

# GRACE MINISTRIES STUDY BIBLE

Today's King James Version



**GRACE MINISTRIES**

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# FOREWORD

The producers and publishers of this Study Bible believe in the full divine inspiration of the Bible. That is, we believe that God Himself inspired the original writers of each of the 66 books so that they wrote down, word for word, in the languages they used (Hebrew, Greek, and a little Aramaic), exactly what God wanted them to write. Therefore we have no hesitation in calling the Bible the Word of God.

Our highest authority for believing this is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In Matthew 4:4 He taught us that words found in the Old Testament had come "from the mouth of God". He said that not the smallest part of a single letter of the law of Moses would pass away until all of it was fulfilled (Matt 5:18). He stated that words written by David were "by the Holy Spirit" of God (Mark 12:36). He said that what was spoken to the leaders of Israel was "the word of God", and that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He taught that His own teachings had come directly from God the Father in heaven (John 12:49; 14:24). He stated that the Holy Spirit of God would lead His apostles "into all truth" (John 16:13), and His apostles taught that all the Old Testament Scriptures were given "by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16), and that Old Testament prophecy came through holy men of God who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

The English text of the Bible and the notes we have produced and present to the reader reflect this high view of inspiration.

**THE BIBLE TEXT :** The text used for this Study Bible is not a new translation, but a revision of the Authorized Version, known popularly as The King James Version (hereafter called KJV), first published in 1611. We have done this revision with constant reference to the same Hebrew and Greek manuscripts that the translators of the KJV used.

We are aware that some Christians who are lovers of the KJV will not welcome any changes made in it. They may argue that there is no point in changing a version that God has so greatly blessed and that so many English speaking Christians have used for centuries. Many who think like this may not be aware that the original translators of the KJV made much use of previous translations, and that the KJV has already been revised a number of times. The version generally available to Christians for many years now has not been the original version completed in 1611, but the revision made in 1769. The producers of the 1967 edition of the Scofield Reference Bible did some revising of the KJV, as they inform us in their Introduction. Others also have produced their own revision – for example, the New King James Bible.

The revision we have made should not be confused with any of those. However, our purpose has been the same as that of the original translators of the KJV, and of those who have made helpful revisions of the KJV since then. We have wanted to provide a very accurate version with language clear and understandable to all those who read the Bible. When God originally gave His Word to those who wrote it down, He gave it in the forms of speech and language that people commonly used at the time, because He wanted His revelation to be easily intelligible to the people. We have tried to follow His example.

It should be clear to all those who study the KJV that some of its words and expressions are no longer understood, and that some have changed their meaning altogether.

Consider these words: "amerce", "asswaged", "astonied", "avouched", "besom", "bestead", "bewray", "brigandine", "broided", "bruit", "caul", "chapters", "chode", "churl", "cieled", "clouts", "cockatrice", "collops", "concision", "descry", "emeralds", "felloes", "flotes", "froward", "glede", "graff", "greaves", "habergeons", "hoised", "holpen", "husbandmen", "husbandry", "implead", "juttle", "knop", "lien", "meteyard", "minished", "neesings", "noisome", "ouches", "plenish", "publican", "ringstraked", "sackbut", "scall", "scrabbled", "scrip", "silverlings", "sod pottage", "sottish", "stomacher", "strake", "suretiship", "tabret", "timbrel", "trow", "unicorns", "vaunteth", "wimples", "wot", "wotteth", etc.

This is by no means a full list of words in the original KJV that present-day readers may not know the meaning of. A number of these words are not even in some modern dictionaries. Perhaps the ordinary reader may guess the meaning of some of them by the context in which they appear, but

surely not all of them, and he may actually make wrong guesses. In any case, should our understanding of any part of the Word of God have to be a matter of guesswork?

And consider the following phrases in the KJV – phrases which no doubt were clear enough to people 400 years ago, but which are not clear to a reader today not familiar with that kind of English. Some of these phrases sound very strange to our ears, and some actually convey the wrong meaning today:

“He entreated Abram” (Gen 12:16) – changed to “he treated Abram well”. The word “entreated” no longer conveys the proper meaning of the Hebrew here.

“Tables of stone” (Ex 24:12; etc) – changed to “tablets of stone”. It was not stone tables that Moses had in his hands when he came down from Mount Sinai.

“Environ us round” (Josh 7:9) – changed to “surround us”, for obvious reasons.

“The great and terrible God” (Nehemiah 1:5) – this has been changed in this revision to “the great and awesome God.” To many people today “terrible” does not mean “awe\_inspiring” or “awesome”, but has a very negative meaning, such as “extremely bad”, “horrible”, “dreadful”.

“Seek after leasing” (Psalm 4:2) – changed to “seek after a lie”. In old English the word “leasing” could mean “lying”, but we no longer use the word with this meaning.

“Recount his worthies” (Nahum 2:5) – changed to “remember his nobles”, which better conveys the meaning of the Hebrew to readers today.

“Suffer little children. . .to come unto me” (Matt 19:14) – changed to “permit little children. . .to come to me”. In the days when the KJV was translated “suffer” could also mean “permit” or “let”, and here did have that meaning, but we no longer use the word in this way.

“Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree” (Acts 5:30) – changed to “whom you killed by hanging him on a tree”. The KJV sounds as though they first killed Jesus and afterwards hung him on the cross. The word “and” is not in the Greek.

“We wot not” (Acts 7:40) – changed to “we do not know”, for obvious reasons.

“From there we fetched a compass” (Acts 28:13) – changed to “from there we circled about”, which gives the meaning of the Greek. No doubt the KJV conveyed this meaning to readers in their day, but for modern readers that English phrase no longer has this meaning, but another one altogether.

“Quit you like men” (1 Cor 16:13) – changed to “be courageous”. In Greek there is only one word here, meaning “manly” or “brave”. It has nothing to do with quitting anything.

“We do you to wit of the grace of God” (2 Cor 8:1) – changed to “we inform you of the grace of God”, for obvious reasons.

“Shall not prevent them who are asleep” (1 Thess 4:15) \_ changed to “will not precede those who have fallen asleep”. The Greek word does not mean what we now think of as preventing.

“He who now letteth will let” (2 Thess 2:7) – changed to “he who is now restraining will continue to restrain”. “Letteth” and “let” actually convey the wrong meaning of the Greek to readers now.

“The word of God is quick and powerful” (Heb 4:12) – changed to “the word of God is living and powerful”. The Greek word does not indicate something that acts quickly but something that is living. Four hundred years ago “quick” could mean “alive”, but it does not do so in modern usage.

“A peculiar people” (1 Pet 2:9) – changed to “a people belonging to God”. To people today “peculiar” usually means “strange”, “queer”, or “odd”, which is not the meaning of the Greek word here.

“Seek peace and ensue it” (1 Peter 3:11) – changed to “seek peace and follow after it”. The word “ensue” no longer conveys the meaning of the Greek.

This is by no means all the changes that we thought needed to be made. The reader will discover others in the text we are providing, and often a note about the change made. The reader should not think that changing these words or phrases is actually changing the Word of God which was written



down in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. It is only making the Word of God more clear and meaningful and accurate in English for readers today. Can anyone really think it is changing the Word of God to translate "we do not know" in place of "we wot not"? or "tablets of stone" to replace "tables of stone"? or "surround us" for "environ us round"?

We have also changed the forms of verbs and some pronouns which needed to be changed to bring them up\_to\_date. These English verb forms and pronouns make the KJV sound archaic and strange today to those who are not used to it. When the KJV was translated "thou" and "thee" were commonly used for any person, and not a special way of speaking to God. It was not then, and is not now, a more pious or reverent way of addressing Him, so we have changed these obsolete forms to "you." Along with that we have also changed all the forms of verbs which are not used now, such as "hath", "hast", "wilt", "saith", "sheweth", "believeth", "believest", etc.

We have retained the use of italics. The KJV translators added words not in the Hebrew and Greek text but which they thought were necessary to make a complete sentence or to make a phrase or sentence clear. When they did so they placed these added words in italics. We have done the same.

In Hebrew and Greek (as in all languages) some words have more than one meaning, and because of this, words and whole sentences, may be translated differently from this version we have produced. We have sometimes placed in the notes these possible alternate translations.

**THE NOTES:** Our sole purpose in writing and publishing these notes has been to provide the reader with a help in better understanding the Word of God, and so put it into practice more fully. They represent many years of hard work. Great care has been taken to try to expound what is in the text of the Bible, and not to present any preconceptions or prejudices we may have. It is, of course, quite possible that we have not always succeeded in this, and the reader may sometimes find mistakes in matters of fact or errors in the interpretation of a verse or a passage. If these things are pointed out to us, and we are convinced of our error, we will be most happy to correct any such thing in future editions. Truth is what we constantly aim at, and anything less than the truth in our thinking and speaking and writing is unacceptable and painful to us, as it should be to everyone who reads this.

May God alone be praised if those who use our Study Bible come to a better understanding of the truth through it. We are in hearty agreement with the psalmist who wrote, "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, because of your mercy and because of your truth" (Ps 115:1). In this we will have our joy and satisfaction.

We have provided a great many references throughout the notes and in a brief concordance at the end. We hope all these references are accurate, but are aware that mistakes in proof reading are always possible and may be found here and there. If the reader discovers any such mistakes we would appreciate having them pointed out to us.

**The Staff of Grace Ministries**  
Bangalore, India

# STUDY BIBLE

Today's King James Version

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# THE OLD TESTAMENT

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# GENESIS

**Title:**

In the original Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament there were no names or titles to the various books. The Jews, to whom God gave His Word, usually called each book by the first one or two words of the opening sentence. In Genesis the first word in Hebrew, the original language of the Old Testament, was the word translated "In the beginning", and so that is what the Jews called it. Many centuries later Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament into the Greek language and gave names to each of the books. This translation is called the Septuagint. Much later these names were used in the Latin translation of the Bible, and many centuries after that in the English translation of the Bible. In this way the names came into what is now called the King James Version and other English versions.

**Author:**

The people of Israel from the time of Moses onward were sure that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, and there is strong evidence in the Bible itself to support this belief. See Ex 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Num 33:2; Deut 31:19,24-26; Josh 1:8; 8:31; 1 Kings 2:3; Luke 24:44; 1 Cor 9:9. Most importantly, Jesus Christ Himself said that Moses wrote about Him. See Matt 19:8; John 5:46,47; 7:19.

**Date:**

Probably sometime between 1446 and 1406 before Christ.

**Theme:**

Beginnings. Here we have the beginning of God's written revelation of Himself, the beginning of the world, of mankind, of sin, of God's plan of redemption, of the various races of men, and the beginning of the people of Israel through whom God gave His Word.

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**1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was desolate and void; and darkness *was* up the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the surface of the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good, and God divided the light from the darkness.

**1:1** "Beginning" – Ps 33:6,9; 102:25; Isa 42:5; 45:18; John 1:2,3; 1:16; Heb 1:2; Rev 4:11. We do not know for certain whether this refers to the beginning of the whole universe, or only the beginning of God's plan for the earth. And we do not know when this beginning took place. Some seem sure that it was some billions of years ago. Others think that it was only some thousands of years ago. See the additional note on all this at the end of Genesis.

Here the time of beginning is not the important thing, but the fact of it. Nothing in creation is eternal, only God is (Ps 90:2). Before creation there was God, and God made the world out of nothing by His Word and almighty power.

The great Creator appears in the first verse of the Bible and He is referred to some 30 times in this first chapter alone. The whole Bible is His narrative. It gives us some of His mighty acts and wonderful words. Especially it gives us the story of His dealings with mankind, and what He has done to teach them the truth about Himself. He teaches us also how we can come to Him, and how to worship Him.

The Bible does not begin with proofs of God's existence. It simply presents Him in action. His works speak of His existence and we learn something of what He is like by the things He has made. See Ps 19:1,2; Isa 40:25,26; Rom 1:20.

"Heaven" – this could also be translated "heavens" or "sky" or "skies." It does not necessarily indicate outer space, though it may possibly do so.

**1:2** "Earth" – this could also be translated "land" – the Hebrew word means both "earth" and "land", and throughout the Old Testament the land of Israel is indicated by this word (eretz). Some scholars believe that here in Genesis the verses describing God's creation from verse 2 onwards refer only to the land later promised to the children of Israel. The usual view is that this chapter deals with God's work in the whole earth.

"Was" – not "became." This indicates a prevailing condition, not a change in the condition (this makes the "gap" theory – the theory that there was a long period of time between verses one and two – seem very unlikely).

"Desolate and void" – Ps 104:30; Jer 4:23. "Desolate" is an accurate translation of the Hebrew word here. There cannot be an object completely without form. In the beginning the earth was void of life and not yet ready for human habitation. There was only a spherical shape covered with water

5 And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7 And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which *were* under the expanse from the waters which *were*

and darkness. But God did not create the earth to remain in that condition, but eventually to become the habitation of mankind – Isaiah 45:18.

"Darkness" – see how God Himself describes this in Job 38:9.

"Deep" – it seems that the whole earth was covered with ocean. Dry land did not appear until later – verse 9.

"Spirit of God moved" – this suggests that God's Spirit was present to prepare the earth for man's habitation. Compare Ps 104:30. God's Spirit is seen at work throughout the Bible. Here are some of the verses which refer to Him: 6:3; 41:38; Ex 31:3; Num 24:2; 1 Sam 16:13; 2 Sam 23:2; Ps 51:11; 143:10; Isa 11:2; 61:1; Matt 1:18; 3:16; 12:28; Luke 11:13; John 3:5,6; 14:17; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 2:4; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 2:10; 6:19; Gal 3:2; 6:19; Eph 1:13; 2:22; 2 Pet 1:19; Rev 22:17. See notes at John 14:16,17; etc.

**1:3** "And God said" – we are not told when God spoke the words that follow. Some scholars believe that there was a long gap between verses 2 and 3, and that the earth remained for a long time in darkness. See the note at the end of Genesis. It is not necessary to believe that the original work of creation revealed in verse 1 must be included in the work of the "first day." Verse 1 gives us the original creation. Verse 3 begins the revelation of what God did after that to prepare the earth for life and human habitation. We are not told when God sent light to the dark earth. Only the bare fact is stated.

"Said" – by the mere power of His word God created – vs 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24; Ps 33:6-9; Heb 11:3.

"Light" – 2 Cor 4:6. The context points to light on earth, which had been lying in darkness. We are not told what the source of this light was. Compare v 14.

**1:4** Isa 45:7.

**1:5** Ps 74:16.

"Day" – see notes on 2:4; 5:2.

"Evening. . . morning were the first day" – if the light in v 3 did not come from the sun, then this evening and morning could possibly have a very different meaning from what those words mean now, but see the note below on vs 14-18.

**1:6** Ps 104:1,2; Jer 10:12.

"Expanse" – to the present-day reader this word better expresses the meaning of the Hebrew than the word "firmament" in the KJV.

**1:7** Ps 148:4.

"Made" – the Hebrew word also means

above the expanse. And it was so. 8 And God called the expanse "heaven." And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together to one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. 10 And God called the dry *land* earth, and the gathering together of the waters he called seas. And God saw that *it was* good. 11 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation, the plant bearing seed and the fruit tree on the earth bearing fruit according to its kind, with its seed in it." And it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth vegetation, the plant bearing seed according to its kind, and the tree bearing fruit, with its seed in it, according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. 13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heaven to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years, 15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth." And it was so. 16 And God

"brought forth", "prepared", "made ready", etc. See verse 16.  
**1:8** "Heaven" – the Hebrew word could also be translated "sky" or "skies" or even "air". This "expanse" is where the birds fly (verse 20), so it refers to something close to the earth.  
**1:9** Job 38:8-11; Ps 95:5.  
**1:10** Ps 33:7.  
**1:11-13** Ps 104:14. Vegetation came before animal life.  
**1:14-18** Ps 74:16; Ps 136:7-9; Isa 40:26. There are other sources of light than the sun, and the light in v 3 may have been from another source (clouds of ionized gas is one possibility). Or it might have been, as some think, that the earth was at first obscured by dense clouds of vapor. Some light from the sun was able to penetrate to the earth, but the sun itself could not have been seen. Here perhaps the meaning is that for the first time the sun and moon were made visible from the earth's point of view. Or it may possibly mean that God put them in their present positions, or that He did something to them that resulted in their present condition. There is, perhaps, another possibility – see note at the end of Genesis.

In v 16 the word "created" is not used (as it is in v 1 – in Hebrew "bara"). The Hebrew word here ("asah") has various meanings, such as "to work on", "to produce", "to make", "to prepare" (see Psalm 74:16), or even "to appoint."

Observe that the sun and moon were given as signs to mark seasons and to govern day and night. They were not made that men might worship them (see Deut 4:19; 17:3-5; Ezek 8:16-18. We are to

made two great lights: the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night. *He made* the stars also. 17 And God set them in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good. 19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the waters teem with living, moving creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven." 21 And God created great sea monsters, and every living moving creature, according to its kind, with which the waters teem, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, and increase in number, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds increase *in number* on the earth." 23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth according to its kind." And it was so. 25 And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, and cattle

worship the Creator who made them, Him only (Ex 20:3; Matt 4:10). The sun and moon have no spiritual influence at all in the affairs of men. They do not govern men. They govern day and night by physically affecting activities on earth by their presence or absence. Seeing the sun, moon and stars we should realize something of God's greatness, of how superior He is to man and to all other things He has made (Ps 8:3,4; 102:25-27; Isa 40:12-17,25,26; 44:24.

"He made the stars also" – perhaps this means that He made them appear from earth's point of view. But see the note at the end of Genesis.

"Set them" (v 17) – or "appointed them."  
**1:19-25** Animal life was first created in the water, then on land.

**1:24-26** There is a theory devised by men that tries to explain the development of life on earth from lifeless matter to man, leaving God out altogether. This theory is atheistic evolution. It is an unproved theory and there are still many unsolved scientific problems in connection with it – not to mention other kinds of problems.

For example, how did life originally arise spontaneously out of lifeless matter? How did lifeless matter itself originate? How can consciousness and intelligence, mind and personality, morality and ethics, religion and spirituality be explained if the development of man began originally from lifeless matter alone which have none of these? The teaching that these came about without God, from inanimate matter, is a mere theory, not scientific fact; and it is a theory greatly lacking in real evidence. And it is neither wise nor scientific to believe something without proper evidence. The Bible declares



according to their kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good.

26 And God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him. He created them male and female.

28 And God blessed them and God said to them,

that atheism, that all denial of God, comes from a heart that is foolish and perverse (see Psalm 14:1 and note).

Others, who believe in God, have thought that God used the process of evolution to bring all present forms of life into existence. From the evidence we have in the Bible, and the knowledge of the many defects in the theory of evolution, we can say that this seems very unlikely.

Let us always remember that any theory or hypothesis is based on partial knowledge. It is an attempt to explain matters without having all the facts. Often when more is known, theories must be either greatly modified or completely abandoned. This has happened again and again in the history of scientific investigation. As for us, let us be very careful in our statements so that we do not either oppose a teaching of the Bible, or unnecessarily add to what it says, or show that we are ignoring real evidence of any kind, scientific or otherwise.

**1:26** The language of this verse reveals, not a product of evolution, but a new creation, different from all that was created before. According to the Bible man is not a mere animal. And he is not God or a part of God. He is far above the animals. No one should think of calling animals the children of God. And the Bible does not say that animals were made in God's image. But man, though far above animals, is far below God. He is a creature, God is the Creator. However, in certain ways he resembles God. He was made with personality. This indicates a very important truth – man's Creator also has personality. God is not an impersonal power.

Man was given a mind to think about God's revelation, a will to choose between good and evil, an ability to love and worship God. He was made in God's image (Gen 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Eph 4:24). This does not mean that God has a body like man's. God is Spirit. See John 4:24.

Notice in this verse the words "us" and "our." See also Gen 3:22. It seems that here is a hint of the mysterious and wonderful doctrine of the Trinity, which is gradually revealed in the Bible. To whom was God speaking in this verse? To angels? The Bible nowhere says that man was made in the image of angels or that angels

"Be fruitful, and increase in number, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

29 And God said, "Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree on which is the fruit of a seed-bearing tree. It will be food for you. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth that has life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

joined with God in His work of making man. Then to whom was God speaking? To some gods or other? There is only one God and not many. This is a truth stated everywhere in the Bible – Deut 4:35,39; Isa 43:10-12; 44:6-8; Rom 3:29,30; 1 Cor 8:4; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:15,16; Jude 25. So God was not speaking to another God or god.

But according to the Bible, in the one Godhead there are three persons, named the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – one God, three persons perfectly united with one will, one mind, one nature. All three were active in creation. The Father appears in v 1, the Spirit in v 2, and the Son was with the Father in the whole process of creation (John 1:1-3; Col 1:16,17; Heb 1:10-12). See notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16; etc. Here in Genesis in this verse it seems that God the Father is speaking to the other members of the Trinity.

**1:27** Matt 19:4-6. "So" – in the KJV every verse in this chapter except this one and verse 1 begins with the word "and." In Hebrew there is no separate word for this, but one single letter joined with the word that follows. Apparently in Hebrew this was a device that aided the flow of the language and often added nothing to the meaning of the sentence containing it. The KJV sometimes translates this by other English words. In this verse the same Hebrew letter is translated "so". In other places in the Old Testament it is translated in the KJV as "thus" (Gen 2:1), "but" (Gen 2:6,17), "now" (Gen 3:1), "so" (Gen 3:24), etc, and sometimes it is omitted altogether (Gen 8:2).

**1:28** Ps 8:6-8; Jer 27:5. Notes on "bless" and "blessed" at 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:1; Ps 1:1; Matt 5:3-12; etc.

**1:29** "Look" – or "behold" (KJV). "Behold" was in common use when the KJV was translated (early 17th century), but is rarely used now, except in the phrase "lo and behold." In Hebrew (and in Greek) the word here translated "look" is very often used merely to call attention to the words which follow. It is sometimes difficult to translate meaningfully into good English. Occasionally we have put it in the past tense, as in verse 31 ("saw").

**1:29,30** God gave new directions after the great flood described in chapters 7 and 8. See 9:3,4.

31 And God looked at everything that he had made, and saw that it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God completed his work which he had done;

**1:31** Everything God made, including man, was very good. Man was sinless and able to have fellowship with God, and love Him and worship Him in spirit and in truth.

### **Note on creation and science**

Is there any conflict between the account of creation in this chapter and the truths discovered by modern science? No. This first chapter of Genesis, as all the rest of the Bible, is a revelation from God Himself and so is absolutely true to the facts (see 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21; etc). Scientific evidence is not lacking that the order of creation given here is correct – the heavens, and a desolate, empty earth, then light reaching earth, after that vegetation and animal life in water, and later on land, and finally man. Science is in agreement with this chapter that creation is real. It is not a mere dream in the mind of God.

However, this chapter is at odds with certain speculations and theories of science that some put forth to try to explain the origin of the universe apart from God. But the speculations and theories of science are not the facts of science, and we should not confuse these things. It is not scientific to say that the universe originated by itself out of nothing. No scientist was there to observe what happened then, and there is no evidence now that such things ever happen. When it comes to the origin of the universe scientists can only speculate, just as those who are not scientists. Or else believe the record God has given here in His Word.

Concerning the origin of things, Genesis chapter one gives the most logical and sensible and reasonable explanation in existence. It certainly has not been disproved by science, and many fine and brilliant scientists have believed this account and accepted it as God's revelation.

And regarding the theories of some scientists which are contrary to the plain teachings of the Bible we should keep in mind the following: Scientists who have not believed in God and received the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour are fallen, sinful people just as the rest of mankind, and this will be revealed in their thoughts and theories as well as in their actions – see 8:21; Ps 14:1-3; Jer 17:9; Matt 15:19; Rom 1:18-23; 3:17-19; Eph 2:1-3; etc. So it is a dangerous and foolish thing to accept a theory of any unbelieving scientist (no matter how skilled and knowledgeable he is in his own field) when what he puts forth relates in any way to God or religion or the Bible or to ethics and morality.

and he ceased on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because in it he had ceased from all his work which God created and did.

4 These *are* the accounts of the heavens and of the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the

**2:1** "Host of them" – this phrase is not defined, but may mean the sun, moon, and stars that appear from earth's viewpoint. Some think it means the whole universe with its many galaxies, but other explanations have been offered. See the note at the end of Genesis.

**2:2** "Ceased" – this could also be translated "rested", but we should not think that God gets weary (Isa 40:28). He finished His work and so ceased His activities. He here establishes a principle for man to follow – one rest day after six days of work (Ex 20:8-11).

"Day" – 1:5; 5:2. This word is used in at least four different ways in the Bible: daylight hours – 1:5,14; John 11:9; a period of 24 hours – Matt 17:1; Luke 24:21; a longer period of time – Isa 34:8; John 9:4 (compare also 2 Peter 3:8); metaphorically – 1 Thess 5:5,8.

Here in v 3 the seventh day seems to indicate a day as we know it now. It is plain from Ex 20:8-11 that the day God sanctified for man was a day of 24 hours. And so it may be that we should think that the six previous days, the days of creation were also days of 24 hours each.

However, verses 4-6 speak of the "day" that "the LORD God made the earth and the heavens", and goes on to indicate ground separate from the sea, and the way the ground was watered. So the word "day" there can hardly mean a day of 24 hours, for it includes at least God's acts in days 2 and 3 of chapter one. It is not always easy to interpret how the word "day" is used in the Bible, and perhaps to be too dogmatic in this matter is to be unwise. Some have argued like this: God ceased His work after the six days of creation, the days were possibly long periods of time, and He sanctified His seventh day. Man's days are a small picture of that and so later on God ordered men to labor six days and rest on the seventh, and sanctified man's seventh day. The reader may decide for himself what to make of this argument. Others have taught that the days of creation were days of 24 hours, but that they refer only to God's activity in the land later promised to Israel, not to the whole earth.

**2:3** "Sanctified" – this is the first use of this word in the Old Testament. It means to make holy or to declare holy or to set apart. See notes at Lev 20:7; John 17:17; etc.

**2:4** "LORD" – the word "the" has been added here by the KJV (and everywhere the word LORD appears). LORD (all capital letters) translates the Hebrew word for "Jehovah" (or "Yahweh" – which is how it is sometimes

heavens, 5 no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no shrub of the field had yet sprouted. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and *there was* no man to till the ground. 6 But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. 7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

8 And the LORD God planted a garden toward the east in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; also the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four

head *streams*. 11 The name of the first *is* Pison. That is the one that goes around the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold. 12 And the gold of that land is good. There *also are* bdellium and the onyx stone. 13 And the name of the second river *is* Gihon. This *is* the one that goes around the whole land of Cush. 14 And the name of the third river *is* Hiddekel. This *is* the one that goes toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river *is* Euphrates.

15 And the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die."

18 And the LORD God said, "*It is* not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper

written, being closer to the sound of the Hebrew). This is the first appearance of the most common name for God in the Old Testament, used more than 6000 times (in Hebrew 6519 times). For the meaning of this name see note at Ex 3:14. In the KJV "Lord" (not having all capital letters) is a translation of a different Hebrew word. See the note at 15:2.

**2:4-6** It is obvious that conditions in the early earth were very different from what they are now.

**2:6** The Hebrew of this verse is very difficult and might be translated in other ways.

**2:7** This is the second account of God's creation of man. It does not contradict the first account but gives added information. Man's body is composed of elements found in the earth (Gen 3:19). In the Hebrew language even the word for man (adam – see v 20) is very close to the word for ground (adamah). But man is not mere body. See Eccl 12:7; Ps 31:5; Luke 16:22,23; Acts 7:59; 2 Cor 5:6-8; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 12:22,23; Rev 6:9-11. In the creation of man's body God used previously existing material. But we cannot say that He used previously existing materials when He brought plant and animal life into existence. He does not tell us either that He did or that He did not.

**2:8** To some extent we can identify the location of Eden from the information given in verses 10-14. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers flow through present-day Iraq into the Persian Gulf. Nothing is known about the rivers called here Pishon and Gihon. They may no longer exist. The Cush mentioned in verse 13 is not the land we call Ethiopia today, but another region of the same name located in the neighborhood of Iraq.

**2:9** We do not know what the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil were like. We know only what resulted from eating their fruit. The fruit of one gave life. Eating the fruit of the other gave a specific kind of knowledge. This was not wisdom itself but a knowledge of good and evil that

would come from experience. The trees themselves were both good (1:31). God never made anything evil.

**2:13** "Cush" – in ancient times it appears that there were two regions called by this name. One was in Africa and included a part of present-day Ethiopia, the other was in western Asia.

**2:14** "Hiddekel" – the river in western Asia now called the Tigris.

**2:15** God did not create man for idleness.

**2:15-20** The picture here is beautiful – God and man at peace, in fellowship and communication. Man knew God and walked with God. God's plan had man in a garden, surrounded by beauty, in the midst of plenty, with pleasant work to do. And man was created for a very high purpose and destiny. He was the ruler of God's earth (1:28; Ps 8:5,6).

**2:17** God is the Creator, the Lord of the universe. He has a perfect right to give commands to His creatures, and to test their love and obedience. He gave the first man only one command – that they must not eat the fruit of a certain tree. The command might have been about something else – the meaning would have been the same. The meaning can be expressed in these words: I am God; you are man. It is your privilege and duty to love me supremely, trust me completely and obey me gladly. If you do not do so you shall die.

"Die" – the first reference to death in the Bible. It resulted from man's disobedience and sin as we shall see in chapter 3. Death means separation—the spiritual separation of man from God (Eph 2:1,5) and the physical separation of body and spirit (Eccl 12:7). See also Rom 5:12; 6:23; Jam 1:15.

**2:18** This refers to a specific man, Adam. The definite article is used. It is a general principle that a man needs a wife but it does not always apply (Jer 16:1,2; 1 Cor 7:26,27). In the case of the first man it was necessary for him to have a wife if there was to be a human race. But it is not

suitable for him."

19 And the LORD God formed every beast of the field from the ground, and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *became* its name. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But as for Adam there was not found a suitable helper for him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs and in its place closed up the flesh. 22 And *with* the rib which the LORD God took from man, he made a woman, and brought her to the man.

23 And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called 'woman', because she was taken out of man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be united to his wife, and they will

become one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

**3** Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Really, did God say, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4 And the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil."

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was

necessary for any specific individual now to marry in order to perpetuate the human race. **2:19** "From the ground" – all animal life did not originate in the water.

"He brought" – God appeared to Adam in some form, probably either angelic or human, to have fellowship and talk with him. John 1:18 says that no man has seen God at any time. This means no man has seen God in His spiritual essence as He is described in 1 Tim 6:16. But He sometimes appeared in human or angelic form in Old Testament times and He came as Jesus Christ, as described in the New Testament. Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

**2:20** Man from the beginning had the gift of language and the ability to use words rightly. God gave him this gift when He created him.

"Adam" – this could be translated "man" also. In Hebrew the words are the same.

**2:21,22** Woman, too, is not a product of evolution but a unique creation of God (1 Cor 11:8-12).

"Took one of his ribs" – possibly this could be translated "took part of his side."

**2:23,24** From the beginning God ordained marriage as one man, one woman (Mark 10:7,8; Eph 5:28-33).

"Woman" – in Hebrew the word for woman sounds very much like one of the words for man (man – "ish" or "eesh"; woman – "isha" or ("ishsha").

**2:25** See 3:7,10,11.

**3:1** This serpent was unlike present-day snakes. It was the most clever of all animals and apparently, until God's curse came on it (v 14), did not crawl on its belly as snakes do now. Here it seems clear that Satan, the chief of demons, was using the serpent and speaking through it. In the Bible the serpent is a symbolic name of Satan himself (2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9; 20:2). Satan, not literal snakes, tempts people to sin and disobey God (Matt 4:3; 1 Thess 3:5). Note on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1.

"Really" – the KJV has "yea", but this is not a literal translation of the Hebrew word which has a variety of possible meanings – "also", "though", "so much the more", "indeed", etc.

**3:2** See 2:16,17.

**3:3** She added to God's words. See Prov 30:6.

**3:4,5** John 8:44; Rev 12:9. Satan contradicted the word God gave in 2:17. Satan tempts men and destroys them by telling them lies about God, about themselves and about reality. He also tempts by putting some illusion of good or greatness before men. He tried to persuade the woman that God was withholding some good they might gain by listening to himself. So we learn the method Satan uses to ruin human beings – he denies God's Word, tells lies, and promises some pleasure or false good. See v 22 also.

"God" (v 5) – the KJV has "gods." The Hebrew word here (elohim) can mean either God or gods, but "God" is surely a better translation in this place. The word "gods" is used in the Bible to indicate the false gods worshiped by some people in the world, but when the serpent said this to Eve, there were no other people in the world and no gods. So when she heard the word "elohim" she could only think of the one true God. Even if there had been other gods, Eve, before the fall, would not have been tempted to become like them. But the suggestion she could become like God could have been very appealing to her.

**3:6** See 1 Tim 2:14; Jam 1:14,15; 1 John 2:16; Rom 5:12-19. This one sin changed the whole character of man, the whole course of the world. See 6:5; 8:21. Sin is disobedience to God's Word, rebellion against almighty God, a lack of conformity to His principles. It is acting from self according to one's own desires contrary to God's word and will. See 1 John 3:4; 5:17; Jam 4:17; Rom 14:23; Prov 24:9. The man was drawn

good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate it, and also gave *some* to her husband with her. And he ate *it*. 7 And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 And the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?"

10 And he said, "I heard the sound you *made* in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 And the man said, "The woman whom you gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What

is this that you have done?"

And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14 And the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you *are* cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. You will go about on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel."

16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your suffering in childbirth. In pain you will bear children. And your desire *will be* for your husband, and he will rule over you."

17 And to Adam he said, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife, and ate of the tree concerning which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it', the ground is cursed on your account; in painful toil you will eat its *produce* all the days of your life. 18 It will also bring forth thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

into sin by his wife. Temptations that come through the marriage relationship can be very strong. Adam was not deceived (1 Tim 2:14) but knowingly disobeyed God and followed his wife's suggestion.

**3:7** In 2:17 God said they would die on the day they ate of that fruit. That day they did not die physically, but they did die spiritually. This appears in the following verses. Also the process of degeneration which results in physical death began that day (see Rom 5:12). Here in v 7 we see the death of innocence. Man's reaction to his sin and guilt was shame which he tried to cover and hide. The outward act spoke of an inner spiritual experience.

**3:8** "LORD God. . .walking"– compare 12:7; 16:7; 18:1,2; etc. Now man tried to hide from God. But God came to seek and save him. The almighty Creator of chapter 1 is here seen as a God of love and mercy (1 John 4:8). The story of God's gracious pursuit of lost men begins here and continues throughout the Bible. See notes on Ex 25:8; etc. It was not man who sought God then, and people do not do so now (Rom 3:11). It is God who sought man, and who seeks him still. Compare Luke 19:10.

**3:9** Of course God knew where Adam was and what he had done, but He wanted Adam to speak out and confess his sin.

**3:10** Here is the first mention of fear in the Bible. Sin brings fear of discovery and of God's presence (John 3:20). It is also true that all the many fears which afflict mankind have their origin in man's first sin.

**3:12** Guilty man at once tried to shift the responsibility for his action onto someone else. Actually Adam was trying to blame God for his sin. It is as though he was saying "God, it's your fault. You gave this woman to me."

**3:13** The woman speaks as her husband did. She means "It's not my fault. The serpent deceived me. And after all who made the serpent?" Trying to escape responsibility for one's sins by putting the blame for them on someone else has been man's way from that day to this. But God does not accept such excuses.

**3:14** Sin brought a curse on all the world. The earth is not the same as it was before Adam's fall (v 17; Rom 8:19-22).

**3:15** Here is the first promise of a Saviour for fallen man. He would be born of the woman (the man is not mentioned here. Many scholars think this signifies the virgin birth of Christ. See Isa 7:14; Matt 1:22,23; Gal 4:5). The Saviour will be the bruiser of Satan's head – that is, He will destroy Satan and his works (Rom 16:20; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8). The final overthrow of Satan is seen in the last book of the Bible (Rev 20:10). The serpent was to bruise the heel of the Saviour. He could hurt and wound Him but not destroy Him. And the wounding of the Saviour was for man's benefit (Isa 53:5; 1 Pet 2:24).

"Offspring" – the Hebrew word means "seed", "offspring", "descendant."

**3:16** Since the fall of human beings into sin, woman is to be in subjection to the man (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:11-15; 1 Pet 3:1-5).

"Suffering in childbirth" – this seems to be the meaning rather than "suffering and childbirth" (KJV). On the word "and" see the note at 1:27.

**3:17** "In painful toil" – in Hebrew this is the same word translated "suffering" in v 16. It has a variety of meanings – "suffering", "sorrow", "pain", "hard labour", etc.

**3:17-19** Job 5:7; 14:1; Ps 90:3,9,10; Eccl 12:7.



19 In the sweat of your face you will eat bread, until you return to the ground; for you were taken from it; for you *are* dust and you will return to dust."

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

21 The LORD God also made garments of skins for Adam and for his wife, and clothed them. 22 And the LORD God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil. And now, he *must not* put out his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."

23 Therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So he drove the man out, and at the east of the of the garden of Eden he placed cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every

direction, to keep the way of the tree of life.

**4** And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived, and gave birth to Cain, and said, "I have gotten a man *by the help* of the LORD."

2 And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a cultivator of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came about that Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground. 4 And Abel also brought *an offering*, of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering, 5 but did not have regard for Cain and for his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

**3:21** It seems very probable that there is a picture here of God's way of salvation by sacrifice and grace. Man's attempts to hide his guilt and shame cannot succeed. He is not fit to stand before God in his own works. God Himself slew an innocent animal and clothed Adam and Eve. Much later in history God came in the person of Christ and died for sinners. He clothes those who come to Him in His own righteousness. What man is by nature is described in Isa 64:6. By God's grace he can have a perfect covering (Isa 61:10; 1 Cor 1:30). See notes on justification at Gen 15:6; Rom 1:17; 3:21-26; 4:5,23-25.

**3:22** This verse shows that there was some truth in the serpent's words in v 5. This is Satan's method - to mix lies with truth to make it seem more attractive and believable. By sinning man did not become like God in God's holy character - in fact, just the opposite of that happened. But in the one matter of knowing good and evil man became like his Creator.

"Us" - see 1:26.

"Live forever" - God will not let man live forever in this world in a sinful condition. If He did so it would be a terrible disaster. In the last book of the Bible the tree of life appears again (Rev 2:7; 22:14), and the way to it.

**3:23,24** Man has lost paradise because sin and Paradise are mutually exclusive. Men must choose one or the other; they cannot have both (Rev 22:14). Man has not risen from lower forms of life. In Adam he has fallen from a higher state of life. Adam is the representative and progenitor of all mankind (Rom 5:12-19). He lost paradise for us all. The Bible is the story of God's way of preparing man for Paradise again.

"Cherubim" - see Ex 25:18-22; Ezek 1:5-14; 10:1-10. In Hebrew cherubim is the plural of cherub ("im" indicating the plural form). In English adding an "s" to the word is unnecessary and obscures this fact. The cherubim are, it seems, heavenly beings always associated with God's glory and holiness, or symbols related to God's glory and holiness. Here they are guardians of

the way to the garden.

In this chapter the results of man's sin are very clear. They are still visible in the world today - shame, useless attempts to cover guilt, fear, trying to hide from God, vain excuses, a curse on creation, pain, bondage, and drudgery to mankind, death, and exclusion from Paradise. Man was made in God's image (1:26). By sinning that image became terribly marred. In the New Testament God's revealed purpose is to restore to fallen man the image of God in true righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:24), to have His people become like Christ (Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2).

**4:1** "Knew" - this is one way the Hebrews expressed sexual intimacy.

**4:3-5** "Offering" - here is the first mention of offerings in the Bible. Who taught Cain and Abel to bring offerings to God? Evidently their parents, Adam and Eve. Who taught Adam and Eve? God Himself is the only one who could have. Why did God accept Abel's offering and reject Cain's? Heb 11:4 gives at least part of the answer. Abel offered a better sacrifice. How was it better? Judging from the rest of the Bible the answer seems to be that he brought a blood sacrifice. Throughout the Bible this is regarded as an offering for sin. See notes at Ex 12:1,7; Lev 1:5; 4:3; Heb 9:22. Abel came to God acknowledging that he was a sinner and that only a blood sacrifice could make atonement for his sin. On the other hand Cain, it seems, came in his pride and self-righteousness and with no sin offering.

Hebrews 11:4 tells us that Abel brought his offering by faith. This means he believed God and did what God had revealed should be done. True faith is always a response to some word or some revelation God has given. Cain is an illustration of Prov 14:12; 15:8. Cain and Abel represent the two divisions of humanity. Abel took God's way. Cain took his own way. Abel is the first example of faith mentioned in the Bible (which does not necessarily mean that Adam and Eve did not have faith). Faith is exceedingly important in God's sight (15:6; 1 John 5:10; Hab 2:14; Matt 17:20; 21:21,22;

6 And the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? and why is your face downcast? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And *its* desire is for you, and you should rule over it."

8 And Cain talked with his brother Abel, and it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and killed him.

9 And the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" And he said, "I don't know. *Am* I my brother's keeper?"

10 And he said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. 11 And now your *are* cursed from the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you cultivate the ground, from now on it will not yield its strength to you. You will be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth."

13 And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment *is* greater than I can bear. 14 Look, today you have driven me out from the face of the ground, and I will be hidden from your face, and I will be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. And it will come about *that* anyone who finds me will kill me."

15 And the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain will have sevenfold vengeance taken on him." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, so that no one finding him would kill him. 16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and lived in the land of Nod, to the east of Eden.

Mark 9:23; 11:24; John 3:36; Heb 11:6).  
4:6 Prov 19:3; 14:29.

4:7 Num 32:23. "Sin" - this is the first mention of the word, though sin had already come into the world by the disobedience of Adam. From that time on it spread like poison in the bloodstream of humanity and affected (and still affects) every individual born into the world - except Christ. In this verse sin is pictured as a wild beast looking for a victim. Sin desires to devour every one of us. It must be overcome or it will destroy all.

4:8 How quickly sin showed its violent and deadly character! Compare 1 John 3:12-15; Ps 38:20; Prov 29:10; Matt 23:35.

4:9 Cain shows his lying, loveless and arrogant nature.

4:10 Num 35:33; Heb 12:24; Rev 6:9,10.

4:11-16 "Cursed" - here are some of the results of sin: Separation from God's presence, loneliness, fear, depression and a curse on one's whole life. Compare Deut 28:15-19. These results we see everywhere in the world today. Cain was not put to death, but after the great flood God gave a new command concerning murder (9:5,6).

4:16 "Out from the presence of the LORD" - this is something that unbelievers often have little or no concern about, but that believers consider the worst kind of punishment. Compare Ps 51:11; 2 Thess 2:9.

17 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch. And he built a city and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son. 18 And Irad was born to Enoch, and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methusael, and Methusael begot Lamech.

19 And Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. 20 And Adah gave birth to Jabal. He was the father of those who live in tents, and of those who have cattle. 21 And his brother's name *was* Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute. 22 As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, a forger of every *kind of* tool in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-cain *was* Naamah.

23 And Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,  
You wives of Lamech, listen to my  
speech,

For I have killed a man for wounding me,  
And a young man for hurting me.

24 If Cain will be avenged sevenfold,  
then Lamech seventy *times* sevenfold."

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she gave birth to a son, and called his name Seth, "For God," she said, "has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, whom Cain killed." 26 And also a son was born to Seth, and he called his name Enos. Then *men* began to call on the name of the LORD.

"Nod" - this Hebrew word means "wandering."

4:17 Where did Cain get his wife? When Seth was born to Adam and Eve, Adam was 130 (5:3), and could have had a great many sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters and their offspring (1:28). These are not all named in the Bible because God had no purpose in doing so. Cain married one of Adam's descendants.

4:18-24 These verses give the line of ungodly Cain. We see its character in the boast of Lamech who gloried in revenge and murder. How different must be the behavior of God's people. Notes at Ex 21:23-25; Num 31:2. Observe also that the evil of polygamy first appears in this godless line. Note at Gen 30:1.

4:22 "Forger of every kind of tool in" - this could also be translated "an instructor of every craftsman in," though the translation above is probably closer to the meaning of the Hebrew.

4:25 Seth in Hebrew means granted or given.

4:26 "Call on the name of the LORD" - 12:8; 26:25; 1 Kings 18:24; Ps 116:17; Joel 2:32; Zeph 3:9; 1 Cor 1:2. With the departure of Cain from God's presence (v 16) mankind was divided into two lines. This verse indicates that the line of Seth was the godly line through which God would make further revelation of His word and will. Seth's

**5** This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female and blessed them, and called their name "man", on the day when they were created.

3 And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and called his name Seth. 4 And after he had begotten Seth the days of Adam were eight hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters. 5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

6 And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begot Enos. 7 And after he begot Enos, Seth lived eight hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. 8 And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

9 And Enos lived ninety years, and begot Cainan. 10 And after he begot Cainan, Enos lived eight hundred and fifteen years, and begot sons

and daughters. 11 And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years, and he died.

12 And Cainan lived seventy years, and begot Mahalaleel. 13 And after he begot Mahalaleel, Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years, and begot sons and daughters. 14 And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died.

15 And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begot Jared. 16 And after he begot Jared, Mahalaleel lived eight hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters. 17 And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety-five years, and he died.

18 And Jared lived a hundred and sixty-two years, and he begot Enoch. 19 And after he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. 20 And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years, and he died. 21 And Enoch lived sixty-five years, and

descendants prayed to the one true God, Jehovah. Note on Jehovah at Ex 3:14.

**5:1,2** Gen 1:26-28. "Man" – in Hebrew Adam and man are the same word.

"In the day" – see note on "day" at 1:5; 2:2-4. Here day may mean a longer period of time than 24 hours. Adam and Eve were created at different times, and it is possible that these times were separated by more than 24 hours (2:7,15-22).

**5:3** Adam was now a fallen, sinful man and his nature was passed on to his offspring, and so to succeeding generations and eventually to us (Job 14:4; Ps 51:5). We are all sinners by birth. See, for example, Rom 3:23.

In agreement with this is a well-known prayer used by Hindus for many centuries – "I am a sinner by birth and by deeds. My soul is depraved by sin; I am conceived in sin. Lord, save me, be merciful to me a sinner (Papoham, papakarmanam, papathma, papasambhava, pahi mam kripaya Deva, sharanagata vatsala)." The godly line of Seth also was sinful.

**5:4** Men lived to a great age before the flood of Noah's day. After that man's life span on earth became gradually shorter – note at 50:26.

**5:6-32** This list gives us the godly line of Seth until Noah who was the last righteous man on earth before the flood. There is no certainty that this list is complete and gives every person in the line between Adam and Noah. There are reasons for this lack of certainty.

In Biblical Hebrew "begot" or "became the father of" sometimes could mean "became the ancestor of", with many generations missing. If the meaning here is "became the ancestor of" then, for example, "And Seth lived a hundred and five years and begot Enosh" would mean this: "At age 105 Seth had his first son who was in the direct line to Enosh" (who may have been the next

generation after or several generations after). To become the ancestor of those who followed, the process had to begin at some age or other of the individual mentioned. This would mean too that only the names of the most outstanding men between Seth and Noah are given in this genealogy. Admittedly this is not the way we use language today in the English-speaking world, but that does not mean that the ancient Hebrews did not. For what may seem a strange use of language to us, see Exodus 1:5. There the 70 persons who went into Egypt are all said to have come "from the loins of Jacob", but that number included his sons' wives and their children.

In Hebrew usage the word "son" (or "daughter") sometimes means a descendant that came many generations later. For example, 1 Chron 26:24 in the Hebrew has Shubael the son of Gershom the son of Moses. It is true that Gershom was the son of Moses, but Shubael was born about 400 years later. Matt 1:1 has "a record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham." Christ was born about 1000 years after David, and Abraham lived many centuries before David. According to Hebrew usage, we could say also that Abraham was the father of David, the father of Jesus Christ. And would it be off the mark to say that Abraham lived 100 years and became the father of David, the father of Jesus Christ? For Abraham became their ancestor through Isaac, who born to him when he was 100 years of age. This may seem to strain the use of the English language, but we can't assume that it would necessarily strain the use of Hebrew.

We should also note that genealogies sometimes omitted names. Ezra 7:3 omits names given in 1 Chron 6:7-11, and Ezra is giving his own genealogy. Ruth 4:18-22 is another example of a genealogy with gaps in it. Matt 1:1-17 omits the names of three



begot Methuselah. 22 And after he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years, 24 and Enoch walked with God, then he was not *seen again*, for God took him.

25 And Methuselah lived a hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. 26 And after he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years, and begot sons and daughters. 27 And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.

28 And Lamech lived a hundred and eighty-two years, and begot a son. 29 And he called his name Noah, saying, "This *one* will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, *arising from* the ground which the LORD has cursed." 30 And after he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and begot sons and daughters. 31 And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.

32 And Noah was five hundred years old, and

Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

**6** And it came about when men began to increase *in number* on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* beautiful, and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. 3 And the LORD said, "My spirit will not always strive with man, for he also *is* flesh. Yet his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterwards, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they gave birth to *children* by them. They *became* the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man in the earth was great, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. 6 And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him in his heart. 7 And the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the surface of the earth, both

kings from the genealogy of Christ. See notes there on vs 1, 8.

The Bible does not tell us how long mankind has been on earth and we would derive no spiritual benefit from knowing. And the author of these notes thinks that we can hardly estimate that time accurately by these genealogies, given the above uncertainties. The Bible was not given to satisfy our curiosity, but to point us to God the Creator and Saviour.

**5:22-24** "Walked with God" – Gen 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15; Micah 6:8; Mal 2:6; 1 Thess 2:12; Amos 3:3; Lev 26:23,24. Evidently Enoch was a prophet (Jude 14). God must have promised him that he would not die, for we read in Heb 11:5 that it was by faith that he was caught up without seeing death. Faith is man's response to a revelation from God. Only three people in the Bible were taken away from this world in the body – Enoch, Elijah (2 Kings 2:11), and the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:51). Enoch and Elijah did not die. Jesus did.

**6:2** "The sons of God" – there are two interpretations of this phrase. Some think they were fallen angels (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6,7). Others think they were men from the godly line of Seth who married women of the ungodly line of Cain. The normal meaning of the phrase "sons of God" in the Old Testament (but not in the NT) is angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Dan 3:25; etc).

**6:3** "Strive" – God fights against men's sins. He is utterly opposed to them and will eventually punish all of them (except those forgiven by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ). God is long-suffering and patient, but He will not go on forever without punishing the guilty – Ex 34:6,7; Gal 5:16,17; 1 Pet 3:20; Ps 103:14; Prov 29:1. Compare Prov 1:22-32. "Hundred and twenty years" – this

probably means that God was giving mankind 120 years more before the judgment of the flood. There is some doubt about this because we cannot be certain whether these words were spoken before Noah reached the age of 500 (5:32), or afterwards. If they were spoken afterwards, then the period of time left before the flood was only 100 years or less. Compare 5:32 with 9:28,29. So it is possible that God here speaks of a time after the flood when men would live much shorter lives than they did before the flood. After the flood man's life span gradually diminished until the time of Jacob and his sons. Then, at least for them, it reached approximately 120 years (Gen 47:9; 50:26). And possibly this was the life span until roughly the time of Moses (Moses died at the age of 120 – Deut 34:7), at which time the life span of man was again reduced (Ps 90:10).

**6:5** See 5:3; 8:21; Mark 7:21-23; Jer 17:9. Here we see the terrible results of the one sin of Adam. Observe that sin begins as an inward thing, a depravity of the heart. Observe also that a person abandoned to his sinful nature will not have a single thought that God counts good. Let us not vainly imagine that we are better by nature than those who lived before the flood. See Rom 3:9,19,23; 7:18. If we do not believe the Bible's statements regarding the depravity and sinfulness of the human race we will not understand God's actions in judging and punishing individuals and peoples and nations.

**6:6** God feels great grief at the fallen, sinful, unrepentant condition of men (Ps 78:40; Ezek 18:31,32; 33:11; Hos 11:8; Matt 23:37; Luke 9:41,42; Eph 4:30).

**6:7** God is love (1 John 4:8). But this does not mean that He can forget holiness and

man, and beast, and creeping things, and the birds of the air, for I regret having made them.” 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a righteous man and blameless in his time, and Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 The earth also was corrupt in the eyes of God and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked at the earth, and saw that it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come in my presence, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and, look, I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. You shall make rooms in the ark, and shall cover it inside and outside with pitch. 15 And this is the way you shall make it: the length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 You shall make a window in the ark, and shall finish it to a

cubit from the top. And you shall put the door of the ark in its side. You shall make the *ark with* lower, second, and third *decks*. 17 And, look, I, even I, am going to bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh *which has* the breath of life. Everything that is on the earth will die. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you. And you shall come into the ark, you, and with you, your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives. 19 And you shall bring into the ark two of each *kind* of every living thing of all flesh, to keep *them* alive with you. They shall be male and female. 20 Two of each kind shall come to you, of birds according to their kind, and of cattle according to their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth according to its kind, two of every *kind* shall come to you, to keep *them* alive. 21 And you shall gather for yourself some of every food that is eaten, and take it with you, and it will be for food for you and for them.”

22 Noah did this. He did according to all that God commanded him.

justice, and spare the guilty and unrepentant (Ex 34:6,7; Deut 7:9,10; Rom 2:4,5). God is also the holy and just Judge and Ruler of the universe – 18:25; 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 47:2 (see the note there); 75:7; 94:2; 96:13; Ezek 7:3; Acts 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1; Rev 19:11. In Noah’s time only one godly man was left on the whole earth. Sin had reached such proportions that, for the good of the world, the God of justice had to punish it and destroy a perverted, rebellious, unbelieving and unrepentant generation of men.

After this time also God handed nations and whole civilizations over to destruction because of their sins. See notes on 15:16; Lev 18:24; Deut 13:12-18; 28:18-19. But when He did so He felt pain and grief. See Luke 19:41 and the notes at Jer 48:30-39. When God acts in judgment it is always for the good of those people who remain, the eventual good of humanity as a whole. And even in times of judgment any individual who looks to God for mercy will find it (Isa 55:6,7). See notes at 15:16 and Psalm 47:2.

The Lord Jesus said that the condition of mankind at the end of this age will be as it was in Noah’s day (Matt 24:37,38).

**6:8** 1 Pet 3:20.

**6:9** See 5:24; Ps 37:37-40. Noah was both a righteous man and a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet 2:5). He preached God’s truth to that generation.

“Blameless” – see the notes at 17:1; Job 1:1.

**6:11** Luke 17:26; Deut 31:29; Rom 3:15-18.

“In the eyes of” – the literal meaning of the Hebrew is “to (or in) the face”, and means “in the presence of” or “before God” or “in front of.” “In the eyes of” seems best to express the meaning here.

**6:12** Even the godly line of Seth (4:26) was now completely corrupted except for Noah.

Compare Ps 53:2,3.

**6:13** Isa 24:1-6; 34:1-4; 1 Pet 4:7.

**6:14** “Gopher” – it is unclear what kind of tree is meant by the Hebrew word here.

“Pitch” – we do not know exactly what substance this was.

**6:15** One cubit equals 18 inches.

**6:16** “A cubit from the top” – it seems there were a series of openings all around the ark near the roof to let in light and air.

**6:17** 2 Pet 2:5.

**6:18** In this verse the first use in the Bible of the word “covenant” occurs. It is a very important word, used nearly 300 times. The Hebrew word means an agreement between two or more parties (21:27; 26:28; 2 Sam 3:12,13), or a promise given by one party to another (Gen 9:8-11). Sometimes there were conditions laid down, sometimes not. There was often some sign given and a sacrifice offered in connection with the establishment of a covenant.

God made very important covenants with men on several occasions –

with Noah and all mankind (9:8-17);

with Abraham and his descendants (15:18-21);

with the nation Israel (Ex 19:5);

with David and his offspring (2 Sam 7:16);

and the New Covenant (Matt 26:27-29).

See notes at the above places. The first part of the Bible is called the Old Testament (or Covenant) because it has to do for the most part with God’s covenant made with Israel at Sinai (Ex 19:5). The second part of the Bible is called the New Testament (or Covenant) because it has to do with the covenant Christ made with His disciples just before His crucifixion.

**6:22** Noah did what God told him because he believed God – Heb 11:7. True faith always produces obedience and action (Jam 2:14,20,26). By this Noah was able to save his family too.

**7** And the LORD said to Noah, "You, and all your household, come into the ark. For I have seen you as righteous in my eyes in this generation. **2** You shall take for yourself seven of every clean beast, the male and its female, and two of beasts that *are* unclean, the male and its female, **3** also seven each of the birds of the air, the male and the female, to keep offspring alive on the surface of the whole earth. **4** For in seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the surface of the earth every living substance that I have made."

**5** And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him.

**6** And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was on the earth. **7** And Noah went into the ark, and with him, his sons and his wife and his sons' wives, because of the waters of the flood. **8** Of clean beasts and of unclean beasts and of birds and of every creeping thing on the earth, **9** two by two, the male and the female, went in to Noah into the ark, as God had commanded Noah. **10** And it came about after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth.

**11** In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, that very day, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. **12** And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

**13** On that very day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, went

into the ark, **14** they, and every beast according to its kind, and all the cattle according to their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and every bird according to its kind, every bird of every sort. **15** And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two of all flesh which had the breath of life. **16** And those that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

**17** And the flood keep coming on the earth for forty days, and the waters increased, and lifted up the ark, and it rose up above the earth. **18** And the waters were powerful and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark went on the surface of the waters. **19** And the waters grew exceedingly powerful on the earth, and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven, were covered. **20** The waters powerfully rose fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.

**21** And all flesh that moved on the earth, both of fowl and of cattle and of beast and of every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man, died. **22** All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was on the dry *land*, died. **23** And every living thing which was on the face of the earth was destroyed, both man and cattle and creeping things and the birds of the sky. They were destroyed from the earth, and only Noah, and those who were with him in the ark, remained *alive*.

**24** And the waters remained powerful on the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

**8** And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in

**7:2** On "unclean animals" see Lev 11:1-31; Deut 14:3-20; Acts 10:9-16; 1 Tim 4:3,4.

**7:11** The waters of the flood came from two sources - water underneath the ocean bed which was released, and torrential rains from above. Before the flood there may have been huge quantities of water trapped under pressure beneath the ocean floor. Whatever was there now burst out and, together with the large amount of rain falling from the sky, greatly raised the level of the water in the oceans, and covered the hills and mountains.

**7:16** God shut the door, not to keep Noah from getting out, but to keep anyone else from getting in. God's judgment was to be complete on a very wicked generation. The day of opportunity to be saved was over. Justice now triumphed over wickedness. Compare Prov 1:24-33; 29:1; Isa 55:6,7; 2 Cor 6:2.

**7:19** "Mountains" - not "hills" (as in the KJV). In Hebrew the word is the same as the word translated "mountains" in the next verse. The word means "mountains" and "hills," but in the context "mountains" seems the better translation.

**7:20** "Cubits" - or "The waters powerfully

rose and covered the mountains to a depth of fifteen cubits" (nearly 7 meters).

**7:24** From the language of verses 19-24 it seems clear that the flood was worldwide. This is indicated by the height of the waters (see 8:4), the extent of the destruction (see 9:15), and the length of time the flood waters remained on earth (8:13,14). These things could be said of no local flood. See also 2 Pet 3:3-7. We cannot set a date for the flood, nor is it necessary that we do so (see note on 5:5-32). The date is not important. The important thing is the spiritual lessons we can learn from that event. These are: Sin will bring God's judgment; God is grieved when He must judge and condemn men to destruction, but will do so for the sake of His justice, and for the good of those who remain. He will save those who trust in Him. The ark is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ who saves His believing people from God's wrath against sin.

**8:1** "God remembered" - compare 19:29; 30:22; Ex 2:24; 1 Sam 1:19; Ps 105:42; Isa 49:15,16; Heb 6:10. The Hebrew word translated "remember" includes the idea of showing loving concern for someone.

the ark, and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 Also the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were closed, and the rain from heaven was stopped, 3 and the waters steadily receded from the earth. And at the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. 4 And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

6 And it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. 7 And he sent out a raven, which flew here and there until the waters were dried up from the earth. 8 He also sent out a dove from him, to see if the waters had receded from the surface of the earth; 9 but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and so she returned to him in the ark, for the waters *still covered* the surface of the whole earth. Then he put out his hand, and took her, and brought her in to him in the ark. 10 And he waited still another seven days, and *then* again he sent out the dove from the ark. 11 And the dove came to him in the evening, and there in her mouth was a plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. 12 And he waited still another seven days, and sent out the dove. She did not return again to him any more.

**8:2** Ararat is a group of mountain peaks in northeastern Turkey. The highest peak is nearly 4,300 meters high.

**8:3** "Waters steadily receded" – an immense amount of water was required to produce the kind of flood described in chapter 7. As the water receded where did it go? Verse 2 says that the fountains of the deep were "closed." This means that they no longer gave out water. It would seem that great quantities of water had been stored in huge caverns under the ocean beds of the earth. This was released at the time of the flood, greatly increasing the amount of water in the oceans. Then God closed the fountains so that they no longer gave out water. But the caverns were still there and it seems likely that the flood waters slowly drained back into them.

**8:13,14** The flood began in Noah's 600th year, 2nd month, 17th day (7:11). The waters were completely dried up in his 601st year, 2nd month, 27th day. The total time was one year and eleven days, according to the method they used for determining a year. (The Hebrews determined their days and years by the movement of the moon. The total time according to the system we use now, based on the movements of earth and sun, was exactly a year). The flood was at its full power for 150 days (7:24). This shows

13 And it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month*, on the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked out, and now the surface of the earth was dry. 14 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

15 And God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing that is with you, all flesh, both of birds, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful, and increase *in number* on the earth."

18 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went out. 19 Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, and whatever crawls on the earth, according to their kinds, went out of the ark.

20 And Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma, and the LORD said in his heart, "Never again will I curse the ground on man's account. For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. And never again will I destroy every living thing, as I have done. 22 While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night will not cease."

that the flood was worldwide and not merely over the area where Noah was. No local flood would be at its height for so long, or rise so high, or take so long to recede.

**8:20** "Altar" – 12:7,8; 13:18; 22:9. This is the first mention of an altar (the word is used more than 400 times in the Bible), or of a burnt offering. Note on burnt offering at Lev 1:1-7. Worship of the true God springs up in the hearts of those to whom He reveals Himself.

**8:21** "Soothing aroma" – the worship of believing, obedient hearts is pleasing to God. In the Old Testament their sacrifices were like a pleasing aroma also because they spoke of Christ. Note at Lev 1:9. The word translated "soothing" is from a Hebrew word meaning (among other things) "to give rest to, to quieten." Possibly the word indicates that the "soothing aroma" of burnt offerings quietened God's wrath against man's sin (because it spoke of the then future sacrifice of Christ).

"Evil from his youth" – every child is born into the world with a sinful nature. So every inclination of his heart will be away from God's holy standards. His thoughts and desires will be self-centered, not God-centered. It will be necessary to teach him to do right – the wrong he will do by nature (4:7; 5:3; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Rom 3:9-23; 7:18).

**9** And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase *in number* and fill the earth. 2 And the fear of you and the dread of you will be on every beast of the earth, and on every bird of the air, on all that moves *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hands. 3 Every moving thing that lives will be food for you. I have given you everything, just as *I gave* the green plants.

4 "But flesh with its life, *which is* its blood, you shall not eat. 5 And I will certainly require *punishment for* your lifeblood. I will require it at the hand of every beast, and at the hand of man. I will require *punishment for* the life of a man at the hand of every man's brother. 6 Whoever sheds man's blood, by man will his blood be shed; for in the image of God he made man. 7 And you, be fruitful and increase *in number*. Bring forth abundantly on the earth and increase in it."

8 And God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, 9 "And, see, I am establishing my covenant with you, and with your offspring after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. 11 And I establish my covenant with you; never again will all flesh be cut down by the waters of a flood, and never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12 And God said, "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for all succeeding generations: 13 I set my bow in the cloud,

and it will be for a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 And it will come about when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will appear in the cloud, 15 and I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of every *kind of* flesh. And the waters will not again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 And the bow will be in the cloud, and I will look at it, so that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of every *kind of* flesh on the earth."

17 And God said to Noah, "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh on the earth."

18 And the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham *was* the father of Canaan. 19 These were the three sons of Noah. And from them *people* spread over the whole earth.

20 And Noah was a man *who tilled* the soil, and he planted a vineyard, 21 and drank of the wine and became drunk. And he was uncovered inside his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment and put it on both their shoulders and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father. And their faces *were* turned away and they did not see their father's nakedness.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and came to know what his younger son had done to him. 25 And he said, "Cursed *be* Canaan. He will be a servant of servants to his brothers."

26 And he said, "Blessed *be* the LORD, the God

**9:1** All peoples and nations on earth today are Noah's descendants.

**9:2-7** There are two changes now introduced which indicate a new order of things on earth. God now gives man permission to eat meat (compare 1:29), and commands capital punishment for murder (compare 4:15). Observe that at this time there was no distinction made between "clean" and "unclean" animals for food. Man could eat any that he chose. Compare Leviticus chapter 11.

**9:4** Lev 7:26;27; 17:10-16; 19:26; Deut 12:16,23; 15:23; Acts 15:20,29.

**9:5** Ex 21:12,28,29.

**9:6** Lev 24:17; Num 35:33. Man, though terribly fallen, is still in some respects in the image of God (Jam 3:9).

**9:9-11** Judging from v 10, this covenant with Noah is more like a simple promise, not an agreement. Certainly animals could not enter into an agreement with God.

**9:12-17** This bow, called by many in India "Indra's bow", has nothing whatever to do with Indra. The rainbow is a sign of the true God's faithfulness to His covenant. The rainbow is associated with God's presence in Ezek 1:28 and Rev 4:3.

**9:19** See 10:32.

**9:21** The Bible does not conceal the faults and sins of God's people. It tells things as they are. In this case it is uncertain whether Noah had ever drunk wine before or knew what it could do to him. When he realized it was affecting him he should have stopped drinking but this would probably have been very difficult (compare Prov 20:1; 23:29-35). Drunkenness is condemned in the Bible and its results are shown to be disastrous (19:30; Isa 5:11,22; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:18).

**9:22** Ham, instead of covering his father's shame, told others about it. He did not show the proper love and respect for his father (Ex 20:12; 1 Pet 4:8). It seems that he had a perverted mind.

**9:25-27** Three prophecies are here (compare 49:1; Deut 33:1). Concerning Ham (v 25) - as a son he had not shown the proper behavior, so judgment would come on one of his sons. Perhaps Canaan was with his father when the above event occurred. We do not know. But we do know that God always acts in perfect justice. This prediction was at least partially fulfilled when Israel



of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant. 27 God will enlarge Japheth and he will live in the tents of Shem. And Canaan will be his servant." 28 And Noah lived after the flood *for* three hundred and fifty years. 29 And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.

**10** Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After the flood sons were born to them.

2 The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. 3 And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. 4 And the sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. 5 From these the coast lands of the Gentiles were divided in their lands, each one according to his language, according to their families, in their nations.

6 And the sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan. 7 And the sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan.

8 And Cush begot Nimrod. Nimrod became a mighty one in the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter in the eyes of the LORD. Therefore it is said, "Just like Nimrod the mighty hunter in the eyes of the LORD." 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. 11 From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, 12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah. This is a great city.

13 And Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, 14 Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines), and Caphtorim. 15 And Canaan

begot Sidon his firstborn, Heth, 16 and the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgasite, 17 the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, 18 the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. And afterwards the families of the Canaanites were scattered.

19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as you come to Gerar, to Gaza; as you go to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, as far as Lasha.

20 These *were* the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their countries, *and* in their nations.

21 As for Shem, the father of all the children of Eber and the brother of Japheth the elder, to him also children were born.

22 The children of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. 23 And the children of Aram: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash. 24 And Arphaxad begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber. 25 And two sons were born to Eber. The name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided. His brother's name was Joktan. 26 And Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28 Obal, Abimael, Sheba, 29 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.

30 And their location was from Mesha, as you go to Sephar, a hill in the east.

31 These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, according to their nations.

32 These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations. And from among them, after the flood, the nations of the earth were divided.

subdued the Canaanites in the land of Canaan many centuries later (Josh 9:23; 1 Kings 9:20,21).

Concerning Shem (v 26) – Jehovah was already the God of Shem. This suggests Shem's faith. The God of Shem would bring His blessings into the world through Abraham, the nation Israel, and Jesus Christ all of whom were descendants of Shem.

Concerning Japheth (v 27) – this may possibly speak of the coming of vast numbers of Gentiles into the Christian fold (Eph 3:6). "Live in the tents of" suggests entering into the blessings of Shem, and God brought salvation to the world through the descendants of Shem (11:10; John 4:22). **10:2-5** These are ancestors of peoples which settled in regions generally north, northwest, and northeast of Israel. Javan is present-day Greece.

"Sons" (verses 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 20-23, 29, 31) – in Hebrew usage the word "sons" sometimes means "descendants" or "successors" or "peoples." See note on 5:6-32.

**10:6-7** Ancestors of peoples which settled east, south, and southwest of Israel. It

seems there were two regions named Cush. One included a part of present-day Ethiopia, the other was in the neighborhood of present-day Iraq. Mizraim is another name for Egypt.

**10:8** "Begot" – in Hebrew usage this word is sometimes used to mean "became the ancestor of" or "predecessor of." Note on 5:6-32.

**10:8-12** Nimrod had to do with some cities that became prominent in Bible times. Both Nineveh and Babylon were destroyed long ago.

**10:14** The Philistines lived along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and came to prominence in the Biblical story during the times of the judges and early kings of Israel.

**10:15-19** Some of these peoples occupied the land of Canaan before the nation of Israel dispossessed them (Ex 3:8,17; Josh 24:11).

**10:21-31** Shem was the ancestor of Abraham, and of the nation of Israel.

**10:21** Note on Eber at 11:15.

**10:23** "Mash" – or "Meshech."

**10:25** Peleg means "divided."

**11** And the whole earth had one language, and one speech. 2 And it came about that as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they lived there.

3 And they said to one another, "Come on, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly." And they had brick instead of stone, and they had tar instead of mortar. 4 And they said, "Come on, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower, the top of which *will reach* to heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves, so we won't be scattered over the surface of the whole earth."

5 And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built. 6 And the LORD said, "See, the people *are* one and they all have one language, and they have started to do this, and so now nothing that they have planned to do will be kept from them. 7 Come, let us go down and there confuse their language so that they cannot understand one another's speech."

8 So the LORD scattered them from there over the whole surface of the earth. And they stopped building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and the LORD scattered them from there over the surface of the whole earth.

10 These *are* the generations of Shem: Shem was a hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. 11 And after he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and

begot sons and daughters.

12 And Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. 13 And after he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

14 And Salah lived thirty years, and begot Eber. 15 And after he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

16 And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begot Peleg. 17 And after he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters.

18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. 19 And after he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters.

20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begot Serug. 21 And after he begot Serug Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters.

22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. 23 And after he begot Nahor Serug lived two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.

24 And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begot Terah. 25 And after he begot Terah, Nahor lived a hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters.

26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

**11:1** We do not know what this one language was.

**11:2** "Shinar" – this was the name of the region where the city of Babylon was built. It was located in what is now called Iraq.

**11:3** "Come on" – this is closer to the Hebrew than "go to" (KJV), an expression common in England 400 years ago, but no longer in use. The Hebrew word usually means "come."

**11:4-9** The building of Babel was contrary to God's instructions in 9:1. The language in v 4 indicates pride and self-glorification as the motive for the building of the city. Later in history Nebuchadnezzar built a very great and mighty city there which caused him to boast in his power (Dan 4:30). The name Babylon in Scripture is usually associated with man's pride and defiance of God (Isa 47:8; Jer 50:24,29,32; Dan 4:30; 5:1-4; Rev 17:4-6; 18:7). Babylon was a center of idolatry and false religion and persecution of God's people.

The name Babel may have two meanings. It probably means (as many have suggested) "the gate of God." This is what the people who built it might have thought. Babel may also be derived from a Hebrew word meaning "to confuse." What men boast of as a gateway to God is in God's sight mere confusion. God will eventually destroy

all such proud achievements of men and bring their pride into the dust (Lev 26:18,19; Prov 15:25; 16:18; Isa 2:17-22; 25:11; Jer 13:9; 49:16; Dan 4:37; Zeph 2:8-10; Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5; Rev 18:7,8).

**11:5** "Came down" – compare 18:21 (note).

**11:6** In other words they would exalt themselves very highly against God and His purposes in the earth.

**11:8** This was the very thing they did not want, but which God saw was good (v 4; 9:1). God will accomplish His purposes in spite of rebellious men.

**11:9** Ps 92:9; Luke 1:51. Babel sounds like the Hebrew word for confused. Diversity of language came about because of man's pride and disobedience. What a trouble the language problem has been through the centuries, and still is!

**11:10** "Begot" (also vs 11-25) – see note at 10:8. Israel was descended from Shem. With the following genealogy the story of the people of Israel really begins. It continues through much of the rest of the Bible. Once again humanity is divided into two lines, and God chose the line of Shem as the one through whom He would teach the world great things. His purpose in this was to bring great blessing to all nations.

**11:16** The word Hebrew may have come from the word Eber.

27 Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begot Lot. 28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldees. 29 And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran *who was* the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. 30 But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 And Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they left Ur of the Chaldees with them to go to the land of Canaan. And they came to Haran and lived there.

32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

**12** Now the LORD had said to Abram, "Go out of your country and from your relatives and from your father's house to a land that I will show you, 2 and I will make of you a great nation,

**11:28** "Ur" – a large city in the land of Babylon. It was a center of moon worship and other idolatry (Josh 24:2).

**11:31** "Haran" – a city in what is now called Syria.

**12:1** The call of Abraham was a great new beginning in the Bible. It took place about 1900 years before Christ. From now until the book of Acts in the New Testament for the most part we have the story of Abraham and his descendants. He was the father of the Jewish people, and because of his great faith in God he is called the father of all who trust in God (Rom 4:11). He is called also the servant of God (26:24), a prophet (20:7), and the father of the nation Israel (Isa 51:2; Rom 4:1). But probably his greatest name is "the friend of God" (Is 41:8; Jam 2:23). It all began by simple faith and obedience to God's call (Heb 11:8-10).

**12:2** "Great nation" – see 17:4-8; 18:17,18; 22:17; 46:3; Ex 1:7; Deut 26:5.

"Bless" – blessing may mean either material or spiritual blessing. Spiritual blessings, of course, are far more important than material (Matt 5:3-12; Luke 6:20-26). Material blessings are temporary, spiritual blessings are related to eternity (compare Eph 1:3; Matt 6:19-21). On blessing see notes at v 3; 24:35; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1,2; Matt 5:3; etc. Observe that Abraham not only received God's blessing, he became a blessing to others.

**12:3** "Bless" – 22:18,19-21; 26:4; 28:14; Acts 3:25,26; Gal 3:8,9. Faith in God and obedience to Him bring great blessing, not only to the individual who practices them but to many others.

"All families of the earth" – the God of the Bible is the God who created the universe, the God who made all nations. He is love (1 John 4:8), and delights to bring blessing to all peoples, especially the

and I will bless you and make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 And I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you. And in you all families of the earth will be blessed."

4 So Abram left, just as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Abram *was* seventy-five years old when he went out of Haran. 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had accumulated, and the persons whom they had gotten in Haran, and they went away to go to the land of Canaan. And into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And Abram passed through the land as far as the place *called* Shechem, to the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanites *were* then in the land.

7 And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." And he built an altar there to the LORD, who appeared to him.

8 And he moved from there to a mountain to the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east; and there

blessing of salvation and eternal life. These blessings come through Abraham because Jesus Christ, according to His human nature, was a descendant of Abraham. Through Christ salvation has become available to all the peoples on earth, including all the various language groups of India. See Gal 3:8,9; John 4:22; Isa 2:3; Rom 9:4,5. The promised blessing of God was not just for one little nation, but for the whole world. Other notes on blessing or blessed at Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1-3; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12; Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Eph 1:3. See in Gal 3:9,14 how God's blessing can come on anyone.

"Curse" – to oppose and speak evil of the one chosen by God is the same as opposing and speaking evil of God who chose him. And it is to reject God's purpose through him. Cursing such a person will bring a curse on those who do it. In some important respects God in perfect justice deals with people as they deal with others (Ps 18:25,26).

**12:5** Canaan, or at least part of what was called Canaan, is present-day Israel.

**12:6** "Canaanites" – see 10:15-19.

**12:7** "Appeared" – God sometimes appeared on earth in the form of a man or an angel to speak with men and to work His will: 3:18; 16:7; 18:1-3; 26:2. God as Spirit is everywhere unseen and unheard by men. In dealing with men He thought it good at times to assume visible form.

"Land" – 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; Josh 1:2-4; 23:4,5; Ps 105:8-12. The land of Israel belongs to the Jews by God's promise.

"Altar" – 8:20.

**12:8** "Bethel" – the first mention of this important place in Old Testament history. It is mentioned more than any other town except Jerusalem. It was a few kilometers north of Jerusalem.



he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. 9 And Abram traveled on, still going toward the south.

10 And there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to stay there for a time, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 And it came about when he was approaching Egypt he said to Sarai his wife, "Look, I know that you *are* a beautiful woman to see. 12 Therefore it will happen that when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This *is* his wife'; and they will kill me, but will keep you alive. 13 So please say *that you are* my sister, so that it may go well with me on your account, and my soul will live because of you."

14 And it came about that when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman *was* very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh, and *so* the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16 And he treated Abram well on her account, and he got sheep, and oxen, and donkeys, and male and female servants, and female donkeys, and camels.

17 And the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with great plagues because of Abram's wife Sarai. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What *is* this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she *is* your wife? 19 Why did you say 'She *is* my sister'? I was going to take her as a wife for myself. Now then, see your wife. Take *her* and go." 20 And Pharaoh gave a command *to his men*

concerning him, and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

**13** And Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot *went* with him, into the south of *Canaan*. 2 And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold. 3 And he went on his journeys from the south as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the place of the altar which he had first made there. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

5 And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. 6 And the land was not able to support them while they were living together, for their possessions were great, so that they could not live together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, and the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then living in the land.

8 And Abram said to Lot, "Please, let there be no strife between me and you and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. 9 *Is* not the whole land before you? Please separate yourself from me. If *you take* the left, then I will go to the right; or if *you take* the right, then I will go to the left."

10 And Lot raised his eyes, and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere, (*this was* before the LORD destroyed Sodom and

"Name of the LORD" - 2:4; 4:26; 13:4. **12:9** "The south" - Hebrew has "Negev", the name for the desert-like region in the south of Canaan.

**12:10** It is not written that God told Abraham to leave Canaan. Perhaps the famine was meant as a test to strengthen his faith and build his character (Ps 66:10-12; Jam 1:2-4,12; 1 Pet 1:6,7). By going down to Egypt to escape the trial he got into difficulties and brought difficulties to others.

**12:13** Abraham's statement was a half-truth. Sarai was his half-sister (20:12). This marriage took place in Ur of Chaldaea before God called Abraham. God later forbade marriage between such close relatives. Abraham meant to deceive the king of Egypt and this was sin. The Bible does not try to hide the sins and failures of God's people. All have a sinful nature and all have sinned (Rom 3:23; 1 John 1:8,10). God could have protected Abraham without Abraham's resorting to deception. See notes at 27:18-26; Josh 2:5; 1 Sam 27:10; 2 Sam 15:34.

"Please" - though the KJV has "I pray thee", that is hardly a literal translation of the Hebrew, which here is only two letters joined to the end of the verb "say." In Hebrew these letters are often joined to a verb. This was probably only a polite way of speaking, so we have translated it "please." The KJV translated the same letters in other

ways (for example "now" in Gen 18:27). Some versions omit it altogether, without changing the basic meaning.

**12:15** "Pharaoh" - this was not a personal name but the title of successive rulers of Egypt.

**12:17** Though the fault was Abraham's, God did this to preserve the integrity of Abraham's marriage and to fulfill later His purposes in Abraham and Sarai. Observe that God Himself may send diseases in judgment. See also Ex 15:26; 2 Kings 5:27; 15:5. This does not mean that all diseases are sent by God. Compare Job 2:7; etc.

**12:18** See how one man's sin can affect others.

**13:1** "South" - literally, "Negev" - 12:9.

**13:4** "Called on the name of the LORD" - 4:26; 12:8.

**13:5** "Lot" - 12:5.

**13:7** "Canaanite and Perizzite" - 10:18; 15:20; 34:30.

**13:8** "Strife" - Prov 15:8; 20:3; Matt 5:40; Rom 12:18; 1 Cor 6:7. Quarreling over land and property is senseless - Ps 49:10-12; Luke 12:13-21.

**13:9** The whole land was given to Abram, but he was willing to give the best portion to Lot in order to avoid strife. He is an example to us of unselfishness. See also 26:19-22.

**13:10,11** Lot was greedy and selfish in this

Gomorrah), like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as you come to Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot traveled east. And *so* they separated themselves from one another. 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, and Lot lived in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom *were* wicked and sinners against the LORD, exceedingly *so*.

14 And after Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, "Raise your eyes and from the place where you are look northward and southward and eastward and westward, 15 for I will give all the land which you see to you and to your offspring forever. 16 And I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* your offspring also will be numbered. 17 Get up, walk over the land, through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

18 Then Abram moved *his* tent and came and lived by the oak trees of Mamre, which *are* in Hebron, and there built an altar to the LORD.

**14** And this happened in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations: 2 these *men* made war on Bera king of Sodom, and on Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. 3 All these made an alliance together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. 4 For twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5 And in the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer, and the kings who *were* with him, came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 and

decision. He got what he wanted but it cost him dearly in the end, as can be seen in chapter 19. This choice brought Lot close to the wicked cities that God would later destroy (vs 12,13). God will surely punish greed and selfishness (Col 3:5,6; 1 Tim 6:6-10; Heb 13:5). See the way of happiness and blessing in the words of Jesus in Matt 10:38,39; Luke 14:33; etc.

**13:13** "Against" – compare Ps 51:4. All sin is against God.

**13:14-17** God repeated this promise of Canaan many times (12:7; 15:18; 17:8). Notice that the gift of Canaan was forever (v 15).

**13:18** "Hebron" – a town about 35 kilometers south of Jerusalem.

**14:1** "Shinar" – Babylonia (11:2).

"Elam" – 10:22. Elam was an area in what is now called Iran.

**14:3** "Salt Sea" – the Dead Sea. Sodom and Gomorrah were on the plain near it.

the Horites in their mount Seir as far as El Paran, which *is* near the wilderness. 7 And they returned and came to En Mishpat, which *is* Kadesh, and attacked the whole country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who lived in Hazezon Tamar.

8 And the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (this *is* Zoar) went out and met them in battle in the vale of Siddim, that is, they met 9 Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings *fighting* with five. 10 And the vale of Siddim *was full of* tar pits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there. And those who remained fled to the mountain. 11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their food, and went their way. 12 And they took Abram's brother's son Lot, who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and left.

13 And one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he lived among the oak trees of Mamre the Amorite, *the* brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner. These *men were* allies of Abram. 14 And when Abram heard that his brother had been taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen *in number*, and pursued them as far as Dan. 15 And he divided his *forces* against them, he and his servants, at night, and attacked them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which *is* to the north of Damascus. 16 And he brought back all the goods, and brought back also his brother Lot and his goods, and also the women and the people.

17 And after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and of the kings who *had been* with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh, which *is* the king's dale.

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was the priest of the Most

**14:7** "Kadesh" – Kadesh Barnea on the southern border of Canaan.

"Amalekites" – note at Ex 17:8.

"Amorites" – 10:16; 15:16.

**14:12** At first Lot was only near Sodom (13:12). Now he was in it and so in great danger.

**14:13** This is the first use of the word "Hebrew" in the Bible. See 11:16.

**14:14** "Brother" – Lot was Abraham's nephew, not his literal brother. The Hebrew word here translated brother has a wider range of meaning than the English word. It may indicate a variety of relationships.

**14:14-16** In all this Abraham revealed great courage, faith in God and skill in military matters. He led 318 men against four kings and their combined armies and was able to rescue Lot and the plunder. Compare Gideon's victory with 300 men in Judges chapter 7, and see 1 Sam 14:6.

**14:18,19** "Melchizedek" – we know very little

High God. 19 And he blessed him, saying, "Blessed be Abram by the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, 20 and blessed be the Most High God who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And *Abram* gave him a tenth of everything.

21 And the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, and take the goods for yourself."

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, 23 *swearing* that I *will* not *take* anything that *is* yours, from a thread to a shoelace, so that you would not say, 'I have made Abram rich', 24 except for that which the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their share."

of this person. He is mentioned only once more in the Old Testament (Ps 110:4). But he has great importance as a type and forerunner of Christ as High Priest, and he is discussed at some length in the letter to the Hebrews. See notes on Hebrews chapter 7. To Abraham he gave bread and wine. Compare Matt 26:26-29.

"Salem" – this almost certainly refers to Jerusalem (Ps 76:2). The word means peace and well-being.

"Priest" – note at Ex 28:1.

"Most High God" – in Hebrew "El Elyon." The name is used 35 times in the Hebrew Bible, mostly in Psalms (21 times). El Elyon is far above all others called God or Lord (Ps 97:9), transcendent over the universe. Heaven and earth are His possessions; that is, He is the eternal Creator. The first mention of this name is associated with a priest, thus suggesting that El Elyon can be approached only through sacrifice.

**14:20** "Blessed be" – the Hebrew may also be translated "Praise be to."

"Abram" – literally, "he."

"Tenth" – or "a tithe." This is the first mention of a tithe in the Bible. Abraham gave to Melchizedek a tenth, thus showing how great Melchizedek was (Heb 7:4-7). That is, as God's appointed priest he was in a higher position than Abraham. On "tithe" see 28:22; Lev 27:30; Num 18:21; Deut 12:6; 14:22; 2 Chron 31:5; Mal 3:8-12, 21-24.

**14:22-24** Abraham solemnly refused to accept anything from the ungodly – the opposite of Balaam (2 Pet 2:15), and many in our own day who love money and possessions regardless of where they come from or how they might get them.

**15:1** "Vision" – the first appearance of this word which is used in the Bible about 100 times. In Hebrew the word comes from a verb which means "to see" or "to gaze at." God often revealed things to His prophets by means of visions. Sometimes they came in dreams, sometimes when the prophet was awake or in a trance-like state. They sometimes saw symbolic forms and shapes

**15** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, and your exceedingly great reward."

2 And Abram said, "Lord God, what will you give me, while I go childless? And *while* the manager of my household *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "See, you have not given me any offspring, and, see, someone born in my house is my heir."

4 And now the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This *one* will not be your heir, but the one who will come forth from your own body will be your heir." 5 And he brought him outside and said, "Look now toward the heavens and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And he said to him, "So will your offspring be."

6 And he believed in the LORD, and He counted

and heard God speaking to them revealing His word and will.

"Do not be afraid" – compare 21:17; 26:24; Ex 14:13; Isa 35:4; 41:10; 43:5; Matt 14:27; Heb 13:6.

"Shield" – Ps 3:3; 28:7; etc. God Himself was Abraham's shield. Anyone who tried to injure Abraham had first to get through God. This is true of all God's people. Compare Deut 33:29; Job 1:10,11; 2:6; Ps 115:9-11.

"Reward" – God Himself was also Abraham's reward – his great treasure. If our treasure is in God, is God, there is no danger of anyone breaking in and stealing it (Matt 6:19-21). And what a treasure this is! See Num 18:20; Deut 10:9; Ps 73:26; Eph 1:3; 2:7; 3:8; 1 Pet 1:4.

**15:2** "Lord God" – the Hebrew words are Adonai Jehovah, and if both words were translated as in the rest of the KJV, would be "Lord LORD" (the word for God is not in the Hebrew here). The expression means Lord Jehovah. This name is used more than 400 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Adonai means lord, master, ruler. Adonai is Lord of the whole earth (Josh 3:11). He is the Lord of lords (Deut 10:17). In Greek the word is Kurios, the title given to the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. See note at Luke 2:11. Abraham is acknowledging Jehovah as his master, and the Lord of everything – one well able to give him a son. **15:3** If Abraham had no child all he could do was leave his property to someone else. Evidently he had been considering Eleazar for this.

**15:4,5** God made this promise of an heir when Abraham's wife Sarai was barren (11:30), and in any case past the age of childbearing (Heb 11:11). It was not humanly possible for them to have children. But God is able to make anything happen and human impossibilities are as nothing to Him (18:14; Jer 32:17,27; Luke 1:37).

**15:6** This is one of the key verses of the Bible. It is repeated in three books of the New Testament (Rom 4:3,9,22; Gal 3:6;

it to him for righteousness.

7 And he said to him, "I *am* the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it."

8 And he said, "Lord God, how can I know that I will inherit it?"

9 And he said to him, "Bring to me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a dove, and a young pigeon." 10 And he took all these to him, and cut them in half and laid each piece opposite the other, but he did not cut the birds in half. 11 And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them

away.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram, and suddenly a horror of great darkness fell on him. 13 And he said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve those *people*. And they will afflict them for four hundred years. 14 And also I will judge that nation whom they will serve. And afterward they will come out with great possessions. 15 And you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they will come here again, for the wickedness of the Amorites *is*

Jam 2:23). God did not count Abraham righteous because of his piety or obedience to God's call, but because of his faith. In himself Abraham was a sinner, as we all are. Men cannot change themselves into holy people, cannot create for themselves a righteous nature, cannot stand before God by their good works (Isa 64:6; Jer 13:23; Rom 3:10-12). But if we trust God and believe God's promises, God counts our faith as righteousness (Rom 3:22; 5:1; 10:10; Phil 3:9; Heb 11:7). He puts on us His own perfect righteousness – Isa 61:10; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21. See also Gen 3:21. In this way God makes us fit for His presence, even as He did Abraham.

**15:7** See 11:31; 12:1.

**15:8** Abraham believed God would give him a son, but he longed for a sign from God to encourage his faith concerning Canaan. God did not rebuke him for that (see also Judges 6:17,36-40; 2 Kings 20:8-11; Isa 7:11,14; 37:30; Luke 1:18).

**15:9** Lev 1:2,10,14-17; Num 19:2.

**15:12** What follows came to Abraham in a dream. This is one way God revealed truth to people in Bible times. See 20:3; 28:12; 31:24; 37:5; 40:5. Notes at Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

**15:13** Ex 1:11,14; 2:23; Deut 5:15.

**15:14** Ex 3:19-22; 6:6; 7:4; 9:13-16; 12:32-28.

**15:15** See 25:7,8. "Go. . . in peace" – a way of indicating his death.

**15:16** "Fourth generation" – v 13 says 400 years. People in Abraham's day lived longer than they do now, so a generation then comprised more years than a generation now. Abraham lived to the age of 175, Isaac to 180, Jacob to 147, Joseph to 110.

"Amorites" – 10:15,16; 14:7. They were inhabitants of Canaan before Abraham arrived there.

"Not yet full" – compare 6:3,5-7; Lev 18:24,25. God punishes evil people only when the time is ripe, and He waits patiently for them to repent and turn to Him if they will. If they do not, according to the Bible, He may send another people to destroy them.

### **Note on God and human calamities**

Concerning destructive wars, genocides, or natural disasters which have occurred in

the world there are only a small number of possible views which people can hold:

1. There is no God and all such things are a result of natural catastrophes or man's inhumanity to man. This would be a common view of those who do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

2. There is a God but He has little or nothing to do with such events, but stands aside and does not hinder the forces of nature and lets men behave as they will.

3. There is a God who is the active sovereign ruler of the world, and He is the one who is responsible for the above things, and He is unjust in permitting these things to happen or causing them to happen. More people than we may estimate privately (and perhaps subconsciously) hold this view, though many of them would not want to state openly that God is unjust.

4. God is the ruler of the world but for reasons known only to Himself justly permits such things to happen without actively causing them; He allows men to do to one another more or less as they will.

5. God, as the sovereign ruler of the world, uses men and nations and nature to bring such things about and always works in absolute justice to accomplish His plan for the world.

Those of us who believe that God exists and know that such things have occurred in the world, and do occur, must reach our own conclusions about God's relationship to them. But we should try to learn what He wants to teach us, and beware of charging God with any kind of indifference, weakness or injustice. Does not the Creator of men care what happens to them? Does not the One who made the universe have sufficient wisdom to know how to rule in the affairs of men? Is He not strong enough to prevent what He wants to prevent and bring about what He wishes to bring about? We would be foolish indeed to ignore what the Bible says about all this – the more so if we realize that both Jesus Christ and His apostles all upheld the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible.

In God's Word, the Bible, we see that God Himself sent the flood which destroyed almost the entire human race. We see that He Himself sent the angel of death into Egypt in Moses' day to destroy all the

not yet full.”

17 And it came about that when the sun went down and it was dark, *there* appeared a smoking furnace and a flaming torch that passed between those pieces. 18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, *the land of* 19 the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

**16** Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no *children*, and she had a maidservant, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said to Abram, “Now look, the LORD has kept me from bearing *children*. Please, go in to my maidservant. It may be that I can obtain children through her.” And Abram listened to Sarai’s voice.

3 And Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her

husband Abram to be his wife. 4 And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5 And Sarai said to Abram, “The wrong I *suffer* *be* on you. I gave my maidservant into your arms, and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between me and you.”

6 But Abram said to Sarai, “Look, your maidservant is in your hand. Do whatever you please to her.” And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she ran away from her presence.

7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the desert, by the spring on the way to Shur.

8 And he said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maidservant, from where have you come? And where are you going?” And she said, “I’m running away from the presence of my mistress Sarai.”

9 And the angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.” 10 And the angel of the LORD said to

firstborn of the Egyptians. Later we see that He Himself sent Israel into the land of Canaan to exterminate its wicked inhabitants. We see that He gave orders to King Saul to completely obliterate the Amalekites. We see that in the Gospels Jesus Himself spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem by its enemies as a result of their sin. Other examples can be given. And if God caused such things to happen, surely it is wisdom on our part to attribute to Him a good reason for His actions, though we may not understand what the reason is. It is madness to accuse Him of injustice or of acting contrary to goodness and wisdom. Are we superior to God that we can judge Him and call His actions into question? Are we more just than He? Do we see more clearly than He what should be done among the peoples of the world? See also the note on Psalm 47:2.

**15:17** In ancient times when making a solemn covenant sometimes an animal was killed and divided into two parts. Then the covenant makers passed between the parts. See Jer 34:18,19. Here God Himself, symbolized by fire, walked between the parts of the slain animals. On fire as a symbol of God see Ex 3:2.

“Furnace” – or “fire pot.” “Flaming torch” is closer to the Hebrew than “burning lamp.”

**15:18-21** God now makes a solemn covenant to give the land of Canaan to Abram’s descendants (13:14-17; 17:1-8; 22:17; 26:4; 28:13-15). The land was occupied by numerous and strong peoples, but God fulfilled His promise as He always does. See Josh 21:43-45; 1 Kings 4:20,21.

**16:1-4** God had promised Abram that an heir would be born to him (15:4). Now Abram makes the mistake of trying to fulfill God’s promise in his own way, instead of waiting

for God to do so in His way. He listens to the voice of his wife instead of waiting for God’s voice. The results were sad indeed for Abram and Sarai, and deeply affected the whole history of Western Asia. The offspring of Abram and Hagar was Ishmael, the progenitor of twelve Arab tribes (16:11; 17:20; 25:12-18). The descendants of Ishmael and Isaac (21:1-3) have often been opposed to each other even to this day.

**16:7** Angels are mentioned about 300 times in the Bible. They are spirit beings usually unseen by men. But they may appear in the form of men from time to time. Both the Hebrew and Greek words for angel means “messenger.” Angels were created by God for His service. Some important references to them are: 28:12; Job 1:6; 38:7; Ps 78:49; 91:11; 103:20; Dan 6:22; Matt 1:20; 13:39,41; 16:27; 22:30; 25:41; 26:53; John 1:51; Acts 7:53; 8:26; 12:7-11; 2 Cor 11:14; Col 2:18; Heb 1:6,7; 1 Pet 1:12; 2 Pet 2:4; Rev 1:1; 22:8,9.

There are innumerable angels (Rev 5:11), but the angel in this verse is a very special one. His name is “the angel of the LORD (Jehovah).” He appears many times in the Old Testament and speaks as if He were God Himself (31:11-13; Ex 3:2-6), and He has divine attributes (16:10; 48:16). He is identified as the LORD (Jehovah – Judges 2:1-3; 6:12,14,16,23). His name is “wonderful” (Jud 13:18; compare Isa 9:6). He appeared several times in the form of a man (Jud 13:3,6,10,11,13). For these reasons it seems certain that this angel is none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ, coming to help and bless men before His birth of a virgin many centuries later.

**16:10** This is language only God can use – 17:1,2,19,20.



her, "I will increase the number of your offspring exceedingly, so that they will be too many to count."

11 And the angel of the LORD said to her, "See, you *are* with child. You will give birth to a son, and shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has heard of your misery. 12 And he will be a wild man. His hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand *will be* against him. And he will live in the presence of all his brothers."

13 And she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You *are the* God who sees me", for she said, "Here have I also seen him who sees me?"

14 Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi. To this day, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bore Abram a son. And Abram called his son's name, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. 16 And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

**17** And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I *am* God Almighty. Walk in my presence and be blameless. 2 And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will increase your numbers exceedingly."

3 And Abram prostrated himself, and God talked with him, saying, 4 "As for me, now this is my covenant with you: you will be a father of many

nations. 5 And your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you in their generations as an everlasting covenant, to be your God and *the God* of your descendants after you. 8 And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land where you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. And I will be their God."

9 And God said to Abraham, "Therefore you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you in their generations. 10 This *is* my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you must be circumcised. 11 And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it will be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 And among you he who is eight days old shall be circumcised, every male in your generations, he who is born in the house, or bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your offspring. 13 He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your money, must be circumcised. And my covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting

**16:11** Ishmael means "God hears."

"Misery" – see how concerned the great God of the universe was with the sorrows of a servant girl. Compare Ex 1:23- 25; 22:26,27; Ps 103:13,14; Matt 8:2,3; 9:36; Luke 22:50,51. This should give us confidence that He cares for us too and will hear us when we call. See Ps 65:2.

**16:13** "Sees me" – Job 24:23; 31:4; 34:21; Ps 139:1-6; Prov 5:21; 15:3; 2 Chron 16:9; Heb 4:13.

**16:14** This name means "The well of the Living One who sees me."

**17:1** "Appeared" – 12:7.

"God Almighty" – the Hebrew words for this are El Shaddai. The name is used 48 times in the Old Testament, mostly in Genesis (6) and Job (31). El Shaddai is the all-sufficient one who can keep His promises and do anything for His people He decides to do (18:14; Jer 32:17,27; Matt 19:26; Rom 4:21).

"Blameless" – the Hebrew word here (translated "perfect" in the KJV) means "complete", "whole", "sound", "wholesome", "innocent", "having integrity", "blameless", or "perfect." this is what God wants all His believers to be – 6:9; Deut 18:13; Job 1:1; Ps 15:1,2; 19:13; Prov 2:7; 1 Cor 1:8; Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 3:13; 5:23; 2 Pet 3:14. A blameless life must be a walk in God's presence and with His strength, and always looking to Him and for Him.

**17:2** See 12:2,3; 13:14-16; 15:4,5,18.

**17:4** "Many nations" – all the descendants

of Ishmael, Isaac, and Abraham's sons by Keturah (Gen 16:10; 17:19; 25:1-4).

**17:5** Abram means "exalted father." Abraham means "father of a multitude."

**17:6** "Kings" – a great many kings came from Abraham – rulers of the nation of Israel and other peoples. Also the King of kings, the Lord Jesus, in His human nature, is descended from Abraham.

**17:7,8** "To be your God" – this was the most important of the promises of this covenant – far greater than the promise of the land of Canaan. This promise is repeated under the new covenant – Jer 31:31-33; 2 Cor 6:16. It is also one of the last and best things seen in the Bible – Rev 21:3. If the true and living God is our God then we have the highest possible good and all we can ever need for time or eternity.

**17:9-14** Circumcision was to signify something spiritual – Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; 9:25,26; Col 2:11. It spoke of faith in God's word, and a righteousness that comes by faith (Rom 4:11). It was an agreement to be the people of God and listen to His voice. The mere outward ceremony meant nothing if there was not faith and a desire to please and serve God (Rom 2:28,29). But if the rite was not practiced, if a person had no faith, no obedience to God's covenant, he was to be cut off from the people. Men had responsibility under the covenant God made with Abraham. It was to believe God and act accordingly.

**17:10** 17:15 Sarah means "princess."

covenant. 14 As for the uncircumcised male, the flesh of whose foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant."

15 And God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her name Sarai, but her name *will be* Sarah. 16 And I will bless her, and give you a son by her also. Yes, I will bless her, and she will be *a mother of* nations. Kings of people will come from her."

17 Then Abraham prostrated himself and laughed and said in his heart, "Will *a child* be born to him who is a hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child*?" 18 And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live in your presence!"

19 And God said, "Your wife Sarah will certainly bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant, *and* with his offspring after him. 20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Now I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will increase *his numbers* exceedingly. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21 But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this same time next year." 22 And he finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23 And Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all who had been born in his house, and all who had been bought with his money, every male among the persons of Abraham's household, and that very day circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, as God had told him. 24 And Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on the same day. 27 And all the men of his household, born in the house and bought with money from foreigners, were circumcised with him.

**17:16** For the first time God promises that Sarah shall bear a son.

**17:17,18** The faith of Abraham, the man of faith, and the father of all who believe, temporarily stumbles. Perhaps he "believed not for joy" (Luke 24:40,41). In all of God's believers there is a mixture of faith and unbelief, and we all have reason enough to cry out as the man in Mark 9:24 did.

**17:19-21** God repeats the promise. Isaac means "he laughs." God says He will establish the covenant with him, not with Ishmael (but Ishmael also was to receive God's blessing because he was a son of Abraham.) Now Abraham fully believed the promise concerning Isaac. See Rom 4:17-24.

**17:23** Abraham immediately obeyed. See also 22:1-3. This is a mark of a man of God. Many people put obedience to God's

**18** And the LORD appeared to him at the oak trees of Mamre as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 And he raised his eyes and looked and three men appeared, standing near him. And when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favour in your sight, please do not pass your servant by. 4 Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 And I will bring a piece of bread. Refresh yourselves. After that you can go on. That is why you have come to your servant." And they said, "Do as you have said."

6 And Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quick! Get ready three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make bread on the hearth."

7 And Abraham ran to the herd and brought a choice tender calf and gave *it* to a young man who hurried to prepare it. 8 And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set *them* before them. And he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.

9 And they said to him, "Where *is* your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent."

10 And he said, "I will certainly return to you, according to the time of life, and then your wife Sarah will have a son." And Sarah heard it *standing* in the tent door, which *was* behind him.

11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well advanced in age, *and* it had ceased to be with Sarah according to the way of women. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old will I have pleasure, my lord also being old?"

13 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Will I, who am old, indeed bear *a child*?' 14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah will have a son."

Word off to another time, and then never get around to it (Acts 24:25; 2 Cor 6:2; Heb 3:15; John 2:5).

**18:1,2** Here is an instance of God appearing in the form of man. See 12:7; 16:7. The other two that appeared to Abraham were angels (vs 16,22; 19:1).

**18:6** "Bread" – the KJV has "cakes", which is misleading to readers now. The meaning of the Hebrew is flat round bread like chapathis or parathas.

**18:8** Abraham's preparation of the meal took some time. The Lord and His angels waited patiently. See Jud 6:18.

**18:12** See 17:17. Though Sarah laughed here, later she may also have believed the promise – Heb 11:11,12.

"Lord" – the Hebrew also means "husband."  
**18:14** "Is anything too hard for the LORD?"

15 Then Sarah denied *it*, saying, "I did not laugh", for she was afraid. And he said, "No, but you did laugh."

16 And the men got up from there and looked toward Sodom. And Abraham went with them to take them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am going to do, 18 seeing that Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him? 19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and so they will keep the way of the LORD, practicing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham that which he has told him."

20 And the LORD said, "Because the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, 21 I will now go down and see whether they have done altogether according to its outcry, which has reached me; and if not, I will know." 22 And the men turned their faces from there, and went toward Sodom, but Abraham was still standing before the LORD. 23 And Abraham drew near and said, "Will you destroy the righteous also with the wicked? 24 Perhaps there are fifty righteous *people* in the city. Will you really destroy *it* and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are there? 25 Far be it from you to act in this way, to kill the righteous with the wicked. That the righteous should be as the wicked – be it far from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

26 And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty

righteous in the city, then I will spare the whole place for their sakes."

27 And Abraham answered and said, "Please, here am I, who *am only* dust and ashes, undertaking to speak to the Lord, 28 perhaps the fifty righteous will lack five. Will you destroy the whole city for *lack of five*?"

And he said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it*."

29 And he spoke to him once again and said, "Perhaps there will be forty found there."

And he said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do *it*."

30 And he said to him, "Oh, may the Lord not be angry, and I will speak: perhaps thirty will be found there."

And he said, "I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there."

31 And he said, "Please, here am I undertaking to speak to the Lord: Perhaps twenty will be found there."

And he said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy *it*."

32 And he said, "Oh, may the Lord not be angry, and I will speak just once more: perhaps ten will be found there."

And he said, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

33 And the LORD went his way when he had finished conversing with Abraham, and Abraham went back to his place.

– Jer 32:17,27; Matt 19:25,26; Luke 1:37.  
**18:15** Sarah shows her sinful nature by lying to God. See 12:13. Very often the wrong kind of fear causes even good people to sin. The healthy fear of God keeps them from it (20:11; Ex 20:20). So God tells His people not to fear what men in general fear (15:1), but to fear Him – Deut 10:20; Matt 10:28; Heb 12:28.  
**18:16** "Sodom" – 13:12,13.  
**18:17** Ps 25:14; Prov 3:32; Amos 3:7; John 7:17; Isa 41:8.  
**18:18** See 12:3; 22:18; Acts 3:25; Gal 3:8.  
**18:19** "Children" – Deut 4:9; 6:6,7; 11:9; Ps 78:4; Prov 22:6; Eph 6:4; 2 Tim 3:15. See here Abraham's responsibility to behave in such a way that God could fulfill His promises to him. God chose him for this very reason.  
**18:20,21** "I will know" – didn't the Lord, who is omniscient, know what the exact state of Sodom was? Why did He need to go down and see? He did not **need** to. He can know everything without going anywhere – John 21:17; Heb 4:13 (so no one should ever think he can hide anything from God). But can He not also in His perfect liberty, if He wishes, choose not to know something – such as all the details of the vileness of the people of Sodom? And can He not choose to forget what He wants to forget (compare Isa 43:5; Jer 31:34; Heb 10:17)? Does

anyone know enough about the nature of God to be able to say dogmatically what He can and cannot do in such matters as this? On the sin of Sodom see Ezek 16:49,50.  
**18:22,23** Abraham understood God's intention to destroy Sodom. His nephew Lot was living there and Abraham was afraid that Lot would be destroyed in the destruction of Sodom. And he probably felt compassion for the people of Sodom, wicked though they were. So he begins to intercede for the city.  
**18:24** "Spare" – the Hebrew word here may also mean "forgive" (also v 26).  
**18:25** "Judge" – Ps 9:7,8; 58:11; 94:2; 96:13; Eccl 12:14; Acts 17:30,31; Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-15.  
 "Do right" – Deut 32:4; 2 Chron 19:7; Job 34:10,12; 37:23; Ps 89:14; 97:2; Jer 9:24.  
**18:27** "Dust and ashes" – 3:19. Abraham takes his rightful place as a frail, mortal creature before the great Creator and Lord of the universe. There is no other proper way for men to pray to the one true God.  
**18:30** "Angry" – God will not be angry when men humbly pray and intercede for others. For the things which really make God angry see Num 25:3.  
**18:32** Abraham stopped at ten, perhaps thinking that Lot would have been able to lead his family and a few others at least into



**19** And two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom. Seeing *them* Lot got up to meet them, and he bowed with his face toward the ground, 2 and he said, "Please now, my lords, turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the street."

3 And he urged them so strongly that they turned aside to him and went into his house. And he made a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. 4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house, 5 and they called out to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came in to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them."

6 And Lot went out the door to them and shut the door after him, 7 and said, "Please, brethren, do not act so wickedly. 8 Now look, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Please let me bring them out to you, and you do to them as you see fit. But do nothing to these men, because they have come under the shadow of my roof."

9 And they said, "Stand back." And they said again, "This one came in to *town* to stay a while, and he has to be a judge! Now we will treat you worse than them." And they crowded in on the man Lot, and came near to break in the door.

the paths of righteousness. Actually in the whole city of Sodom there was only one righteous person. That was Lot (2 Pet 2:6-8). And even he needed the prayers of Abraham for his rescue (19:29). Prayer is a very positive and mysterious and powerful force in God's dealings with men (20:17,18; Ex 17:11; 32:11-14; Num 14:19,20; 16:46-48; Josh 10:12-14; Job 42:10; Ps 18:6-10; 65:2; Prov 15:8,29; Isa 38:1-6; Jer 33:3; Dan 2:17-19; 9:3,21-23; 10:2,12-14; Matt 6:9-13; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9,10; 18:1-8; Acts 1:14; 2:1-4; 4:24,31; 12:5-10; Jam 5:16-18; Rev 8:3-5).

**19:1** "Angels" – these angels also appeared as men – 18:1,2,22. Sodom was notorious as the most wicked city of the ancient world and was about to be destroyed as an example of God's wrath and judgment on sin (2 Pet 2:6; Jude 7; Deut 29:23; 32:32; Ezek 16:49,50). Notes at 6:7; Lev 18:24. "Gate" – 34:20.

**19:2** Their preference to spend the night outdoors does not speak well of Lot's home.

**19:4,5** "Know them" – see note at Gen 4:1. In the Bible lying with a man as with a woman is seen as a terrible sin. In the law He gave God says it is worthy of death (Lev 18:22; 20:13). The New Testament also speaks strongly against it (Rom 1:26,27; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10; Jude 7). The men

10 But the men *inside* put out their hand and pulled Lot into the house to them and shut the door. 11 And they struck the men who were at the door of the house, both small and great, with blindness, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

12 And the men said to Lot, "Have you here anyone else? Sons-in-law and your sons and your daughters, and whoever you have in the city, bring *them* out of this place, 13 for we are going to destroy this place, because their outcry has become great in the presence of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

14 And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Up! get out of this place, for the Lord is going to destroy this city." But to his sons-in-law he seemed like someone who was joking.

15 And when the morning dawned the angels hurried Lot, saying, "Up! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here so that you will not be destroyed in *the punishment* for the wickedness of the city."

16 And when he hesitated, the men took hold of his hand, of the hand of his wife, and of the hand of his two daughters, *for* the LORD was merciful to him. And they brought him out and set him outside the city. 17 And this took place when they had brought them out: one *of them* said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere on the plain. Escape to the mountain, so you will not be destroyed!"

of Sodom wished to use force to satisfy their lust, piling sin on sin.

**19:8** According to the rules of hospitality in those times guests in a home had to be protected by their host. Still it was surely an act of desperation for Lot to basely offer his defenseless daughters to these vile men.

**19:9** Lot, though he was a righteous man, had no influence whatever over the people of Sodom.

**19:11** God has His own ways of protecting His people, and it does not involve any acts of desperation such as appear in v 8.

**19:13** Justice and the good of the world demanded Sodom's destruction.

**19:14** Lot had no influence over his sons-in-law either.

"Joking" – sometimes those who bring the most solemn and true messages are regarded as fools or madmen – compare Acts 2:13; 17:18; 26:24.

**19:16** It seems Lot still had not understood the seriousness of the situation and was reluctant to leave Sodom. His home and his wealth were there. In spite of his reluctance to leave, God was merciful to him. It was God's mercy and not Lot's goodness that was the reason for his deliverance. Compare Eph 2:4,8; 2 Pet 3:9; etc.

**19:17** "Escape" – God's judgment was on the way. It called for immediate action.

18 And Lot said to them, "No, please, my Lord! 19 Now look, your servant has found favour in your sight, and you have magnified your mercy, which you have shown me in saving my life, but I cannot escape to the mountain, or some evil may overtake me and I will die. 20 Now see, that town is near to flee to, and it is a little one. Please let me escape there (*is* it not a little one?), and my soul will live."

21 And he said to him, "See, I have accepted you for this thing also, so that I will not overthrow this town of which you have spoken. 22 Hurry! Escape there, for I cannot do any thing until you have gone there." Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar.

23 The sun had risen over the earth when Lot went into Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained sulfur and fire on Sodom and on Gomorrah out of the sky from the LORD. 25 And he overthrew those cities and the whole plain and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew in the ground. 26 But his wife, from behind him, looked back and she became a pillar of salt.

27 And Abraham got up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD, 28 and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and looking saw that the smoke of the country was going up like the smoke of a furnace.

29 And when God destroyed the cities of the plain, it came about that God remembered Abraham and so sent Lot out of the center of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.

30 And Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in a mountain, and his two daughters went with him, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. And he lived in a

cave, he and his two daughters. 31 And the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father *is* old, and *there* is not a man on earth to come in to us according to the way of the whole earth. 32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie down with him, so that we may bring to life offspring of our father."

33 And they made their father drink wine that night, and the first born went in and lay with her father. And he did not know when she lay down, or when she got up.

34 And it came about on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Look, last night I lay with my father. Let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, so that we may bring to life offspring of our father." 35 And they made their father drink wine that night also. Then the younger got up and lay with him. And he did not know when she lay down, or when she got up.

36 In this way both the daughters of Lot were pregnant by their father. 37 And the firstborn gave birth to a son, and called his name Moab. He *is* the father of the Moabites of today. 38 As to the younger, she also gave birth to a son, and called his name Ben Ammi. He *is* the father of the children of Ammon of today.

**20** And Abraham journeyed from there toward the south country, and lived between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed for a while in Gerar. 2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She *is* my sister", and Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream at night and said to him, "Now you *are the same as* dead, because of the woman whom you have taken, for

Compare Matt 3:7; Heb 6:18.

**19:18-20** Lot would not leave the choice of the place for him in God's hands. Still he wanted to make his own self-centered choice. Compare 13:10,11.

**19:22** God was going to rescue Lot in answer to Abraham's prayer (v 29) and could not destroy Sodom until Lot was out of it. So with Noah (chapters 6,7); so with God's people at the end of this age (Rev 14:14-16; 15:1). "Zoar" means small.

**19:26** Lot had little or no influence over his wife. All she wanted was in Sodom. See Luke 17:32.

**19:27** See 18:22.

**19:29** Lot was rescued for Abraham's sake and in answer to Abraham's prayer.

**19:30-38** Lot had no godly influence over his daughters either. And he was responsible for what happened there. This story of Lot is very sad, but very instructive. He was a man who believed God and was counted righteous (2 Pet 2:6-8). But he made a bad choice because of greed, and did not keep his distance from Sodom. He knew what

Sodom was like and felt bad about the behavior of its people. But he chose to live there. And obviously he did not bring up his daughters in the instruction and fear of God. He is a picture of carnal believers who, though saved, will experience great loss - 1 Cor 3:1-15. Let us learn from God's Word what the world is really like and how to live in it (1 John 2:16,17; 2 Cor 6:14-18), and what great loss we can suffer by selfishness and compromise.

**19:36-38** The Moabites and Ammonites later became enemies of Israel. Such sin as the daughters of Lot committed with him, indeed all sin, can have far-reaching consequences.

**19:38** "Ben-Ammi" means "son of my people."

**20:1** Gerar was in the land of the Philistines toward the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

**20:2** Abraham repeats his former sin (12:13). An event like this shows that when Satan knows our weakness he will bring the same temptations again and again.

**20:3** Once again God had to intervene to

she *is* a man's wife."

4 But Abimelech had not come near her, and he said, "Lord, will you destroy righteous people? 5 Did he not say to me, 'She *is* my sister'? And she also, she herself, said, 'He *is* my brother'. I have done this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands."

6 And God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart, for I also kept you from sinning against me. For this reason I did not permit you to touch her. 7 So now return the man's wife to him, for he *is* a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not return *her*, know for a certainty that you will die, you, and all who *are* yours."

8 Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing. And the men were very afraid. 9 Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? In what have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done things to me that ought not to be done."

10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see that you have done this thing?"

11 And Abraham said, "Because I thought, 'Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place, and they

will kill me on account of my wife.' 12 And yet *she* really *is* my sister. She *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. 13 And when God caused me to wander from my father's house, it came about that I said to her, 'You shall show me this kindness: wherever we go, say of me, 'He *is* my brother.'"

14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and male servants, and female servants, and gave *them* to Abraham, and returned his wife Sarah to him. 15 And Abimelech said, "Look, my land *is* before you. Live where it pleases you."

16 And he said to Sarah, "See, I have given your brother a thousand *pieces* of silver. See, it is to cover the *offense* against you in the eyes of all who *are* with you; to everyone this is your vindication."

17 So Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants, and they gave birth *to children*. 18 For the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

**21** And the LORD looked after Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time which

protect Sarah. This is the first use of the word "dream" in the Bible. But see 15:12.

**20:6** "From sinning" - 1 Sam 25:26; Jude 24.

"Against me" - Ps 51:4.

**20:7** "Prophet" - the word "prophet" in Hebrew does not mean an eloquent speaker or a learned man, though some of the prophets of the Bible were both. The Hebrew verb from which the word prophet comes means to announce, to proclaim, or to speak by some sort of inspiration. Certainly in general a prophet in the Bible was a person who spoke by inspiration, under the influence of some spirit. A true prophet was inspired by God's Spirit and spoke God's messages. A false prophet spoke by inspiration from some source other than God, and spoke lying messages. See also Num 11:25. For true prophets see Deut 18:18; 1 Sam 3:19-21; 1 Kings 17:1,2,8; Jer 1:4-10; Micah 1:1; 3:8; etc. For false prophets see Deut 18:20-22; 1 Kings 18:19-29; Jer 14:14; 23:32; Ezekiel chapter 13; Matt 24:11,24; Luke 6:26; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Rev 16:13; 19:20. The whole Bible was given by God through His true prophets. Much of it has been fulfilled, some still awaits fulfillment.

**20:9** It is a sad day when outsiders must rebuke the prophets and servants of God for their wrongdoing.

**20:11** The first reference in the Bible to the "fear of God." This fear is not a fear to come to God, or to pray to God. It is not the kind

of fear a criminal may have for jails and police. It is a healthy awe and respect for God, a fear of offending Him by sinning. It is exceedingly important for people to have the fear of God.

It restrains from evil doing (Ex 20:20; Prov 16:6).

It is a motive for obeying God (Deut 5:29; 6:2).

It is the beginning of wisdom (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). It results in God's great blessings (Deut 6:24; Ps 25:14; 33:18,19; 34:7-9; 85:9; 103:11,13,17; 115:13; Prov 14:27; 19:23; Isa 33:6).

It is the duty of all mankind (Ps 33:8), and without it men fall into great evil (Rom 3:18 with preceding verses). We should all pray for it (Ps 86:11).

It is something we may choose to have or not have (Prov 1:29).

See other notes at Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7; etc.

**20:16** "Thousand pieces of silver" - in Hebrew "a thousand shekels." One shekel equals 11.5 grams. So the total amount was about 11.5 kilograms or 25 pounds - a very large amount showing how seriously Abimelech regarded the matter.

"To everyone this is your vindication" - this is the probable meaning of the Hebrew phrase, which is difficult. The translation of the KJV here is unlikely.

**20:17** "Prayed to God" - note and references to prayer at 18:32.

**20:18** "Closed up" - 1 Sam 1:5.

**21:1,2** "Spoken" - 17:16; Titus 1:2.

God had told him. 3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. 4 And when his son Isaac was eight days old Abraham circumcised *him*, as God had commanded him. 5 And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

6 And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh; all who hear *it* will laugh with me." 7 And she said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne *him* a son in his old age."

8 And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. 9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she bore to Abraham, mocking. 10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Drive out this slave woman and her son, for the son of this slave woman will not be heir with my son, with Isaac."

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. 12 And God said to Abraham, "Let it not be grievous in your sight because of the lad and because of your slave woman. Listen to Sarah's voice in everything she has said to you, for in Isaac shall your offspring be called. 13 And I will also make a nation of the son of the slave woman, because he *is* your offspring."

14 And Abraham got up early in the morning, took bread and a bottle of water and gave *it* to Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder, *gave her* the boy and sent her away. And she left and wandered around in the desert of Beersheba.

15 And the water in the bottle was finished, and she thrust the boy under one of the bushes. 16 And she went and seated herself opposite *him* at a distance of about a bow shot. For she said, "Let me not see the boy's death." And she sat

opposite *him*, raised her voice, and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is bothering you, Hagar? Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he *is*. 18 Get up, pick up the lad, and hold him up with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

19 And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water and she went, filled the bottle with water, and gave the boy a drink.

20 And God was with the boy, and he grew, lived in the desert, and became an archer. 21 And he lived in the desert of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

22 And at that time it came about that Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his forces, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God *is* with you in all that you do. 23 So here and now swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my son or with my son's son, but *that* the same kindness that I have shown to you, you will show to me, and to the land where you have been staying for a time."

24 And Abraham said, "I will swear *it*."

25 And Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had taken by force. 26 And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing, and you did not tell me, and I did not hear *it*, until today."

27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. 28 And Abraham put seven ewe lambs from the flock by themselves. 29 And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What is *the meaning of* these seven ewe lambs which you have put by yourselves?"

30 And he said, "Take *these* seven ewe lambs from my hand, so that they will be a witness for

**21:3** "Isaac" – 17:19.

**21:4** See 17:10,12.

**21:5** Rom 4:19-21.

**21:6** See 18:13.

**21:9** This was Ishmael. 16:1,4,15; Gal 4:22,23. At this time he was about sixteen years old, Isaac only two or three.

**21:10** Gal 4:29-31.

**21:11** The error Abraham made in the matter of Hagar (16:1,2) now brings much sorrow to him. Going our own way in anything usually results in grief. Only the will of God is good, pleasing and perfect – Rom 12:2.

**21:12** Rom 9:7; Heb 11:18. Isaac, the child God promised, was chosen by God to be the heir of Abraham and the one through whom the Saviour of the world would come. The covenant of blessing to the world which God had made with Abraham (12:1-3) was confirmed to him. The rest of the Old Testament for the most part, and part of the New Testament is the story of Isaac's descendants through Jacob. This covenant

was not confirmed to Ishmael. There was only the promise that he too would become a great nation – vs 13,18.

**21:14** "Morning" – again we see Abraham's immediate obedience – 17:23; 22:2,3.

"Boy" – the KJV here has "child", which could be misleading. Ishmael was a teenager. The Hebrew means "youth" or "young man" or "boy", as well as "child."

**21:17** "Heard" – Ex 2:24; 3:7; Deut 26:7; Ps 6:8; 10:17; 34:6,15,17; 66:19; 116:11.

**21:19** "Eyes" – Num 22:31; 2 Kings 6:17. Sometimes God creates new things or new ways to provide for His people; sometimes He merely opens their eyes to what is already there.

**21:21** Paran was located south of Canaan in the Sinai peninsula.

**21:22** "Abimelech" – 20:2. "With you" – 26:28; 28:15; 39:2,3,21; Acts 7:9,10; Heb 13:5,6; Rev 21:3; Ex 33:14-16; 34:8,9; Josh 1:5; Isa 7:14. Note at Ex 25:8.

me, that I have dug this well."

31 Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because there the two of them took an oath.

32 In this way they made a covenant at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and Phichol, the chief captain of his forces, got up and returned to the land of the Philistines. 33 And *Abraham* planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. 34 And Abraham stayed for many days in the land of the Philistines.

**22** And after these things it came about that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham." And he said, "See, *here I am*."

**21:31** Beersheba can have two meanings – "well of the oath" or "well of the seven."

**21:32** "Philistines" – 10:14.

**21:33** "Everlasting God" – Hebrew "El Olam." Olam comes from a word that has more than one meaning – "hidden" or "secret", "a long time" or "everlasting", or "world." Deut 29:29; 32:39,40; 33:27; Ps 90:2; Isa 40:28; Jer 10:10; Heb 13:8,20,21; Rev 1:18.

**22:1** "Tested Abraham" – God often asked Abraham to give up things and persons. At first He asked him to give up country and relatives (12:1). Then He asked him to give up his plans for Ishmael (17:17,18). Finally He asked him to give up his son. Just so does the Lord Jesus ask those who would be His disciples to give up everything for Him (Matt 10:37-39; Mark 10:21,29-31; Luke 9:57-62; 14:33). God will test His people's love for Him, their faith in Him, their obedience to Him. These tests, though they may be difficult and painful, will work for the good of those who endure them. They will increase their faith and teach them many important lessons (Deut 8:2,16; 13:3; Ps 66:10-12; Jam 1:2-4,12; 1 Pet 1:6-7; 4:12,13). God tests us to bring out the good he has put in us. Satan tempts us to bring out the evil in our fallen nature.

"Here I am" – v 11.

**22:2** "Only son" – though Ishmael was a son by the servant girl, Isaac was the only son of Abraham and his wife, the only son related to God's covenant and promises.

In the Bible the one true God forbids human sacrifice to other gods (Lev 18:21; Deut 18:9,10; 2 Kings 17:17). This is because other gods are not God at all and no one has any right to offer anything to them, let alone fellow human beings. All things and all persons belong to God the Creator, and in a double sense His redeemed people belong to Him (1:27; Ps 50:10; Isa 42:5; Ezek 18:4; Ex 13:1,2; 19:5; Lev 20:26; 1 Cor 6:19,20). Since all men are God's property He has a perfect right to do with them as He sees fit. He may, if He wants, even demand that they be offered as burnt offerings, as He told Abraham to offer Isaac.

Remember God is a just and holy God.

2 And he said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell you about."

3 And Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son, cut up the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place which God had told him about. 4 Then on the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place at a distance. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey. I and the boy will go over there and worship and come back to you."

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt

He would never ask Abraham to do something that was wrong (Jam 1:13). Actually this is the only case in the entire Bible when God asked a person to offer another as a sacrifice. It seems God had a two-fold purpose in this. He wished to test Abraham's devotion and faith and He wished to give a picture of what He Himself planned to do through His son Jesus Christ in offering Him for the sins of the world. The test for Abraham was like this: God had said that Isaac was Abraham's only son, his heir, the one with whom God would establish His covenant (15:4; 17:16,19; 21:12; 22:2). Would Abraham believe God's promises even when faced with a command that seemed contrary to them? Would he believe that God could do no wrong and could not break His word? Abraham was equal to this test. He reasoned that if God asked him to do something God had a good reason for it, and that somehow or other God would fulfill His promises (Rom 4:21). He believed that even if he had to put Isaac to death God would raise him to life again to fulfill His word (Heb 11:17-19).

All this is a picture of what God has done in Jesus Christ. Like Isaac Jesus is the only Son of the Father (John 3:16). He is the heir of the world (Heb 1:2), the one through whom God made His new covenant (Heb 9:15), the one through whom the blessings promised to Abraham would come to the world (Acts 3:26; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:3). God in love to mankind offered Him up as a sacrifice for sinners (Rom 5:8; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 4:9). Then He raised Him from the dead to fulfill all His promises (Acts 2:24,32-36; 1 Cor 15:3,4). God told Abraham to take Isaac to the "land of Moriah." Jerusalem was located in this region (2 Chron 3:1). Jerusalem, of course, is the place where the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected.

**22:3** "Morning" – Abraham practiced instant obedience – 17:23; 21:14.

"Wood" – Abraham fully intended to do what God told him and made preparations for obedience.

**22:5** The words "come back" seem to indicate Abraham's faith.

**22:6** "On his son Isaac" – compare John



offering, and put *it* on his son Isaac. And he took the fire in his hand and a knife, and the two of them went on together. 7 And Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "See, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God himself will provide a lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went on together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him about, and Abraham built an altar there, arranged the wood *on it*, bound his son Isaac, and placed him on top of the wood on the altar. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. 11 And the angel of the LORD called to him out of heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham." And he said, "Here I am."

12 And he said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy, and do not do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me."

13 And Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behind *him* a ram appeared, caught in a thicket by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah Jireh, just as it is said to this day, "In the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

15 And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven a second time, 16 and said, "I have sworn by myself, says the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 that I will certainly bless you, and I will certainly increase *the number of* your offspring like the stars of heaven and like the sand which is

on the seashore. And your offspring will possess the gate of his enemies. 18 And in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they got up and went together to Beersheba, and Abraham stayed at Beersheba.

20 After these things it came about that *some-one* told Abraham, saying, "Now Milcah, she also has borne children to your brother Nahor: 21 Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, 22 Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23 And Bethuel became the father of Rebekah. Milcah bore these eight to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24 And his concubine also, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

**23** And Sarah's lifespan was a hundred and twenty-seven years. *These were* the years of Sarah's life. 2 And Sarah died in Kirjath Arba. This is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

3 And Abraham got up from the presence of his dead *wife* and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, 4 "I *am* a foreigner and a settler among you. Permit me the possession of a burial site among you, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, 6 "My lord, listen to us. You *are* a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead."

7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed down before the people of the land, to the children of

19:17. Evidently Isaac was no small child. He was able to carry a load, and knew what was going on (v 7).

**22:8** "Provide" - verse 13. Compare John 1:29,36; Acts 8:32-35; 1 Pet 1:18,19; Rev 5:6-14.

**22:9** "Altar" - there is nothing here to suggest Isaac resisted Abraham. It seems he willingly cooperated with his father in all this. So did Jesus when He faced the cross (John 10:18; Matt 26:39).

**22:10** The moment of final obedience came and Abraham did not shrink back.

**22:11** "The angel of the LORD" - note at 16:7. The Son of God stopped Abraham. Much later in history He did not stop Himself but willingly gave Himself to death for us all (John 10:11,17,18; Gal 1:4; Phil 2:8).

**22:14** "Jehovah Jireh" - a name meaning "The LORD will provide" - see note at Ex 3:14,15. In Christ Jehovah did provide an offering and a sacrifice for the sins of the world. And that event took place at "the mountain of the LORD" - in Jerusalem.

"Provided" - a secondary meaning of the

Hebrew word which usually means "seen." The Lord will see to it means that he will provide it.

**22:16-18** "I will certainly bless" - obedience to God always brings blessings. Notes at 12:2,3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:1-14; Ps 1:1,2; 119:1. The Hebrew has "blessing I will bless." Writers in Hebrew sometimes repeated the verb in this way for the sake of emphasis, so "certainly bless" is also correct.

"Offspring" - Acts 3:25,26; Gal 3:16.

**22:20** "Nahor" - 11:29.

**22:23** "Rebekah" - 24:67.

**23:3** "The sons of Heth" - Heth was a son of Canaan and the progenitor of the Hittite people. See 10:15. Note on Hittites at 26:34,35.

**23:4** "Foreigner and a settler" - 20:13; Lev 25:23; 1 Chron 29:15; Ps 39:12; Heb 11:8-10,13.

"Permit" - a secondary meaning of the Hebrew word which also means "give", but probably the better translation here because Abraham was not asking for the gift of a burial site.

**23:6** "Mighty prince" - perhaps they were



Heth. 8 And he talked with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I should bury my dead out of my sight, listen to me and on my behalf ask Ephron the son of Zohar, 9 to permit me *to have* the cave of Machpelah, which he owns, which *is* at the end of his field. For its full price let him give it me as a possession for a burial site among you."

10 And Ephron lived among the children of Heth, and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the children of Heth, of all those who went in at the gate of his city, saying, 11 "No, my lord, listen to me. I will give the field to you, and I give you the cave that *is* it. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead."

12 And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. 13 And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "But if you *will give it*, please, listen to me. I will give you money for the field. Take *it* from me, and I will bury my dead there."

14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15 "My lord, listen to me. The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What *is* that between me and you? So bury your dead."

16 And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed the silver for Ephron, *the price* he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

17 And the field of Ephron, which *was* in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and the cave that was in it and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the area of its borders, were deeded 18 to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. 19 And after this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah facing Mamre. This *is* Hebron in

the land of Canaan. 20 And the field, and the cave that *is* in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as a possession for a burial site.

**24** And Abraham was old, well advanced in age, and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who was in charge of all that he had, "Please, place your hand under my thigh, 3 and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live. 4 But you shall go to my country, and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

5 And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Should I take your son back to the land that you came from?"

6 And Abraham said to him, "You be careful that you do not take my son back there. 7 The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my relatives, and who spoke to me, and who swore to me, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land', he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there." 9 And the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him about that matter.

10 And the servant took ten camels of his master's camels, and left, for all the goods of his master *were in* his charge. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. 11 And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water, at evening time, the time when women

aware of some of Abraham's activities, such as those in 14:14-16 and 20:17.

**23:9** Though God had given Abraham and his descendants the whole land, he actually possessed none of it and had to buy a portion for a burial ground. In the same way, by promise the whole world belongs to believers in Christ (Rom 4:13; 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21,22; Gal 4:7). However, at present most of them possess very little or none of it. The fulfillment of these promises of God await the time when God rises in judgment on the world and the kingdoms of the world becomes the kingdom of God and Christ (Rev 2:26,27; 11:15; 19:15).

**23:10** "Gate" – v 18; 19:1; Deut 25:7; Josh 20:4; Ruth 4:11.

**23:15** "Shekels" – the total amount was about 4.5 kilograms – probably a very high price for a field in Abraham's day (compare Jer 32:9). Sometimes those people who at first seem most generous will take the greatest advantage of others.

**24:1** "Blessed" – 12:2; 13:2; 24:35.

**24:2** "Thigh" – a custom then when making a very solemn promise (47:29).

**24:3** Deut 7:3; Ezra 9:1-4; 1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14-17. Abraham worshiped the one true God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The Canaanites worshiped many gods and idols. Abraham wanted to keep his son separate from such things. And he knew that a Canaanite wife might turn his son to idolatry. Compare Deut 7:3,4; 1 Kings 11:1-6; Ezra 9:1-4; 1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**24:4** "My country" – not Ur of Chaldea, but where Abraham lived later for a while – v 10; 11:31.

**24:6-8** "Land" – 12:7; 13:5; 15:18.

"His angel" – note at 16:7. This marriage was arranged in heaven.

**24:9** Verse 2.

**24:10** The servant in this chapter is a model for all who would serve God. He was obedient, prayerful, tactful, faithful, waited on God

go out to draw water.

12 And he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please send me good success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 See, I am standing *here* by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Let it come about that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your water pot so I can drink', and she says, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also', *let her be the one* that you have decided on for your servant Isaac. And by that I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

15 And it came about before he had finished speaking, that here came Rebekah, who had been born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother. *She had* her water pot on her shoulder. 16 And the girl *was* very beautiful to look at, a virgin, no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her water pot, and came up.

17 And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your water pot."

18 And she said, "Drink, my lord", and she hurried and lowered her water pot onto her hand and gave him a drink.

19 And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw *water* for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." 20 And she hurried and emptied her water pot into the trough, and ran again to the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels. 21 And the man, keeping silent, watched her to find out whether the LORD had made his journey successful or not.

22 And this happened when the camels had finished drinking: the man took a gold earring of half a *shekel* weight and two bracelets of ten shekels weight of gold for her arms, 23 and said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there room *in* your father's house for us to spend the night?"

24 And she said to him, "I *am* the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 She also said to him, "We have both straw and fodder enough, and room to spend the night."

26 And the man bowed his head, and worshipped the LORD. 27 And he said, "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken

his mercy and his truth toward my master. I being on the way, the LORD has led me to the house of my master's brothers."

28 And the girl ran and told these things to those in her mother's house. 29 And Rebekah had a brother. His name was Laban. And Laban ran out to the man at the well. 30 And it came about when he saw the earring, and bracelets on his sister's arms, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah saying, "This is what the man said to me", that he came to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well. 31 And he said, "Come in, you blessed of the Lord. Why are you standing outside? For I have got the house ready, and a place for the camels."

32 And the man came into the house. And *Laban* unloaded his camels, and gave straw and fodder for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who *were* with him. 33 And *food* was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my business." And he said, "Tell it."

34 And he said, "I *am* Abraham's servant. 35 And the LORD has greatly blessed my master *so that* he has become rich; and he has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and male servants and female servants, and camels and donkeys. 36 And my master's wife Sarah bore a son to my master when she was old. And to him he has given all that he has. 37 And my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I am living, 38 but you shall go to my father's house and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son.' 39 And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.'

40 "And he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives, from my father's household. 41 When you go to my relatives, then you will be free from this my oath. If they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

42 "And today I came to the well and said, 'O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now you will give success to the journey I have come on, 43 see, I am standing by the well of water, and it will happen that when the virgin comes out to draw *water*, and I say to her, 'Please give me a little

for guidance, and honored and praised his master.

"Mesopotamia" - an area northeast of Canaan in what is now called Syria.

**24:14** On asking God for signs see note and references at 15:8.

**24:15** "Speaking" - Isa 65:24.

**24:22** "Ten shekels" - about 110 grams.

**24:27** "Led" - compare Ps 25:9; 32:8; 48:14; 73:24; Prov 3:5,6.

**24:35** Material prosperity was often a sign of God's blessing then, but not necessarily now. Many godly people are poor, many godless people are rich (Luke 6:20-26; 16:19-31; James 2:57).

**24:40** "Walk" - see 17:1.

water from your water pot to drink', 44 and she says to me, 'You drink, and I will also draw *water* for your camels', *let her be* the woman whom the LORD has decided on for my master's son.'

45 "And before I had finished speaking in my heart, suddenly Rebekah came out with her *water* pot on her shoulder, and she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.'

46 "And she hurried and lowered her water pot from her *shoulder*; and said, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also.' So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

47 "And I asked her and said, 'Whose daughter *are* you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him'. And I put the ring on her face, and the bracelets on her arms. 48 And I bowed my head and worshipped the LORD, and praised the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter for his son. 49 And now if you will deal kindly and faithfully with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me, so that I may turn to the right or to the left."

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The matter comes from the LORD. We cannot speak to you *anything either* bad or good. 51 See, Rebekah is before you. Take *her* and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the Lord has said."

52 And it came about that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the ground. 53 And the servant took out silver jewels, gold jewels, and clothing, and gave *them* to Rebekah. Also he gave to her brother and to her mother valuable things. 54 And they ate and drank, he and the men who were with him, and spent the night *there*. In the morning they got up and he said, "Send me away to my master."

55 And her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us for *a few* days, at least ten. After that she will go."

56 And he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has made my journey successful.

Send me away so I can go to my master."

57 And they said, "We will call the girl, and ask her what she has to say."

58 And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."

59 And they sent away their sister Rebekah, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "You are our sister. *May* you *become* the mother of thousands of millions, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate them."

61 And Rebekah and her maids got up, and rode on the camels, and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. 62 And Isaac had come from the way of the well Lahai Roi, for he lived in the south *of the* country. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening, and he raised his eyes and looked, and there *were* the camels coming. 64 And Rebekah raised her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she got down from the camel, 65 for she had said to the servant, "What man *is* this walking in the field to meet us?" And the servant had said, "It *is* my master." So she took a veil and covered herself.

66 And the servant told Isaac everything that he had done. 67 And Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. And he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's *death*.

**25** Then again Abraham took a wife. Her name was Keturah. 2 And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 And Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. 4 And the sons of Midian: Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these *were* the children of Keturah.

5 But Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. 6 But to the sons of the concubines whom Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from Isaac his son, eastward, to the east country.

7 And these are the days of the years of

**24:60** See 22:17.

**24:67** In the events of the Old Testament there are often pictures of spiritual truth later revealed in the New Testament. Some think we have a picture in this chapter of the same truth Jesus presented in the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son (Matt 22:2). If this is so (and it is possible, though not at all certain) Abraham would represent God the Father who would make a marriage for His Son. The servant would represent the Holy Spirit who has come into the world to win the bride and who presents Christ to

people (John 16:13,14). Rebekah would represent the bride of Christ, His Church (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-32; Rev 19:7,8). Isaac would represent the Lord Jesus Christ who goes out to meet her (John 14:3; 1Thess 4:16,17).

**25:1** Keturah means "incense."

**25:5** See 15:4; 24:36.

**25:6** "Concubines" – the practice of polygamy was common in the ancient world, but it was not God's instruction to men. See 2:24; 30:1.

**25:7** Abraham lived 38 years after the death

Abraham's life: he lived a hundred and seventy-five years. 8 Then Abraham expired, dying in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. 9 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which faces Mamre, 10 the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried there. 11 And it came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. Isaac lived by the well Lahai Roi.

12 Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bore to Abraham; 13 these *are* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth, and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15 Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16 These *were* the sons of Ishmael, and these *are* their names, by their towns, and by their camps, twelve princes according to their nations. 17 And these *were* the years of the life of Ishmael: a hundred and thirty-seven years, and he expired. He died and was gathered to his people. 18 And they lived from Havilah to Shur, that *is* east of Egypt, as you go toward Assyria. He died in the presence of all his brothers.

19 And these *are* the generations of Isaac,

of his first wife.

**25:8** "Gathered to his people" – this phrase, meaning death, is used often in the Old Testament (25:17; 35:29; 49:29,33; etc). There may be in the phrase, as some think, a suggestion of survival after death.

**25:9-10** See 23:17-18.

"Sons of Heth" – the Hittites.

**25:11** See 12:2,3; 26:3.

**25:16** See 17:20,21.

**25:18** Many present-day Arabs claim descent from Ishmael.

**25:20** "Padam-Aram" – a region in what is present-day Syria.

**25:21** "Barren" – 20:17,18; 1 Sam 1:2-17; 2:5; Ps 113:9; 127:3; Isa 54:1.

"Prayer" – Ps 65:2; 66:18,19.

**25:23** "Nations" – Edom and Israel – 32:3; Deut 2:4,8; 2 Sam 8:14; Jer 49:7,8; Amos 1:11; Obad 1; Mal 1:2.

"Younger" – 27:40; Rom 9:10-15. This was the exact reverse of the usual custom and order. But God's choice is according to His foreknowledge and sovereign will, and does not depend on the natural order of things.

**25:24** "Twins" – see how close together in time Jacob and Esau were born – Jacob was holding the heel of his brother. According to those who follow astrology they were born under the same sign of the zodiac. The position of the stars and planets were the same for both of them. Yet how vastly different were their whole futures! One became loved and blessed by God, and the other became

Abraham's son: Abraham begot Isaac. 20 And Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

21 And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren. And his prayer was accepted by the LORD, and his wife Rebekah conceived. 22 And the children struggled together in her, and she said, "If *it is* so, why *am I* like this?" And she went to ask the LORD.

23 And the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two kinds of people will be separated from your body; and the *one* people will be stronger than the other people, and the older will serve the younger."

24 And when her days to give birth were fulfilled, indeed *there were* twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red, like a hairy garment all over. And they called his name Esau. 26 And after that his brother came out, his hand holding on to Esau's heel. And his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

27 And the boys grew. Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the open field, but Jacob was a quiet man, staying in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 And Jacob was boiling some soup, and Esau

rejected and hated by God – see Mal 1:2,3. Their futures were not in the stars but in their response to God and in God's decisions about them. This is always true. The position of planets and stars when we are born has absolutely nothing to do with what we will become.

Astrology cannot explain why the lives of twins should be so different, or anything else that can stand examination. It is a senseless superstition. Those who teach it have found it is a way to make money and to hold people in their power. In the case of Jacob and Esau (and this is true of us all), the important thing was the way they responded to the true and living God, and their attitude toward His promises. Jacob, though he had many faults, had faith in God and put great value on those promises. Esau did not care about either God or His promises. On astrology see Daniel chapter 2 and the note at 2:2.

**25:25** Esau means "hairy."

**25:26** Jacob means "he grasps the heel." This signified a person who is a "supplanter" or "deceiver."

**25:27** "Open field" – the word "field" does not mean he was a farmer. The Hebrew word can also mean an area where wild animals are. Esau was not one for plowing the fields, but for hunting or playing in them.

**25:29** "Was boiling *some* soup" – the Hebrew word here translated "soup" means literally "something boiled", such as soup, stew, or such like.

came from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please let me eat some of that red soup, for I'm worn out." Therefore his name was called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, "Sell me this day your birthright."

32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die, and so what good will this birthright do me?"

33 And Jacob said, "Swear to me this day", and he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil soup, and he ate and drank, and got up and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

**26** And there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. 2 And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt. Stay in the land which I will tell you about. 3 Stay in this land for a time, and I will be with you, and will bless you. For to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will confirm the oath which I swore to Abraham your father, 4 and I will make your offspring to increase in number like the stars of heaven, and will give all these lands to your offspring, and in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

**25:30** Edom means "red."

**25:31** "Sell me" – Jacob began to show his scheming nature. But God would have fulfilled His will for him without his tricks (note at 27:18-26).

"Birthright" – the one who had the birthright or right of the firstborn was to be the head of the family. In this case, he was the one who would be in line to have the promise of the land and the blessings God had promised and through whom the Saviour of the world would come. Later, at least, the firstborn received a double portion of the inheritance (Deut 21:17).

**25:32-34** Esau was not about to die. It was simply that he cared nothing for the promises of God, and for his birthright which made him the heir of those promises. He was a mere worldly man without faith and saw no reason to sacrifice a present pleasure for a future good. Like many today his god was his belly (Phil 3:19). He is described in Heb 12:16,17. Jacob in many ways was an unspiritual man and was willing to take advantage of his brother. He should of course simply have fed him without asking anything for it. Later, in chapter 27, he was willing to deceive his father to get what he wanted. But with all his faults he had a true faith in God which made him value God's promised blessings. Faith is exceedingly important in God's sight – 15:6; Heb 11:6; 1 John 5:10; Ps 78:21,22; Hab

6 And Isaac stayed in Gerar, 7 and the men of the place asked him about his wife, and he said, "She is my sister", for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife", thinking "The men of the place will kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to look at."

8 And when he had been there a long time, it so happened that Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out a window and now saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. 9 And Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Look, surely she *is* your wife, and how is it that you said, 'She *is* my sister?'" And Isaac said to him, "Because I said that I may die on her account."

10 And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us."

11 And Abimelech ordered all *his* people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife will surely be put to death."

12 Then Isaac sowed *seed* in that land and obtained in the same year a hundredfold, and the LORD blessed him, 13 and the man became rich and went on increasing until he became very rich. 14 He had possessions of flocks, possessions of herds, and great number of servants, and the Philistines envied him. 15 So all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham the Philistines stopped up and filled them

2:4; Matt 17:20; 21:21,22; Mark 9:23; 11:24; John 3:36.

"Despised" – the Hebrew word does not mean "hated" but "regarded with contempt" or "disdained." The birthright meant nothing to Esau.

**26:1** "Famine" – 12:10.

"Abimelech" – 20:1,2; title to psalm 34. It is probable that Abimelech was a title of successive Philistine kings, as Pharaoh was of Egyptian kings.

"Philistines" – note at 10:14.

**26:2** "Appeared" – note at 12:7.

**26:3,4** See 15:18; 17:8; 22:15-18; 26:24; 28:15; 31:3; Gal 3:8.

**26:5** "Obeyed" – 12:4; 17:9,23; 18:19; 22:18. Here again is the teaching that obedience brings God's blessing.

**26:7** Like father, like son (Gen 12:13; 20:2,12).

**26:9** "I may die" – it is better to lose one's life than to be a liar. For God hates lying, but loves those who are willing to die rather than sin. Here once more we see that fear may cause men to sin. Note at 18:15.

**26:10** Again an outsider has to rebuke one of God's people (20:9).

**26:12-22** God forgave Isaac and gave him blessing. However, though Isaac was prospering materially his days in Gerar were a time of continual strife and difficulties. He is an example to us of a man of peace who would rather move on than fight with his



with earth.

16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us. For you are much more powerful than we *are*."

17 And Isaac left there and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and stayed there. 18 And Isaac dug out the wells of water again, which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. And he called their names according to the names which his father had given them.

19 And Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. 20 And the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water *is* ours"; and so he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. 21 And they dug another well, and quarreled about that *one* also, and *so* he called its name Sitnah. 22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel about that *one*, and he gave it the name Rehoboth, saying, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land."

23 And he went up from there to Beersheba. 24 And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I *am* the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I *am* with you, and will bless you, and increase *the number of* your offspring, for the sake of my servant Abraham."

25 And he built an altar there, and called on the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there. And Isaac's servants dug a well there.

26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol, the commander of his army, came with him. 27 And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hated me and sent me away from you?"

28 And they said, "We saw that the LORD was really with you, and we said, 'Now let there be an oath between us, between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you, so 29 that you will not harm us, just as we have not touched you, and have

done to you nothing but good, and have sent you away in peace. You are now blessed by the LORD.'"

30 And he made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. 31 And they got up early in the morning, and gave *their* oath to one another. Then Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 And it so happened that the same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." 33 And he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city *is* Beersheba to this day.

34 And Esau was forty years old when he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 They were a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah.

**27** And it came about that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son," and he said to him, "See, *here* I am."

2 And he said, "Look now, I am old, *and* I do not know the day of my death. 3 Please take your weapons now, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and get me some venison, 4 and prepare for me the kind of tasty food I love, and bring *it* to me, so that I can eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

5 And Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison and bring *it*. 6 And Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Look, I heard your father speaking to your brother Esau, saying, 7 'Bring me venison and prepare for me tasty food, so that I may eat, and bless you in the LORD's presence before my death.' 8 Therefore, my son, now obey my voice in what I command you. 9 Go now to the flock, and bring me from there two choice young goats, and with them I will prepare for your father the kind of tasty food he loves, 10 and you shall take it to your father, so that he may eat, and so

neighbors. And he did not take revenge on them (Rom 12:17-19; Heb 12:14).

**26:20-22** "Esek" means "dispute." "Sitnah" means "opposition." "Rehoboth" means "wide space."

**26:24** "Abraham" - v 5.

**26:25** "Altar" - 8:20; 12:7.

**26:28** "With you" - 21:22. When it was clear that God was with Isaac it made a profound impression on his enemies and resulted in peace (Prov 16:7).

**26:33** "Shebah" means both "oath" and "seven."

"Beersheba" - 21:31.

**26:34,35** Esau married women of the land who worshiped idols and gods other than Jehovah the one true God. Isaac did not do for Esau what Abraham had done for him (24:3,4). The Hittites were a powerful people

whose center of power was in what is now called Turkey. Many of them had settled in Canaan and the country was once controlled by them (23:3; Num 13:29; 2 Sam 11:3). **27:1-4** Did Isaac understand that God had rejected Esau and chosen Jacob? Or, even having understood, did he decide to put his own will above God's and give the chief blessing, the blessing of the firstborn, to Esau anyway? We are not told what was in his mind and heart, but it seems he had no intention of blessing Jacob at all. This favoritism had its roots in an unspiritual motive - see 25:28. Isaac had a sinful nature, as all men have. Compare 9:21; 12:13; Rom 3:9-20.

**27:5-17** Rebekah determined to get the blessing of Isaac for Jacob (and through Isaac the blessing of God), even though it



that he may bless you before his death."

11 And Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, "Look, my brother Esau *is* a hairy man, and I am a man *with* smooth *skin*. 12 Perhaps my father will touch me, and *then* I will seem like a deceiver to him, and I will bring a curse on myself, and not a blessing."

13 And his mother said to him, "Your curse be on me, my son. Just obey my voice and go get *them* for me."

14 And he went and got *them* and brought *them* to his mother. And his mother prepared the kind of tasty food that his father loved. 15 And Rebekah took the best clothes of her older son Esau, which *were* with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. 16 And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth *skin* of his neck, 17 and she placed the tasty food and the bread, which she had prepared, in the hand of her son Jacob.

18 And he came to his father and said, "My father", and he said, "Here I am. Who *are* you, my son?"

19 And Jacob said to his father, "I *am* Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please get up, sit and eat *some* of my venison, so that your soul may bless me."

20 And Isaac said to his son, "How *is it* that you have found it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought *it* to me."

21 And Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, so that I can touch you, my son, *to see* whether you *are* really my son Esau or not."

22 And Jacob went near to Isaac his father. And he touched him and said, "The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau."

23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him. 24 And he said, "*Are* you really my

son Esau?" And he said, "I am."

25 And he said, "Bring *it* near me and I will eat of my son's venison, so that my soul may bless you." And he brought *it* near him, and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank.

26 And his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now, and kiss me, my son."

27 And he came near and kissed him. And he smelled the odor of his clothes, and blessed him, and said,

"See, the smell of my son  
*is* like the smell of a field  
which the Lord has blessed.

28 Therefore may God give you  
of the dew of heaven,  
and of the fatness of the earth,  
and an abundance of grain and wine.

29 Let people serve you,  
and nations bow down to you.  
Be lord over your brothers,  
and let your mother's sons  
bow down to you.

Cursed *be* every one who curses you,  
and blessed *be* he who blesses you."

30 And it came about that, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob and Jacob had hardly gone away from the presence of his father Isaac, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 And he too had prepared tasty food, and *now* he brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father get up and eat of his son's venison, so that your soul may bless me."

32 And his father Isaac said to him, "Who *are* you?" And he said, "I *am* your son, your firstborn Esau."

33 And Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who? Where *is* the one who got venison and brought it

meant deceiving her husband. Evidently she regarded God's promises as something of great value. But she also was guilty of favoritism (25:28).

**27:18-26** Jacob too was willing to lie and deceive in order to get God's blessing. In all this, though both Jacob and his mother sinned, they showed their faith in God's promises. And faith, even weak faith, is very important in God's dealings with men (references at 25:34). God rewarded their faith but He punished their deception. Jacob indeed got the blessing but later he himself was deceived and suffered much at the hands of his father-in-law (29:25; 31:7,40,41). And Rebekah no doubt suffered because she was separated from Jacob and may never have seen him again (28:5. After chapter 27 Rebecca no longer appears in Genesis). God hates lying and deception and will certainly punish it (Prov 6:16-19; 12:22; 19:5,9; Gal 6:7; Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9).

It was not only sinful for Jacob to

deceive his father, it was also quite unnecessary. Before Esau and Jacob were born God had already chosen Jacob and said that the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). See 25:23; Rom 9:10-13. God would have fulfilled His word without the scheming and lying of Jacob and his mother. It is never necessary for men to use tricks, lies and deception to get God to fulfill His will toward them. God will do it in His time and way if men will trust Him and leave matters in His hands. Notes at 12:13; Josh 2:5; 1 Sam 27:10; 2 Sam 15:34.

**27:20** "Your God" - Jacob does not say, "my God" (see 28:21; 31:54; 35:3). And he was willing to lie in God's name, which shows how far he had to go to become a spiritual man. **27:27-29** This was the blessing God gave to Abraham in different words (12:1-3), and what the Lord had already told Rebekah in 25:23. **27:31** Verse 4. Was Isaac unable to give a blessing without eating a tasty meal?

**27:33** "He will be blessed" - Isaac believed

to me? And I ate all *of it* before you came, and blessed him. Yes, *and* he will be blessed."

34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with a very great and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me, me too, O my father."

35 And he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and took away your blessing."

36 And he said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and, see, now he has taken away my blessing." And he said, "Haven't you reserved a blessing for me?"

37 And Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Look, I have made him your lord, and I have given all his brothers to him for servants, and I have sustained him with corn and wine. And now what will I do for you, my son?"

38 And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me too, O my father." And Esau raised his voice and wept.

39 And his father Isaac answered and said to him,

"See, your dwelling will be  
away from the fatness of the earth,  
and from the dew of heaven from above.

40 And you will live by your sword,  
and will serve your brother.

And it will come about  
when you grow restless,  
that you will break his yoke  
from off your neck."

41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand. Then I will kill my brother Jacob."

42 And these words of her elder son Esau were told to Rebekah, and she sent *word* and called her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Look, your brother Esau is consoling himself about you, *by planning* to kill you. 43 Now therefore, my son,

that he had given God's blessing to Jacob and that nothing could change it (Heb 11:20; Num 23:19,20). And indeed nothing could. Compare 9:25-27; 49:1.

**27:34** Too late Esau thought of what he had lost (25:33,34). Now he could not change his father's mind. See Heb 12:15-17.

**27:36** "Jacob" - 25:26. Esau here angrily describes what the name Jacob means. Jacob both deceived Esau and took his place to get the blessing.

**27:39** The land of the Edomites, which was south of the Dead Sea, was rocky and barren.

"From the fatness" - the Hebrew may also mean "of the fatness."

**27:40** "Grow restless" - the KJV has "shalt have the dominion", but this is so unlikely to be the meaning of the Hebrew here that

obey my voice. Get up and flee to Haran to Laban my brother, 44 and stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury subsides; 45 *just* until your brother's anger against you subsides, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and get you from there. Why should I be deprived of you both in one day?"

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these *who are* of the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

**28** And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and spoke to him giving him this command: "You shall not take a wife from among the daughters of Canaan. 2 Arise, go to Padan-Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take a wife for yourself from there from among the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. 3 And God Almighty bless you, make you fruitful, and increase your *number* so that you may become a multitude of people, 4 and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you, so that you may inherit the land in which you are a foreigner, which God gave to Abraham." 5 And Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Padan-Aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

6 And Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan-Aram to take a wife for himself from there, *and that* when he blessed him he gave him a command saying, "You shall not take a wife from among the daughters of Canaan," 7 and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and went to Padan-Aram. 8 When Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father, 9 then Esau went to Ishmael, and in addition to the wives he *already* had, took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

10 And Jacob left Beersheba and went toward

we have changed it.

"Neck" - 2 Kings 8:20-22.

**27:41** "Kill" - this was a further corruption of a nature already seen to be corrupt (25:34. Compare 4:8). But how great the trouble usually caused by deceit!

**27:46** See 26:34,35. This was Rebekah's way of getting Isaac to send Jacob away out of danger.

**28:1** "Blessed him" - Isaac accepted the fact that God had chosen Jacob (28:33).

"Of Canaan" - 10:15-19 - the Canaanites were the inhabitants of the land before Abraham came there.

**28:3** "God Almighty" - in Hebrew El-Shaddai - note at 17:1.

**28:4** See 12:2,3; 15:18-21.

**28:10** Now the story of the Bible narrows

Haran. 11 And he came to a certain place and spent all night there, because the sun had set. And he took *one* of the stones of that place, and put it for his pillow and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and a ladder appeared, set up on the earth and its top reached to heaven, and the angels of God appeared, ascending and descending on it. 13 And the LORD appeared, standing above it and saying, "I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac. I will give the land where you are lying to you and to your offspring, 14 and your offspring will be like the dust of the earth *in number*, and you will spread out to the west, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and in you and in your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed. 15 And, see, I *am* with you and will keep you in every place you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you about."

16 And Jacob awoke from his sleep, and he said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know *it*." 17 And he was afraid, and said, "How awe-inspiring *is* this place! This *is* nothing else than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

18 And Jacob got up early in the morning, took the stone that he had put for his pillow, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Beth-El, but at first the name of that city was called Luz.

down to Jacob and his descendants, because the covenant God made with Abraham has been confirmed to Jacob, and it is through his descendants that God had determined to bring His blessings to the world.

"Haran" – 11:31.

**28:12** "Dreamed" – notes at 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

"Ladder" – see John 1:51. The Lord Jesus Himself is the way God has appointed between earth and heaven – John 14:6; Heb 10:19-22. And He is the one and only Mediator between God and men – 1 Tim 2:5.

**28:13** Jacob is fearful and fleeing for his life to another country. God in mercy confirms to him the covenant and promises made to Abraham.

**28:14** "Blessed" – 12:23; John 4:22; Isa 2:3; Rom 9:4,5.

**28:15** "With you" – references at 21:22.

"Keep you" – Num 6:24; 1 Sam 2:9; Ps 121:4,5,7; John 10:28; 17:12,15; 2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 24.

**28:16,17** Jacob was right. The true God is awe-inspiring, and wherever He appears is a holy place. And all men should learn to fear Him. Compare Ex 3:4-6; 19:20,21; Deut 28:58; Josh 5:13-15; Ps 33:8; 68:35.

**28:18** "Pillar" – this was a memorial pillar, not a thing to worship. He poured oil on it to dedicate the place to the true God.

**28:19** Bethel means "house of God." It became one of the important places in the

20 And Jacob make a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I am going, and will give me bread to eat, and clothes to wear, 21 so that I return to my father's house in peace, then the LORD will be my God, 22 and this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will become God's house. And I will surely give you a tenth of all that you give me."

**29** Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the people of the east. 2 And he looked, and saw a well in the field, and there *were* three flocks of sheep lying by it, for they watered the flocks from that well. And a large stone was on the well's mouth. 3 All the flocks would be gathered there, and *then* they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone again in its place on the well's mouth.

4 And Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where *are* you from?" And they said, "We *are* from Haran." 5 And he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him."

6 And he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "*He is* well. And, look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep."

7 And he said, "Look, *it is* still broad day, and not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed *them*."

8 And they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and until they roll the stone

Old Testament (12:8; 35:1; Jud 1:22; 1 Kings 12:28; 2 Kings 2:3; 17:28; 23:15), mentioned about 70 times.

**28:20** Jacob's faith, though real, was not strong. He puts an "if" when God had not put one. God's promise was not based on conditions. But Jacob seems to be trying to bargain with God in vs 21,22. In v 15 God said "I am with you, I will watch over you, I will bring you back." He did not say, "If you are good, and if you give me a tenth, and if you make Bethel a special place, I will be with you." When faced with God's promises let us be careful not to think as Jacob did here. But we see in Jacob's life that God deals lovingly and tenderly with weak believers. Compare Ps 103:13,14; Matt 6:30; 8:26; etc.

**28:21** "My God" – he would take Jehovah as his personal God and worship and serve Him – "if." But we should all believe, worship and serve Jehovah without any "ifs" whatever, simply because He is the one and only true God.

**28:22** "Tenth" – 14:20; Lev 27:30; Num 18:21; Deut 14:22; Mal 3:8. A tenth of one's income was the bare minimum God wanted from His people. But God did not mention it to Jacob as a condition of the fulfillment of His promises.

**29:1** "People of the east" – northeast of Canaan.

**29:5** "Nahor" – 11:27-29.

from the well's mouth. Then we will water the sheep."

9 And while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she tended them. 10 And it came about when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. 11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and raised his voice and wept. 12 And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative, and that he *was* Rebekah's son. And she ran and told her father.

13 And it came about when Laban heard the news about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, "You really are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

15 And Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative should you then serve me for nothing? Tell me what your wages *will be*."

16 And Laban had two daughters; the name of the older *was* Leah, and the name of the younger *was* Rachel. 17 Leah was tender eyed, but Rachel *was* beautiful and pleasing in appearance. 18 And Jacob loved Rachel, and said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

19 And Laban said, "*It is* better that I give her to you, than to give her to another man. Stay with me." 20 And Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him *but* a few days, because of the love he had for her.

21 And Jacob said to Laban, "My time is fulfilled. Give *me* my wife so that I may go to her."

22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. 23 And it came about that in the evening he took Leah his daughter, and

brought her to him, and *he* went in with her. 24 And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid servant.

25 And it came about that in the morning, *lo and behold, it was* Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"

26 And Laban said, "Giving the younger before the firstborn is not done in our country. 27 Fulfill her *bridal* week, and we will give you this *one* also for the service which you will give me for still another seven years."

28 And Jacob did so. He fulfilled her week, and Laban gave him Rachel his daughter also as *his* wife. 29 And Laban gave his maid servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid. 30 And *Jacob* went in also to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah, and served with him still another seven years.

31 And when the LORD saw that Leah *was* hated, he opened her womb. But Rachel *was* barren. 32 And Leah conceived, and gave birth to a son, and she called his name Reuben. For she said, "Surely the LORD has looked on my misery. So now my husband will love me."

33 And she conceived again, and gave birth to a son, and said, "Because the LORD heard that I *was* hated, he has given me this *son* also." And she called his name Simeon.

34 And she conceived again, and gave birth to a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become united to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi.

35 And she conceived again, and gave birth to a son, and she said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. And she stopped bearing *children*.

**29:12** "Father's relative" – the KJV has "brother", but Jacob was Laban's nephew. This is an illustration that a too literal translation of a Hebrew word or phrase sometimes can be misleading. In Hebrew the words brother, father, son, etc. have a wide range of meaning.

**29:15** Laban seemed to be loving and generous, but his true character was something else, as is later revealed. How often men seem to be one thing and later prove to be the opposite.

**29:18** It was the custom in those days, in that part of the world, for the men to pay a dowry for brides – the opposite of India's custom (24:53; Ex 22:16,17; Deut 22:28,29).

**29:25** "Deceived" – 25:26; 27:35,36; Gal 6:7; Prov 22:8; Ps 18:25,26. They who deceive others should not be surprised if others deceive them. It is no strange thing for men to be paid back in their own coin. Those who will not live according to the

principle of Matt 7:12 will find many thorns in their paths.

**29:27** See 31:41.

**29:28** Polygamy was not ordained by God – 2:23,24.

**29:31,32** God loves the unloved and unlovable. He sees their loneliness and sorrow and He cares. Leah became the mother of two of the greatest tribes in Israel – Levi and Judah – and one of the ancestors of king David and the Lord Jesus. Reuben means "see, a son!"

**29:33** Simeon means "heard" or "hearing."

**29:34** "Now" – evidently, up until this time, Jacob had not shown her the affection she craved. Levi means "joined."

**29:35** Leah does not mention her husband this time. Perhaps she was beginning to accept the fact that he would never really love her, and sought to find her joy in her children, and (who knows?) in God. Judah sounds like the Hebrew word for praise and may mean "praise" or "let Him (God) be praised."

**30** And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I'll die."

2 And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

3 And she said, "See my maid Bilhah, go to her. She will bear *a child* on my knees, so that I may also have children through her."

4 And she gave him Bilhah her maid servant as a wife, and Jacob went to her. 5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 And Rachel said, "God has given judgement *for* me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan.

7 And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 And Rachel said, "I have struggled with my sister with great struggles, *and I have won.*" And she called his name Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing *children*, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10 And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11 And Leah said, "A troop is coming." And she called his name Gad.

12 And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13 And Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." And she called his name Asher.

14 At the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me *some* of your son's mandrakes."

15 And she said to her, "*Is it* a small matter that

you have taken my husband? And would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes."

16 And Jacob came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come to me, for I have certainly hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night.

17 And God listened to Leah and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 And Leah said, "God has given me my wages because I have given my maid servant to my husband." And she called his name Issachar.

19 And Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 And Leah said, "God has granted me a good gift. Now my husband will stay with me, because I have borne him six sons." And she called his name Zebulun.

21 And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22 And God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her, and opened her womb. 23 And she conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach." 24 And she called his name Joseph, saying, "The LORD will add to me another son."

25 And it came about, when Rachel had given birth to Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, so that I may go to my own place and to my country. 26 Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and let me go. For you know my service which I have rendered you."

27 And Laban said to him, "Please, if I have

**30:1** Though some Old Testament people of God had more than one wife at a time this was not God's instruction to them or to anyone. God's appointed way was one man, one wife (2:21-24; Matt 19:1-9). In this chapter we will see that multiple wives meant multiple troubles. In verse 1 there is envy, in verse 2 anger, in verses 3,4 carnal thinking, in verse 8 strife, in verses 14-16 ignorant quarreling. Jacob's example is not good but bad. And the Bible records bad example, not that we might follow it, but that we might avoid it. In the following verses we see again the sad condition of the human heart. All are sinners, all fail in many ways to live up to God's standards. The Bible tells things as they are, not as we might vainly imagine them to be. People who obtain salvation do so by the grace of God, not by their own supposed goodness. **30:2** See 20:18; Ps 113:9; 127:3.

**30:3** Verse 9; 16:2. Again we see the desperation women felt in ancient times to have children and a family.

**30:6** Dan means "He judged", or "He vindicated."

**30:8** Naphtali means "my struggle."

**30:13** "I am happy" – compare 29:32. God enabled her to come from misery to

happiness. God delights to do this. Compare Isa 61:3. Asher means "happy" or "blessed." **30:14-16** "Mandrakes" – a plant which they mistakenly thought produced fertility in women, if eaten.

**30:17** It was God's grace, not eating mandrakes, that gave another son to Leah.

**30:18** "Maid servant" – Leah was altogether mistaken about the reason God gave her another son. Issachar sounds like the Hebrew word for reward. It may mean "man of hire", or "there is a reward."

**30:20** Leah no longer speaks of her husband loving her (29:32,34). But she did not give up hope that he would at least show her some respect. Zebulun may mean "dwelling" or "honor" or "exalted."

**30:21** Dinah means "judgment."

**30:22** See 8:1.

**30:23** "Reproach" – she considered it a disgrace not to have children – compare 1 Sam 1:2,7; Luke 1:25. But of course it was not. It was simply God's will for her until God later decided to give her children. God's will for us is never a reproach if we believe Him and serve Him (Rom 12:1,2).

**30:24** Joseph means "increase", or "may He add." Compare Prov 30:15,16.

**30:27** "On your account" – 21:22; 26:24;



found favour in your eyes, *stay here*. I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me on your account." 28 And he said, "Tell me your wages, and I will pay *them*."

29 And he said to him, "You know how I have served you, and how your cattle was with me. 30 For you *had* little before I *came*, and it is *now* increased enormously. And the LORD has blessed you since my coming. But now when shall I provide for my own house also?"

31 And he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flock: 32 I will go through your whole flock today, removing from it all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the dark-coloured ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and *these* will be my wages. 33 So my righteousness will testify for me in the coming days, when you come concerning my wages: among the goats every one with me that *is* not speckled and spotted, and dark-coloured among the lambs, that will be counted as stolen."

34 And Laban said, "Right. Let it be according to your word." 35 And that *very* day he removed the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had *some* white in it, and all the dark-coloured ones among the lambs, and gave *them* into the hand of his sons. 36 And he put a three-days journey between himself and Jacob. And Jacob tended the rest of Laban's flocks.

37 Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar, almond and plane trees, and peeled them in white strips, making the white in the rods appear. 38 And he set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the channels in the watering troughs, when the flocks came to drink. And they mated when they came to drink. 39 So the flocks mated in front of the rods and they bore streaked, speckled and spotted *young*. 40 And Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward all the streaked and dark-coloured *ones*

in the flock of Laban. And he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them among the flocks belonging to Laban. 41 And it came about that whenever the stronger *ones of the* flock mated, Jacob placed the rods in front of the eyes of the flock in the *water* channels, so that they might mate near the rods. 42 But he did not place *the rods* there if the *animals in the* flock were weak. So the weaker ones were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. 43 And the man greatly increased *in wealth*, and had many flocks, female servants, male servants, camels and donkeys.

**31** And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that belonged to our father, and he has gained all this wealth from that which was our father's." 2 And Jacob looked at the face of Laban, and now it *was* not *friendly* toward him as before.

3 And the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers, and to your relatives, and I will be with you."

4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock, 5 and he said to them, "I see *from* your father's face that he *is* not *friendly* toward me as before, but the God of my father has been with me. 6 And you know that I have served your father with all my strength. 7 And your father has deceived me, and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. 8 If he said: 'The speckled *ones* will be your wages', then all the flocks bore speckled *ones*, and if he said: 'The streaked *ones* will be your wages', then all the *animals in the* flock bore streaked *ones*. 9 So God has taken away the flocks of your father and given *them* to me.

10 "And it so happened at the mating season of the flock that in a dream I raised my eyes and saw that the rams which were mating were streaked, speckled, and spotted. 11 And the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob', and I said, 'Here I am.' 12 And he said, 'Raise your eyes and look. All the rams which mate with the flock are streaked,

39:3,4; Isa 61:9.

**30:35,36** Jacob deceived his brother and his father; his father-in-law deceived him. If he could have managed it he would not have left Jacob a single sheep or goat as his own.

**30:37-43** Jacob thought he knew a few tricks himself. Actually the rods placed before the mating sheep and goats had absolutely nothing to do with the kind of offspring they produced. The reason why more striped, speckled and spotted offspring were produced is given in 31:11,12. It was God's grace working through natural processes and not Jacob's tricks that made the difference.

**31:3** "With you" - 28:15.

**31:5** Verse 42; 30:30. Jacob acknowledges that God has been with him, but still does not say "my God" (27:20).

**31:7** "Ten times" - it seems that Laban had deceived and cheated Jacob more times than the two recorded instances.

"Harm me" - compare 50:20; Num 23:8; Job 1:10; Ps 105:15; 115:9; Heb 13:6; 1 Pet 3:13. No one can harm the child of God unless God permits it. And if God permits it, it will be for his good. Read and believe Rom 8:28.

**31:9** Jacob acknowledges that it was God who did this and not his tricks - 30:37-43.

**31:10,11** "Dream" - v 24. Notes on dreams



speckled, and spotted, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 13 I *am* the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar *and* where you made a vow to me. Now get up and go away from this land, and return to the land of your relatives.”

14 And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, “Is there still any share or inheritance for us in our father’s house? 15 Are we not counted by him as foreigners? For he has sold us and also has entirely eaten up our money. 16 For all the riches which God has taken from our father *is* ours, and our children’s. Now then, do whatever God has told you.”

17 Then Jacob rose up, and put his sons and his wives on camels, 18 and took away all his livestock, and all his goods which he had accumulated, his acquired livestock which he had accumulated in Padan-Aram, to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

19 And Laban went to shear his sheep. And Rachel stole her father’s household gods. 20 And Jacob deceived Laban the Syrian, by not telling him that he was running away. 21 So he fled with all that he had. And he got up and crossed over the river, and set his face toward Mount Gilead.

22 And on the third day Laban was told that Jacob had run away. 23 And he took his brothers with him, and pursued him a seven-days’ journey, and they caught up to him in Mount Gilead. 24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream at night, and said to him, “Watch out that you do not say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.”

25 Then Laban caught up to Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent on the mountain. And Laban, with his brothers, *also* pitched on the mountain of Gilead. 26 And Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done by deceiving me, and carrying away my

daughters like captives *taken* by the sword? 27 Why did you run away secretly and deceive me? You did not tell me so that I could send you away with joy and with songs, with tambourines and with harp. 28 And you have not allowed me to kiss my sons and my daughters. You have now acted foolishly in doing so. 29 It is in the power of my hand to harm you, but the God of your father spoke to me yesterday night, saying, ‘Watch out that you do not say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.’ 30 And now you have certainly gone away, because you were longing for your father’s house. Still, why have you stolen my gods?”

31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, “I was afraid, because I said, ‘Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.’ 32 Whoever you find your gods with, let him not live. In the presence of our relatives see anything that is yours with me, and take *it*.” For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

33 And Laban went into Jacob’s tent, and into Leah’s tent, and into the tents of the two maid servants, but he did not find *them*. Then he went out of Leah’s tent, and entered Rachel’s tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the idols and put them in the camel’s saddle, and had sat down on them. And Laban searched the whole tent but did not find *them*.

35 And she said to her father, “Do not be angry, my lord, because I cannot rise in your presence, for the way *it gets* with women is now with me.” And he searched, but did not find the idols.

36 And Jacob became angry and contended with Laban. And Jacob answered and said to Laban, “What *is* my crime, what *is* my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? 37 Now that you have searched all my things, what have you found of all

at 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

**31:13** “I am the God” – here the angel of God (v 11) says He is God.

“Angel of God” – note at 16:7.

“Bethel” – 28:19.

**31:15** See 29:20,23,27.

**31:19** Though Laban knew of the one true God (v 53), and knew that it was He who had blessed them (30:27), he still foolishly kept idols in his house and called them his gods (v 30). Sadder still is the fact that Rachel wanted them so badly she was willing to steal them. Had Jacob been so busy gaining wealth that he had not taken time to instruct his beloved wife in the truth of God? Would he have even desired to do so (compare 35:2)? We cannot be sure. Sometimes people reject instruction even when it is given. Perhaps Jacob told Rachel the truth about God and idols and she did not believe it.

**31:20** “Deceived” – 25:26; 27:35,36; Jer 13:23; 17:9.

**31:21** “River” – Euphrates river.

“Gilead” – territory bordering on Canaan to the east.

**31:24** “Dream” – v 11.

**31:26,27** Why should people who deceive others be surprised when others deceive them? Note at 29:25.

**31:29** “Harm” – in this Laban was mistaken. Note at v 7. Compare John 19:10,11.

**31:30** Verse 19; Josh 24:2. Of what value are gods which can be stolen? Jud 6:30,31; Ps 115:3-8; Isa 42:17; 44:12-20.

**31:31** “Afraid” – Jacob had learned enough of Laban’s deceitful nature to be afraid of what he might do. He should have been afraid of his own nature also. We should be more afraid of the defects in our own characters than those in other people.

**31:35** Rachel also did not mind practicing deceit. It seemed that none of them realized that families and peoples who practice lying and deceiving will experience all kinds of troubles and difficulties.

**31:37** “Family members” – KJV has “brothers”, but here the Hebrew word obviously means

your household things? Put *it* here before my family members and your family members, so that they may judge between the two of us.

38 "These twenty years I *have been* with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. 39 I did not bring to you those which were torn by beasts; I bore the loss of it. You demanded from me what was stolen either by day or by night. 40 *This is how* I was: in the day the heat consumed me, and the frost at night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. 41 Now I have been in your house for twenty years. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your livestock, and you changed my wages ten times. 42 Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely you would now have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my misery and the labour of my hands, and rebuked *you* yesterday night."

43 And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "*These* daughters are my daughters, and *these* children *are* my children, and *these* flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about their children whom they have borne? 44 So now come on, let us make a covenant, I and you, and let it be as a witness between me and you."

45 And Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. 46 And Jacob said to his relatives, "Gather *some* stones", and they took stones and made a heap. And they ate there by the heap *of stones*.

"relatives" or "family members." See note at 29:12.

**31:41** "Ten times" – v 7.

**31:42** "Fear of Isaac" – this means the God whom Isaac feared – the true God.

**31:44** See 21:27,32; 26:28; Josh 24:27.

**31:45** "Pillar" – 28:18.

**31:47** Both Jegar Sahadutha and Galeed mean "witness heap."

**31:49** Mizpah means "watchtower."

**31:50** "God is a witness" – Jud 11:10; Ps 139:3,7-12; Jer 42:5; Micah 1:2; Mal 2:14; 3:5; 1 Thess 2:10; Heb 4:13.

**31:53** If Laban had the one true God he had no need for household gods (v 30). But he, like Jacob, spoke of God as being someone else's God, not his own. Happy are those who can truly claim God as their own (Ps 3:7; 5:2; 7:1; 23:1; Dan 9:19; John 20:28; Phil 4:19).

**31:54** "Sacrifice" – for the first time we read of Jacob offering a sacrifice to God. It seems it took Jacob a long time to understand and practice certain basic matters related to a walk with God. His sacrifice here may be in fulfillment of his vow to take Jehovah as his God, if Jehovah did as He said He would do (28:21).

"Eat a meal" – literally, "eat bread", but the meaning is that they ate a meal

47 And Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed.

48 And Laban said, "Today this heap *is* a witness between me and you." Therefore its name was called Galeed, 49 and Mizpah. For he said, "The LORD watch between me and you, while we are absent from one another. 50 If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take *other* wives besides my daughters, *even though* no man *is* with us, see, God *is* a witness between me and you."

51 And Laban said to Jacob, "Look at this heap and look at *this* pillar, which I have set up between me and you. 52 *May* this heap be a witness, and *this* pillar *be* a witness, that I will not cross over this heap to you, and that you will not cross over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53 The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." And Jacob gave an oath by the Fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his relatives to eat a meal. And they ate the meal, and spent all night on the mountain.

55 And early in the morning Laban got up, and kissed his grandsons and his daughters, and blessed them. Then Laban left and returned to his place.

**32** And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, "This *is* God's host", and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother to the land of Seir, the country of

together. This is one of the ways the Hebrews expressed that. Here we have another illustration of the truth that a too literal translation may be misleading.

**31:55** "Kissed his grandsons" – KJV has "sons" here, but Laban had no sons there. He kissed the children of his daughters. In Hebrew words like "son" or "brother" have a much wider range of meaning than they do in English.

So Jacob parts from Laban after 20 years. He has gotten four wives, twelve children (Benjamin was born later) and great flocks. In spite of many troubles and afflictions, failings and faults, he continued to believe in God. God did not approve of many of his actions but was merciful to him and brought him safely back to his own land, as He had promised in 28:15. God proved Himself again to be a faithful, loving God. See Ex 34:6,7; Ps 86:15; 103:8-14; 108:4; 145:8; Joel 2:12,13; Micah 7:18-20; Rom 2:4.

**32:1** "Angels" – 16:7; 2 Kings 6:15-17; Ps 34:7; 91:11; Heb 1:13,14.

**32:2** Mahanaim means two camps or companies. Jacob received assurance that God's hosts were camped with his camp.

**32:3** "Esau" – Jacob feared that Esau would seek revenge for stealing his blessing and

Edom. 4 And he commanded them, saying, "Speak to my master Esau like this: 'Your servant Jacob says this, I have been staying with Laban, and remained there until now. 5 And I have oxen and donkeys, flocks, and male servants, and female servants. Now I have sent *men* to tell my master *this*, so that I may find favour in your sight.'"

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We went to your brother Esau, and he is also coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him."

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. And he divided the people with him, and the flocks, herds and camels, into two groups, 8 and said, "If Esau comes to the one group and attacks it, then the group which is left will escape."

9 And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country, and to your relatives, and I will prosper you', 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and all the faithfulness which you have showed to your servant. For with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I have become two groups. 11 Rescue me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, the hand of Esau, for I am afraid that he will come *and* attack me, and the mother with the children. 12 And you said, 'I will surely make you prosper, and make your offspring like the sand of the sea, which is so much that it cannot be numbered.'"

13 And he stayed there that night, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau: 14 two hundred female goats, twenty male goats, two hundred ewes, twenty rams, 15 thirty camels *giving* milk, together with

their young, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys, and ten foals. 16 And he put *them* in the hands of his servants, each drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Go on ahead of me and put a space between drove and drove."

17 And he commanded the one in the front, saying, "When my brother Esau meets you, and speaks and asks, 'To whom do you belong?', and, 'Where are you going?' and, 'Who owns these *herds* in front of you?' 18 Then you shall say, 'They *belong* to your servant Jacob. It *is* a present sent to my master Esau. And look, he *is* also behind us.'"

19 And he gave the same command to the second, and to the third, and to all who followed the droves, saying, "This is the way you must speak to Esau when you meet him. 20 And say also, 'Look, your servant Jacob *is* behind us.' For he said, 'I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and when I see his face, perhaps he will receive me.' 21 So the present went on before him, and he himself stayed that night in the camp.

22 And he got up that night, and took his two wives, and his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford Jabbok. 23 *After* he took them and brought them over the brook, he sent over his possessions. 24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until daybreak. 25 And when he saw that he was not overpowering *Jacob*, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh became out of joint, as he wrestled with him. 26 And he said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." And *Jacob* said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

27 And he said to him, "What *is* your name?" And he said, "Jacob."

birthright – vs 7,8; 27:36,41,42.

"Edom" – 25:30. The country of Edom was south of the Dead Sea, far from where Jacob then was.

**32:4** Notice how he calls Esau "master" and himself "servant", showing his willingness to submit to Esau (at least in word) for the sake of peace.

**32:9** "Return" – 31:3.

**32:10-12** Jacob is conscious of his sins and errors and realizes to some extent that his safety and prosperity depend on the grace of God. He does not plead his own goodness but the promises and faithfulness of God who had promised him good things – 28:13-15. Now Jacob does not try to bargain with God as he did then. Surely this was a spiritual step upward.

**32:13-21** Even after looking to God for safety he made his own plans to pacify Esau. Did he think God might fail him? Compare him with a man of more faith in God's protection – Ezra 8:21-23.

**32:22** "Jabbok" – a stream that flows from the east into the Jordan some 30 kilometers north of the Dead Sea.

**32:24** "Man" – an angel in the form of a man – the Messenger of the Lord, the Son of God Himself (vs 28,30; Hos 12:3-5). Note at 16:7.

"Daybreak" – this wrestling was surely more than physical. Jacob could not have wrestled physically for a whole night. Anyway the angel had more important matters in mind – matters of the spirit, mind, and will of Jacob.

**32:25** "Was not overpowering" – was this mighty angel unable to overcome a man? See Isa 37:36. The body he could easily overcome. It was Jacob's will and nature that would not be overpowered. With his thigh out of joint Jacob could wrestle no more, but only cling to the Messenger with profound determination. Then he prevailed. Compare Luke 11:5-10; 18:1.

**32:26** "Let me go" – could not God leave a man if He wished? But the Omnipotent One was willingly held fast by determined faith. Compare Ex 32:10; Luke 24:28,29.

"Bless me" – did Jacob fully realize who it was he held in his arms?

**32:27** For blessing to come to Jacob now he

28 And he said, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed."

29 And Jacob asked *him*, saying, "Please tell me your name." And he said, "Why *is it that* you are asking about my name?" And he blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, *saying*, "For I saw God face to face, and my life was preserved."

31 And as he passed by Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his thigh. 32 Therefore, to this day, the children of Israel do not eat the sinew which shrank, which *is* on the hollow of the thigh; because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew that shrank.

**33** And Jacob raised his eyes, and looked, and there came Esau, and with him four hundred men. And *Jacob* divided the children between Leah and Rachel and the two maid servants. 2 And he put the maid servants and their children in the front, and Leah and her children after *them*, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3 And he went on ahead of them, and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, fell on his neck, and kissed him. And they wept. 5 And *Esau* raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who *are* these with you?" And he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."

6 Then the maid servants approached *Esau*,

had to face himself and acknowledge what he was (25:26; 27:36). "Name" meant his nature and character.

**32:28** "Jacob" – that night God was able to make a deep change in him. Jacob was not free of his sinful nature until death, but his dependence on deceitful tricks, his confidence in himself were shattered. It is true that Jacob overcame that night, but so did the angel. In that wrestling match both parties won.

"Israel" – means literally "he strives with God", or possibly, "a prince with God."

"Have prevailed" – compare Matt 11:12. God wants us to deeply desire Him, and earnestly seek Him and His blessings and His kingdom (2 Chron 15:4,15; Ps 42:1,2; Jer 29:12,13; Matt 6:33; Rom 2:6,7; Heb 4:11). We will have them when we have the same faith in God and determination Jacob had, and when we face ourselves and our sinfulness as he did.

**32:29** "Name" – Jud 13:17,18; Isa 9:6.

"Blessed him" – Jacob received exactly what he wanted (v 26). Compare Matt 7:9-12.

**32:30** Peniel means "God's face." See also 16:13; Jud 6:22,23; 13:22. They saw God in angelic or human form, not in His glorious spirit nature – 2:19; Ex 33:18-23;

they and their children, and they bowed down. 7 And Leah also, with her children came near, and bowed down. And after *them* Joseph and Rachel came near and they bowed down.

8 And he said, "What *do* you *mean* by this whole drove that I met?" And he said, "*Those are* to find favour in the sight of my master."

9 And Esau said, "I have enough, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself."

10 And Jacob said, "Please, no. If I have now found favour in your sight, then receive my present from my hand. For I see your face, as though seeing the face of God, and you were pleased with me. 11 Please accept my gift that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and so I have enough." And he urged him, and he accepted *it*.

12 And *Esau* said, "Let us set out on our journey, and move on, and I will go ahead of you."

13 And he said to him, "My master knows that the children *are* tender, and the flocks and herds with young *are* with me. If they drive them too hard one day, the whole flock will die. 14 Please let my master go on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, as much as the livestock going in front of me and the children are able to bear, until I come to my master in Seir."

15 And Esau said, "Then let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me." And he said, "What is the need? Let me find favour in the sight of my master."

16 So Esau went back that day on his way to

John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:15,16.

**32:31** The limp was a constant reminder of his own weakness and God's grace. Something similar is seen in 2 Cor 12:7-10. Really meeting God can never leave men the same as they were.

**33:2** "Last" – to keep those he loved the best in the safest position (29:30; 37:3).

**33:3** "Seven times" – a picture of humility and total submission to Esau.

**33:4** "Kissed him" – compare Prov 16:7. While God had been working with and in Jacob He had also been at work in Esau. God was answering Jacob's prayer of 32:11. God can turn even the hearts of kings the way He wishes – Prov 21:1.

**33:9** Esau showed more kindness and generosity to Jacob than Jacob had to him (25:29-33; 27:36) This does not necessarily mean that Esau had by faith taken the one true God as his God.

**33:14-18** Jacob had no intention of going to Seir (Edom) where Esau lived. This whole passage shows that he was still uneasy about Esau. It shows too that Israel had not completely lost his Jacob nature overnight. Succoth was a long way from Seir and in a different direction. And Shechem was straight west in Canaan and not south toward Seir.

"Succoth" – this means "shelters."

Seir. 17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth and built a house for himself, and made booths for his cattle. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. 18 And after coming from Padan-Aram, Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, and pitched his tent before the city. 19 And he bought a part of the field where he had spread his tent, from the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money. 20 And he erected an altar there, and called it El Elohe Israel.

**34** And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of that region, saw her, he took her, lay with her and defiled her. 3 And his soul was united to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke kindly to the girl. 4 And Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl for *my* wife."

5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field, and Jacob kept silent until they had come.

6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to talk with him. 7 And when they heard *this*, the sons of Jacob came from the field, and the men were sad and very angry, because in lying with Jacob's daughter he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel, a thing which ought not to be done.

8 And Hamor talked with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as *his* wife. 9 And intermarry with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. 10 And you will live with us, and the land will be before you. Live and do business in it, and get possessions for yourselves in it."

11 And Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favour in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. 12 Ask me any amount of dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me. But give me the girl as *my* wife."

13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem

and Hamor his father deceitfully, and spoke *this way* because he had defiled Dinah their sister, 14 saying to them, "Giving our sister to someone who is not circumcised is a thing we cannot do; for that *would be* a disgrace to us. 15 But on this *condition* we will give consent to you: if you will become like us and every male of you becomes circumcised, 16 then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for us, and we will live with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if you will not listen to us to become circumcised, then we will take our daughter and we will be gone."

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Hamor's son Shechem. 19 And the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. And he was the most honoured of all the house of his father. 20 And Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city, and talked with the men of their city, saying, 21 "These men *are* friendly with us. Therefore let them live in the land, and trade in it. For, see, the land *is* large enough for them. Let us take their daughters for ourselves as wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 *But* only on this *condition* will the men consent to live with us, to be one people: if every male among us becomes circumcised, just as they *are* circumcised. 23 *But will* not their cattle and their goods and every animal of theirs *become* ours? Only let us give consent to them, and they will live with us."

24 And everyone who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

25 And it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword, and came on the city boldly, and killed all the males. 26 And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and left. 27 *Then* the sons of Jacob came on the slain and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28 They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, and

**33:20** "Altar" – 8:20; 12:7,8; 13:18; 22:9. El Elohe Israel means "God, the God of Israel" or, possibly, "Mighty is the God of Israel." Previously Jacob had spoken of "the God of my father" and "the God of Abraham" (31:5,42; 32:9). Now Jacob speaks of Him as his own God and so fulfills the vow he made in 28:1.

**34:1** See 30:21.

**34:2** The Hivites were a people who were in the land of Canaan before Abraham arrived there. Besides Shechem they lived in Gibeon (Joshua chapter 9), and near mount Hermon (Josh 11:3).

**34:10** "Do business in it" – or "move about freely in it."

**34:13** Did they learn how to use deceit by watching their father? We do not know, but we do know that bad example has great power for evil. And deceitfulness is easily learned because of the deceitful nature of men's hearts – Jer 17:9; Ps 58:3.

**34:14** "Circumcised" – 17:9-14.

**34:20** The main gate of towns and cities is the place where the elders and leaders came together to discuss and decide issues (19:1; Ruth 4:1).

**34:25-29** See 49:5-7.



whatever was in the city, and whatever was in the field, 29 and they carried off all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, and looted everything that *was* in the houses.

30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me, making me stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. And since I have few in number, they will gather themselves together against me, and kill me, and I will be destroyed, I and my household."

31 And they said, "Should he deal with our sister as with a prostitute?"

**35** And God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make there an altar to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of your brother Esau."

2 Then Jacob said to his household, and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your clothes, 3 and let us arise and go up to Bethel. And there I will make an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way that I went." 4 And they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had, and *all* the earrings which *were* in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem. 5 And they journeyed, and the terror of God was on the cities that *were* around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

6 So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that *is* Bethel, he and all the people with him. 7 And there he built an altar, and called the place El Bethel, because there God had appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

8 But Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she

was buried below Bethel under an oak. Its name was called Allon Bachuth. 9 And God appeared to Jacob again after he came out of Padan Aram, and blessed him. 10 And God said to him, "Your name *is* Jacob. Your name will not be called Jacob any longer, but Israel will be your name." And he called his name Israel.

11 And God said to him, "I *am* God Almighty. Be fruitful and increase *in number*. A people and a group of peoples will come from you, and kings will come from your body. 12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you. And I will give the land to your descendants after you." 13 And God went up from him in the place where he had talked with him.

14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had talked with him, a pillar of stone. And he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. 15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

16 And they journeyed from Bethel, and, *with* still a short distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had severe labour pains. 17 And it came about, when she was having severe labour pains, that the midwife said to her, "Do not be afraid. You will have this son also." 18 And it happened that as her soul was leaving *her body* (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni, but his father called him Benjamin.

19 And Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem. 20 And Jacob set up a pillar on her grave. To this day that *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave.

21 And Israel journeyed on, and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Edar. 22 And when Israel was living in that region, it so happened that Reuben went and lay with his father's concubine

**35:1** See 27:43; 28:13,19.

**35:2** See 31:19,30,34. Is it only now that Jacob tells them to put those gods away? Long before he should have insisted that his family forsake false gods and idols and serve the only true God. Compare Josh 24:15,23; Ps 16:4.

**35:3** "Altar to God" – more and more Jacob was thinking of God as his God. He had found that God is a faithful and loving God who answers prayer. Compare Ps 34:4,6,17; 107:6; 116:1,2; etc.

**35:4** "Earrings" – possibly these had been worn as magic amulets. Otherwise, why bury them under the oak? Did they not understand that such things have no power whatever to protect from evil? Later the Bible makes it abundantly clear that anyone who wants to serve the one true God must part with all gods, idols, and magic.

**35:5** "Terror of God" – God protected them by creating fear in the hearts of the Canaanites. Compare Ex 15:16; 23:27; Deut 2:25.

**35:7** See 28:11-22. Jacob fulfills his vow. And he had taken another step forward in spiritual understanding and devotion to God. In chapter 28 it seems he was more occupied in his thoughts with the place Bethel. Here he is more occupied with the God who had come to him at Bethel. El-Bethel means "the God of Bethel."

**35:8** "Allon-Bacuth" means "oak of weeping."

**35:9,10** See 25:26; 32:28.

**35:11,12** "God Almighty" – in Hebrew El-Shaddai (see 17:1). Concerning the promise here see 17:3-8. The covenant God made with Abraham was confirmed to Jacob.

**35:14** "Oil on it" – see note at 28:18.

**35:15** Bethel means "house of God."

**35:16-18** Ben-oni means "Son of my sorrow" or "Son of my trouble." Benjamin means "Son of the right hand."

**35:22** See 49:3,4. Because of this sin, though he was the firstborn, he was passed over and his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph (9:3,4; 1 Chron 5:1; Num 32:23).



Bilhah, and Israel heard *about it*. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob.

23 The sons of Leah *were* Jacob's firstborn Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

24 The sons of Rachel *were* Joseph and Benjamin.

25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid-servant, *were* Dan and Naphtali.

26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, *were* Gad and Asher.

These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan-Aram.

27 And Jacob came to Mamre to his father Isaac, to the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac stayed for a time. 28 And Isaac's time *on earth* was a hundred and eighty years. 29 And Isaac expired. He died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

**36** Now these *are* the generations of Esau, who is Edom. 2 Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite, 3 and Bashemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebajoth.

4 And Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Bashemath bore Reuel, 5 and Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These *were* the sons of Esau, who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

6 And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the people of his house, and his cattle, and all his animals, and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went into a land away from the presence of his brother Jacob. 7 For their possessions were too many for them to live together, and the land where they were foreigners could not sustain them because of their livestock. 8 So Esau lived in mount Seir. Esau *is* Edom.

9 And these *are* the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir;

10 These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau.

11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

12 And Timna was Esau's son Eliphaz had a concubine, Timna, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz.

These *were* the sons of Esau's wife Adah.

13 And these *were* the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Esau's wife Bashemath.

14 And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: she bore to Esau Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.

15 These *were* the chiefs among the offspring of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, 16 chief Korah, chief Gatam, *and* chief Amalek. These *were* the chiefs who came from Eliphaz in the land of Edom, these *were* the sons of Adah.

17 And these *were* the sons of Reuel Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These are the chiefs that came from Reuel in the land of Edom, these *were* the sons of Esau's wife Bashemath.

18 And these *were* the sons of Esau's wife Aholibamah: chief Jeush, chief Jaalam, chief Korah. These *were* the chiefs *descended* from Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.

19 These *were* the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these *were* their chiefs.

20 These *were* the sons of Seir the Horite, who lived in the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, 21 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These *were* the chiefs of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

22 And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. And Lotan's sister *was* Timna.

23 And the children of Shobal *were* these: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

24 And these *were* the children of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. This *was that* Anah who found the mules in the wilderness, as he tended the donkeys of his father Zibeon.

25 And the children of Anah *were* these: Dishon and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

26 And these *were* the children of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.

27 The children of Ezer *were* these: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

28 The children of Dishan *were* these: Uz and Aran.

29 These were the chiefs that came from the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, 30 chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These *were* the chiefs who came from Hori, among their chiefs in the land of Seir.

31 And these *were* the kings that reigned in the

**35:29** This was 43 years after the event of 27:4.

**36:1** See 25:25,30.

**36:2,3** Note on polygamy at 30:1.

**36:8** "Seir" – an area south of the Dead Sea.

**36:12** "Amalek" – Ex 17:8-16; Num 24:20;

Deut 25:17-19; 1 Sam 15:2,3.

**36:15** "Teman" – Job 2:11.

**36:20** See 14:6. The Horites were a people living in the area before Abraham came from Ur of Chaldea.

**36:28** "Uz" – Job 1:1.

**36:31** "King" – 1 Sam 8:4,5. This verse could

land of Edom, before any king reigned over the children of Israel. 32 And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah.

33 And Bela died, and Jobab, the son of Zerah of Bozrah, reigned in his place.

34 And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his place.

35 And Husham died, and Hadad, the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city *was* Avith.

36 And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place.

37 And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his place.

38 And Saul died, and Baalhanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place.

39 And Baalhanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his place. And the name of his city *was* Pau, and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

40 And these are the names of the chiefs *descended* from Esau, according to their families, according to their places, by their names: chief Timnah, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, 41 chief Aholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, 42 chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, 43 chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These *were* the chiefs of Edom, according to their settlements in the land of their possession. This *was* Esau, the father of the Edomites.

**37** And Jacob lived in the land where his father had been a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2 These *are* the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. The boy *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his

father's wives, and Joseph brought to his father a bad report about them.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his children, because he was the son of his old age. And he made a coat of *many* colours for him. 4 And when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

5 And Joseph had a dream and told *it* his brothers, and they hated him still more. 6 And he said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I had. 7 For, see, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, *lo and behold*, my sheaf rose and also stood upright, and, see, your sheaves stood around and bowed down to my sheaf."

8 And his brothers said to him, "Will you really rule us! Will you lord it over us!" And they hated him still more because of his dreams, and because of his words.

9 And he had still another dream, and told it his brothers, and said, "See, I have had another dream. And, *lo and behold*, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

10 And he told *it* to his father and to his brothers. And his father rebuked him and said to him, "What *is* this dream you have had! Will I and your mother and your brothers really come to bow down to the earth before you?" 11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the thing *in mind*.

12 And his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers are pasturing *the flock* in Shechem, aren't they? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am."

14 And he said to him, "Please go and see whether it is going well with your brothers, and well with the flocks, and bring me word again." So he sent him out of the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. 15 And a man found him, when he appeared wandering in the field, and the man asked

possibly be translated "These were the kings who reigned in Edom before an Israelite king reigned over them."

**37:2** "Joseph" – he is the center of the rest of the book of Genesis (except for chapters 38 and 49). Through him blessing came to the people of Israel and to other nations. In this respect he is a type or picture of Christ.

"Bad report" – judging from what we know of both Joseph and his brothers as seen in the rest of their history, this bad report would surely have been true and accurate.

**37:3** "Of many colours" – the meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain (also vs 23,32).

"For him" – showing such favoritism was surely not wise (it never is), and it brought great trouble to Joseph.

**37:4** "To him" – see v 11; Prov 14:30;

27:4; Matt 27:18. Envy comes out of man's sinful nature and often leads to further sin. **37:5** "Dream" – notes at 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

"Told it" – Joseph may not have shown much wisdom in this, but, then, he was only seventeen.

**37:7,8** See the fulfillment in 42:6,9; 43:26; 44:14; 49:26; Deut 33:16. Through Joseph's dreams God was revealing the truth.

**37:10** As far as we know Jacob never bowed down to Joseph, but Joseph became the prime minister of Egypt and so the ruler over Jacob and his family after they came there.

**37:11** Acts 7:9. "Mind" – Luke 2:19,51.

**37:12** "Shechem" – Jacob owned land there – 33:18,19.

**37:14** "Hebron" – the straight distance from Hebron to Shechem was about 80 kilometers.

him, saying, "What are you looking for?"

16 And he said, "I'm looking for my brothers. Please tell me where they are pasturing *their flocks*."

17 And the man said, "They left here; for I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" And Joseph went after his brothers, and found them in Dothan. 18 And when they saw him at a distance, and before he came near them, they plotted against him to kill him.

19 And they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming. 20 So come on now, let's kill him, and throw him into some pit, and we will say, 'Some savage beast has eaten him.' And we shall see what becomes of his dreams."

21 And Reuben heard *it*, and he saved him from their hands by saying, "Let us not kill him." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Do not shed blood. Throw him into this pit *here* in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him." *He said* this so that he might rescue him from their hands, and take him back to his father again.

23 And it came about when Joseph came to his brothers that they stripped Joseph of *his* coat, his coat of *many* colours that he had on. 24 And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; *there was* no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread. And they raised their eyes and looked, and, a group of Ishmaelites appeared, coming from Gilead with their camels bearing spices and balm and myrrh, going along carrying *them* down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said to his brothers, "What do we

gain by killing our brother, and concealing his blood? 27 Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let our hand not be on him; for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh." And his brothers listened to *him*.

28 Then *some* Midianites, merchants, were passing by. And they pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty *pieces* of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

29 And Reuben returned to the pit, and, *lo* and behold, Joseph *was* not in the pit. And he tore his clothes. 30 And he returned to his brothers and said, "The boy *is* not *there*. And I, where am I to go!"

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed *one* of the young goats, and dipped the coat in the blood, 32 and they sent the coat of *many* colours, and had *it* brought to their father, saying, "We have found this. Examine it now *and see* whether it is your son's coat or not." 33 And he examined it and said, "*It is* my son's coat! A savage beast has devoured him! Without doubt Joseph has been torn in pieces!"

34 And Jacob tore his clothes, and put on a loincloth of sackcloth, and mourned for his son many days. 35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, "For I will go down to the grave to my son *still* mourning." So his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, *and* captain of the guard.

**37:17** Dothan was about 20 kilometers north of Shechem.

**37:18** "Kill him" – compare Ps 31:13,14; 37:12,32; Mark 14:1; John 11:53. We see already what the people of Israel were like. Their later history was similar until at last they were responsible for the death of the Son of God. But we should not think that we, by nature, are any better than they – Rom 3:9,19,23.

**37:19** "Dreamer" – spoken sarcastically in hatred.

**37:21,22** See 42:22. Reuben was the oldest of the sons of Jacob and felt responsible for Joseph – vs 29,30.

**37:25** "Ishmaelites" – 16:11,12.

**37:27** "Flesh" – did they imagine that selling their brother into slavery instead of killing him showed brotherly love?!

**37:28** These merchants are called Ishmaelites in vs 25,28 and 39:1, and Midianites in vs 28,36. Either there was a mixture of these two clans in this group or they were all Ishmaelites who lived in the land of Midian and so were both Ishmaelites and Midianites. Both of these peoples were descended from Abraham, and so closely related.

"Twenty pieces of silver" – this total

amount was a little more than 230 grams – no great sum as payment for the greatest man of his generation. Compare Zech 11:13; Matt 26:15.

**37:29** "Clothes" – v 34; 44:13 – in those days the tearing of garments was a sign of grief or shock.

**37:31,32** Jacob began his career by deceiving his father. Now he reaped again what he sowed (Gal 6:7), being deceived by his sons. This deception also involved a goat – compare 27:6-19.

**37:35** "Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol." This is the first use of the word in the Old Testament. It meant the place to which the dead go and included both the grave and the unseen world where the souls of men went after death. Perhaps a better translation would be "the realm of the dead." See also note at Luke 16:23. In Old Testament days Sheol was usually regarded as a place of sorrow (2 Sam 22:6; Ps 9:17; 18:5; 116:3; Isa 14:9-17; Ezek 32:21). The Old Testament does not have much to say about the condition of those who have died, whether believers or unbelievers. The New Testament has far more on the subject. Life and immortality were brought to light through Jesus Christ (2 Tim 1:10).

**38** And it came about at that time that Judah left his brothers and went down and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name *was* Hirah. 2 And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name *was* Shuah. And he took her and went in with her. 3 And she conceived and bore a son. And he called his name Er. 4 And she conceived again and bore a son. And she called his name Onan. 5 And she once again conceived and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. It was at Chezib that she gave birth to him.

6 And Judah got a wife for Er his firstborn. Her name *was* Tamar. 7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death.

8 And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up offspring for your brother." 9 And Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. And it came about that when he went in to his brother's wife, he spilled *it* on the ground, so that he would not produce offspring for his brother. 10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD, so he killed him also.

11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow at your father's house, until Shelah my son has grown up." For he said, "Perhaps he may die also, like his brothers." And Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

12 And in process of time the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died. And Judah was comforted and went up to Timnath to those shearing his sheep, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 And Tamar was told, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnath to shear his sheep." 14 And she took off her widow's clothes, covered *herself* with a veil, wrapped herself up, and sat in an open place which was by the Timnath road. For she saw that Shelah had grown up, and

she had not been given to him as *his* wife.

15 When Judah saw her he thought she was a prostitute, because she had covered her face. 16 And he turned to her at the roadside, and said, "Go on now and let me come in with you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me to come in with me?" 17 And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock." And she said, "Will you give *me something* as a pledge until you send *it*?"

18 And he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" And she said, "Your seal and your cord and your staff that's in your hand." And he gave *them* to her, and went in with her. And she conceived by him. 19 And she got up and went away, and put aside her veil, and put on widow's clothes.

20 And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to get *his* pledge from the woman's hand. But he did not find her. 21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the prostitute who *was* by the roadside?" And they said, "There wasn't any prostitute in this place."

22 And he returned to Judah and said, "I can't find her. Also the men of the place said that there had been no prostitute in that *place*."

23 And Judah said, "Let her take *it* with her, so we won't be put to shame. See, I sent this young goat and you didn't find her."

24 And about three months after *this* it came about that Judah was told, saying, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has acted like a prostitute, and look, she is pregnant because of *her* prostitution." And Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned!"

25 When she was brought out, she sent *word* to her father-in-law, saying, "I *am* pregnant by the man who owns these." And she said, "Please look at them and see who these *belong* to: the

**38:1** "Judah" – there is a great contrast between this chapter and the next. The two chapters taken together show the greatness of Joseph's character compared with Judah's. Judah fell into the sins of the Canaanites. But in Egypt, alone and friendless, Joseph remained pure.

"Adullam" – a town in the southern part of Canaan.

**38:7** "Death" – the form of the Hebrew verb here does not necessarily mean God killed Onan Himself, but suggests that God brought about his death using some means or other. If God purposes that someone die He has all sorts of means which He can use to see that it happens.

**38:8** "Brother" – in those days it was the duty of the brother of the deceased husband to marry his widow. At the time of Moses this became the law for the nation Israel (Deut 25:5,6; Ruth 4:5; Matt 22:24). But even before Moses this rule

must have been considered binding.

**38:9** "His" – any offspring would have had his brother's name, and been counted as his brother's. Compare Ruth 4:5,6.

"Ground" – Onan used this means of birth control from a wrong motive. Within the marriage relationship birth control itself is not sinful. Nowhere in the Bible is there a command not to practice it or any suggestion that it is wrong. It was Onan's bad motive that so displeased God (v 10).

**38:11** "Grown up" – compare Ruth 1:11-13.

**38:14** "Wife" – she saw that Judah was deceiving her and she had no hope of another marriage. So she took the following way to have a child.

**38:24** Judah did not condemn himself for his own sin (vs 15,16), but was quick to condemn Tamar. In other words, he behaved as the general lot of human beings do. See 3:12,13; Rom 2:1,21-23. If she deserved death, so did he (see Lev 20:10; 21:9;

seal and cord, and staff." 26 And Judah recognized *them* and said, "She has been more righteous than I; because I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not have relations with her again.

27 And at the time she gave birth, it so happened that twins *were* in her womb. 28 And as she was giving birth it came about that *one* put out *his* hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet *thread* on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29 And when he drew back his hand it so happened that suddenly his brother came out. And she said, "How you have made a breach for yourself!" Therefore his name was called Perez. 30 And afterwards his brother, who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand, came out, and his name was called Zerah.

**39** And Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, *one* of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the hands of the Ishmaelites, who had brought him down there.

2 And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a man who brought prosperity, and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him, and that the LORD caused everything *he had* in his hands to prosper. 4 And Joseph found favour in his sight, and he served him. And he put *Joseph* in charge of his house, and entrusted everything he had into his hands. 5 And from the time *that* he put him in charge of his house and of all that he had, it came about that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph, and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house, and in the field. 6 So he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know anything he had, except the food he

ate. And Joseph was handsome in form and in appearance.

7 And after these things, it came about that his master's wife cast her eyes at Joseph, and said, "Lie down with me."

8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, with me *here*, my master doesn't know what is in the house, and he has entrusted everything he has into my hands. 9 No one *is* greater in this house than I. He has not kept back anything from me except you, because you *are* his wife. How then can I do this great evil and sin against God?" 10 And it came about that she spoke to Joseph day after day, but he did not listen to her to lie down with her *or* to be with her.

11 And about this time it so happened that Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was there inside. 12 And she caught him by his cloak, saying, "Lie down with me." But he left his cloak in her hand, ran and got out.

13 And when she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand, and had run away, it came about 14 that she called to the men of her household, and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice, 15 and when he heard me raising my voice and crying out, it so happened that he left his cloak with me, ran and got out."

16 And she put his cloak beside her until his master came home. 17 And she spoke to him with these words, saying, "The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to mock me. 18 And when I raised my voice and cried out, it so happened that he left his cloak with me and ran

Deut 22:22).

**38:26** A poor and partial confession. A better one would have been, "I am more sinful than she."

**38:29** "Perez" – Ruth 4:18-22; Matt 1:1-3. Perez means "a breach", or "a breaking out."

**38:30** Zerah can mean "dawning" or "scarlet" or "brightness." Chapter 38 gives more evidence that the Bible shows us what people are like and how much they need the grace of God if they are ever to be saved.

**39:1** 37:25,28,36.

**39:2** "With Joseph" – vs 3,21,23; Acts 7:9; Gen 21:20; 26:3; 27:45; 31:3,5; 32:9; 35:3. God with us is the greatest blessing of all.

"Prosperity" – the Hebrew here does not necessarily mean that Joseph himself became prosperous.

**39:3** "Everything he had in his hands" – compare Josh 1:8; Ps 1:3.

**39:5** "Joseph" – the person who walks with God will be a blessing wherever he goes (12:2). And to receive God's blessings and to be a blessing to others Joseph did not need the deceitful tricks his father once

practiced.

**39:6** Joseph always proved himself the kind of person whom others could trust with everything they had – vs 22,23; 41:41. He was first faithful in small things and later in great things (compare Luke 16:10). He is a shining example of the sort of men the church today needs so much. Alas that there are so many who are the opposite of Joseph and cannot be trusted with anything.

**39:8** Prov 5:3,4; 6:23,24; 7:4,5,25-27.

**39:9** "Great evil" – Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10; Prov 2:16,17; 5:3-23.

"Against God" – Gen 20:6; 42:18; 2 Sam 12:13; Ps 51:4. The reason Joseph kept himself from sinning against God is found in 42:18.

**39:12** "Ran" – 2 Tim 2:22; Prov 2:16; 5:8.

**39:14-18** See Ps 11:2; 37:12; 38:20. But even the slander of a wicked woman worked for Joseph's eventual good – it took him to prison where he came to the king's notice, and so to the highest position in Egypt, next to Pharaoh. See and believe Rom 8:28.

**39:14** "Hebrew" – 11:16.



out."

19 And when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, "This is the way your slave acted toward me," it came about that his anger was aroused. 20 And Joseph's master took him and put him in the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And there he was in the prison.

21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison entrusted all the prisoners that were in the prison into Joseph's hands, and he attended to whatever they did there. 23 The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything *that was* under his hand, because the LORD was with him, and the LORD caused everything he did to prosper.

**40** And it came about after these things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their master, the king of Egypt. 2 And Pharaoh was angry with these two officials of his, with the chief of the butlers and with the chief of the bakers. 3 And he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. 4 And the captain of the guard put them in Joseph's charge and he served them. And they continued for a time in custody.

5 And both of them had dreams, each one dreamed in the same night, each man with a meaning in his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison.

6 And Joseph came in to them in the morning, and looked at them, and saw that they *were* sad. 7 And he asked *these* officials of Pharaoh who *were* with him in custody in his master's house, saying, "Why are you looking sad today?"

8 And they said to him, "We have had a dream, and *there is* no interpreter for it." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell me the *dreams*."

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream, see, a vine was before me, 10 and on the vine *were* three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and

its clusters produced ripe grapes. 11 And Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand, and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand."

12 And Joseph said to him, "This *is* its interpretation: the three branches *are* three days. 13 Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head, and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand, just the way you did before when you were his butler. 14 But when it goes well with you, think about me and please show kindness to me, and mention me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. 15 For in fact I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me in the dungeon."

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "In my dream, see, *I had* three white baskets on my head. 17 And in the topmost basket *there were* all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head."

18 And Joseph answered and said, "This *is* its interpretation: the three baskets *are* three days. 19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you, and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat your flesh off of you."

20 And the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, it so happened that he made a feast for all his servants, and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. 21 And he restored the chief butler to his place as butler again, and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. 22 But he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted for them.

23 Still the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

**41** And this happened at the end of two full years: Pharaoh was dreaming, and it appeared that he stood by the river. 2 And, suddenly, up out of the river came seven cows, sleek and fat, and fed in a meadow. 3 And then after them seven *other* cows came up out of the river, ugly and emaciated, and stood beside the other cows on the bank of the river. 4 And the ugly

**39:19** Prov 6:34.

**39:20** Ps 105:17-19. See note at Jer 37:15,16. For note on the good that can come by afflictions see Job 3:20.

**39:21** "With him" - v 2.

"Favour" - if God is with us and shows us kindness it can little matter where we are. Compare Acts 16:22-25; Phil 4:11-13.

**39:22** Verse 6.

**39:23** Verse 3.

**40:4** God's hand was in all this, working for Joseph's eventual release from prison-41:9-14.

**40:5** "Dreams"-15:12; 20:3,6; 28:12; 31:10,11,24. God, who put these two men near Joseph, also gave them their dreams.

**40:8** "God"- 41:16; Dan 2:27,28.

**40:12** Dan 2:36; 4:18,19.

**40:15** 37:26-28.

**40:16** "Three white baskets" - or, possibly,

"three baskets of bread."

**40:23** "Forgot him"- the cupbearer forgot Joseph, but God did not. And in His way, and in His perfect time, God brought Joseph out of prison.

**41:1** "Dreaming"- 40:5. Notes and



and emaciated cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

5 And he slept and dreamed a second time, and saw seven ears of grain coming up on one stalk, plump and good. 6 And then seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprung up after them. 7 And the seven thin ears ate up the seven plump and full ears. And Pharaoh woke up, and, see, *it was* a dream.

8 And in the morning it happened that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for Pharaoh.

9 Then Pharaoh's chief butler spoke up and said, "Today I remember my faults. 10 Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, *both* me and the chief baker. 11 And we dreamed dreams in the same night, I and he. Each of us had a dream with its *own* meaning. 12 And a young man was there with us, a Hebrew, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him our dreams and he interpreted *them* for us, interpreting for each man according to his dream. 13 And *that's* what happened; it came about just as he interpreted for us. He restored me to my place, and hanged him."

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly from the dungeon. And he shaved himself, changed his clothes, and came in to Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and *there is* no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said about you, *that* you can understand a dream to interpret it."

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "*It is* not in me. God will give Pharaoh an answer for *his* welfare."

17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream, see, I stood on the bank of the river, 18 and suddenly up out of the river came seven cows, fat and sleek, and fed in a meadow. 19 And then up

came seven other cows after them, poor, very ugly and emaciated, such as I have never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt. 20 And the lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven, *the* fat cows. 21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them, for they *were* still just as ugly as in the beginning. So I woke up. 22 Again I saw in my dream, and there appeared seven ears coming up on one stalk, full and good, 23 and then seven ears, withered, thin, *and* scorched by the east wind, sprung up after them. 24 And the thin ears ate up the seven good ears. I told *this* to the magicians, but no one could explain *it* to me."

25 And Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one *and the same*. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26 The seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good ears *are* seven years. The dreams *are* one *and the same*. 27 And the seven thin and ugly cows that came up after them *are* seven years. And the seven empty ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine.

28 "This *is* the thing that I said to Pharaoh: God is showing Pharaoh what he is about to do. 29 See, seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt are coming. 30 And after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will consume the land. 31 And the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that famine which follows, for it *will be* very severe. 32 And as for the dream being twice repeated to Pharaoh, this was because the thing has been decided by God, and God will shortly cause it to happen.

33 "Therefore now let Pharaoh look for a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officials over the land, and take up the fifth part of *the produce* of the land of Egypt in the seven years of plenty. 35 And let them gather all the food of those coming good years, and store up

references at 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1. **41:5** "Grain" – the KJV has "corn", but corn, as we know it, was not found in Egypt in those days.

**41:8** Compare Dan 1:20; 2:2,27; 4:7. Four centuries after Joseph, magicians were still practicing their arts in Egypt – Ex 7:11,22; 8:7,18,19; 9:11. People often think magicians can do much more than they can actually do. They sometimes mistakenly believe that their tricks are a display of divine power. All types of sorcery are forbidden in God's Word – Deut 18:10-13.

**41:9** "Butler" – 40:14,23. God, after He permitted the butler to forget Joseph, now, at the proper time, causes him to remember him. Even things like this are in His hands.

**41:14** "Dungeon" – God's time had come. Compare Rev 2:10; Ps 31:15.

**41:15** Dan 5:16.

**41:16** "Not in me" – Joseph had the humility seen in other great servants of God – Dan 2:22,28,30; Acts 3:12; 2 Cor 3:5. James 4:6 is a word to write on our hearts and read daily.

**41:25** Compare Dan 2:28,29,45.

**41:30** "Famine" – God sometimes sends famines in judgment on a people's sins. See Lev 26:18-20; Deut 28:15,23,24; Ruth 1:1; 2 Sam 21:1; 2 Kings 4:38; 8:1; 25:3; Ps 105:16. At that time in Egypt God had a much wider purpose, as the following chapters reveal.

**41:32** In other words, God was emphasizing the truth He was revealing. See 37:5-9;

grain under the control of Pharaoh, and let them keep the food in the cities. 36 And that food will be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine that will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land does not perish because of the famine."

37 And this word was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find *one such* as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"

39 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, no one is as discreet and wise as you are. 40 You shall be over my house, and all my people will be ruled according to your word. Only in the throne will I be greater than you."

41 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have put you over all the land of Egypt." 42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it on Joseph's hand, and dressed him in fine linen clothes, and put a gold chain around his neck, 43 and he caused him to ride in his second chariot, and they shouted ahead of him, "Bow the knee!" And he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I *am* Pharaoh, and without you no one will lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." 45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath Paaneah; and he gave him Asenath the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On as his wife. And Joseph went throughout the *whole* land of Egypt.

46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and travelled throughout all the land of Egypt. 47 And in the seven years of plenty the earth produced by handfuls. 48 And he gathered all the food of those seven years which occurred in the land of Egypt, and stored up the food in the cities. He stored up the food from the fields which were around each city in the same *city*. 49 And Joseph gathered grain as the sand of the sea, great quantities, until he stopped counting, for it *was* beyond measure.

50 And before the years of famine came, two

sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, bore to him. 51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, saying "For God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's house." 52 And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

53 And the seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt ended. 54 And the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said. And the famine occurred in every land, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55 And when the whole land of Egypt *began to* experience the famine, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread. And Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph. Do what he tells you."

56 And the famine was over the whole surface of the earth. And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold *grain* to the Egyptians. And the famine grew very severe in the land of Egypt. 57 And all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy *grain*, because the famine was so severe in every land.

**42** Now when Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why are you looking at one another? 2 And he said, "Look, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Get yourselves down there and buy *grain* for us from there, so that we can live, and not die."

3 And ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain in Egypt. 4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Perhaps some harm may come to him." 5 So among those who came to *Egypt*, the sons of Israel *also* came to buy *grain*, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joseph was the ruler over the land, and he was the one who sold *grain* to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came, and bowed themselves before him with *their* faces to the earth.

Amos 7:1-6,7-9; 8:1-3. See also note at Dan 7:3-7.

**41:37** Pharaoh had not asked for advice, but Joseph's advice (vs 33-36) was so full of good sense that Pharaoh immediately accepted it. It was God alone who gave such wisdom to Joseph (Acts 7:10).

**41:38** Compare Dan 4:8,9,18; 5:11,14.

**41:40** Note at 39:6. Compare 1 Sam 2:7,8; Ps 75:6,7; 113:7,8; Jam 4:10.

**41:41** Compare Dan 2:48; 5:29; 6:3.

**41:42** "Ring" – note at Esther 3:10.

**41:43** Compare Esther 6:6-11.

**41:44** Ps 105:21,22.

**41:45** This new name of Joseph means "revealer of secrets."

**41:46** See 37:2. Joseph had been in Egypt thirteen years.

**41:47** "By handfuls" – this indicates great abundance; wherever one looked handfuls of grain could be picked up.

**41:51** Manasseh probably means "causing to forget."

**41:52** Ephraim means "twice fruitful" or "much fruitfulness." In giving both names Joseph was remembering God's goodness to him in the place of his troubles. If we view matters as he did we will have more joy in the world, this place of our suffering. **41:55** Verses 41,44.

**41:57** "All countries" – this means those civilized lands known to the people in that part of the world. It included Canaan.

**42:4** Benjamin was the only son of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel left in Canaan.

**42:6** 37:7-10.

7 And Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but acted like a stranger to them, speaking roughly to them. And he said to them, "Where have you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

8 And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. 9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and said to them, "You *are* spies! You have come to see the unprotected *parts* of the land."

10 And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. 11 We *are* all the sons of one man. We, your servants, *are* honest *men*, not spies."

12 And he said to them, "No! You have come to see the unprotected *parts* of the land."

13 And they said, "Your servants *are* twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. See, today the youngest *is* with our father, and one *is* no more."

14 And Joseph said to them, "It *is* just as I told you *when I* said, "You are spies. 15 This is how you will be tested: By the life of Pharaoh you will not go out of here unless your youngest brother comes here. 16 Send one of you, and let him bring your brother. And you will be kept in prison, so that your words can be tested, *to see if there is* any truth in you. Or else by the life of Pharaoh you *are* surely spies." 17 And he put them all together in custody for three days.

18 And on the third day Joseph said to them, "Do this and live, *for I* fear God: 19 If you *are* honest *men*, let one of your brothers be confined in the prison *where you are*. Then you go and take grain for the famine in your houses. 20 But bring your youngest brother to me. So your words will be verified, and you will not die." And they did so.

**42:7** Joseph was not unforgiving (45:4,5). Evidently he waited to see if they had repented of their sin against him (37:18,28).

**42:8** "Did not recognize him" – they had not seen Joseph for at least twenty years (37:2; 41:46,53). Moreover, they thought he was dead (v 13; 44:20). And they could never have imagined he would be ruler in Egypt. Also Joseph would have been shaven and dressed in the manner of Egypt.

**42:9** "Dreams" – 37:5-9. He remembered God's revealed will as given in his dreams, and their reaction to him then – hatred. And so he spoke as he did. But the rest of the story shows that it was not revenge he had in mind.

**42:10** "Lord" – 37:8.

**42:18** "Fear God" – this was the secret of Joseph's wise and godly way of life. Notes on the fear of God at 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**42:21** "Brother" – they were referring to Joseph – 37:26-28. Repentance was beginning to do its work in them. This is what

21 And they said to one another, "We *are*, in fact, guilty about our brother, for we saw the pain of his soul when he pled with us, and we would not listen. Therefore this distress has come on us."

22 And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not tell you, saying 'Do not sin against the boy?' And you would not listen. So see, his blood is being accounted for." 23 And they did not know that Joseph understood *them*, for he spoke to them through an interpreter.

24 And he turned away from them and wept. Then he turned back to them and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them, and tied him up him before their eyes.

25 Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain and to return each one's money to his sack, and to give them provision for the road. And this was done for them. 26 And they loaded their donkeys with the grain and left there.

27 And when one *of them* opened his sack at the inn to feed his donkey, he saw his money, for there it was in his sack's mouth. 28 And he said to his brothers, "My money has been returned, and lo *and behold*, it's in my sack!" And their heart failed *them*, and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What *is* this *that* God has done to us?"

29 And they came to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan, and told him all that had happened to them, saying, 30 "The man *who is* the lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies in the country. 31 And we said to him, 'We are honest men, we are not spies. 32 We *are* twelve brothers, sons of our father. One *is* no *more*, and today the youngest *is* with our father in the land of Canaan.' 33 And the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'This is how I will know that you *are* honest *men*: leave one of your brothers with me, and take *food*

Joseph was wanting to see. And it was very important to him (and to God) that he see it. Compare God's dealing with the people of Israel (and, no doubt, with many since) – Hos 5:15; Jer 3:12,13. If we desire God's blessing we must not try to cover up and forget our sins (Prov 28:13). Note on repentance at Matt 3:2; etc.

**42:22** "Boy" – 37:21,22.

"Blood" – they thought Joseph had died (v 13; 44:20), and they knew the penalty for what they had done – 9:5,6.

**42:24** "Wept" – 43:30; 45:14,15. Joseph was deeply moved to see repentance at work in them (indeed, God Himself always is moved when He sees repentance – Luke 15:7,10). But evidently Joseph did not think the work was complete or that the right time had come to reveal his identity to them.

**42:25** For Joseph's purpose see v28 and 43:18,22

**42:28** "God" – they realized that God was working in a strange way and they feared He was going to bring about their punishment.

for the famine in your households, and go, 34 and bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know that you *are* not spies, but *that* you are honest. Then I will hand over your brother to you, and you can trade in the land.”

35 And when they emptied their sacks, it happened that, there, in his sack, *was* each man's bundle of money. And when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. 36 And their father Jacob said to them, “You have deprived me of my children: Joseph is no *more*, and Simeon is not *here*, and you will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.”

37 And Reuben spoke to his father, saying, “If I don't bring him to you, *then* kill my two sons! Give him into my hand, and I will bring him back to you.”

38 And he said, “My son shall not go down with you! For his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If harm comes to him along the way you are going, then you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

**43** And the famine *was* severe in the land. 2 And when they had eaten up the grain they had brought from Egypt, it came about that their father said to them, “Go again, buy us a little food.”

3 And Judah spoke to him, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You will not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.’ 4 If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5 But if you will not send *him*, we will not go down, for the man said to us, ‘You will not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.’”

6 And Israel said, “Why did you treat me so badly, telling the man whether you had *another* brother?”

7 And they said, “The man asked us particularly about our situation, and about our relatives, saying, ‘*Is* your father still alive? Do you have another brother?’ And we informed him in accordance with *his* words. Could we possibly know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”

8 And Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the boy with me, and we will arise and go, so that we can live, and not die, both we, and you, and our little ones too. 9 I will be the guarantee for him. You

can demand him from my hand. If I do not bring him to you, and place him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. 10 For if we had not delayed, surely by now we would have returned this second time.”

11 And their father Israel said to them, “*If now it has to be* so, do this: Take *some* of the best fruits in the land in your containers, and take down a present for the man, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds. 12 And in your hand take double the money, and the money that was brought back in the mouth of your sacks, take it back in your hand. Perhaps it was an oversight. 13 Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. 14 And God Almighty give you mercy in the man's presence, so that he may send your other brother and Benjamin away. If I am deprived of my children, I am deprived.”

15 And the men took that present, and in their hand they took double the money, and Benjamin, and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. 16 And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take *these* men home, and slaughter *an animal*, and prepare *a meal*, for these men will eat with me at noon.”

17 And the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man took the men to Joseph's house. 18 And the men were afraid, because they were taken to Joseph's house, and they said, “We are brought in *here* because of the money that was returned to our sacks the first time, so that he can find an opportunity to attack us and seize us as slaves along with our donkeys.”

19 And they approached the steward of Joseph's house and talked with him at the door of the house, 20 and said, “O sir, we certainly did come down the first time to buy food, 21 and after we arrived at the inn, it so happened that we opened our sacks, and, there, in the mouth of the sack *was each* man's money, our money in full weight. And we have brought it back in our hand. 22 And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We don't know who put our money in our sacks.”

23 And he said, “You *be* at peace. Don't be afraid. Your God, and the God of your father, has

**42:34** “Trade” – or it could possibly mean “move about freely.”

**42:36** It seems that Jacob held his sons responsible for Joseph's disappearance.

“Against me” – Jacob had not learned what his son Joseph had learned (45:5-7; 50:20), and what Paul later learned (Rom 8:31).

**42:37** See 37:21,22.

**42:38** “Left alone” – did Jacob sometimes count only Joseph and Benjamin his sons because they alone were born to Rachel (33:2; 44:27)? This favoritism was

unwise (25:28; 27:1).

**43:3** 42:20.

**43:9** 42:37.

**43:14** “God Almighty” – El-Shaddai. Note at 17:1.

“Mercy” – compare Ex 3:21; Neh 1:11; Prov 21:1.

“Deprived” – compare Esther 4:16.

**43:18-22** Joseph's purpose in 42:45 is being fulfilled. His brothers are being humbled.

**43:23** “God” – 42:28. “Simeon” – 42:24.

given you the treasure in your sacks. I had your money." And he brought Simeon out to them.

24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet. And he gave feed for their donkeys. 25 And they prepared the present for the coming of Joseph at noon, for they heard that they would be eating bread there.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought out to him the present which they had in the house, and bowed down to him to the ground. 27 And he asked them about *their* welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?"

28 And they answered, "Your servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* still alive." And they bent their heads, and bowed down.

29 And he raised his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother, of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." 30 And Joseph hurried out, for his heart was moved for his brother, and he looked for *a place* to weep. And he went into *his* room and wept there.

31 And he washed his face and went out, and restrained himself, and said, "Put the bread on."

32 And they put *it* on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, who were eating with him, by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that *is* an abomination to the Egyptians. 33 And they were seated in his presence, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in amazement. 34 And *Joseph* took and sent portions to them from his *own table*, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were happy with him.

**44** And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in his sack's mouth. 2 And put my

cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his grain money." And he did according to Joseph's spoken command.

3 As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. 4 When they had gone out of the city, *but* not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Up, follow the men. And when you catch up to them, say to them, 'Why have you rewarded evil for good? 5 *Is* not this *cup* *the one* my lord drinks out of, and indeed which he uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'

6 And he caught up to them, and spoke to them these same words. 7 And they said to him, "Why is my master saying these words? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. 8 See, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your master's house? 9 Whoever of your servants it is found with, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."

10 And he said, "Now also *let it be* according to your words. The one with whom it is found will be my servant, and *the rest of you* will be blameless."

11 Then quickly each one put his sack down on the ground, and each one opened his sack. 12 And he searched, beginning at the eldest, and leaving off at the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they tore their clothes, and each one loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, for he *was* still there. And in his presence they fell on the ground. 15 And Joseph said to them, "What deed *is* this that you have done? Don't you know that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

16 And Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the wickedness of your servants. See, we are my lord's servants, both we, and also *the one* with whom the cup was found."

17 And he said, "Far be it from me to do so. The

**43:26** "Ground" - v 28; 37:7,10.

**43:29** "Mother's son" - Benjamin was Joseph's only full brother. The others, born of other mothers, were half-brothers.

**43:30** Joseph was obviously a man of tender heart.

**43:32** "Abomination" - compare Ex 8:26; John 4:9.

**43:33** "Amazement" - they wondered how Joseph could know their ages.

**44:1,2** See 42:25,28; 43:18-22. Joseph now hopes for a further work of God in his brothers producing deeper repentance and humility. See note at 42:21.

**44:5** Verse 15. Later in history, divination

was forbidden to God's people (Lev 19:26; Deut 18:10-12; 2 Kings 17:17). If Joseph practiced such a thing surely it was in ignorance that God was displeased with it. But it is possible that he actually had nothing to do with divination, and in v 15 was merely speaking as his brothers would expect him to speak as an Egyptian.

**44:7** "Far be it from" - "God forbid" (KJV) is not in the Hebrew here.

**44:13** Tearing clothes indicated shock or grief.

**44:14** 37:7,10.

**44:15** "Divine" - note on v 5.

**44:16** "Wickedness" - 42:28. Joseph must



man in whose hand the cup was found, he will be my servant. As for you, go on in peace to your father."

18 Then Judah approached him and said, "Oh my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not your anger burn against your servant, for you *are* just like Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Do you have a father, or a brother?' 20 And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and *there is* a son of *his* old age, *who is* young. And his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's *children*, and his father loves him.'

21 "And you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, so that I can see him.' 22 And we said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, for *if* he leaves *his father*, his father would die.' 23 And you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will see my face no more.' 24 And when we went to your servant my father, it came about that we told him the words of my lord.

25 "And our father said, 'Go back, *and* buy us a little food.' 26 And we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down, for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

27 "And your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. 28 And the one went away from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn in pieces", and I haven't seen him since. 29 And if you also take this one from me, and harm comes to him, you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

30 "So now when I go to your servant my father, and the boy *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the boy's life, 31 this is what will happen: When he sees that the boy *is* not *with us*, he will die, your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32 For your servant became the guarantee for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him to you, then I will bear the blame before my father forever.'

have been delighted to hear them speak so. **44:20** "Father loves him" – Judah shows a concern for his father's feelings which he did not show before (37:31-35). In fact, the brothers as a whole seem chastened, softened men.

**44:27** "My wife" – he meant Rachel. Did he count only her as his wife and not the three others? (She was the one he loved, and the only one he really wanted to marry – 29:18,20,30,31.)

**44:29** "Grave" – Sheol – note at 37:35.

**44:33,34** What has happened to the hard man of former years? Surely this speech of Judah's, showing his compassion and

33 "So now, please, instead of the boy, let your servant stay as a slave to my lord, and let the boy go up with his brothers. 34 For how can I go to my father when the boy *is* not with me? Then I would have to see the misery that would come on my father."

**45** Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood near him, and he cried out, "Get everyone away from me." So no one was standing near him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the household of Pharaoh heard *it*.

3 And Joseph said to his brothers, "I *am* Joseph. Is my father still living?" And his brothers could not answer him, for they were alarmed in his presence.

4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near me." And they came near. And he said, "I *am* your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 So do not be grieved now, or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years the famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor reaping. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve descendants on the earth for you, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 "So now *it* was not you *who* sent me here, but God. And he has made me *like* a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. 9 Hurry, and go up to my father, and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me. Do not delay. 10 And you will live in the land of Goshen, and you will be near me, you, and your children, and your grandchildren, and your flocks, and your herds, and all that you have. 11 And I will provide for you there, so that you and your household do not come to destitution, for there *will be* five more years of famine.'

12 "And, look, your eyes, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, *can* see that *it is* my mouth that

willingness to suffer for another, was like music in Joseph's ears. See how God works to change people's hearts and attitudes.

**45:2** 42:24; 43:30.

**45:3** They remembered their sin (37:4,5,28; 42:21,22).

**45:5-8** Joseph looked beyond his afflictions and the sin of his brothers, and saw the hand of God working good. He had a wonderfully clear and true view of God's complete sovereignty in the affairs of men, and believed the truth of Rom 8:28 before Paul ever wrote it. Note at 50:20.

**45:10** Goshen was a choice part of Egypt and very fertile – v 20.



is speaking to you. 13 And you must tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. And you must hurry and bring my father down here."

14 And he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 And he kissed all his brothers, and wept over them. After that his brothers talked with him.

16 And *someone took* the news of this to Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." And it pleased Pharaoh and his servants.

17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do like this: load up your animals and go to the land of Canaan. 18 And bring your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. 19 Now you are commanded. Do like this: Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt *is yours*.'"

21 And the children of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons, according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the road. 22 To each and every one of them he gave changes of clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver, and five changes of clothing. 23 And he sent these *things* for his father: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and food for his father on the road. 24 So he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "See that you do not quarrel on the way."

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan to their father Jacob, 26 and told him *the news*, saying, "Joseph *is* still alive, and he is the ruler over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart became numb, because he did not believe them. 27 And they told him all of Joseph's

words which he had said to them. And when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived, 28 and Israel said, "*It is enough*. My son Joseph *is* still alive! I will go and see him before I die."

**46** And Israel set out with all that he had and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spoke to Israel in visions by night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob."

And he said, "Here I am."

3 And he said, "I *am* God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will there make of you a great nation. 4 I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up *again*. And Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."

5 And Jacob arose from Beersheba, and the sons of Israel conveyed Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to convey him. 6 And they took their livestock, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his offspring with him. 7 He brought with him to Egypt his sons, and his grandsons, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants.

8 And these are the names of the children of Israel, who came to Egypt, Jacob and his sons. Reuben *was* Jacob's firstborn; 9 and the sons of Reuben *were* Hanoch, Phallu, Hezron, and Carmi. 10 And the sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. 11 And the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 12 And the sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of Perez *were* Hezron and Hamul. 13 And the sons of Issachar: Tola, Phuvah, Job, and Shimron. 14 And the sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

**45:14** "Wept" – though a very powerful man in a great kingdom, Joseph was not ashamed of tears. Eight times in chapters 42-50 his weeping is spoken of. Compare Isa 53:3; Luke 19:41; John 11:35.

**45:15** "Talked with him" – tears can convince others of loving concern when nothing else can.

**45:18** "The land" – they had hated him and plotted against him slavery and death. In return he gave them the best the land could offer. In this he is an example of how men should behave. Compare Matt 5:44,45; 7:12. See 1Pet 2:19-24.

**45:22** "Three hundred pieces of silver" – about 3.5 kilograms.

**45:24** "Quarrel on the way" – Joseph knew their nature. And he now wanted them to forget the past and make a new beginning.

**45:26** "Got numb" – this is a literal translation of the Hebrew.

**46:1** Beersheba is in the southern part of Canaan. His father Isaac had also offered sacrifices there (26:23-25).

**46:2** "Visions" – note at 15:1.

"Jacob! Jacob!" – see 32:28; 35:10. But Israel did not lose his Jacob nature until he died and perhaps here needed to be reminded of it.

**46:3** "Great nation" – 12:2.

**46:4** "With you" – see 28:15. All is well if God goes with us where we go (Ps 23:4).

**46:5** Notice the mixture of Jacob's two names. This is seen also in v 8; 47:28,29; 48:2; 49:33 and 50:2.

**46:12** "Er and Onan" – these two died in Canaan (38:7,10).

**46:13** "Job" – or "Iob" or "Jashub."

15 These *were* the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, besides his daughter Dinah. All these sons and daughters of his *numbered* thirty-three.

16 And *these were* the sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

17 And the sons of Asher *were* Imnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah their sister; and the sons of Beriah *were* Heber, and Malchiel.

18 These *were* the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, whom she bore to Jacob. *The total* *was* sixteen persons.

19 The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel *were* Joseph and Benjamin. 20 And Manasseh and Ephraim *were* born to Joseph in the land of Egypt. Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah priest of On, bore them to him.

21 And the sons of Benjamin *were* Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppin, and Ard.

22 These *were* the sons of Rachel, who *were* born to Jacob. The total of these persons *was* fourteen.

23 And the son of Dan *was* Hushim.

24 And the sons of Naphtali *were* Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

25 These *were* the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore them to Jacob. The total of these persons *was* seven.

26 All the people who came with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides the wives of Jacob's sons, the total *number of* persons *was* sixty-six. 27 And the sons of Joseph, who *were* born to him in Egypt, *were* two persons. *So* all the people of the household of Jacob, who came to Egypt, *were* seventy.

28 And he sent Judah before him to Joseph, so he could appear before him in Goshen. And they went on to the land of Goshen. 29 And Joseph prepared his chariot, and went out to Goshen to meet his father Israel, and presented himself to him. And he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a long time.

30 And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you *are* still

alive."

31 And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh and say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32 And the men *are* shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock, and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.' 33 And it will come about that Pharaoh will call you and will say, 'What is your occupation?' 34 Then you must say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth up to now, both we and our fathers.' *Do this* so that you can live in the land of Goshen, because every shepherd *is* an abomination to the Egyptians."

**47** Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, saying, "My father and my brothers, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, have come from the land of Canaan, and now *are* in the land of Goshen."

2 And he took five men from among his brothers, and presented them to Pharaoh.

3 And Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What *is* your occupation?"

And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants *are* shepherds, both we and our fathers."

4 They also said to Pharaoh, "We have come to stay in the land for a time, for your servants had no pasture for their flocks, because the famine *is* severe in the land of Canaan. Therefore, please let your servants stay now in the land of Goshen."

5 And Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. 6 The land of Egypt *is* before you. Have your father and brothers live in the best of the land. Have them live in the land of Goshen, and if you know any men of ability among them, then put them in charge of my livestock."

7 And Joseph brought in his father Jacob, and placed him before Pharaoh. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh. 8 And Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old *are* you?"

9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* a hundred and thirty

**46:15** "Padan-Aram" – 25:20.

**46:26,27** Sixty-six persons came with Jacob; Joseph and his two sons were already in Egypt. This total comes to 69. Counting Jacob the total is 70.

**46:29** "Wept" – 45:14.

**46:31-34** It would seem from this that Joseph wanted all the people of Israel to be kept separate in the region of Goshen. Possibly he did not want them to be put in a city or to mingle too closely with the Egyptians and learn their ways. So he advised his brothers to speak out frankly and tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds, "an abomination to the

Egyptians."

**47:4** "Goshen" – this area was very fertile and the land good for grazing flocks and herds.

**47:6** "Capable men" – knowing Joseph he could believe that some of his brothers might have some good sense and skill.

**47:7** "Blessed" – the Hebrew word may also be translated "greeted."

**47:9** "Pilgrimage" – Heb 11:9,13.

"Difficult" – 31:40-42; 42:36,38; Job 5:7; 14:1.

"Fathers" – Abraham lived to be 175; Isaac to 180. At this time Jacob was only

years. The days of the years of my life have been few and difficult, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." 10 And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from the presence of Pharaoh.

11 And Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. 12 And Joseph provided bread for his father and his brothers, and all his father's household, according to their families.

13 And *there was* no bread in all the land, for the famine *was* very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the whole land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. 14 And Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought. And Joseph brought the money to Pharaoh's house. 15 And when there was no more money in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money is gone."

16 And Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you *grain* for your cattle, since your money is gone." 17 And they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for horses and for the flocks and for the herds of livestock, and for the donkeys. And that year he fed them with bread for all their livestock.

18 When that year was over, they came to him the second year, and said to him, "We will not hide it from my lord, that our money is spent. My lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands. 19 So shall we perish before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants to Pharaoh. And give *us* seed *grain* so that we can live and not die, so that the land will not be desolate."

20 And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. For each one of the Egyptians sold his

130 (v 28).

**47:10** "Blessed" – the Hebrew word may also mean "said farewell to."

**47:11** 45:18. Joseph did more than make promises. He did what many do not do – he fulfilled them.

**47:13-26** Under Joseph the power of the state increased enormously. All the land and then all the people became Pharaoh's property. Perhaps this was best to meet the crisis of that time of terrible famine. But it is very doubtful if it worked for the future prosperity of Egypt. When the state owns everything, personal liberties and initiative are stifled and the people as a whole will suffer. But what happened in Egypt is a

field, because the famine had overcome them. So the land became Pharaoh's. 21 And as for the people, he moved them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt to its *other* end. 22 But he did not buy the land of the priests, because the priests had an allotment *assigned to them* by Pharaoh, and ate their allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore they did not sell their lands.

23 Then Joseph said to the people, "Look, today I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. See, *here is* seed for you, and you must sow the land. 24 And it must be that you give a fifth part of the crop to Pharaoh, and four parts will be your own as seed for the field, and for your food, and for those of your households, and for food for your little ones."

25 And they said, "You have saved our lives. Let us find favour in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants."

26 And Joseph made it a law in the land of Egypt, *in force* to this day, *that* Pharaoh would have the fifth part *of all crops*, except for the land of the priests, *which* did not become Pharaoh's.

27 And Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen, and they had possessions there, and grew, and greatly increased *in number*.

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years, so the total age of Jacob was a hundred and forty-seven years. 29 And the time drew near for Israel to die, and he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If now I have found favour in your sight, please place your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and faithfully with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but when I rest with my fathers, you must carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burial site."

And he said, "I will do as you say."

31 And he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him. And Israel bowed down at the head of the bed.

**48** And after these things, it came about that some one told Joseph, "Look, your father *is* sick." And he took with him his two sons, Manasseh

picture of certain important spiritual truth later made clear to the people of Israel. God told them that all the land of Israel and all the people belonged to Him, and He was responsible for their welfare as long as they kept His covenant – Ex 7:4; 19:5; Lev 25:23; Deut 7:6. In the same way now believers together with all they have belong to God, being purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ – 1 Cor 6:19,20; etc.

**47:27** 46:3.

**47:29** "Thigh" – note 24:2.

**47:31** "Bowed down" – referred to in Heb 11:21 as an example of Jacob's faith.

**48:1** "Ephraim" – 41:51,52.

and Ephraim. 2 And someone told Jacob, and said, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you." And Israel summoned his strength and sat up on the bed.

3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4 and said to me, 'Look, I will make you fruitful, and increase you *in number*; and I will make of you a multitude of people, and will give this land to your offspring after you as an everlasting possession.'

5 "And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, *are* mine. Just like Reuben and Simeon, they will be mine. 6 And your children who will be born to you after them will be yours, *and* will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. 7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by my side on the way in the land of Canaan, when there still just a little way before coming to Ephrath. And I buried her there by the Ephrath road. That is Bethlehem."

8 And Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?"

9 And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place."

And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them."

10 Now Israel's eyes were dim because of age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near to him, and he kissed them, and embraced them.

11 And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face, and lo *and behold*, God has showed me your offspring too."

12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and bowed down with his face to the ground. 13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. 14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand

on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands. For Manasseh was the firstborn.

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said,

"God, in whose presence my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,

16 The Angel who delivered me from all evil, bless the lads.

And let them be called by my name, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac.

And let them grow into a multitude among the peoples of the earth."

17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took hold of his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, "Not like that, my father, for this is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head."

19 And his father refused, and said, "I know it, my son, I know it. He too will become a people, and he too will be great, but in fact his younger brother will be greater than he, and his offspring will become a multitude of nations." 20 And he blessed them that day, saying, "Israel will pronounce a blessing in your name, saying, 'God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'" And he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 And Israel said to Joseph, "Look, I am dying, but God will be with you, and bring you again to the land of your fathers. 22 And I have given to you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

**49** And Jacob called to his sons, and said, "Assemble yourselves, so that I can tell you what will happen to you in the last days.

2 "Assemble yourselves and hear, you sons of Jacob,

**48:3** "God Almighty" – El-Shaddai – note at 17:1.

"Luz" – Bethel (28:19).

**48:4** "Said" – 28:13,14.

**48:5** 1 Chron 5:1,2. Joseph's sons became the fathers of two of the twelve tribes of Israel who divided and possessed the land of Canaan. Levi received no inheritance in the land.

**48:9** "Bless" – 27:4.

**48:14** Verses 17-20; Heb 11:21. The tribe of Ephraim became the most powerful in the northern kingdom of Israel after the kingdom divided in the time of Rehoboam.

**48:15** "Shepherd" – this was true even when Jacob was least aware of it. On shepherd

see Ps 23:1; 78:52; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; John 10:11-16.

**48:16** "Angel" – note at 16:7.

**48:20** "Manasseh" – v 14. The blessings spoken of these founders of the nation of Israel were given by direction of the Spirit of God and foretold the future. See 9:25-27; 27:33; 49:1.

**48:22** "I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow" – the event he speaks of is not recorded in the Bible, unless Jacob is referring to the events of 34:25-29.

**49:1** In this chapter Jacob is speaking as a prophet. In v 28 these predictions are called blessings. Blessings (or curses) spoken by inspiration of God were actually prophecies

and listen to your father Israel.

- 3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might,  
and the beginning of my strength,  
excelling in dignity, and excelling in power.
- 4 Unstable as water, you will not excel,  
because you went up to your father's bed;  
then you defiled it.  
He went up to my couch.
- 5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers.  
Instruments of violence are in their  
habitations.
- 6 O my soul, do not come into their secret.  
Do not be united with their assembly,  
my honour, do not be united.  
For in their anger they slew a man,  
and in their self-will they dug down  
a wall.
- 7 Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce;  
and their wrath, for it was cruel.  
I will divide them in Jacob,  
and scatter them in Israel.
- 8 "Judah, you *are the one* whom your  
brothers will praise.  
Your hand *will be* on the neck of your  
enemies.  
Your father's children will bow down  
to you.
- 9 Judah *is* a lion's cub.  
From the prey, my son, you have gone up.  
He stooped down, he crouched like a lion,  
and like an old lion.

of the future. Compare 9:25-27; chapter 27. **49:3,4** 35:22; Deut 27:20; 1 Chron 5:1. Afterwards the tribe of Reuben was never noted for leadership or greatness. No judge, no prophet, no great leader of the people named in the Bible came from Reuben. **49:5** 34:25-29. **49:7** Josh 19:1,9; 22:1-42. Simeon was later scattered partly in Judah's territory (Josh 19:2-9 with 15:26-32 and Neh 11:25-28), and partly among the tribes in the north of Israel (2 Chron 34:6). Levi had its towns throughout the other tribes of Israel and had no region of its own (Ex 32:26,29; Num 18:20,23; 35:2-8; Josh 21:1-42). **49:8** Judah probably means "praise." "Bow down to you" – a prediction that Judah would later become the ruling tribe in Israel (1 Chron 5:2). **49:9** "Lion's cub" – compare Ezek 19:6; Micah 5:8; Num 24:9. The Lord Jesus, descended from Judah, is called "The lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev 5:5). **49:10** "Sceptre" – Ps 60:7; 108:8. Out of Judah came David and Solomon who reigned over the twelve tribes, and all the kings who ruled over the kingdom of Judah. In regard to His human nature Jesus Christ came from Judah (Luke 1:27; Heb 7:14). "Shiloh" – this comes from a Hebrew word

Who will rouse him up?

- 10 The sceptre will not depart from Judah,  
nor a lawgiver from between his feet,  
until Shiloh comes.  
And the gathering of the people *will be*  
to him.
- 11 He ties his foal to the vine,  
and his donkey's colt to the choice vine.  
He washes his garments in wine,  
and his clothes in the blood of grapes.
- 12 His eyes *will be* red with wine,  
and his teeth white with milk.
- 13 "Zebulun will live at the haven of the sea.  
And he *will be* a haven for ships.  
And his border will be as far as Sidon.
- 14 "Issachar is a strong donkey crouching  
down between two burdens.
- 15 And he saw that restful place was good,  
and that the land *was* pleasant,  
and bowed his shoulder to bear *loads*,  
and became a servant to tribute.
- 16 "Dan will judge his people,  
as one of the tribes of Israel.
- 17 Dan will be a serpent by the road,  
an adder in the path, that bites the  
horse's heels,  
so that his rider falls backwards.
- 18 I wait for your salvation, O LORD.
- 19 "Gad, a troop will overcome him,  
but he will overcome at last.

which may mean "He to whom it belongs", but it may possibly mean "quietness" or "rest." Almost this exact phrase is found in Ezek 21:26,27. The one to whom the ruler's sceptre belongs is the Lord Jesus. He is the king of the Jews (Matt 27:37), and the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 17:14; 19:11-16). He shall rule all nations in the future. The obedience of the people will be to Him (Ps 2:6-9; 72:1-11; Rev 2:26,27; 3:21). **49:11,12** These verses suggest prosperity in a settled environment. Verse 12 may also be translated "His eyes will be dull from wine, his teeth white from milk." **49:13** Zebulun later settled in the north of Israel not very far from the sea coast and from Sidon – close enough to be enriched by the abundance of the seas (Deut 33:18,19). **49:14,15** Jacob could predict no glorious future for this tribe. For the sake of life in a pleasant part of Canaan it would be willing to give up its freedom. **49:16-18** The name Dan means to judge or provide justice. However, this tribe failed miserably in this. At times it was more like a snake than a just judge. See Judges 18:1-31. **49:19** The tribe of Gad settled east of the



- 20 "Asher, rich food *will come* from him,  
and he will yield royal dainties.
- 21 "Naphtali *is* a deer set free.  
He gives beautiful words.
- 22 "Joseph *is* a fruitful bough,  
a fruitful bough by a well,  
whose branches run over the wall.
- 23 The archers bitterly attacked him,  
and shot *at him*, and hated him.
- 24 But his bow remained firm,  
and the arms of his hands were made  
strong by the hands of the mighty  
*God of Jacob*  
(from there *is* the Shepherd, the stone  
of Israel),
- 25 by the God of your father, who will  
help you,  
and by the Almighty,  
who will bless you *with* blessings of  
heaven above,  
blessings of the deep that lies below,  
blessings of the breasts, and of the  
womb.
- 26 The blessings of your father have  
surpassed the blessings of my  
ancestors to the utmost bounds of  
the everlasting hills.  
They will be on the head of Joseph,  
and on the crown of the head of him who  
was separate from his brothers.
- 27 "Benjamin will be as ravenous as a wolf.  
In the morning he will devour the prey,

and at night he will divide the spoil."

28 All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them, while blessing them. He blessed each one according to his *appropriate* blessing. 29 And he gave them a command, saying to them, "I am going to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave in the field of Machpelah, which faces Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial site. 31 There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah. There they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah. And there I buried Leah. 32 The purchase of the field and of the cave that is in it was from the children of Heth."

33 And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up onto the bed, and expired, and was gathered to his people.

**50** And Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept on him, and kissed him. 2 And Joseph commanded the physicians *who were* his servants to embalm his father. And the physicians embalmed Israel. 3 And it took a full forty days for him, for it fully takes this many days for those who are being embalmed. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

4 And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favour in your eyes,

Jordan river, away from the main land of Israel, and was exposed to the raids of enemy peoples on its borders (Num 32:1-5). Gad can also mean "attack" or "band of raiders."

**49:20** This tribe settled along the sea coast in Israel in a fertile part of the land.  
**49:21** The last phrase of this verse is obscure. It may also be translated "it bears beautiful fawns." This tribe settled around the sea of Galilee and in the hill country north of it. This verse suggests a life free and fair. The words "set free" suggest a time of bondage from which they recover. See Jud 4:1-7; 5:18.

**49:22-26** Jacob's favorite son comes in for the longest and greatest blessing. But Joseph was the most worthy of all the sons of Jacob, and God was directing Jacob's thoughts and words. The tribes that came from Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, later received some of the choicest parts of the land of Canaan as their portion. Ephraim was the leading tribe of Israel for at least three centuries and later was at the center of the northern kingdom of Israel. The prosperity of this tribe is referred to in Hos 12:8. Verse 23 refers to all Joseph's sufferings at the hands of his brothers, and in Egypt.

"God of Jacob" (v 24) – see note on Ps 146:5.

"From there" – from the hands of the God of Jacob or from the place of the God of Jacob.

"Shepherd" – John 10:11.

"Stone" or "Rock." See note at Deut 32:4.

**49:25** "Almighty" – in Hebrew "Shaddai" – 17:1.

**49:27** Benjamin was later a fierce and active tribe, as can be seen from Judges chapters 19-21; Ps 68:27. Ehud (Judges 3:12-30), and Saul, Israel's first king who was something like a wolf, came from Benjamin. This is true also of Saul of Tarsus – another "wolf" before he became a "sheep" (Acts 9:1,2; Phil 3:5).

**49:28** These blessings fitted the sons of Jacob in their character and history, and in God's knowledge of the future.

**49:29-32** 23:3-20. "Sons of Heth" – Heth was the progenitor of the Hittite nation.

**49:33** "Gathered to his people" – note at 25:8.

**50:1** "Wept" – 45:14.

**50:2** Jacob died (49:33), Israel was embalmed. After death he was no more Jacob but Israel forever.

**50:3** The ancient Egyptians were very skilled in preparing bodies for burial. Some of these



please speak in the ears of Pharaoh and say, 5 'My father made me swear, saying, "Look, I am dying. You must bury me in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan." Therefore, now please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come again.'"

6 And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, just as he made you swear."

7 And Joseph went up to bury his father, and all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, 8 and all the household of Joseph, and his brothers, and his father's household, went up with him. They left behind in the land of Goshen only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds. 9 And both chariots and horsemen went up with him, and it was a very great company.

10 And they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which *is* beyond the Jordan, and there they mourned with a very great and bitter lamentation. And he observed seven days' mourning for his father. 11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, "This *is* a bitter mourning to the Egyptians." So its name was called Abel-Mizraim. It *is* beyond the Jordan.

12 And his sons did for him just as he had

bodies are still in a state of preservation after 3,500 years.

**50:5** 47:29-31.

**50:11** "Abel-Mizraim" – this name means "mourning of the Egyptians."

**50:13** 23:16-20.

**50:15-17** 37:28;42:21,22. In spite of all the kindness Joseph had shown them their conscience was still uneasy and made them afraid. There is no record of Jacob giving the instructions they said he gave, but he may have done so

**50:17** "Wept" – 45:14. Joseph was grieved at their lack of trust in him. And does not our unbelief make the Lord Jesus sad?

**50:18** "Prostrated themselves in his presence" – 37:8-10.

**50:19** Joseph is saying that God alone is the judge of men, and the one who should take vengeance if necessary (Rom 12:17,19). See note at Num 31:2.

**50:20** In this one verse Joseph shows his great trust in God, his clear grasp of spiritual truth, and his total acceptance of the will of God (compare 45:5-7; Deut 23:5; Ps 76:10; Rom 8:28). In the whole of human history God has been the great king over the world (see Ps 47:2 and note there). He has been working out His good purposes and bringing the greatest good to those who trusted and loved Him, even when men and devils (and sometimes they themselves) meant the greatest evil. There are many examples of this in the Bible.

Balak tried to destroy Israel and called Balaam to curse the nation, but God turned the event into blessing for Israel and the

commanded them. 13 For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field as a possession for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite. 14 And after burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

15 And when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Maybe Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil which we did to him." 16 And they sent *a messenger* to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave a command before he died, saying, 17 'Tell Joseph this: now please forgive the transgression of your brothers, and their sin, for they did evil to you.' So now please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

18 And his brothers also went and prostrated themselves in his presence. And they said, "See, we *are* your servants."

19 And Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, you meant *it* for evil against me, *but* God meant it for good, so as to bring about *this result*, keeping

defeat of Balak (Numbers chapters 22-24).

Saul tried to murder David and chased him in the wilderness, but God was testing and preparing David for the throne of Israel and raised him to that position in the proper time. Satan tried to ruin Job, but the result was more blessing and prosperity, both spiritual and material for Job (Job 1:9-11; 2:7; 42:10).

Evil men tried to destroy Daniel, but through that attempt God brought more glory to Himself and a higher position for Daniel (Dan 6:1-28).

How often Paul was mistreated by evil men, beaten, stoned, imprisoned. Yet he said, and fully believed, that it was all for good (Rom 8:28; 2 Cor 4:17,18; 12:10; Phil 1:12-14).

The supreme example of this principle was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Satan and wicked men meant it for evil. God meant it for good (Acts 2:23; 4:27,28), and through the acts of men at their worst He brought the greatest good to mankind, the eternal salvation of His people.

What a God! For His people He turns curses into blessings, evil into good, loss into gain, weakness into strength! God is the sovereign ruler of the universe. He is not a victim of circumstances and events. He controls circumstances and events, including the sinful acts of men, for His people's good, and to fulfill His purposes. Let us learn, as Joseph did, to apply this great truth to our own lives. It can give us joy in troubles and peace in sorrows of every kind.

many people alive, as *it is* today. 21 Now, therefore, do not be afraid. I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

22 And Joseph lived in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. 23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third *generation*. Also the children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up on Joseph's knees.

**50:21** "Kindly to them"— some of the events in the life of Joseph are strikingly similar to some events in the life of Christ. They were both especially loved by their fathers (37:3; Matt 3:17; John 3:35; 5:20). Both were hated by their own people (37:4; John 15:24,25). The words of both were rejected by their people (37:8; John 8:37,43,45). There was a conspiracy to kill each of them (37:18; Matt 26:3,4). Each was sold into the hands of enemies (37:28; Matt 26:14-16). Each was falsely accused and punished (39:11-20; Matt 26:59-68; Luke 23:4, 23,24). Each became a blessing to the Gentiles (41:48,49, 54-57; Luke 24:45-47; Rom 1:16). Each rose to the highest place possible to him (41:38-44; Acts 2:36; Eph 1:20-22; Phil 2:9-11). Each was a means of saving his people (45:5-7; 47:11,12; Rom 1:16; 11:25-27). As Joseph made himself known at last to his brothers so will Jesus make himself known to the nation Israel (45:1-4; Zech 12:10; Rev 1:7). And as Joseph spoke kindly and showed kindness to his brothers as long as he lived, so will the Lord Jesus (Eph 2:7).

**50:24,25** 13:15; 26:3; 35:12.

**50:26** "A hundred and ten" — see Heb 11:22. Throughout Genesis we see the life span of men getting less and less (5:27; 9:29; 11:10-32; 25:7; 37:28; 47:28. Later it was reduced further (Ps 90:10).

"Coffin in Egypt" — in the opening chapter of Genesis man is full of life, a living being made in God's image (1:27; 2:7). Genesis closes with death coming to one of the best of men. The reason for death is given in 2:17; 3:6; Rom 5:12.

### **Additional Notes on Genesis chapter 1**

Genesis chapter one is a marvelous revelation from God, fully inspired and completely accurate, giving us certain facts about the origin of our world, of mankind and of all we see about us. We should all be very glad indeed to have this record of God's creative activity.

However, having the record and fully understanding it are two different matters. Actually, there are some major difficulties in our path when we try to understand all that God has revealed. Perhaps the principal difficulty is this: Some Hebrew words used there have more than one possible meaning and can be translated in various ways.

For example, the word translated "heaven" or "heavens" (NKJV) in verse 1 is

24 And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am dying, but God will surely come to you, and bring you out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." 25 And Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely come to you, and you shall carry up my bones from here."

26 So Joseph died, aged a hundred and ten years. And they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

the one word in Hebrew used to express everything from the air, the sky just above the earth, to the heavens of stars (and possibly galaxies - though galaxies are nowhere mentioned in the Bible). It is also the word used for Heaven, God's dwelling place. In verse 26 this same Hebrew word is translated "air" (and in about 20 other places in the Old Testament). In Hebrew the word is always in the plural. The singular is never used, even when the meaning is obviously singular, and so from the word itself we cannot always be sure whether singular or plural is meant. This is why some versions have "heaven" in verse 1, and others have "heavens".

Also the word translated "earth" is the same word for "land" and is used very often for the land of Israel.

And the Hebrew word usually translated "made" in verses 7 and 16 also has more than one meaning - "made ready", "prepared", "brought forth", "worked on", "did", as well as "made" or "created from existing material". The word translated "set" ("appointed" in some versions) in verse 17 is a form of the Hebrew word for "gave" which has quite a variety of meanings.

The word "beginning" in verse 1 also gives scope for questions. Does it refer to the beginning of the whole universe? or only to the beginning of our galaxy, the Milky Way, with its stars that appear in our sky at night? or, for that matter, only to the earth and that part of the sky closest to earth? It is generally assumed that it refers to the beginning of the whole universe, and it may do so. But can this be proved beyond doubt from the Hebrew words used? Of course, God did create the whole universe (Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11), but can we be absolutely certain that this is what He is saying here? Is it not possible that God is giving a revelation of what is of most concern to man on earth, that is, man's immediate environment, the earth and sky just above the earth, and that outer space was already in existence long before the event spoken of in Genesis 1:1? (One recognized expert on the Hebrew language whom I contacted believes this is the way we should look at it.) Perhaps the galaxies in far distant space were created long before the Milky Way. Can it be proved that they were not? According to evidence put forth by astronomers the formation of new galaxies in space still goes on.

It certainly seems possible to me that the phrase "In the beginning" means the beginning of our corner of the universe, that part which relates most directly to mankind. The earth is very special to God. This is where He created man made in His image, and this is where He planned for His Son to come and live among men and die for them. So the "beginning" may well mean the beginning of this spot that is special in the eyes of God.

We may also have difficulties in understanding all that is in Genesis chapter 1 because of assumptions that have been generally made about what is taught here. But assumptions are just that, and may not be the truth God has revealed.

There are also disputes among those who accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God (which it is) about the time periods involved in this chapter, and the manner in which God brought about all that is seen there.

This chapter, as the rest of the Bible, is God's Word, and we should all be very careful about making pronouncements concerning the events revealed in It, and AVOID DOGMATISM ABOUT DOUBTFUL THINGS (this should apply also about other revelations in the Bible which seem to us to have two or more possible interpretations). And we should not fail to love our brothers in the faith who disagree with our views on certain details of God's revelation.

As for the word translated "heaven," since the Hebrew word has various meanings, we should be careful not to immediately rule out any of them as we look at the opening verse of the Bible. Is God really speaking here of the whole universe? Or only of that part of it which is close to the earth? Should the word be translated "sky" or "skies? Are we to take the information given in verses 7 and 8 as the definition of the "heaven" in verse 1? The same Hebrew word is used in both verses. The language of verses 7 and 8, speaking of waters above the expanse (or firmament) and below the expanse, seems to indicate that the heaven spoken of in this chapter is related to the skies just above the earth, not to the far reaches of space.

Many scientists, at present, with the evidence they think they have gleaned, say that the universe is many billions of years old. This has not been proved to everyone's satisfaction, but assuming, for the moment, that it is true, it is not necessary to think that the earth is anywhere near that old. Its beginning might conceivably have been long after the creation of what we call outer space with its myriads of galaxies. If so, light from those far distant galaxies could have been streaming through this corner of space where the earth now is, before the earth was created. I am only suggesting possibilities, not making assertions.

There seems to be a good possibility that there was a gap between verses two and three of Genesis chapter 1, and perhaps a very long gap. It is not necessary to think

that verse 1, the creation of the heaven and the earth, is to be included in the work of the first day. Verse one was the original creation. Verse 3 begins the revelation of what God did to prepare the earth for life and human habitation. We are not told when God sent light to the dark and empty earth. Only the bare fact is stated. Some scholars believe that this time period could have been millions or even billions of years. If the "beginning" in 1:1 was the beginning of the whole universe. Including earth, then the earth is very old, and it could have remained dark and empty for an immense period of time before God sent light and began to change things.

Someone may ask, Why would God wait such a long period of time before going to work on the earth to make it fit for man's habitation? But we might just as well ask, why not? Why have a universe billions of years old (if that is what it is)? God does not regard time as we do (see Psalm 90:4, where a thousand years to God is like a watch in the night - 4 hours). And He does not think as we do (Isaiah 55:8,9), and His judgments are unsearchable and His ways are past finding out (Romans 11:33). Of course, the appearance of man (*homo sapiens*) on earth was of recent origin, measured in thousands of years, not millions or billions.

We should look more carefully at 1:14-18. The Hebrew word translated "made" in verse 16 is "asah." This is not the same word used in verse 1, translated "created" ("bara"). Here "asah" may not mean "created", but "to work on" or "to produce", "to make ready", "to prepare" (see Ps 74:16). The word "asah" is used over 2600 times in the Hebrew Old Testament ("bara" is used only 49 times), and has a wide band of meanings. In a few cases it is used with more or less the same meaning as "bara" (create), though it usually (perhaps always) seems to mean to make out of already existing material. In verse 26 God said "Let us make (asah) man in our image", and in the next verse we have the words, "So God created (bara) man in His own image." God "made" or created man out of previously existing material - the dust of the earth. In Gen 2:4 we have both verbs used again - "This is the history of the heaven and the earth when they were created ("bara"), in the day that the LORD God made ("asah") the earth and the heaven." So we cannot be absolutely sure that Gen 1:14-16 indicates that God actually created the sun and moon at that time, using pre-existing material, or whether He merely worked on them and caused them at that time to shine on earth, perhaps by more fully removing a cloud and water canopy surrounding the earth.

Another possibility that perhaps should not be ruled out is this: Let us suppose that Genesis 1:1 is speaking only of the earth and its local "heaven" (that which surrounded the earth close in), and that the earth was actually created before the sun, the moon and the stars which appear to us on earth.

Could not earth have been a special creation held in the hand of God on which He lovingly began His special work, giving it light from some source other than the sun (v 3), and afterwards actually creating the sun, moon and stars we read about in verses 14-16. But, someone will object, the earth needed to turn on its axis and needed to revolve around a heavenly body as it now does the sun. This is true if the only forces that exist are the physical forces of nature. But God the Creator is not limited to physical forces, and in creation may do as He pleases.

And there is another force operating in the universe, one which scientists cannot examine. See Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:17, where we are told that all things are "upheld" by the powerful word of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that by Him all things "hold together."

If, in fact, the sun and moon and visible stars came into existence after the earth was already here, then "asah" could mean that they were created out of already existing material (such as clouds of gas). If this is the way things came about, then the age of our solar system, and indeed our whole galaxy (but not the whole universe, and not necessarily the earth), would be measured in thousands of years, not billions. Light from the center of this galaxy, traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, could reach the earth in about 28,000 years. But perhaps the words "the stars" means only the stars that appear in our night sky. In this case, the sun, moon, and these close stars could be younger than that.

If, on the other hand, it can be proved that this galaxy is many millions or billions of years old (and some scientists think they have proved this), that should not trouble us. It should not affect the conviction that the present earth, prepared for mankind's habitation, is much, much younger than that, however old the original earth and this galaxy might be.

We should look at the sentence '*He made the stars also.*' Perhaps this means that He made them appear from the earth's point of view - that is, made conditions ready so that their light would reach earth. However, it would not be contrary to the Hebrew here to translate this "*He had made the stars also*" - referring to a work done long before. Notice that the words "He made" or "He had made" are in Italics, indicating that they are not in the original Hebrew. Or the expression might be a simple statement which means this: He who did all these other things is the One who also made the stars. Or it could even mean that at that time He actually took preexisting material and made the stars which now appear to us on earth.

One last theory should be put in the list of possibilities - some Christian scholars insist that the entire universe, all the heavens with their myriads of galaxies, together with the original earth, was made only some thousands of years ago, and that six literal days of creation followed immediately after

that. To me there seems to be scientific evidence against this view that makes it very doubtful indeed. If in the future this scientific evidence proves to be invalid, then this interpretation could seem much more likely than it does at present. But it is not necessary to accept this interpretation as the best explanation of the language of Genesis chapter 1, as I have tried to show in these notes. And since the language of the Bible itself does not demand such an interpretation, what is the value of trying to establish it?

To the author of these notes, in his present state of knowledge, these seem to be the possibilities. When I say "possibilities" I mean things that seem possible from the use of Hebrew words and phrases, and not necessarily scientifically possible, or possible from God's point of view. Actually, from God's point of view there is only one "possibility" - that which He actually did back there "in the beginning" and during the time following that.

In any case, trying to determine the age of the universe or of the present earth (or the earth as it was originally) is not my chief concern. Of what spiritual benefit would the knowledge of that be to anyone? We should be much more concerned with the God who created and made them and us, and with His later revelation of Himself, and with what He has done for us and what He wants us to be and do.

In the above notes I have set forth these theories, suggestions and possibilities which give some idea of the diversity of opinions held by believers about God's activities in regard to the heavens and the earth. What do I myself believe? I believe, as I said above, that we should be very cautious in our interpretation of the details of God's revelation here, and not express our opinions as if they were the absolute truth of God.

Further, I believe that what we call outer space with its myriads of galaxies, etc is probably some billions of years old; that the condition of the earth from Genesis 1:3 onward is quite young in comparison, its age to be measured in thousands, not billions, of years; that it is possible that the earth before God prepared it for man's habitation is older than that, and perhaps much older than that. If the beginning stated in 1:1 was the beginning only of our Milky Way galaxy then that might have taken place long after the creation of outer space with its galaxies. In this case, our galaxy and our earth need not be very ancient compared to the rest of the universe. We would have not merely a young earth, but a comparatively young galaxy as well. If, on the other hand, 1:1 refers to the beginning of the whole universe and the earth along with it then the original earth could be very ancient indeed. If this is the way we should understand that verse, then we might well consider that there was a huge gap in time between verses 2 and 3, God waiting a very long time before He sent light onto the earth

and went to work on it again. In this case, the physical earth, desolate and void, was very old, but the earth made ready for life and man is a great deal younger. And since this prepared earth is comparatively young, then the days mentioned in this chapter could well be days of 24 hours. If Genesis 1:1 is speaking only of the earth and its local "heaven", the "air", then the earth and the sun, moon, and stars spoken of in verses 14-16 could be young, and the days of this chapter would be days of 24 hours.

Faced with all these possibilities, I would state again my conviction that it is not wise

to be unduly dogmatic. God knows what He did and when He did it, and He knows also that His revelation of what He did, when properly understood, will be in complete harmony with any real truth science can ever discover. Let us indeed be dogmatic in teaching that God is the great Creator, and earth is a special creation made for a special purpose and that man too is a special creation of God. But the various interpretations of some of the details of His creation, at present, surely should not be put forward with the same certainty as these great truths.

# EXODUS

**Title:**

The Jews called this book by the opening words “Now these are the names,” and later shortened it to “names.” The name “Exodus” was given later (see the introduction to Genesis). It means “departure” or “going out,” and refers to the departure of the people of Israel from Egypt.

**Author and date:**

See Genesis author and date.

**Theme:**

The deliverance of Israel from slavery is the major theme of the first part of this book, and how God’s people were to live and worship is the major theme of the second part. The whole book is full of symbolic meanings and contains much instruction for believers now. See 2 Tim 3:16,17.

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**1** Now these *are* the names of the children of Israel who came into Egypt, each man and his household coming with Jacob: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, 3 Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, 4 Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. 5 All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob *totaled* seventy persons. But Joseph was *already* in Egypt.

6 And Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation. 7 And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and grew in number, and became exceedingly powerful, and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt who had not known Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more than we, and more powerful. 10 Come on, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they may increase *in number*, and it may happen, if any war breaks out, that they too will join our enemies and fight against us, and so get themselves out of the country."

11 Therefore they put slave drivers over them to oppress them with their hard labour. And for Pharaoh they built treasure cities, Pithom and Rameses. 12 But the more they oppressed them, the more they increased in number and grew. And they were in dread because of the children of Israel. 13 And the Egyptians forced the children of Israel to serve rigorously, 14 and made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, in brick, and in all kinds of labour in the field. All their service which they forced them to do was harsh.

15 And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives (the name of the one was Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah), 16 and he said, "When you assist the Hebrew women to give birth, and see *them* on the

*delivery* stools, if it *is* a son, then you must kill him; but if it *is* a daughter, then let her live."

17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the boys alive. 18 And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, saving the boys alive?"

19 And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they *are* vigorous and give birth before the midwives go in to them."

20 Therefore God was good to the midwives, and the people increased *in number* and became very strong. 21 And it came about, because the midwives feared God, that he enabled them to have families *of their own*.

22 And Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every *Hebrew* son that is born you must throw into the river, and every daughter you must save alive."

**2** And a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. 2 And the woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he *was* a fine *child*, she hid him for three months. 3 And when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of reeds for him, coated it with tar and pitch, put the child in it and placed *it* among the water plants at the river's edge. 4 And his sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the river, and her maids were walking along by the river's side. And when she saw the basket among the water plants, she sent her maid to get it. 6 And when she had opened *it*, she saw the child, and just then the baby cried. And she had compassion on him, and said, "This *is one* of the Hebrews' children."

**1:1-5** Gen 46:8-27.

**1:6** Gen 50:26.

**1:7** Gen 12:2; 28:3; 35:11; 46:3; 47:27; 48:4; Ps 105:24.

"Children of Israel" – in Hebrew literally "sons of Israel"; but in Hebrew the word for son or sons has a wide range of meaning, and here obviously means the descendants of Israel, or the people of Israel, both male and female.

**1:11-14** Long before, God told Abraham that this would happen – Gen 15:13. Sometimes the people of God are much mistreated, hated, afflicted, and persecuted in this world (Matt 10:21-23, 34-39; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom 8:17; Heb 11:35-38; 1 Pet 4:1, 12-19; 1 John 5:19). But see notes at Gen 50:20; Ps 66:10-12; Rom 8:28; etc.

**1:15** "Hebrew" – Gen 14:13. This was another name for a person of Israel.

**1:17** "Feared God" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps

34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 16:6; Acts 4:19; 5:29.

**1:20, 21** Prov 11:18; Eccl 8:12; Isa 3:10, 11; Matt 10:42; Heb 6:10.

**2:1** 6:16, 18, 20.

**2:2** "A fine child" – Acts 7:20; Heb 11:23. Here begins the story of one of the greatest persons of ancient times. His name, Moses, appears more than 800 times in the Bible. The Jews believed that he wrote the first five books of the Bible and there is very good reason for this belief given in the Bible itself (see Deut 31:9, 22; Mark 12:19, 26; Luke 24:27; John 1:45; 5:45-47; 2 Cor 3:15). These first five books were sometimes called the Book of the Law of Moses. The law given at Sinai came through Moses and he is the representative of God's law throughout the Bible (Luke 2:22; 16:29; John 1:17; Acts 28:23).

**2:4** "Sister" – her name was Miriam (15:20).

7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, so that she may nurse the child for you?"

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." And the girl went and called the child's mother. 9 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, for she said, "Because I drew him out of the water."

11 And it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brothers and saw their hard labours. And he saw an Egyptian hitting a Hebrew, one of his brothers. 12 And he looked this way and that, and when he saw that there *was* no one *around*, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 And when he went out the second day, just then two Hebrew men were fighting with each other. And he said to the one who was in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?"

14 And he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me, like you killed the Egyptian?" And Moses was afraid, and said, "This thing must have become known."

15 Now when Pharaoh heard about this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh to stay in the land of

Midian. And he sat down by a well. 16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and were drawing *water* and filling the troughs to water their father's flock, 17 and the shepherds came and drove them away. But Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

18 And when they came to their father Reuel, he said, "How *is it that* you have come so soon today?"

19 And they said, "An Egyptian rescued us from the hand of the shepherds, and also drew enough *water* for us, and watered the flock."

20 And he said to his daughters, "And where is he then? Why have you left the man? Call him, so that he can eat bread."

21 And Moses was content to stay with the man. And he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah *in marriage*. 22 And she bore him a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land."

23 And in the process of time it came about that the king of Egypt died. And the children of Israel were groaning because of *their* bondage, and crying out, and their cry, resulting from *their* bondage, rose up to God. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked on the children of Israel, and God had concern for *them*.

**3** Now Moses was pasturing the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert,

**2:10** Moses sounds like the Hebrew word for "draw out" and probably means that.

**2:11** Acts 7:23-25; Heb 11:24-26. This was the time of Moses's choice for God and God's people rather than for the pleasures and treasures of the world. In this he was a great example to us all – Matt 6:19-21; Luke 14:33; 1 John 2:15-17.

"Brothers" – in Hebrew the word has a wide range of meaning. Here it means relatives, or people.

**2:12-14** Acts 7:24-28.

**2:15** "Fled" – he fled in faith, not in fear (Heb 11:27). The land of Midian was in the Sinai Peninsula.

**2:17** Gen 29:3,10.

**2:18** The priest of Midian had two names – Reuel and Jethro (or perhaps Jethro was a title). Reuel means "friend of God"; Jethro means "excellent." The Midianites were descended from Abraham (Gen 25:2). It is possible that Jethro was a worshiper of the one true God, the God of Abraham.

**2:22** Gershom sounds like the Hebrew for "a stranger there", and probably means that.

**2:23-25** "Covenant" – Gen 12:1-3; 22:16-18; 26:2-5; 28:13-15; 33:18,19; Ps 105:8,42.

"Had concern for them" – God always hears the groans of His people and has compassion (Ex 6:5; 34:6,7; Jud 2:18; Ps 6:6-9; 38:9; 102:19,20; Isa 38:5; Rom 8:23,26).

**3:1** Egypt was one of the most advanced civilizations of ancient times, and Moses was a man educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, powerful in words and deeds (Acts 7:22). He was in the prime of life, strong and manly, with a love for his people and a zeal for God. We might think he was fully equipped to lead Israel out of Egypt immediately. Evidently God thought otherwise. Moses spent 40 years in the desert (7:7 with Acts 7:23,30), and became a shepherd of his father-in-law's sheep. It seems that what he needed to know to become the deliverer, lawgiver, and leader of Israel could be learned only in loneliness, lowliness, and difficulties. While he was faithfully performing the lowly task of shepherding sheep God appeared to him to call him to a higher ministry.

Here are some other examples of this same truth: Gideon (Jud 6:11); David (1 Sam 16:11-13); Elisha (1 Kings 19:19); Amos (Amos 7:14,15); Peter (Matt 4:18,19). At last God's time came to deliver His people from bondage and He leads Moses to mount Horeb (another

and came to the mountain of God, to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the middle of a bush. And he looked and saw that the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight. Why isn't the bush being burnt up?"

4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses." And he said, "Here I am."

5 And he said, "Do not come near here. Take your shoes off your feet, for the place where you are standing *is* holy ground." 6 He also said, "I *am* the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7 And the Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their slave drivers. For I know their sorrows, 8 and have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites

and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 And now, look, the cry of the children of Israel has reached me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are crushing them. 10 So now, come and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you can bring my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."

11 And Moses said to God, "Who *am* I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

12 And he said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this *will be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain."

13 And Moses said to God, "Look, *when* I go to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you', and they say to me, 'What *is* his name?' what shall I say to them?"

14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "You shall say this to the children of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

15 And God also said to Moses, "You shall say this to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and this *is* the *name for* remembrance to all generations.

name for Sinai). It is called "the mountain of God" because God would later reveal Himself there to His people in a wonderful way and give them His law. Exodus chapters 19-40; the whole of Leviticus, and chapters 1-10 of Numbers were given there.

"Jethro" – note at 2:18.

**3:2** "Angel" – note at Gen 16:7.

"Bush" – Mark 12:26; Acts 7:30.

"Fire" – in the Bible fire is sometimes a symbol of God's presence – 13:21; 19:18; Gen 15:17; Lev 9:24; Num 11:1-3; 16:35; Deut 4:11,12; 5:4; 9:3; 1 Kings 18:24,38; 1 Chron 21:26; 2 Chron 7:1; Ps 18:8; Isa 4:5; 33:14; Ezek 1:4; Mal 3:2,3; Heb 12:29. Fire speaks especially of God's complete holiness. But God never instructed men to worship fire, which is a symbol of God, but to worship only God who created fire and everything else.

**3:4** Gen 22:11; 1 Sam 3:4.

**3:5** Josh 5:15.

**3:6** Acts 7:32; Jud 13:22; Rev 1:17.

**3:7** 2:25; Neh 9:9; Ps 106:44; Isa 63:9; Acts 7:34.

**3:8** Gen 15:13,14; 50:24; Ex 6:6-8; 12:51.

**3:11** Forty years previously Moses was sure God would use him to deliver Israel and tried to do so in his own way – Acts 7:25. Now he has learned humility (Ex 4:10,13; 6:12).

**3:12** Gen 28:15; 31:3; Ex 4:12; 33:14-16; Josh 1:15; Isa 43:2; 57:15.

**3:14,15** Here is one of God's important names: "I AM." Compare the phrase found in Rev 1:8 – "who is, and was, and is to come." The word

LORD in v 15 (all capital letters) indicates the name "Jehovah" or (as some prefer to write it because it is closer to the Hebrew) "Yahveh", or "Yahweh". This name comes from the Hebrew word "to be", and means "I am" or "I will be." And "I am who I am" could also be translated "I will be what I will be." Jehovah is the eternally self-existing one. In the Hebrew Old Testament the name Jehovah is used more than 6,000 times. It is God's "memorial" name to be remembered by the Jews throughout all generations (Ps 135:13). The nature of Jehovah is revealed in Ex 34:6,7.

Some learned Jews translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek some two or three centuries before Christ. They translated Jehovah by the Greek word Kurios, which means Lord. "Lord" is used more than 700 times in the New Testament. In many places it is a translation of the name Jehovah (Matt 3:3 and Isa 40:3; Matt 4:7,10 and Deut 6:13,16; Acts 2:20,21 and Joel 2:31,32; Rom 4:8 and Ps 32:2; etc). Lord (Kurios) is the title given to Jesus Christ hundreds of times in the New Testament, and Christ used the words "I am" about Himself (John 8:24,28,58). The Jesus who appears in the New Testament is the incarnation of Jehovah of the Old Testament.

There are several compound names of Jehovah in the Old Testament.

Jehovah Jireh – "Jehovah will provide" (Gen 22:13,14)

Jehovah Rapha – "Jehovah who heals"

16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, I have certainly visited you and *seen* what is being done to you in Egypt, 17 and I have said, I will bring you up out of the misery of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'

18 "And they will obey your voice, and you shall come to the king of Egypt, you and the elders of Israel, and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now please let us go a three days' journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.' 19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, except by a mighty hand. 20 And I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in its midst. And after that he will let you go.

21 "And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and it will come about that, when you go, you will not go empty-handed. 22 But every woman shall borrow from her neighbour, and from her who is staying a while in her house, ornaments of silver and ornaments of gold, and

clothing. And you shall put *them* on your sons and on your daughters, and so you will plunder the Egyptians."

**4** And Moses answered and said, "But, look, they will not believe me, or obey my voice. For they will say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"

2 And the LORD said to him, "What *is* that in your hand?" And he said, "A rod."

3 And he said, "Throw it on the ground." And he threw it on the ground, and it became a snake, and Moses ran away from it. 4 And the LORD said to Moses, "Put out your hand, and take it by the tail." And he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand. 5 *The LORD said* "This is so that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

6 And again the LORD spoke to him, "Now put your hand inside your *cloak*." So he put his hand inside his *cloak*, and when he took it out *he saw* that his hand was leprous like snow.

7 And he said, "Put your hand inside your *cloak* again." And he put his hand inside his *cloak* again, and he drew it out from inside his *cloak*, and *saw* that it had been restored like his *other* flesh.

(Ex 15:26)

Jehovah Nissi - "Jehovah my banner" (Ex 17:8-15)

Jehovah Shalom - "Jehovah is peace" (Jud 6:24)

Jehovah Tsidkenu - "Jehovah our righteousness" (Jer 23:6)

Jehovah Shammah - "Jehovah is present" (Ezek 48:35)

For notes on these names see the references given. In the New Testament Jesus is revealed completely fulfilling the meanings of all these names: Jireh (John 10:11, 17,18); Rapha (Matt 9:35); Nissi (Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57); Shalom (Eph 2:14; Col 1:20); Tsidkenu (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21); Shammah (Matt 1:23; 28:20). Jesus showed Himself to be the great "I am" - the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8). Comparison of other verses also reveals the identification of Jesus with Jehovah (for example, Ps 23:1 with John 10:11; etc). For other references see note at Luke 2:11.

**3:16** Gen 28:13; 48:13.

**3:17** Gen 50:24.

**3:19** 5:2.

**3:20** "Hand" - 7:4,5; 9:15; 13:3,9,14.

"Wonders" - 7:3; 10:2; 15:11; Deut 6:22; Neh 9:10; Ps 105:27; 135:9; Jer 32:20; Acts 7:36. Through miracles God showed His reality and power. Men's hearts are hard and unbelieving, and in this world there are so-called gods and lords innumerable. In Egypt God displayed such signs and miracles that it was plain to all that He,

Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the true and only God (8:18,19). The miracles He did there were a judgment on the gods of Egypt (Ex 12:12). In the New Testament, at the beginning of this era, God performed many wonderful miracles to show that Christ's Gospel was true and that He was the Saviour of the world (Heb 2:4). Notes on miracles at Matt 8:1; Luke 16:31; John 2:11.

**3:21,22** This would be in payment for the slavery and afflictions they had undergone at the hands of the Egyptians. It was divine justice at work as in Ezek 39:10; Hab 2:8.

**4:1** God had said that they would listen (3:18), so Moses had no business making this excuse.

**4:3-9** This is the first time in recorded Old Testament history that any man had been given the power to do miracles.

**4:3,4** The serpent was the well-known emblem of the kings of Egypt (Pharaohs) who wore them on their crown. The Pharaohs themselves were regarded as divine. Now Moses is given power over Pharaoh.

**4:5** This was the purpose of these signs. It was exceedingly important that the people of Israel believe Moses, the deliverer God was sending them. If they did not believe there would be no deliverance for them. Compare Josh 3:7; John 4:48; 5:36; 6:29; 8:24; 10:27,38.

**4:6** The power to inflict and remove plagues was also given to Moses.

"Leprous" - see note at Lev 13:1.

8 And the LORD said "It will come about that if they do not believe you, or pay attention to the evidence of the first sign, they may believe the evidence of the latter sign. 9 And it will be that if they do not believe even these two signs, or obey your voice, then you shall take some water from the river, and pour it on the dry ground. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry ground."

10 And Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, not before this and not since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

11 And the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who make the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? 12 So now go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you shall say."

13 And he said, "O my Lord, please send the word by the hand of anyone else you want to send."

14 And the anger of the LORD burned against Moses, and he said, "Is not Aaron the

Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And also now he is coming to meet you. And when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 And you shall speak to him, and put words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. 16 And he will be your spokesman to the people. And he himself will be as a mouth for you, and you will be as God for him. 17 And you shall take this rod in your hand. You shall do signs with it."

18 And Moses left and returned to his father-in-law Jethro, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brothers who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

19 And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt, for all the men who tried to take your life are dead." 20 And Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

21 And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in your

**4:9** The Nile was (and is) the great river of Egypt. Most of Egypt's civilization and agriculture was along its banks. It was worshiped as divine.

**4:10** Another unacceptable excuse. God does not need men's eloquence, but their obedience.

**4:11** Ps 94:9; 146:8; Matt 11:5.

**4:12** Deut 18:18; Isa 50:4; Jer 1:9; Matt 10:19,20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11,12; 21:14,15; John 14:26; 16:13. This is the way the whole Bible was inspired. God taught His prophets what to say, and breathed His thoughts into their minds. And He carried them along in their writing in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).

**4:13,14** Now Moses makes almost a flat refusal to go and God's anger burns against him because of it (compare Ps 90:7-11). Let us understand that Moses, great man that he was, had a sinful nature like all the rest of mankind (Rom 3:23), and needed God's grace to overcome it. If we refuse to do the will of God in spite of repeated urgings and commands and promises we too will be the objects of His anger.

**4:15,16** 7:1,2.

**4:17** 4:2.

**4:18** 3:1.

**4:19** 2:15,23.

**4:20** 18:2-4.

**4:21** "Wonders" - 3:20; 11:9,10.

"Harden" - in the next seven chapters twenty times the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is mentioned. Sometimes Pharaoh hardened his own heart, at other times God hardened Pharaoh's heart. God is the sovereign ruler of the universe and can do all things according to His own will (Rom 9:17,18; Eph 1:11). But God always has good reasons

for doing what He does. He is not an arbitrary, capricious deity who merely wants to show His sovereignty. Several reasons may be suggested as to why He hardened Pharaoh's heart.

First, Pharaoh was a godless, arrogant man who kept God's people in bondage and treated them cruelly. When faced with God's demands he hardened his own heart (8:15,32; 9:17,34). Hardening him further was God's way of judging and punishing him (compare Ps 18:25-27). Pharaoh was not a good man whom God made bad by hardening. He was a bad man whose badness was further revealed by hardening. It is not written anywhere in the Bible that God ever hardened a humble man, or a man who wanted to know God and serve Him.

A second reason why God hardened Pharaoh was that God sought an occasion to work His wonders in Egypt so that His people would believe and know Him (4:5,9; 6:7). It is very unlikely that they would have tried to leave Egypt if God had not revealed His power and love to them in a very striking way.

A third reason why God hardened Pharaoh was that He wanted His name (that is, His nature) to be known throughout the whole earth (9:16). This was not for His own good but for the good of humanity. The knowledge of God is the supreme knowledge men can gain. Indeed, eternal life consists in it (John 17:3). At different occasions God revealed different ones of His attributes - sometimes love, sometimes holiness, sometimes wisdom, etc. Here in Egypt He revealed His power, His severity toward the ungodly, and His mercy toward His people.

A fourth reason why God hardened Pharaoh was that He had decided to execute judgment



hand. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. 22 And you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: Israel is my son, my firstborn. 23 And I say to you, Let my son go so that he may serve me. And if you refuse to let him go, then I will kill your son, your firstborn.'

24 And it happened at the inn along the way, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him, 25 but Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at his feet, and said, "You are a bridegroom of blood to me." 26 So the LORD let him alone. Then she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.

27 And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." And he went and met him in the mountain of God, and kissed him. 28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him to do.

29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, 30 and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 And the people believed. And when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked on their misery, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

**5** And afterwards Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: Let my people go so that they may hold a feast to me in the desert."

2 And Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go."

3 And they said, "The God of the Hebrews has

on the gods of Egypt (12:12). He showed the utter powerlessness of those false gods, and the vanity and uselessness of worshipping them. And this also was a very significant and important thing for God to do.

**4:22** Isa 63:16; 64:8; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1; Rom 9:4.

**4:23** 5:1; 11:5; 12:29.

**4:24-26** Why would God think to kill the very person He planned to use to deliver His people from bondage? The answer is to be found in the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants (Gen 17:9-14). At that time God gave circumcision as the sign of the covenant. Moses was disobedient to this command of God, and he was in danger until he obeyed – or made his wife obey. It seems that his wife may have been the stumbling-block to obedience. Of course, if God had really made much of an effort to kill Moses He could easily have done so. What He wanted was

met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, so that he will not attack us with plague or with the sword."

4 And the king of Egypt said to them, "Why do you, Moses and Aaron, take the people away from their work? Get back to your labours." 5 And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land now are many, and you are making them rest from their labours."

6 And that same day Pharaoh commanded the people's slave drivers, and their overseers, saying, 7 "You must not give the people straw to make brick any more, as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 And you must put on them the same quota of bricks which they made before. You must not make it any less, for they are idle. So they cry out, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' 9 Let more work be put on the men, so that they will keep working and not pay attention to empty words."

10 And the people's slave drivers and their overseers went out and spoke to the people, saying, "Thus says Pharaoh: 'I will not give you straw. 11 You go and get your straw where you can find it. But none of your work will be reduced.'" 12 So the people were scattered throughout the whole land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. 13 And the slave drivers hurried them, saying, "Complete your work, your daily tasks, just as when there was straw." 14 And the overseers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's slave drivers had put over them, were beaten and were asked, "Why have you not completed your task in making bricks both yesterday and today, as before?"

15 Then the overseers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why are you treating your servants like this? 16 There is no

to wake him up to an important duty. To get men to wake up and obey Him God may sometimes use very drastic measures.

**4:27** 4:15; 3:1.

**4:29** 3:16; 4:2-8.

**4:30** 4:15,16.

**4:31** 3:18; 4:8.

**5:1,2** At first Moses did not demand that Pharaoh release Israel from bondage and let them leave Egypt. He asked only a simple thing. Pharaoh, in the hardness of his heart, would not grant even that. He did not know the true and only God and he did not want to know Him (compare 2 Kings 18:35; Job 21:14,15). Pharaoh is a picture of Satan, the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4), who will not willingly or easily let his slaves (sinful men) go free.

**5:4-9** Pharaoh wanted only to get as much work out of his slaves as possible. He thought all the words of Moses were false. He was determined to crush Israel

straw given to your servants, and they say to us, 'Make brick!' And, see, your servants are beaten. But the fault is with your own people."

17 But he said, "You *are* idle! You *are* idle! Therefore you say, 'Let us go *and* offer sacrifices to the LORD.' 18 So go now and work. For no straw is going to be given to you; yet you must deliver the quota of bricks."

19 And the overseers of the children of Israel saw *that* they *were* in trouble when they were told, "You must not make *any* reduction from the bricks of your daily *quota*." 20 And they met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them when they came from Pharaoh, 21 and they said to them, "The LORD look on you, and judge. Because you have made us odious in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to kill us."

22 And Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have you treated this people so badly? Why is it *that* you have sent me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."

**6** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a

completely – vs 17,18.

**5:19-21** The people of Israel were weak and unstable – sometimes believing God, sometimes not, sometimes praising and worshipping Him, sometimes complaining and murmuring against Him and Moses His servant. In other words, they were typical human beings, like us. Even Moses was affected by their discouragement – vs 22,23. God does not answer Moses's question "why"? He seldom does give an answer to it (Deut 29:29; Isa 55:9; John 13:7; the whole book of Job).

**6:1** God announced victory for His people before the struggle began. Compare John 16:33; Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57.

**6:3** Some scholars have suggested that the last sentence in this verse could possibly be translated as a question: "Did I not reveal myself to them by my name Jehovah?" The name Jehovah comes very early in Genesis (2:5) and is used many times throughout that book. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob certainly knew that name. If we leave the translation in v 3 as it is, without putting a question mark (in the original Hebrew Old Testament there were no question marks anywhere even when questions were asked), the meaning would be this: God progressively gave revelation of Himself in the Bible, here some, there some, and little by little the full picture of who He is builds up. In the New Testament we have the full blaze of His revelation of Himself in Christ.

In Genesis the emphasis is on His almightiness, His all-sufficiency for His people (Gen 17:1; 35:11; 48:3). Though God used His name of

strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

2 And God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I *am* the LORD, 3 and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty, but I did not make myself known to them by my name Jehovah. 4 And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, where they were foreigners. 5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant.

6 "Therefore say to the children of Israel, 'I *am* the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. 7 And I will take you for myself as a people, and I will be God to you, and you will know that I *am* the LORD your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for an inheritance. I *am* the LORD.'"

9 And Moses told this to the children of Israel,

Jehovah then He did not reveal its meaning, and His people did not know what the name would eventually mean to them. Here in Exodus God began to reveal all that is meant by the great name of Jehovah (notes at 3:14,15; 33:19; 34:5-7). He reveals especially the relationship between the name Jehovah and the redemption of His people (vs 6-8). He reveals that Jehovah is the one who is faithful to fulfill His promises.

"God Almighty" – in Hebrew El-Shaddai – note at Gen 17:1.

**6:4** Gen 15:18; 17:3-8; 26:3; 28:13.

**6:5** 2:24.

**6:6** 15:13; Deut 7:8; 1 Chron 17:21; John 8:31-36; Gal 1:3,4.

**6:7** "People" – 19:5; Deut 4:20; 7:6; 2 Sam 7:24; 1 Pet 2:9,10.

"God" – Gen 17:7; Ex 29:45; Lev 11:45; Deut 29:13; 2 Cor 6:17,18; Rev 21:3.

"You will know" – 16:12; Isa 41:20; 49:23,26; 60:16; John 7:17; Eph 1:17-19; Phil 3:7-11. This is one great purpose God has in the revelation of Himself in His acts and in His Word.

**6:8** Gen 15:18; 26:3. Five reasons are given in verses 6-8 and similar verses in Exodus for God's display of mighty power in Egypt.

First, to free His people from cruel bondage.

Second, to judge the ungodly of Egypt and their false gods.

Third, to show He was the God who keeps His promises and covenant.

Fourth, to show once and for all that He was the supreme and only God, far above all gods, lords and men (7:5; 10:1,2;

but because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage they did not listen to Moses.

10 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 11 "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land."

12 And Moses spoke in the LORD's presence, saying, "Look, the children of Israel have not listened to me. How then will Pharaoh, who is of uncircumcised lips, listen to me?"

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them an order for the children of Israel, and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

14 These are the heads of their fathers' houses. The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These *are* the families of Reuben.

15 And the sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These *are* the families of Simeon.

16 And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi *were* an hundred and thirty-seven years.

17 The sons of Gershon *were* Libni, and Shimi, according to their families.

18 And the sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath *were* a hundred and thirty-three years.

19 And the sons of Merari *were* Mahali and Mushi. These *are* the families of Levi according to their generations.

20 And Amram took as his wife Jochebed, his father's sister, and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram *were* a hundred and thirty-seven years.

21 And the sons of Izhar *were* Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri.

22 And the sons of Uzziel *were* Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri.

23 And Aaron took as his wife Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

24 And the sons of Korah *were* Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These *were* the families of the

Korahites.

25 And Aaron's son Eleazar took as his wife *one* of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. These *were* the heads of the fathers of the Levites according to their families.

26 It *was* this Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring the children of Israel out from the land of Egypt according to their armies. 27 These *were* the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out from Egypt. These *are* the same Moses and Aaron.

28 And it came about on the day *that* the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, 29 that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, I *am* the LORD. Tell Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

30 And Moses said in the presence of the LORD, "Look, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how will Pharaoh listen to me?"

**7** And the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. 2 You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. 3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 But Pharaoh will not listen to you, so that I may lay my hand on Egypt and bring out my armies, my people the children of Israel from the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 And the Egyptians will know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch out my hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

6 And Moses and Aaron did so. They did just as the LORD commanded them. 7 And Moses *was* eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 9 "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Perform a miracle for yourselves', then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and throw *it* down before Pharaoh *and* it will become a snake.'"

10 And Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did just as the LORD had commanded.

12:12).

Fifth, to show that God was actively involved in the affairs of the world acting in behalf of His people (8:22,23). He was not a God afar off who had no concern for the affairs of men. God rules over the world (note at Ps 47:2).

"Uncircumcised lips" – he probably means his inability to speak clearly and fluently.

**6:12** 4:10; 6:30; Jer 1:6.

**7:1** 4:16. Moses was to be God's representative, acting for Him. Compare

2 Cor 5:18-20.

"God" – the Hebrew could also be translated "a god", but it is very unlikely indeed that this is the meaning here.

**7:3-5** Note at 4:21. It is of the greatest possible importance that men learn of the one true God. If they refuse to learn in a gentle, humble, obedient way, He may teach them in harsher ways.

**7:9** Why would Pharaoh say such a thing? See note at v 11.

**7:10** 4:2-4.

And Aaron threw his rod down before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a snake.

11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers, and the magicians of Egypt also did the same thing with their magic spells. 12 For they all threw down their rods and they became snakes, but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

14 And the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart *has become* hardened. He refuses to let the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning. Then he goes down to the water, and you shall stand on the river's bank *waiting* for his coming, and you shall take in your hand the rod that was turned into a snake. 16 And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, Let my people go, so that they may serve me in the desert. Up until now you would not listen. 17 Thus says the LORD, You will know that I *am* the LORD by this: See, I will strike the water that *is* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and it will be turned into blood. 18 And the fish that *are* in the river will die, and the river will stink, and the Egyptians will loathe drinking of the water of the river.'"

**7:11** Pharaoh, if he had so desired, could have at least tried to put Moses and Aaron to death when they first came in behalf of Israel. Instead, it appears that he wanted a contest. No doubt he thought that the gods of Egypt were more powerful than the God of Israel and that his magicians could show tricks as impressive as anything Moses could do. Two of Egypt's magicians are named in 2 Tim 3:8,9. Some sorcerers and so-called "godmen" can display seeming wonders and show some sort of power, but it is not the power of the one true God. The Lord Jesus warned of false Christs and false prophets, followers of Satan, who would come and show great signs and wonders (see Matt 24:24,25; 2 Thess 2:8-10; Rev 13:13-15). Signs and wonders alone do not prove that the ones doing them are of God and speak the truth. They may be tricks of the magician's art or displays of Satanic power.

**7:12** Here is the first indication to Pharaoh that Moses and Aaron were in touch with a greater power than Egypt's magicians. Their snakes were symbols of Pharaoh himself (note at 4:3,4). Actually, the magicians' "rods" may have been rigid snakes which started to move when released. Perhaps this was not an uncommon trick. If those magicians actually performed miracles, the power by which they did them was the power of Satan (compare 2 Thess 2:9).

**7:13** Pharaoh refused to admit defeat so quickly.

**7:17** "You will know" – the Lord had used

19 And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, *so that* they may become blood, and so that there may be blood throughout the whole land of Egypt, both in wooden *containers*, and in stone *containers*."

20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. And he lifted up the rod and struck the water that was in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that was in the river turned to blood. 21 And the fish that were in the river died, and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river. And there was blood throughout the whole land of Egypt.

22 And the magicians of Egypt did *the same thing* with their magic spells, and so Pharaoh's heart was hardened; he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had said. 23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house; he did not let his heart dwell on this either. 24 And all the Egyptians dug around the river for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the river.

25 And seven days passed after the LORD had

such words to Moses about the Egyptians, but this is the first time directly to Pharaoh himself. God accepted Pharaoh's challenge. He will show His power. God is not a bully who has a vain desire to show Himself stronger than everyone else. He does what He does that the truth might be understood and that men may come to know Him. Here He was giving a revelation of Himself for all time and for all people.

**7:19-21** The Egyptians considered the Nile River divine and worshiped it. Also every morning they bathed their idols in clean water. Now God begins His judgments against the gods of Egypt (12:12).

**7:22** Is it possible for magicians to do such a thing? And was there any clear water left in the river for them to do so? The Nile is a flowing stream and its water was constantly being renewed from its source upstream. The magicians were either able to turn some of it into blood, or made it seem that they did so. In either case the result was the same – Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

Observe that the magicians could not reverse the judgment of God on the waters of Egypt (or any of the judgments which follow); they could only try to imitate what Moses and Aaron did. If they had possessed great power, and had desired the good of the people, surely they would have tried to turn the blood back into clean water, and to deliver the land from the other plagues which followed. But they did not, and they could not.

struck the river.

**8** And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: Let my people go so that they may serve me. 2 And if you refuse to let *them* go, now I will plague all *the land within* your borders with frogs. 3 And the river will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house and into your bedroom and onto your bed, and into the house of your servants, and onto your people, and into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. 4 And the frogs will come up on both you and on your people and on all your servants.'"

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.'"

6 And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7 And the magicians did so with their magic arts and brought frogs up on the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the LORD so he will take away the frogs from me, and from my people, and I will let the people go, so that they may offer sacrifices to the LORD."

9 And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Get the honour instead of me. When will I pray for you and for your servants and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *so that* they may remain only in the river?"

10 And he said, "Tomorrow." And he said, "*Let it be* according to your word, so that you may know that *there is* no one like the LORD our God. 11 And the frogs will go away from you and from your houses and from your servants and from your people. They will remain only in the river."

12 And Moses and Aaron went out from

Pharaoh, and Moses called out to the LORD, because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. 13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. 14 And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

16 And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the ground, so that it may become lice throughout the whole land of Egypt.'" 17 And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and struck the dust of the ground, and it became lice on man, and on beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout the whole land of Egypt. 18 And the magicians tried to bring out lice with their magic arts, but they could not. So there were lice on man and on beast.

19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God!" But Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

20 And the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh when he comes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: Let my people go, so that they may serve me. 21 Otherwise, if you will not let my people go, look, I will send swarms of flies on you and on your servants and on your people, and into your houses, and the houses of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground where they are.

22 "And on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, to the end that you may know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23 And I will put a division between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow."

**8:1** The Hebrew word for "serve" also means "worship." In all ages God brings His people out of the bondage of sin that they might both serve and worship Him (John 4:23; Rom 12:1; Rev 22:3,4).

**8:2** The frog was also connected with the most ancient forms of idolatry in Egypt.

**8:6** Ps 105:30.

**8:7** The magicians seemed equal to the challenge.

**8:8** Evidently the magicians could not remove the frogs with their secret arts. They could add to the severity of the plagues but could not offer any cure. Pharaoh now shows his first sign of weakness.

**8:9,10** "There is no one like the LORD our God" – this word of Moses was a plain challenge to the Egyptians. God would show himself far superior to their gods.

**8:15** The wicked always want relief from their difficulties, but they do not want to love and serve the true God.

**8:16** "Lice" – the Hebrew word is obscure in meaning and may possibly mean "gnats" or "mosquitoes." The Egyptians worshiped not only a Nile River god but a god of the land as well. Here the plague arises out of the land itself. God showed His power over the earth by creating living things from dust.

**8:18,19** The magicians could not create anything and so failed here. They were convinced that God was at work through Moses. This was a very significant admission, but Pharaoh would not listen.

**8:22,23** The true God would give further evidence that He was the God of Israel and that He was there with them. He will always make a distinction between those who serve



24 And the LORD did so. A great swarm of flies came into the house of Pharaoh and *into* his servants' houses and into all the land of Egypt. The land was ruined because of the swarm of flies.

25 And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God inside the country."

26 And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we will sacrifice to the LORD our God what the Egyptians *regard* as an abomination, and, see, when we sacrifice what the Egyptians *regard* as an abomination will they not stone us? 27 We will go a three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, just as he commands us."

28 And Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, so that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the desert. But you must not go very far away. Pray for me."

29 And Moses said, "See, I am going out from you, and I will pray to the LORD that tomorrow the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

30 And Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD. 31 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses, and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. 32 And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; he would not let the people go.

**9** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: Let my people go, so that they may serve me. 2 For if you refuse to let *them* go, and still hold them, 3 then the hand of the LORD will bring a very severe plague on your livestock that *is* in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the

sheep. 4 And the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, and nothing will die of all *that belongs* to the children of Israel.'"

5 And the LORD appointed a definite time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land." 6 And the LORD did that *very* thing the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died. But not one of the livestock of the children of Israel died. 7 And Pharaoh sent and saw that there was not one of the livestock of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

8 And the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle them toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And they will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt which will become boils breaking out *in* sores on man and on animal, throughout the whole land of Egypt."

10 And they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses sprinkled them up toward the sky, and they became boils breaking out *in* sores on man and on animal. 11 And the magicians could not stand in the presence of Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. 12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had told Moses.

13 And the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him: 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: Let my people go, so that they may serve me. 14 For this time I will send all my plagues on your heart and on your servants and on your people, so that you may know that *there is* no one like me in all the earth. 15 For *if by* now I had stretched out my hand to strike you and your people with plague, you would have been destroyed from the earth. 16 But I have raised you up for this very *purpose*,

and worship Him and those who worship other gods, but not in just the way He then distinguished between them in Egypt.

"Put a division" – the KJV here follows the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). The Hebrew has "I will put a deliverance."

**8:25-28** Pharaoh wanted Israel to remain in the land, or at least in reach of his armies. But, of course, he wanted also to be relieved of his difficulties.

"Pray for me" – he began to see something of the truth.

**8:32** Verse 15. Now Pharaoh reveals the incredible stubbornness of fallen, sinful human nature (Rom 1:21; 8:6,7,8). Knowing the truth is not enough. There must be a heart to obey it.

**9:1** 8:1.

**9:4** 8:22,23.

**9:6** The gods of the Egyptians were powerless in the face of God's judgments and were unable to prevent such a calamity to some of the peoples' prized and essential possessions.

**9:7** Pharaoh knew it was God at work but he would not submit to Him (compare Dan 5:22,23).

**9:8** The Egyptians worshiped a god of the air also. Jehovah now shows He is the master over the regions of the air.

**9:11** 7:11; 8:18,19. This is the last mention of the magicians in Exodus. This is an indication of their crushing defeat.

**9:12** Note at 4:21.

**9:14** 8:10.

**9:16** 4:21; 6:7; 7:5; Rom 9:17. The report of God's deliverance of His people from



to show you my power, and to have my name declared throughout the whole earth. 17 Still you are exalting yourself over my people and will not let them go. 18 Now tomorrow about this time, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been in Egypt from its establishment until now. 19 Therefore send now *and* gather your livestock, and all that you have in the field. *For* the hail will fall *on* every man and animal that is found in the field that is not brought home, and they will die."

20 Among the servants of Pharaoh, those who feared the word of the LORD got his servants and his livestock to run into the houses. 21 But those who did not pay attention to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

22 And the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and on animal, and on every plant in the field, throughout the land of Egypt." 23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along on the ground, and the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail and fire mixed with the hail, very heavy. There had not been anything like it in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. 25 And in the whole land of Egypt the hail struck all that was in the field, both man and animal. The hail also struck every plant in the field, and shattered every tree in the field. 26 Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, there was no hail.

27 And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time. The LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked. 28 Pray to the LORD, for *there has been* enough of this mighty thundering and hail, and I will let you go, and you will stay no longer."

29 And Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to

the LORD, *and* the thunder *shall* cease, and there will not be any more hail, so that you may know that the earth *is* the LORD's. 30 But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God."

31 And the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* in bud. 32 But the wheat and the rye were not struck, for they *had* not grown.

33 And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to the LORD, and the thunder and hail stopped, and rain no longer poured on the earth. 34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had stopped, he continued to sin, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35 And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he would not let the children of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

**10** And the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, so that I might show these signs of mine among them, 2 and so that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, what things I have accomplished in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them so that you may know that I *am* the LORD."

3 And Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, so that they may serve me. 4 For if you refuse to let my people go, then tomorrow I will bring the locusts into your territory, 5 and they will cover the face of the land, so that one will not be able to see the land. They will eat the rest of what escaped, which is left to you from the hail, and will eat every plant which grows for you out of the field, 6 and they will fill

Egypt spread to many places (15:14-16). Jethro in Midian heard (18:4). Balaam, who lived far away at the Euphrates river, also knew of it (Num 23:22,23; 24:8). Rahab in the land of Canaan knew of it (Josh 2:9-11). Today people know of it wherever the Bible is read.

**9:17** Pharaoh's pride and arrogance were his undoing (10:3). Compare Ps 101:5; 119:21; Prov 16:18; 21:4; Luke 1:51; Jam 4:6.

**9:20,21** Prov 13:13.

**9:23,24** Jehovah showed himself as the master of the powers of nature. The storm god of the Egyptians was seen to be powerless. **9:26** Verse 4; 8:22,23; 9:4.

**9:27** Even Pharaoh says he has sinned (10:16). In the Bible this is a common admission (Num 14:40; 22:34; Josh 7:20; 1 Sam 15:24; 2 Sam 12:13; 24:10; Matt 27:4). But the confession must be sincere and accompanied with repentance and a

turning to God; otherwise it is worthless. Pharaoh's was worthless. See real confession and repentance in Psalm 51.

**9:28** 8:8,28.

**9:29** The earth belongs to the LORD, the God of Israel, and not to some god or other (19:5; 20:11; Ps 24:1; 50:10-12; 89:11; 1 Cor 10:26).

**9:30** Moses saw Pharaoh's self-deception and insincerity.

**9:34,35** 8:15,31,32. The fact is Pharaoh never wanted to know the truth or the true God. In the heart of man there is deadly enmity toward God (John 3:19,20; 15:24,25; Rom 1:30; 8:7; James 4:4). Pharaoh displayed this hatred to the full. **10:1** 4:21; 7:5.

**10:2** God did what He did so that future generations also might come to know the Lord.

**10:3** 9:17.

your houses, and the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians. This neither your fathers, nor your grandfathers have seen, since the day that they came on the earth to this day." And he turned around and left Pharaoh.

7 And Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, so that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you still not know that Egypt is destroyed?"

8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God. *But who are those who will go?*"

9 And Moses said, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters. We will go with our flocks and with our herds, for we *must hold* a feast to the LORD."

10 And he said to them, "Let the LORD be with you, if I ever let you and your little ones go! Watch out, for trouble *is* before you! 11 Not like that; you *who are* men go and serve the LORD, for that's what you wanted." And they were driven away from Pharaoh's presence.

12 And the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come up on the land of Egypt, and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left."

13 And Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all *that* night, and when morning came the east wind brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and settled on all the territory of Egypt, a very great many. There were never such locusts before, nor will there be such after them. 15 For they covered the surface of the ground everywhere, so that the land was darkened, and they ate every plant in the land, and all the fruit of

the trees which the hail had left. And in all the land of Egypt, among the trees, or among the plants in the field, nothing green remained.

16 Then Pharaoh quickly called for Moses and Aaron and he said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. 17 So now please forgive my sin only this once, and pray to the LORD your God to only take away this death from me."

18 And he went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to the LORD. 19 And the LORD changed *the wind* to a very strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and drove them into the Red sea. Not one locust remained in all the territory of Egypt. 20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness *which* may be felt." 22 And Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. 23 For three days they did not see each other; nor did anyone get away from his place. But all the children of Israel had light in their homes.

24 And Pharaoh called for Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only leave your flocks and your herds behind. Let your little ones also go with you."

25 And Moses said, "You must allow us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 26 Our livestock also will go with us. Not a hoof will be left behind. For we must take from them to serve the LORD our God, and we will not know what we are to use to worship the Lord."

27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28 And Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Watch out for

**10:7** Even now when his officials give him this advice Pharaoh refused to submit to God.

**10:8-11** Pharaoh wanted to keep his hold on them through their children.

**10:16,17** Another insincere confession. He wanted relief from the plague but he did not want to submit to God.

**10:21,22** The chief god of the Egyptians then was Ra (or Re), the sun god. Now this god too was shown to be helpless.

**10:23** 8:22,23; 9:4,26.

**10:24-26** Pharaoh wanted to retain his hold on them through their property. Pharaoh made four attempts to get Moses to compromise. He said first "stay in the land and sacrifice" (8:25); then "don't go far from the land" (8:28); then "only men may go" (10:10,11); finally he said they had to "leave flocks and herds behind" (10:24). Moses' answer was clear – "not a hoof is to be left behind."

Now, too, God wants His people to be spiritually delivered completely from this evil world (John 17:14-16; Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 6:17; Gal 1:4; 1 Pet 2:9-12; 1 John 2:15-17). Egypt is a type of this world, the kingdom of Satan, a picture of sin's bondage from which God would redeem us. Pharaoh, a god in Egypt, is a picture of Satan. Now, as then, forces hostile to God would try to keep His people tied to the world. Believers must learn to say with Moses "not the tiniest part of who we are or what we have shall be left behind. Nothing shall remain in Satan's control. With our wives, our children and all our possessions we will serve the Lord."

**10:28** Pharaoh here ends the contest with Moses and has to admit defeat. His magicians have failed, his attempts at compromise have failed, and Egypt's gods have failed. All that is left for him is to make threats (compare Acts 4:15-22; 7:54-58).

yourself! See my face no more, for on the day you see my face you will die."

29 And Moses said, "You have well spoken. I will not see your face again."

**11** And the LORD had said to Moses, "I will bring one *more* plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that he will let you go from here. And when he lets *you* go, he will in fact drive you out of here altogether. 2 Now speak in the hearing of the people, and *have* each man ask his neighbour, and each woman her neighbour, for silver ornaments and gold ornaments." 3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.

4 And Moses had said to *Pharaoh*, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out among Egypt's *people*, 5 and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, to the firstborn of the servant girl who is behind the millstones, and all the firstborn of animals. 6 And there will be a great cry throughout the whole land of Egypt. Never was there one like it, and never again will there be. 7 But not a dog will move its tongue against any of the children of Israel, against man or beast, so that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel.' 8 And all these servants of yours will come to me, and bow down before me, saying, 'Go, you and all

the people who follow you.' And after that I will go."

And, burning with anger, he had gone out from Pharaoh.

9 And the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you, so that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." 10 And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

**12** And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "This month *is to be* for you the beginning of months; it is to be the first month of the year for you. 3 Speak to the whole congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month each man among them is to take for himself a lamb for a father's house, a lamb for *each* household. 4 And if the household is too small for a lamb, let him and his neighbour nearest to his house take *it* according to the number of persons *there are*. Make your estimate for the lamb in accordance with what each person eats. 5 Your lamb is to be without blemish, a male of the first year. You are to take *it* from the sheep, or from the goats, 6 and you are to keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill them in the evening. 7 And they are to take *some* of the blood, and put *it* on both side posts and on the upper beam of the door of the houses where they

But threats do not change the truth. And the truth is this: Jehovah, the God of Israel, the God of the Bible is the true and only God, and the gods of Egypt and other nations were not and are not.

**10:29** 11:8.

**11:2** 3:22.

**11:3** 3:21; Deut 34:10-12.

**11:4,5** The Egyptians worshiped gods who were supposed to give life and to destroy life. But now Jehovah reveals that it is He and not those gods who has the power of life and death in His hands. See 1 Sam 2:6; Gen 38:7; Ps 33:18,19; Matt 10:28; Rev 1:18.

**11:7** 8:22,23; 9:4,26; 10:23.

**11:9** 7:4.

**11:10** This record of God's judgment on Pharaoh and the Egyptians shows that seeing even the greatest miracles in itself cannot change the heart of man. Outward miracles cannot break his stubborn will. Human pride and hardness of heart are amazing, audacious and unreasonable in the extreme. Compare Ps 78:17,32-42. This is seen also in the time of the Lord Jesus. Many who saw His mighty miracles failed to repent and believe and obey Him. See what He said in Luke 16:31. The judgment of God on such

people is inevitable.

**12:1-3** This is one of the key chapters of the Old Testament. In it God shows His people that their redemption comes only by blood sacrifice. So important was this time in Israel that they started dating their year from this month. This Hebrew month (based on the movement of the moon) had two names – Abib and Nisan – and fell sometime during our months of March and April. It was an entirely new beginning for the people of Israel. This whole chapter is highly symbolic. See also Lev 23:5. The sacrificial lamb signifies Christ who shed His blood to redeem men (John 1:29,36; Matt 26:28; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:22; Rev 5:9,12).

**12:5** This speaks of Christ's sinless perfection (Lev 1:10; 22:18-21; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:18-20).

**12:6** The lamb was kept four days to make sure there was no defect in it. Before Christ died on the cross, during His period of temptation and trial His life proved to be sinless (Heb 4:15; 7:26).

**12:7** Verses 22,23. The blood had to be applied to each house. Otherwise it accomplished nothing. Christ's blood shed for sinners does not save any person until he or she personally trusts Him for salvation.

are going to eat it. 8 And that *very* night they are to eat the meat roasted with fire, and they are to eat it with bread made without yeast *and* with bitter *herbs*. 9 Do not eat any of it raw, or even boiled in water, but roasted *with fire*, its head with its legs, and with its inner parts. 10 And you are to let none of it remain until morning, and you are to burn in the fire what does remain of it until morning. 11 And this is how you are to eat it: with your waist bound, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you are to eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.

12 "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and animal. And I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt. I *am* the LORD. 13 And the blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague will not be on you to destroy *you*, when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 "So this day shall be to you a memorial, and you are to keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You are to keep it as a feast by ordinance for all time. 15 For seven days you are to eat bread made without

yeast. On the very first day you are to put away yeast from your houses, for whoever eats bread made with yeast from the first day until the seventh day, that person is to be cut off from Israel. 16 And on the first day *you are to have* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day you are to have *another* holy convocation. On those *days* no kind of work is to be done, except what must be eaten by everyone; that alone may be prepared by you.

17 "And you are to observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this very day I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you are to observe this day throughout your generations by an ordinance forever. 18 On the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you are to eat bread made without yeast, until the evening of the twenty-first day of the month. 19 For seven days there is to be no yeast found in your houses, for whoever eat anything that is made with yeast, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a foreigner, or *someone* born in the land. 20 You must not eat anything made with yeast. You are to eat bread made without yeast in all your dwelling

**12:8** Matt 26:26; John 6:51-58,63; 1 Cor 5:7. Eating here signifies a spiritual reality. The people of Israel literally ate the lamb. Believers in Christ spiritually partake of Christ. That is, they believe His flesh and blood were sacrificed for them on the cross, they receive Him into their hearts by faith, they meditate on His person and work for them. In this way He becomes their food.

"Bread made without yeast" - This signifies Christ in His sinlessness as the food of His people (see notes at John 6:35,48-51). In the Bible yeast often signifies evil (Matt 16:6,11; 1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9). "Bitter herbs" may possibly signify the bitterness of the experiences that Christ endured for us (Isa 53:3,4).

**12:9** The lamb was not to be divided (v 46; John 19:33,36). Fire signifies the holiness of God which consumes the offering. The offering was accepted in the place of sinners. Water could not be used, for, it would have lessened the power of the fire. At Calvary the Lord Jesus experienced the full power of God's fiery wrath against sin.

**12:10** 34:25. The symbolic meaning may be this: the sacrifice of Christ was once forever. Those who by faith partake of it are saved forever (Heb 10:12,14).

**12:11** They were to be ready for travel to the land of Canaan. The believer now, having partaken of the Lamb of God, should always be ready for his pilgrim journey here, and ready to move on to the next world (Luke 12:35-40).

**12:12** God was judging not only the Egyptians but their gods as well. God is against the gods. Egypt had gods representing the air, the land, various animals, the Nile river, the sun, etc. God had already showed He was the absolute master of the Nile (7:20,21), the land (8:16,17), the animal kingdom (9:2,6), the air (9:8,9,22-24), and the sun (10:21,22). Now He shows that life and death are in His hands, and that no "god" has anything to do with it. Practically every Egyptian god was represented by some beast or other. The true God shows their powerlessness by slaying the firstborn of every beast as well as that of every man. Vain and foolish had been the worship of those gods, gods so powerless to help. Compare Ps 115:3-8.

**12:13** The blood was their one and only protection from God's wrath and judgment. So now the blood of Christ cleanses the believer from all sin and thus protects him from God's coming judgment on sinners (Rom 3:23-26; Heb 9:14,28; 1 Pet 1:19; 1 John 1:7; Rev 1:5). And this is the only way of protection. Note on the Passover at Lev 23:5.

**12:14** Lev 23:4,5; 2 Kings 23:21.

**12:15** Ex 12:8; 13:6,7; 23:15; 34:18; Lev 23:6; Num 28:17; Deut 16:3,8. Seven is a very significant number in the Bible. It is the number of fullness or completeness. Here it signifies a complete period of time - our whole life on earth.

**12:16** Lev 23:7,8; Num 28:18,25.

**12:17** Verse 41.

places."

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go out and take a lamb for yourselves on behalf of your families, and kill the Passover. 22 And you are to take a bunch of hyssop, and dip *it* in the blood that is in the basin, and put the blood that is in the basin on the upper beam *of the door* and the two side posts. And none of you is to go out the door of his house until morning. 23 For the LORD will go through *the land* to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the upper beam and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to strike *you*."

24 "And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for yourselves and for your sons forever. 25 And it is to come about that when you have come to the land which the LORD will give you as he has promised, you must keep this ceremony. 26 And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this ceremony?' 27 then you must say, 'It *is* the sacrifice of the Passover of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians, and spared our houses.'" And the people bowed their heads and worshipped. 28 And the children of Israel went and did so; they did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

29 And it came about at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. 30 And Pharaoh got up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where *there was* not one dead.

31 And during the night he called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Get out from the midst of my people, both you and the children of Israel, and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. 32 Take your flocks and your herds also, as you have said, and be gone! And bless me also."

33 And the Egyptians urged the people, to get them out of the land in a hurry, for they said, "We *are* all dead *men*." 34 And the people took their dough before yeast was put in it, *and carried* their kneading bowls on their shoulders, wrapped up in their clothes. 35 And the children of Israel did what Moses had said; they asked the Egyptians for silver ornaments and gold ornaments and clothing. 36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have *what they requested*. And *in this way* they plundered the Egyptians.

37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There *were* about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. 38 And a mixed multitude also went up with them, and flocks, and herds, a great amount of livestock. 39 And they baked flat bread without yeast with the dough which they brought out of Egypt. Yeast was not put in it because they were driven out of Egypt, and could not delay. And they had not prepared any food for themselves.

40 Now the length of time the children of Israel stayed in Egypt *was* four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came about at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, on the very day it came about, that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. 42 It *is* a night to be much observed for the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This *is* the LORD's night, to be observed by all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

43 And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This *is* the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner is to eat of it, 44 but every man's slave who is bought with money is to eat of it, after you have circumcised him. 45 A foreigner or a hired servant is not to eat of it.

46 "It must be eaten in the same house; you are not to carry any of the meat out of the house. And you must not break a bone of it. 47 All the congregation of Israel shall celebrate it.

48 "And when a foreigner stays among you, and wants to keep the LORD's Passover, all the

**12:23** The destroyer was the angel God sent to execute judgment (v 12).

**12:26** It is very important that parents instruct their children concerning what God has done for them (10:2; 13:8,14,15; Deut 6:6,7,20,21; 32:7; Josh 4:6; Ps 78:5,6).

**12:27** Verses 11,12,23.

**12:28** Their faith in God's word caused them to apply the blood to the doorposts (Heb 11:28). So now faith will cause us to apply the truth of Christ's sacrifice to ourselves.

**12:29** Num 8:17; 33:4; Ps 135:8; 136:10.

**12:30** 11:6.

**12:31,32** 11:1. This was the closest Pharaoh ever came to humbling himself and repenting, but it was short-lived and utterly self-centered.

**12:33** 10:7.

**12:35,36** 3:21,22; 11:2,3; Ps 105:37.

**12:37,38** A total probably not less than 20 lakhs (2,000,000). Compare Gen 46:27.

**12:43** No foreigner, that is, no one who was not in covenant relationship with the Lord, no one who had not received the covenant sign of circumcision, was to partake (v 48).

**12:46** Num 9:12; Ps 34:20; John 19:33,36.

**12:47** Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:23-26.



males in his *household* must be circumcised, and then let him come near and celebrate it. Then he will be like one who is born in the land, but no uncircumcised person is to eat of it. 49 There is to be one law for him who is native born and for the foreigner who is staying among you."

50 All the children of Israel did this; they did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. 51 And it came about on that very day *that* the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

**13** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Sanctify for me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both man and animal. It is mine."

3 And Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for the LORD brought you out from this *place* by the strength of *his* hand. No bread made without yeast is to be eaten. 4 You came out this day in the month of Abib. 5 And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give to you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you are to observe this ceremony in this month. 6 For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast, and on the seventh day *there is to be* a feast to the LORD. 7 Bread made without yeast is to be eaten for seven days, and no bread with yeast is to be seen with you, nor is yeast to be seen among you within all your borders.

8 And on that day you are to tell your son, saying, '*This is done* because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' 9 And it will be for you like a sign on your hand, and like a reminder between your eyes, so that the LORD's law may be in your mouth. For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with a strong hand. 10 So you are to keep this ordinance in its time from year to year.

11 "And it will be *like this*: when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to

you and to your fathers, and gives it to you, 12 you are to set apart for the LORD the all of the first offspring of the womb, and every firstborn that comes of any animal you have. The males *are to belong* to the LORD. 13 And every firstborn of a donkey you are to redeem with a lamb; and if you do not redeem it, then you are to break its neck. And every firstborn of man among your children you are to redeem.

14 "And in time to come, it will be *like this*: when your son asks you, saying, 'What *is this*?' you are to say to him, 'The LORD by the strength of *his* hand brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 15 And it happened that when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of man to the firstborn of animal. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the firstborn of the womb that are males, but I redeem the firstborn of all my children. 16 And it is to be like a sign on your hand, and as a symbol between your eyes. For the LORD brought us out of Egypt by the strength of *his* hand.'"

17 And it came about that when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them *by* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "The people should not change their minds by seeing war, and return to Egypt." 18 But God led the people around *by* the way of the desert of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up from the land of Egypt, armed for battle.

19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, because *Joseph* had made the children of Israel swear a solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you must carry my bones away from here with you."

20 And they set out from Succoth, and camped in Etham, at the edge of the desert. 21 And by day the LORD went before them in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them on the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, so that *they could* travel by day and night. 22 The pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, were not taken away *from their place* in front of the people.

**12:49** Lev 24:22; Num 15:15,16,29.

**13:2** 22:19; Lev 27:26; Num 3:13; 18:15; Deut 15:19; Luke 2:23.

**13:3** 12:42; Deut 16:3.

**13:5** Gen 15:18; 26:3.

**13:8** 12:26; Ps 44:1.

**13:9** 12:14; 13:16; Num 15:39; Deut 6:8; 11:18.

**13:13** Redeem here means to release by offering a sacrifice to the Lord. The Lord Jesus redeemed His people, released them from their sins, by the sacrifice of Himself (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:18;

Rev 5:9).

**13:17,18** God knew how weak, unbelieving, and unstable the people of Israel were and led them in His wisdom by the best possible way. Compare Deut 32:9-12; Ps 23:2; John 10:2-4,14.

**13:19** Gen 50:24,25; Josh 24:32; Heb 11:22.

**13:21** 14:19,24; 33:9,10; Num 9:15; 14:14; Deut 1:33; Neh 9:12; Ps 78:14; 99:7; 105:39; Isa 4:5. Note on fire at 3:2.

**13:22** Neh 9:19; Ps 48:14; Isa 58:11.



**14** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Tell the children of Israel to turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon. You are to camp facing it, by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say about the children of Israel, 'They are confused in the terrain, the desert has hemmed them in.' 4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he follows them, and I get glory through Pharaoh, and through all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I *am* the LORD." And they did so.

5 And it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people, and they said, "Why have we done this, letting Israel go from our service?" 6 And he prepared his chariot, and took his people with him. 7 He took six hundred choice chariots, and all the *other* chariots in Egypt, with officers over every one of them. 8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel. And the children of Israel were going out with hand raised high. 9 But the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army; and they overtook them camping by the sea, near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.

10 And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel raised their eyes, and there *were* the Egyptians marching after them, and they were very frightened. And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11 And they said to Moses, "*Was it* because *there were* no graves in Egypt that you have you taken us away to die in the desert? Why have you treated us like this, bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Didn't we tell you this very thing in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone, so that we may serve the Egyptians'? For *it would have been* better for

us to serve the Egyptians, than to die in the desert."

13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will show you today. As for the Egyptians whom you see today, you will never see them again. 14 The LORD will fight for you, and you will keep silent."

15 And the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward, 16 and raise your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it. And the children of Israel will go on dry *ground* through the middle of the sea. 17 And I, I myself, will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they will follow them, and I will get honour for myself through Pharaoh and through his whole army and through his chariots and through his horsemen. 18 And the Egyptians will know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gotten honour for myself through Pharaoh, through his chariots, and through his horsemen."

19 And the angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them. And the pillar of cloud went from in front of them and stood behind them, 20 and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. It was a cloud and darkness *to them*, but at night it gave light *to these*, so that the whole night the one did not come near the other.

21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD caused the sea to move back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided. 22 And the children of Israel went into the middle of the sea on dry *ground*, and the waters *were like* a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left.

23 And the Egyptians pursued *them*, and went into the middle of the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 And it came about that in the morning watch the LORD

**14:4** Note at 4:21.

**14:5** 12:30-32.

**14:8** Num 33:3.

**14:9** "Horsemen" (also vs 17,18,23,26,28) – the Hebrew for this word may mean "charioteers" also.

**14:10** Josh 24:7; Neh 9:9; Ps 34:17; 106:7.

**14:11,12** "Said" – 5:21; 15:24; 16:2; Num 14:1-4; Ps 106:7.

"Better" – 32:9; 34:9; Deut 9:7; 31:27. The people of Israel believed and worshipped God when things seemed to be going well, but murmured and complained when things seemed to be going badly. They did not realize that difficulties were to test and strengthen their faith and give God further opportunities to display His power and grace.

**14:13** 20:20; 2 Chron 20:15,17; Isa

41:10,13,14.

**14:14** Verse 25; 15:3.

**14:15** There are times when mere prayer without action is out of place and God's people must simply go forward in obedience to His command.

**14:16** 4:17,20; 7:19.

**14:17,18** 4:21.

**14:19** 13:21. Note on angel at Gen 16:7.

**14:20** We can see from this that the pillars of cloud and fire were no small things but very massive indeed.

**14:21,22** This marvelous event was remembered ever after in Israel – 15:8; Neh 9:11; Ps 66:5,6; 74:13; 78:13; 106:8,9; 136:13-15. All things are under God's control and He uses means – wind, sea, rain and sun, etc – to accomplish His purposes.

**14:23-25** Verse 14.

looked at the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and threw the army of the Egyptians into confusion, 25 and he caused their chariot wheels to come off, so that they drove them with difficulty. So the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the face of Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians."

26 And the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the waters may come back on the Egyptians on their chariots and on their horsemen." 27 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and when morning came the sea returned to its place, and the Egyptians were fleeing against it, and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the middle of the sea. 28 And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not one of them remained.

29 But the children of Israel walked on dry ground in the middle of the sea, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left. 30 In this way the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 And Israel saw the great power that the LORD used on the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and his servant Moses.

**15** Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying:

"I will sing to the LORD,  
for he has triumphed gloriously.  
The horse and his rider he has thrown  
into the sea.

2 The LORD *is* my strength and song,  
and he has become my salvation.  
He *is* my God, and I will glorify him,

my father's God, and I will  
exalt him.

3 The LORD *is* a warrior.  
The LORD *is* his name.

4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army  
he has thrown into the sea.  
His chosen officers also are drowned  
in the Red sea.

5 The depths covered them.  
They sank to the bottom  
like a stone.

6 Your right hand, O LORD, was glorious  
in power.  
Your right hand, O LORD, dashed the  
enemy in pieces.

7 And in the greatness of your excellence  
you overthrew those who rose up  
against you.  
You sent out your wrath,  
and it consumed them like  
stubble.

8 And with the blast of your nostrils  
the waters gathered together,  
the floods stood upright like a heap,  
and the depths congealed in the  
heart of the sea.

9 "The enemy said,  
'I will pursue,  
I will overtake,  
I will divide the spoil,  
my desire will be satisfied on them.  
I will draw my sword,  
my hand will destroy them.'

10 "You blew with your wind,  
the sea covered them.  
They sank like lead in the mighty  
waters.

11 "Who *is* like you, O LORD, among  
the gods?

**14:27,28** 15:1,7; Deut 11:4; Neh 9:11; Ps 78:53. God knew how to deal with a proud, ungodly ruler and his ungodly armies which persecuted His people, and it was just and right for God to do as He did. Note at Num 31:2. See also Prov 1:24-31; 29:1; 2 Thess 1:5-10.  
**14:29** Heb 11:29.  
**14:31** 4:31; Ps 106:12. But even then their faith was weak and wavering.  
**15:1** Ps 106:12; Rev 15:3; Isa 12:5; 42:10.  
**15:2** Ps 18:1; Isa 12:2; Hab 3:18,19; 2 Sam 22:47; Ps 99:5; Isa 25:1.  
**15:3** 14:14; Deut 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; Josh 23:10; Rev 19:11. The Lord fights for truth and justice and overthrows the arrogant and

ungodly.  
"Warrior" – here the KJV has "man of war", thus having the Israelites speak as though Jehovah God were a man. The expression "man of" in Hebrew was a common way of speaking to indicate anyone (human or not) who had the quality revealed in the word that followed.  
**15:4** 14:6,7,17,18.  
**15:5** Neh 9:11.  
**15:6** "Hand" – 3:20; 6:1; Ps 16:11; 102:25; 118:15,16; 119:73; Isa 59:1.  
**15:7** Ps 78:49,50; Isa 5:24; Heb 12:29.  
**15:9** 14:5,8,9.  
**15:10** 14:21.  
**15:11** "Who is like you" – 8:10; 9:14. There were many who are called gods and lords in the world of that day, as in our day, but

- Who is like you, glorious in holiness,  
awe-inspiring *in* praises,  
doing wonders?
- 12 You stretched out your right hand;  
the earth swallowed them.
- 13 In your mercy you led out the people  
*whom* you redeemed.  
You will guide them in your strength  
to your holy dwelling place.
- 14 The peoples will hear *and* be afraid.  
Sorrow will take hold of the  
inhabitants of Philistia.
- 15 Then the chiefs of Edom will be  
amazed.  
The mighty men of Moab will be seized  
with trembling.  
All the inhabitants of Canaan will  
melt away.
- 16 Fear and dread will fall on them.  
By the greatness of your arm they will  
be as still as a stone,  
until your people pass over, O LORD,  
until the people *whom* you have bought  
pass over.
- 17 You will bring them in,  
and plant them in the mountain of your  
inheritance;  
*in* the place, O LORD, *which* you have  
made for you to live in,  
*in* the Sanctuary, O Lord,  
*which* your hands have established.
- 18 The LORD will reign for ever and ever."

19 For the horse of Pharaoh along with his  
chariots and his horsemen went into the sea,  
and the LORD brought the waters of the sea back  
on them; but the children of Israel went on dry  
*ground* in the middle of the sea. 20 And Miriam the  
prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine  
in her hand, and all the women went out after her  
with tambourines and with dancing.

21 And Miriam answered them,

"Sing to the LORD,  
for he has triumphed gloriously.

The horse and his rider he has thrown  
into the sea."

22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea,  
and they went out into the desert of Shur, and  
went three days in the desert and found no water.  
23 And when they came to Marah, they could not  
drink the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter.  
Therefore the name of it was called Marah.  
24 And the people grumbled against Moses,  
saying, "What will we drink?"

25 And he cried out to the LORD, and the  
LORD showed him a tree. When he threw it  
into the water, the water became sweet. There  
*the LORD* made a decree and an ordinance for  
them, and there he tested them,

26 And said, "If you carefully listen to the  
voice of the LORD your God, and do what is  
right in his sight, and give ear to his command-  
ments and keep all his decrees, I will put none of  
these diseases on you, which I brought on the

Jehovah showed His vast superiority to them  
all. The gods of Egypt are no longer wor-  
shipped; the gods of ancient Babylon, of  
Greece, of Rome have long since been dis-  
carded. Jehovah, the God of the Bible, the  
Creator of the universe, lives and continues  
to perform His wonderful works. Deut 3:24;  
2 Sam 7:22; 1 Kings 8:23; Ps 71:19; 86:8;  
Mic 7:18.

"Holiness" – Lev 19:2; Isa 6:3; Rev  
4:8; 1 Pet 1:14-16 (note at Lev 20:7).

"Wonders" – Job 5:9; Ps 72:18; 77:14;  
86:10; 136:4. These are some of the les-  
sons God was teaching Israel (and would  
teach us) by His dealings in Egypt.

**15:13** "Mercy" – in the midst of judgments  
on the ungodly God shows His love to those  
who believe and serve Him.

"Holy dwelling" – Jerusalem (Zion) – Ps  
9:11; 76:2; 78:54; 132:13; 135:21.

**15:14-16** "Peoples" – 9:16; Deut 2:25;  
Josh 2:9-11.

"Bought" – Ps 74:2; Isa 43:1; Jer 31:11;  
Titus 2:14; 2 Pet 2:1.

**15:17** Ps 2:6.

**15:18** Ps 10:16; 29:10; 146:10; Jer 10:10;  
Rev 11:15. Jehovah is the great king of the  
universe.

**15:19** 14:27-29. "Horsemen" – or "chari-  
oteers."

**15:20,21** 2:4; Num 26:59; Mic 6:4. Miriam  
is the first prophetess mentioned in the  
Bible. Note at Gen 20:7.

**15:22-24** Ps 77:20; 78:52,53. Evidently  
there was a spring at Marah. The Hebrew  
word "marah" means bitter. This was the first  
test of Israel after the mighty display of  
God's power and love at the Red Sea.  
Through Moses He Himself led them to  
Marah. They pathetically failed the test and  
began to grumble – not for the first or last  
time (14:11; 16:2; Num 14:2; 16:41; Ps  
106:13; 1 Cor 10:10,11). They were always  
speaking to Moses instead of to God. When  
our supplies fail to whom do we speak? Does  
our faith in God fail with our failing  
supplies?

**15:25** The tree which healed the waters can  
remind believers now that the cross of Christ  
can take the bitterness out of life's trials  
and difficulties and turn them into satisfy-  
ing experiences (Gal 3:13; Rom 15:4;  
1 Pet 1:6,7; 4:1,12,13).

"He tested them" – compare 16:4; Deut  
8:2,16; Jud 2:22; 3:1,4; Ps 66:10-12.

**15:26** "If" – a promise with conditions. Some

Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you."

27 And they came to Elim, where *there were* twelve springs of water, and seventy palm trees; and they camped there by the waters.

**16** And they set out from Elim, and the whole congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. 2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the desert. 3 The children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat *and* when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this desert to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Look, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people are to go out and gather at a certain rate every day, so that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law, or not. 5 And it shall be that on the

sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in; and it will be twice as much as they gather daily."

6 And Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "In the evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out from the land of Egypt, 7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD; for he hears your grumbling against the LORD. But what are we, that you grumble against us?" 8 And Moses said, "*This will take place* when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning. For the LORD hears your grumbling which you grumble against him. But what *are* we? Your grumbling *is* not against us, but against the LORD."

9 And Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near to the LORD's presence, for he has heard your grumbling.'"

10 And it came about while Aaron was speaking to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the desert, and, suddenly, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

are unconditional (Gen 9:12-16 for example). When God promises something without conditions it means He will fulfill it regardless of what men may do. The promise here was not like that. It was based on their obedience. If they did not obey, the promise would not be fulfilled. "The LORD who heals you" – the Hebrew is "Jehovah Rophekah" and He is perfectly able to heal His believing people (23:35; Deut 32:39; Ps 41:3,4; 103:3; 147:3; Matt 9:35; Jam 5:14,15).

**15:27** God gives rest and refreshment after difficulties (Ps 23:2; 66:10-12; Mark 6:31; Rev 7:17). The journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan is full of instruction and warning for us today (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:1-13). In some respects it is similar to the journey of Christ's believers through life from this evil world, from which they have been rescued, to heaven (note at Num 14:45; 20:12; Deut 1:19; Gal 1:4). In these chapters describing Israel's journey we can see the weakness, depravity and instability of those people (and of ourselves, for by nature we are no better than they. If God has enlightened us and shown us what we truly are by nature, we can see our own portrait in these chapters). We also can see God's goodness, love and power displayed on their behalf and also God's holiness and anger against sin. We can assume by all this that great difficulties and testings are inevitable for God's people in every age.

**16:2** 14:11; 15:24; Deut 9:24; Ps 106:25; 1 Cor 10:10.

**16:3** 106:13-15. They forgot the afflictions and bondage of Egypt and thought only of food. The provisions they had brought from

Egypt were exhausted. They were in a desert. The Sinai peninsula where they were is nearly 12,000 square miles, mostly desolate sand, rock and barren mountains. The wadis had water usually only when it rained, which was seldom. There were springs here and there and an occasional oasis and enough water and vegetation for flocks and herds. But there was certainly not enough food or water for two million people on the march. Parts of that area are described in Deut 1:19 as a "great and terrible desert" or a "waste howling wilderness" (KJV).

The people saw this dreary waste with no cultivated fields, no rivers or flowing streams, and it appeared that only death by thirst or starvation awaited them. They forgot God's love and the fact that He had led them to the place where they were and had promised to take them all the way to Canaan. Unbelief can blind people's eyes to everything except their difficulties.

"Oh, that" – the KJV has "Would to God", but in Hebrew the word for God does not appear.

**16:4** "From heaven" – Neh 9:15; Ps 78:23-25; 105:40; John 6:31; 1 Cor 10:3.

"Test" – 15:25; Deut 8:2,16.

**16:6** 6:7.

**16:7** "Glory of the LORD" – 16:10; 33:18,21,22; 40:34; Num 14:21; Ps 72:19; Isa 6:3; John 11:40; 2 Cor 4:6; Heb 1:3.

**16:8** "Against the LORD" – our grumbling against the leaders God has given us and the circumstances into which He has brought us is against God Himself. This is why it is so serious (1 Sam 8:7,8; Luke 10:16; Rom 13:2; 1 Thess 4:8). Notes at Num 16:1,2,3.

12 "I have heard the grumbling of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'In the evening you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread; and you will know that I *am* the LORD your God.'"

13 And it came about that in the evening quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay around the camp. 14 And when the dew that lay *there* was gone, there, on the surface of the desert *appeared* a tiny flake-like thing, as small as hoar frost on the ground. 15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "It *is* manna", for they did not know what it *was*. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat."

16 "This *is* what the LORD has commanded: 'Each person *is to* gather it according to his eating, an omer for each person, *according to* the number of people you have. Each one is to take for *those* who *are* in his tent.'"

17 And the children of Israel did so. They gathered *it*, some more, some less. 18 And when they measured *it* with an omer, the one who gathered much had nothing over, and the one who gathered little had no lack. Each one of them gathered *it* according to his eating.

19 And Moses said, "Let no one leave *any* of it until the morning."

20 But they did not listen to Moses. Some of them left *some* of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank; and Moses was angry with them.

21 And they gathered it every morning, each one according to his eating. And when the sun grew hot, it melted. 22 And it came about on the sixth day *that* they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one person. And all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, 23 and he said to them, "This *is* what the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow is the rest *day*, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you want to bake *today*, and boil what you want to boil,

and what is left over put aside to be kept until the morning.'"

24 And so they put it aside until morning, as Moses commanded. And it did not stink, nor was there any worm in it. 25 And Moses said, "Eat that today, for today *is* a Sabbath to the LORD. Today you will not find it in the field. 26 You are to gather it for six days, but on the seventh day, *which is* the Sabbath, there will not be any."

27 And it happened *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day to gather *it*, and did not find any. 28 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws? 29 See, the LORD has given you the Sabbath, so on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Each one of you is to stay in his place. Let no one go out of his place on the seventh day." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

31 And the house of Israel called the name of it Manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and it tasted like wafers *made* with honey. 32 And Moses said, "This *is* what the LORD commands: 'Fill an omer with it to be kept for your *future* generations, so that they may see the bread I have fed you with in the desert, when I brought you from the land of Egypt.'"

33 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer full of manna in it, and place it before the LORD, to be kept for your *future* generations."

34 So Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept, just as the LORD commanded Moses. 35 And the children of Israel ate manna for forty years, until they came to an inhabited land. They ate manna until they came to the borders of the land of Canaan.

36 Now an omer *is* a tenth of an ephah.

**17** And all the congregation of the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sin for *the next stage* of their journeys,

**16:12** Num 14:26,27; Ps 94:8,9.

**16:15** In Hebrew "what is it" is "Man hu"? The word manna comes from this (v 31).

**16:16** Verse 4; Neh 9:15; Ps 78:24; 105:40; John 6:31; 1 Cor 10:3; Rev 2:17. The manna signifies the Lord Jesus Christ come down from heaven to be the spiritual food of His people – John 6:31-35. We feed on Him by faith. That is, by faith we receive Him as our Saviour, meditate on His wonderful deeds and attributes and His work for us on the cross, draw near to Him in prayer, and receive strength from Him for our daily life.

"Omer" (also vs 18,32,33,36) – a mea-

sure equaling about two liters.

**16:18** 2 Cor 8:15.

**16:19,20** They could not or would not obey an instruction as simple as this. The truth here is that God did not want them to store up for the future, but day by day to recognize their dependence on Him alone for their needs. Compare Matt 6:11.

**16:22-26** Again they could not obey a simple instruction until repeated. We see how human, how ordinary were these Israelites.

**16:32-34** Heb 9:4. "Testimony" – 25:16.

**16:35** Deut 8:2,3; Josh 5:12; Neh 9:20,21.

**17:1** 15:22-24. They were there at God's command and should have been sure He



according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim. And *there was* no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?"

3 But the people were thirsty for water there, and so the people grumbled against Moses, and said, "Why *is* it *that* you have brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"

4 And Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

5 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take with you *some* of the elders of Israel. And take your rod in your hand, with which you struck the river, and go. 6 See, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb, and you are to strike the rock. And water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the children of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us, or not?"

8 Then Amalek came, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose *some* men for us, go out, and fight with Amalek.

would give them all they needed (Ps 23:1). **17:2,3** "Quarreled" - 14:11; 16:2,3,8; Num 21:5,6.

"Test" - Deut 6:16; Ps 78:18,41; Matt 4:7; 1 Cor 10:9.

**17:4** Num 14:10.

**17:5** 4:2; 7:20.

**17:6** "Horeb" - 3:1.

"Strike" - Num 20:10,11; Deut 8:15; Neh 9:15; Ps 78:15; 105:41; 114:8. This rock signifies Christ (1 Cor 10:4). He was struck for His people (Isa 53:4-6) so that they might have eternal spiritual water to drink (John 4:10,13,14; q7:37; Rev 7:17; 22:1,17). To give water for 20,00,000 people great streams had to gush from the rock. From Christ the smitten Rock flows such quantities of living water that there is enough for every one of earth's billions to drink. The water here signifies the Holy Spirit (John 7:38,39).

**17:7** The Hebrew word "massah" means test or testing. "Meribah" means quarrel or quarreling. See Num 14:22; 20:13; Deut 6:16; 9:22; Ps 95:8-11. They tested God by their unbelief - "Is the LORD among us or not?" Their duty and privilege was to trust God to meet their every need and not grumble and complain at His leading. Had not God repeatedly shown His love and power toward them?

**17:8** Amalek was a people descended from Esau, Jacob's brother (Gen 36:12; Deut 25:17-

Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand."

10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek, and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And it was like this: When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands *were* heavy, and so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and one on the other side, and his hands remained steady until sundown. 13 And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 And the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as something to be remembered, and tell it in the hearing of Joshua, because I will completely blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi, 16 for he said, "Because the LORD has sworn *that* the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation."

**18** And Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for his people Israel, *and* that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

2 After Moses had sent his wife Zipporah back,

19; 1 Sam 15:2,3). They were a semi-nomadic people usually occupying desert areas south of Canaan. From this time on they were enemies of Israel. Notes at 1 Sam 15:2; Esther 3:1.

**17:9** "Joshua" - 24:13; Josh 1:1.

"Rod" - 4:20.

**17:10** "Hur" - 24:14; 31:2.

**17:11** This signified dependence on God's power alone. Perhaps the lifted arm is a picture of intercession for the people of God. Observe that when Moses' arm came down God's enemies gained ground and defeated God's people.

**17:14** "Write" - 24:4; 34:27; Num 33:2; Deut 31:9.

"Blot out" - Deut 25:19; 1 Sam 15:3.

**17:15** "Jehovah Nissi" - this means "The LORD is my banner." He is the God who gives victory to His people against their enemies (Ps 20:5; 60:4; Isa 11:12; John 16:33; Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14). The Christian life is a warfare against spiritual enemies (Eph 6:10-18). Victory is gained by dependence on God's power alone (v 11). We must fight if we would win, but victory is God's gift and does not come by our strength or skill. Note at Josh 1:17.

**17:16** The first part of this verse may also be translated "Because a hand was against the throne of the LORD."

**18:1-4** "Jethro" - 2:16,18; 3:1. Gershom means "an exile" or "a stranger there."



Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, received her 3 and her two sons. The name of one *was* Gershom; for he said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land". 4 And the name of the other *was* Eliezer; for *he said* "the God of my father *was* my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

5 Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the desert, where he was camping at the mountain of God, 6 and he said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, and your wife and her two sons with her, have come to you."

7 And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and bowed down, and kissed him; and they asked each other of *their* welfare, and came into the tent. 8 And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, *and* all the hardship that had come on them in the way, and *how* the LORD had delivered them.

9 And Jethro rejoiced because of all the goodness which the LORD had done for Israel, whom he had delivered from the hand of the Egyptians. 10 And Jethro said, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all gods, because *he was* above them in the matter in which they behaved so arrogantly." 12 And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God. And Aaron and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law in God's presence.

13 And it came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people were standing around Moses from morning to evening. 14 And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting alone, with all the people standing around you from morning to evening?"

15 And Moses said to his father-in-law,

Eliezer means "God of help" or "my God is helper."

**18:5** "Mountain of God" - 3:1,12; 4:27; 24:13.

**18:9** Ps 25:6; 86:5; Isa 63:7-9.

**18:11** 12:12; 15:11; 1 Kings 18:39; 2 Chron 2:5; Ps 95:3; 97:9; 135:5.

**18:15,16** Num 9:6,8; 27:5; Deut 17:8-13.

**18:18** Num 11:14,17; Deut 1:12.

**18:21,22** Deut 1:13-18; 16:19,20; 2 Sam 23:3; 2 Chron 19:5-10; Ps 15:1-5; Prov 24:23-25; Acts 6:3. The God of the Bible is a God of absolute justice Himself and demands that judges and rulers seek only

"Because the people come to me to seek God's *guidance*. 16 Whenever they have a matter, they come to me, and I judge between one and another, and I cause *them* to know God's decrees and his laws."

17 And Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. 18 You will surely wear out, both you and this people who *are* with you, for this work *is* too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. 19 Now listen to my voice. I will give you counsel and God will be with you. You be the *representative* of the people to God, so that you may bring the cases to God. 20 And you will teach them ordinances and laws and show them the way in which they are to walk, and the work they are to do. 21 But you must select able men from all the people who fear God, men of truth, hating dishonest gain. And place *such men* over them, *to be* leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens. 22 And let them judge the people at all times. And it shall be *that* they will bring every great matter to you, but will judge every small matter themselves. So it will be easier for you, when they bear *the burden* with you. 23 If you do this thing, and if God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their places contented."

24 So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. 25 And Moses chose able men from all Israel, and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens. 26 And they judged the people at all times. The hard cases they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

27 And Moses let his father-in-law leave, and he went his way to his own land.

**19** In the third month after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, the same day, they came *into* the desert of Sinai. 2 When they set out from Rephidim they came to

justice for people, and refuse bribes and dishonest gain.

**18:24** Even so great and wise a man as Moses was willing to take the advice of others (Num 12:3).

**19:1,2** The location of this mountain called Sinai or Horeb (3:1,12) is not known for certain, but the one usually regarded by scholars as the Sinai of the Bible is a series of peaks two miles long and a mile wide. The highest point is over 7,000 feet (about 2,160 meters). In front of it there is an extensive plain where as many as (20,000 people could camp.

the desert of Sinai and camped in the desert. There Israel camped in front of the mountain.

3 And Moses went up to God. And the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob, and tell to the children of Israel: 4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I carried you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. 5 Now, therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you will be my special treasure out of all the peoples, for all the earth is mine. 6 And you will be for me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses took the words of the people back to the LORD.

9 And the LORD said to Moses, "See, I come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." And Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow,

and have them wash their clothes, 11 and be ready by the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12 And you are to set limits to the people all around, saying, Watch out for yourselves, so *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain, or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13 No hand is to touch him, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot *with arrows*; neither animal or man is to live. When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they are to come up to the mountain."

14 And Moses went down from the mountain to the people, and sanctified the people. And they washed their clothes. 15 And he said to the people, "Be ready by the third day; do not go near *your wives*."

16 And it came about on the morning of the third day that there were flashes of lightning and thunder, and a thick cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a trumpet exceedingly loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the bottom of the mountain. 18 And the whole of Mount Sinai was in smoke, because the LORD came down on it in fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a

**19:3** The God of love who has redeemed Israel from bondage now gives them a further revelation of truth.

**19:4** Deut 29:2; 32:11.

**19:5,6** God now makes another covenant with Israel. See 24:8. This covenant is called the Mosaic Covenant because it was given through Moses. It is also called by some the covenant of works because its promised blessings were based on the obedience of the people. In other words, it was a conditional covenant, not like the one God gave in Noah's day (Gen 9:12-16). God now says to Israel that they would enjoy certain privileges 'if you obey me'. The first part of the Bible is named after this covenant. The rest of the Old Testament from here to Malachi deals with Israel under this covenant.

This covenant has three parts, relating to the ethical, social, and religious life of Israel. This covenant did not change God's covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 15:18-21; 17:9-14). It was added to that covenant and was to be in force only until Christ came (Gal 3:17-19; Heb 8:7-13). When this old covenant had fully served the purpose God had for it, He laid it aside and brought in the new covenant which is far superior to it (Heb 8:6). Under the old covenant God promised Israel three things upon their obedience.

First, they would be His own special possession (Deut 4:20; 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4. Concerning believers in Christ now see Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9).

Second, they would be a kingdom of priests. This was never completely fulfilled in Israel under the old covenant because they were not obedient. (Note on priests at 28:1).

Third, they would be a holy nation (Deut 7:6; 14:21; 26:19; Isa 62:12).

**19:8** 24:3,7; 26:17. Their intention to keep God's laws was good (Deut 5:27), but they were self-deceived and all too ignorant of their weak and sinful hearts (Jer 17:9). Their later history revealed this – 32:7-9; Num 14:11; Deut 5:29; 9:24; Ps 95:10,11; 106:13,14. Because of the depravity of human nature, self-effort will never enable anyone to completely keep the law of God. To do that men must be spiritually changed, receive God's Holy Spirit and live in the power of the Spirit (Rom 8:3,4). So the law could not bring salvation to the people. The basis of salvation is grace and mercy, not the deeds of the law (John 1:17; Acts 13:39; Rom 3:22-26; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:1-5; Titus 3:3-7). Still our desire should always be to obey God and do what He tells us (John 15:10; 1 John 2:3-6).

**19:9** 24:15,16; Deut 4:11.

**19:10-13** The holy God is ready to reveal His holy law to the people. They must be clean and ready to stand before Him. Even the mountain where God appeared was holy and must not be touched.

"Sanctify" – see note at Lev 20:7.

**19:16-18** Deut 4:11; Jud 5:5; Ps 68:7,8; Heb 12:18-21.

furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently. 19 And when the sound of the trumpet made a long blast, and got louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him with a voice.

20 And the LORD came down on Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mountain and Moses went up. 21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, warn the people so they will not break through to the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And have the priests also, who come near the LORD, sanctify themselves, so that the LORD does not break out against them."

23 And Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you warned us, saying, 'Set limits around the mountain and sanctify it.'"

"Fire" – note at 3:2.

**19:20** Neh 9:13.

**19:21-25** The picture in this chapter is one of gloom and fire and quaking and fear and distance between God and man. All these indicate God's hatred of all sin and man's unworthiness in himself to approach God. They show also that the revelation of God's commandments was a fearful thing, that the way of a peaceful, joyous entrance into God's presence was not then being revealed. God in His love gave the law to teach the people many important things. The law brought the knowledge of sin (Rom 3:19,20); when broken it brought God's wrath (Rom 4:15); to the disobedient it brought a curse (Deut 27:26; Gal 3:10), and death and condemnation (2 Cor 3:7,9).

The law itself was holy, just, and good (Rom 7:12), but mankind is unholy, unjust, and bad, and far too weak and sinful to fully keep the law (Rom 7:14,18; 8:3). The law was a just and righteous code to govern society, but it was not a way for personal salvation. The principal work of the law is to teach us certain truth we need to know about God and ourselves and so point us to Christ (Gal 3:24,25). Learning God's high and holy standards, our own sinful, weak natures, our need of Christ and His grace is a very great good. Happy those who so learn!

**20:1** This is one of the key chapters of the Bible, of the whole literature of the world. The laws recorded here are not man's but God's. They give His standard of holiness and justice. They were given for the good of Israel and for the good of people everywhere.

**20:2** God first identifies Himself so there can be no mistake. He is Jehovah ("LORD"), the eternally self-existing one, the Creator of man (Gen 2:7), the one who displayed His marvelous power in bringing Israel out of Egypt (note on Jehovah at 3:14,15).

**20:3** The first law of God is often repeated in the Bible (Deut 6:14; 2 Kings 17:35; Jer 25:6; 35:15; Matt 4:10). The Bible teaches the centrality of God the Creator, and this is

24 And the LORD said to him, "Away, go down. Then you are to come up, you, and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, so that he does not break out against them."

25 So Moses went down to the people, and spoke to them.

**20** And God spoke all these words, saying, 2 "I *am* the LORD your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 "You shall have no other gods besides me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in

the most important of His laws. If people follow other gods they will reject Him, neglect other laws of His, ignore His way of salvation, and thus bring ruin upon themselves. The meaning of this verse is not that there are many gods all struggling for supremacy. There is only one true God and He hates everything that is false, everything that man makes into a god or falsely imagines to be God. He loves human beings and wants their love in return (Deut 6:5). Even if a person follows all the other laws of God and breaks only this one, that person is guilty of a great sin against God, and is worthy of terrible punishment (Deut 13:6-18; 17:2-7; etc).

"Besides" – this may also be translated "before". In either case, what the true God is forbidding is to have any other god at all, ever.

**20:4-6** God, the Creator of the universe and of man, forbids all idolatry. This commandment too is repeated many times in the Bible (for example Lev 19:4; 26:1; Deut 4:15-19; 5:8,9; 27:15; 1 John 5:21). God does not have to give any reasons for this; He is God and knows what is right and good. But excellent reasons why He gave this command are later revealed in the Bible.

First, idols give a false view of what God is like. They dishonor and slander God (Isa 40:18-26; Acts 17:29; Rom 1:20-23). Nothing that men can make can in any way represent God's eternal being, His holiness, His grandeur, His supremely excellent nature. Man-made images will be ugly and abominable by comparison with God's glory. Even if there could be images which truly represented God's nature (and this is impossible), they would not be good for people to have and worship. By them we could only know the images of God and not God Himself. God can be known only through spirit, only by direct experience with Him. The Lord Jesus taught that God is spirit and that they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

the water under the earth; 5 You shall not bow down to them, or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the wrongdoing of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 and showing mercy to thousands, to those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain.

Second, the Bible says that idols are vain and worthless (Ps 115:2-8; 135:13-18; Isa 44:9-20; Jer 10:5; Hab 2:18,19; 1 Cor 12:2; Rev 9:20).

Third, idolatry corrupts individuals and nations. It leads people astray from the one true God (Ps 106:36-39; Ezek 6:9; 44:10; Hos 4:12). So God in His love for people emphatically forbids all idolatry.

**20:5,6** "Jealous God" – jealousy is a word associated with love. God loves His people with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3). He loved the world so much He gave His only Son as a sacrifice (John 3:16). A God of love He is (1 John 4:8), and He wants love in return. When His people's love is given to false gods and idols His anger is aroused. He loves so much that He can tolerate no rival for His people's affections (34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:5,15; Josh 24:19).

"Visiting" – God does not punish children for their parent's sin (Deut 24:16; notes on Ezekiel chapter 18). However, the consequences of parent's sins come upon children. And God has so arranged things in life that it will be so. Children are influenced by their parents very strongly and learn their ways. If parents hate God it will be no surprising thing if their children also come to hate God. The consequences and resulting punishment of such sin will be only to the 3rd and 4th generation, but God will show His love to a thousand generations. God would much rather show love than punish (Ps 30:5; Ezek 18:23,30-32; Hos 14:1-4. The whole book of Hosea shows this truth. The cross of the Lord Jesus reveals that God took the punishment of sin Himself to keep from punishing others). In this revelation of His holy law the God of love speaks, and throughout the whole Bible God showed love, mercy, and grace to anyone who heartily turned to Him. And He still continues to do so.

"Wrongdoing" – the Hebrew word here has a variety of meanings including the consequences of sin.

**20:7** Lev 19:12; Deut 6:13; 10:20. God is holy and His name is holy (note at Lev 20:7). People must regard it as holy and use His name only sincerely, truly, lovingly. The penalty for breaking this law was severe (Deut 28:58,59).

**20:8-11** Gen 2:2,3; Ex 23:12; 31:13-17; 34:21; 35:2,3; Deut 5:12-15; Isa 58:12,13. The Sabbath was a day of quietness, relaxation, and rest. It was also the day when Israel met together to worship God (Lev 23:3). God knew that man needed such a day after six days of

8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you are to labour, and do all your work; 10 but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work *in it*, *neither* you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your foreigner who *is* inside your gates; 11 for *in* six days the LORD made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that is them, and ceased on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and made it holy.

work. The law had Saturday for their rest day. Christians now, no longer under the law (Rom 6:14), generally have Sunday as their rest day (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2). The particular day is not the important thing but the fact of having some day for rest and worship. In the whole of the New Testament there is no command to Christians to take Saturday (or any other day) as their day of rest.

**20:11** "Made" – the Hebrew verb ("asah") which has many meanings – "made", "did", "prepared", "made ready", "appointed", "worked on", etc. It is unlikely that this verse refers to Genesis 1:1 and the "beginning" when God "created" ("bara") the heaven and the earth out of nothing. The Hebrew verb here usually means made or made ready, working on existing materials. See the notes on Genesis chapter 1. It seems that here in Exodus the six days here were the days that God "worked on" an already existing earth (from Gen 1:3 onward). If this is the correct interpretation, then since the seventh day here is a literal day of 24 hours there is strong reason for thinking that the six previous days were also literal days of 24 hours. But see notes at Gen 1:5; 2:4; 5:2.

"Six days" – the word "in" before "six" appears in most versions, but it has added by the translators. It is not in the Hebrew here. So this sentence could also be translated like this: "For six days the LORD worked on the sky and the land, the sea, and all that is in them, and ceased the seventh day." It seems He is speaking of making this special area of the universe ready for man's habitation. After all, He is speaking to human being on the earth He created for them and about which they have more interest than any other spot in the universe. And the original hearers and readers knew nothing about outer space with its billions of galaxies. Of course, God did create the whole universe, but it is unlikely that this is what He is speaking about here.

"Heaven" – this could be translated "sky" also. The Hebrew word is in the plural, but it is always in the plural whether the meaning is "heavens" (plural), or "heaven" (singular) or "sky" or "skies". The singular is never used.

"Earth" – the Hebrew word here also means "land", and may be better, in the context, to translate it "land". If we say earth, the sea is a part of the earth and should not be singled out as something different from the earth. But the expression "land

12 "Honour your father and your mother, so that your time may be long in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

13 "You shall not commit murder.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that *belongs* to your neighbour."

18 And all the people saw the thunder and the lightning flashes, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood at a distance. 19 And they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will listen; but do not have God speak with us, or we will die."

20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come to test you so that his fear may be before your faces, so that you do not

sin."

21 And the people stood at a distance, and Moses drew near the thick darkness where God *was*.

22 And the LORD said to Moses, "This is what you are to say to the children of Israel: You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. 23 *To be* with me you shall not make for yourself gods of silver, and you shall not make for yourself gods of gold.

24 "You shall make an altar of earth for me, and on it you shall sacrifice your burnt offerings, and your peace offerings, your sheep, and your oxen. In every place that I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you, and I will bless you. 25 And if you make an altar of stone for me, you shall not build it with cut stones, for if you use your chisel on it, you have polluted it. 26 Neither shall you go up by steps to my altar, so that your nakedness is not exposed on it.'

**21** "Now these *are* the laws which you are to set before them.

2 "If you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to serve you for six years, and in the seventh he is to go out

and sea" indicates that these two things are different. And, in fact, what God did in those six days of Genesis was to prepare the land and the sea and the atmosphere around the earth.

**20:12** Lev 19:3; Deut 27:16; Matt 15:4; 19:19; Eph 6:2,3.

**20:13** Gen 9:6; Ex 21:12; Lev 24:17; Deut 5:17. This is not a command against killing, but against murder. God Himself commanded men to put other men to death for various offenses (see note at 21:36), and sent the nation Israel into Canaan to kill its inhabitants. So to translate this command as "You shall not kill" is misleading. The Hebrew word means murder.

**20:14** Lev 20:10; Deut 5:18; Matt 5:27; 19:18; Rom 13:9; 1 Cor 6:9,18; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; Heb 13:4.

**20:15** 21:16; Lev 19:11,13; Matt 19:18; Rom 13:9; Eph 4:28.

**20:16** See 23:1; Ps 5:6; 15:2; Prov 6:16-19; 12:22; Matt 19:18; Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9. God is a God of truth and so hates all kinds of lying and deception. Three times in the closing book of the Bible God reveals what the terrible consequences of lying will be (Rev 21:8,27; 22:15).

"Neighbour" – this means fellow human beings, not just the person living next door.

**20:17** Deut 5:21; Rom 7:7; 13:9; Eph 5:3,5. All the other commandments in this chapter concern outward actions. This one concerns the secret desires of the heart. The apostle Paul once thought he could keep all of the law, but this one command revealed to him the uncontrollable desires that were in his fallen nature and convicted

him of sin (Rom 7:7,8). More than any other commandment perhaps this one shows that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). The Lord Jesus revealed that sin is in the inner desire as well as in the outward act of a person (Matt 5:27,28; 15:19,20).

**20:18** 19:16,18; Heb 12:18,19. Law keeps man at a distance from God, grace brings him near.

**20:19** Deut 5:5,23-27; Heb 12:19.

**20:20** Deut 4:10; 6:24; Prov 3:7; 16:6; Isa 8:13. The law should produce a fear of offending God and bringing His punishment. Such fear will restrain from evil (notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7).

**20:21** 19:16; Deut 5:22.

**20:22** Deut 4:36; 5:24,26; Neh 9:13; Heb 12:25.

**20:23** The one law God repeats in this chapter is the prohibition of other gods. This law was of the utmost importance. In fact all the other laws are based on this one.

**20:24** Burnt and peace offerings signify Christ sacrificed for sinners to deliver them from the curse of the very law now revealed (Gal 3:13,14). See notes on these offerings at Leviticus chapters 1 and 3.

"Bless you" – notes on blessing at Gen 12:2,3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:1,2; Ps 1:1,2; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12; Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:9,15; Eph 1:3.

**21:1** Here are various laws for Israel as a nation, as a community of people living together.

**21:2** Lev 25:39-43; Deut 15:12-18; Jer 34:14. Slavery was an accepted custom in



free, *paying* nothing. 3 If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he was married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out by himself.

5 "But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free', 6 then his master shall bring him to the judges, then he shall also bring him to the door, or to the door post, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

7 "And if a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. 8 If she does not please her master, who has assigned her to himself, then he is to let her be redeemed. He shall have no authority to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt unfairly with her. 9 And if he has assigned her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom with daughters. 10 If he takes another *woman*, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her conjugal rights. 11 And if he does not do these three *things* for her, then she shall go out free without payment.

12 "Whoever strikes a man, so that he dies, shall surely be put to death. 13 However if a man did not lie in wait, but God delivered *him* into his

hands, then I will appoint you a place where he is to flee. 14 But if a man deals arrogantly with his neighbour so as to murder him treacherously, you shall take him from my altar to be put to death.

15 "And whoever strikes his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

16 "And whoever kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hands, he shall surely be put to death.

17 "And whoever curses his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

18 "And if men fight together, and one strikes the other with a stone or with *his* fist, and he does not die, but is confined to *his* bed, 19 if he gets up again and walks around with his staff, then the one who struck *him* will be in the clear. But he shall pay *for* the loss of his time, and shall see that he is completely healed.

20 "And if a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod, and the *slave* dies at his hand, he shall surely be punished. 21 However, if the *slave* survives a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he *is* his property.

22 "If men fight, and *one of them* harms a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined, just as the woman's husband may demand, and he must pay as the judges *determine*. 23 And if there is *any* further injury, then you shall give life

the ancient world. Under the law God permitted it for His people. It is possible He did so to signify certain spiritual truths – that man is in bondage to sin and that the law cannot free him; and that God's people belong to Him. He is their owner and master, and they are His servants or slaves. God may have permitted slavery also to teach that all men, because they are sinners and rebels against God, have no rights before God. Because of their nature and actions they deserve punishment, grief, death, and eternal separation from God. If any people enjoy life, liberty, happiness and prosperity, this is God's grace and mercy to them and not their inalienable right.

In Israel slaves were to be treated far better than in any other country on earth. Their owners were to show them fairness and kindness. As a rule they were to be considered practically as members of the family where they were. They rested on the Sabbath and ate the meat of the sacrifices (Deut 5:14; 12:12; 16:11), even the consecrated food of the priests (Lev 22:11). They took circumcision if they wanted to and then had all the privileges of the covenant (Ex 12:44). When set free they were given provisions (Deut 15:14). A higher code for slaves did not exist among any people. One other fact – the seed of the eventual overthrow of slavery is found in Old Testament teachings like Lev 19:18. See also Matt 7:12 and note

on slavery at Eph 6:5.

**21:5** Deut 15:16,17.

**21:6** Some slaves were treated so well by their masters that they wanted to serve permanently. This is the true believer's attitude toward God who is his Lord and Master and he rejoices in this relationship. Christ is the believer's perfect example in this as in everything (Heb 10:7; Ps 40:6-8; John 8:29; Rom 15:8). In the New Testament believers are called slaves or servants of God (Rom 6:17-22).

"Judges" – the Hebrew word means "gods" or "God". See note at Ps 82:1,2. The judges were supposed to be God's representatives to dispense justice.

**21:7** Neh 5:5.

**21:12** Gen 9:6; Lev 24:17; Num 35:30; Matt 26:52.

**21:13** Num 35:10-15; Deut 19:1-13; Josh 20:1-9.

**21:14** Deut 19:11,12; 1 Kings 2:28-34.

**21:15** 20:12.

**21:16** Deut 24:7.

**21:17** 20:12; Lev 20:9; Prov 20:20; Matt 15:4.

**21:21** Lev 25:44-46. God's people are God's property – Deut 4:20; 7:6; 14:2; Ps 135:4; Rom 14:8; 1 Cor 6:19,20; Titus 2:14.

**21:22** Deut 22:18,19.

**21:23-25** This is the essence of the law – exact retribution for offenses (Lev 24:19,20; Deut 19:21). This was to govern the rela-



for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

26 "And if a man strikes the eye of his male slave, or the eye of his female slave so that it is lost, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. 27 And if he knocks out his male slave's tooth, or his female slave's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake.

28 "If an ox gores a man or a woman and they die, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its meat shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *shall be* in the clear. 29 But if the ox was previously in the habit of goring, and its owner has been warned, and he has not confined it, and it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. 30 If payment is demanded of him, then he shall give whatever is demanded for the ransom of his life. 31 Whether it has gored a son, or has gored a daughter, it is to be done to him according to this law. 32 If the ox gores a male slave or a female slave, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

33 "And if a man uncovers a pit, or if a man digs a pit, and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, 34 the owner of the pit shall make *it* good, *and* give money to their owner; and the dead *animal* shall be his.

35 "And if one man's ox hurts another's, and it dies, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money from it, and also divide the dead ox. 36 Or if it is known that the ox was previously in the habit of goring, and his owner has not confined it, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead one will be his.

**22** "If a man steals an ox, or a sheep, and kills it, or sells it, he shall repay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.

2 "If a thief is found breaking in, and is struck

and dies, no blood *is to be shed* for him in *punishment*. 3 If the sun has risen on him *when he breaks in*, blood *is to be shed* for him. A *thief* must make full restitution. If he does not have anything, then he must be sold for his theft.

4 "If the stolen *animal* is found in his hands alive, whether it is an ox, or donkey, or sheep, he must repay double.

5 "If a man lets out a field or vineyard to be grazed, and puts his *own* animal so that it feeds in another man's field, he must make restitution from the best in his own field, and from the best of his own vineyard.

6 "If fire breaks out, and catches in thorns, so that the stacks of grain or the standing grain, or the field, are burnt up *by it*, the one who started the fire must surely make restitution.

7 "If a man gives his neighbour money or goods for safekeeping, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is caught, he must pay double.

8 If the thief is not caught, then the owner of the house shall be brought to the judges, to see whether he laid his hands on his neighbour's possessions. 9 For every case of transgression, *whether it is* about an ox, or donkey, or sheep, or garment, or any kind of lost thing which *another* claims to be his, the case of the two parties shall come before the judges, and the one the judges declare guilty must pay double to his neighbour.

10 "If a man gives a donkey, or an ox, or a sheep, or any animal, to his neighbour for safekeeping, and it dies, or is hurt, or driven away without anyone seeing it, 11 *then* an oath *before* the LORD is to be *made* between the two of them that he has not laid his hands on his neighbour's possessions, and their owner must accept *it*, and the *neighbor* is not to make restitution. 12 But if it has been stolen from him, he must make restitution to the owner of it. 13 If it has been torn in pieces, *then* let him bring it as evidence, and he shall not make restitution for that which was torn.

tionship of the people of Israel in society. Their judges were to decide what retribution was required. In Matt 5:38-41 Jesus gave a higher law for individual relationships. See also Rom 12:19-21. Even if justice is not obtained in the courts, believers are not to take vengeance, but are to commit their case to God. Note at Num 31:2.

**21:32** "Thirty shekels" – about 0.3 kilogram. The price of a slave was 30 pieces of silver. See Zech 11:12; Matt 26:15; 27:3,9.

**21:36** Under the law, as we see in this chapter, death was the penalty for murder, striking or cursing a parent, kidnaping, and causing death through negligence. Other sins for which the death penalty was ordered in God's law were these: breaking the Sabbath (31:14;

35:2), offering a child to a false god (Lev 20:2), adultery and other sexual sins (Lev 20:10-16), consulting mediums and other such people (Lev 20:6), blasphemy (Lev 24:15), promoting or practicing idolatry and false worship (Deut 13:1-8), prophesying falsely (Deut 18:20), disobedience and rebellion (Deut 21:18-21), sorcery (22:18), and worship of other gods (22:20). In the eyes of the one true God all these were (and are) sins worthy of death.

**22:1** 20:15; 2 Sam 12:6; Luke 19:8.

**22:2,3** A person in a house at night would feel more danger from a thief and would be justified in striking in self-defense.

**22:7** Lev 16:1-7.

**22:11** Heb 6:16.

14 "And if a man borrows *any animal* from his neighbour, and it is hurt, or dies, the owner of it not *being* with it, he shall surely make restitution. 15 *But* if the owner of it is with it, he shall not make restitution. If it is hired, it came for its hire. 16 And if a man seduces a girl who is not engaged *to be married*, and lies with her, he shall surely pay a dowry for her to be his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

18 "You shall not permit a witch to live.

19 "Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.

20 "He who sacrifices to *any* god, except to the LORD alone, shall be utterly destroyed.

21 "You shall not wrong a foreigner or oppress him, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

22 "You shall not mistreat any widow, or fatherless child. 23 If you mistreat them in any way, and they cry out to me at all, I will surely hear their cry, 24 and my wrath will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives will be widows, and your children fatherless.

25 "If you lend money to *any* of the poor among my people, you shall not be like a moneylender; you must not charge him interest. 26 If you ever take your neighbour's cloak as a pledge, you shall deliver it to him by sundown; 27 for that *is* his only covering; it *is* his garment for his body. What else will he sleep in? And when it comes about that he cries out to me, I will hear; for I *am* gracious.

28 "You shall not revile God, or curse a ruler of your people.

29 "You shall not hold back the first of your harvest and of your vintage. You shall give me the firstborn of your sons.

30 "You shall do the same with your oxen, *and* with your sheep. It is to be seven days with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to me.

31 "And you shall be holy men to me. You shall not eat *any* flesh *that is* torn by beasts in the field; you must throw it to the dogs.

**23** "You shall not spread a false report. Do not join hands with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. 2 You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; neither shall you testify in a lawsuit to pervert justice, following the majority. 3 And you shall not show partiality to a poor man in his lawsuit.

4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you must surely bring it back to him. 5 If you see the donkey of someone who hates you lying under its burden, you must not leave it to him, you shall surely help him with *it*.

6 "You shall not pervert justice with your poor in his lawsuit. 7 Keep far from a false matter; and do not put the innocent and righteous to death; for I will not acquit the guilty.

8 "And you must not take a bribe; for a bribe blinds the discerning, and perverts the words of the righteous.

9 "Also you shall not oppress a foreigner, for

**22:16,17** Deut 22:28,29. In Israel a bridegroom paid a dowry to the girl's father – the opposite of the custom in India.

**22:18** Lev 19:31; 20:6,27; Deut 18:10,11; Jer 27:9,10. Sorcerers and sorceresses are not servants of God, and not in contact with God. The result of their activity is to turn people away from the truth and away from the true God. That danger had to be dealt with drastically. See also Acts 13:6-11; Rev 9:21; 18:23; 21:8; 22:15.

**22:19** Lev 18:23; 20:15,16; Deut 27:21.

**22:20** 32:8; 34:15; Lev 17:7; Num 25:2; Deut 17:2,3,5; 1 Kings 18:40; 2 Kings 10:25; 1 Cor 10:20. The penalty for this sin was great because it was breaking the first and most important of the ten commandments (20:3). The Creator demands that worship be given to Him alone and not to anything or anyone else called a god.

**22:21** 23:9; Lev 19:33,34; 25:35; Deut 1:16; 10:19; 27:19.

**22:22-24** Deut 24:17,18; Ps 68:5; 82:1-4; Prov 23:10,11; Jer 9:24. The God of the Bible (the only God there is) loves justice and will punish those who trouble the weak and helpless. Injustice makes God angry. Notes on His anger at Num 25:3; etc.

**22:25** Lev 25:35-37; Deut 15:7-11;

23:19,20; Neh 5:7; Ps 15:5.

**22:26,27** God sees such small things and He cares.

**22:28** Lev 24:15,16; Acts 23:5.

"God" – 21:6. In Hebrew the word may also indicate the judges, God's representative. It seems unlikely that we should translate this as "the gods" (KJV). For one thing, in Hebrew the word "the" is not here.

**22:29** God had to come first in their thinking. It is God who gives the land, the rain and the harvest, and He must be remembered and honored (23:16,19; Deut 26:2-11; Prov 3:9; Mal 3:10).

**22:31** 19:6; Lev 11:44; 19:2.

**23:1** "Report" – 20:16; Lev 19:11,12; Deut 5:20; Ps 101:5; Prov 10:18.

"Witness" – Deut 19:16-21; Ps 35:11; Prov 19:5; Acts 6:11.

**23:2** Deut 16:19; 24:17.

**23:3** Lev 19:15; Deut 1:17; 6:19.

**23:4,5** Deut 22:1-4.

**23:6** Lev 19:15; Deut 1:17; 10:17; 16:19.

**23:7** "Guilty" – 34:7; Deut 25:1; Rom 1:18.

**23:8** Deut 10:17; 16:19; Prov 15:27; 17:8,23; Isa 5:22,23. See notes at Ps 26:10; Amos 5:12.

**23:9** 22:21; Lev 19:33,34; Deut 24:17,18; 27:19.

you know the heart of a foreigner, seeing you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

10 "You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its harvests. 11 But the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie still, so that the poor among your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do the same way with your vineyard, *and* with your olive garden.

12 "You shall do your work in six days, and on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your maid servant, and the foreigner, may be refreshed.

13 "And pay attention to everything I have said to you, and do not mention the name of another god; do not let it be heard from your mouth.

14 "Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me.

15 "You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat bread made without yeast for seven days, as I commanded you, in the time appointed in the month Abib; for in *that month* you came out from Egypt. And no one is to appear before me empty-handed.

16 "And you *must keep* the Feast of Harvest *with* the firstfruits of your labours which you have sown in the field, and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labours from the field.

17 "Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God.

18 "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifices with bread made with yeast, and the fat of my sacrifices must not remain until morning.

19 "You shall bring the first of the firstfruits of your land into the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

20 "See, I am sending an angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the

place which I have prepared. 21 Pay attention to him, and obey his voice. Do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name *is* in him. 22 But if you shall indeed obey his voice, and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and an adversary to your adversaries. 23 For my angel will go before you, and bring you to the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will destroy them. 24 You must not bow down to their gods, or serve them, or do according to their works; but you must utterly demolish them, and smash their images. 25 And you shall serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread, and your water. And I will take away sickness from among you. 26 None will have a miscarriage or be barren in your land. I will enable you to complete the number of your days.

27 "I will send my fear before you, and will destroy all the people to whom you will be going, and I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. 28 And I will send hornets before you, which will drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before you. 29 I will not drive them out before you in one year, so that the land will not become desolate, and the beasts of the field increase in number against you. 30 I will drive them out before you little by little, until you are increased *in number*, and inherit the land.

31 "And I will set your boundaries from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hands, and you will drive them out before you. 32 You must not make any covenant with them, or with their gods. 33 They shall not dwell in your land, so that they may not cause you to sin against me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."

**23:10** Lev 25:1-7.

**23:11** Lev 19:10; 23:22. Observe God's concern for the poor.

**23:12** 20:8-11; 31:15; 35:2,3.

**23:13** "Pay attention" – Deut 4:9,23; 1 Tim 4:16.

"Another god" – Josh 23:7; Ps 16:4; Hos 2:17.

**23:14** 34:22-24; Deut 16:16.

**23:15** 12:14-20; Lev 23:6-8; Num 28:16-25.

**23:16** "Harvest" – 34:22; Lev 23:10; Num 28:26.

"Firstfruits" – Lev 23:39.

**23:17** 34:23; Deut 16:16. This does not mean women and children were to stay at home. But because of the length and difficulty of the way they were not commanded to come as the men were.

**23:18** 34:25; Lev 2:11.

**23:19** 22:29; 34:26; Deut 26:2,10; Neh 10:35; Prov 3:6.

**23:20** 3:2; 14:19; 32:34; 33:2.

**23:21** "Rebel" – Deut 9:7; Ps 78:40,56.

"Name" – 3:14; 6:3; 34:5-7. Note on angel at Gen 16:7.

**23:22** Gen 12:3; Num 24:9; Deut 30:7.

**23:23** Josh 24:8,11. Notes at Gen 6:7; Lev 18:24.

**23:24** "Must not bow down" – 20:5; Deut 12:30,31.

"Smash" – Num 33:52; Deut 7:5; 12:3; 2 Kings 18:4.

**23:25** "Bless" – Lev 26:3-13; Deut 28:1-14.

"Sickness" – 15:26; Deut 7:15.

**23:31** "Philistines" – the Mediterranean Sea.

"River" – the Euphrates.

**23:32** "Covenant" – 34:12; Deut 7:2.

**24** And he said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship at a distance. **2** And Moses alone shall come near the LORD. They shall not come near. And the people shall not come up with him."

**3** And Moses came and told the people all the words and all the laws of the LORD, and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "We will do *according to* every word that the LORD has spoken."

**4** And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and erected an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. **5** And he sent young men from the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. **6** And Moses took half of the blood and put *it* in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. **7** And he took the book of the covenant, and read *it* in the hearing of the people. And they said, "We will do everything that the LORD has said, and be obedient."

**8** And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "See, the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you about all these words."

**9** Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, **10** and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet *there* was something like a pavement of sapphire, and it was as clear *blue as* the heavens. **11** And he did not lay a hand on the nobles of the children of Israel. They also saw God, and ate and drank.

**12** And the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and stay here, and I will give you tablets of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written, so that you may teach them."

**13** And Moses and his assistant Joshua got up, and Moses went up on to the mountain of God. **14** And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us, until we come back to you. For, see, Aaron and Hur *are* with you. Whoever has matters *to* resolve, let him come to them."

**15** And Moses went up on the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. **16** And for six days the glory of the LORD remained on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it. And on the seventh day he called to Moses from inside the cloud. **17** And in the eyes of the children of Israel the sight of the glory of the LORD was like consuming fire on the top of the mountain. **18** And Moses went inside the cloud when he went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

**25** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **2** "Tell the children of Israel to bring me an offering. You shall take my offering from everyone who gives it willingly from his heart. **3** And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, and silver, and brass, **4** and blue, purple and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*, **5** and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and acacia wood, **6** oil for the light, spices for anointing oil and for sweet incense, **7** onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate.

**8** "And let them make me a sanctuary, so that I

**24:1** 6:23; 28:1.

**24:3** 19:8; 24:7; Deut 5:27.

**24:4** 17:14; 34:27; Num 33:2; Deut 31:9. This is a plain statement that Moses wrote down the law at God's command. We should not doubt it. Compare John 5:46. Anyone who denies this (and some people do so) is denying a fact of holy Scripture.

**24:5** 18:12.

**24:6** Heb 9:18.

**24:7** "Book" – v 4.

"Obedient" – note at 19:8.

**24:8** "Blood" – Heb 9:19,20. Note on the old covenant at Ex 19:5.

**24:10,11** "Saw" – they saw a manifestation of God in some form, human or angelic (Isa 6:5; John 1:18; 6:46; 12:41; 1 Tim 6:16; notes at Gen 2:19; 12:7).

"Pavement" – Ezek 1:26; 10:1.

**24:12** 31:18; 32:15; Deut 5:22.

**24:13** "Joshua" – 17:9-14.

**24:14** 17:10,12.

**24:15** 19:19.

**24:16** 16:10.

**24:17** 3:2; 19:18; Deut 5:4; Heb

12:18.

**24:18** 34:28; Deut 9:9; 10:10.

**25:2** Note at 35:4-9; 1 Chron 29:3,5,9; Ezra 2:68; 2 Cor 8:11,12; 9:7.

**25:7** "Ephod" – 28:4,6-14.

"Breastplate" – 28:4,15-30.

**25:8** "Sanctuary" – the Hebrew means "a place that is holy".

"Dwell among them" – here we have a wonderful thing – God's great desire to be with men. The Bible reveals God coming to man, desiring man's fellowship, providing a way for man to approach God and live in His presence forever. This is really the story of the Bible – see Gen 2:8,19; 3:8; 16:7; 18:1; 32:24; Ex 3:8; 13:21; 19:20; 29:45,46; 33:14; 40:34,35; Lev 9:3-6; 26:11,12; Num 5:3; Deut 12:11; 1 Kings 6:13; Ps 132:13,14; Isa 7:14; 57:15; Ezek 37:27; 48:35; Zech 2:10; Matt 1:21-23; John 1:1,14; 14:16-18,23; Acts 2:1-4; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21,22; Rev 21:3. But if the holy Creator is to live with man an obstacle must be removed. This obstacle is man's sin (Isa 59:1,2; see note at

may dwell among them. 9 You shall make *it* according to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all of its articles.

10 "And they shall make an ark of acacia wood, its length two and a half cubits, its width a cubit and a half, and its height a cubit and a half. 11 And you shall overlay it with pure gold; overlay it on the outside and on the inside, and make a gold molding on it all around. 12 And you shall cast four gold rings for it, and put *them* on the four corners of it, two rings on one side of it, and two rings on its other side. 13 And you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 14 And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, so that the ark can be carried with them. 15 The poles are to be in the rings of the ark; they

must not be taken away from it. 16 And in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give you.

17 "And you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold, its length two and a half cubits, and its width a cubit and a half. 18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold. Make them out of hammered gold at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end. You must make the cherubim of *one piece with* the mercy seat, at its two ends. 20 And the cherubim are to have *their* wings stretched out above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces *are to look* toward one another. The faces of the cherubim are to be toward the mercy seat. 21 And you shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the

Gen 3:24). Here at the giving of His holy law God knew that people would break it. In love He provided a way to cover their sin, to make atonement for them that He might live among them. It is a way of holiness and sacrifice.

**25:9** "Tabernacle" – two different Hebrew words were used for the tabernacle. One was the common word for "tent", the other was one of the common words for "dwelling". It was sometimes called the tent of meeting (because God's presence was there for the people to approach – 25:22; 29:42; 30:36). It was also called the tent of the testimony (because there the stone tablets of the law were kept).

"Pattern" – God showed Moses the exact pattern because the tabernacle was to teach spiritual truth through material objects (25:40; 26:30; Acts 7:44; Heb 8:2,5; 9:1-24; Rev 11:19). The whole tabernacle is a picture of Christ and His work on man's behalf. The tabernacle was the means whereby God dwelt with His people. So was Christ. John 1:14 in the Greek actually has He "tented" or "tabernacled" among us. The tabernacle was filled with God's glory (40:34,35). Christ is the radiance of God's glory (Heb 1:3; John 1:14; Matt 17:2). The tabernacle revealed that the way of approach to God's presence was by the blood of a sacrifice brought into the holy of holies by the high priest (Lev 16:15-17). This signified the work of Christ for us (Heb 9:11,12,24).

In the New Testament we do not have an explanation of each detail of the tabernacle, but the meanings of the main elements are clear enough. Let us study with reverence this pattern given by God. We should avoid unnecessary speculation and dogmatism about obscure elements of the tabernacle, and emphasize the main teachings God had given us here. Our object must not be to show our cleverness in discovering and teaching its mysteries, but to learn more of Christ and love Him more and follow His ways more closely.

**25:10** "Cubit" – about 18 inches or nearly

half a meter.

**25:10-16** "Ark" – 37:1-9; Num 3:31; 10:33; Deut 10:3; Josh 3:3-17; 6:4; Jud 20:27; 1 Sam 3:3; 4:1-11; 5:1-11; 6:1-21; 7:1,2; 2 Sam 6:2-17; 7:2; 15:24-29; 1 Kings 8:1-21; Heb 9:4; Rev 11:19. The ark was called by the name of the LORD (Jehovah) – 2 Sam 6:2. It is also called "the ark of the covenant" (Num 10:33). Therefore it seems safe to say that the ark symbolizes the presence of Jehovah God, the Lord of the universe, and His covenant with His people Israel. The two stone tablets containing the ten commandments, called "the testimony" in this verse, were a principal part of the law on which the old covenant was based, and were kept in the ark (Deut 10:2-5).

It would be no mistake to think the ark signifies Christ, who is Jehovah's presence with His people. It is He who has the law of God in His heart (Ps 40:7,8 with Heb 10:5-7). Two other things were kept in the ark – a jar of manna and Aaron's rod which budded (Heb 9:4). The manna signifies Christ the spiritual food of His people (see 16:16). The rod of Aaron signifies Christ as High Priest (Num 17:1-11). For the possible meanings of acacia wood and gold see note at Ex 26:15-30.

**25:17** "Mercy seat" – the Hebrew word used here comes from a verb which meant to cover over. A form of this word is used throughout the Old Testament to express the idea of atonement. See note on atonement at 29:33. Atonement was made on the cover of the ark. That was the place where God in mercy covered the sins of Israel and forgave them (Lev 16:15-17,30).

**25:18-20** The cherubim were not images of God. At the time when the pattern was given for this tabernacle, God strictly forbade the making of any image of God (20:4). He certainly would not give here a command contrary to that. The cherubim were not put there to be worshiped, and they were never worshiped in Israel. The cherubim are mentioned in other places in the Bible (note at Gen 3:24). A design of the cherubim was



testimony that I will give you. 22 And there, from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will meet with you and I will speak with you about all the things which I will give you as commandments for the children of Israel.

23 "You shall also make a table of acacia wood, its length two cubits, its width a cubit, and its height a cubit and a half. 24 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make for it a gold molding around it. 25 And you shall make for it a rim around it, a handbreadth wide, and shall make a gold molding around it for its rim. 26 And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners by its four legs. 27 The rings are to be near the rim as holders for the poles to carry the table. 28 And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. The table will be carried with them. 29 And you shall make its dishes and its ladles and its pitchers and its sacrificial bowls, for pouring drink offerings. You shall make them of pure gold. 30 And you shall set the Showbread on the table before me at all times.

31 "And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. It is to be made of hammered work. Its base and its shaft, its bowls, its buds, and its flowers shall be of one piece with it. 32 And six branches shall come out from its sides, three branches of the lampstand out from one side, and three branches of the lampstand out from the other side. 33 Three bowls made like almond blossoms with a bud and a flower are to be on one branch, and three bowls made like almond blossoms on the other branch,

woven into the veil that was placed before the holy of holies in the tabernacle (26: 31-33). They may symbolize the glory and holiness of God, or indicate that there was a barrier for sinful men to come into God's presence, that only the high priest (who was a symbol of Christ) could do so.

**25:22** 30:6,36; Lev 16:2; Num 17:4; God met with the representative of His people at the place where the blood of the atoning sacrifice was offered (Lev 16:15,16). This signifies that the meeting place for God and man is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the way is by the blood He shed for sinners (Heb 10:19-23).

**25:23-30** "Table" – Lev 24:5-7. The table signifies Christ, bearing the bread of life (John 6:35). Note at Ex 16:16.

"Showbread" – literally, in Hebrew, "bread of the faces". In such a context in Hebrew faces indicate the presence of someone. A good translation here would be "The bread of the Presence", meaning the bread set in the presence of God.

**25:31-39** "Lampstand" – 37:17-24. This seems a better translation of the Hebrew than "candlestick". It held lamps, not candles. The lampstand signifies Christ the

with a bud and a flower, and so in all the six branches that come out from the lampstand. 34 And on the lampstand shall be four bowls made like almond blossoms, with their buds and their flowers. 35 And there shall be a bud under two branches of it, and a bud under another two branches of it, and a bud under another two branches of it, to all the six branches that go out from the lampstand. 36 Their buds and their branches shall be of one piece with it. The whole of it is to be one hammered work of pure gold.

37 "And you shall make its seven lamps. And they shall set up its lamps to give light in front of it. 38 And its snuffers and its trays are to be of pure gold. 39 He shall make it and all these articles out of a talent of pure gold.

40 And see that you make them according to their pattern, which was shown to you on the mountain.

**26** "And you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet. You shall make them with cherubim, the work of a skillful craftsman. 2 The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. Each of the curtains shall have the same size. 3 The five curtains shall be joined to one another, and another five curtains shall be joined to one another. 4 And you shall make loops of blue on the edge of the outer curtain in one set, and also you shall make them on the edge of the outer curtain in the second set. 5 You shall make fifty loops on the one

light (John 1:4,9; 8:12; 9:5). He is the one who lights the way to God's presence. The lampstand had seven branches with their seven lamps. Seven is the Bible number of completeness and perfection (compare Rev 1:4,12,16; 5:6; etc). Christ is the perfect light. No other is needed to light the way to God, to give light for worship and service, and indeed there is no other. In the tabernacle there was no other light at all – not of sun, or moon, or of any other source. The priests did not need to bring their own light into the tabernacle. The seven-branched lampstand was enough and its lamps were never to go out. In the future city of God we see something similar (Rev 21:23).

"Talent" (v 39) – about 34 kilograms. **25:40** God repeated this instruction given in v 9. God is showing in symbolic form the way of approach to Himself. He is setting forth the person and work of Christ. So everything had to be made exactly as He says.

**26:1-6** "Tabernacle" – 36:8-19. Fine linen signifies righteous deeds (Rev 19:8). Here it no doubt speaks of the righteous deeds of Christ, His sinless life among men. The colors of blue, purple and scarlet signify,

curtain, and you shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that *is* in the second set, so that the loops are opposite one another. 6 And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and join the curtains together with the clasps, so that the tabernacle will be a unit.

7 "And you shall make curtains of goats' hair for a covering on the tabernacle. You shall make eleven *such* curtains. 8 The length of a curtain *is to be* thirty cubits, and the breadth of a curtain four cubits, and the eleven curtains are to be of the same size. 9 And you shall join five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shall double the sixth curtain at the front of the tabernacle. 10 And you shall make fifty loops on the edge of the outer curtain in the *first* set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain in the second. 11 And you shall make fifty clasps of bronze, and put the clasps into the loops and join the tent together, so that it may be a unit. 12 And the part that is left over of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that is left over, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. 13 And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of what is left over of the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. 14 And you shall make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and over it a covering of badgers' skins.

15 "And you shall make boards for the tabernacle out of acacia wood, to stand upright. 16 A board *is to be* ten cubits in length. A cubit and a half is to be the width of a board. 17 Each board *will have* two tenons, fitted to one another. You shall make all the boards of the tabernacle like this. 18 And so you shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side, facing south. 19 And you shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards, two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets

under another board for its two tenons. 20 And for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, *there shall be* twenty boards, 21 and their forty sockets of silver, two sockets under one board, and two sockets under *each* other board. 22 And for the rear of the tabernacle facing west you shall make six boards. 23 And shall you make two boards for the corners of the tabernacle at the rear. 24 And they shall be joined together at the bottom, and they shall be joined together at the top of it into one ring. Both of them shall be made this way and they will be for the two corners. 25 So there will be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under *every* other board.

26 "And you shall make bars of acacia wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 27 and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, at the rear, facing west. 28 And the middle bar in the center of the boards shall reach from end to end. 29 And you shall overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold as places for the bars, and you shall overlay the bars with gold.

30 "And you shall set up the tabernacle according to its pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

31 "And you shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen, the work of a skillful craftsman. It shall be made with *woven* cherubim. 32 And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks *shall be* of gold. *The pillars will rest* on four sockets of silver. 33 And you shall hang up the veil from the clasps, and you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there behind the veil. And the veil will divide for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. 34 And you shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy Place. 35 And you

perhaps, Christ's heavenly origin, His royalty and His sacrifice. The curtains covered over the articles in the tabernacle and made the tabernacle one. Inside the curtains were the light, the table with its bread, the altar of incense (30:1), the ark and the mercy seat, the tablets of the law, and the glory of God's presence. All this was inside the curtains – that is, they all signify spiritual realities which are in Christ.

**26:7-14** "Curtains. . .for a covering" – 36:14,19. This was for practical reasons. It made the tabernacle waterproof. This outer covering, rough and lacking in beauty may speak of Christ's outer circumstances which veiled His glory (see Isa 53:2,3; Matt 13:55-57; Phil 2:6-8).

"Badgers' skins" – or, possibly, the skins of dolphins or sea cows. We do not know

the exact meaning of the Hebrew word used here.

**26:15-30** "Boards" – some commentators have suggested that acacia wood (from trees that grow in the desert) speak of Christ's humanity (Isa 53:2) and that gold speaks of His divine origin and glory (gold is associated with the divine glory in Rev 21:18,21. See also Ex 25:10,11). Silver perhaps speaks of redemption (Ex 30:11-16; Lev 5:15; Num 3:47-51). The Lord Jesus is the God-man (John 1:1,14; 1 Tim 2:5; Titus 2:13). His work was redemption (Eph 1:7; Titus 2:14).

**26:31-35** "Veil" – a similar curtain was made for the temple (2 Chron 3:14). This veil separated the Holy Place with its lampstand and table of bread from the Most Holy Place where the presence of God dwelt over the ark. At the death

shall put the table outside the veil, and the lampstand opposite the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south, and you shall put the table on the north side.

36 "And for the door of the tent you shall make a hanging of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen, *made by a worker in embroidery*. 37 And for the hanging you shall make five pillars of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Their hooks *also are to be of gold*. And you shall cast five bronze sockets for them.

**27** "And you shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits wide. The altar is to be square, and its height *is to be* three cubits. 2 And you shall make horns for it on its four corners. Its horns are to be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze. 3 And you shall make pans for it to receive its ashes. And *make* its shovels, its basins, its meat forks, and its firepans. You shall make all of its utensils *out of* bronze. 4 And you shall make a grating for it, a bronze network, and make four bronze rings on the network, in its four corners. 5 And you shall put it under the ledge of the altar underneath, so that the network will be halfway up the altar. 6 And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7 And the poles shall be put into the rings, and the staves are to be at the two sides of the altar, to carry it. 8 You shall make it hollow, out of boards. You must make it just as *it* was shown to you on the mountain.

9 "And you shall make the courtyard of the tabernacle. For the south side of the courtyard, facing south, *there are to be* hangings of fine woven linen a hundred cubits long on one side.

of the Lord Jesus on the cross the veil in the temple was torn in two (Matt 27:51). Until the death of Christ the way into the presence of God was not fully revealed and opened. Now we have this new and living way through which anyone, by faith in the Lord Jesus, can come into the Most Holy Place into God's presence (Heb 9:8; 10:19-22). Note on holy at Lev 20:7.

**26:36,37** "Door" – this veil was to screen the holy place from the outer court where the altar stood.

**27:1-8** "Altar" – this was the place where the blood of the daily sacrifices was sprinkled, where the offerings and sacrifices were consumed by fire. It was the first object met with coming from outside into the compound of the tabernacle. It signifies the cross of Christ where His blood was shed and where He offered Himself as a sacrifice to God for the sins of the world (John 1:29; 19:17,18; Eph 5:2; Heb 9:14; 10:10). This was the first step in opening the way into God's presence. The only way into the holy

10 And its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets *are to be of* bronze. The hooks on the pillars and their bands *are to be of* silver. 11 And also for the north side *there are to be* hangings a hundred cubits in length, and its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of bronze, the hooks on the pillars, and their bands, of silver.

12 "And for the width of the courtyard on the west side *are to be* hangings of fifty cubits, their ten pillars and their ten sockets. 13 And the width of the courtyard on the east side, facing east, *is to be* fifty cubits. 14 The hangings on one side of the gate *are to be* fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets. 15 And on the other side the hangings *are to be* fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets.

16 "And for the gate of the courtyard *there is to be* a hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen, made by a worker in embroidery. *There are to be* four pillars and their four sockets. 17 All the pillars around the courtyard *are to be* banded with silver. Their hooks *are to be of* silver, and their sockets of bronze. 18 The length of the courtyard *is to be* a hundred cubits, and the width fifty everywhere, and the height five cubits of fine woven linen, and their sockets of bronze. 19 All the articles of the tabernacle for all of its service, and all its tent pegs, and all the pegs for the courtyard, *are to be of* bronze.

20 "And you shall command the children of Israel to bring you pure oil of pounded olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continuously. 21 In the tabernacle of the congregation outside the veil that *is* in front of the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep the light in order from evening to morning before the LORD. *This is to be a* perma-

place and the holy of holies was from the altar. The only way now is by the cross of Christ. **27:9-19** "Hangings" – these curtains, signifying a perfect righteousness (note at 26:1-6), kept out everyone from entering the tabernacle except the priests. The ordinary Israelite never got inside. In fact, he could not even see in. The height of the curtains was over seven feet. Perfect holiness and righteousness ban the sinner from God's presence. The way into God's presence then was not yet clearly revealed (Heb 9:8). The only way into the court of the tabernacle was through the gate. This, too, speaks of Christ. (John 10:9; 14:6).

**27:20** "Oil" – 35:8,28; Lev 24:1-4. Oil signifies God's Holy Spirit (Zech 4:2-6) and anointing speaks of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Isa 61:1; Luke 4:17-20). The lamp, which signifies Christ, was to burn continually. See John 3:34; Heb 1:9. The light which Christ is will never go out.

**27:21** "Congregation" – note at 25:9.

nent statute throughout their generations for the children of Israel.

**28** "And bring near to yourself your brother Aaron and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, so that he may serve me as priests. I mean Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 2 And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother for glory and for beauty. 3 And you shall speak to all *who are* wise in heart, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, so that he may serve me as priest. 4 And these *are* the garments which they are to make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and an embroidered tunic, a turban, and a sash. And they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister to me in the priest's office. 5 And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, 6 and they shall make the ephod *of* gold, *of* blue, and *of* purple, *of* scarlet, and fine woven linen, the work of a skillful craftsman. 7 It is to have its two shoulder pieces joined at its two ends. And so it is to be joined together. 8 And the skillfully woven *waist* band of the ephod, which is on it, is to be of the same workmanship and material, *of* gold, *of* blue and purple and scarlet, and fine woven linen.

9 "And you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the children of Israel, 10 six of their names on one stone, and the remaining six names on the other stone, according

to their *time of birth*. 11 Like an engraver in stones, *like* the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel. You shall set them in gold filigree *settings*. 12 And you shall put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the children of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial. 13 And you shall make gold filigree *settings*, 14 and two chains *of* pure gold at the ends. You shall make them *of* braided work, and fasten the braided chains to the filigree *settings*.

15 "And you shall make the breastplate of judgment, the work of a skilled craftsman. You shall make it like the work of the ephod. You shall make it *of* gold, *of* blue, and *of* purple, and *of* scarlet; and you shall make it *of* fine woven linen. 16 It is to be square, folded double. Its length *is to be* a span, and its width *is to be* a span. 17 And you shall set in it settings of stones, four rows of stones. *The first row is to have* a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle; *this shall be* the first row. 18 And the second row *is to have* an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; 19 and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 20 and the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold filigree. 21 And the stones shall be according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet. They shall be according to the twelve tribes, each one according to his name.

22 "And you shall make braided chains *of* pure

Perhaps "Tabernacle of meeting" would be a better translation. The meaning is that this was the place where God met the people, not the place where people met together for worship.

**28:1** Before the time of the Exodus from Egypt the heads of families acted as priests and offered sacrifices (Gen 8:20; 26:25; 31:54). In Exodus God chose a particular family to act as priests for the whole nation (29:9). Aaron was the High Priest. The priests were to offer sacrifices for the people, manage the work of the tabernacle, and represent the people before God. In the New Testament Church there is no special group among believers whom God chooses to be priests. All believers in Christ are priests (1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6), and Christ is the only High Priest (Heb 4:14-16; 9:24; 10:19-22). Christ as High Priest offered himself as a sacrifice to God. This one sacrifice was perfect and complete and took away all the sins of God's people forever.

Believers now as priests have no animal sacrifice to make and none is needed. But they still have something to offer – their bodies to live or die for God (Rom 12:1,2; Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6; 1 John 3:16), praise

to God (Heb 13:15), their possessions (Rom 12:13; Gal 6:6,10; Titus 3:14; Heb 13:2,16; 3 John 5-8), and their service (Heb 13:16). They all have direct access into God's presence and their work as intercessors goes on much as that of Old Testament priests (Eph 6:18-20; 1 Tim 2:1,2).

**28:2** 29:29; 31:10; 39:1-31; Lev 8:7-9,30. **28:3** 31:3,6; 35:25,31-35; 36:1; Isa 11:2; 1 Cor 12:7-11; Eph 1:17.

**28:6-8** "Ephod" – 39:2-7; Lev 8:7. This was a garment something like a vest and was worn over the other clothing of the priests.

**28:9-14** "Before the LORD" (v 12) – 28:29,30; 39:6,7. The bearing of the names on Aaron's shoulders signifies Christ our great High Priest bearing the names of His people before God. Shoulders speak of the place of strength (Isa 9:6; Luke 15:4,5). He bears and sustains His people by His strength and presents them to God continually (Heb 7:24,25).

**28:15-29** "Breastplate. . . stones" – it is difficult to find out what particular gem is meant by each Hebrew name. In each gem there was a name of one of the tribes of Israel. The breastplate was worn over the

gold for the breastplate, like a cord. 23 And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and shall put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 24 And you shall put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings *which are* on the ends of the breastplate. 25 And you shall fasten *the other* two ends of the two braided *chains* to the two filigree *settings*, and put *them* on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, in the front. 26 And you shall make two rings of gold, and shall put them on the two ends of the breastplate at its inside edge that *is* next to the ephod. 27 And you shall make two *more* rings of gold and shall put them on the two sides of the ephod at the bottom, toward its front part, close to the place where it is joined, above the waistband of the ephod. 28 And they shall tie the breastplate by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that *it* may be above the waistband of the ephod, and that the breastplate may not come loose from the ephod.

29 "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment on his heart when he goes into the Holy Place, as a memorial before the LORD continually. 30 And you shall put the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate of judgment, and they shall be on Aaron's heart when he goes into the presence of the LORD, and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel on his heart before the LORD continually.

31 "And you shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32 And there shall be an opening at the top of it, in its center. It shall have a binding of

woven work around its opening, like the opening of a coat of mail, so that it will not tear. 33 And you shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, all around its hem. And *make* golden bells between them all around, 34 a golden bell then a pomegranate, a golden bell then a pomegranate, all around on the hem of the robe. 35 And Aaron is to wear it when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the Holy Place in the LORD's presence, and when he comes out, so that he does not die.

36 "And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave it, *like* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37 And you shall put it on a blue cord so that it may be on the turban. It is to be at the front of the turban. 38 And it is to be on Aaron's forehead, so that Aaron may bear the guilt *relating to* the holy things that the children of Israel will consecrate, *with regard to* all their holy gifts. And it shall always be on his forehead, so that they may be accepted in the LORD's presence.

39 "And you shall make the embroidered tunic of fine linen, and shall make the turban of fine linen, and shall make the sash, the work of a weaver. 40 And you shall make tunics for Aaron's sons, and you shall make for them sashes and caps, for glory and for beauty. 41 And you shall put them on Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, and shall anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, so that they may serve me as priests.

42 "And you shall make linen shorts for them to cover their nakedness. They are to reach from the

high priest's heart – the place of the affections. Christ our great High Priest now bears the names of His believers on His heart in heaven. He not only sustains them by His strength (vs 9-14), continually before God His heart is filled with love for them.

**28:30** "Thummim" – Lev 8:8; Num 27:21; Deut 33:8; 1 Sam 28:6; Ezra 2:63; the probably meaning of the words "urim" and "thummim" is "lights and perfections". By their means God gave light on doubtful matters. Perhaps one gem lighted up for a positive answer, the other for a negative answer, but we cannot be sure. Now God's Spirit reveals God's will to believers.

**28:31-35** "That he does not die" – so that he might not die in the course of his duties even the high priest had to be very careful to perform them just as God directed. There was danger of death for several offenses connected with the tabernacle –

ministering in or entering the tabernacle without priestly garments (28:43)

failing to wash before entering (30:20,21)

misuse of anointing oil (30:33)

making for oneself the incense (30:37,38)

being unclean and eating offerings (Lev 7:20,21)

eating fat or blood of sacrifices (Lev 7:25-27)

entering the holy of holies except once a year (Lev 16:2)

failing to burn incense in the holy of holies (Lev 16:13)

offering sacrifices somewhere else (Lev 17:4-14)

eating sacrifices on the third day after they were offered (Lev 19:7,8)

unauthorized persons working on the tabernacle (Num 1:51) or approaching the sanctuary (Num 3:10) or touching the holy articles (Num 4:15).

All this was meant to show how holy are the things of God and how careful men should be in His worship and work.

**28:36-38** "Plate. . . always on his forehead" – this was a continual reminder to Aaron that he was separated for this special work and that he was the representative of the people before God.

**28:40** Verse 4; 39:27,28,41; Lev 8:13.

**28:41** 29:1-29; 30:30; 40:15; Lev 8:1-36; 10:7; Heb 5:1-4.

**28:42** Lev 6:10; 16:4.



waist to the thighs. 43 And they must be worn by Aaron, and by his sons, when they come into the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near the altar to serve in the Holy Place, so that they do not incur guilt and die. *This shall be* a permanent ordinance for him and his offspring after him.

**29** "And this *is* what you shall do to them to set them apart to serve me as priests: Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, 2 and bread made without yeast, and cakes without yeast, mixed with oil, and wafers without yeast, spread with oil. You shall make them *with* wheat flour. 3 And you shall put them in one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams. 4 And you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall wash them with water. 5 And you shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the tunic, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and fasten *them to* him with the waistband of the ephod. 6 And you shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. 7 Then shall you take the anointing oil and pour *it* on his head and anoint him. 8 And you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. 9 And you shall fasten *them to* them with sashes, *to* Aaron and his sons, and put the caps on them. And the priesthood shall be theirs by a permanent ordinance. And *so* you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

10 "And you shall have a bull brought before the tabernacle of the congregation, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the

bull. 11 And you shall kill the bull in the LORD's presence, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 12 And you shall take some of the blood of the bull, and put *it* on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. 13 And you shall take all the fat that covers the inner parts, and the upper lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them, and burn *them* on the altar. 14 But you shall burn with fire the flesh of the bull, and its skin, and its dung, outside the camp. It is a sin offering.

15 "You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. 16 And you shall slaughter the ram, and shall take its blood, and sprinkle *it* all around on the altar. 17 And you shall cut the ram in pieces, and wash its inner parts, and its legs, and put *them* with its *other* pieces, and with its head. 18 And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a soothing aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

19 "And you shall take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. 20 Then you shall slaughter the ram, and take *some* of its blood, and put *it* on the tip of Aaron's right ear, and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, and on the thumb of their right hand, and on the large toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. 21 And you shall take *some* of the blood that *is* on the altar, and *some* of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron, and on his garments, and on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him. And he and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with

**28:43** 20:26. The garments of the high priest were for glory and beauty (vs 2,40). These garments signify the glory and beauty of Christ's activities in heaven as High Priest now. Believers on earth now, the priests of the new covenant, have no special garments. Their holy lives are to be their distinguishing mark, their glory and beauty.

**29:1** Lev 8:1-34.

**29:2** 12:15; Lev 2:4; 6:19-23.

**29:4** 40:12; Lev 8:6. This washing was different from the daily washing the priests were to do in the laver (30:18-21). Christ fulfilled this type at His baptism (Matt 3:13-17). It was then that He entered into His ministry. As regards believers, the priests of the New Testament, this washing speaks of the washing of regeneration (1 Cor 6:11; Eph 5:26; Titus 3:5). The daily washing in the laver signifies the cleansing of the believer when he sins (Ps 51:2,7; John 13:5-10; Heb 10:22; 1 John 1:9). Christ, the sinless Son of God, needed neither regeneration nor daily washing from sin. His

baptism fulfilled the picture of Aaron the High priest and identified Him with His people. Note on Christ's baptism at Matt 3:13.

**29:7** 30:25; Lev 8:12; 21:10; Num 35:25; Ps 133:2,3. The Lord Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit immediately after His baptism (Matt 3:13-17; Acts 10:38).

**29:9** 28:40,41; 40:15; Lev 8:1-36; Num 3:10; 18:7; 25:13; Deut 18:5.

**29:10** Lev 1:4; 8:14. Laying hands on the sacrifice signified that the offerer accepted the sacrifice in his place, on his behalf.

**29:11,12** Lev 8:15; Ex 27:2; 30:2.

**29:13** Lev 3:3,4.

**29:14** "Sin offering" – note at Lev 4:3.

**29:15** Lev 8:18.

**29:18** "Burnt offering" – notes at Leviticus chapter 1.

"Soothing aroma" – Gen 8:21; Ex 29:25; Eph 5:2.

**29:19** Lev 8:22-29.

**29:20** This signified that they were cleansed and sanctified completely from head to foot.

**29:21** 30:25,31; Lev 8:30.

him, will be consecrated.

22 "You shall also take the fat and the rump of the ram, and the fat that covers the inner parts, and the upper lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them, and the right shoulder (for it *is* a ram for ordination), 23 and from the basket of bread made without yeast, that *is* in the LORD's presence, *take* one loaf of bread, and one cake made with oil, and one wafer, 24 and put all *of this* in Aaron's hands, and in the hands of his sons, and wave them as a wave offering before the Lord. 25 Then you shall take them from their hands, and burn *them* on the altar as a burnt offering, as a soothing aroma before the LORD. It is an offering made by fire to the LORD. 26 And you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration, and wave it as a wave offering before the LORD, and it will be your part.

27 "And you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering, and the shoulder of the lifted up offering, *what* was waved and which was presented from the ram for the consecration, *that is*, from what *is* for Aaron, and from what *is* for his sons, 28 and it shall belong to Aaron and his sons, *an offering* from the children of Israel by a permanent ordinance. For it is an offering lifted up. It shall be an offering lifted up from the children of Israel from the sacrifice of their peace offerings, their lifted up offering to the LORD.

29 "And Aaron's holy garments shall belong to his sons after him, for their anointing in them, and

their ordination in them. 30 *And* that son who becomes priest in his stead shall put them on for seven days, when he comes into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the Holy Place.

31 "And you shall take the ordination ram and boil its flesh in a holy place. 32 And Aaron and his sons shall eat the meat of the ram, and the bread that *is* in the basket, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 33 And they shall eat those things with which atonement was made at their ordination and consecration. But a stranger shall not eat *of them*, because they *are* holy. 34 And if any of the meat of the consecration *ram*, or *any* of the bread, remains until morning, you shall burn that remainder with fire. It must not be eaten, because it *is* holy.

35 "And so you shall do to Aaron and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. You shall *take* seven days to ordain them. 36 And each day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement. And after you have made atonement for the altar, you shall cleanse it, and you shall anoint it to consecrate it. 37 For seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and consecrate it. And it will be a most holy altar. Whatever touches the altar shall be holy.

38 "Now this *is* what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year day by day regularly. 39 One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. 40 And with the one lamb *offer* a tenth of *an ephah* of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of pounded olive

**29:23** Lev 8:26.

**29:24** Lev 8:27.

**29:25** Lev 8:28.

**29:26** Lev 7:31,34; 8:29.

**29:29** Num 20:26,28.

**29:31** Lev 8:31.

**29:33** "Atonement" – Lev 4:20,26,31; 16:6,16,30,34. Atonement in Old Testament days did not completely take away sin. It was impossible that the blood of animals could do so (Heb 10:4). Through these sacrifices God covered their sins, or passed over their sins, until such time as Christ should come and remove their sins completely and forever by the sacrifice of Himself. See Romans 3:24,25. Atonement in the Old Testament removed God's wrath from the people (Num 16:46-48). It made forgiveness possible (Lev 4:20; 5:10; Num 15:25). It made it possible for God to dwell among His people (Ex 25:8; 29:44,45). But it could not, and did not, really deal with the problem of sin or make the people fit for God's presence or prepare them to enter heaven after death. These things were accomplished only by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross – Heb 10:1-22.

**29:34** 12:10; 23:18; 34:25; Lev 8:32.

**29:35** We can learn something from the order of the ritual in the ordination of the priests. Remember that the priests of the Old Testament signify all of Christ's believers now. The order was washing (v 4), dressing in holy garments, which speak of Christ's righteousness (v 8), application of blood to ear, hand and foot, signifying the whole person (v 20), sprinkling of the anointing oil, which speaks of the Holy Spirit (v 21), offering of the burnt offering, which speaks of full dedication to God (vs 22-25), appointing the food of the priest – sacrifices which speak of Christ (vs 26-34). Now believers are regenerated (Titus 3:5), dressed in Christ's righteousness (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21), sanctified by Christ's blood (Heb 13:12), anointed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:21,22; 1 John 2:20) and find their spiritual food in Christ (John 6:53-63). And they are to offer themselves to God (Rom 12:1,2).

**29:36** 40:10; Heb 10:11.

**29:38** Num 28:3-31; 29:6-38.

**29:40** "Tenth of an ephah" – about 2 liters.

"Fourth of a hin" – probably about one liter.

"Drink offering" – Lev 23:23,18,37; Num 4:7; 15:5; 28:7.

oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering. 41 And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall do to it as to the meat offering in the morning, and as its drink offering, for a soothing aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

42 "This shall be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. There I will meet you and speak with you. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle will be sanctified by my glory.

44 And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar. I will also sanctify both Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. 45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46 And they will know that I am the LORD their God who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, so that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

**30** "And you shall make an altar to burn incense on. You shall make it of acacia wood. 2 Its length is to be a cubit, and its width a cubit. It is to be square. And its height is to be two cubits. Its horns are to be of one piece with it. 3 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top, its sides all around, and its horns. And you shall make a gold molding for it all around. 4 And you shall make two gold rings for it under its molding. You shall make them on its two sides, on its two opposite sides, and they shall be holders for poles to carry it with. 5 And you shall make the poles out of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 6 And you shall put the altar before the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you.

7 "And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it every morning. He shall burn incense on it

when he trims the lamps. 8 And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it. There is to be a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. 9 You shall offer no strange incense on it, or a burnt sacrifice, or a food offering. And you shall not pour a drink offering on it. 10 And Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement. Once a year atonement shall be made on it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."

11 "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "When you take a census of the children of Israel to number them, then each one of them must pay a ransom for his soul to the LORD, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. 13 This is what each one who comes to be numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the sanctuary shekel (a shekel is twenty gerahs). A half shekel shall be the offering for the LORD. 14 Every one who comes for numbering, twenty years old and over, shall give an offering to the LORD. 15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering to the LORD to make atonement for your souls. 16 And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall designate it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, so that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for your souls."

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "You shall also make a bronze laver, and its bronze base, for washing. And you shall put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and you shall put water in it. 19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet there. 20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire to the LORD, so that

**29:42** 25:22; Num 17:4.

**29:45** Note at Ex 25:8.

**29:46** 20:2.

**30:1-5** "Altar" – 37:25-29.

**30:6** 26:31-33. Sometimes the altar of incense was outside the veil that hung before the Most Holy Place. Sometimes it was inside the veil (Heb 9:3,4). The altar with its incense signifies Christ as intercessor (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24; John 17:1-26). Christ as High Priest is the Mediator through whom the praises and prayers of God's people ascend to God (Heb 13:15; Rev 8:3,4).

**30:7** The incense signifies Christ's own prayers.

**30:8** Heb 7:25.

**30:9** The altar and incense signify Christ as

intercessor, the one who prays for His people. There is no one else in heaven to mediate between God and God's people (1 Tim 2:5). So all other incense was forbidden. Burnt offerings etc, were not to be offered here but on the altar in the courtyard. Every symbol in the tabernacle was to be in its own place and unmixed with any other symbol. Note at Lev 10:1,2.

**30:10** Lev 16:18.

**30:12** 38:25,26; Num 1:2; 26:2.

**30:13** "Half a shekel" (also v 15) – about 6 grams.

**30:18-21** "Laver" – 38:8; 40:30-32. The priests in their uncleanness must not try to approach the God whose whole nature is fiery holiness. In the Bible water is a symbol of the Word of God (Eph 5:26). Believers

they do not die. 21 And they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they do not die. This shall be an ordinance for them forever, for him and for his offspring throughout their generations."

22 Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23 "Take also for yourself the finest spices: five hundred *shekels* of pure myrrh, half as much, two hundred and fifty *shekels*, of sweet cinnamon, two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet calamus, 24 and five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the sanctuary shekel, and a hin of olive oil. 25 And you shall make it into a holy anointing oil, a perfume mixture of the perfumer's art. It is to be a holy anointing oil. 26 And with it you shall anoint the tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, 27 and the table and all its utensils, and the candlestick and its utensils, and the altar of incense, 28 and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. 29 And you shall consecrate them, so that they will be most holy. Whatever touches them will be holy.

are cleansed by hearing God's word (John 15:3), by meditating on it and obeying it (Ps 119:9). This laver, or basin, signifies Christ as the incarnate Word of God (John 1:1,14; Rev 19:13). Through him the Word of God came, and the Word of God is contained in Him as water in the basin. Now believers in Christ (the New Testament priests) through Christ may cleanse themselves from the defilement of sin (2 Cor 7:1; Heb 10:19-22).

**30:22-25** "Holy anointing oil"– 37:29; 40:9; Lev 8:10. Anointing oil signifies the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God for service (27:20).

"Five hundred shekels" (v 23) – about 6 kilograms.

"A hin" (v 24) – about 4 liters.

**30:26-29** "Consecrate" (v 29) – 40:9; Lev 8:10; Num 7:1.

**30:30** 29:7; Lev 8:12. Now all believers are anointed by Christ and consecrated by Christ to minister as priests to God (2 Cor 1:21,22; 1 John 2:20,27; John 14:16,17; 20:21,22).

**30:31-33** "Cut off" – God gave this severe warning because the oil signifies His Holy Spirit. No man can duplicate His power and influence, and no one should try. He cannot be bestowed on anyone except priests (all believers now). It is wicked presumption to try to use Him for our own purposes (see Acts 8:18-23). For other offenses against the tabernacle and its articles which brought danger of death see note at 28:35.

**30:34-38** "Incense" – the incense speaks of Christ's intercessions, holy and fragrant to God. The warning in v 38 is to signify perhaps that prayer and worship are not to be for selfish reasons, not self-manufactured. The person who is not a believer must not intrude into holy things. Worship

30 "And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, so that *they* may serve me as priests. 31 And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil for me throughout your generations. 32 It shall not be poured on man's flesh, neither shall you make *any other* like it, with its mixture. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. 33 Whoever mixes *any* like it, or whoever puts *any* of it on a foreigner, shall be cut off from his people."

34 And the LORD said to Moses, "Take for yourself sweet spices: stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, *these* sweet spices with pure frankincense. There is to be the same *weight* of each. 35 And you shall make an incense with it, a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure *and* holy. 36 And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put *some* of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. 37 And *as for* the incense which you shall make, you shall not

that is not given in God's way will not be acceptable to God. See notes on psalm 50, Isa 1:10-17, John 4:23,24, Col 2:18,23, Prov 14:12.

#### *Special note: A Spiritual Exercise*

This ends the description of the tabernacle, the pattern God gave to His people to reveal heavenly truths. It all speaks of Christ. It all symbolizes Him and His work for us and our privileges and responsibilities in Him. Believers in Christ now can use thoughts and meditations about the tabernacle to see clearly how they should approach and worship God. In spirit we come with our offerings to the entrance of the tabernacle compound which speaks of Christ "the gate" (John 10:7). The ordinary Israelite could not enter the tabernacle or the compound, but we as New Testament believers are also priests (1 Peter 2:5,9), so we enter and the glories of the new covenant begin to open to our view.

First we approach the altar of burnt offering. There we look on the fire and the poured out blood and the animal sacrifices burned to ashes, and remember again the Lamb of God, the one great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, the blood and life of the Lord Jesus poured out for us on Calvary (John 1:29; Rom 3:25; 2 Cor 5:21). He was both sacrifice and High Priest who offered the sacrifice (Heb 8:1-3; 9:11,12). Sacrifices were to be offered daily on the tabernacle's literal altar, but on Calvary Jesus was offered once and for all for our sins (Heb 10:10-14). That one sacrifice cannot be repeated, it is not necessary that it be repeated, and no one should even dream of trying to repeat it. But daily we should keep it in memory and bow in adoration at His feet.

make its composition for yourself; it shall be to you holy for the LORD. 38 Whoever makes *any* like it to smell it, shall be cut off from his people."

**31** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "See, I have called Bezaleel by name; *he is* the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge,

and in all kinds of crafts, 4 to make artistic designs, to work in gold, and in silver, and in bronze, 5 and in cutting of stones, for setting *them*, and in carving of timber, to work in all kinds of crafts. 6 And I, I myself, have given Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan to *work* with him.

"And I have put wisdom in the hearts of all who are wise in heart, so that they may make all that I

At this altar we remember too our death in Him (Rom 6:3,4,8; 2 Cor 5:15; Col 3:3), and as New Testament priests we here offer our sacrifices – our praises, and all that we are and all we have and all that is within us (Rom 12:1,2; Heb 13:15,16; Luke 14:33). We take our proper place of death to self and lay ourselves, as it were, on the altar to be a burnt offering for God alone, and as those risen from the dead in Christ (Eph 2:5,6) move forward to live for Him (Lev 1:3-17; Luke 9:23; 2 Cor 5:15).

From the altar Christ our great High Priest leads us to the basin or laver filled with water, and there by using the Word of God and by the Spirit of God we wash away any defilement, any uncleanness there may be in our thoughts, motives or behavior (2 Cor 7:1; Heb 10:22).

Still as priests we continue on with Him to the tabernacle building itself, the Holy Place, and enter. There we stand in the only light in that place, the light of the seven-branched lampstand which speaks of Christ (John 8:12). And there we resolve again to walk in His light and behave as children of the light (Eph 5:8,9; 1 John 1:7). And there we view the bread on the table and partake of the Bread of life which it symbolizes (John 6:35). We feed on Him by meditating on His excellent qualities and deeds and how they relate to us, and by opening our hearts afresh to His presence. In this way of faith we receive strength from Him for our daily walk as pilgrims in a fallen world. And there in the Holy Place we see Christ as our intercessor and mediator (Rom 8:34; 1 Tim 2:5), symbolized by the altar of incense, and offer our prayers to mingle with His. And then we face the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, the holy of holies.

In Old Testament days no ordinary priest dared go through that curtain, but only the high priest, and that but once a year (Lev 16:2,34; Heb 9:7). But we, the New Testament priests, can enter there, can enter every day, and any time of day or night. Christ the great High Priest has opened up a new and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh (Heb 10:19-22). He takes us by the hand and leads us in. We are united to Him, are members of His Body, and so enter with Him (1 Cor 12:12,13). And there again we see the altar of incense, Christ our intercessor and mediator (the altar of incense was sometimes in the Holy Place and sometimes in the Most Holy Place –

Heb 9:3,4, perhaps signifying that Christ can be in more than one place at the same time, in God's presence in heaven and with us here on earth).

And there is the Ark with its atonement cover, speaking of its heavenly counterpart that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ which enables us to approach infinite holiness (Heb 9:12; 10:19; 12:24). And there above the cover are the cherubim. And there between the cherubim is the cloud of glory, the presence of the eternal God, the Creator of the universe. And here we bow in His holy presence, with Christ our great High Priest at our side, being united to Him, and present ourselves to God our Father. And in the Spirit we worship Him and pray for our needs and intercede for others. And He hears us because we have come in the way He has provided and appointed. And He wants us to come and welcomes us with love and compassion and mercy and grace (Heb 4:16).

The Old Testament priests were active every day in the tabernacle. A daily spiritual exercise such as the one suggested above would not be without value to us who are New Testament priests. For the tabernacle reveals something of the glory and love and power of Christ, and reminds us that each day of our lives we need to be aware of His sacrifice for us, that we need to bring Him the offering of ourselves, that we need to be clean, and can be clean, in all that we do, that we need His light on our daily path, that we need to get our strength each day by feeding on the Bread of life, that we need His constant intercessions for us, and that we need to pray ourselves and worship lowly and gratefully at His throne.

Certainly we should all remember these truths daily and apply them in our lives. Of course, a mere ritual, going through the forms of worship without proper understanding or without heart, is an empty and useless thing (John 4:24). But making use of the tabernacle to remember all the wonderful truth God revealed through it, and heartily entering into that truth, can be of great benefit.

**31:1** 35:30 – 36:1.

**31:2** 1 Chron 2:20.

**31:3-6** "All kinds of crafts" – 35:31,34; 1 Kings 7:14. Now believers are engaged in the spiritual work of cooperating with God in the construction of His holy temple, the Church, which is Christ's body (Eph 1:22,23; 2:19-22; 4:11-13). For this work great wis-



have commanded you: 7 the tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, 8 and the table and its articles, and the pure candlestick with all its articles, and the altar of incense, 9 and the altar of burnt offering with all its articles, and the laver and its base, 10 and the woven garments, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons, to serve as priests, 11 and the anointing oil, and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They will do everything just as I have commanded you."

12 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying, "You shall surely observe my Sabbaths, for *this* is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, so that *you* may know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you.

14 "Therefore you shall observe the Sabbath, for it *is* holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death. For whoever does *any* work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Six days work may be done, but the seventh *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death.

16 "Therefore the children of Israel shall

observe the Sabbath, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant. 17 It *is* a sign between me and the children of Israel forever. For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he ceased *working*, and was refreshed."

18 And when he had finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

**32** And when the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down out of the mountain, the people gathered together around Aaron, and said to him, "Up, make us gods who will go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him."

2 And Aaron said to them, "Break off the gold earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me."

3 And all the people broke off the gold earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. 4 And he took *them* from their hand, and after he had made a calf in a mold, he fashioned it with a carving tool.

And they said, "These *are* your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt."

dom and skill are required. These God gives to His chosen ones through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 1 Cor 3:10,11; 12:4-11; Col 2:2,3,10). The name Bezalel means "in the shadow of God". Oholiab means "the Father's Tent". Believers should rest in the shadow of the Almighty (Ps 91:1), be filled with God's Spirit for God's work (Eph 5:18), and participate in the raising of their heavenly Father's tent on earth.

**31:13** 20:8; Ezek 20:12,20. The Sabbath was to be a constant weekly reminder to Israel that God had chosen them and made a covenant with them.

"Who sanctifies you" – this may also be translated "who makes you holy" or "who sets you apart", the meaning of "sanctified".

**31:14-16** "Put to death" – a very severe warning indeed. The reason for it was this: disobeying God's commandments about the Sabbath was presumptuously, arrogantly defying God who had chosen them and covenanted with them.

**31:17** Gen 1:31; 2:2,3; Ex 20:11.

**31:18** 24:12; 34:29; Deut 4:13; 5:22; 9:10,11.

**32:1** Moses spent 40 days and nights on the mountain (24:18). The people, in spite of their assurance and solemn promise (19:8; 24:3), could not keep the first and most important of God's commands (20:3) even as long as six weeks (v 8)!

"Make us gods" – this could also be translated "make us a god", or "make us a

God". The Hebrew word for God is Elohim (see note at Gen 1:26). It is also the word for gods. When used for God, if a verb is used in connection with the word, it is always a singular form of the verb, but when used for gods, it is a plural form of the verb. Here there is no verb in Hebrew.

**32:2-4** Here is a very terrible thing! A horrible sin by God's high priest and the people! A sin ever after condemned in the Bible (32:21,30; Deut 9:16,20; Neh 9:18; Ps 106:19-21; Acts 7:39-41). Learn by this what man's heart is like. God had repeatedly, miraculously, marvelously revealed Himself to them in great power and glory. But they simply did not care. They wanted only to act according to their sinful nature. They wanted to do things in their own way, not God's way (and let us not vainly imagine that by nature we are better than they – Rom 3:9-12). The Israelites had seen calf worship in Egypt no doubt, and contrary to God's word, and to reason itself, they wanted to follow the custom of a people whose gods had been proved powerless and empty.

"These are your gods" (v 4) – or, possibly, "This is your God". There is no verb here in Hebrew. But whether it is translated gods or God, the truth of the matter is this: They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image of an ignorant four-footed beast, and this is among the very worst sins it is possible to commit. See Romans 1:21-23.

5 And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation, and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD." 6 And they rose up early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*. 8 They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have molded a calf for themselves, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed to it, and said, 'These *are* your gods, O Israel, who have brought you up out of the land of Egypt.'"

9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and, look, it is a stiffnecked people. 10 So now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn against them, and so that I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

11 And Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, why does your wrath burn against your people, whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians speak and say, 'He brought them out for disaster, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?' Turn from your fierce wrath, and relent concerning this disaster against your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Is-

rael, your servants, to whom you swore by yourself, and said to them, 'I will make *the number* of your offspring like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of I will give to your offspring, and they will inherit it for ever.'" 14 And the LORD relented concerning the disaster which he had said he would do to his people. 15 And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the testimony *were* in his hand. The tablets *were* written on both sides; they *were* written on the one side and on the other. 16 And the tablets *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

17 And when Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "*There is* a sound of war in the camp." 18 And he said, "*It is* not the sound of a victory shout, nor *is it* the sound of a cry of defeat; *it is* the sound of singing I hear."

19 And it came about, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing. And Moses' anger burned, and he hurled the tablets out of his hands, and broke them at the foot of the mountain. 20 And he took the calf which they had made and burned it in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and scattered *it* on the water, and made the children of Israel drink *it*.

21 And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought so great a sin on them?"

**32:5,6** "Feast" – a feast to the LORD before an idol was a horrible violation of God's second commandment (20:4). Idolatry is deeply ingrained in man's fallen nature. The people wanted their idols so much that they tried to mix this forbidden thing with a worship of the true God (Acts 7:41). But God will never accept this nauseous mixture of truth and error. See 1 Kings 18:21; etc. This feast turned into a sinful revel (verses 19,25; 1 Cor 10:7).

**32:7** God says to Moses "your" people – perhaps an indication that Moses must identify himself with them in the intercession to follow.

**32:8** "Quickly" – within 40 days.

**32:9** 33:3,5; 34:9; Isa 48:4; Acts 7:51; Rom 10:21.

**32:10** "Let me alone" – God was testing Moses. He had not determined to destroy the tribes of Israel. He had given prophecies regarding them which had to be fulfilled (Gen 48:15-19; 49:1-28; 50:24). Notice God's words "let me alone" – as if the all-powerful God could not do as He pleased unless Moses let Him! Actually this was an invitation to Moses to intercede. The people deserved to be destroyed (22:20; Lev 26:30). But in answer to Moses' prayer God would spare them.

"Wrath" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11;

etc. Often in the Bible, as here, we see God's anger aroused because of idolatry.

**32:11-13** "Forever" – Deut 9:18,26. So Christ intercedes for His people now (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1). Moses had no selfish ambition. He was thinking of God's glory, not his own. He refused God's offer and gave three reasons why God should not destroy the people – they were God's people, not Moses' people (v 11 compare v 7); He should not give cause to the Egyptians to misunderstand God's dealings and purposes; and He must remember His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 15:5; 22:16-18; 26:4; 28:13,14).

**32:14** See how the prayers of a righteous man work together with the purposes and promises of God to accomplish God's plan (compare Jam 5:16). God indicated He would destroy them only if Moses "let Him alone". But Moses would not let Him alone. And of course, God knew he would not. Compare Heb 7:25.

**32:15,16** 31:18; Deut 9:15.

**32:19** Deut 9:17. They had broken the law. His breaking of the tablets symbolizes this. Moses shared God's anger against the people's sin. Compare Mark 3:5.

**32:20** Deut 9:21.

**32:21** Deut 9:20; Neh 9:18; Acts 7:39.

22 And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord burn. You know the people, that they *are set* on evil. 23 For they said to me, 'Make gods for us who will go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him.' 24 And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them break *it off*.' So they gave *it* to me. Then I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

25 And when Moses saw that the people *were* out of control (for Aaron had let them get out of control to *their* shame among their enemies), 26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who *is* on the LORD's side? *Let him come* to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered together near him.

27 And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Each man put his sword by his side, *and go* in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each man kill his brother, and each man his friend, and each man his neighbour.'" 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day. 29 For Moses had said, "Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, each man against his son, and against his brother, so that he may grant you a blessing this day."

30 And it came about on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin, but now I will go up to the LORD. Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." 31 And Moses returned to the LORD, and said, "Oh, this people have committed a great sin, and have made gods of gold for themselves.

32 "Yet now, if you will forgive their sin *forgive*; but if not, I pray you to blot me out of your book

which you have written."

33 And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34 Therefore go now, lead the people to *the place* I have spoken to you about. Look, my angel will go before you. Nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin on them."

35 And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

**33** And the LORD said to Moses, "Depart, *and go* up from here, you and the people whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, I will give it to your offspring. 2 And I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 3 *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey. Since you *are* a stiffnecked people I will not go up among you, so that I may not consume you on the way."

4 And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and none of them put on his ornaments. 5 For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, You *are* a stiffnecked people. If I come up among you for a moment, I will consume you. Therefore now put your ornaments away from you, so that I may know what to do to you." 6 And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, at a distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And it came about *that* anyone who sought the LORD went out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. 8 And it was *like this*: when Moses went out to the

**32:22,23** Aaron tried to cast the responsibility of that sin on others (compare Gen 3:12). Did he not realize he was as prone to evil as the people?

**32:24** This was an outright lie (v 4; Acts 7:41).

**32:25** "Out of control" – the KJV has "naked" here, which may just be possible; but it is an unlikely translation of the Hebrew word, which means, among other things, to loosen restraints.

**32:25-28** Deut 33:9. For a similar incident see Num 25:7-13.

**32:29** The Levites were to receive a blessing because they alone put God first, and were willing to be obedient instruments in His hands to punish the people for their sin. Before the whole nation they stood up on the side of justice and truth. God rewards such people.

**32:32** Ps 69:28; Dan 12:1; Mal 3:16,17; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 20:12,15; 21:27. For a similar expression of deep love for Israel see Rom 9:1-3. The Lord Jesus Christ in the fullest sense was willing to die that

others might live. This love should be in all Christ's believers (1 John 3:16).

**32:33** Ps 9:5; Rev 3:5.

**32:34** "Angel" – 23:20; note at Gen 16:7.

"Visit" – the Hebrew word may also mean "punish". Ps 99:8; Deut 32:35; Rom 2:5,6.

**32:35** Though God decided not to destroy the people completely, He expressed His displeasure and anger at their behavior (vs 27,28). See Num 12:14; 14:22,23; 25:3.

**33:1** Gen 12:7.

**33:2** "Angel" – not the angel of the LORD but an angel. See note at Gen 16:7.

"Jebusites" – Josh 24:11. The sins of the Amorites was now full (Gen 15:16) and God would drive them out and plant His own people in their land. See notes at Gen 6:7; Lev 18:24.

**33:4** Num 14:1,39. The people wished to do as they pleased without regard to God's commandments, but they still wanted God to be with them. This is what mankind in general is like.

**33:7** "Tent" – not the tabernacle (KJV). It

tent, all the people rose up, and each one stood at his tent door, and looked after Moses until he had gone into the tent. 9 And it came about as Moses went into the tent, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tent, and the LORD talked with Moses. 10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tent door, and all the people rose up and worshipped, each one *in* his tent door. 11 And the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When he returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, did not go out of the tent.

12 And Moses said to the LORD, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people', and you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and also you have found grace in my sight.' 13 So now, I pray you, if I have found grace in your sight, show me now your way, so that I may know you, so that I may find grace in your sight. And consider that this nation is your people."

14 And he said, "My presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest."

15 And he said to him, "If your presence does not go *with me*, do not take us up from here. 16 For now how can it be known that I and your people have found grace in your sight? *Is it* not by your going with us? So we will be separated, I and your people, from all the people on the face of the earth."

17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have said, for you have found grace in my sight, and I know you by name."

18 And he said, "I pray you, show me your

glory."

19 And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." 20 And he said, "You cannot see my face, for *there* no man will see me, and live."

21 And the LORD said, "Look, *there is* a place by me, and you shall stand on a rock. 22 And it shall come about, when my glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover you with my hand when I pass by, 23 and I will take away my hand, and you will see my back. But my face will not be seen."

**34** And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two stone tablets like the first, and I will write on *these* tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. 2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. 3 And no one is to come up with you, and do not let anyone be seen throughout the whole mountain, and do not let flocks or herds feed in front of the mountain."

4 And he cut two stone tablets like the first. And Moses got up early in the morning, and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two stone tablets. 5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and

had not yet been constructed.

**33:9** 13:21.

**33:11** Num 12:8; Deut 34:10. The Lord probably appeared to Moses in the form of a man or an angel (Gen 18:12).

**33:12** 33:2. Moses was not satisfied with a promise of an angel to accompany them.

**33:13** A great prayer (compare Ps 25:4; 27:11; 51:13; 86:11). God answered Moses' prayer (Ps 103:7). Moses' desire to know God more fully is an example to all of us (John 17:3; Eph 1:17; 4:13; Phil 3:8,10; Col 1:10; 2 Pet 1:3; 3:18; Jer 9:23,24).

**33:14** God's presence was the one thing Moses wanted above all else. God's presence alone can give rest (Deut 12:10; 25:19; Josh 21:44; 22:4; Isa 14:3; 30:15; Matt 11:28,29; Heb 4:9).

**33:15,16** Lev 20:24,26; Num 23:21-24; Deut 33:29.

**33:18** Another great request. The whole Bible is the story of God's glory, from the old creation in Genesis chapter 1 (Ps 19:1), to the new creation in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 (Rev 21:23). See Ex 40:34,35; Num 14:21; Deut 5:24; 1 Kings 8:11; Ps 8:1; 72:19; Isa 6:3; 40:5; 59:19; Ezek 1:28; 43:2; Matt 16:27; 17:2; 24:30;

John 1:14; 17:5,24; Acts 7:2; Rom 1:23; 5:2; 2 Cor 4:6; Col 1:27; Heb 1:3; Jam 2:1; Jude 24:25; Rev 1:6,14-17; 4:11; 21:11.

**33:19** "Goodness" – God's goodness is part of His glory.

"Name" – to proclaim His name is to reveal His nature. This He does in 34:6,7.

"Mercy" – Rom 9:15.

**33:20** John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16.

**33:21-23** "Rock" – Rock in the Bible is a symbolic name sometimes given to God, and Christ. It speaks of a firm foundation for God's people, a refuge from trouble (Deut 32:31; Ps 18:2,31,46; 28:1; 42:9. Notes at Ex 17:6, Deut 32:4 and Ps 118:22).

**34:1** 24:12; 31:18; 32:16,19; Deut 10:2,4.

**34:3** 19:12,13.

**34:5** His name means His nature and attributes. See 33:19; John 17:6. He did more than simply state the name Jehovah (which Moses knew anyway – 3:14,15). He revealed His character and ways.

**34:6,7** These are key verses in the O.T., revealing the name of Jehovah, that is, the nature of the one true God.

**34:6** "Merciful" – Deut 4:31; Neh 9:17,31;

proclaimed,

"The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, slow to get angry, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 maintaining mercy for thousands, forgiving wickedness and transgression and sin; yet not leaving *sin* unpunished; visiting the wickedness of the fathers on the children and on the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation."

8 And at once Moses bowed his head toward the ground and worshipped. 9 And he said, "If now I have found grace in your sight, O Lord, I pray you let my Lord go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our wickedness and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."

10 And he said, "See, I will make a covenant. In the presence of all your people I will perform miracles such as have not been done in all the earth, not in any nation. And all the people among whom you *live* will see the working of the LORD; for it *is* an awe-inspiring thing that I will do with you. 11 Observe what I command you this day. Look, I will drive out before you the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12 Watch yourself so that you do not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going; it

would be a snare among you. 13 But you shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their sacred groves. 14 For you shall worship no other god; for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, *is* a jealous God.

15 "*Watch that you do not* make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, lest when they prostitute themselves to their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and *someone* invites you, you eat of his sacrifice, 16 and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, and make your sons prostitute themselves to their gods.

17 "You shall make no cast metal gods for yourself.

18 "You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat bread made without yeast for seven days, as I commanded you, in the time of the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out from Egypt.

19 "All the first offspring of the womb *is* mine, and every firstborn male of your livestock, *whether* ox or sheep. 20 But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, and if you do not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. And no one is to appear before me empty-handed.

Ps 78:38; Jer 3:12; Dan 9:9; Luke 6:36.

"Gracious" – Num 6:25; 2 Chron 30:9; Neh 9:17,31; Ps 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8; 2 Cor 8:9; Eph 2:8.

"Slow to get angry" – Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; 103:8; Joel 2:13.

"Goodness" – Ps 23:6; 31:19; 33:5; 52:1; 107:8; Zech 9:17; Rom 2:4; 11:22; Eph 5:9.

"Truth" – the Hebrew word also can be translated "faithfulness" – Ps 31:5; 57:10; 86:15; John 14:6; Titus 1:2.

**34:7** "Forgiving" – Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 32:1,2; 86:5; Dan 9:9; Matt 6:12; Mark 2:5,7,10; Luke 23:34; 24:47; Eph 1:7; 4:32; Col 1:14; 2:13; 1 John 1:9.

"Not leaving *sin* unpunished" – this seems closer to the Hebrew than the KJV. Observe that the KJV has added the words "the guilty" in italics, words which are not in the Hebrew here. Ex 23:7; Num 14:18; Prov 17:15. Even such a God of love cannot forget holiness and justice. He cannot and will not spare the unrepentant and unbelieving. On "children" see notes at 20:5; Deut 24:16; Ezekiel chapter 18.

"Visiting" – this seems to mean that God has so arranged human life on earth that the sins done by people affect their children for 3 or 4 generations.

**34:8** Such a revelation of God's nature calls for worship, adoration, awe, love, and a lifetime of faithful service.

**34:9** See how Moses includes himself in this confession – "our wickedness", "our sin"

(see also Isa 64:6,7; Jer 3:25; Dan 9:5,6,9,20).

"Inheritance" – Deut 4:20; 9:26,29; 32:9; Ps 33:12; Eph 1:18.

**34:10** A promise God now adds to the covenant He made with Israel at Ex 19:5; 24:7,8. He promises He will do astounding miracles for them and with them, not seen among any peoples on earth. (See the fulfillment in Josh 6:20; 10:11; 10:12-14; 24:12. See also Ps 72:18; 136:4.)

**34:11** Note at 33:2.

**34:12** 23:32,33.

**34:13** See 23:34; Num 33:52; Deut 7:5; 12:3; Jud 2:2. It was exceedingly important that Israel not defile itself with the idol worship of Canaan. So the command to destroy their idols was often emphatically repeated.

"Groves" – this could be translated "Asherah poles" – Asherah was a goddess worshiped by the Canaanites. Note at Jud 3:7. If the meaning is "groves", it means groves of trees where the people engaged in idolatry.

**34:14** 20:3,5; Deut 4:24.

**34:15** 22:20; 32:8; Deut 32:37,38.

"Prostitute" – here means to be unfaithful to God and worship other gods – Lev 20:5; Jer 2:20; etc.

**34:16** Deut 7:3; Josh 23:12,13; 1 Kings 11:1-4.

**34:17** 20:4,23; Lev 19:4; Deut 5:8.

**34:18** 12:17.

**34:19** 13:2; 32:29.

**34:20** 13:13,15; 22:19; Deut 16:16.



21 "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. *Even* during plowing season and during harvest you shall rest.

22 "And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. 23 Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. 24 For I will drive out nations before you, and enlarge your borders, nor will anyone covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.

25 "You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifices with yeast, nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left until morning.

26 "The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

27 And the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." 28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He did not eat bread, or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

29 And it came about that when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (when he descended from the mountain the two tablets of testimony *were* in Moses' hand) Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had talked with *the LORD*. 30 And when Aaron and all the children of Israel looked at Moses, seeing the skin of his face shining, they were afraid to come near him. 31 And Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. 32 And afterwards all the children of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken to him on Mount Sinai.

33 And Moses put a veil on his face *until* he had finished speaking with them. 34 But whenever Moses went in to the LORD's presence to speak with him, he took the veil off until he came out. And he would come out, and speak to the children of Israel what he was commanded. 35 And the children of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, and Moses would

put the veil on his face again until he went in to speak with him.

**35** And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together and said to them, "These *are* the things which the LORD has commanded you to do. 2 Work is to be done for six days, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy *day*, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever works on it shall be put to death. 3 On the Sabbath you shall not light a fire in any of your homes."

4 And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying, 5 'Take from among yourselves an offering for the LORD. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it *as* an offering for the LORD: gold, and silver, and bronze, 6 and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*, 7 and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and acacia wood, 8 and oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 9 and onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate.

10 "And let every skillful person among you come and make all that the LORD has commanded: 11 the tabernacle, its tent, and its covering, its clasps, and its boards, its crossbars, its pillars, and its sockets, 12 the ark, and its poles, *with* the mercy seat, and the veil that hides it, 13 the table, and its poles, and all its utensils, and the showbread, 14 also the lampstand for the light, and its articles, and its lamps, with the oil for the light, 15 and the incense altar, and its poles, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense, and the hanging for the door at the entrance of the tabernacle, 16 the altar of burnt offering, with its bronze grate, its poles, and all its utensils, the laver and its base, 17 the hangings of the court, its pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court, 18 the pegs for the tabernacle, and the pegs for the court, and their cords, 19 the woven garments for service in the Holy *Place*, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments for his sons to serve as priests."

20 And all the congregation of the children of Israel left Moses' presence, 21 and everyone

**34:21** 20:9,10.

**34:22** "The year's end" – points to the first month of the Hebrew year (March-April). See note on 12:1-3.

**34:22-26** 23:14-19.

**34:27** Observe that Moses himself wrote down what God said. See 24:4; Num 33:2; Deut 31:9.

**34:28** This is the second time Moses spent 40 days in the mountain. The ten commandments are given in 20:3-17.

**34:29-35** In 2 Cor 3:6-18 Paul contrasts the glory of the old covenant with the glory of the new covenant. Though the old had glory it is as nothing compared with the glory of the new.

**35:2,3** 20:9,10; Num 15:32-36.

**35:5-9** 25:1-9. In offerings made to God there must be a willing mind (vs 21,29; Deut 15:10; 1 Chron 29:3,5,9,14,17; 2 Cor 9:7; 8:12), otherwise the offering is not acceptable. God's people should count it a

whose heart stirred him up, and everyone whose spirit made him willing, came and brought the LORD's offering for the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. 22 And all who were willing, both men and women, came and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and ornaments, all gold jewelry, and everyone *presented* an offering of gold to the LORD. 23 And everyone who had in his possession blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. 24 Everyone who presented an offering of silver and bronze brought the LORD's offering, and everyone who had acacia wood for any work of the service, brought it. 25 And all the women who were skillful spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun in blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. 26 And all the women whose heart stirred them with a skill spun goats' *hair*. 27 And the leaders brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate, 28 and spices, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. 29 The children of Israel brought a willing offering to the LORD, each man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring *something* for all the kinds of work which the LORD had commanded through Moses to be made.

30 And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the LORD has called Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, by name 31 and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, and with knowledge, and with all manner of craftsmanship, 32 to make designs to work in gold, and in silver, and in bronze, 33 and to cut stones for setting *them*, and in carving wood, to make any kind of artistic work. 34 And he has put in his heart, *both* his and *that of* Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, *the ability* to teach others. 35 He has filled them with wisdom of heart to do all kinds of work, of the engraver, and of the artistic craftsman, and of the embroiderer in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, of those who do any work, and of those who make designs."

joy to give to God and His work. If we do not, there is something wrong with our spiritual condition. God's command to give of our substance to Him is a test of our love for Him and His work. If we love Him we will want to give something to Him. The people then were giving for the construction of a sanctuary so God could live among them. New Testament believers have the privilege of giving toward the work of the

**36** Then Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every skillful person in whom the LORD had put skill and understanding to know how to do all kinds of work for the service of the sanctuary, worked according to all that the LORD had commanded.

2 And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every skillful person in whose heart the LORD had put skill, each one whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work, 3 and they received from Moses all the offerings which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, for its construction. And they *continued* to bring him freewill offerings every morning. 4 And all the skillful men who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each one from his work which they were doing, 5 and they spoke to Moses, saying, "The people are bringing much more than enough for the building work which the LORD commanded to be done."

6 And Moses gave an order and they proclaimed it throughout the camp, saying, "Neither man nor woman should do anything more for the offering for the sanctuary." So the people were restrained from bringing more. 7 For the material they had was enough, and more than enough, for all the work to be done.

8 And every skillful person among them who was doing work on the tabernacle made ten curtains of fine woven linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet. He made them *with* cherubim, the work of a skillful craftsman. 9 The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. The curtains *were all* of one size. 10 And he joined five curtains to one another, then joined *the other* five curtains to one another. 11 And he made loops of blue on the edge of the end curtain of the first set; he did the same on the end curtain of the second set. 12 He made fifty loops on the one curtain, and made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was in the second set. The loops held one *curtain* to another. 13 And he made fifty clasps of gold, and joined the curtains to one another with the clasps. So the tabernacle became a unit.

14 And he made curtains *of* goats' *hair* for the tent over the tabernacle. He made eleven of these curtains. 15 The length of each curtain *was* thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain *was* four

building of God's spiritual house, the church which is Christ's body. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

**36:5-7** See 2 Chron 31:6-10. This will be the result in any age, in any country on earth when God's people willingly and lovingly give to Him for His work. Then God's blessing will be on His people (Mal 3:10; 2 Cor 9:7-9).

**36:8-38** 26:1-37.

cubits. The eleven curtains *were* of one size. 16 And he joined five curtains by themselves, and *the other* six curtains by themselves. 17 And he made fifty loops on the edge of the end curtain in the set, and made fifty loops on the edge of the *end* curtain in the *second* set. 18 And he made fifty bronze clasps to join the tent together, so that it would be a unit. 19 And he made a covering for the tent *of* rams' skins dyed red, and a covering *of* badgers' skins above that.

20 And he made boards for the tabernacle *of* acacia wood, to stand upright. 21 The length of each board *was* ten cubits, and the width of each board one cubit and a half. 22 Each board had two tenons, equally distant from one another. He made these for all the boards of the tabernacle. 23 And he made boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side facing south. 24 And he made forty silver sockets on the bottom of the twenty boards, two sockets under each board for its two tenons, and two sockets under *every* other board for its two tenons. 25 And he made twenty boards for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, 26 and their forty sockets of silver, two sockets under each board, and two sockets under *every* other board. 27 And he made six boards for the west side of the tabernacle. 28 And he made two boards for the corners of the tabernacle at the rear. 29 And they were double from the bottom and so to its top and joined together to one ring. He did this for both of them for the two corners. 30 And there were eight boards; and they *had* sixteen silver sockets, two sockets under each board.

31 And he made bars of acacia wood, five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, 32 and five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the west side. 33 And he made the middle bar to pass through the boards from one end to the other. 34 And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings out of gold to hold the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

35 And he made a veil *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen. He made it *with* cherubim, the work of a skillful craftsman. 36 And he made four pillars *of* acacia wood for it, and overlaid them with gold. Their hooks *also were of* gold. And he cast four sockets of silver for them. 37 And for the tabernacle doorway he made a hanging *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen, of needlework. 38 And *he made* its five pillars with their hooks, and he overlaid their tops and their bands with gold; but their five sockets *were of* bronze.

**37** And Bezaleel made the ark of acacia wood. Its length was two cubits and a half, its width a cubit and a half, and its height a cubit and a half. 2 And he overlaid it with pure gold both inside and outside, and made a gold molding for it all around. 3 And he cast four gold rings for it, *to be set* in its four corners, two rings on its one side, and two rings on its other side. 4 And he made poles *of* acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. 5 And he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry the ark.

6 And he made the mercy seat *of* pure gold. Its length *was* two cubits and a half, and its width one cubit and a half. 7 And he made two gold cherubim. He made them hammered out of one piece, at both ends of the mercy seat; 8 one cherub at the one end, and another cherub at the *other* end. He made the cherubim *of one piece* with the mercy seat at both its ends. 9 And the cherubim had outspread wings over *the ark*, and their wings covered the mercy seat, with their faces toward each other. The faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.

10 And he made the table *of* acacia wood. Its length was two cubits, its width a cubit, and its height a cubit and a half. 11 And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made for it a molding of gold all around. 12 He also made a rim for it the width of a hand all around, and made a gold molding for its border all around. 13 And he cast four gold rings for it, and put the rings at the four corners of its four legs. 14 The rings, the holders for the poles to carry the table, were close to the rim. 15 And to carry the table he made the poles *of* acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. 16 And he made *out of* pure gold the utensils which *were* on the table, its dishes, and its spoons, and its pitchers for pouring out the drink offerings.

17 And he made the lampstand *of* pure gold. He made the lampstand *of* hammered work. Its base and its shaft, its cups, its buds and its flowers, were *of one piece* with it. 18 And six branches went out from its sides, three branches of the lampstand from one side of it, and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it. 19 Three cups like almond blossoms, a bud and a flower were on one branch, and three cups like almond blossoms, a bud and a flower on another branch, and so throughout the six branches going out from the lampstand. 20 And on the lampstand were four cups like almond blossoms, its buds and its flowers. 21 And a bud was under the *first* pair of branches, and a bud under the second pair of branches, and a bud under the *third* pair of branches, for the six

branches going out from it. 22 Their buds and their branches were *of one piece* with it. The whole of it was of one hammered work *of* pure gold.

23 And he made its seven lamps, and its snuffers, and its trays, *of* pure gold. 24 He made it and all of its utensils *with* a talent of pure gold.

25 And he made the incense altar of acacia wood. Its length was a cubit, and its width a cubit. *It was* square, and its height *was* two cubits. Its horns were *of one piece* with it. 26 And he overlaid it with pure gold, its top and its sides all around and its horns. He also made a gold molding for it all around. 27 And he made two rings of gold for it under its molding, on its two sides, on its opposite sides, to hold the poles with which to carry it. 28 And he made the poles *of* acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold.

29 And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure fragrant incense of spices, the work of a perfumer.

**38** And he made the altar of burnt offering *of* acacia wood. Its length *was* five cubits, and its width five cubits. It was square, and its height was three cubits. 2 And he made its horns on its four corners. Its horns were *of one piece* with it. And he overlaid it with bronze. 3 And he made all the utensils of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, *and* the meat forks, and the firepans. He made all its utensils *out of* bronze. 4 And he made for the altar a grating of bronze below, underneath its ledge, reaching half-way up it. 5 And he cast four rings for the four ends of the bronze grating to hold the poles. 6 And he made the poles *of* acacia wood, and overlaid them with bronze. 7 And he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar to carry it. He made the altar hollow with boards.

8 And he made the laver *of* bronze, and its base *of* bronze, from the mirrors *of the women* who served at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

9 And he made the courtyard. The hangings of the courtyard on the south side, facing south, were a hundred cubits *of* fine woven linen. 10 Their pillars were twenty, and their bronze sockets twenty. The hooks on the pillars and their bands were *of* silver. 11 And for the north side *the hangings* were a hundred cubits, their pillars were twenty, and their bronze sockets twenty. The hooks on the pillars and their bands were *of* silver.

12 And for the west side the hangings were

fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. The hooks on the pillars and their bands were *of* silver. 13 And for the east side, facing east, *the hangings* were fifty cubits. 14 The hangings on the one side *of the gate* were fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three, 15 and *the same* for the other side. On each side of the gate of the courtyard were hangings of fifteen cubits, with their three pillars, and their three sockets. 16 All the hangings of the surrounding court were of fine woven linen. 17 And the sockets for the pillars were *of* bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands *of* silver, and their tops were overlaid with silver; and all the pillars of the court had silver bands.

18 And the hanging for the gate of the courtyard was needlework, *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen. And the length was twenty cubits and the width was five cubits, like the hangings of the court. 19 And their four pillars, and their four sockets were of bronze, the hooks *of* silver, and the overlaying of their tops and their bands *of* silver. 20 And all the pegs of the tabernacle, and of the surrounding courtyard, were *of* bronze.

21 This is the sum for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as account was made, according to the commandment of Moses, *for* the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest. 22 And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses. 23 And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a skillful workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen. 24 All the gold that was used in the work of the whole construction of the sanctuary, the gold of the *special* offering, was twenty-nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel.

25 And the silver of those in the congregation who were numbered was a hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel, 26 a bekah for each person, that is, half a shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, from everyone who came to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty *men*. 27 And the hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets for the sanctuary and the sockets for the veil, a hundred sockets with the hundred talents, a talent for

**37:25-28** 30:1-5.

**37:29** 30:23-25.

**38:1-7** 27:1-8.

**38:8** 30:18.

**38:9-20** 27:9-19.

**38:24** The weight of the gold was about one metric ton (1000 kilograms).

**38:25** The weight of the silver was about 3.4 metric tons.

**38:26** 12:37; 30:13,15; Num 1:46.

each socket. 28 And out of the thousand seven hundred and seventy-five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their tops and made bands for them.

29 And the bronze of the offering was seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels. 30 And with it he made the sockets for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the bronze altar, and the bronze grating for it, and all the utensils of the altar, 31 and the sockets of the surrounding courtyard, and the sockets for the courtyard gate, and all the pegs for the tabernacle, and all the pegs for the surrounding courtyard.

**39** And with the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made woven garments for service in the Holy Place, and made the holy garments for Aaron, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

2 And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen. 3 And they hammered the gold into thin plates, and cut it into threads, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, the work of a skillful craftsman. 4 They made shoulder pieces for it to join it together. It was joined together at the two top ends. 5 And its skillfully woven waistband that was on it, was of one piece, and like it in workmanship, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

6 And they prepared onyx stones set in gold filigree settings, engraved, like signets are engraved, with the names of the children of Israel. 7 And he put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as memorial stones for the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

8 And he made the breastplate, the work of a skillful craftsman, like the work of the ephod, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine woven linen. 9 It was square. They made the breastplate double. Its length was a span and its width a span, being doubled.

10 And they set four rows of stones in it. The first row had a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle; this was the first row. 11 And the second row had an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 12 And the third row had a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. 13 And the fourth row had a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They were set

in gold filigrees in their settings. 14 And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names. They had engravings like a signet, each one with its name, according to the twelve tribes.

15 And on the breastplate they made braided chains of pure gold, like cords. 16 And they made two gold filigree settings, and two gold rings, and put the two rings on two corners of the breastplate. 17 And they put the two braided gold chains in the two rings on the corners of the breastplate. 18 And the two ends of the two braided chains they fastened to the two filigree settings, and put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, in the front of it. 19 And they made two gold rings, and put them on the other two corners of the breastplate, on its inside edge which was next to the ephod. 20 And they made two other gold rings, and put them at the bottom of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, toward the front of it, close to the place where it joined, above the woven waistband of the ephod. 21 And they bound the breastplate by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, so that it would be above the woven waistband of the ephod, and so that the breastplate might not get loose from the ephod, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

22 And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. 23 And there was an opening in the center of the robe, as the opening of a coat of mail, with a band all around the opening so that it would not tear. 24 And on the hem of the robe they made pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and woven linen. 25 And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates on the hem of the robe, all around between the pomegranates; 26 a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe to be worn for service, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

27 And they made tunics of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons, 28 and a turban of fine linen, and the fine linen caps, and linen breeches of fine woven linen, 29 and a sash of fine woven linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needlework, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

30 And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and inscribed on it a writing, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 31 And they tied a lace of blue to it to fasten it to

**38:28** About 20 kilograms.

**38:29** The weight of the bronze was about 2.4 metric tons.

**39:1** 31:10; 35:19.

**39:2-5** 28:6-12.

**39:6,7** 28:9-12.

**39:8-21** 28:15-28.

**39:22-26** 28:31-34.

**39:27-29** 28:39-42.

**39:30,31** 28:36,37.



the turban near the top, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

32 Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation was finished. And *in what they made*, the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses. 33 And they brought the tabernacle to Moses: the tent, and all its furniture, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets, 34 and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and the screening veil, 35 the ark of the testimony, and its poles, and the mercy seat, 36 the table, *and* all its utensils, and the showbread, 37 the pure lampstand, with its lamps, *with* the lamps to be set in order, and all its utensils, and the oil for light, 38 and the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle door, 39 the bronze altar, and its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils, the laver and its base, 40 the hangings of the courtyard, its pillars, and its sockets, and the hanging for the courtyard gate, its cords, and its pegs, and all the articles for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation, 41 the woven garments for service in the Holy Place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, for service as priests.

42 The children of Israel made all the work according to all that the LORD commanded Moses. 43 And Moses looked at all the work, and *saw that in* doing it they had done it just as the LORD had commanded. And Moses blessed them.

**40** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. 3 And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and screen the ark with the veil. 4 And you shall bring in the table, and arrange the things that belong on it. And you shall bring in the lampstand, and light its lamps. 5 And you shall set the gold altar of incense in front of the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door of the tabernacle.

6 "And you shall set the altar of burnt offering in front of the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. 7 And you shall set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the

altar, and shall put water in it. 8 And you shall set up the surrounding courtyard, and hang up the hanging at the courtyard gate.

9 "And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it, and all its articles, and it shall be holy. 10 And you shall anoint the altar of burnt offering, and all its articles, and sanctify the altar, and the altar will be most holy. 11 And you shall anoint the laver and its base and sanctify it.

12 "And you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. 13 And you shall put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint him, and sanctify him, so that he may serve as priest. 14 And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. 15 And you shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, so that they may serve me as priests. And their anointing will be for an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." 16 And Moses did so. He did according to all that the LORD commanded him.

17 And it came about on the first month in the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was erected. 18 And Moses erected the tabernacle, and fastened its sockets, and set up its boards, and put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. 19 And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent on top of it, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

20 And he took the testimony and put *it* in the ark, and attached the poles to the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark. 21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the screening veil, and screened the ark of the testimony, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil. 23 And he arranged the bread on it before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24 And he put the lampstand in the tent of the congregation opposite the table, on the south side of the tabernacle. 25 And he lighted the lamps before the LORD, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil, 27 and he burned fragrant incense on it, just as the LORD commanded Moses. 28 And he put up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle.

**39:43** A job well done will have God's blessing (Lev 9:22,23; Num 6:23-26; John 12:26; Heb 6:10).

**40:2** It took several months to construct the tabernacle and its furnishings. See v 17 and 19:1.

**40:3** "Testimony" – called this because the tablets with the ten commandments were kept in it.

**40:15** Note on priest at 28:1.

**40:16** Heb 2:3,5.

**40:17** "Second year" – since leaving Egypt.

29 And he put the altar of burnt offering *near* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered the burnt offering and the food offering on it, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

30 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there for washing. 31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet there. 32 They washed whenever they went into the tent of the congregation, and whenever they came near the altar, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

33 And he set up the courtyard all around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the courtyard gate. So Moses finished the

work.

34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to go into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud remained on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went forward on all their journeys, 37 but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not travel until the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

**40:29** 29:38-42.

**40:31,32** 30:19,20. Moses was the great leader through whom the law was given. He spoke with God face to face. But he needed to wash in the laver just as the most ordinary priests (1 John 1:8-10).

**40:34** 1 Kings 8:11; Ezek 43:4,5; Rev 15:8. God came in glory to the tabernacle that He might live among His people. The glory of God filled Christ the Son of God, God's spiritual tabernacle for the same purpose (John 1:14,18; Matt 17:2; 2 Pet

1:16,17; 2 Cor 4:4,6; Col 1:19; Heb 1:3; Rev 1: 13-18; 21:23).

**40:35** 1 Kings 8:11; 2 Chron 5:13,14.

**40:36-38** 13:21,22; Num 9:16-23; Neh 9:19; Ps 78:14. God knows just where His people should be, how long they should stay there, and where they should go when it is time to move, and He will infallibly guide those who trust and obey Him (Ps 32:8; 48:14; 73:24; Isa 58:11; John 10:2-5).

"Fire" – note at 3:2.

# LEVITICUS

## Title:

The Jews called this book by its opening words in Hebrew – “And he called”. The name in English came from the name the Greek translators of the Hebrew Old Testament gave this book. Leviticus means “that which pertains to Levites”.

## Author and date:

See the introduction to Genesis.

## Themes:

One theme is the need for cleanness and holiness in every part of life. God is holy, so His people must be holy. See 11:45; 19:2; 20:7. Another theme is this: God can be approached only through sacrifice. See 16:1-17. Since man is sinful, atonement must be made for his sin. This book is highly symbolic and its symbols point to Christ and the relationship between Christ and His people. Some key words in this book are “sacrifice” and “offering” (nouns and verbs are used about 300 times), “clean” and “unclean” (used more than 130 times), “holy” (used 70 times), and “priest” or “priests” (used more than 170 times). The priests were those who represented the people before God, offered sacrifices and had charge of the worship in the tabernacle.

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**1** And the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, If any man of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of animals from the herd, and from the flock.

3 "If his offering *is* a burnt sacrifice from the herd, let him offer a male without blemish. He shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. 4 And he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. 5 And he shall kill the young ox before the LORD. And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that *is by* the door of the

tabernacle of the congregation. 6 And he shall skin the burnt offering, and cut it into its pieces. 7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar, and arrange the wood on the fire. 8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall arrange the parts, the head, and the fat, on the wood that *is* on the fire which is on the altar, 9 but he shall wash its inner parts and its legs in water. And the priest shall burn all *of it* on the altar as a burnt offering, an offering made by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

10 "And if his offering *is* a burnt offering from the flocks, from the sheep or from the goats, he shall bring a male without blemish. 11 And he shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD, and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle its blood

**1:1** Ex 25:22; Num 7:89.

**1:2** In the first seven chapters of this book five different offerings are described – burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt. Three of these are called "soothing aroma" (burnt, grain and peace), the remaining two are not. None of these offerings could take away sin or make the worshiper perfectly fit for God's presence (Heb 10:1,4). By bringing them the worshiper showed his faith and his desire for forgiveness and acceptance by God. God, seeing the believer's offering, "covered" his sins and forgave him.

All of these offerings signify the Lord Jesus Christ the Lamb of God who was sacrificed to take away the sins of all His people, both those who lived before Christ and afterwards (John 1:29; Isa 53:7; Eph 5:2; Heb 10:12; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6,8,9,12). It is Christ's one offering that fits His people perfectly for God's presence (Heb 10:14,19-22). Each of these five offerings in Leviticus signifies a different element in Christ's one sacrifice on the cross. In each offering there are types and symbols, some clear as to meaning, some perhaps not so clear. We suggest certain meanings. Let the reader carefully and prayerfully search out the matter himself, comparing scripture with scripture.

**1:3** The burnt offering signifies Christ in His entire obedience to God, His complete and willing offering of Himself in love to God (Matt 26:39; John 6:38; 10:11,17,18; Heb 10:5-7). This offering was burned completely on the altar (note at v 13). The ox probably signifies obedient service (Deut 25:4; Isa 1:3; Ezek 1:10), and here signifies Christ as the obedient servant of God (Phil 2:5-8).

"Without blemish" signifies Christ's sinless, perfect human nature (Luke 23:4; John 8:46; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5).

**1:4** 3:2,8; Ex 29:10,15,19. Laying on of hands signified the acceptance of the offering in the place of the one bringing the offering. The person should have died for his sin, the animal died instead. Christ died for us, in our place, as our substitute

(2 Cor 5:14,15; Gal 2:20). We must, so to speak, lay our hands on His head, that is, accept Him as our offering. Otherwise His offering will not save us.

"Atonement" – Lev 4:20,26,31; 16:6,16,30,34. Note at Ex 29:33.

**1:5** Note on priests at Ex 28:1. Here both the priest and the offering signify Christ. When Christ became a sacrifice He was also the priest who made the offering (Matt 26:26-28; John 6:51; Heb 7:26,27; 9:11-14). Blood in all Old Testament sacrifices signifies Christ's blood (Matt 26:28; Rom 3:25; Heb 9:12,14,22), and the altar speaks of the cross where the Lord Jesus died. Note at Ex 27:1-8.

**1:6** Note at 7:8.

**1:7** 6:8-13. Fire signifies the holiness of God – note at Ex 3:2.

**1:8** Verse 12; 3:3,4; 8:20.

**1:9** "Wash" – Num 15:8-10; 28:11-14. In the Bible water signifies both God's Holy Spirit and God's Word.

"Soothing" – see note at Gen 8:21. See Ex 29:18,25; Num 15:3. It was a soothing smell to God because it spoke of Christ and His perfect surrender and obedience (Eph 5:2). All the offerings signify God's delight in some aspect or the other of Christ's offering. Those sacrifices not called soothing aroma are the sin and guilt offerings. These sacrifices speak of Christ in the guilty sinner's place. It signifies Christ made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), and a curse for us (Gal 3:13). To God there is nothing soothing about sin and guilt and the curse which had to be removed by His Son.

**1:10** "Sheep" – the sheep signifies Christ in His meekness and gentleness as the sacrificial lamb of God (Isa 53:7; Matt 27:12-14).

"Goats" – in the Bible God's people are called sheep (Ps 95:7; 100:3; John 10:7,11,14-16; 21:16; Heb 13:20), and sinners are compared to goats (Matt 25:31-33,41). The goat as burnt offering may signify Christ in the sinner's place showing the surrender and obedience to God the sinner should show but does not (Isa 53:12; Luke 23:33).



all around on the altar. 12 And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat. And the priest shall arrange them on the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* on the altar, 13 but he shall wash the inner parts and the legs with water. And the priest shall bring it all and burn it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

14 "And if his offering to the LORD *is* a burnt offering of birds, then he shall bring his offering from doves or from young pigeons. 15 And the priest shall bring it to the altar, and wring off its head and burn *it* on the altar. And its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar. 16 And he shall take away its crop with its feathers, and throw it beside the altar on the east side, by the place of the ashes. 17 And he shall tear it by its wings, *but* shall not divide *it completely in two*. And the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that *is* on the fire. It *is* a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

**2** "And when any will offer a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be *of* fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. 2 And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests. And he shall take from it his handful of its

flour, and of its oil, with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn its memorial on the altar, *as* an offering made by fire, of a soothing aroma to the LORD. 3 And the rest of the grain offering *shall belong* to Aaron and his sons. *It is* a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

4 "And if you bring an offering of a grain offering baked in the oven, *it shall be* cakes of fine flour made without yeast, mixed with oil, or wafers without yeast, anointed with oil. 5 And if your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* on a griddle, it shall be *of* fine flour without yeast, mixed with oil. 6 You shall break it in pieces, and pour oil on it. It *is* a grain offering. 7 And if your offering *is* a grain offering *cooked* in a pan, it shall be made *of* fine flour with oil. 8 And you shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD, and when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. 9 And the priest shall take from the grain offering its memorial and burn *it* on the altar. *It is* an offering made by fire, of a soothing aroma to the LORD. 10 And what is left of the grain offering *shall belong* to Aaron and his sons. *It is* a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

11 "No grain offering which you bring to the LORD, shall be made with yeast; for you shall burn

**1:13** Unlike some other offerings this one was completely consumed by fire on the altar. This was the only one of these five offerings which could not be eaten by the priests. The particular sin offering the blood of which was taken into the Most Holy Place also could not be eaten (16:27). The other sin offerings, and all the other offerings the priests were permitted to eat, except some that were offered by the priests themselves. The burnt offering was all for God. In other words, one aspect of Christ's sacrifice was for God alone (John 8:29; 17:4).

**1:14-17** Doves and pigeons were the offerings of the poor who could not afford to bring bullocks, sheep, or goats (5:7; 12:8). Doves were the offering of Mary and Joseph at the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:22-24). This shows their poverty. Doves and pigeons are associated in the Bible with mourning and innocence (Isa 38:14; 59:11). They may possibly signify Christ as the innocent man of sorrows (Isa 53:3; Matt 23:37; Heb 7:26). **1:17** Though the burnt offering signifies Christ, it also reveals what the believer should be and do (Rom 12:1,2).

**2:1** "Grain offering" - vs 4,5,7,14. This was not an offering of "meat" (KJV), but of grain or meal, so it was necessary to change the KJV here. The Hebrew word does not at all mean meat. This offering signify Christ offering Himself, and the fruit of His life, as food for both God and His people. Believers feed on Him in their hearts by faith (John 6:51-58,63). Christ referred to Himself as both wheat (John 12:24) and bread

(John 6:35). Bread is made from wheat that has been ground, battered, crushed, and made into flour. Compare Isa 53:10; Matt 26:67,68; 27:26-30; Luke 12:50; Heb 2:10,18).

**2:2** "Oil" - oil signifies the Holy Spirit (Ex 27:20). The Lord Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His ministry (Luke 3:22; 4:17-20; Acts 10:38).

"Frankincense" - this was the most expensive of the perfumes of that day. It was used in making the holy incense for the tabernacle (Ex 30:34,35). It was one of the offerings brought to the Lord Jesus by the wise men (Matt 2:11). Does it not speak of the fragrance of His life and prayers?

"Memorial" - to God. That which was burned on the altar belonged wholly to God. Christ the food offering for His people was a source of satisfaction to God too.

**2:3** John 6:33. All that signifies Christ is most holy. For note on "holy" see Lev 20:7.

"Belong to. . . his sons" - some of the offerings of God's people went to the support of God's servants. See v 10; 5:13; 6:26; 7:6-10.

**2:4** Baked suggests the fierce and fiery trials the Lord Jesus went through (1 Pet 4:1,12,13). Note on yeast at Ex 12:8.

**2:5** "Mixed with oil" may suggest that Christ was born of the Spirit as well as later anointed by the Spirit (Matt 1:18,20; Luke 1:35).

**2:6** Matt 26:26.

**2:11** Honey is corruptible. It may ferment and turn sour. There was no such thing in Christ.

no yeast, or any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire. 12 As for the offering of firstfruits, you shall offer them to the LORD, but they shall not be burned on the altar as a soothing aroma. 13 And you shall season every offering of your grain offering with salt; you shall allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be missing from your grain offering. You shall offer salt with all your offerings.

14 "And if you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits fresh heads of grain dried by the fire, grain beaten out of full heads. 15 And you shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it. It *is* a grain offering. 16 And the priest shall burn its memorial, *part* of its beaten out grain, and part of its oil, with all its frankincense. *It is* an offering made by fire to the LORD.

**3** "And if his offering *is* a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers *it* from the herd, whether *it is* a male or female, he shall offer *one* without blemish before the LORD. 2 And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood on the altar all around. 3 And he shall offer from the

sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the inner parts, and all the fat that is on the inner parts, 4 and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them which *is* by the loins, and the lobe on the liver, with the kidneys which he shall take away. 5 And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar on top of the burnt sacrifice, which *is* on the wood that *is* on the fire. *It is* an offering made by fire, of a soothing aroma to the LORD.

6 "And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD *is* from the flock, male or female, he shall offer *one* without blemish. 7 If he offers a lamb as his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 8 And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation, and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. 9 And he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the LORD, its fat, *and* entire fat tail which he shall take off close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the inner parts, and all the fat that *is* on the inner parts, 10 and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them which is by the loins, and the lobe on the liver, with the kidneys which he shall take away. 11 And the priest shall burn it on the altar. *It is* the

**2:12** Leaven and honey which signify evil and corruptibility could be offered with first fruits because first fruits sometimes signify redeemed men who still have sin in them (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:5; Jam 1:18; 1 John 1:8-10).

**2:13** Ezek 43:24; Mark 9:49,50; Luke 14:33,34; Col 4:6. Salt is the opposite of leaven. It preserves from corruption. Num 18:19 and 2 Chron 13:5 have the phrase "covenant of salt" in Hebrew. This means a permanent covenant never to be corrupted or changed.

**2:14** Christ was crushed and put in the fire for us.

"Grain" – what we now call "corn" (maize) was not known in western Asia in those days. So it was necessary to change the KJV here, and in every other place where the word "corn" appears.

**2:15,16** The grain offerings signify Christ but they also reveal what believers should be. They should be fully dedicated to God, purged of leaven (1 Cor 5:7,8 – every corruptible thing), seasoned with salt, anointed with the Holy Spirit, and fragrant in their lives of holy service to God.

**3:1** 7:11-34; 17:5.

"Peace offering" – the Hebrew word here translated peace also means fellowship or friendship. This offering signifies the Lord Jesus as His people's peace, making reconciliation between God and man (2 Cor 5:18-21; Eph 2:13-18; Col 1:20-22). Christ by His sacrifice destroyed the enmity, the alienation that existed between man and

God because of man's sin, and in this way brought peace. Peace with God brings with it the peace of God (John 14:27; 16:33; Phil 4:7,9; Col 3:15).

"Male or female" – the burnt offering had to be a male because it signified Christ Himself in His total obedience to God. The peace offering signifies what Christ did in the place of men and women alike to bring them to God.

**3:2** 1:4. Note on priests at Ex 28:1.

**3:3,4** Unlike the burnt offering only part of this offering was burned on the altar. The breast and shoulder or thigh were food for the priests (7:31-34). The rest was eaten by the one bringing the offering. Eating speaks not only of that which sustains life, but of fellowship with Christ and God the Father (Matt 26:26; Luke 22:14-19; 1 Cor 10:16,17; 1 John 1:3; Rev 3:20). The offering speaks of having peace with God and feasting in joy and fellowship with God and fellow believers and the Lord Jesus.

**3:11** "Food" – as food for whom? For God (21:6,8,17,22; Num 28:2; Mal 1:12). This "food" was not for the priest or anyone else. It was completely burned on the altar. God does not get hungry (Ps 50:7-15). He himself gives food to all and does not need man to give to Him (Acts 17:24,25). The "food" of God, that which brings satisfaction to God, is Christ and His sacrifice (Matt 3:17; John 10:17; Phil 2:8,9). Also it is like food to God to have peace and fellowship with men (note at Ex 25:8). This fellowship takes place in and through Christ alone. In Him

food of the offering made by fire to the LORD.

12 "And if his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD. 13 And he shall lay his hand on its head, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation, and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood on the altar all around. 14 And he shall offer from his offering an offering made by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the inner parts, and all the fat that is on the inner parts, 15 and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them which is by the loins, and the lobe on the liver, with the kidneys which he shall take away. 16 And the priest shall burn them on the altar. *It is* the food of the offering made by fire for a soothing aroma. All the fat *is* the LORD's.

17 "*It shall be* a permanent regulation for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that you eat neither fat nor blood."

**4** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, If a person sins through ignorance in any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and does any of them, 3 if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him bring for his sin which he has committed a young ox without blemish to the LORD for a sin offering. 4 And he shall bring the ox to the door of the tabernacle of

the congregation in the presence of the LORD, and shall lay his hand on the ox's head, and kill the ox before the LORD. 5 And the anointed priest shall take of the ox's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation, 6 and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle *some* of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the veil of the sanctuary. 7 And the priest shall put *some* of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour all the blood of the ox at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which *is near* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8 And he shall take off all the fat of the ox from it for the sin offering, the fat that covers the inner parts, and all the fat that *is* on the inner parts, 9 and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them which *is* by the loins, and the lobe on the liver, with the kidneys which he shall remove, 10 as it was removed from the ox of the sacrifice of peace offerings. And the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering.

11 "And the skin of the ox, and all its flesh, with its head, with its legs and its inner parts and its dung, 12 the whole ox, he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire. It is to be burned where the ashes are poured out.

God and man may meet and partake with one another in what Christ has done in the work of reconciliation. God and man both find this food in Christ only and in Christ together.

**3:12** 1:10.

**3:16,17** 7:26,27; 17:10-16. The blood is the life. The fat may signify the general health and vigor of the animal. It belonged to God.

**4:1,2** In this chapter the sins of four categories of persons are in view: priests, the congregation as a whole, leaders, and ordinary individuals. All the sins mentioned are unintentional ones. Why is this? Was there no sacrifice for intentional sins? There was (16:30), but it was not stated here (see 6:1-7). Perhaps the reason for this was to emphasize that sin even committed unintentionally is still sin and needs atonement. How much more then sins committed intentionally. In the sacrifice of Christ for sin in the New Testament no distinction is made between intentional and unintentional sins. He died for sinners and all their sin, and all sin (except one) may be forgiven (Matt 12:31,32).

**4:3** The sin offering signifies the Lord Jesus Christ in the sinner's place, bearing their sin and their sinfulness and dying for them (Isa 53:5,6,12; Matt 26:28; John 1:29; Rom 3:25; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 1:4; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2; Rev 1:5). Christ died for what we are as well as for what we have done. The sin offering

was most holy (6:25,29). It was altogether set apart for God. And though Christ bore the sins of the world, counted them His own and suffered in behalf of sinners and in their place, He lost none of His personal holiness.

**4:4** 1:3,4.

**4:5-7** This is the only one of these five offerings the blood of which was taken inside the tabernacle and sprinkled in the holy place, and applied to the altar of incense. Perhaps this was to show that the holy place was defiled by the presence of the priests who served there daily. Atonement is needed wherever the steps of sinful man have fallen.

**4:8-10** 3:3,4,14-17.

**4:11,12** "Outside the camp" - 16:27; Ex 29:14. This signifies the Lord Jesus suffering for men outside the gate, despised and rejected by His own people Israel (John 19:17-20; Heb 13:10-13), and enduring the punishment that sin deserved. All sin and uncleanness must be excluded from God's camp. Christ was made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), so was to be taken out of the camp. In the sinner's place He had to be counted unworthy of a place in the city of God. Outside he had to suffer the fiery wrath of God against sin. This is signified by the sacrificial animal burning in the fire. In these sacrifices we see not only Christ's suffering and death for sinners, we see also something of what the sinner deserves to suffer, and will suffer, if He rejects Christ

13 "And if the whole congregation of Israel sins through ignorance, and the matter is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they commit any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and are guilty, 14 when the sin which they have committed against *God's command* becomes known, then the congregation shall offer a young ox for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of the congregation. 15 And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the ox before the LORD, and the ox shall be killed in the presence of the LORD. 16 And the anointed priest shall bring *some* of the ox's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation, 17 and the priest shall dip his finger in *some* of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, before the veil. 18 And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, that *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering, which *is at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 19 And he shall take all its fat from it, and burn *it* on the altar. 20 And he shall do with the ox as he did with the ox for a sin offering. And the priest shall do just the same with this, and make atonement for them, and it will be forgiven them. 21 And he shall carry the ox outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first ox. It is a sin offering for the congregation.

22 "When a leader has sinned, and through ignorance has done any of the things the LORD his God has commanded not to be done, and is guilty, 23 if his sin which he has committed becomes known to him, he shall bring his offering, a young goat, a male without blemish. 24 And he shall lay his hand on the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD. It *is* a sin offering. 25 And the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out its blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering. 26 And he shall burn

all its fat on the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings *is burned*. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin, and it will be forgiven him.

27 "And if any of the common people sin through ignorance, doing any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and is guilty, 28 if his sin which he has committed becomes known to him, then he shall bring his offering, a young goat, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. 29 And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. 30 And the priest shall take *some* of its blood with his finger, and put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all its blood at the bottom of the altar. 31 And the priest shall take away all its fat, as the fat is taken away from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and burn *it* on the altar for a soothing aroma to the Lord. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

32 "And if he brings a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish. 33 And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill it as a sin offering at the place where they kill the burnt offering. 34 And the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all its blood at the bottom of the altar. 35 And the priest shall take away all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offerings, and burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. Thus the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it will be forgiven him.

**5** "And if a person who is a witness sins, when he hears *he is* sworn in to testify *about something* he has either seen or known, by not telling it, then he shall bear his guilt.

2 "Or if a person touches any unclean thing,

the sinner's substitute (Mark 9:47,48; 2 Thess 1:6-9; Rev 20:15; 21:8).

**4:13** Num 15:22-26.

**4:15** Corporate or national sin means corporate or national responsibility, and a sacrifice had to be made to atone for such sin. Perhaps there is a suggestion in this that Christ would die not only for the individual sinner, but for the whole Jewish nation (John 11:49-52) and for the Church as a unit (Eph 5:25). The sacrifice was the same as for an individual priest who sinned.

**4:18** Verse 7. The prayers of Christ and His people's prayers through Him, together with the remembrance of His blood, rise up to the heavenly Father.

**4:20** Verses 26,31,35. They obtained

forgiveness not because the animal sacrifice took away their sin, but because Christ would come and take away the sins of His people by the sacrifice of Himself.

**4:23** It is interesting that the priest was to offer a bull, the leader to offer a goat. Are leaders more likely to be "goats" than other men? or were the sins of the priests likely to be greater, more costly than others?

**4:28** Christ died as a substitutionary sacrifice for both men and women.

**4:32** A lamb would be cheaper and more easily obtained by the poor.

**5:1-4** It seems that the sins indicated here could be either intentional or not. Both kinds of sin need atonement (4:1,2).

**5:2** "Unclean" - note at 11:1.

whether it is the carcass of an unclean animal, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of an unclean creeping thing, even *though* he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean, and guilty.

3 "Or if he touches the uncleanness of man, whatever uncleanness *it may be* that defiles a man, and he is unaware of it, when he knows *of it*, then he shall be guilty.

4 "Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, if he is unaware of whatever *it is* that he has thoughtlessly sworn, when he comes to know *of it*, then he shall be guilty in either case.

5 "And it shall be, when he is guilty in one of these *things*, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that *matter*; 6 and he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a young goat, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin.

7 "And if he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD his trespass offering for his sin which he has committed, two doves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. 8 And he shall bring them to the priest, who shall first offer what *is* for the sin offering, and wring off its head from its neck, but shall not sever *it* completely, 9 and he shall sprinkle *some* of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, and the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the bottom of the altar. *It is* a sin offering. 10 And he shall offer the second *one as* a burnt offering, according to the regulation. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin which

he has committed, and it will be forgiven him.

11 "But if he is not able to bring two doves or two young pigeons, then the one who sinned shall bring for his offering a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put *any* frankincense on it, for *it is* a sin offering. 12 Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, its memorial, and burn it on the altar, on the offerings made by fire to the LORD. *It is* a sin offering. 13 Thus the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin that he has committed in one of those *matters*, and it will be forgiven him. *And the rest of the offering* shall belong to the priest, like the grain offering."

14 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 15 "If a person acts unfaithfully and sins, through ignorance, in *regard to* the holy things of the LORD, then he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish from the flocks, its value set by you in silver shekels according to the sanctuary shekel, for a trespass offering, 16 and he shall make restitution for what he failed to do in *regard to* the holy things, and shall add a fifth part to it, and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it will be forgiven him.

17 "And if a person sins by doing any of these things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, even though he is unaware *of it*, he is still guilty, and shall bear his guilt. 18 And he shall bring to the priest a ram from the flock, *one* without blemish, its value set by you, for a trespass offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him for his error done in ignorance while he was unaware of it, and it will be forgiven him. 19 *It is* a

**5:5** 16:21; 26:40; Num 5:7; Ps 32:5; Prov 28:13; 1 John 1:9.

**5:6** Note on atonement at Ex 29:33.

**5:7** 1:14.

**5:10** 1:14-17; 4:20,26.

**5:11-13** Some were perhaps so poor that they could not buy even two doves. Only in such an extreme case would a sin offering without blood be permitted. But the flour was to be burned on the altar on top of the offerings that had been blood sacrifices. It mingled with them and so could be regarded as making atonement (see 17:11; Heb 9:22). Notice that no oil or incense was to be put on it. This was because it signified Christ in the place of sinners. The sin and trespass offerings were not offerings with a pleasing aroma (1:9). The sinner does not have the Holy Spirit, and to God there is no fragrance in his life. Remember that in the sin and guilt offerings Christ is the sinner's substitute.

"Tenth of an ephah" (v 11) – probably about 2 liters.

**5:15,16** Here the holy things of the Lord

may mean tithes, offerings and first fruits. See 22:14-16. God demands restitution when it was possible for it to be made. See also 6:4-6. In these verses we have the first mention of the guilt offering. It could be translated "trespass offering". The guilt offering and sin offering were very similar and there was one law for both (7:7). The difference between them was that the guilt offering was for those offenses that required restitution, the sin offering was for other types of sin. This suggests that the guilt offering had to do with the outward results of sin and the sin offering had to do with sin itself. Christ fulfilled what both these offerings signify. He died in the place of sinners, was made sin for us. He also died for our sins, and for the results of our sins.

"Shekel" (v 15) – about 11.5 grams.

**5:17-19** Every one of us has sinned against God, at times without knowing it. Sin done unknowingly is still sin and we are responsible for it and it requires atonement. Thank God, Christ died for all our sins, known and unknown.



trespass offering. He was certainly guilty against the LORD."

**6** And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "If a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the LORD, and lies to his neighbour about something deposited with him, or left in his care, or *about* a thing *he* robbed, or if he has deceived his neighbour, <sup>3</sup> or has found something that was lost and lies about it, and swears falsely, doing one of all the things a man does and sins in *doing* it, <sup>4</sup> then, because he has sinned and is guilty, it is *required* that he restore what he robbed, or the thing he has gotten deceitfully, or what was deposited with him, or the lost thing which he found, <sup>5</sup> or anything about which he swore falsely. He shall make restoration for it in full, and shall add a fifth part to it, *and* give it to him to whom it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering. <sup>6</sup> And he shall bring to the priest his trespass offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish from the flock, its value set by you, as a trespass offering. <sup>7</sup> And the priest shall make atonement for him in the presence of the LORD, and of all he might have done, he will be forgiven for the one thing in which he was guilty."

<sup>8</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>9</sup> "Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: it, the burnt offering, *is to be* burning on the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. <sup>10</sup> And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and put linen shorts next to his flesh, and take up the ashes of the burnt offering which the fire has consumed on the altar, and shall put them beside the altar. <sup>11</sup> And he shall remove his garments, and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. <sup>12</sup> And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it. It shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and arrange the burnt offering on it, and burn the fat of the peace offerings on it.

<sup>13</sup> The fire shall always be burning on the altar. It must never go out.

<sup>14</sup> "And this *is* the law of the grain offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it in the presence of the LORD, before the altar. <sup>15</sup> And he shall take his handful from it, from the flour of the grain offering and from its oil, and all the frankincense which *is* on the grain offering, and shall burn *it* on the altar as a soothing aroma to the LORD, as its memorial offering. <sup>16</sup> And the rest of it Aaron and his sons shall eat. It is to be eaten with bread, made without yeast, in a holy place. They shall eat it in the courtyard of the tabernacle of the congregation. <sup>17</sup> It shall not be baked with yeast. I have given it *to them as* their portion of my offerings made by fire. It is most holy, like the sin offering and like the trespass offering. <sup>18</sup> All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat it. *It shall be* a regulation forever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made with fire. Everyone who touches them shall be holy."

<sup>19</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>20</sup> "This *is* the offering of Aaron and of his sons, which they are to offer to the LORD on the day when he is anointed: a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning, and half of it in the evening. <sup>21</sup> It is to be made with oil in a pan. *And when it is* baked, you shall bring it in *and* offer the baked pieces of the grain offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD. <sup>22</sup> And the priest among his sons who is anointed in his stead shall offer it. *This is* a permanent regulation. It is to be completely burned *as an offering* to the LORD. <sup>23</sup> For every grain offering of the priest shall be completely burned; it shall not be eaten."

<sup>24</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>25</sup> "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering: the sin offering is to be killed in the presence of the LORD in the place where the burnt offering is killed. *It is* most holy. <sup>26</sup> The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It is to be

**6:2** All sin, no matter what human being it is against, is also against the Lord (Ps 51:4; Gen 20:6; 39:9; 2 Sam 12:13; Ps 41:4).

**6:3** Ex 23:4; Deut 22:1-4.

**6:4,5** Ex 22:1; Num 5:5-8; 2 Sam 12:6; Luke 19:8. Without restitution confession is vain. God demands that we make up for the wrong we have done. If we are not willing to do so we cannot expect God's forgiveness.

**6:6,7** The sins mentioned in the above verses could only be done intentionally, knowingly. Still there was forgiveness if the offender confessed, repented, and made restitution.

**6:10** Ex 39:27,28; 28:39,42.

**6:12** 3:5.

**6:15** 2:2,9.

**6:16** 2:3; 10:12,13.

**6:17** "Fire" – 2:11.

"Holy" – vs 25,26,29,30. They were holy because they spoke of the Son of God, and consecrated by God.

**6:18** "All. . . shall eat it" – compare 1 Cor 9:13,14.

**6:20** Ex 29:1-9.

"Tenth of an ephah" – probably about 2 dry liters.

**6:21** 2:5.

**6:22,23** These offerings which the priests offered for themselves, unlike the ones the people offered, could not be eaten. They were for God alone.

**6:25** 1:11.

**6:26** The knowledge that Christ died for our sins is satisfying spiritual food

eaten in a holy place in the courtyard of the tabernacle of the congregation. 27 Whatever touches its flesh shall be holy, and when *any* of its blood is sprinkled on any garment, you shall wash what it was sprinkled on in a holy place. 28 And the earthenware vessel in which it was boiled shall be broken. If it has been boiled in a bronze pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water. 29 All the males among the priests shall eat it. It is most holy. 30 But no sin offering that has *any* of its blood brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to make atonement in the Holy Place shall be eaten. It shall be burned in the fire.

**7** "And this is the law of the trespass offering; it is most holy: 2 They shall kill the trespass offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering; and he shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. 3 And he shall offer all of its fat from it, the fat tail, and the fat that covers the inner parts, 4 and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them which is by the flanks, and the lobe on the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. 5 And the priest shall burn them on the altar as an offering made with fire to the LORD. It *is* a trespass

offering. 6 Every male among the priests shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place; it *is* most holy.

7 "The trespass offering *is* like the sin offering; *there is* one law for them: the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it. 8 And the priest who offers anyone's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he offers. 9 And all the grain offering that is baked in the oven, and all that is cooked on the griddle and in the pan, shall belong to the priest who offers it. 10 And every grain offering mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to one *as much* as another.

11 "And this is the law of the sacrifice of the peace offerings, which he shall offer to the LORD.

12 "If he offers it for thanksgiving, then with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer cakes made without yeast, mixed with oil, and wafers without yeast, anointed with oil, and cakes of kneaded fine flour, mixed with oil. 13 Besides the cakes, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings, he shall offer *for* his offering bread made without yeast. 14 And of this he shall offer one out of the whole offering as a lifted up offering to the LORD, *and* it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles

indeed – John 6:53-58.

**6:30** One aspect of the sin offering was toward God alone.

**7:1** 5:14 – 6:7.

**7:2** 1:11.

**7:3-5** 3:3-5.

**7:6** 6:26. Note on "holy" at 20:7.

**7:7** 6:25-30.

**7:8** The skin was to be kept by the priest. This signifies Christ's righteousness given to the believer. See notes at Gen 3:21; 15:6; etc.

**7:9,10** 2:1-10.

**7:11** 3:1.

**7:12,13** "Thanksgiving" – 22:29; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; 69:30; Eph 5:20; Phil 4:6; Col 2:7; 4:2; 1 Thess 5:18; Rev 7:12. This is the first reference to thanksgiving in the Bible. Of course this does not mean that believers had not been thankful to God before this time, only that the word had not been used. Notice that regulations concerning it are in connection with the peace offering. There can be no true thanksgiving apart from reconciliation and fellowship with God. But reasons for thanksgiving abound everywhere (Ps 106:1) and giving of thanks to God is an important part of man's duty and privilege toward God. One reason for the corruption of mankind as a whole was their ingratitude (Rom 1:21). Believers are urged to give thanks for everything that comes to them (Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18). It is one of the offerings we can now bring to God (Heb 13:15). Here in Leviticus the regulations regarding the thanksgiving offering are as follows:

It was entirely voluntary – "if he offers".

Thanksgiving and giving to God and to others cannot be compelled; it must spring from the heart that delights in God's goodness. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

Along with the thanksgiving offering cakes or wafers had to be brought, and they had to be without yeast, because the thanksgiving offering spoke of Christ the sinless one. It signifies Christ giving Himself for the praise and glory of God. Our thanksgiving to God should be full of Christ (not full of self as in Luke 18:11,12. See the way Paul gave thanks – Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; 2 Cor 2:14; 9:15; Col 1:3,4; 2 Thess 2:13,14; 1 Tim 1:2; Phil 4:5).

In v 13 the worshiper is instructed to bring also cakes made with yeast. These signify believers, for believers still have sin in them. Those who brought thanksgiving offerings which speak of Christ were to offer that which spoke of themselves also. True thanksgiving will mean that the believer gives himself to God. The instructions about the thanksgiving offerings come at the very end of instructions given about the five great offerings in Leviticus. It is as though God were saying "see what provision I am making for you to be forgiven and brought into my fellowship. Now be thankful and rejoice". So it is in Rom 12:1,2. Paul had fully outlined the merciful acts of God in the first eleven chapters of Romans. Then he urged believers in view of those mercies in thanksgiving to present themselves as a sacrifice to God.

**7:14** 2:1; 3:3,4. On the ordinary level let us see that thanksgiving results in food for the priests who did the work of the

the blood of the peace offerings. 15 And the meat of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.

16 "But if the sacrifice of his offering *is* a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice, and the rest of it shall be eaten on the next day. 17 But on the third day the rest of the meat of the sacrifice shall be burned with fire. 18 And if *any* of the meat of the sacrifice of his peace offerings is at all eaten on the third day, it shall not be accepted, or put into the account of the one who offers it. It shall be an abomination, and the soul who eats *any* of it shall bear his guilt.

19 "And meat that touches any unclean *thing* shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. And as for other meat, everyone who is clean shall eat it. 20 But the person in his uncleanness who eats *any* of the meat of the sacrifice of peace offerings that *belong* to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people. 21 And the person who touches any unclean *thing*, such as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eats *any* of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which *belong* to the LORD, that soul shall be cut off from his people."

22 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, You shall eat no kind of fat, from ox, or from sheep, or from goat. 24 And the fat of an animal that dies of itself, and the fat of that which is torn by beasts, may be used for any other purpose, but you shall not eat it at all. 25 For whoever eats the fat of an animal which men offer as an offering made by fire to the LORD, the person who eats *it* shall be cut off from his people. 26 Moreover you shall eat no kind of blood, *whether* of bird or of animal, in any of your homes. 27 Any person who eats any kind of blood, that person shall be cut off from his people."

28 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 29 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to the LORD shall bring to the LORD his offering of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. 30 His own hands

shall bring the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breast. He shall bring the breast so that it may be waved *as* a wave offering before the LORD.

31 "And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall belong to Aaron and his sons. 32 And the right shoulder you shall give to the priest as a lifted up offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings. 33 Among the sons of Aaron, he who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, shall have the right shoulder as *his* portion. 34 For I have taken the wave breast and the lifted up shoulder from the children of Israel, from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their due forever from the children of Israel."

35 This *is the portion given at* the anointing of Aaron, and the anointing of his sons, out of the offerings of the LORD made with fire, in the day *when* he presented them to serve the LORD as priests; 36 which the LORD commanded to be given to them by the children of Israel, in the day that he anointed them, a permanent regulation throughout their generations.

37 This is the law of the burnt offering, of the grain offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings, 38 which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their offerings to the LORD in the Sinai desert.

**8** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and an ox for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of bread made without yeast, 3 and gather all the congregation together at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." 4 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

5 And Moses said to the congregation, "This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded to be done."

tabernacle. This is still the way God's work should be accomplished and Christian workers supported. In thanksgiving to God we are to give to God's work and workers.

**7:15** 22:29,30.

**7:16-18** 19:5-8. The third day may signify the resurrection of Christ (Matt 16:21; 27:64; Luke 24:7,21,46). The offering that signified the sacrifice of Christ was to be completed in all aspects before that day which signified His resurrection.

**7:20,21** 22:3-7; 19:13. In Leviticus "uncleanness" is a symbol of sin. Note at 11:1; 15:31.

This severe warning is similar to that given in 1 Cor 11:28-34. For other offenses connected with tabernacle worship that brought danger of death see note at Ex 28:35.

**7:23-25** 3:17; 17:15; 22:8.

**7:26,27** Gen 9:4; Lev 17:10-16; 19:26; Deut 12:23; 1 Sam 14:33; Acts 15:20.

**7:30** Ex 29:26,27; Lev 9:21; Num 6:20.

**7:31** Num 18:11; Deut 18:3.

**7:32** Ex 29:27; Lev 9:21; Num 6:20.

**7:34-36** 1 Cor 9:13,14.

**7:38** 1:1; 26:46; 27:34; Deut 4:5.

**8:2** Ex 28:1-43; 30:22-25.

6 And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. 7 And he put on him the tunic, and tied the sash around him, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him, and tied on him the skillfully woven waistband of the ephod, and fastened *the ephod* to him with it. 8 And he put the breastplate on him, and he put the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate. 9 And he put the turban on his head, and on the front of the turban, he put the golden plate, the holy crown, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

10 And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that *was* in it, and consecrated them. 11 And he sprinkled *some* of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and both the laver and its base, to consecrate them. 12 And he poured *some* of the anointing oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him to consecrate him. 13 And Moses brought Aaron's sons and put tunics on them, and tied sashes around them, and put caps on them, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

14 And he brought the ox for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ox for the sin offering. 15 And he killed *it*. And Moses took the blood and with his finger put *it* all around on the horns of the altar, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and consecrated it, to make atonement for it. 16 And he took all the fat that *was* on the inner parts, and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moses burned it on the altar. 17 But the ox and its hide, its flesh, and its dung, he burned with fire outside the camp, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

18 And he brought the ram for the burnt offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. 19 And he killed *it*. And Moses sprinkled the blood on the altar all around. 20 And he cut the ram into pieces. And Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat. 21 And he washed the inner parts and the legs in water. And Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. *It was* a burnt sacrifice for a soothing aroma, *and* an offering

made by fire to the LORD, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

22 And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. 23 And he killed *it*. And Moses took *some* of its blood, and put *it* on the tip of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the large toe of his right foot. 24 And he brought Aaron's sons, and Moses put *some* of the blood on the tip of their right ears, and on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the large toes of their right feet. And Moses sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. 25 And he took the fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that was on the inner parts, and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right shoulder, 26 and from the basket of bread made without yeast that *was* before the LORD, he took one cake made without yeast, and a cake of bread *with* oil, and one wafer, and put *them* on the fat, and on the right shoulder, 27 and he put all *of this* in Aaron's hands, and in his sons' hands, and waved them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 28 Then Moses took them from their hands, and burned them on the altar on the burnt offering. They *were* ordination offerings, a soothing aroma. It was an offering made with fire to the LORD. 29 And Moses took the breast and waved it as a wave offering before the LORD; *for* this was Moses' portion from the ordination ram, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

30 And Moses took *some* of the anointing oil and of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled *it* on Aaron, *and* on his garments, and on his sons with him, and on his sons' garments, and sanctified Aaron, *and* his garments, and his sons with him, and his sons' garments.

31 And Moses said to Aaron and to his sons, "Boil the meat *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and eat it there with the bread that *is* in the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it. 32 And you shall burn with fire what is left of the meat and of the bread. 33 And you shall not go out

**8:6** Note at Ex 29:4.

**8:7** Ex 28:4,6,40.

**8:8** Ex 28:15,30.

**8:9** Ex 28:36.

**8:10** Ex 30:26-29.

**8:11** Ex 30:28.

**8:12** Ex 29:7. This oil signifies God's Holy Spirit. Observe that the anointing oil was poured on Aaron the high priest before the sacrifices were slain, but that the ordinary priests received their anointing after the blood of the sacrifice was put on them (vs 24, 30). Also the oil was poured on Aaron, but only sprinkled on the ordinary priest.

Aaron as high priest signifies the Lord Jesus as High Priest. The Lord Jesus needed no sacrifice for Himself and He was anointed with the Holy Spirit before He gave himself as a sacrifice for others (Luke 3:21,22; 4:18). Also He had the Holy Spirit without measure – signified by pouring the oil on Aaron (John 3:34). The ordinary priests signify believers of this New Testament age who need to be cleansed through the blood of Christ before they are anointed by the Holy Spirit.

**8:13-34** All this is in accordance with the instructions God gave Moses in

of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation *for* seven days, until the days of your ordination are at an end; for he will take seven days to ordain you. 34 What he has done today *is just as* the LORD commanded to be done to make atonement for you. 35 Therefore you shall stay *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, so that you do not die; for so I am commanded." 36 So Aaron and his sons did everything which the LORD commanded through Moses.

**9** And on the eighth day it came about *that* Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel, 2 and he said to Aaron, "Take a young calf for yourself for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, *both* without blemish, and offer *them* in the presence of the LORD. 3 And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, Take a young goat for yourself for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering, 4 also an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice in the presence of the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the LORD will appear to you."

5 And they brought what Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. 6 And Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded you to do; and the glory of the LORD will appear to you."

7 And Moses said to Aaron, "Go to the altar, and offer your sin offering, and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself, and for the people; and offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, just as the LORD commanded."

8 Therefore Aaron went to the altar, and killed

the calf of the sin offering which *was* for himself. 9 And the sons of Aaron brought the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood and put *it* on the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar. 10 And on the altar he burned the fat, and the kidneys, and the lobe on the liver of the sin offering, just as the LORD commanded Moses. 11 And the flesh and the hide he burned with fire outside the camp.

12 And he killed the burnt offering. And Aaron's sons presented the blood to him, which he sprinkled all around on the altar. 13 And they presented the burnt offering to him, with its pieces, and the head, and he burned *them* on the altar. 14 And he washed the inner parts and the legs, and burned *them* on the burnt offering on the altar.

15 And he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which *was* the sin offering for the people, and killed it, and offered it for sin, like the first.

16 And he brought the burnt offering, and offered it according to the regulation. 17 And he brought the grain offering, and took a handful of it and burned *it* on the altar, besides the burnt sacrifice of the morning.

18 He also killed the ox and the ram as a sacrifice of peace offerings, which *was* for the people. And Aaron's sons presented the blood to him, which he sprinkled all around on the altar. 19 And *they* presented the fat of the ox and of the ram, the fat tail and that which covers the *inner parts*, and the kidneys, and the lobe on the liver, 20 and they put the fat on the breasts. And he burned the fat on the altar. 21 And Aaron waved the breasts and the right shoulder as a wave offering before the LORD, just as Moses commanded.

22 And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from

Exodus 29:8-35.

**8:35** Seven signifies a complete period of time.

**9:2** "Sin offering" – 4:3; 9:7,8; Heb 5:1-3. In this respect Aaron is viewed not as a type of Christ but as what he was himself. He was a sinner like every other Israelite, like every other human being. His own sin had to be dealt with before he could minister for the people.

**9:4** "The LORD will appear" – vs 23,24; Ex 29:43.

**9:6** If we wish to see God's glory we must trust Him and follow His instructions (John 11:40; 17:24).

**9:11** 4:11,12; 8:17; Heb 13:11,12.

**9:15** 4:27-31.

**9:17** 2:1-3.

**9:18** 3:1-11.

**9:22,23** In these two remarkable verses we see that the revelation of God's glory came at the offering of the sacrifice which

symbolized the Lord Jesus. In other words God's glory is manifested at the cross of Jesus where He died for sinners. This wonderful event revealed the nature of God as no other event in history, and God's nature is the foundation of His glory (Ex 33:18,19; 34:5:7). We see also that God's blessing came to the people after the sacrifice had been offered. The cross of Christ is the source of all those blessings God promised to the world through the seed of Abraham (Gen 12:3; 22:18; for notes on blessing and blessed see also Num 6:22-26; Ps 1:1-3; etc).

Here in these verses in Leviticus the people were blessed two separate times. In v 22 after the sacrifices were offered Aaron blessed the people lifting up his hands. This picture was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus in Luke 24:50. After that, Aaron and Moses went inside the tabernacle, out of sight of the people. This was fulfilled by Christ in Luke



offering the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings.

23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. 24 And a fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw *this*, they shouted and prostrated themselves.

**10** And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, both took their censers, and put fire in them, and put incense on them, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. 2 And fire came out from the LORD, and consumed them, and they died in the presence of the LORD. 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "This *is* what the LORD spoke, saying, 'I will be sanctified among those who come near me, and in the presence of all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron kept silent.

4 And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, Aaron's uncle, and said to them,

24:51; Acts 1:9. When Moses and Aaron came back out they blessed the people again. At present the Lord Jesus is still in the true tabernacle in heaven. But He will come again as the perfect fulfillment of the law of Moses and its high priesthood to bring God's blessings in full measure to His people (Rom 8:18-25; 1 Cor 15:51-54; Isa 11:1-9; Rev 19:11-22:5). Until God's time comes He remains in heaven (Acts 3:19-21).

**9:24** Aaron had already slain the sacrifices, shed their blood, and put them on the altar before He went inside the tabernacle. There was already fire on the altar consuming the sacrifices (vs 13, 14, 17). The blessing that came through the sacrifices had been given. But it was only after Aaron and Moses came back out from the tabernacle that God publicly revealed His full acceptance of the sacrifice. This signifies that at the second coming of Christ it will be fully revealed to all peoples that God has fully accepted the sacrifice of His Son. Then Phil 2:10,11 and similar verses will be fulfilled. And great joy will come to the people of God.

**10:1,2** Judging from other verses in this chapter this event took place on the solemn day that Aaron and his sons began their ministry as described in chapter 9. The sin of Nadab and Abihu is not fully described. It is said only that they offered unauthorized fire in their censers. According to 16:12 the fire used in censors to burn incense came from off the brazen altar that stood in the court of the tabernacle (this signifies that true prayer and worship are to have their source in the cross, the sacrifice of Christ). No other fire, such as one a person would start for his own use, was permitted for the burning of incense. Nadab and Abihu

"Come near, carry your brothers away from the sanctuary, out of the camp." 5 So they went near, and carried them in their tunics out of the camp, just as Moses said.

6 And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and to Ithamar, his sons, "Do not uncover your heads, or tear your clothes, so that you do not die, and so that wrath does not come on all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, lament the burning which the LORD has kindled. 7 And you shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, so that you do not die; for the LORD's anointing oil is on you." And they did according to the word of Moses.

8 And the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying, 9 "Do not drink wine or strong drink, *neither* you nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of the congregation, so that you do not die. *This shall be* a regulation forever throughout your generations, 10 so that you may make a distinction between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, 11 and that you may teach the children of Israel all the regulations which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses."

ignored this and offered their own fire.

Also the duty of burning incense ordinarily belonged to the high priest (Ex 30:7-9), and not to his sons. The incense spoke of the prayers of Christ (see Ex 30:6-9). Nadab and Abihu apparently without any instructions from anyone, on their own initiative, ignoring their father's rights, offered incense. They paid the penalty for their rashness and arrogance. All this contains important lessons for all of us. Incense signifies prayer and worship (Ps 141:2; Rev 8:3).

God must be worshiped in the way He appoints, not according to what man thinks good (John 4:24; Heb 10:19-22). God is showing here how serious a sin false worship is. God's holy anger is like a consuming fire against sin, including that sin (2 Thess 1:4-10; Heb 12:28,29; 2 Pet 2:1-3; Rev 20:15; Num 25:3).

**10:3** This gives an explanation of the death of Nadab and Abihu. They had no regard for the holiness of God, the sacredness of His presence. They were not thinking of the proper way of approaching Him, nor of His honor. Aaron understood this and so uttered not a word.

**10:6,7** All this happened on the day that Aaron and his sons were anointed and consecrated. At that time they had received a command not to leave the entrance of the tabernacle for seven days (8:34,35). They had their holy turbans on and must not remove them; they wore their holy priestly garments and must not put them off (8:6-10).

**10:9-11** This instruction coming here suggests perhaps that Nadab and Abihu may have been drinking when they committed this sin. On drinking see Prov 20:1; 31:5;

12 And Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and to Ithamar, his sons who were left, "Take the grain offering that remains from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without yeast beside the altar; for it *is* most holy. 13 And you shall eat it in the holy place, because it *is* your due, and your sons' due, from the sacrifices of the LORD made with fire; for so I am commanded. 14 And you shall eat the wave breast and lifted up shoulder in a clean place, you, and your sons, and your daughters with you; for *they are* your due, and your sons' due. *They* are given out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel. 15 They shall bring the lifted up shoulder and the wave breast with the offerings of fat made by fire, to wave *it as* a wave offering before the LORD, and it shall be yours, and your sons' with you, by a permanent regulation, just as the LORD has commanded."

16 And Moses looked carefully for the goat of the sin offering, and found out that it had been burned. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the remaining sons of Aaron, and said, 17 "Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it *is* most holy, and *God* has given it you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? 18 See, its

blood was not brought inside the Holy *Place*. You should in fact have eaten it in a holy *place*, as I commanded."

19 And Aaron said to Moses, "Look, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and such things have happened to me. And *if* I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?" 20 And when Moses heard *that*, he was content.

**11** And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, These *are* the animals which you may eat among all the animals that *are* on the earth. 3 You may eat whatever has a divided hoof or a cloven hoof *and* chews the cud among animals.

4 "But you shall not eat of these that chew the cud or of these that have a divided hoof: the camel, because it chews the cud, but does not have a divided hoof; it *is* unclean for you; 5 and the coney, because it chews the cud, but does not have the divided hoof; it *is* unclean for you; 6 and the rabbit, because it chews the cud, but does not have the divided hoof; it *is* unclean for you; 7 and the pig, though it has the divided hoof, the cloven

Isa 28:7; Ezek 44:21; Hos 4:11; Luke 1:15; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7. **10:12,13** 6:14-18.

**10:14,15** 7:30-34; Num 18:11.

**10:16-18** 9:3,13; 6:24-30.

**11:1** In Leviticus chapters 11-15 the key word is "unclean." It occurs more than 100 times. To understand these chapters we must recognize that Leviticus is a book of symbols. In this book God is teaching spiritual truths by means of pictures. Here that which is called "unclean" is either sinful in itself or is a symbol of something that is defiling in the spiritual realm. For example, in the following verses the touch of an "unclean" animal cannot be sinful itself, but it may be a picture of something that makes the mind and spirit of man unclean.

**11:2-23** Deut 14:3-21. It seems there are a number of reasons why God gave this prohibition against eating certain animals. For the most part at least the animals listed as "unclean" would not be as good for food as "clean" animals such as sheep and goats. Also God wanted the Hebrews kept as a distinct people from all other peoples on earth (Ex 19:5,6; Deut 7:6; 14:2). This was because He had chosen this nation as the channel for His revelation and for the Saviour who was to come. One way of keeping His people distinct was by ordering their diet. This was added to the Sabbath, circumcision, festivals and tabernacle worship - all designed to make and keep Israel a distinct people.

Also God was teaching His people by types and pictures to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, spiritually healthy and unhealthy. They were to be on the lookout to avoid uncleanness of every kind. Perhaps also, as some scholars have suggested, God was teaching that man's sins are like unclean creatures, like the crafty and secretive jackal, the filth-loving pig, the stubborn mule, the village dog that eats any unclean thing, the savage tiger and lion, the vulture that feeds on the dead and decaying, the owl which loves darkness, the slimy fish that lives at the bottom of foul streams, the dangerous snake with its venom, the innumerable creeping and crawling things of earth, the worm that lives in dead and rotting things. In this way, perhaps, sin is pictured in all that is disgusting, cruel, harmful, destructive, filthy and detestable. And indeed, sin is like that.

However, since the instructions in this chapter are concerning what God's people may or may not eat, the primary symbolic meaning seems to be this: For the mental, spiritual food of God's people there are things that are good and wholesome and other things that are unclean and unhealthy. The food for priests was the offerings of God's people, all of which signified Christ (2:3; 6:26; 7:6-10,13,14,31-36). Those same sort of foods were also for God's people as a whole (11:3). But there were many animals they must not eat, must not even touch their dead bodies. These

hoof, yet it does not chew the cud; *it is* unclean for you. 8 You shall not eat their meat, and shall not touch their carcass. They *are* unclean for you.

9 "Of all that *live* in the waters you may eat these: You may eat whatever has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers. 10 But all that do not have fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which *is* in the waters, *are to be* an abomination to you. 11 Yes, they are to be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their meat, and you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. 12 Whatever has no fins or scales in the waters *is to be* an abomination to you.

13 "And these *are the ones* among the birds which you shall regard as an abomination; they shall not be eaten, they *are* an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the osprey, 14 and the vulture, and any kind of kite, 15 every kind of raven, 16 and the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckoo, and every kind of hawk, 17 and the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, 18 and the swan, and the pelican, and the gier eagle, 19 and the stork, every kind of heron, and the lapwing, and the bat.

20 "All flying creatures that walk on *all* fours, *shall be* an abomination to you. 21 But among all the flying creatures that walk on *all* fours you may eat those that have legs above their feet with which to leap on the ground. 22 These are the ones among them that you may eat: every kind of locust, and every kind of bald locust, and every kind of cricket, and every kind of grasshopper. 23 But all *other* flying creatures which have four feet *shall be* an abomination to you.

24 "And by these you will be made unclean; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until evening, 25 and whoever picks up *one* of their carcasses shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening.

signify "foods" for the mind which are unwholesome and unclean.

By food we should understand thoughts, teachings, ideas, and imaginations which we allow into our minds and hearts. The Bible is clear what sort of things these should be. See Ps 1:1,2; 119:11; Matt 16:6,12; Phil 4:8; Col 2:8; 3:16; Heb 5:11-14; 1 Pet 2:2,3. The world lies in evil and darkness (1 John 5:19). Its ideas, teachings, philosophies, and its own religious doctrines are unholy and destructive. If people do not feed on God's Word, what they take into their minds and hearts may be as disgusting and ruinous as cockroaches, rats, scorpions, toads, maggots and vipers. For much that we find in the world is just like those things.

In the New Testament the unclean creatures listed in this chapter are no longer

26 "The carcass of any animal that *has* the divided hoof but not completely split hoof, and does not chew the cud, *are* unclean to you. Everyone who touches them shall be unclean. 27 And among all kinds of animals that walk on *all* fours, whatever walks on its paws *are* unclean for you. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until evening. 28 And he who picks up their carcass shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. They are unclean for you.

29 "And among the creeping things that creep on the ground these *shall be* unclean for you: the weasel, and the mouse, and every kind of the great lizard, 30 and the ferret, and the chameleon, and the lizard, and the snail, and the mole. 31 Among all the creeping things these *are* unclean for you. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. 32 And if *any* of them when they are dead falls on anything, it shall be unclean, whether *it is* any article of wood or clothing or hide or sack; whatever article *it may be* with which *any* work is done, it must be put in water, and it shall be unclean until evening; then it becomes clean. 33 And whatever is in any earthenware pot in which *any* of them falls *shall be* unclean; and you shall break it. 34 Any food which could be eaten on which water comes *from such a pot* shall be unclean; and any liquid that could be drunk in any *such* pot shall be unclean. 35 And on whatever *any part* of their carcass falls, *that* shall be unclean, *whether it is* an oven or a stove. It shall be smashed, *for* they are unclean, and shall be unclean for you. 36 But a spring or a cistern *where* water collects shall be clean, though the one who touches their carcass shall be unclean. 37 And if *any* part of their carcass falls on any seed for sowing, *it shall be* clean. 38 But if *any* water has been put on the seed and *any part* of their carcass falls on it, *it shall be* unclean for you.

39 "And if any animal which you may eat dies,

regarded as unclean (Acts 10:9-16; 1 Cor 10:25,26; 1 Tim 4:3-5). This means they never were unclean in themselves, but that God was using them as symbols to teach spiritual lessons. Once the lessons intended by the symbols are taught, the laws regarding the symbols can be done away with.

**11:24,25** Washing the clothes was the one way to get rid of this uncleanness. Water is a symbol of the Word of God. The use of the Word of God is God's way of making and keeping us clean (Ps 119:9; John 15:3; Eph 5:25-27). It is the only remedy for ideas and imaginations which pollute the mind and heart.

**11:26-38** Even the touch of the unclean must be avoided, and if contact is made cleansing is needed. Compare 2 Cor 6:17; 7:1; etc.

**11:39** Even that which is good mental and

he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until evening. 40 And he who eats its carcass shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening; and he who picks up its carcass shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening.

41 "And every creeping thing that creeps on the ground *is to be* an abomination; it shall not be eaten. 42 You shall not eat anything that moves on the belly, or anything that walks on *all* fours, or anything that has many feet among all the creeping things that creep on the ground; for they *are* an abomination. 43 You shall not make yourselves abominable by any creeping thing that creeps, or make yourselves unclean by them so that you become defiled by them. 44 For I *am* the LORD your God. Therefore you shall sanctify yourselves. And you shall be holy, for I *am* holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any kind of creeping thing that creeps on the ground. 45 For I *am* the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. So you shall be holy, for I *am* holy.

46 "This *is* the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters and every creature that creeps on the ground. 47 *It is* to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten."

**12** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and gives birth to a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days; she shall be unclean, just as during the days of separation for her infirmity. 3 And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. 4 And she shall then remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, or come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed. 5 But if she gives birth to a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, just

as in her separation; and she shall remain in the blood of her purification for sixty-six days.

6 "And when the days of her purification are completed for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring as a sin offering a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a dove, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to the priest. 7 He shall offer it in the presence of the LORD and make atonement for her; and she shall become clean from the issue of her blood. This *is* the law for her who has given birth to a male or a female.

8 "And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two doves, or two young pigeons, the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

**13** And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 "When a man has a swelling, a scab, or a bright spot on the skin of his body, and it *seems to be* the mark of leprosy in the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest, or to one of his sons the priests. 3 And the priest shall look at the mark in the skin of the body, and *if* the hair in the mark has turned white and the mark appears *to be* deeper than the skin of his body, it is a mark of leprosy; and the priest shall look at him and pronounce him unclean. 4 If the bright spot *is* white in the skin of his body, and does not appear *to be* deeper than the skin, and the hair in it has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the mark for seven days. 5 And the priest shall look at him on the seventh day, and *if* the mark in his sight appears to be unchanged, and the mark has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall isolate him for seven more days. 6 And the priest shall look at him again on the seventh day, and *if* the mark *is* somewhat dark, *and* the mark has not spread in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; it *is only* a scab. And he shall

spiritual food must be fresh and living.

**11:44,45** 19:2; 1 Pet 1:16; note at Lev 20:7.

**11:47** 10:10; 1 Kings 3:9; Ezek 22:26; 44:23; Heb 5:14.

**12:2** 15:19; 18:19.

"Unclean" – in Hebrew the same word is used for "unclean" animals, "unclean" diseases, etc. See note at 11:1.

"Infirmity" – this refers to a woman's monthly period.

**12:3** Gen 17:12; Luke 1:59; 2:21.

**12:6** A sin offering was required at the birth of a child. Having a child is not sin. The teaching here is by symbol and picture. The teaching is that every woman who brings forth a child, and every child born in the natural course, is a sinner and needs the atonement. Since the fall of Adam and Eve

a sinful nature is transmitted from parents to children. This is the meaning of David's words in Ps 51:5. He did not mean that his mother was an exceptionally sinful woman. Indeed she may have been, for all we know, a very righteous person.

**12:8** Mary, the mother of Jesus, also offered a sin offering at His birth. This was not for Him but for herself. Jesus had no human father. He was born of a virgin by the power of God's Holy Spirit and was perfectly sinless (Luke 1:34,35. Luke 2:22-24 speaks of the offering of Mary and shows the poverty of the family).

**13:1-44** "Mark" (v 2) – the Hebrew word here also means "spot," "stroke" or "blow."

"Leprosy" – the Hebrew word comes from a verb which means "to strike." The disease

wash his clothes and be clean. 7 But if the scab spreads further in the skin after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again; 8 and *if* the priest looks and sees that the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; *it is* leprosy.

9 "When the mark of leprosy is on a man, then he shall be brought to the priest. 10 And the priest shall look *at him*, and *if* the swelling *is* white in the skin, and it has turned the hair white, and *there is* raw flesh in the swelling, 11 *it is* an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not isolate him; for he *is* unclean.

12 "And if leprosy breaks out on the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of *the one who has* the mark, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, 13 then the priest shall look and *if* the leprosy appears to cover his whole body, he shall pronounce *the one who has* the mark clean; it has all turned white; he *is* clean. 14 But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. 15 And the priest shall look at the raw flesh, and pronounce him to be unclean, *for* the raw flesh *is* unclean. *It is* leprosy. 16 But *if* the raw flesh changes and turns white, he shall come to the priest. 17 And the priest shall look at him, and *if* the plague appears to have turned white, then the priest shall pronounce *the one who has* the mark clean; he *is* clean.

18 "And the body which has a boil in its skin that has healed, 19 and in the place of the boil there is a white swelling or a bright spot, white and somewhat reddish, it should be shown to the priest. 20 And when the priest sees it, if it appears *to be* lower than the skin, and the hair in it has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; *it is* a mark of leprosy broken out of the boil. 21 But if the priest looks at it, and no white hairs appear in it, and *if it is* not lower than the skin, but *is* somewhat dark, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days. 22 And if it spreads over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; *it is* a mark of leprosy. 23 But if the bright spot is unchanged and

has not spread, *it is* the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

24 "Or if the body has in its skin a burn from fire, and the raw *flesh* that was burned has a white bright spot, somewhat reddish or white, 25 then the priest shall look at it, and *if* it appears that the hair in the bright spot has turned white, and it appears *to be* deeper than the skin, *it is* leprosy, broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean; *it is* the mark of leprosy. 26 But if the priest looks at it, and no white hair appears *to be* in the bright spot, and *it is* no lower than the *other* skin, *it is* somewhat dark, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days. 27 And the priest shall look at him on the seventh day, and if it is spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; *it is* the mark of leprosy. 28 And if the bright spot is unchanged, and has not spread in the skin, but *is* somewhat dark, *it is* a swelling from the burn, and the priest shall pronounce him clean, for *it is* an inflammation from the burn.

29 "If a man or woman has a mark on the head or the beard, 30 then the priest shall look at the mark, and if he sees that it appears *to be* deeper than the skin, and *there is* yellow thin hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; *it is* a scale, leprosy on the head or beard. 31 And if the priest looks at the mark of the scale, and sees that it *does not appear to be* deeper than the skin, and *that there is* no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the mark of the scale for seven days. 32 And on the seventh day the priest shall look at the mark, and, *if* he sees that the scale has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the scale does not appear *to be* deeper than the skin, 33 he shall shave himself, but he shall not shave the scale. And the priest shall isolate the one who has the scale for seven more days. 34 And on the seventh day the priest shall look at the scale, and if it appears that the scale has not spread in the skin, and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean.

was regarded by the people as a stroke from God, a punishment for sin, and sometimes it was (Num 12:10-15; 2 Kings 5:27). Some other versions have translated this word "infectious skin disease" or "malignant skin disease." If we look at the symptoms of the disease recorded here in this chapter, it is evident that it is not the leprosy we know today. If the disease in these chapters was any sort of leprosy it certainly was of a different kind than the leprosy now known (which does not seem impossible). In any case the disease here described is a fitting one to signify sin.

Consider the following. It was a disease in the body or in the blood that broke out in

the skin. The first signs of the disease were often small and seemingly insignificant. Usually there was a very gradual development of the disease, and it eventually resulted in something very offensive, ugly, and destructive. As far as we know there was no earthly cure – the Heavenly Physician was needed for that. And because of its defiling or infectious nature it was necessary to keep those who had it outside God's camp (v 46). All this is true also of the rise and development of a sinful life in an individual.

In 12:19 we see that for the cleansing of a person healed from this disease both a trespass offering and sin offering were required. But we should not think it was a sin



And he shall wash his clothes, and be clean. 35 But if the scale spreads further in the skin after his cleansing, 36 then the priest shall look at him, and if it appears that the scale has spread in the skin, the priest shall not look for yellow hair; he *is* unclean. 37 But if the scale appears to be unchanged, and black hair has grown in it, the scale is healed; he *is* clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

38 "And if a man or a woman has bright spots, white bright spots, in the skin of the body, 39 then the priest shall look, and *if* the bright spots appearing in the skin of the body *are* dull white, it *is* a rash broken out in the skin; he *is* clean.

40 "And the man who has lost his hair, *though* he *is* bald, he *is* clean. 41 And the one who has lost his hair from the part of his head toward his face, though he is bald on the forehead, he is clean. 42 But if there is on the bald head, or bald forehead, a white reddish sore, it *is* leprosy broken out on his bald head, or his bald forehead. 43 Then the priest shall look at it, and *if* the swelling of the sore appears to be reddish white on his bald head, or on his bald forehead, like the leprosy that appears in the skin of the body, 44 he *is* a leprous man; he *is* unclean. The priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his mark *is* on his head.

45 "And the leper who *has* the mark shall *wear* his clothes torn, and *have* his head uncovered, and shall put a covering on his upper lip, and shall cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' 46 He shall remain unclean all the days in which the mark *is* on him; he *is* unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling *shall be* outside the camp.

47 "And if a garment has the mark of leprosy in it, *whether it is* a woollen garment, or a linen garment, 48 *whether it is* in the warp or woof, of

linen, or of wool, whether in a hide, or in anything made of hide, 49 and if the mark in the garment, or in the hide, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything *made* of hide, is greenish or reddish, it *is* a mark of leprosy, and shall be shown to the priest. 50 And the priest shall look at the mark, and isolate *that which has* the mark for seven days. 51 And he shall look at the mark on the seventh day. If the mark has spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a hide, or in anything that is made of hide, the mark *is* a fretting leprosy; it *is* unclean. 52 Therefore he shall burn that garment, whether warp or woof, on wool or on linen, or anything of hide, that has the mark; for it is a fretting leprosy; it shall be burned in the fire.

53 "And if the priest looks, and it appears that the mark has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything of hide, 54 then the priest shall command them to *wash the thing that has* the mark, and he shall isolate it for seven more days. 55 Then, after it has been washed, the priest shall look at the mark, and *if* it appears that the mark has not changed its colour, and the mark has not spread, it *is* unclean. You shall burn it in the fire. It is eaten away on the inside or on the outside. 56 And if the priest looks, and the mark appears *to be* somewhat darker after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, or out of the hide, or out of the warp, or out of the woof. 57 And if it still appears in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything of hide, it *is* a spreading mark. You shall burn that which *has* the mark in the fire. 58 And the garment, whether warp or woof, or whatever thing *made* of hide it may be which you wash, if the mark has gone from it, then it shall be washed the second

to have this, or any other, disease. And the person afflicted with a dreadful disease is not more of a sinner than a person in perfect health. This is one lesson we can learn from the book of Job. But we all have the nature which is symbolized by the disease seen in these two chapters. That is, we are all sinners both by nature and by deeds (Rom 3:9,23; Luke 13:1-5).

But if the disease described in these chapters was not a direct result of sin why was it necessary to offer a trespass and a sin offering for it? Remember that those offerings signify the Lord Jesus Christ dying in the place of sinners, and for their sins (notes at 4:3,11,12; 5:15,16). Since the sacrifices offered for the disease are symbolic, then the disease for which the sacrifices were offered is also symbolic.

Here is a safe rule to follow in all the five books of the law of Moses. That which required a sin offering was either sinful in itself, or else, not being sinful in itself, it symbolized sin, a picture of sin in some way.

**13:45,46** Num 5:1-4; 12:10-14; Luke 17:11,12; Heb 13:12,13. The Lord Jesus suffered in the place of lepers outside the camp (note at 5:11,12). So great was His love for sinners. Outside the camp of God's people is where sinners are and where they must remain unless they repent and trust in the Lord Jesus.

**13:47-59** The same Hebrew word used for the disease that attacks persons is here use for that which attacks cloth and leather goods. No known kind of leprosy does this. It is not necessary for us to know exactly what this disease was. If this disease in the skin symbolizes sin in the nature breaking out in sinful acts, then sin in the clothing probably signifies defilement of one's outward way of life. Garments signify the life we live before all (Rev 3:4; 16:15). The unclean garment was to be burned (v 52) or washed (v 58). Sin that defiles our outward walk must be judged in the fire of God's holiness, and washed by the Word of God (John 13:10; 15:3; Eph 5:26; Isa 1:16,17; Jude 23).

time, and shall be clean.

59 "This *is* the law about the mark of leprosy in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or anything *made* of hides, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean."

**14** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "This is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: he shall be brought for the priest *to see*; 3 and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall look, and if he sees *that* the mark of leprosy is healed in the leper, 4 then the priest shall command that two live clean birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet and hyssop be brought for the one who is to be cleansed. 5 And the priest shall give a command to kill one of the birds in an earthenware pot over running water. 6 As for the live bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, the scarlet and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird *that was* killed over the running water. 7 And seven times he shall sprinkle the one who is to be cleansed from leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird go free in the open field.

8 "And the one who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, so that he may be clean. And after that he shall come into the camp, and shall stay out of his tent for seven days. 9 But it must come about on the seventh day that he shave off all the hair of his head and his beard and his eyebrows; he shall shave off all his hair; and he shall wash his clothes, and shall wash his body in water; and he shall be clean.

10 "And on the eighth day he shall take two

male lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, and one log of oil. 11 And the priest who pronounces *him* clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

12 "And the priest shall take one male lamb and offer it as a trespass offering, along with the log of oil, and wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. 13 And he shall kill the lamb in the place where he kills the sin offering and the burnt offering, in that holy place; for as the sin offering *belongs* to the priest, *so does* the trespass offering; it *is* most holy. 14 And the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* on the tip of the right ear of the one who is being cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the large toe of his right foot. 15 And the priest shall take *some* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand; 16 and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and shall sprinkle *some* of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD, 17 and of the rest of the oil that *is* in his hand the priest shall put on the tip of the right ear of the one who is being cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the large toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering. 18 And the rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall pour on the head of the one who is being cleansed; and the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD.

19 "And the priest shall offer the sin offering and make atonement for the one who is being

**14:2** Matt 8:4; Luke 5:14; 17:14.

**14:3** 13:46. Healing of this disease was possible. Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that men could heal it, so we assume that healing came from God. We know that man's sinful nature cannot in any way be healed by man. Compare Jer 13:23; etc. **14:4-7** This ritual was not for healing but for the cleansing of the person diseased. In the cleansing of the sinner before God both the death and resurrection of Christ have their part (see Rom 4:25). Both are at the very heart of the gospel which saves and sanctifies us (1 Cor 15:3,4,17). Both the death and resurrection of Christ could not be signified by one bird – unless God chose to miraculously give it new life each time it was sacrificed, and He did not. So in the cleansing of the diseased person God appointed this way of two birds – one to be sacrificed, the other to be released after being dipped in the blood of the first, thus identifying the second with the first.

Hyssop used in this ritual (v 6) was a small plant that grew in that area and is in the Bible associated with cleansing and

sanctification (Ex 12:22; Num 19:18; Ps 51:7; Heb 9:19). The earthenware vessel and running water may possibly signify Christ's human nature and the Holy Spirit (human nature is sometimes likened to earthen vessels – Rom 9:21-23; 2 Cor 4:7. The Holy Spirit is symbolized by water in John 7:38,39).

**14:8** The person to be declared clean had his part in the process. So does the believer now in the process of sanctification (Isa 1:16; Rom 6:11-13; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 5:16; Eph 4:22-32; Col 3:1-10; 1 John 1:9).

**14:10** "Three-tenths of an ephah" – probably about 6.5 liters.

"One log" – probably about 1/3 of a liter.

**14:12** 5:6,16; 6:6; Ex 29:22-24,26.

**14:14** Ex 29:20; Lev 8:23,24. Signifying the total person.

**14:15-18** The oil signifies God's Holy Spirit. In God's work of sanctification both the blood of Christ and the Spirit of God are necessary – 2 Thess 2:13; Heb 9:13,14; 10:10; 1 Pet 1:2.

**14:19** Note on 13:1-44.

cleansed from his uncleanness. And afterwards he shall kill the burnt offering. 20 And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

21 "And if he *is* poor, and cannot get so much, then he shall take one lamb as a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and a log of oil, 22 and two doves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering.

23 "And on the eighth day he shall bring them for his cleansing to the priest, before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 24 And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. 25 And he shall kill the lamb for the trespass offering, and the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of the one who is being cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the large toe of his right foot. 26 And the priest shall pour *some* of the oil into the palm of his own left hand; 27 and with his right finger the priest shall sprinkle *some* of the oil that *is* in his left hand seven times before the LORD. 28 And the priest shall put *some* of the oil that *is* in his hand on the tip of the right ear of the one who is being cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the large toe of his right foot, on the place where the blood of the trespass offering *was put*. 29 And the priest shall put the rest of the oil that is in his hand on the head of the one who is being cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD. 30 And he shall offer one of the doves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get, 31 the one as a sin offering, and the other as a burnt offering, such as he is able to get, with the grain offering. And the priest shall make atonement for the one who is being cleansed before the LORD. 32 This *is* the law *of the one* who has the mark of leprosy, who is not able to get what belongs to his cleansing."

33 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 34 "When you have come into the land of

Canaan, which I give to you as a possession, and I put the mark of leprosy in a house in the land of your possession, 35 and he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, 'It seems to me *there may be* a mark in the house', 36 then the priest shall command them to vacate the house, before the priest goes *into it* to see the mark, so that everything that is in the house is not made unclean. And afterwards the priest shall go in to see the house. 37 And he shall look at the mark, and, *if* the mark appearing in the walls of the house *has* greenish or reddish depressions, which appear lower than the wall, 38 then the priest shall leave the house by the door of the house, and close up the house for seven days. 39 And on the seventh day the priest shall come again and look, and *if* he sees *that* the mark has spread in the walls of the house, 40 then the priest shall command them to take away the stones where the mark is, and they shall throw them in an unclean place outside the city. 41 And he shall have the house scraped all around inside, and they shall pour the dust that they scrape off outside the city in an unclean place. 42 And they shall take other stones and put *them* in the place of those stones. And he shall take other mortar, and shall plaster the house.

43 "And if the mark comes again and breaks out in the house after he has taken away the stones, and after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered, 44 then the priest shall come and look, and *if* he sees *that* the mark has spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house; it *is* unclean. 45 And he shall tear down the house, its stones and its timber, and all the mortar of the house, and carry *them* out of the city to an unclean place.

46 "Moreover, anyone who goes into the house all the time that it is closed off shall be unclean until evening. 47 And anyone who lies down in the house shall wash his clothes, and anyone who eats in the house shall wash his clothes.

48 "But after the house has been plastered, if the priest comes in and looks *at it*, and sees *that* the mark has not spread in the house, after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the mark is healed. 49 And for cleansing the house he shall

**14:20** Notes on atonement at Ex 25:17 and 29:33.

**14:21,22** 5:11; 12:8; 27:8.

"Tenth of an ephah" – probably about 2 liters.

**14:34** "Mark of leprosy" – in Hebrew the same words as in 13:2. See note there. Here it cannot mean leprosy as we know it today. This plague in the walls of a house signifies sin and uncleanness, not in our nature, or conduct, but in our homes, our

close surrounding, our relationships. Everything that was incurably infected had to be destroyed. If it could be washed and saved it was to be done. The believer must be careful who he has fellowship with, and alert as to how his surroundings and relationship can affect him (compare Gen 19:1 – note on Lot in Sodom; 1 Kings 11:4; 2 Chron 18:1; Matt 10:34-38; 1 Cor 15:33; 2 Cor 6:14-18).

**14:49-53** 14:4-7.

take two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop, 50 and he shall kill one of the birds in an earthenware pot over running water, 51 and he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the live bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times, 52 and cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the live bird, and with the cedar wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet. 53 But he shall let the live bird go free outside the city in the open fields, and make atonement for the house; and it shall be clean.

54 "This *is* the law for all kinds of the mark of leprosy, and scale, 55 and for the leprosy of a garment, and of a house, 56 and for a swelling, and for a scab, and for a bright spot. 57 *It is* to teach when *it is* unclean, and when *it is* clean. This *is* the law of leprosy."

**15** And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When any man has a discharge from his body, he *is* unclean *because of* his discharge. 3 And this is his uncleanness in his discharge: whether his discharge flows from his body or his discharge from his body has stopped, *it is* his uncleanness.

4 "Every bed that the one who has the discharge lies on is unclean, and everything he sits on is unclean. 5 And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening. 6 And he who sits on anything that he who has the discharge sat on shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening.

7 "And he who touches the body of the one who has the discharge shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening.

8 "And if he who has the discharge spits on someone who is clean, then *that person* shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening.

9 "And any saddle the one who has the discharge rides on shall be unclean. 10 And whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening, and he who picks up any of those things shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening.

11 "And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, when he has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe

*himself* in water, and be unclean until evening.

12 "And the earthenware pot that the one who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every wooden utensil shall be rinsed in water.

13 "And when he who has a discharge is cleansed from his discharge, then he shall count seven days for himself for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean. 14 And on the eighth day he shall take for himself two doves, or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and give them to the priest. 15 And the priest shall offer them, one as a sin offering, and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him, for his discharge, in the presence of the LORD.

16 "And if any man has a seminal emission, then he shall wash his whole body in water, and be unclean until evening. 17 And every garment, and every hide, that the seminal emission was on shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. 18 Also if a woman lies with a man *and there is* a seminal emission, *both* of them shall bathe *themselves* in water, and be unclean until evening.

19 "And if a woman has a discharge, *and* her discharge in her body is blood, she shall be in her impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.

20 "And everything that she lies on in her impurity shall be unclean, also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. 21 And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening. 22 And whoever touches any thing that she sat on shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening. 23 And if it *is* on *her* bed, or on anything she sits on when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening.

24 "And if any man at all lies with her and her menstrual impurity is on him, he shall be unclean for seven days, and the whole bed he lies on shall be unclean.

25 "And if a woman have a discharge of her blood many days not at the time of her impurity, or if it runs beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge of her uncleanness shall be like the days of her impurity; she *shall be* unclean. 26 Every bed she lies on during the whole time of her discharge shall be to her like the bed of her impurity, and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, like the uncleanness of her impurity. 27 And whoever touches those things shall be unclean,

**15:2** Note at 11:1.

**15:2-13** In these verses sin is depicted as something that flows from within a person, sometimes unconsciously, secretly (see Matt 15:19,20). This kind of sin also must be

recognized, confessed, cleansed and atoned for.

**15:14,15** 14:22. Note on 13:1-44.

**15:16-18** 22:4-7; Deut 23:10,11.

**15:19-28** Note on vs 2-13.

and shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening.

28 "But if she becomes clean from her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. 29 And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two doves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 30 And the priest shall offer one as a sin offering, and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for the discharge of her uncleanness.

31 "Thus shall you separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, so that they do not die in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that *is* among them. 32 This *is* the law of the one who has a discharge, and of the one who has a seminal emission and is defiled with it, 33 and of her who is ill with her menstrual impurity, and of the one who has a discharge, man or woman, and of the one who lies with her who is unclean."

**16** And the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered *strange fire* before the LORD, and died;

**15:29,30** Note on 13:1-44.

**15:31** Compare 20:3; Ex 25:8; Num 19:13,20; Ezek 5:11; 36:17. In chapters 11-15 sin and sinful acts and thoughts are depicted as unclean animals, as being related to our birth, as a dangerous and ugly disease, as a defiler and destroyer of our behavior, possessions and home, and as a discharge from the body. The pictures combined reveal the total corruption of man's nature, the depravity that stains and defiles all he is and does (Gen 6:5; Eccl 9:3; Isa 64:6; Jer 17:9; Rom 7:18). Now in chapter 16 we turn to a picture of the eternal remedy for man's sin and depravity. The Lord Jesus Christ by the sacrifice of Himself has put away everything that can trouble and ruin believers, and has made for them a heaven without any unclean thing, or sickness or tears or anything that could ever defile them again. Rev 21:2-4,27.

**16:1** This is one of the key chapters in the books of Moses, and it describes one of the most important days in the Jewish year. For an understanding of the symbolic meanings here we should study Hebrews 5:1-5; 7:18-28; 8:1-6; 9:1-10,22.

"Sons of Aaron" - Lev 10:1-3. There is a reminder at the beginning of this chapter that God must be approached only in God's way.

**16:2** "Not. . . at all times" - Ex 30:10; Heb 9:7,25.

"Die" - Ex 28:43; 30:20,21; Lev 8:35. The fiery holiness of God acted as a barrier to the approach of sinful man into His presence. For other offenses connected with tabernacle worship that brought danger and

2 and the LORD said to Moses, "Tell your brother Aaron that he must not come at all times into the *Most Holy Place* inside the veil *that is* in front of the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, so that he does not die; for I will appear in the cloud on the mercy seat.

3 "Aaron must come into the *Most Holy Place* like this: with a young ox for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen tunic and have the linen breeches on his body and fasten on the linen sash, and put on the linen turban. These *are* holy garments; therefore he shall wash his body in water, and *then* put them on. 5 And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two young goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

6 "And Aaron shall offer his ox for the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his household. 7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8 And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9 And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. 10 But the goat on which the lot fell to

death see the note at Ex 28:35. Now Jesus has opened a new and living way through the sacrifice of Himself so that His people can come to God at any time (Heb 10:19-22; 1 Pet 3:18). "Let us draw near into the very presence of God in the Most Holy Place" was never spoken to ordinary Israelites. This was because the way was not yet made clear. Even the ordinary priests could not enter the Most Holy Place where God's presence was. And the Israelite who was not a priest never once saw the inside of the tabernacle. He could come only to the gate of the courtyard (see note at Ex 27:9-19). All this has great significance. The old covenant, its tabernacle and sacrifices were only shadows of good things to come and not the good things themselves (Heb 8:5; 10:1).

**16:3** "Sin offering" - 4:1-12; Heb 9:7.

"Burnt offering" - 1:10-13.

**16:4** Ex 28:29,42; 30:20; Heb 10:22.

**16:5** 4:13-21.

**16:6** Heb 5:3.

**16:7-10** Both of these goats signify Christ. The one offered as a sin offering signifies Christ dying for sinners in their place (4:3). The goat ("scapegoat", in Hebrew "azazel", the goat of removal) let loose in the wilderness signifies Christ in the sinner's place bearing sin away to an unknown place (John 1:29). The Lord Jesus Christ is the only sin-bearer God has appointed for men. Two goats were required to express two aspects of His work for sinners (compare 14:4-7). All the sins of the people of Israel were confessed over the head of the live goat, after which it went to a "solitary land" (vs 21,22).

The Lord Jesus bore our sins on the cross



be the scapegoat, is to be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement by it, *and* to let it go as a scapegoat into the wilderness.

11 "And Aaron shall bring the ox of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make atonement for himself, and for his household, and shall kill the ox of the sin offering which *is* for himself. 12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of fragrant incense beaten small, and bring *it* inside the veil, 13 and he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, so that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* on the testimony, so that he does not die. 14 And he shall take *some* of the blood of the ox, and sprinkle *it* with his finger on the eastern side of the mercy seat, and sprinkle *some* of the blood seven times with his finger in front of the mercy seat.

15 "Then he shall kill the goat for the sin offering that *is* for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the ox, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat, and in front of the mercy seat, 16 and make atonement for the *Most Holy Place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins. And he shall do the same for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remains with them among their uncleanness. 17 And no one is to be in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goes in to make atonement in the *Most Holy Place*, until he comes out, and has made atonement for himself and for his household and for all the congregation of Israel.

18 "And he shall go out to the altar that *is* before the LORD and make atonement for it, and take *some* of the blood of the ox, and of the blood of the goat, and put *it* all around on the horns of the altar. 19 And he shall sprinkle *some* of the blood on it seven times with his finger and cleanse

it and sanctify it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

20 "And when he has finished atoning for the *Most Holy Place* and the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. 21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the evil deeds of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is ready. 22 And the goat will carry away on it all their sins to a solitary land. And he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

23 "And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation and put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the *Most Holy Place*, and shall leave them there. 24 And he shall wash his flesh with water in a holy place, and put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself, and for the people. 25 And the fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar.

26 "And the one who released the goat *chosen* as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterwards come into the camp. 27 And *someone* shall take outside the camp the ox *for* the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering whose blood was brought into the *Most Holy Place* to make atonement. And they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their dung in the fire. 28 And the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterwards come into the camp.

29 "And *this* shall be a permanent regulation for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, you shall humble yourselves, and not do any work at all, *whether* native-born or a

(1 Pet 2:24) – a wilderness, a solitary place indeed (Matt 27:45,46)! He departed into the realm of death. Unlike this live goat which appeared no more, the Lord Jesus appeared again on the third day, but He was without those sins He had carried away. He left them in that wilderness where He went. He has separated the believer's sins from him as far as the east is from the west (Ps 103:12), buried them in the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19). At His resurrection the Lord Jesus appeared to only a few of His disciples. The day is coming when He will appear to all of them (Heb 9:28).

**16:12** Ex 30:34-38.

**16:13** Ex 25:21.

**16:14** Heb 9:25.

**16:15** Heb 7:27; 9:7,12.

**16:16-20** Ex 29:36,37; 30:10; Heb 2:17; 9:23. The tabernacle, even the *Most Holy Place*, as we can see from this, was defiled

by the presence of the Israelites around it and by the priests who served in it, all of whom were sinners. This defilement had to be removed by sacrifice. Note on atonement at Ex 29:33.

**16:17** Aaron, the high priest of Israel, had to perform this work of atonement by himself all alone. No one could help him, no one was even to be there inside with him. So the Lord Jesus alone made atonement for all His people.

**16:21,22** The sins of God's people are gone, never to appear again.

**16:27** Note at 4:11,12.

**16:29-31** The Hebrew translated "humble yourselves" means "to suffer, be afflicted, depressed, oppressed, humbled." The word may have been used to indicate fasting also. It was so important for Israelites to humble themselves on the day of atonement that an individual who did not was to be cut off

foreigner who is staying among you; 30 for on that day *the priest* will make atonement for you to cleanse you, so that you may be clean from all your sins in the presence of the LORD. 31 It *shall be* a Sabbath of rest for you, and by a permanent regulation you shall humble yourselves. 32 And the priest who is anointed and who is consecrated to serve as priest in his father's stead, shall make the atonement. And he shall put on the linen clothes, the holy garments, 33 and he shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and make atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and make atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

34 "And this shall be an everlasting regulation for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year."

And Moses did just as the LORD commanded him.

**17** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to Aaron, and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them; this *is* what the LORD has commanded, saying, 3 anyone of the house of Israel who kills an ox, or lamb, or goat in the camp, or who kills *it* out of the camp, 4 and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer as an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, that man

shall have blood imputed to him; that man has shed blood shall be cut off from among his people, 5 so that the children of Israel will bring their sacrifices which they are sacrificing in the open field; that they may bring them to the LORD to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to the priest, and offer them as peace offerings to the LORD. 6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat as a fragrant aroma to the LORD. 7 And they shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons to whom they have prostituted themselves. This shall be a permanent regulation for them throughout their generations.

8 "And you shall say to them, Anyone of the house of Israel, or of the foreigners who live among you, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9 and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from among his people.

10 "And *as for* anyone of the house of Israel, or of the foreigners who live among you, who eats any kind of blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul. 12 Therefore I said to the children of Israel, None of you shall

(see 23:28-30). It was a Sabbath when no work was to be done. A Sabbath of fasting, mourning, and affliction and humbling oneself. This speaks to us now of ceasing from our own works for salvation. Also of repentance, and trusting in the atonement Christ made. When there is no repentance and faith there will be no benefit from Christ's atonement. God commands men to repent (Luke 24:46,47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20; Jam 4:8-10; Isa 55:7). Through repentance and faith will come joy, peace, and fellowship with God. For further suggestions as to the meaning of these verses see the note at 23:26-32.

**16:30** Notice the word "all." This means sins done either knowingly or unknowingly. Compare Acts 13:38,39; Col 2:13; 1 John 1:9.

**16:34** Heb 9:7; 10:10,14.

**17:1** From the beginning of this chapter to the end of chapter 22 instructions are given concerning the holy life style the people of Israel were to adopt. It is significant that this comes immediately after chapter 16 with its day of atonement. God is saying, first see the grace of God shown in atonement and forgiveness, then live a holy life (compare Rom 6:1-14; 2 Cor 5:15; Eph 4:20-24; Col 3:1-11; Heb 10:19-23; 1 Pet 2:24,25).

**17:3-6** From this point on there was only one acceptable place for sacrifice. That was

at the tabernacle, and later at the temple in Jerusalem. Both tabernacle and temple signify Christ. Now there is one and only one place where God accepts man's offerings and that is in Christ (Heb 13:15,16; John 14:6). Verses 8 and 9 below show how serious a matter God's instruction here was. For other offenses against tabernacle worship that brought danger of death see note at Ex 28:35.

**17:7** "Demons" – this is the first reference to demons in the Bible. They are referred to rarely in the Old Testament, but frequently in the New Testament. They are called the devil's angels (Matt 25:41), and Satan is called the prince of demons (Matt 12:24-28). Demons are invisible fallen, wicked spirit beings who can enter the bodies of people and even animals (Mark 5:2,8-13). They can cause sickness or disabilities or madness (Matt 9:32,33; 17:14-18; Mark 5:2-5; Luke 13:10,16). They are behind false teaching (1 Tim 4:1). They are probably fallen angels who took Satan's part when he sinned and fell. Satan and his demons want to be worshiped (Matt 4:8,9). According to the Bible they receive this worship through the worship of false gods and idols. See Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20.

"Prostituted themselves" – 20:5; Ex 34:15; Jer 2:20.

**17:10,11** 3:17; 7:26,27; Gen 9:4; Deut

eat blood, nor shall any foreigner who lives among you eat blood.

13 "And anyone of the children of Israel, or of the foreigners who live among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dirt. 14 For *it is* the life of all flesh; its blood *is* as its life; therefore I said to the children of Israel, You shall not eat the blood with any kind of meat; for the life of all flesh *is* its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.

15 "And every person, whether native-born or a foreigner, who eats that which has died, or which was torn *by beasts*, shall both wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until evening; then he shall be clean. 16 But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."

**18** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, I *am* the LORD your God. 3 You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, and you shall not do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am taking you, *and* you shall not behave according to their rules. 4 You shall obey my laws and observe my regulations to walk in them; I *am* the LORD your God. 5 You shall therefore keep my regulations, and my laws; if a man obeys them he will live through them; I *am* the LORD.

6 "None of you shall approach any of his blood relatives to uncover nakedness; I *am* the LORD.

7 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, or the nakedness of your mother; she *is* your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness.

8 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it *is* your father's nakedness.

9 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or daughter of your mother, *whether she be* born at home, or born outside; *do not uncover* their nakedness.

12:16,23-25. Life is in the blood. This is why the blood of sacrifice makes atonement – it is life poured out by a substitute.

**17:15,16** 11:24,25.

**18:3** "Egypt" – Ezek 20:7,8.

"Canaan" – Lev 18:24-30; 20:23.

**18:5** Neh 9:29; Ezek 18:9; 20:11; Luke 10:28; Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12. This was the basis of the law and the old covenant. The problem was that because of the sinfulness of man's nature no one ever kept perfectly the law of God (except the Lord Jesus who had no sinful nature). See Rom 3:9-12,23, and the note at Ex 19:8. But it was certainly possible for the Israelites to avoid the detestable sins and idolatries of the Egyptians and Canaanites.

**18:6-18** All sexual contact and marriage

10 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your son's daughter, or of your daughter's daughter; *do not uncover* their nakedness; for their nakedness *is* your own nakedness.

11 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten of your father; she *is* your sister; you shall not uncover her nakedness.

12 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she *is* your father's close relative.

13 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she *is* your mother's close relative.

14 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother; you shall not approach his wife; she *is* your aunt.

15 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she *is* your son's wife; you shall not uncover her nakedness.

16 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.

17 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shall you take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; *for they are* her close relatives; it *is* wickedness.

18 "And you shall not marry a woman and her sister as a rival, while the other woman is still living, to uncover her nakedness.

19 "Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during her period of impurity.

20 "And you shall not have intercourse with your neighbour's wife, to defile yourself with her.

21 "And you shall not let any of your offspring pass through *the fire* to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.

22 "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination.

23 "And you shall not have intercourse with any animal to defile yourself with it; nor shall any woman stand before an animal to have intercourse with it;

between members of the same family were forbidden.

**18:20** Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10; Prov 6:29; Matt 5:27,28; 1 Cor 6:9; Heb 13:4.

**18:21** "Pass through the fire" – this is probably an expression meaning simply "be sacrificed in the fire."

"Molech" – this was one of the gods of the Ammonites, a people who lived near Canaan to the east. His devotees sometimes actually burned their children in the fire to him. Any Israelite doing such a thing must be put to death (20:2-5). In spite of this warning king Solomon later built a high place for Molech (1 Kings 11:6-8).

**18:22** 20:13; Deut 23:18; Rom 1:27; 1 Cor 6:9. Note at Gen 19:4,5.

**18:23** Ex 22:19; Lev 20:15,16; Deut 27:21.

it *is* perversion.

24 "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the nations which I will drive out before you were defiled by all these things. 25 And the land is defiled; therefore I will punish it for its wickedness, and the land itself vomits out its inhabitants. 26 You shall therefore keep my regulations and my laws, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations; not any of your own nation, or any foreigner who lives among you 27 (for the men of the land who *were there* before you have done all these abominations, and the land is defiled), 28 so that the land does not also vomit you out for defiling it, as it vomited out the nations that *were* before you.

29 "For anyone who commits any of these abominations, those persons who commit *them* shall be cut off from among their people. 30 Therefore you shall keep my charge so that you do not follow *any* of these abominable customs which were followed before you, and so that you do not defile yourselves with them. I *am* the LORD your God."

**19** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy; for I the LORD your God *am* holy.

3 "Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep my Sabbaths. I *am* the LORD your God.

4 "Do not turn to idols, or make cast metal gods for yourselves. I *am* the LORD your God.

5 "And if you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it for your acceptance. 6 It must be eaten the same day you offer it and on the next day; if any of it remains until the third day, it must be burned in the fire. 7 For if any of it is eaten on the third day, *it is* offensive. It shall not

be accepted. 8 Therefore *everyone* who eats it shall bear his guilt, because he has profaned a thing consecrated to the LORD, and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

9 "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not fully reap the corners of your field, and you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 And you shall not go over your vineyard a second time, nor gather *every* grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and foreigner; I *am* the LORD your God.

11 "You shall not steal, or cheat, or lie to one another.

12 "And you shall not swear falsely by my name, nor profane the name of your God; I *am* the LORD.

13 "You shall not defraud your neighbour, or rob *him*; the wages of a hired person are not to remain with you all night until the morning.

14 "You shall not curse the deaf, or put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shall fear your God; I *am* the LORD.

15 "You shall not pervert justice. You shall not be partial to the poor, or honour the person of the great; *but* shall judge your neighbor righteously.

16 "You shall not go up and down as a tale-bearer among your people; and you shall not take a stand against the life of your neighbour; I *am* the LORD.

17 "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall by all means rebuke your neighbour, and not share in his guilt.

18 "You shall not take vengeance, or hold any grudge against the children of your people; but you shall love your neighbour as yourself; I *am* the LORD.

19 "You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let two different kinds of your livestock mate together. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed, nor

**18:24,25** 20:23; Deut 9:5; 18:11; Rom 1:18; Col 3:6. At last the practices of the nations in Canaan had become so detestable that God's wrath fell on them. Note at Gen 6:7. God determined to drive them out and give their land to His people Israel. In all this we may be absolutely sure of this truth – there is no punishment which God sends on any individual or any group or people or nation which is undeserved. Only when the sins of men reach such a stage that God must judge and punish them does He do so.

**18:30** 22:9; Deut 11:1.

**19:2** Ex 19:6; Lev 11:44; 20:7,26; Isa 6:3; 1 Pet 1:16. Note at 20:7.

**19:3** Ex 20:8,12; 31:13; Deut 5:16.

**19:4** Ex 20:4; Lev 20:23; 26:1; Ps 96:5; 115:4-7. What need had they of any gods or idols? They had the Lord God, the loving creator of the universe.

**19:5-8** 7:15-18.

**19:9,10** 23:22; Deut 24:20-22. See God's concern for the poor and needy, and the duty of God's people to help them.

**19:11** Ex 20:15,16; Jer 9:3-5; Eph 4:25.

**19:12** Ex 20:7; Deut 5:11; Matt 5:33.

**19:13** Ex 22:7-15,21-27.

**19:14** Notes on fear of God at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**19:15** Ex 23:3,6; Deut 1:17; 10:17; 16:19.

**19:16** Ps 15:3; Jer 6:28; 9:4; Ezek 22:9.

**19:17** 1 John 2:9,11; 3:15.

**19:18** "Vengeance" – Deut 32:35; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30. Note at Ex 21:23-25; Num 31:2.

"Love your neighbour as yourself" – one of the two greatest commands in the whole law. It sums up all of a person's duties toward others (Matt 19:19; Mark 12:31; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Jam 2:8). "Neighbour" means any fellow human being regardless of race, color, caste, social or financial position or any other condition which tends

wear a garment of two different kinds of material.

20 "And whoever has intercourse with a woman who *is* a slave betrothed to *another* man, and she is not redeemed or given her freedom, there shall be punishment, but they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. 21 And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, a ram for a trespass offering. 22 And the priest shall make atonement for him in the presence of the LORD, with the ram of the trespass offering for his sin which he has committed; and the sin which he has committed will be forgiven him.

23 "And after you enter the land, and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised; it shall be as uncircumcised to you for three years; it shall not be eaten. 24 But in the fourth year all their fruit shall be holy to praise the LORD *with*. 25 And in the fifth year you may eat of their fruit, so that it may yield their increase for you; *I am* the LORD your God.

26 "You shall not eat *anything* with the blood. And you shall not use divination, or sorcery.

27 "You shall not round off *the hair* at the sides of your heads, nor trim the corners of your beard.

28 "You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead, or make any tattoo marks on yourselves. *I am* the LORD.

29 "Do not degrade your daughter to make her a prostitute, or the land will fall into prostitution, and the land will become full of wickedness.

30 "You shall keep my Sabbaths, and show reverence for my sanctuary; *I am* the LORD.

31 "Do not turn to mediums, or seek out spiritists, or you will be defiled by them; *I am* the LORD your God.

32 "You shall rise in the presence of the gray

head, and honour the presence of the aged, and fear your God; *I am* the LORD.

33 "And if a foreigner is staying with you in your land, you shall not oppress him. 34 The foreigner who lives with you shall be to you like one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt; *I am* the LORD your God.

35 "You shall not pervert justice in measuring length, or weight, or quantity. 36 You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin. *I am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 "Therefore you shall observe all my regulations and all my laws to do them; *I am* the LORD."

**20** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Again, you shall say to the children of Israel, Anyone of the children of Israel, or of the foreigners who are staying in Israel, who gives *any* of his offspring to Molech shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he has given *one* of his offspring to Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. 4 And if the people of the land close their eyes concerning that man when he gives *one* of his offspring to Molech, and do not kill him, 5 then I will set my face against that man and against his family, and will cut him off from among their people, and all who follow him to prostitute themselves to Molech.

6 "And I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to prostitute themselves in following them, and will cut him off from among his people.

7 "Therefore sanctify yourselves and be holy,

to divide people. See Luke 10:29-37.

**19:20** Deut 22:23-27.

**19:21** 6:1-7.

**19:26** "Blood" - 17:10.

"Divination" - v 31; 20:6,27; Deut 18:10,11; 1 Sam 28:3; 2 Kings 17:17; Isa 8:19. Dealing with sorcerers, mediums and fortune tellers brings a person under the influence of demons and of Satan. Such people do not know God or the future or anything else that men need to find out (though they may occasionally make predictions that later prove to be accurate, those predictions will not be helpful to anyone, and more often than not their predictions are not at all fulfilled). God tells us in His word what we need to know about what we should be and do, and also about the future.

**19:29** 21:9; Deut 22:21; 23:17,18.

**19:30** 19:3; 26:2.

**19:31** Note at Ex 22:18.

**19:32** Prov 23:22; Lam 5:12; 1 Tim 5:1.

**19:33,34** Ex 22:21; Lev 19:18; Deut 24:17,18; Matt 7:12.

**19:35,36** Deut 25:13-16; Prov 20:10; Ezek 45:10. An ephah was a dry measure, a hin was a liquid measure.

**20:2-3** "Gives" - or "sacrifices."

"Molech" - note at 18:21.

**20:5** "Prostitute themselves" - the people of God going after idols and false gods or things of this evil world is frequently compared in the Bible to prostitution and adultery (Isa 1:21; Jer 2:20; 3:1,6,8,9; 13:27; Ezek 16:17,28; 23:5,8,19; Hos 2:5; 4:15; 5:3,4; Jam 4:4; Rev 17:5; 18:3). Being unfaithful to God in spiritual matters is like a woman's unfaithfulness to her husband. By making this comparison God shows what an evil thing it is.

**20:6** 19:31.

**20:7** The word "holy" comes from a Hebrew word which means separated or set apart. In the Bible God and certain persons, places,



for I *am* the LORD your God. 8 And you shall keep my statutes, and obey them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

9 "Anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother; his blood *will be* on his *own* head.

10 "And the man who commits adultery with another man's wife, *both* the adulterer who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

11 "And the man who lies with his father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness. Both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood *will be* on their *own* heads.

12 "And if a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have worked perversion. Their blood *will be* on their *own* heads.

13 "And if a man lies with *another* man, as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *will be* on their *own* heads.

14 "And if a man takes a wife and her mother, it *is* wickedness. They shall be burned in the fire, both he and they, so that there will be no wickedness among you.

15 "And if a man lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal.

16 "And if a woman approaches any animal to mate with it, you shall kill the woman, and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *will be* on their *own* heads.

17 "And if a man takes his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it *is* a wicked thing, and they shall be cut off in the sight

of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness. He will bear his guilt.

18 "And if a man lies with a woman in her monthly period, and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her flow, and she has laid bare the flow of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from among their people.

19 "And you shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, or of your father's sister, for such a one has uncovered his close relative. They will bear their guilt.

20 "And if a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness. They will bear their sin; they will die childless.

21 "And if a man takes his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They will be childless.

22 "Therefore you shall keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them, so that the land where I am taking you to live does not vomit you out. 23 And you shall not walk in the ways of the nation which I will drive out before you; for they committed all these things, and so I abhorred them. 24 But I have said to you, You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess it, a land that flows with milk and honey. I *am* the LORD your God who has separated you from *other* people.

25 "Therefore you shall make a distinction between clean animals and unclean, and between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by animal or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground which I have separated from you as unclean. 26 And you shall be holy for me, for I the LORD *am* holy, and have separated you from *other* people, so that you would be mine.

things, and days are said to be holy. When referring to God the word means separate from all evil, all sin, all impurity. Holiness is one of the most striking and awe-inspiring attributes of the God of the Bible. No other literature in existence emphasizes God's holiness so much or presents it so fully. God is completely, perfectly, utterly holy (Ex 15:11; Lev 11:44; 19:2; 1 Sam 2:2; Ps 145:17; Isa 6:3; Heb 1:12; 1 Pet 1:16; Rev 15:4). God has a hatred of all that is wicked, unclean, sinful.

The whole Bible is the story of how such a holy God devised the way whereby sinful men could be forgiven, purged of their sin, made holy and brought into His gloriously holy presence. Men are holy when God has separated them from others and set them apart for Himself (Ex 19:5,6; Lev 11:44,45; 1 Pet 2:8-10). In the New Testament all believers in Christ are called holy ones (Rom 1:1; Phil 1:1; etc). When God sets apart individuals or a people for Himself He

demands that they separate themselves from all sin and evil. And He begins the work of purifying them (Eph 5:25-27; Titus 2:11-14. See also note at John 17:17-19).

Places (Ex 3:5; 19:23; 26:33), things (Ex 28:2,38; 29:33,34; 30:10; 40:10), and days (Gen 2:3; Ex 20:8; Lev 23:2 - days for holy meetings) are also called holy. This is because God set them apart for sacred purposes in His dealings with men. **20:8** Ex 31:13.

"Who sanctifies you" - the Hebrew here could be translated "Who makes you holy", or "who sets you apart as holy."

**20:9** Ex 21:17; Deut 27:16.

**20:10** Ex 20:14; Lev 18:20; Deut 5:18.

**20:11-21** 18:7-23; Deut 27:20-23.

**20:22** 18:28. The ground itself finds it hard to bear the sinners that live on it.

**20:23** 18:3,25.

**20:24** Ex 13:5; 33:1-3,16.

**20:25** 10:10; Deut 14:3-21. Note at Lev 11:2-23.

27 "And a man or woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones. Their blood *will be* on their *own heads*."

**21** And the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, No one shall defile himself for a dead person among his people. 2 But he may defile himself for a close relative, *that is*, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother, 3 and for his virgin sister who is near him, not having a husband. 4 *But* a leader among his people shall not defile himself to make himself unclean.

5 "They shall not make bald spots on their heads, and shall not shave off the edges of their beards, or make any cuts on their body. 6 They shall be holy for their God, and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and they present* the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy.

7 "They shall not marry one *who is* a prostitute, or profane, and they shall not marry a woman divorced by her husband; for *the priest is* holy to his God. 8 So you shall sanctify him; for he presents the bread of your God; he shall be holy to you, for I the LORD, who sanctifies you, *am* holy.

9 "And the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by prostituting herself, she is profaning her father; she shall be burned in the fire.

10 "And the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured, and who was consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head or tear his clothes, 11 and he shall not approach any dead body, nor defile

himself *even* for his father or for his mother, *if they die*, 12 or go out of the sanctuary, or profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God *is* on him. I *am* the LORD.

13 "And he shall marry a virgin. 14 He shall not marry a widow, or a divorced woman, or a profane *one*, or a prostitute, but shall marry a virgin of his own people. 15 And he must not profane his offspring among his people; for I the LORD sanctify him."

16 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 17 "Speak to Aaron, saying, None of your offspring throughout their generations who has *any* blemish is to approach to present the bread of his God. 18 For none who has a blemish shall approach: a blind man, or a lame man, or one who is disfigured, or has a deformed *limb*, 19 or one with a crippled foot, or crippled hand, 20 or a hunchback, or a dwarf, or one with a defective eye, or one who has skin defects or scabs, or crushed testicles. 21 No one among the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall approach to present the offerings of the LORD made by fire. He has a blemish; he shall not approach to present the bread of his God. 22 He shall eat the bread of his God, both the most holy and the holy, 23 but because he has a blemish he shall not go behind the veil, or come near the altar, so that he does not profane my sanctuaries; for I the LORD sanctify them."

24 And Moses told this to Aaron, and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel.

**22** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Tell Aaron and his sons to separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and not to profane my holy name *in those*

**21:1** The following two chapters give instructions regarding the priests. Priests here symbolize all believers in this New Testament age (see note at Ex 28:1). The priests were to be without defect and to keep themselves holy. The laws in these chapters are symbolic of spiritual realities that God wants to see in believers now.

**21:1-4** Death is the result of sin and even the touch of death was to be regarded as defiling (Gen 2:17; Rom 6:16,21,23; Lev 11:40; Num 19:14; Ezek 44:25). So death speaks of man's sinfulness and corrupted condition, and believers now are to watch themselves lest they be corrupted by the touch of the fallen world (2 Cor 6:14-18; Gal 1:4; 6:14; Col 3:2,5; Titus 2:14; 1 John 2:15,16; 5:19).

**21:5** Deut 14:1; Ezek 44:20. Such practices were probably common among the peoples around them in that day.

**21:6** "Bread of their God" - note at 3:11.

**21:7** Ezek 44:22.

**21:8** See 20:8 for alternate possible

translations of "sanctifies." Holiness is one of the great key words of the Bible.

**21:9** 19:29.

**21:10-15** The high priest signifies Christ the High Priest. Higher things were required of him than of the ordinary priests. He had a great work to do and must not let any relationship in life hinder him (compare Matt 10:37; 12:46-50; 16:21-23).

**21:13** 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25,26; Rev 19:6-8.

**21:15** 20:8.

**21:16-23** The priests without physical defects signify the perfection of human nature that was in Christ and that God wants to see in all His people (Matt 5:48; 2 Cor 7:1; 13:11; Eph 4:13; Col 1:28; 4:12; Jam 1:4). The physical defects mentioned in vs 18-20 symbolize spiritual defects that make believers unfit for the service of God. Needless to say these physical defects have nothing to do with spirituality, and some physically handicapped people become great servants of God.

**21:23** 20:8.

things which they dedicate to me; *I am* the LORD.

3 "Say to them, Anyone among all your offspring throughout your generations who approaches the holy things which the children of Israel dedicate to the LORD, if he has any uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from my presence; *I am* the LORD.

4 "No one of the offspring of Aaron who is a leper, or who has a discharge, shall eat the holy things, until he is clean. And anyone who touches anything *that is* made unclean *by* a dead *body*, or a man who has a seminal emission, 5 or anyone who touches any creeping thing which can make him unclean or a man by whom he may become unclean, whatever uncleanness he has, 6 the person who touches any such shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy things, unless he has washed his body in water. 7 And when the sun sets, he shall be clean, and afterwards may eat of the holy things; because it is his food. 8 He shall not eat that which dies, or is torn *by beasts*, and *soddefile* himself with it; *I am* the LORD.

9 "Therefore they shall keep my charge, so that they do not become burdened with sin because of it, and so die if they profane it. I the LORD sanctify them.

10 "No foreigner shall eat a holy thing; no one staying with the priest, or a hired servant may eat a holy thing. 11 But if the priest buys anyone with his money, *that person* may eat it; and those who are born in his house may eat his food. 12 Also if a priest's daughter is *married* to a foreigner, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things. 13 But if the priest's daughter is a widow, or divorced, has no child, and has returned to her father's house, she may eat of her father's food, as in her youth; but no foreigner is to eat of it.

14 "And if a man eats of a holy thing unintentionally, then he shall add a fifth *part* to it and give *it* to the priest with the holy thing. 15 And they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel which they offer to the LORD, 16 or permit them to be guilty of trespassing in eating their holy things, for I the LORD sanctify them."

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the

children of Israel, and say to them: When any *of you* of the house of Israel, or of the foreigners in Israel, presents his offering for any vow or for any of his freewill offerings which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering, 19 for you to be accepted *you must offer* a male without blemish from the cattle, of the sheep, or of the goats. 20 *But* you must not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be accepted for you. 21 And if anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfil *his* vow, or as a freewill offering, of cattle or sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there is to be no blemish in it. 22 You shall not offer these to the LORD: *that which is* blind or injured or maimed, or having a sore or skin disease or scabs. And do not offer them to the LORD in fire on the altar. 23 You may offer either an ox or a lamb that is deformed or stunted *as a* freewill offering, but it will not be accepted for a vow. 24 You shall not offer to the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; you must not sacrifice *it* in your land. 25 Nor shall you *accept* any of those from the hand of a foreigner to offer as the food of your God, because they have a deformity in them, *and* are blemished. They will not be accepted for you."

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 27 "When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, then it is to be with its mother for seven days, but from the eighth day on it will be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28 And you shall not kill *either* a cow or ewe together with its young on the same day.

29 "And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer it so you will be accepted. 30 It must be eaten on the same day; you shall leave none of it until the next day. *I am* the LORD.

31 "Therefore you shall keep my commandments, and do them. *I am* the LORD. 32 And you shall not profane my holy name, for I will be sanctified among the children of Israel. I am the LORD who sanctifies you, 33 who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I am the LORD."

**23** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, These *are* the LORD's feasts, my feasts,

**22:3** 7:20,21; Num 19:13.

**22:4** "Leper" – note at 13:2.

**22:7** Num 18:11.

**22:9** Ex 28:43; Num 18:22.

"Sanctify" – 20:8.

**22:10** Ex 29:33.

**22:11** Otherwise what could he eat?

**22:20-22** "Blemish" – there must be no blemish because the offerings signify Christ, the perfect one, the holy one.

**22:23** "Deformed" – these offerings represented the people who gave them,

therefore they could be deformed or blemished, since people are like that. They did not represent Christ because they were not of those five kinds of offerings God prescribed as offerings in the place of sinners (Leviticus chapters 1-5).

**22:24,25** That which is called the food of God must be perfect, for it speaks of Christ.

**22:32** "Sanctifies" – 20:8.

**23:1,2** In the first few chapters of Leviticus we saw that one kind of sacrifice alone could not signify all that the Lord Jesus did for

which you shall proclaim *as* holy convocations.

3 "Work is to be done on six days, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *in it*; *it is* the LORD's Sabbath in all places where you live.

4 "These *are* the LORD's feasts, holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their seasons: 5 In the evening of the fourteenth *day* of the first month *is* the LORD's Passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD. For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. 7 On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no heavy work in it, 8 but you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. On the seventh day *is* a holy convocation; you shall do no heavy work *in it*."

9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you have entered the land which I am giving to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first of your harvest to the priest; 11 and he shall wave the sheaf in the LORD's presence for you to be accepted. The priest shall wave it on the day following the Sabbath. 12 And on that day when you wave the sheaf you shall offer a year-old male lamb without blemish as a

burnt offering to the LORD. 13 And its grain offering *shall be* two-tenths of an *ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD as a soothing aroma; and its drink offering shall be a fourth of a hin of wine. 14 And until the day you bring an offering to your God you shall not eat bread, or roasted grain, or *any* product of the field. *This shall be* a regulation forever throughout your generations in all the places you live.

15 "And from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, you shall count off seven full Sabbaths. 16 You shall count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.

17 You shall bring out of the places where you live two wave loaves of two-tenths of an *ephah*. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with yeast; *they are* the firstfruits to the LORD. 18 And with the bread you shall offer seven lambs a year old, without blemish, and one young ox, and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to the LORD, together with their grain offering, and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD. 19 Then you shall sacrifice one young goat as a sin offering, and two lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings. 20 And

sinners in His one sacrifice (note at 1:2). In this chapter we can see that one feast or festival or holy day alone cannot signify all that God wants for His people. There were seven of these times of observance for the whole nation. They covered the great events of Israel's past, present and future. All these times of observance signify great spiritual realities revealed in the New Testament. All speak of Christ and His believers. The order of these feasts is also significant.

**23:3** The seven feasts or festivals were in addition to the usual Sabbaths mentioned here.

**23:5** Ex 12:3-13, 21-27. This was a yearly reminder of their deliverance from slavery and death. The Passover signifies Christ, the Passover for believers, slain for them (1 Cor 5:7). The bondage of Israel in Egypt speaks of the bondage of sin. Egypt symbolizes this present evil world, the kingdom of Satan. Christ shed His blood to redeem and rescue us from this world system (1 Pet 1:18, 19; Matt 20:28; Gal 1:4; Titus 2:14). In saving His people this was the first great work of the incarnate Christ. The Passover took place on the 14th day of the first month. It was also called the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread. Christ was crucified at the time of the Passover (Matt 26:17-20; 27:1, 2).

**23:6-8** The second festival was that of Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:14-20; 23:15; 34:18; Num 28:16-25; Deut 16:3-8). It was actually a continuation of the Passover. The first day was a rest day signifying, perhaps,

Christ's rest in the tomb after His crucifixion. See note on unleavened bread at Ex 12:8. Israel was to observe this feast and for seven days eat bread made without yeast. Seven signifies a complete time.

**23:9-14** This festival or holy day took place on the "day after the Sabbath." If this Sabbath is the one mentioned in v 7, this would mean that the feast of Firstfruits took place on the 16th of the month. The Passover was on the 14th. In other words beginning with the Passover this was the third day, the day on which Christ rose from the dead (Matt 16:21; 17:23; 27:64; 28:1; 1 Cor 15:3, 4). This feast of Firstfruits signifies Christ the first of all those who rise from the dead never to die again (1 Cor 15:20-23; Rev 1:5).

**23:12** Note at 1:3.

**23:13** "Two-tenths of an ephah" – probably a little more than 4 liters.

"Fourth of a hin" – probably about one liter.

"Drink offering" – Ex 29:40.

**23:15-21** This feast was called Pentecost. Pentecost means "fiftieth (day)." It took place exactly fifty days after the feast of Firstfruits. Israel was to offer new grain to the Lord (v 16). This feast also was in some way like Firstfruits (v 17). Fifty days after the Lord Jesus rose from the dead the Holy Spirit came upon His waiting disciples (Acts 2:1-4). This was a new beginning. This age of the New Covenant, the age of grace, began then. The bread was to be taken with yeast (v 17) because it represented

the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. 21 And on the same day you shall make a proclamation; it is to be a holy convocation for you. *In it* you shall do no heavy work. *It shall be* a regulation forever in all the places you live throughout your generations.

22 "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field; and when you reap you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor, and for the foreigner. I *am* the LORD your God."

23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a Sabbath, a reminder by the blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 You shall do no heavy work *in it*; but you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD."

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 27 "Also on the tenth *day* of that seventh month

*there shall be* a Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you. And you shall humble your souls, and present an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28 And on that day you shall do no work, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, for making atonement for you in the presence of the LORD your God. 29 For any person who will not humble themselves on that day shall be cut off from among his people. 30 And any person who does any work on that day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 You shall do no kind of work. *This is to be* a statute forever throughout your generations in every place you live. 32 *It shall be* a Sabbath of rest for you, and you shall humble yourselves. You shall celebrate your Sabbath on the ninth *day* of the month *beginning in the evening*, from evening to evening."

33 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month *begins* the Feast of Tabernacles to the LORD, *which goes on* for seven days. 35 On the first day there *shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no heavy work *in*

believers and there is still some evil in them. Note on yeast at Ex 12:8.

**23:23-25** Num 29:1-6. The feast or festival of Trumpets was the fifth feast. It took place nearly 4 months after the feast of Pentecost. Not much is said of it in the Bible and its symbolism is not explained. But in general the blowing of trumpets had several meanings.

It signified war (Num 10:9; Jer 4:19); assembling the people and moving on (Num 10:1-18); announcement of a king (1 Kings 1:34,39; 2 Kings 9:13); manifestation of God's majesty and power (at Sinai - Ex 19:16); proclaiming the great festivals of Israel (Num 10:10; 2 Chron 29:27).

The feast of trumpets took place at the start of the seventh month. Seven signifies a complete period of time. The last two festivals also were in the seventh month. A complete period of time from the earlier festivals of the Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits as fulfilled spiritually in the New Testament would put the feast of Trumpets at the end of this church age. Then (if we follow the meaning of trumpet blasts in the Old Testament) we should have a final call to war, the gathering of God's people, the appearance of a king, the manifestation of the majesty and power of God, the overthrow of the ungodly, and a great festival of rejoicing for God's people. According to the New Testament this is exactly what will take place at the end of this age (Rev 11:15-18; 16:12-16; Matt 24:30,31; Rev 19:11-17; 20:6).

**23:26-32** Ex 30:10; Lev 16:29-34; Num 29:7-11. The sixth appointed time was the

Day of Atonement. It also took place in the seventh month. If the order of Christ's actual work for sinners is followed, the day of atonement should come with the first three feasts in the first month of the year. For it was on the cross that Christ shed His blood and soon after entered heaven (Heb 9:11-14). But if we carefully study Leviticus chapter 16 we can see that part of the ritual on the day of atonement took place after the high priest had made atonement in the Most Holy Place and came out (16:20-22). That is, confession of the sins of Israel took place after that atonement was made and after the high priest appeared again. Here in chapter 23 God gave the order in which these holy days should be observed because He wanted us to learn something by it.

By placing the day of atonement as the sixth in the order, and in the seventh month, surely God would have us look for part of the symbolism of that day to be fulfilled at the end of this age.

Notice that the matter emphasized here in vs 26-32 is the humbling of themselves by the people of Israel and their observance of rest. The day of atonement was also a day of national confession and mourning and repentance. For these reasons it is very probable that this day here signifies the repentance of Israel at the end of this age described in Zech 12:10 - 13:1 and referred to, it seems, in Rom 11:25-27 (see notes on those verses). On that day they will partake of the atonement and receive their long rejected Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and find rest in Him.

**23:33-43** Deut 16:13,16; Ezra 3:4; Neh 8:14; John 7:2. The seventh and last feast, the feast of Tabernacles or Booths, was five



*it.* 36 For seven days you shall present an offering made by fire to the LORD; the eighth day shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a day of solemn assembly, and you shall do no heavy work in it.

37 "These are the feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *as* holy convocations for presenting an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering, and a grain offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, each on its day. 38 *This is* in addition to the Sabbaths of the LORD, and in addition to your *regular* gifts and all your vows and all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.

39 "Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall keep a feast to the LORD for seven days. The first day *shall be* a Sabbath and the eighth day *shall be* a Sabbath. 40 And on the first day you shall take for yourselves the fruit of choice trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of leafy trees, and willows from the brook, and shall rejoice in the presence of the LORD your God for seven days. 41 And you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It *shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 You shall stay in booths seven days; all native-born Israelites shall stay in booths 43 so that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel stay in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. *I am* the LORD your God."

44 And Moses announced the feasts of the LORD to the children of Israel.

**24** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Command the children of Israel to bring to you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, so that the lamps will burn continually. 3 Aaron shall keep *the lamps* in order outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, from evening to morning before the LORD

continually. *This shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations. 4 He shall keep the lamps in order on the pure *gold* lampstand before the LORD continually.

5 "And you shall take fine flour, and bake twelve loaves with it; two-tenths *of an ephah* shall be *used* in each loaf. 6 And you shall place them in two rows, six to a row, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. 7 And you shall put pure frankincense on *each* row to be a memorial portion for the bread, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 8 He shall place it in order before the LORD regularly every Sabbath. It is an everlasting covenant for the children of Israel. 9 And it shall belong to Aaron and his sons. And they shall eat it in a holy place; for it *shall be* most holy to him among the offerings of the LORD made by fire, his portion forever."

10 And the son of an Israelite *woman*, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this son of the Israelite woman and an Israelite man had a fight in the camp, 11 and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the name *of the* LORD and cursed. And they brought him to Moses (his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan), 12 and they put him in custody so that the mind of the LORD might be made clear to them.

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 14 "Bring the one who cursed outside the camp, and have all who heard *him* put their hands on his head, and have all the congregation stone him. 15 And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God will bear his sin, 16 and the one who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death, *and* all the congregation shall certainly stone him, the foreigner just as the native-born; if he blasphemes the name *of the* LORD he shall be put to death.

17 "And the person who takes the life of any human being shall surely be put to death. 18 And the one who kills an animal must make restitution for it, animal for animal. 19 And if a man injures his

days after the Day of Atonement. That is, it signifies an event at the end of this age. Zech 14:16 is especially meaningful here. It speaks of a time in the future, after the repentance of Israel at the end of this age, and after the return of Christ to reign as king (Zech 12:10-14; 14:4-9). So this feast looked back to Egypt and its bondage and misery (vs 42,43), but forward to the gathering of Israel to joyfully worship the king, the Lord Jesus Christ as He reigns on the earth. The feast was to be for seven days – a complete and perfect period of time.

**24:2** Ex 27:20,21.

**24:4** Ex 25:31; 31:8; 37:17.

**24:5** Ex 25:30; 39:36; 40:23.

"Two-tenths of an ephah" – probably a little more than 4 liters.

**24:6** Ex 25:24; 1 Kings 7:48.

**24:12** Ex 18:15; Num 15:32-34.

**24:14-16** This instruction indicates how grievous a sin blasphemy is. God will punish those who do not regard His name as holy and who misuse it (Ex 20:7; 2:28; Lev 19:12; Deut 5:11; 28:58). Death was decreed because it was a sin worthy of death. Also God did not want the practice to spread among His people, and severe punishment was a way of hindering this. For a list of offenses under the law for which death was ordered see note at Ex 21:36.

**24:17** Gen 9:6; Ex 21:12; Num 35:30,31;

neighbour, it is to be done to him just as he did, 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; it is to be done to him just as he injured the *other* man. 21 And he who kills an animal shall make restitution for it; but he who kills a man must be put to death. 22 You are to have the same law for the foreigner as for the native-born; for I *am* the LORD your God."

23 And Moses told the children of Israel to bring the one who had cursed outside the camp, and stone him with stones. And the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

**25** And the LORD spoke to Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When you enter the land which I am giving you, then the land is to observe a Sabbath to the LORD. 3 For six years you may sow your field, and for six years you may prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruit; 4 but the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest for the land, a Sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. 5 You shall not reap that which grows of itself after your harvest, or gather the grapes of your untrimmed vines; *for* it is a year of rest for the land. 6 And the Sabbath of the land shall be food for you, for you, and for your manservant and for your maid and for your hired man and for the foreigner who stays with you, 7 and for your cattle, and for the animals that are in your land; all the produce of *the land* shall be for food.

8 "And you shall count off seven Sabbaths of years for yourselves, seven times seven years; so the seven Sabbaths of years come to forty-nine years for you. 9 Then, on the tenth *day* of the seventh month, you shall cause the trumpet to sound. You shall sound the trumpet throughout your whole land on the tenth day of the seventh month on the Day of Atonement. 10 And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall

be a Jubilee for you, and each one of you shall return to his *family* property, and each one of you shall return to his family. 11 That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee for you. In *that year* you shall not sow, or reap that which grows of itself, or gather *the grapes* of your untrimmed vines. 12 For it *is* the Jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You shall eat its produce of the field.

13 "In the year of this Jubilee each one of you shall return to his *family* property.

14 "And if you sell any *land* to your neighbour, or buy *any* from your neighbour, you shall not wrong one another. 15 You shall buy from your neighbor according to the number of years after the Jubilee *and* according to the number of years of the produce he sells to you; 16 you shall increase its price for a higher number of years, and you shall decrease the price for fewer years; for he sells *it* to you *according* to the number of the years of *its* crops. 17 So you shall not wrong one another, but fear your God; for I *am* the LORD your God.

18 "Therefore you shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; then you will live in the land in safety. 19 And the land will yield its produce, and you shall eat your fill, and live in it in safety. 20 And you may say, 'What will we eat in the seventh year? Look, we will not be sowing or gathering in our crops.' 21 But I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will produce enough of a crop for three years. 22 And you shall sow the eighth year, and *still* eat of old *crops* until the ninth year; you shall eat of the old crop until its crop comes in.

23 "The land shall not be permanently sold, for the land *is* mine, and you *are* foreigners and temporary settlers with me. 24 And throughout the whole land which you possess you are to provide for redemption for the land.

25 "If your brother has become poor and sold away *some* of his property, then his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his brother sold. 26 And if the man has no one to redeem it, and he

Deut 27:24.

**24:20** Ex 21:23; Deut 19:21. This was the law of the nation and it was perfectly just. It was to be enforced by the nation's judges and leaders and not by the individual.

**25:3** Ex 23:10,11.

**25:4** From the point of view of agriculture, regular times of rest for the land was good for it.

**25:8-13** For meaning of the time of jubilee see v 55 below.

**25:9** 23:27.

**25:10** Jer 34:8,15,17.

**25:18,19** Only God can cause His people to live in safety and security. And for that they must be obedient to Him (Deut 12:10; 33:12,28; Ps 4:8; 12:5; Prov 21:31).

**25:20** This was a question sure to occur especially to an unbelieving mind.

**25:21,22** To a believing and obedient people God is able to give all they could possibly need (Ps 37:25; Matt 6:31-33; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19).

**25:23** The whole earth is the Lord's, but the land of Canaan is His in a special sense (Ex 19:5; Deut 11:12; 2 Chron 7:20). Israel was there as God's guest, as a tenant to look after the land for Him. The history of the world is full of wars for land between nations, and struggles for land between individuals. How few ever realize that it is all God's property, and behave as if it were so.

**25:24-31** "Nearest relative" (v 25) – a translation of one Hebrew word (goel) which

himself is able to redeem it, 27 then let him count up the years from its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, so that he may return to his property. 28 But if he is not able to refund *it* to him, then that which was sold shall remain in the hands of the one who bought it until the year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it is to be returned *to the seller*, and he shall return to his property.

29 "And if a man sells a house situated in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a full year after it was sold; his right of redemption lasts a full year. 30 And if it is not redeemed inside that full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall become the permanent possession of the one who bought it and his offspring; it shall not be returned in the Jubilee. 31 But the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be regarded as the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and shall be returned in the Jubilee.

32 "As for the cities of the Levites, the Levites may redeem at any time the houses in the cities they possess. 33 And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city in their possession shall be returned *in the year of Jubilee*; for the houses in the cities of the Levites are their property among the children of Israel. 34 But the fields of the suburbs of their cities are not to be sold; for it is their permanent property.

35 "And if your brother becomes poor, and his means of support fails among you, then you are to help him *as though he were* a foreigner, or a settler, so that he may live among you. 36 Do not take any usury or interest from him, but fear your God so that your brother may live among you. 37 You shall not lend him your money at usury, or sell him your food at interest. 38 *I am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan, *and* to be your God.

39 "And if your brother *who lives* among you becomes poor and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve like a slave, 40 *but* he is to be like a hired man and be with you like a settler,

and shall serve you until the year of Jubilee. 41 *Then* he is to leave you, *both* he and his children with him, and return to his own family, and go back to his family property. 42 For they *are* my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. 43 You shall not rule over him with severity, but shall fear your God.

44 "Both your slaves and your slave women whom you have, *shall be* from the nations that are around you; you may buy slaves and slave women from them. 45 Also you may buy from the sons of the foreigners who stay among you, and from their families who *are* with you whom they beget in your land; and they will be your possession. 46 And you may bequeath them to your children after you to have as an inheritance. They will be your slaves forever, but you shall not rule over your brethren the children of Israel with severity.

47 "And if a settler or a foreigner among you becomes rich, and your brother *who lives* near him becomes poor and sells himself to the foreigner or settler among you, or to the descendants of a foreigner's family, 48 he may be redeemed after he has been sold; one of his brothers may redeem him, 49 or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him, or *any* of his close family relatives may redeem him, or, if he is able, he may redeem himself. 50 And he together with the one who bought him shall calculate from the year that he was sold to him to the year of Jubilee, and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years. It is to be with him like the time of a hired man. 51 If *there are* still many years *remaining*, he shall pay the price of his redemption corresponding to the amount of his purchase. 52 And if only a few years remain to the year of Jubilee, then he shall calculate together with him, *and* according to these years he shall refund to him the price of his redemption. 53 And he is to be with him like a man hired yearly, *and the other man* must not rule over him with severity in your sight.

54 "And if he is not redeemed during those *years*, then he shall be released in the year of Jubilee, *both* he and his children with him. 55 For

came from the word meaning "to redeem." Since the right of redemption belonged to the nearest relative, it came to mean that person. It could be translated "kinsman-redeemer," or "redeeming relative." See also vs 48,49 below. A beautiful example of the redeeming of property is found in Ruth. See Ruth 2:1,20; 3:12,13; 4:4-10,13. The kinsman-redeemer signifies the Lord Jesus, the Redeemer of His people. He paid the price for them and they have become His (1 Cor 19:20; 7:23; Rom 14:8; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18; Rev 5:9). The price He gave was His own life (Matt 20:28). Though He was the Lord from heaven He

became man's kinsman by the incarnation (John 1:1,14; Heb 2:9,11,14), and man's redeemer by the cross.

**25:32** Num 35:1-8; Josh 21:2.

**25:35** Deut 15:7-11; 24:14,15.

**25:36** Ex 22:25; Deut 23:19,20.

**25:38** 11:45.

**25:39-46** Deut 15:12-18; 1 Kings 9:22. Note at Ex 21:2-6.

**25:42** Those whom God has redeemed are His special property and must be regarded as such.

**25:54,55** The year of Jubilee which came every fiftieth year is referred to 14 times in

the children of Israel are my servants; they *are* my servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I *am* the LORD your God.

**26** "You shall not make for yourselves idols or set up an image or a *sacred* pillar, or set up *any* stone image in your land to bow down to it; for I *am* the LORD your God.

2 "You shall keep my Sabbaths, and revere my sanctuary; I am the LORD.

3 "If you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments and do them, 4 then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield its crops and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 And your threshing will last until the grape harvest, and the grape harvest will last until sowing time; and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

6 "And I will give peace in the land, and when you lie down no one will make *you* afraid. And I will eliminate savage beasts from the land, and the sword will not go through your land. 7 And you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword. 8 And five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will put ten thousand to flight, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword.

9 "For I will turn to you and make you fruitful, and increase your numbers, and confirm my covenant with you. 10 And you will eat old supplies, and clear out the old for the new. 11 And I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul will not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you, and will

be your God, and you will be my people. 13 I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would not be their slaves; and I broke the bands of your yoke, and caused you to go upright.

14 "But if you will not listen to me, and will not obey all these commandments, 15 and if you despise my statutes, or if your soul abhors my judgments, so that you do not obey all my commandments, *but* break my covenant, 16 then I will do this to you: I will appoint terror, consumption, and fever over you, that will consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart. And you will sow your seed in vain, for your enemies will eat it. 17 And I will set my face against you, and you shall be killed in the presence of your enemies. Those who hate you will reign over you, and you shall run away when no one is pursuing you.

18 "And if you will not listen to me in spite of all, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will break the pride of your power, and will make your heavens like iron and your earth like brass, 20 and your strength will be spent in vain, because your land will not yield its crops, and the trees of the land will not yield their fruits.

21 "And if you proceed in opposition to me, and will not listen to me, I will bring seven times more plagues on you according to your sins. 22 I will also send wild beasts among you which will rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your highways will be deserted.

23 "And if you are not corrected by me through

this chapter. On the year of Jubilee certain things were to take place – everyone was to return to his family property (v 10), and the family property to him (v 28; 27:24). It was a year of rest for the land (v 11); it was to be counted a holy year (v 12); liberty was proclaimed to all Israelites (v 10,39,40). In other words it was a year of the restitution of all property, release and freedom to those under the control of others, and a great Sabbath rest. As practically everything else in Leviticus the year of Jubilee has symbolic meanings. The author of these notes thinks it signifies the time of the restitution of all things (Acts 3:19-21); freedom from all bondage to the whole creation and to God's people (Rom 8:19-23); and the great Sabbath rest God has promised (Heb 4:9). **26:1** Ex 20:4; 23:24; Lev 19:4; Num 33:52; Deut 5:8; 16:21.

**26:2** 19:30.  
**26:3** Now follows wonderful promises of blessing, but it is all based on the obedience of God's people to His laws (see also Deut 7:12-26; 11:13-15; 28:1-14. Notice the word "if." See notes on blessing or blessed at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1-3). **26:4** Deut 11:14; 28:12. God the Creator is

the one who controls the rain. Withholding rain would be one penalty for disobedience (v 19). **26:5** 25:18,19.

**26:6** Ps 29:11; 85:8; 147:14.

**26:8** Deut 32:30.

**26:10** They would always have enough and more than enough – if they would obey God.

**26:11** Note at Ex 25:8.

**26:12** Gen 3:8; Deut 23:14; 2 Cor 6:16; Rev 21:3.

**26:13** Ps 107:14,16; Ezek 34:27.

**26:14** See Deut 28:15-68; Josh 23:15. The penalties for disobedience recorded here are terrible indeed. And although God warned them in advance exactly what would happen, the people of Israel did not listen, and all these punishments actually came upon them. This can be seen from the following references. See also the note at Deut 28:65.

**26:16** "Eat it" – Jud 6:3-6.

**26:17** Ps 53:5; 106:41; Prov 28:1.

**26:18** "Seven times more" – but still not all their sins deserved.

**26:19** Isa 28:1-3; Ezek 28:21.

**26:20** Jer 12:13.

**26:22** "Wild beasts" – 2 Kings 17:25.

"Deserted" – Jud 5:6.

**26:23,24** Ps 18:25,26; Isa 59:18.

these things, but proceed in opposition to me, 24 then I will proceed in opposition to you, and will punish you still seven times more for your sins. 25 And I will bring a sword on you that will execute vengeance for the covenant. And when you are gathered together in your cities, I will send plague among you, and you will be given into the hand of the enemy. 26 And when I have cut off the supply of your bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will give *you* your bread by weight; and you will eat and not be satisfied.

27 "And if in spite of all this you do not listen to me, but proceed in opposition to me, 28 then I will also proceed in opposition to you in anger, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. 29 And you will eat the flesh of your sons, and eat the flesh of your daughters. 30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and hurl your carcasses on the carcasses of your idols, and my soul will abhor you. 31 And I will lay your cities waste, and make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell the odor of your soothing aromas. 32 And I will make the land desolate, and your enemies who live in it will be astonished at it. 33 And I will scatter you among the nations, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land will be desolate and your cities waste. 34 Then the land will enjoy its Sabbaths, as long as it lies desolate, and you *are* in the land of your enemies. Then the land will rest and enjoy her Sabbaths. 35 As long as it lies desolate it will rest, because it did not rest during your Sabbaths, when you lived in it.

36 "And I will send weakness into the hearts of those of you who are left *alive* in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf will chase them, and they will run away as if fleeing from a sword, and they will fall when no one is pursuing. 37 And when no one is pursuing they will fall on one another, as if before a sword, and you will have no

power to stand before your enemies. 38 And you will perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies will consume you. 39 And those of you who are left will waste away because of their sin in the lands of your enemies, and will also with them waste away because of the sins of their fathers.

40 "But *if* they confess their wickedness and the wickedness of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that they have proceeded in opposition to me, 41 and *that* I have also proceeded in opposition to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies, if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they pay for their wickedness, 42 then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac; and I will remember also my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43 The land also will be deserted by them, and will enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. And they will pay for their wickedness because, yes, because they despised my judgments and because their soul abhorred my statutes. 44 And yet in spite of all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them *so as* to completely destroy them and break my covenant with them; for I *am* the LORD their God. 45 But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, so that I might be their God. I *am* the LORD."

46 These *are* the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD established between himself and the children of Israel in Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

**27** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, If anyone makes a special vow, *the value* of persons belonging to the LORD, it shall be

**26:25** Deut 28:21; Jer 24:10; Amos 4:10.

**26:26** Isa 3:1; Ezek 4:16,17; 5:16.

**26:29** Deut 28:52,53; 2 Kings 6:29; Lam 4:10.

**26:30** "High places" - 1 Kings 3:2.

"Idols" - 2 Kings 23:20; 2 Chron 34:4,7; Isa 27:9; Ezek 6:3,6; Amos 7:9.

"Abhor you" - 20:23; Deut 32:19; Ps 5:6; 78:59; Prov 22:14. God is love but He is also holy and righteous. Everything contrary to holiness, righteousness and justice is an object of His loathing. Notes at 20:7; Num 25:3.

**26:31** "Lay your cities waste" - Neh 2:3; Jer 44:2,6; Lam 2:7.

"Aromas" - Isa 1:13-15; Amos 5:21-24.

**26:32** Jer 9:11; 12:11; 18:16; 19:18; 25:11; 33:10.

**26:33** Deut 4:27; 28:64; Ps 44:11; 106:27;

Jer 31:10; Ezek 12:15; 20:23; Zech 7:14.

**26:34,35** 25:2-4,8,10,11; 2 Chron 36:20,21.

**26:36** Isa 30:17; Lam 1:3,6; Ezek 21:7.

**26:37** Jer 6:21; Nah 3:3.

**26:38** Deut 4:26.

**26:39** Ezra 4:17; 33:10.

**26:40-44** If only Israel would humble themselves and confess their sins God would be merciful (Isa 1:18; 55:7; Micah 7:18; Luke 24:46,47; 1 John 1:9).

**26:41** "Uncircumcised heart" - Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 4:4; Acts 7:51. This means a heart not made new by God's grace and power.

**26:45** Gen 28:13-15; 35:11,12; 26:2-5; 22:15-18; Ex 6:6-8. God will be faithful to His word even if people are unfaithful (Rom 3:4; 2 Tim 2:13; Titus 1:2).

**27:2** Deut 23:21-23; Eccl 5:4,5.



according to your evaluation. 3 And if your evaluation is for a male between twenty years old and sixty years old, then your evaluation is to be fifty shekels of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. 4 And if it *is* a female, then your evaluation is to be thirty shekels. 5 And if *the person is* between five years old and twenty years old, then your evaluation is to be twenty shekels for the male and ten shekels for the female. 6 And if *the person is* between a month old and five years old, then your evaluation is to be five shekels of silver for the male, and your evaluation for the female *is to be* three shekels of silver. 7 And if *the person is* sixty years old or above, if a male, then your evaluation is to be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. 8 But if he is poorer than your evaluation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall evaluate him; the priest is to evaluate him according to the ability of the one who vowed.

9 "And if *the vow* is an animal that men bring as an offering to the LORD, any such that is offered to the LORD shall be holy. 10 *The person* shall not replace it or exchange a good one for a bad, or a bad one for a good, and if he does exchange animal for animal, then both it and the exchanged one shall be holy. 11 And if *it is* any unclean animal which they do not offer as a sacrifice to the LORD, then he is to present the animal to the priest, 12 and the priest shall evaluate it, whether it is good or bad; as you, the priest, evaluate it, so shall it be. 13 But if he should ever redeem it, then he must add a fifth *part* of it to your evaluation.

14 "And when a man dedicates his house *to be* holy to the LORD, then the priest shall evaluate it, whether it is good or bad; the evaluation of the priest will stand. 15 And if the one who dedicated his house would redeem it, then he must add to it the fifth *part* of the money of your evaluation, and it will become his.

16 "And if a man dedicates *some part* of a field of his property to the LORD, then your evaluation is to be according to the seed *needed* for it. A homer of barley seed *is to be valued* at fifty shekels of silver. 17 If he dedicates his field from the year of Jubilee, your evaluation will stand. 18 But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall will calculate the value for him according to the years that remain to the *next* year of Jubilee,

and it shall be deducted from your evaluation. 19 And if the one who dedicated the field would ever redeem it, then he must add the fifth *part* of the value of your evaluation to it, and it will become his. 20 And if he does not redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it is not to be redeemed any more. 21 And the field, when it released in the Jubilee, shall be holy to the LORD, like a field devoted *to the LORD*; it shall belong to the priest.

22 "And if a man dedicates to the Lord a field that he has bought, which is not a part of the fields of his *family* property, 23 then the priest shall calculate for him the amount of your evaluation to the year of Jubilee, and on that day he shall give your evaluation *as* a holy thing to the LORD. 24 In the year of Jubilee the field shall return to the one from whom it was bought, to the one whose land *it was*. 25 And all your evaluations are to be according to the sanctuary shekel. The shekel shall be twenty gerahs.

26 "But no one may dedicate the firstborn of animals. As firstborn they are *already* the LORD's; whether *it is* an ox or a sheep, it is the LORD's. 27 And if *it is* an unclean animal, then he is to redeem it according to your evaluation, and shall add to it a fifth *part* of it; or, if it is not redeemed, then it is to be sold according to your evaluation.

28 "However no devoted thing that a man irredeemably devotes to the LORD from all that he has, *either* man or beast, or a field of his *family* property, is to be sold or redeemed; every *such* devoted thing is most holy to the LORD.

29 "No one irredeemably devoted *to destruction* who is devoted by men is to be redeemed, *but* shall surely be put to death.

30 "And all the tenth part of the produce of the land, whether the grain of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD. 31 And if a man would ever redeem any of his tithes, he must add to it its fifth part. 32 And as for the tenth part of the herd, or of the flock, of whatever passes under the shepherd's rod, the tenth shall be holy to the LORD. 33 He shall not ask whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it. If he ever does exchange it, then both it and the exchanged animal will be holy; it shall not be redeemed."

34 These are the commands which the LORD gave Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai.

**27:21** Num 18:14.

**27:26** Ex 13:2.

**27:28** Num 18:14; Josh 6:17-19.

**27:30-33** Gen 14:20; 28:22; 2 Chron 31:5; Neh 13:12.

"Is the LORD's" – these offerings of God's people were for the support of God's servants. If they did not give as God said they should they would suffer the consequences – Mal 3:8. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

# NUMBERS

## Title:

The name which the Hebrews called this book, "In the desert", is more descriptive of its contents than the English name "Numbers", which came from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament).

## Author and date:

See the Introduction to Genesis.

## Theme:

Israel under God's training in the desert. The desert (or wilderness) wanderings were a punishment from God, but through them God taught Israel (and teaches us) many important lessons. He showed them that unbelief, disobedience, and complaining against His ways bring grief and trouble, but that trust and obedience result in blessing. Through the 40 years in the desert God also showed His faithfulness to His promises and prepared His people to enter the promised land.

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**1** And the LORD spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, **2** "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel by their families, by the households of their fathers, with the number of *their* names, every male, head by head, **3** twenty years old or more, all who are able to go out to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies. **4** And a man from each tribe is to be with you; each one the head of the household of his fathers. **5** And these *are* the names of the men who are to stand with you:

"From *the tribe of* Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; **6** from Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; **7** from Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; **8** from Issachar, Nethaneel the son of Zuar; **9** from Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; **10** from the children of Joseph: from Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; from Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; **11** from Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; **12** from Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; **13** from Asher, Pagiel the son of Ocran; **14** from Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; **15** from Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan."

**16** These *are* those named by the congregation, leaders of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

**17** And Moses and Aaron took these men whose names were given, **18** and they assembled all the congregation together on the first *day* of the second month. And the *people* registered their ancestry by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, head by head. **19** So Moses numbered them in the desert of Sinai, just as the LORD had commanded him.

**20** And from the descendants of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, head by head, every male twenty years old or more, all who were

able to go out to war, **21** the numbered men from the tribe of Reuben were forty-six thousand five hundred.

**22** From the descendants of Simeon, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, their numbered men according to the number of names, head by head, every male twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, **23** the numbered men from the tribe of Simeon *were* fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

**24** From the descendants of Gad, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, **25** the numbered men from the tribe of Gad *were* forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.

**26** From the descendants of Judah, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, **27** the numbered men from the tribe of Judah *were* seventy-four thousand six hundred.

**28** From the descendants of Issachar, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, **29** the numbered men from the tribe of Issachar *were* fifty-four thousand four hundred.

**30** From the descendants of Zebulun, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of the names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, **31** the numbered men from the tribe of Zebulun *were* fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

**32** From the descendants of Joseph, from the descendants of Ephraim, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, **33** the numbered men from the tribe of Ephraim *were* forty thousand five hundred.

**34** From the descendants of Manasseh, by their

**1:1** "Tabernacle of the congregation" – note at Ex 25:8.

**1:2,3** The purpose of this census is indicated by the words "able to go out to war." There were enemies to be faced, a country to be conquered which was inhabited by powerful peoples. Israel needed to be prepared. They were not to depend on the number of their fighting men but on Jehovah God alone, who was the head of their armies (Josh 5:13-15). But they were to know what military resources were available to them. God could have defeated all their enemies by Himself by miraculous activity as He did the Egyptians in the Red

Sea. But God wanted them to fight and conquer the land He gave them – always, of course, trusting Him and not themselves.

So it is with believers in Christ in this age of grace. They have spiritual enemies to face (Eph 6:12), and they need to be aware of their resources in Christ. God now could utterly destroy Satan and all the forces of evil arrayed against believers. But He wants us to fight in His strength and win the victory. He wants us to be active conquering soldiers, not passive puppets (Eph 6:10-18; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 2:3,4; Rom 8:37; 2 Cor 2:14; Rev 21:7). See notes at Josh 1:17; Judges 3:2.

generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, 35 the numbered men from the tribe of Manasseh *were* thirty-two thousand two hundred.

36 From the descendants of Benjamin, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, 37 the numbered men from the tribe of Benjamin *were* thirty-five thousand four hundred.

38 From the descendants of Dan, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, 39 the numbered men from the tribe of Dan *were* sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

40 From the descendants of Asher, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, 41 the numbered men from the tribe of Asher *were* forty-one thousand five hundred.

42 From the descendants of Naphtali, by their generations, by their families, by the households of their fathers, according to the number of names, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war, 43 the numbered men from the tribe of Naphtali *were* fifty-three thousand four hundred.

44 These *are* those who were numbered. They were numbered by Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each of whom represented the household of his fathers. 45 So all those who were numbered of the children of Israel, by the households of their fathers, twenty years old or more, all who were able to go out to war in Israel, 46 all the numbered men *were* six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

47 But the Levites of the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them. 48 For the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying, 49 "However you shall not number the tribe of Levi, or take their census among the children of Israel. 50 But you

shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all its furnishings, and over everything that *belongs* to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all of its furnishings. They shall take care of it, and shall camp around the tabernacle. 51 And when the tabernacle is to move forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up. And an outsider who approaches shall be put to death. 52 And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies. 53 But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of testimony so that no wrath comes on the congregation of the children of Israel; and the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of testimony."

54 And the children of Israel did so. They did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

**2** And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 "Each man of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, with the banner of their father's household. They shall camp around the tabernacle of the congregation, at a distance.

3 Those of the standard of the camp of Judah shall camp according to their armies on the east side, toward the sunrise. And Nahshon the son of Amminadab *shall be* the leader of the children of Judah. 4 And his army, its numbered men: seventy-four thousand six hundred.

5 And those of the tribe of Issachar shall camp next to him, and Nethaneel the son of Zuar *shall be* the leader of the children of Issachar. 6 And his army, its numbered men: fifty-four thousand four hundred.

7 The tribe of Zebulun *comes next*, and Eliab the son of Helon *shall be* the leader of the children of Zebulun. 8 And his army, its numbered men: fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

9 All the numbered men in the camp of Judah: a hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred, by their armies. These shall set out first.

10 On the south side *shall be* the standard of

**1:46** Ex 12:37; 38:26.

**1:47-50** The Levites were later numbered (3:15,39), but they were not numbered among the men of war. They had different work to do.

**1:51** God gave the whole tribe of Levi to Aaron and his sons to do the work of the tabernacle – 8:19. No one who was not a Levite, that is, no one who was not chosen by God for the work of the tabernacle could have anything to do with it. Here again God's holiness and the holiness of all that pertained to Him are emphasized. It was an exceedingly serious error for an unconsecrated person to touch holy things

(Num 3:10,38; 2 Sam 6:6,7. Note on God's holiness at Lev 20:7).

**1:52** 2:1-31.

**1:53** "No wrath" – if others than Levites camped near the tabernacle they might be tempted to try to enter in or touch some of its holy furnishings. This would cause the anger of God to fall on them. God's work must be done in God's way by God's people (see notes at 12:2; 17:1-11; Lev 10:1,2).

**2:1-31** The tabernacle, God's dwelling place, was in the center of the camp. This signifies God's centrality for His people. Surrounding the tabernacle were the Levites. Then on all



the camp of Reuben according to their armies; and the leader of the children of Reuben *shall be* Elizur the son of Shedeur. 11 And his army, its numbered men: forty-six thousand five hundred.

12 And those of the tribe of Simeon shall camp next to him; and the captain of the children of Simeon *shall be* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 13 And his army, its numbered men: fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

14 The tribe of Gad *comes* next; and the leader of the sons of Gad *shall be* Eliasaph the son of Reuel. 15 And his army, its numbered men: forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.

16 All the numbered men in the camp of Reuben: a hundred and fifty one thousand four hundred and fifty, by their armies. And they shall set out second.

17 Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set out with the camp of the Levites in the middle of the camps. They shall set out just as they camp, each man in his place by their standards.

18 The standard of the camp of Ephraim *shall be* on the west side by their armies; and the leader of the sons of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud. 19 And his army, its numbered men: forty thousand five hundred.

20 And next to him *shall be* the tribe of Manasseh; and the leader of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 21 And his army, its numbered men: thirty-two thousand two hundred.

22 Then the tribe of Benjamin; and the leader of the sons of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideon. 23 And his army, its numbered men: thirty-five thousand four hundred.

24 All the numbered men of the camp of Ephraim: a hundred and eight thousand one hundred, by their armies. And they shall set out third.

25 The standard of the camp of Dan *shall be* on the north side by their armies; and the leader of the children of Dan *shall be* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26 And his army, its numbered men: sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

27 And those of the tribe of Asher shall camp next to him, and the leader of the children of Asher *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran. 28 And his army, its numbered men: forty-one thousand five hundred.

29 Then the tribe of Naphtali; and the leader of

the children of Naphtali *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan. 30 And his army, its numbered men: fifty-three thousand four hundred.

31 All the numbered men in the camp of Dan: a hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred. They shall go last with their standards."

32 These *were* the numbered men of the children of Israel by the households of their fathers. All the numbered men of the camps by their armies *were* six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. 33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

34 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses. They camped by their standards like that, and they set out like that, each one according to their families, according to the households of their fathers.

**3** Now these are the descendants of Aaron and Moses in the day that the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.

2 And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3 These *are* the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests who were anointed, whom he consecrated to serve as priests. 4 And Nadab and Abihu died in the presence of the LORD, when they offered strange fire in the presence of the LORD, in the desert of Sinai, and they had no children. And Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the presence of their father Aaron.

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 "Bring the tribe of Levi near and present them before Aaron the priest, so that they may serve him. 7 And they shall perform duties for him, and the duties of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, doing the service of the tabernacle. 8 And they shall keep all the furnishings of the tabernacle of the congregation, and *perform* the duties of the children of Israel, doing the service of the tabernacle. 9 And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons. They *are* wholly given to him from the children of Israel. 10 And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall carry out their priesthood; and the outsider who approaches shall be put to death."

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

four sides were the rest of the tribes, each in its own place and each with its leader. God is a God of order (1 Cor 14:33). He wants everything and everyone in the proper place. In this age of the church He sets each believer where he should be in the church, Christ's body (1 Cor 12:18), and

gives to each one his or her work (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:7; Eph 2:10).

**2:33** 1:47.

**3:1,2** Ex 6:20-27.

**3:3** Ex 28:1,40,41.

**3:4** Lev 10:1,2.

**3:6-10** 8:6-22; 18:1-7.

12 "And see, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn who open the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be mine, 13 because all the firstborn *are* mine. *For* on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They are mine. I *am* the LORD."

14 And the LORD spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai, saying, 15 "Count the children of Levi according to the households of their fathers, by their families. You shall count every male a month old or more." 16 And Moses counted them according to the word of the LORD, just as he was commanded.

17 And these were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

18 And these *are* the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei.

19 And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, Izeah, Hebron, and Uzziel.

20 And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of the Levites according to the households of their fathers.

21 The family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites *were* from Gershon. These *are* the families of the Gershonites. 22 Those of them who were counted, according to the number of all the males a month old or more, their numbered males *were* seven thousand five hundred. 23 The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle on the west. 24 And Eliasaph the son of Lael was the leader of the households of the father of the Gershonites. 25 And the duties of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation *were to be* the tabernacle, and the tent, its covering, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, 26 and the hangings of the courtyard, and the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard which surrounds the tabernacle and the altar, and the cords for all its work.

27 And from Kohath *came* the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeaharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites. These *are* the families of the Kohathites. 28 The number of all the males a month old or more *was* eight thousand six hundred performing the duties of the sanctuary. 29 The families of the sons of Kohath were to camp on the south side of

the tabernacle. 30 And Elizaphan the son of Uzziel *was* the leader of the households of the father of the families of the Kohathites. 31 And their duties *were to be* the ark, and the table, and the lampstand, and the altars, and the furnishings of the sanctuary which they use in service, and the hanging, and all the work needed for it. 32 And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *was* the chief leader of the Levites, and was to oversee those who perform the duties of the sanctuary.

33 From Merari came the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites. These *are* the families of Merari. 34 And their numbered men, the number of all the males a month old or more, *was* six thousand two hundred. 35 And the leader of the father's households of the families of Merari was Zurriel the son of Abihail. *They* were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. 36 And the appointed duties of the sons of Merari *were to be* the boards of the tabernacle, and its bars, and its pillars, and its sockets, and all its equipment, and everything for its work; 37 also the pillars of the surrounding courtyard, and their sockets, and their pegs, and their cords.

38 But Moses and Aaron and his sons were to be the ones who camped in front of the tabernacle on the east, in front of the tabernacle of the congregation toward the sunrise. They were to perform the duties of the sanctuary on behalf of the children of Israel. And the outsider who approached was to put to death.

39 All the numbered Levite men, whom Moses and Aaron counted at the command of the LORD, by their families, all the males a month old or more *were* twenty-two thousand.

40 And the LORD said to Moses, "Count all the firstborn of the males of the children of Israel a month old or more and take the number of their names. 41 And you shall take the Levites for me (I *am* the LORD) instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the cattle of the children of Israel."

42 And Moses counted all the firstborn of the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded him. 43 And all the firstborn males according to the number of names, a month old or more, of those of them who were numbered, were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.

**3:12,13** Ex 13:2; Lev 27:26; Num 3:45; 8:14.

**3:25** 4:24-26; Ex 26:1,7,4-16.

**3:31** 4:15; Ex 25:10-40; 27:1,2; 30:1-5.

**3:38** 1:51.

**3:43** No doubt these 22,273 were those firstborn who were born after the exodus from

Egypt. It was at the time of the giving of the ordinance of the Passover that God commanded the firstborn of Israel to be especially consecrated to God (Ex 13:1,2, 12-15). Among the 603,550 fighting men of Israel there would have been many more firstborn than 22,273.

44 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine. I am the LORD. 46 And for those who are to be redeemed of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel who exceed the number of the Levites, 47 you shall take *them* according to the sanctuary shekel (the shekel *is* twenty gerahs), 48 and give the money with which the additional number of the *Israelites* is to be redeemed, to Aaron and to his sons."

49 And Moses took the redemption money of those who were in excess of those who were redeemed by the Levites; 50 from the firstborn of the children of Israel he took a thousand three hundred and sixty-five *shekels*, according to the sanctuary shekel. 51 And Moses gave the money of those who were redeemed to Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the LORD, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

**4** And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 "Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, according to their families, by the households of their fathers, 3 from thirty years old up to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

4 "This *shall be* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, *concerning* the most holy things. 5 When the camp sets out Aaron and his sons shall come and take down the covering veil and cover the ark of testimony with it, 6 and put on it the covering of badgers' skins, and spread over it a cloth all of blue, and insert its poles.

7 "And they shall spread a blue cloth on the table of showbread, and put on it the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and jars for drink offerings; and the continual bread is to be on it. 8 And they shall spread over them a scarlet cloth and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and insert its poles.

9 "And they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand for the light, and its lamps, and its snuffers, and its trays, and all its utensils for oil with which they serve it. 10 And they shall put it

and all its utensils inside a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put it on carrying bars.

11 "And they shall spread a blue cloth on the gold altar and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and insert its poles.

12 "And they shall take all the service utensils with which they serve in the sanctuary and put *them* inside a blue cloth and cover *them* with a covering of badgers' skins, and put *them* on carrying bars.

13 "And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth on it, 14 and put on it all its utensils with which they serve at it, the firepans, the forks and the shovels, and the basins, all the utensils of the altar, and spread over it a covering of badgers' skins, and insert its poles.

15 "And when the camp is about to set out and after Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary, and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, the sons of Kohath shall come to carry *it*; but they must not touch *any* holy thing, or they will die. These *are the things* in the tabernacle of the congregation which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

16 "And the responsibility of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *is* the oil for the light, and the fragrant incense, and the daily grain offering, and the anointing oil, the responsibility of the whole tabernacle and everything in it, with the sanctuary and its furnishings."

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 18 "Do not let the tribe of the families of the Kohathites be cut off from among the Levites, 19 but do this to them, so that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each one of them to his work and to his load. 20 But they must not go in to see while the holy things are being covered, so that they do not die."

21 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 22 "Take a census also of the sons of Gershon, by the houses of their fathers, by their families. 23 Count those who are between thirty years old and fifty years old, all who go in to serve and to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

24 "This *is* the service of the families of the Gershonites, *their* work and loads: 25 They shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the congregation, its covering and the covering of the badgers' skins that covers it, and

**3:45-51** The Levites numbered only 22,000 (v 39).

"Five shekels" (v 47) – about 55 grams.

"Thousand three hundred and sixty-five shekels" (v 50) – about 15.5 kilograms.

**4:5** Ex 26:31,33; Lev 16:2; Ex 25:10-16.

**4:6** "Badger skins" – the Hebrew word may possibly indicate the skins of dolphins or

sea cows.

**4:7** Ex 25:30; Lev 24:5-9.

**4:9** Ex 25:31,37,38.

**4:13** Ex 27:1-8.

**4:15** 1:51.

**4:16** Ex 30:22-38; Lev 6:20; 24:1-3.

**4:20** Ex 19:21; 1 Sam 6:19.

**4:25** Ex 26:14; 40:19.

the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, 26 And the hangings of the courtyard, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the courtyard which surrounds the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, and all the equipment for their service, and everything that was made for them. They are to serve in this way. 27 All the service of the sons of the Gershonites, all their loads and all their work shall be under the orders of Aaron and his sons, and you shall assign them the duty of all their loads. 28 This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation, and their duties *shall be* under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

29 "And you shall count the sons of Merari according to their families, by the households of their fathers. 30 Count those between thirty years old and fifty years, each one who enters service to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. 31 And this is the responsibility of their loads in all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation: the boards of the tabernacle, and its crossbars, and its pillars, and its sockets, 32 and the pillars of the surrounding courtyard, and their sockets, and their pegs, and their cords, with all their equipment and with all their service. And you shall assign by name the duty of the equipment they are to carry. 33 This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Merari, all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest."

34 And Moses and Aaron and the leaders of the congregation counted the sons of the Kohathites according to their families and according to the households of their fathers, 35 each one between thirty years old and fifty years old, who entered service for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation; 36 and those of them who were counted by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. 37 These *were* the ones of the families of the Kohathites who were counted, all who could do work in the tabernacle of the congregation. Moses and Aaron counted them in accordance with the command of the LORD through Moses.

38 And those of the sons of Gershon who were counted by their families, and by the households of their fathers, 39 between thirty years old and fifty

years old, each one who entered service for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation, 40 those among them who were counted by their families, by the households of their fathers, were two thousand six hundred and thirty. 41 These *are* the ones of the families of the sons of Gershon who were counted, all who could serve in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moses and Aaron counted in accordance with the command of the LORD.

42 And those of the families of the sons of Merari who were counted by their families, by the households of their fathers, 43 between thirty years old and fifty years old, each one who entered service for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation, 44 those among them who were counted according to their families were three thousand and two hundred. 45 These *are* those of the families of the sons of Merari who were counted. Moses and Aaron counted them in accordance with the word of the LORD through Moses.

46 All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel counted according to their families and according to the households of their fathers, 47 between thirty years old and fifty years old, each one who came to do the work of the service, and the work of *carrying* the loads of the tabernacle of the congregation, 48 those among them who were counted were eight thousand five hundred and eighty. 49 They were counted in accordance with the command of the LORD through Moses, each one according to his service, and according to his load. So Moses counted them just as the LORD commanded him.

**5** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Command the children of Israel to send away from the camp every leper, and everyone who has a discharge, and whoever is defiled by the dead. 3 You are to send out both male and female. You shall send them outside the camp so that they do not defile the camp where I dwell among them." 4 And the children of Israel did so, and send them outside the camp. The children of Israel did just as the LORD told Moses.

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 "Tell the children of Israel that when a man or woman

**4:26** Ex 38:9.

**5:1-4** "Leper" – note at Lev 13:1-44.

"Discharge" – note at Lev 15:2-13.

"Defiled by the dead" – note at Lev 21:1-4. Besides teaching about sin by pictures and types (note at Lev 15:31) this exclusion from the camp was no doubt for hygienic purposes as well.

**5:6** "Trespassing against the LORD" – observe these words carefully. Wrong done

against another person is unfaithfulness or disobedience to God. In fact, all sin, no matter what it might be, is rebellion against God (Ps 51:4; 41:4; 2 Sam 2:13; Gen 3:11; 20:6; 39:9). Human beings do not belong to themselves, but to their Creator, and so when they sin they harm not only themselves, but strike a blow at Him. This is doubly true of believers – they belong to God in a special sense (1 Cor 6:19,20).

commits any sin that men commit, trespassing against the LORD, and that person is guilty, 7 then he must confess his sin which he has done. And he shall make restitution in full for his trespass and add to it a fifth *part* of it, and give *it* to *the one* whom he trespassed against. 8 But if the man has no relative to whom restitution for the trespass can be made, the restitution for the trespass is to go to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram for atonement, with which atonement shall be made for him. 9 And each offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring to the priest shall become his. 10 And every thing a person consecrates shall become his; whatever any one gives to the priest, it becomes his."

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, If any man's wife goes astray and commits a trespass against him, 13 and *another* man has intercourse with her, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and is undetected, and she is defiled and *there is* no witness against her and she has not been caught *in the act*, 14 and the spirit of jealousy comes on him, and he becomes jealous of his wife, and she is defiled, or if the spirit of jealousy comes on him, and he is jealous of his wife, even if she is not defiled, 15 then the man is to bring his wife to the priest, and bring her offering for her, a tenth of an ephah of barley flour, pouring no oil on it and putting no frankincense on it. For it *is* an offering of jealousy, a reminder offering that brings wickedness to remembrance.

16 "And the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before the LORD. 17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware jar and the priest shall take *some* dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle, and put it in the water; 18 and the priest shall have the woman stand before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the reminder offering, which is the jealousy offering, in her hands, and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. 19 And the priest shall have her take an oath and say to the woman, 'If no man has lain with you, and if you have not

gone astray to impurity *with another man* instead of your husband, be free from this bitter water that brings a curse. 20 But if you have gone astray *to another man* instead of your husband, and if you are defiled, and some man other than your husband has lain with you' – 21 then the priest shall have the woman take the oath of the curse, and the priest shall say to the woman – 'the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people by the LORD's making your thigh decay and your abdomen swell. 22 And this water that brings a curse will go into *your* stomach to make your abdomen swell and *your* thigh decay.' And the woman is to say, 'Amen, amen.'

23 "And the priest shall write these curses in a book and wash them off into the water of bitterness, 24 and shall have the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse. And the water that brings a curse will go into her *and become* bitter. 25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand and wave the offering in the presence of the LORD, and offer it on the altar; 26 and the priest shall take a handful of the offering, its memorial, and burn it on the altar, and afterwards have the woman drink the water. 27 And when he has made her drink the water, if she is defiled and has trespassed against her husband, it will come about that the water that brings a curse will go into her *and become* bitter, and her abdomen will swell, and her thigh will decay. And the woman will become a curse among her people. 28 But if the woman is not defiled, but is clean, then she will be free, and conceive children.

29 "This *is* the law of jealousy, when a wife goes astray *to another man* instead of her husband, and is defiled, 30 or when the spirit of jealousy comes on him, and he is jealous of his wife, and has the woman stand before the LORD. And the priest shall apply all this law to her. 31 Then the man will be innocent of any wickedness and the woman will bear her wickedness."

**6** And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them,

**5:7** If the sin involved the possibility of restitution, as, for example, in the case of theft, then mere confession was not enough. Restitution also was commanded (Ex 22:1; Lev 6:4,5; 24:18,21; 2 Sam 12:6; Luke 19:8). God will not accept a confession when there is no attempt at restitution.

**5:8** Restitution must be made even when the person against whom the offense was committed is no longer alive.

**5:9,10** Lev 7:32,34; 10:13-15.

**5:11-31** In the whole Old Testament there is no record of any man ever using this means to determine the guilt or innocence

of his wife. Perhaps some did so. In any case, God's principal purpose in giving this method of testing may have been to create a fear to commit such sin. Any woman should have been afraid to commit adultery if there was an infallible way of finding her out.

"Tenth of an ephah" (v 15) – probably about 2 liters.

**5:21,22** The last phrases of each of these verses (also v 27) could mean barrenness and a miscarrying womb.

**6:2** The word Nazir comes from a Hebrew word meaning to dedicate or consecrate. The Nazirite was either a man or woman who



When a man, or a woman, vows the special vow of a Nazirite to dedicate *himself* to the LORD, 3 he must abstain from wine and strong drink and drink no vinegar *made* from wine or vinegar *made* from strong drink, and he must not drink any grape juice or eat fresh grapes or dried *ones*. 4 All the days of his dedication he must eat nothing that is produced by the grape vine, from the seeds to the skin.

5 "All the days of his vow of dedication no razor is to come on his head. He is to let the locks of his hair grow until the days for which he has dedicated *himself* to the LORD are completed, and he shall be holy. 6 All the days of his dedication to the LORD he must not approach a dead body. 7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, if they die. Because the *sign of his* dedication to his God is on his head. 8 All the days of his dedication he is holy to the LORD.

9 "And if anyone dies very suddenly near him, and he defiles his dedicated head of hair, then he shall shave his head on the day he becomes clean. He shall shave it on the seventh day. 10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; 11 and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering, and the other as a burnt offering and make atonement for him, because he sinned by *being near* a dead *body*. And *the man*

shall consecrate his head that same day; 12 and he shall dedicate the days of his consecration to the LORD, and bring a lamb a year old as a trespass offering; but the previous days will be void, because his dedication was defiled.

13 "And this is the law of the Nazirite, when the days of his dedication are completed: he is to be brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, 14 and he shall offer as his offering to the LORD one male lamb a year old, without blemish, as a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb a year old, without blemish, as a sin offering, and one ram without blemish as peace offerings, 15 and a basket of bread made without yeast, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, and wafers of bread made without yeast, smeared with oil, and their grain offering, and their drink offerings.

16 "And the priest shall bring *them* before the LORD and present his sin offering and his burnt offering, 17 and offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, with the basket of bread made without yeast. The priest shall also present his grain offering, and his drink offering. 18 And the Nazirite shall shave his dedicated head at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of his dedicated head and put *it* in the fire which *is* under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

19 "And the priest shall take the ram's shoulder

dedicated himself or herself fully to God for a stated period of time. Parents could dedicate their children as Nazirites for their whole life. This was done in the case of Samson, the only person in the Bible mentioned by name as being a Nazirite (Jud 13:5). It is possible that Samuel was one, judging from his mother's vow in 1 Sam 1:11. Certainly he was dedicated to the Lord for life (1 Sam 1:27,28). There were other Nazirites too but we are not told any of their names (Amos 2:11,12). It is said of John the Baptist that he would drink no wine (Luke 1:15), possibly indicating that he was to be a Nazirite. In this Church age all believers are to fully dedicate themselves to God (Rom 12:1,2), they are to be spiritual Nazirites – which has nothing to do with not eating grapes or having long hair.

**6:3,4** Nazirites had to abstain from certain things that others could freely partake of. The person dedicated to the Lord cannot live as those who are not. Wine spoke of the ordinary pleasures of life that were permitted to others (Ps 104:15).

**6:5** Long hair was the outward sign of a Nazirite (Jud 13:5; 16:17). Long hair, the apostle Paul wrote, is a dishonor to a man but a glory to a woman (1 Cor 11:14,15). It speaks of a woman's proper place of subjection to a man. The Nazirite male had to be willing to bear this reproach. Perhaps

it suggested his spiritual marriage to the Lord and subjection to God's will.

**6:6** "Dead body" – in this matter Nazirites had to be like priests (Lev 21:1).

**6:7,8** Death was considered defiling (note Lev 21:1-4). Because of all the above rules for a Nazirite Jesus Christ could not have been one (although, of course, He was fully dedicated to the will of God and fulfilled all the spiritual realities that Old Testament Nazirites symbolized). He drank wine (Mark 14:23-25). He touched the dead (Mark 5:41; Luke 7:14); and there is no reason to think He had long hair. There is no connection between the words Nazirite and Nazarene.

**6:9-12** The defilement of death, the wages of sin, must be removed by sacrifice (Lev 5:7. See notes at Lev 13:1-44; 11:1). The hair must be completely shaved as in the case of the leper (Lev 14:8,9), and the Nazirite had to begin afresh to fulfil his vow. **6:13-17** Lev 1:10-13; 4:27-35; 2:1-16; 3:1-5. The Nazirite, though especially consecrated to God and "holy to the Lord" (v 8), was still a sinner (had a sinful nature) and needed cleansing. This is true of the most dedicated, spiritual and holy Christians today also (1 Tim 1:15; Rom 7:18; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8-10; Matt 6:12).

"Peace offering" – Lev 3:1.

**6:18** Since long hair was a symbol all the days of his special dedication, the hair was removed

*after boiling it*, and one cake made without yeast out of the basket, and one wafer made without yeast, and put *them* in the hands of the Nazirite, after his dedicated *hair* has been shaved off; 20 and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. This is holy for the priest, with the wave breast and lifted up shoulder. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.

21 "This is the law of the Nazirite who has made a vow, *and of* his offering to the LORD concerning his dedication, in addition to what *else* he can afford. He must obey the law of his dedication in accordance with the vow he made."

22 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23 "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the way you are to bless the children of Israel, saying to them,

- 24 "The LORD bless you, and keep you.
- 25 The LORD make his face shine on you, and be gracious to you.
- 26 The LORD lift up his countenance on you, and give you peace.

27 "And they shall put my name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

**7** And it came about on the day that Moses had completed setting up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all its furnishings, and the altar and all its utensils, and had anointed them, and sanctified them, 2 that the leaders of Israel, heads of their fathers' households, who *were* the leaders of the tribes, and who were over

and burned once those days were over. **6:22-27** Here is the blessing which God Himself taught His priests to speak to His people. So these are the things He especially wants them to enjoy. They add up to a full and complete life. He wants them to have well-being and safety from every enemy (v 24; Deut 28:1-6; 1 Sam 2:9; Ps 12:7; 31:20; 91:11; John 17:11,15). He wants them to have His light in their lives and on their daily paths and to enjoy always the grace and kindness of God (v 25; Ps 31:16; 67:1; 80:1,3,7,19; 104:15; 119:135). He wants them to experience unbroken communion with Himself and the deep peace that only He can give (v 26; Ps 21:6; 42:5; 29:11; 85:8; 119:165; Isa 9:6,7; 26:3; 32:17; John 14:27; 16:33; Rom 14:17).

All these He still wants His people to enjoy. Through the cross of Christ they are all made available to all who believe in Him.

The lifting up of God's countenance, the shining of His face on His people signify His favor and acceptance of them. The hiding of His face indicates His displeasure (Deut 31:17,18; 32:20; Ps 13:1; 27:9;

those who were numbered, presented offerings. 3 And they brought their offering before the LORD: six covered wagons and twelve oxen, a wagon for *every* two of the leaders, and for each one an ox. And they brought them in front of the tabernacle.

4 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 5 "Take it from them for doing the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and give them to the Levites, to each man according to his service."

6 And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. 7 He gave two wagons and four oxen to the sons of Gershon in accordance with their service. 8 And he gave four wagons and eight oxen to the sons of Merari, in accordance with their service under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 9 But he did not give any to the sons of Kohath, because their part of the work of the sanctuary was carrying *things* on their shoulders.

10 And the leaders made their offerings for the dedication of the altar on the day that it was anointed. The leaders presented their offering before the altar. 11 And the LORD said to Moses, "They shall present their offering, each leader on his day, for the dedication of the altar."

12 And the one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah; 13 and his offering was one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 14 one ladle of ten *shekels* of gold, full of incense,

30:7; 69:17; 102:2; Isa 1:15). One great purpose God had in giving the whole Bible was that people might learn how to receive His blessings and enjoy them forever. See notes at Gen 12:3; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1,2; 119:1,2; Matt 5:3-12; Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:9,14; Eph 1:3. **7:1** Ex 40:9,17.

**7:2** The twelve leaders of the tribes of Israel brought exactly the same offerings and gifts, but each one is listed in full, with the name of each leader. God sees what we offer Him whether it is good or bad. If it is good He rejoices in it, He remembers it and He will reward it (Matt 10:42; Heb 6:10; Rev 22:12). If God's people really believed this they would not be reluctant to give to God's work.

**7:4,5** The things we bring to God with a true heart are acceptable to Him. It is God's way that the servants of God should be supported by the gifts of those whom they serve (Lev 7:14; Num 18:8-32; 1 Cor 9:7-14; Matt 10:9-11; 1 Tim 5:17,18).

**7:13** "A hundred and thirty shekels" – about 1.5 kilogram.

**7:14** "Ten shekels" – about 110 grams.

15 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 16 one young goat for a sin offering, 17 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

18 On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, leader of Issachar, made an offering. 19 He presented as his offering one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 20 one ladle of gold of ten shekels, full of incense, 21 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 22 one young goat for a sin offering, 23 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

24 On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, leader of the children of Zebulun, made an offering. 25 His offering was one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 26 one golden ladle of ten *shekels*, full of incense, 27 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 28 one young goat for a sin offering, 29 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

30 On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, leader of the children of Reuben, made an offering. 31 His offering was one silver dish weighing a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 32 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense, 33 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 34 one young goat for a sin offering, 35 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, leader of the children of Simeon, made an offering. 37 His offering was one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 38 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense, 39 One young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 40 one young goat for a sin offering, 41 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings,

two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

42 On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, leader of the children of Gad, made an offering. 43 His offering was one silver dish weighing a hundred and thirty *shekels*, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 44 one golden ladle of ten *shekels*, full of incense, 45 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 46 one young goat for a sin offering, 47 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

48 On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, leader of the children of Ephraim, made an offering. 49 His offering was one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 50 one golden ladle of ten shekels, full of incense, 51 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 52 one young goat for a sin offering, 53 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54 On the eighth day Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, leader of the children of Manasseh, made an offering. 55 His offering was one silver dish of the weight of a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 56 one golden ladle of ten *shekels*, full of incense, 57 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 58 one young goat for a sin offering, 59 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

60 On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, leader of the children of Benjamin, made an offering. 61 His offering was one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 62 one golden ladle of ten *shekels*, full of incense, 63 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 64 one young goat for a sin offering, 65 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

66 On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, leader of the children of Dan, *made an offering*. 67 His offering *was* one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 68 one golden ladle of ten *shekels*, full of incense, 69 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 70 one young goat for a sin offering, 71 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This *was* the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, leader of the children of Asher, *made an offering*. 73 His offering *was* one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 74 one golden ladle of ten *shekels*, full of incense, 75 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 76 one young goat for a sin offering, 77 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This *was* the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78 On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, leader of the children of Naphtali, *made an offering*. 79 His offering *was* one silver dish, the weight of which was a hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, 80 one golden ladle of ten *shekels*, full of incense, 81 one young ox, one ram, one lamb a year old, for a burnt offering, 82 one young goat for a sin offering, 83 and for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs a year old. This *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84 This *was* the dedication *offerings* of the leaders of Israel for the altar on the day when it was anointed: twelve dishes of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve gold ladles, 85 each silver dish *weighing* a hundred and thirty *shekels*, each bowl seventy. All the silver utensils *weighed* two thousand four hundred *shekels*, in accordance with

the sanctuary shekel. 86 There were twelve gold ladles, full of incense, *weighing* ten *shekels* each, in accordance with the sanctuary shekel. The total gold of the ladles was a hundred and twenty *shekels*. 87 The total of the oxen for the burnt offering *was* twelve oxen, the rams twelve, the lambs a year old twelve, with their grain offering, and the young goats for a sin offering twelve. 88 And the total oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings was twenty-four oxen, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, the lambs a year old sixty. This *was* for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed. 89 And when Moses had gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking to him from the mercy seat that was on the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim. And he spoke to him.

**8** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to Aaron, and say to him, When you light the lamps, the seven lamps will give light in front of the lampstand."

3 And Aaron did so. He set up its lamps in front of the lampstand, just as the LORD commanded Moses. 4 And the workmanship of the lampstand *was* hammered gold. From its base to its flowers it *was* of hammered work. He made the lampstand according to the pattern which the LORD had shown to Moses.

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. 7 And this is what you are to do to them to cleanse them: Sprinkle purifying water on them, and have them shave their whole body and have them wash their clothes, and *so* make themselves clean. 8 Then have them take a young ox with its grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, and take another young ox as a sin offering; 9 and bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation; and gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together, 10 and bring the Levites into the presence of the LORD. And the children of Israel shall put their hands on the Levites; 11 and Aaron shall present the Levites before the LORD *as* an offering of the children of Israel, so that they may perform the service of the LORD.

12 "And the Levites shall lay their hands on the

**7:85,86** "Two thousand four hundred shekels" – about 28 kilograms.

"A hundred and twenty shekels" – about 1.4 kilograms.

**7:89** Ex 40:34,35; 25:21,22; Ps 80:1; 99:1.

**8:2-4** "Lampstand" – Ex 25:31-40; 37:17-24.

"Pattern" – Ex 25:9; 26:30.

**8:6** Isa 52:11; 2 Cor 7:1. Those who do God's work should he clean in every way.

**8:7** 19:9,17.

**8:8** The first bull was for a burnt offering. See note at Lev 1:1-9. The sin offering was an acknowledgment that though they were holy to the Lord they were still sinners and needed atonement.

**8:9** Ex 29:4; 40:12.

**8:10,11** Lev 1:4. This laying on of hands signified their acceptance of the Levites to serve for them in the tabernacle. They became a living offering to God for His holy

heads of the ox; and you shall offer one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites. 13 And you shall set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and present them as an offering to the LORD. 14 In this way you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine.

15 "And after that the Levites shall go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. And you shall cleanse them and present them *as* an offering. 16 For they *are* to be given wholly to me from among the children of Israel. I have taken them for myself *instead* of the first issue of every womb, all the firstborn of the children of Israel. 17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and animal. I set them apart for myself on the day that I struck down every firstborn in the land of Egypt. 18 And I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel. 19 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make atonement for the children of Israel, so that there will be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel approach the sanctuary."

20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did *this* to the Levites. The children of Israel did to the Levites according to all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning them. 21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes. And Aaron presented them as an offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. 22 And after that the Levites went in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation in the presence of Aaron and his sons. They did to the Levites just as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning them.

23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

service (compare Rom 12:1,2).

**8:14-18** 3:12; 16:9. Israel as a whole was God's (Deut 4:20; 7:6; 14:2). The Levites were representatives for them all, taking the place of the firstborn of every family in Israel.

**8:19** "Gift to Aaron" – Aaron and his sons were the priests who served in the tabernacle. But there was far too much work for one family to do. Therefore God separated the whole tribe of Levi and gave them to Aaron and his descendants to help in the work – 1:50-53.

"No plague" – 1:53.

**8:23-26** In 4:3 the beginning age for their service is given as 30 years. It would seem from this that during the first five years of service the Levites were apprentices and

24 "This *is* what *pertains* to the Levites: from twenty-five years of age, and upward, they shall go in to perform the work of the tabernacle of the congregation; 25 and at the age of fifty years they are to stop doing *its* work, and shall not serve any more; 26 they may assist their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to perform the duties, but shall not do any work. Thus shall you deal with the Levites about their duties."

**9** And the LORD spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "Have the children of Israel also keep the Passover at its appointed time. 3 On the fourteenth day of this month in the evening you shall keep it at its appointed time. You are to keep it in accordance with all its rites and in accordance with all its ceremonies."

4 And Moses told the children of Israel to keep the Passover. 5 And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month in the evening, in the desert of Sinai. The children of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses.

6 And some men had become defiled by the dead body of a man, so they could not keep the Passover on that day. And on that day they came to Moses and Aaron. 7 And those men said to him, "Even though we are defiled by the dead body of a man, why are we kept away so that we cannot present an offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?"

8 And Moses said to them, "Wait, and I will hear what command the LORD gives about you."

9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, If any of you or of your descendants becomes unclean because of a dead body, or *is* at a distance on a journey, yet he shall keep the Passover to the LORD. 11 They shall keep it on the fourteenth day of the second month in the evening, and eat it with bread

assistants. For 25 years they did the heavy work of the tabernacle. At age 50 they could completely retire if they wished, or continue on doing light work, or perhaps helping in the work of supervision, for an indefinite period of time, presumably many years more. No such age restrictions were given for Aaron and his sons, the priests. The priestly work of believers now (prayer, praise, giving of gifts, etc) does not cease at any age.

**9:2,3** Ex 12:6; Lev 23:5.

**9:6** 5:2; Lev 11:25.

**9:8** This is what everyone should do in any doubtful matter, in anything where guidance is needed (Ps 85:8; Prov 3:5,6; Jam 1:5).

**9:11** The answer God gave to this problem was that those who were unclean at the



made without yeast and bitter *herbs*. 12 They are not to leave any of it until morning, or break any of its bones. They shall keep it according to all the ordinances of the Passover. 13 But the man who *is* clean, and is not on a journey, and neglects to keep the Passover, that person shall be cut off from among his people. That man will bear his sin because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time.

14 "And if a foreigner is staying among you, and keeps the Passover to the LORD, he must do so according to the ordinance of the Passover, and according to its regulations. You shall have the same ordinance for the foreigner and for the one who is born in the land."

15 And on the day that the tabernacle was set up the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony; and in the evening over the tabernacle there was what appeared to be fire, until the morning. 16 So it was always; the cloud covered it *by day* and the appearance of fire by night. 17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then the children of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. 18 The children of Israel set out at the command of the LORD, and they camped at the command of the LORD. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle they rested in their tents. 19 And when the cloud stayed for many days over the tabernacle, then the children of Israel obeyed the LORD's command and did not set out. 20 And so it was, when the cloud was a few days on the tabernacle, according to the commandment of the LORD they stayed in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed. 21 And so if the cloud stayed from evening to morning, and then the cloud was taken up in the morning, they set out. Whether *it was* by day or by night, when the cloud was taken up they set out. 22 *Whether* it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, remaining over it, the children of Israel stayed in their tents, and did not set out. But when it was taken up, they set out.

23 At the command of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the command of the LORD they set out. They obeyed the LORD's orders in accordance with the LORD's command through Moses.

**10** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Make for yourself two silver trumpets. Make them of hammered work. They will be for your use in calling the assembly, and in the setting out of the camps. 3 And when they blow them, the whole assembly shall gather together to you at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 4 But if they blow *just one trumpet*, then the leaders *who are* heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather together to you. 5 When you blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east side shall move forward. 6 When you blow an alarm the *second* time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall set out. They shall blow an alarm for their setting out. 7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm.

8 "And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets. And this shall be a permanent ordinance for you throughout your generations. 9 And if you go to war in your land against an enemy who oppresses you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and you will be remembered in the presence of the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies. 10 Also on your festive days, and on your solemn days, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings, so that they may be to you as a memorial in the presence of your God. I *am* the LORD your God."

11 And it came about on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle of the testimony. 12 And the children of Israel set out from the Sinai desert; and the cloud came to rest in the desert of Paran. 13 And for the first time they set out according to the command of the LORD through Moses.

appointed time of the Passover could observe it one month later.

**9:13** To neglect this appointed feast of the Lord was a very serious matter. It was the same as regarding it as of no value, as despising God who appointed it. The penalty was to be cut off in one's sin. If we lightly regard the Word of God we shall suffer the sad consequences (Prov 1:24-32; Heb 12:25).

**9:14** Ex 12:49; Lev 24:22.

**9:15,16** Ex 40:2,17,34; 13:21,22.

**9:17-23** Note at Ex 40:36-38.

**10:1-10** 2 Chron 13:12; Jer 4:5; Joel

2:1,15. Here trumpets were to be used in four different ways – for summoning the people, for the setting out of the people, as a call to war, and at feast days. Note at Lev 23:23-25.

**10:11-13** This took place one month after the tabernacle was erected (Ex 40:17), more than a year after they left Egypt. They had been camped at Sinai about 11 months (Ex 19:1), receiving God's laws and instructions. Now they set out on the journey to the land of Canaan. They move out in the exact order that God had previously given (vs 14-28).

14 The standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies moved first; and Nahshon the son of Amminadab *was* over its army. 15 And Nethaneel the son of Zuar was over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar. 16 And Eliab the son of Helon *was* over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun. 17 Then the tabernacle was taken down, and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle.

18 And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies. And Elizur the son of Shedeur *was* over its army. 19 And Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai was over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon. 20 And Eliasaph the son of Deuel was over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad. 21 Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy *things*, and the *others* set up the tabernacle before they came.

22 Then the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set out according to their armies; and Elishama the son of Ammihud *was* over its army. 23 And Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur *was* over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh. 24 And Avidan the son of Gideon was over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin.

25 Then the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set out, the last of all the camps throughout their hosts; and Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai *was* over its army. 26 And Pagiel the son of Ocran *was* over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher. 27 And Ahira the son of Enan *was* over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali. 28 This *was* the order of march of the children of Israel according to their armies, when they set out.

29 And Moses said to Hobab, the son of Raguel

the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are travelling to the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do you good, for the LORD has spoken good concerning Israel."

30 And he said to him, "I will not go, but will go to my own land, and to my relatives."

31 And he said, "Please don't leave us, because you know where we are to camp in the desert, and you can be to us instead of eyes. 32 And it will be, if you go with us, yes, it will be, that whatever good the LORD does to us, we will do the same to you."

33 And they went a three days' journey from the mount of the LORD, and during the three days' journey the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them to seek out a resting place for them. 34 And the cloud of the LORD was over them by day, when they went out of the camp.

35 And it came about when the ark set out that Moses said,

"Rise up, LORD, and let your enemies be scattered,  
and let those who hate you flee before you."

36 And when it rested, he said,

"Return, O LORD,  
to the many thousands of Israel."

**11** And the people were like those who complain of hardship in the hearing of the LORD. And the LORD heard *it*, and his anger was aroused, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed *some* of the outskirts of the camp. 2 And the people cried out to Moses; and when Moses prayed to the LORD the fire was quenched. 3 And he called the name of the place

**10:29** "Father-in-law" – Ex 2:18; 3:1.

"To you" – Ex 6:4-8.

"Concerning Israel" – Gen 12:1-3; 17:6-8.

**10:31** Since the pillar of cloud and fire guided them where God wanted them to go (Ex 13:21; 40:36-38; Neh 9:19; Ps 78:14), Hobab's guidance was really unnecessary. Moses' request may indicate a weakness in him. How often Christians, when they should get their guidance from God, seek it from human beings. Later we find Hobab's descendants in Canaan (Jud 1:16; 4:11). So it seems clear that he accepted Moses' invitation.

**10:32** The people of God should always try to persuade others to enter with them into God's blessings.

**10:33** "Mountain" – Sinai.

"Ark" – Ex 25:10-22. The ark was the symbol of God's covenant and His

presence with them.

**10:35** Ps 68:1,2; Deut 7:10; 32:41.

**11:1** Notes at Ex 14:11,12 and Num 21:5. See also Ex 15:24; 16:2; Num 14:2; 16:11; 17:5. Grumbling or complaining is a terrible sin because it is the same as doubting God's love, justice, guidance, goodness, and promises. If we complain against God we are saying that we are wiser and better than God. In this case this sin was swiftly punished. God's anger is like fire which blazes against all evil, sin, and wrong. Note at Num 25:3. See also Isa 30:27; 33:14; Rom 1:18; Heb 12:29.

**11:2** As Moses was the mediator and intercessor at that time, so now Christ is for His people (1 John 2:1; Heb 7:25; Rom 5:10). He it is who keeps the wrath of God from coming on them because of their sins. Note at Ex 32:11-13.

**11:3** "Taberah" means "burning."

Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them.

4 And the mixed crowd that *was* among them had greedy desires, and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 We remember the fish which we ate for free in Egypt, *and* the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. 6 But now we waste away. *There is* nothing at all *before* our eyes except this manna."

7 And the manna was like coriander seed, and its colour like the colour of bdellium. 8 *And* the people went around and gathered *it*, and ground *it* between millstones, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes with it. And its taste was like the taste of *some* preparation *made with* oil. 9 And when the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna fell on it.

10 Then Moses heard the people wailing, everyone in their families at the entrance of their tents. And the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused. It was also an evil thing in the eyes of Moses. 11 And Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you treated me badly? And why have I not found favour in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? 12 Have I conceived all this people? Have I given them birth, so that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries an infant at the breast, to the land which you swore *to give* to their fathers'? 13 Where can I get meat to give to all this people? For they are wailing to me, saying, 'Give us meat to eat.' 14 I am not able to carry all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. 15 And if you are going to treat me like this, please kill me at once, if I have found favour in your sight, and do not let me see my own misery."

**11:4-9** Though the fiery anger of the Lord burned against them their greedy desires were uncontrollable. They even dared to despise the food God had given them from heaven (Ex 16:14-16,31; Deut 8:3,16). We see from such behavior what man is in his fallen condition.

**11:10** 10:1. Moses was displeased. The burden of the people became very grievous to him. He could stand it no longer and began to complain himself. He practically charged God with treating him too harshly – vs 11-14.

**11:15** Desires and prayers for death are not uncommon even among the greatest leaders of God's people (1 Kings 19:4; Job 3:11,21,22; Jer 20:14-18; Jonah 4:8; Phil 1:23). But when the burden of life and service gets to be almost unendurable, God understands and helps and comforts His people.

**11:18** "Well with us in Egypt" – see Ex 1:9-11,13-16; 2:23-25. How quickly the past is forgotten! Compare 16:12,13.

16 And the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers, and bring them to the tabernacle of the congregation, so that they may stand there with you. 17 And I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take of the Spirit that *is* on you and will put *the same* on them; and they will carry the burden of the people with you, so that you do not carry it by yourself.

18 "And say to the people, Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you will eat meat; for you have wailed in the ears of the LORD, saying, 'Who will give us meat to eat? For *it* was well with us in Egypt.' Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you will eat. 19 You will eat *it* not one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, 20 *but* for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils, and it becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the LORD who *is* among you, and have wailed in his presence, saying, 'Why did we come out of Egypt?'"

21 And Moses said, "The people, among whom I *am*, *are* six hundred thousand men on foot, and you have said, 'I will give them meat so that they may eat *it* for a whole month.' 22 Will the flocks and the herds be slaughtered for them, so they can have enough? Or will all the fish in the sea be gathered for them so they can have enough?"

23 And the LORD said to Moses, "Has the LORD's hand become short? You will see now whether my word comes true for you or not."

24 And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered seventy elders of the people, and had them stand around the tabernacle. 25 And the LORD came down in a

**11:20** "Becomes loathsome" – when we insist on having something which is not God's choice for us He may let us have it, but it will do us no good. Having our own way is the worst thing for us – Ps 106:13-15. Actually the granting of their request was a punishment for rejecting the Lord. Can, then, an answer to prayer ever be a punishment? Sometimes.

**11:23** The answer of God to Moses' wavering faith was this: God is all-powerful and can and will always do what He says He will do (Gen 18:14; Jer 32:17,27; Zech 8:6; Matt 19:26). If God can give meat to six hundred thousand men plus women and children in the barren desert He can also provide all anyone can ever need wherever they may be. And He will do so **in response to faith**. Compare Ps 23:1; 37:25,26; Matt 7:9-11; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19.

**11:25** "Spirit" – how impossible it is to lead the people of God properly without the Spirit of God.

"Prophesied" – to prophesy means to

cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that *was* on him and gave *the same* to the seventy elders. And it happened that, when the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but did not continue.

26 But two *of the* men remained in the camp. The name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. They were enrolled with the others but did not go to the tabernacle. And the Spirit rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

28 And Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant from his youth, answered and said, "My lord Moses, forbid them."

29 And Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, *and* that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" 30 And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

31 And a wind from the LORD went out and brought quails from the sea, and let *them* fall near the camp for about *the distance* of a day's journey on this side, and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits *deep* on the surface of the ground. 32 And the people were up all *that* day and all that night and all the next day gathering the quails. The one

who gathered the least gathered ten homers. And they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. 33 And while the meat *was* still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD burned against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague. 34 And he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy.

35 *And* the people set out from Kibroth Hattaavah for Hazeroth, and stayed at Hazeroth.

**12** And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married (for he had married an Ethiopian woman). 2 And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken also through us?" And the LORD heard *it*.

3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

4 And the LORD spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, "You three come to the tabernacle of the congregation." And the three of them came. 5 And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood *in* the doorway of the tabernacle and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forward. 6 And he said, "Listen now to

speak under the influence of some inspiration or other. True prophets spoke inspired by the Spirit of God (2 Pet 1:21), false prophets spoke under the influence of the spirit of some demon or false god, or out of their heated imaginations (Ezek 13:2,3; 1 Kings 18:25,26,29; Jer 14:14; 23:13). True prophets predicted the future with absolute accuracy because God revealed it to them. They also taught the word of God already revealed. See note at Gen 20:7.

**11:28** Joshua was jealous for Moses, wanting him alone to be the prophet of Israel. Compare Mark 9:38-40.

**11:29** Moses had a higher view of matters. He was a meek and humble man (12:3). He did not desire a high position or honor from men. If others rose to a high place He was not envious of them. His one desire was that God be honored and that the work of God go forward. In all this he is a great example to all of us. Paul was of a similar mind (1 Cor 14:5). These are the kind of leaders God's people always need, not the kind who are out for their own honor or power or financial benefit.

**11:31,32** God kept His word given in v 18. "Ten homers" – probably about 60 bushels or 2.2 kiloliters.

**11:33** Ps 78:26-31. Let us be careful what we ask for and how we ask.

**11:34** Greed or covetousness is like idolatry (Col 3:5), and God's wrath comes on it. Kibroth Hattaavah means "graves of those who craved."

**12:1,2** Moses' first wife was Zipporah, a Midianite (Ex 2:15,16,21; 2:1). It would seem from this verse that she had died and Moses had remarried. His wife was an Ethiopian woman. Moses' brother and sister used this as an occasion to speak against Moses. But it is clear from v 2 that they were not satisfied to be subordinate to Moses and were rebelling against his leadership. They were not content to be in the position God gave them. This is a grievous sin – see note at 16:9-11. We must learn to accept the position God gives to us in His Church. Struggling and striving for position and honors is not Christ's way (Ps 75:6,7; Matt 20:25-28; 23:11,12; Luke 17:10). Our concern should not be to gain a high place but to be zealous and faithful in the place where God has put us, and to seek His honor, not our own. Note at 16:1,2.

**12:3** The Bible records both the virtues and sins of God's people. Moses meekly endured the verbal attacks and rebellion of his brother and sister. He did not defend himself. He did not consider his prestige. In this he was a great example to us all. Christ was an even greater example (Isa 53:7; Heb 12:2,3; 1 Pet 2:21-23).

**12:4-8** Sometimes God lets His servants suffer opposition, rebellion, and slander for a long time, but here it was necessary for the good of His people to speedily judge the case and vindicate Moses.

**12:6** This was one way God used to reveal His truth to the people then. He frequently

my words. If there is a prophet among you, *I* the LORD will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with my servant Moses who *is* faithful in all my household. 8 With him I will speak mouth to mouth, and openly, and not in riddles. And he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

9 And the anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left *them*.

10 And the cloud went up from the tabernacle, and immediately Miriam *became* leprous, *white* as snow. And Aaron looked at Miriam, and saw that she was leprous. 11 And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not lay this sin to our account, which we have foolishly committed and of which we are guilty. 12 Do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb."

13 And Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Heal her now, O God, I beg you."

14 And the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had only spit in her face, should she not be ashamed for seven days? Have her confined outside the camp for seven days, and after that let her be received inside *again*." 15 And Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days; and the people did not set out until Miriam was brought in *again*.

16 And afterwards the people moved from Hazeroth, and camped in the desert of Paran.

**13** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Send men for yourselves to search the land of Canaan, which I will give to the children of

Israel. You shall send one man, each one a leader among them, from each tribe of their fathers."

3 And by the command of the LORD Moses sent them from the desert of Paran. All those men *were* heads of the children of Israel.

4 And these were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; 5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; 6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; 8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; 9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; 10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; 11 from the tribe of Joseph, *that is*, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi; 12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; 13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; 14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; 15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

16 These *are* the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua.

17 And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, "Go up there to the south region, then go up into the hill country, 18 and see what the land is like, and the people who live in it, whether they are strong or weak, few or many, 19 and see whether the land that they live in *is* good or bad, and what cities *they* are living in, whether they are like camps or fortified places, 20 and what the ground is like, whether it is fertile or poor, whether there are trees or not. And make a strong effort to bring *some* of the fruit

made use of visions and dreams.

"Vision" – Gen 15:1; Isa 1:1; Ezek 8:4; Dan 2:19; 7:2; Nah 1:1; Acts 9:10; 10:3; 16:9; 18:9; Rev 9:17.

"Dream" – Gen 20:3; 28:12; 37:5; 1 Kings 3:5; Dan 7:1; Joel 2:28; Matt 1:20.

Now we have God's complete revelation in the Bible and there is not so much need for dreams and visions, though, no doubt, God may still give them if He pleases. But of this we may be sure – in no dream or vision will He add to the revelation of doctrines He has given in the Bible or give anything contrary to its truth. Other notes on dreams at Gen 15:12; Deut 13:1.

**12:7** Josh 1:1; Heb 3:2,5.

**12:8** "Mouth" – Deut 34:10.

"Form" – Ex 20:4; 24:10,11; 33:18-23. **12:9** 1:10.

**12:10** Deut 24:9. "Leprous" – see notes at Lev 13:1,2,47; 14:34. It is not written that Aaron was punished. Perhaps Miriam was the instigator of this rebellion. Perhaps Aaron's punishment was to see the wretched condition of his sister and to know he was partly responsible for it.

**12:11,12** Aaron's anguish and repentance are clear. He calls Moses "my lord" (here meaning my master or my leader), and there is no reason to think he ever rebelled again.

**12:13** Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27,28; Acts 7:60.

**12:14** Even when sin is forgiven it is right for the guilty to bear something of the consequences of it. Note at 14:22,23.

**12:15** Lev 14:7,8.

**13:1,2** Judging from Deut 1:19-23 the original suggestion to spy out the land came from the people. God gave orders to do what was in the people's hearts to do. His original instruction to them was to go up and possess the land (Deut 1:8,21). This they were very reluctant to try to do.

**13:17-20** The sending of spies into the land could have had a good effect if the people had not been so unbelieving and rebellious. They might have been better prepared knowing what faced them in Canaan. The Lord Jesus and the apostles often warned believers of things that faced them in the future so they would be prepared for them (Matt 24:9; John 16:1-4,33; Acts 14:22;



of the land." Now the time *was* the season of first ripe grapes.

21 So they went up and explored the land from the desert of Zin to Rehob, toward Hamath. 22 And they went up from the south and arrived at Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 23 And they came to the valley of Eshcol, and there cut off a branch with a single cluster of grapes and carried it on a pole between two *men*. And *they brought some* pomegranates and *some* figs. 24 The place was called Eshcol Valley, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut off there. 25 And after forty days they came back from exploring the land.

26 And they proceeded on and came to Moses and to Aaron and to the whole congregation of the children of Israel at Kadesh in the desert of Paran, and reported to them and to the whole congregation, and showed them the fruit from the land. 27 So they gave him *this* account and said, "We went to the land where you sent us, and it certainly does flow with milk and honey; and this *is some* of its fruit. 28 However, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities *have* walls and *are* very large. Also we saw the children of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites live in the southern region, and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the

Amorites live in the mountains, and the Canaanites live along the sea and by the banks of the Jordan."

30 And Caleb silenced the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to conquer it."

31 But the men who went up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they *are* stronger than we." 32 And they brought a bad report to the children of Israel about the land which they had explored, saying, "The land which we went through exploring it is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people we saw in it *are* of great size. 33 And we saw the giants there, the sons of Anak, *who are descended* from the giants; and in our own sight we were like grasshoppers, as we were in their sight also."

**14** And the whole congregation raised their voices and cried out, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this desert! 3 And why is the LORD bringing us to this land to fall by the sword? Our wives and our children will become plunder. Is it not better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 And they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader to return to Egypt."

5 Then Moses and Aaron prostrated themselves

Eph 6:10-20; 1 Pet 4:1). But with an unbelieving people, as then on the borders of Canaan, a fuller knowledge of the power of the enemy contributed to their fear, despair and rebellion.

**13:21** Zin was in the extreme south of Canaan, Rehob at Hamath was in the extreme north.

**13:22** The Anaks were a race of giants.

**13:24** "Eschol" means "cluster" or "bunch."

**13:27** Ex 3:8,17; 13:5; Deut 1:24,25. The spies admitted that the land was just what God said it was.

**13:28,29** This also was true, but what was that to God who had promised them victory?

**13:30** One voice spoke with faith (joined later by Joshua's) – God had promised them the land so it was certain that God would enable them to overcome enemies stronger than themselves. He had struck down the Egyptians and could do the same to the Canaanites (Deut 1:30,31). But how difficult it is to get people to really trust God! Observe that the majority is not always right and that men of God sometimes must stand alone for God.

**13:31** Their voice spoke of unbelief in God's promises, faithfulness, power, and love.

**13:32** They said at first it was a good land (v 27). But fear and unbelief made them doubt if they could take it.

**13:33** If God fights for "grasshoppers" they can conquer giants.

**14:1** This sad chapter is a lesson on unbelief and its consequences. As usual the people doubted their beliefs and believed their doubts. So they wept. The one and only thing that could keep them from taking possession of Canaan was unbelief. And this sin they immediately committed (Heb 3:18,19). Now the only thing that can keep us from inheritance in Christ and heaven is unbelief (Mark 16:16; John 3:36). Let us be careful to avoid the bad example of Israel.

**14:2** Note at Ex 14:11,12. See also Ex 15:24; 16:2; Num 11:1; 16:11; 17:5.

**14:3** What a slander on God who loved them, delivered them from their bondage, gave them food from heaven and water from the rock, and poured on them loving kindness and tender mercies! Let us not fall into the same condition. Unbelief always slanders God and fails to receive God's blessings.

**14:4** This is the wickedness of unbelief. Then it would stir up the people to forsake God's way and turn back to the very condition of bondage from which He had delivered them. Now it would tempt those who make a profession of faith in Christ to forsake Christ's way and turn back to the world of which Egypt is but a type and picture (Gal 4:8,9; 2 Tim 4:10; 2 Pet 2:20-22).

**14:5** Moses expressed his great alarm and burden to pray. See 16:4,22,45; 20:6; Deut 9:18,25.

before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. 6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *who were* among those who explored the land, tore their clothes, 7 and spoke to all the company of the children of Israel, saying, "The land, which we went through to explore it, *is* an exceedingly good land. 8 If the LORD is pleased with us, then he will take us into this land, and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. 9 Only do not rebel against the LORD, or be afraid of the people of the land, for they *will be like* bread for us. Their protection has left them, and the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

10 But the whole congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the LORD appeared on the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel. 11 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people treat me with contempt? And how long will it be before they believe me, in spite of all the signs which I have showed among them? 12 I will strike them down with a plague and disown them, and will make of you a greater and stronger nation than they."

13 And Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear *it* (for with your strength you brought up this people from among them), 14 and they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land; for they have heard that you, LORD, *are* among this people, that you, LORD, are seen face to face, and *that* your cloud stands over them, and *that* you go before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. 15 Now *if* you kill *all* these people like one man, then the nations which have heard of your fame will speak, saying, 16 'The LORD has killed this people in the desert because he was not able to bring them into the land which he swore to them.'

17 "And now, I beg you, let the power of my Lord be great, just as you have spoken, saying,

**14:6-9** Joshua joins Caleb (13:30) in exhorting the people to faith and obedience.

**14:10** "To stone them" – unbelief drives people to take desperate measures (Ex 17:4; 2 Chron 24:20,21; John 10:31; Acts 7:57-60; Heb 11:37).

"Glory" – Ex 16:10; Lev 9:23.

**14:11** Unbelief is rooted in man's selfishness, sinfulness, ignorance, and prejudice, and even a sight of God's miracles does not overcome it (Ps 78:11,32; 106:21-24; Luke 16:31; John 6:26). Unbelief wants only a full belly; promises of glory mean nothing to it.

**14:12** Note at Ex 32:10.

**14:13-16** Notes at Ex 32:11-13; Num 11:2. God's reputation was bound up with His people.

**14:17,18** See notes at Ex 20:6; 34:6,7.

18 'The LORD is slow to get angry and of great mercy, forgiving wickedness and transgression, yet not leaving *sin* unpunished, visiting the wrongdoing of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generation*.' 19 Pardon, I beg you, the wickedness of this people in accordance with the greatness of your mercy, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt up until now."

20 And the LORD said, "I have pardoned *them* in accordance with your word. 21 But as truly as I live, the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. 22 Because all those men who have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the desert have tempted me now these ten times, and have not listened to my voice, 23 they will by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor will any of those who treated me with contempt see it. 24 But *as for* my servant Caleb, because he had a different spirit in him, and followed me fully, I will bring him into the land where he went, and his offspring will possess it. 25 Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valley. Tomorrow turn and set out into the desert by way of the Red Sea."

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 27 "How long *will I have to endure* this evil congregation that complains against me? I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel which they make against me. 28 Tell them *this*: *As truly as I live*, says the LORD, I will do to you just as you have spoken in my hearing; 29 your carcasses will fall in this desert, all of you men who were counted, the complete number of you twenty years old and more who have complained against me, 30 will not at all enter the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 But *as for* your little ones, whom you said would be plunder, I will take them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. 32 But *as for* you, your carcasses will fall

**14:19** Ex 32:32; 34:9; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1.

**14:20** So God the Father hears the prayers of His Son for His people.

**14:21** Isa 6:3; Hab 2:14.

**14:22,23** They were pardoned, but they must be chastised and bear something of the consequences of their sin. Compare 2 Sam 12:10,11,14; Heb 12:6; Rev 3:19; Prov 23:13,14; 1 Cor 5:4,5; 11:29,30. **14:24** 26:65; 32:11,12; Deut 1:36; Josh 14:6-13.

**14:25-35** This is what they chose in their unbelief and disobedience and this is what they got. Here is an example of divine justice at work (Deut 30:19,20; Prov 1:28-31; 5:21-23; Isa 3:11; Jer 6:19; Ezek 18:30-32; Matt 23:37-39; John 3:18-20; Gal 6:7,8). The people of Israel opposed God, now He would oppose them (v 34;

in this wilderness. 33 And your children will wander in the wilderness for forty years, and bear your unfaithfulness, until your corpses end in the wilderness. 34 You will bear your sins for forty years, according to the number of days in which you explored the land, forty days, each day for a year, and you will know my opposition. 35 I the LORD have spoken; I will surely do *these things* to this whole evil congregation that is gathered together against me. They will be devoured in this wilderness and here they will die."

36 And *as for* the men whom Moses sent to explore the land, who returned and caused the whole congregation to complain against him by bringing a bad report about the land, 37 those men who brought the bad report about the land died by a plague in the presence of the LORD. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *who were* among the men who went to explore the land, *remained* alive.

39 And Moses told these things to all the children of Israel; and the people mourned greatly. 40 And they got up early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "See, *here we are*, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised; for we have sinned."

41 And Moses said, "Why are you now breaking the command of the LORD? But this will not succeed. 42 Do not go up, or you will be stuck

down before the face of your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword. Because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

44 But they presumptuously went up to the top of the hill, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, did not leave the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill came down and attacked them and beat them down as far as Hormah.

**15** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you have entered the land where you are to live, which I will give to you, 3 and make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or as a freewill offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a fragrant aroma to the LORD, from the herd, or from the flock, 4 then the one who presents his offering to the LORD is to bring a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil. 5 And prepare a fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering with the burnt offering or sacrifice for each lamb.

6 "Or for a ram, you must prepare two tenths of an ephah of flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil as

Lev 26:23,24,27,28; Ps 18:25,26).

**14:36,37** This judgment was speedily executed by God on the unbelieving spies. Beware of unbelief!

**14:40** Their repentance and confession were not real. This is revealed by the fact that they immediately disobeyed God again and refused His command given in v 25 and His word given through Moses in vs 41-43. False repentance will never obtain good results.

**14:44** See Eccl 9:3; Jer 17:9. Sin and unbelief are like insanity. Some Christians are so foolish as to go against Satan in their own strength.

**14:45** This is the usual result of self-effort in God's name apart from God. Canaan is a picture of the inheritance of believers in the heavenly places in Christ. We can enter into an experience of its blessings by a victorious faith in God's promises and a moving forward according to His word. Faith and obedience bring with them the power of God working in behalf of the believer. Unbelief robs us of the victory, rest, and enjoyment of God's blessings He wants us to have. Egypt is a type of the sinful world under God's wrath. The desert speaks of the temptations and trials all believers must pass through on their way to heaven.

It seems that the believer now is in three places at the same time – physically he is

in Egypt (the world), as a pilgrim to heaven he is in the desert, spiritually in Christ he is also already in the heavenly places. Notes at Num 20:12; Ex 15:27; Deut 1:19; Josh 1:17; Jud 3:2; Eph 1:3; 2:6. Numbers chapter 14 shows that Israel was not yet ready for Canaan.

**15:1,2** The people of Israel had lost their opportunity to enter Canaan for 40 years. A great many of them then living would never enter it. However, God immediately began to speak of what they should do after the people of Israel entered it – so certain it was that they would finally arrive in the land. Though they failed, He would not. Chapters 15 to 20 of Numbers cover a period of about 38 years. During that time Israel was wandering here and there in the desert regions south of Canaan. The instructions to the priests in this chapter, for the most part, had been given before at Sinai. Given again here they showed that the covenant was still in force, that God would undertake to bring them into Canaan, and that they should still observe His laws.

**15:3** "Offering" – Lev 1:2,3; 22:21.

"Aroma" – Gen 8:21; Lev 1:9; Eph 5:2; Phil 4:18.

**15:4** Lev 2:1.

"Tenth of an ephah" – about 2 liters.

"Fourth of a hin" – about 1 liter.

**15:5** Ex 29:40; Lev 23:13.

a grain offering, 7 and as a drink offering you shall offer a third of a hin of wine, *as* a fragrant aroma to the LORD.

8 "And when you prepare an ox as a burnt offering, or *as* a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace offerings to the LORD, 9 then he must bring with the ox a grain offering of three tenths of an ephah of flour mixed with half a hin of oil. 10 And you shall bring as a drink offering half a hin of wine, as an offering made by fire, a fragrant aroma to the LORD. 11 This is the way it must be done for one ox, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a young goat. 12 You shall prepare *them* according to the number *of offerings*; so do for each one in accordance with their number.

13 "Everyone who is native-born must do these things in this way, when presenting an offering made by fire, a fragrant aroma to the LORD. 14 And throughout your generations, if a foreigner is staying with you, or anyone else *is* among you, and presents an offering made by fire, a fragrant aroma to the LORD, he must do just as you do. 15 One ordinance *is to be* for both you of the congregation, and for the foreigner who is staying *with you*, a permanent ordinance throughout your generations. Before the LORD the foreigner is to be just as you *are*. 16 The same law and the same custom shall be for you, and for the foreigner who is staying with you."

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When you enter the land where I will take you, 19 it shall be that when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall present a lifted up offering to the LORD. 20 You shall offer a cake from the first of your dough as a lifted up offering. You shall lift it up just as *you do* the lifted up offering from the threshing floor. 21 Throughout your generations you shall present to the LORD a lifted up offering from the first of your dough.

22 "And if you unknowingly failed, and have not obeyed all these commands which the LORD has spoken to Moses, 23 all that the LORD has

commanded you through Moses from the day that the LORD *first* commanded *him*, and from now on throughout your generations, 24 then it shall be, *if any sin* has been committed through ignorance, without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young ox as a burnt offering, as a fragrant aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, in accordance with the ordinance, and one young goat as a sin offering. 25 And the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it *was done* in ignorance. And they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering, before the LORD, for their *sin done* in ignorance; 26 and it shall be forgiven the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and the foreigner who stays among them, since all the people *were* in ignorance.

27 "And if any person sins through ignorance, then he shall bring a female goat a year old as a sin offering. 28 And the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins in ignorance, when he sins in ignorance against the LORD, making atonement for him so that he can be forgiven him. 29 For the one who sins in ignorance you shall have the same law *both for* him who is born among the children of Israel, and for the foreigner who stays among them.

30 "But the person who commits *sin* defiantly, *whether he is* native-born or a foreigner, is blaspheming the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. 31 He must definitely be cut off, because he has rejected the word of the LORD, and has broken his commandment. His guilt *will be* on him."

32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to the whole congregation. 34 And they put him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him.

35 And the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall

**15:8** "Peace offering" -Lev 3:1.

**15:15** 9:14; Lev 24:22.

**15:20** Ex 34:26; Lev 23:14.

**15:22-29** Unintentional sin is still sin. It does harm to people, it is an affront to God's holiness, and it requires atonement (Lev 4:2; Ps 19:12,13).

**15:30,31** Sins done in arrogance and rebellion are a different matter. Those who do them blaspheme God and despise His word. They must be severely punished to show God's wrath against sin and to show there can be no blessing of God when such things are permitted. The Lord Jesus said that all sin and blasphemy could be forgiven

men (except the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit - Matt 12:31). Yes, but there will be very serious consequences in this life to the Christian who commits presumptuous sins (1 Cor 5:1-5; 11:29,30).

**15:32-36** A man merely gathers a few sticks on the sabbath and so must die a cruel death. Was this justice? Yes it was, for God Himself commanded it. The people had just been warned about presumptuous sins. This man had not "merely" gathered a few sticks on the sabbath. He had openly defied God and despised His word (Ex 20:9-11). That is why he had to die. God set him forth as an example of what should happen

surely be put to death. The whole congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 And the whole congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

37 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 38 "Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them to make for themselves tassels on the hems of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put a blue cord on the tassels on the hems. 39 And it will be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them, and not follow your own heart and your own eyes, in accordance with which you have been prostituting yourselves, 40 so that you may remember to obey all my commandments, and to be holy for your God. 41 I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. I *am* the LORD your God."

**16** Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men*, 2 and rose up before Moses, with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the assembly, well-known in the congregation, men of reputation, 3 and they joined together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, "*You take* too

much on yourselves; for the whole congregation *is* holy, each one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?"

4 And when Moses heard *this*, he prostrated himself, 5 and he spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will show who *are* his, and *who is* holy, and will have *that one* come near him; the one he chooses he will have come near him. 6 Do this: take censers for yourselves, Korah and all his company, 7 and put fire in them, and put incense in them in the presence of the LORD tomorrow; and the man whom the LORD chooses, he is the one who *is* holy. You sons of Levi *take* too much on yourselves."

8 And Moses said to Korah, "Now listen, you sons of Levi. 9 *Does it seem* just a small thing to you, that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them? 10 And he has brought you near *to him*, and all your brethren the sons of Levi with you; and do you seek the priesthood also? 11 This is why *both* you and all your company have joined together against the LORD. Who *is* Aaron, that you complain against him?"

12 And Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come.

to everyone who defiantly, arrogantly disobeys the Word of God. The law justly condemns all who disobey it. The reason for the law's existence is not to show mercy, and, in fact, it does not do so. Since we are all sinners (that is, breakers of God's law) we all deserve to die (Rom 3:19; Gal 3:10-14). By such examples as the incident in this chapter the law teaches us to come to Christ for mercy and grace (Gal 3:24). It teaches us how much we need the Gospel of God. Without it we would all be dead and in hell. Note on law at Ex 19:21-25.

**15:37-41** "Tassels. . . remember" – since sin is so powerful in man's nature, and since the temptation to follow their "own heart and eyes" was so great, they needed constant reminders to obey God. Of course, the hypocrites, following still their own heart and eyes, perverted this good use and tried to make it a mark of their own righteousness before men (Matt 23:5).

**16:1,2** This was a very serious rebellion against Moses, referred to several times in the Bible (26:9,10; 27:3; Deut 11:6; Ps 106:17; Jude 11). Rebellion against Moses, God's appointed leader, was the same as rebellion against God Himself. Note at 12:1,2. The rebellion was from two tribes, Levi and Reuben, and was against both the religious and administrative leadership of Moses. Korah was a first cousin of Moses

and Aaron (Ex 6:18-21).

**16:3** We often accuse others of what we ourselves do or want to do (Rom 2:1-3). It is true that in some ways all of God's people are equal in His sight (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). But it is also true that God has appointed leaders and teachers for His people's good (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-13), and we should listen to them as long as they teach the Word of God and lead people according to it. In this regard we should realize also that no one on earth in this age of grace and the church has the same God-given authority Moses had. Christ alone is the head of the Church, and Moses is a type of Him. All that Moses was to Israel, that Christ is to His Church and far more than that (Heb 3:1-6).

**16:5** Ps 65:4.

**16:9-11** Rejecting the place of service God has appointed for us is sin against God. Desiring bigness and pre-eminence and someone else's place of service is rebellion and wickedness. Their rebellion was actually against God, not merely against Aaron. Note at Num 12:2.

**16:12,13** In their eyes Egypt, a land of bondage and affliction for them all, has become a land flowing with milk and honey! See 11:18 also. How perverted were the minds of these rebels! See Isa 5:20. And how perverted the thoughts of Christians who



13 *Is it* a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land that flows with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness? Will you also make yourself a prince over us? 14 What is more, you have not brought us into a land that flows with milk and honey, or given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come!"

15 And Moses was very angry, and said to the LORD, "Do not have regard for their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I harmed one of them." 16 And Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow you and all your company be in the LORD's presence, you and they and Aaron.

17 "And each man is to take his censer, and put incense in it, and each man is to bring his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty censers; you also, and Aaron, each *of you bring* his censer." 18 And each of them took his censer, and put fire in it, and laid incense on it, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. 19 And Korah gathered the whole congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the glory of the LORD appeared to the whole congregation.

20 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 21 "Separate yourselves from this congregation, so that I may put an end to them immediately."

22 And they prostrated themselves, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, if one man sins will you be angry with the whole congregation?"

23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the congregation, saying, Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

25 And Moses got up and went to Dathan and

Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Please move away from the tents of these wicked men, and do not touch anything of theirs, so that you will not be consumed in all their sins." 27 So on every side they got away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children *with them*.

28 And Moses said, "This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things; *they have not come* from my own heart. 29 If these men die like all men die, or if they suffer the fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD does a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up, with all that they have, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have treated the LORD with contempt."

31 And it came about when he had finished speaking all these words, that the ground under them split apart, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all Korah's men and all *their* goods. 33 They, and everything they had, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed over them; and they perished from the congregation. 34 And at their cries all *the people of Israel who had been* around them fled. For they said, "The earth may swallow us up too."

35 And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who offered incense. 36 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 37 "Tell Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to pick up the censers from the burned remains, and scatter the burning coals over there; 38 for the censers of these sinners against their own souls are

look back to the sinful world and long for its pleasures and are tempted to think it is a wonderful place! But the world is a place of hate for the truth (John 15:18), sin (John 16:8), tribulation (John 16:33), guilt (Rom 3:19), ignorance (1 Cor 1:21), blindness (2 Cor 4:4), bondage to Satan (Eph 2:2), darkness (Eph 6:12), corruption (2 Pet 1:4), lust and pride (1 John 2:16).

**16:14** It was the unbelief of people like Dathan and Abiram which made it impossible for Moses to lead them to Canaan (14:2). Now they put the blame on him! Such people are well described in Jude 15,16.

"Put out the eyes of" – an idiom probably meaning "make slaves of" or "deceive."

**16:21** 14:11,12; Ex 32:9,10.

**16:22** "All flesh" – notice the name of God given here. Jehovah God is the God for all mankind, not a tribal deity, not the God of the one nation of Israel only.

"Sins" – compare Gen 18:23-25. The sin

of one person can bring guilt on a whole people (Josh 7:1,11; Rom 5:18,19). But in this case, judging from v 19, it seems the whole congregation sided with these rebels. **16:26** Gen 19:15,17; Rev 18:4,5.

**16:28-30** God Himself reveals His appointed leaders and gives proof of their calling and position. Compare John 5:31,32,36; Acts 2:22; 2 Cor 12:12.

"Pit" (vs 30,33) – in Hebrew Sheol. See the note at Gen 37:35.

**16:32** The sons of Korah did not die with them (26:11; Deut 24:16). Eleven of the psalms were written by (or for) the descendants of Korah – 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88. **16:35** 11:1-3; 26:10; Heb 12:29. Note at Lev 10:1,2.

**16:36-38** Consider this. Though offered by sinful men in a sinful rebellion they were still offered to God and so became holy! Can we then doubt that what we offer Him in sincerity of heart He accepts? (Rom 12:1,2).

holy. Let them be made into hammered sheets *as* a plating for the altar. For since they offered them in the presence of the LORD, they are hallowed. And they shall be a sign to the children of Israel."

39 And Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned up had presented, and hammered them out *as* a plating for the altar, 40 *to be* a reminder to the children of Israel, that no outsider, who is not a descendant of Aaron, should approach to offer incense in the LORD's presence, so that he does not become like Korah and his company. *He did this* just as the LORD had told him through Moses.

41 But the next day the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the LORD's people."

42 And it came about while the congregation had joined together against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation, and saw that the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tabernacle of the congregation. 44 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from this congregation, so that I can consume them immediately." And they prostrated themselves.

46 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer, and put fire in it from the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly to the congregation, and make atonement for them, for anger has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun." 47 And Aaron took *the censer* as Moses commanded, and ran into the middle of the congregation, and saw that the plague had begun among the people; and he put on incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague stopped. 49 Now those who died by the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died because of Korah. 50 And Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the

tabernacle of the congregation; and the plague stopped.

**17** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and take from each of them a rod for the households of *their* fathers, *that is* from each of their leaders for the households of their fathers, *a total* of twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod. 3 And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi; for there *is to be* one rod for each head of the households of their fathers. 4 And you shall put them in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I meet with you. 5 And it shall be *that* the rod of the man whom I choose, will sprout; and I will rid myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, with which they grumble against you."

6 And Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod, one for each leader for their fathers' households, twelve rods. And Aaron's rod was among their rods. 7 And Moses put the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of testimony.

8 And it happened on the next day, when Moses went into the tabernacle of testimony, he saw that the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and budded and produced blossoms, and yielded almonds. 9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod again in front of the testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels; and you shall completely take away their complaints from my presence so that they do not die." 11 And Moses did so. He did just as the LORD commanded him.

12 And the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Look, we are dying! We are destroyed! We're all destroyed! 13 Anyone who comes even near the tabernacle of the LORD dies. Will death consume us all?"

**16:41-45** They forgot their fear (v 34), and once more complained and foolishly and unjustly accused Aaron and Moses. The result is the same as on previous such occasions – a display of God's holy anger against their sin.

**16:46-50** The high priest of Israel stood between the dead and the living and made atonement for them. (Note on atonement at Ex 29:33). This is a beautiful picture of Christ as High Priest who by His prayers saves His people from God's wrath against their sins (Rom 5:9,10; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1). Notes on God's wrath at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7,11.

**17:1-11** Note at 16:28-30. God gives further evidence that Aaron is His chosen

priest. God's object is to keep the people from grumbling about it any more so they would not die (v 10). Aaron's rod signified his position as priest. Aaron himself signifies the Lord Jesus as High Priest (note at Ex 28:9-14).

**17:12,13** The death of the 250 by fire from God (16:35) left the people fearful and perplexed. So in the next chapter God sets forth again the clear duties of the priests and Levites so there would no longer be "wrath on the sons of Israel" (18:5). God's work must be done in God's way by the people God has chosen. But, alas, many think they are doing God's work when God has not called them or sent them (Jer 14:14).

**18** And the LORD said to Aaron, "You and your sons and your father's household with you will bear the guilt of *any sins against* the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you will bear the guilt of *any failure* in your priesthood. 2 And bring with you your brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, so that they may join you, and serve with you. But you and your sons with you *shall minister* before the tabernacle of testimony. 3 And they are to wait on the duties you *assign*, the duties of the whole tabernacle, except that they shall not come near the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, so that neither they nor you die. 4 And they shall join you, and wait on the duties of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle, but an outsider must not come near you.

5 "And you shall keep the responsibilities of the sanctuary, and the responsibilities of the altar, so that there be no more anger on the children of Israel. 6 And I, see, I *myself*, have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel. *They are* given as a gift to you, for the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 Therefore you and your sons with you shall serve as priests in everything *relating* to the altar and inside the veil, and you shall serve. I have given your service in the priesthood as a gift; and the outsider who approaches the sanctuary is to be put to death."

8 And the LORD spoke to Aaron, "See, I have also put you in charge of my lifted up offerings of all the consecrated things of the children of Israel; I have given them to you and to your sons as an anointed portion by an ordinance forever. 9 This shall be yours from the most holy things, *reserved* from the fire: every offering of theirs, *that is*, every grain offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they offer to me, *shall be* most holy for you and for your sons. 10 You shall eat them in a very holy *place*; every male shall eat it; it shall be holy for you.

11 "And this *is* yours: the lifted up offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel. I have given them to you, and to your sons and to your daughters with you, by a statute

forever. Everyone who is clean in your house shall eat of it.

12 "All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, their firstfruits which they shall offer to the LORD, I have given them to you. 13 *And* whatever ripens first in the land which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house shall eat of it.

14 "Everything devoted *to the LORD* in Israel shall be yours. 15 Every first issue of the womb, of everything *that has* flesh, which they bring to the LORD, *whether* man or animal, shall be yours. However you must redeem the firstborn of man, also you must redeem the firstborn of unclean beasts. 16 And you must redeem those that are to be redeemed from a month old, according to your evaluation of five shekels of silver according to the sanctuary shekel, which is twenty gerahs.

17 "But you are not to redeem the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat. They *are* holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and shall burn their fat *as* an offering made by fire, a fragrant aroma to the LORD. 18 And their meat will belong to you, just as the wave breast and the right shoulder are yours. 19 All the lifted up offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD I have given to you and to your sons and your daughters with you, by a statute forever. This is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and with your offspring also."

20 And the LORD spoke to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any share among them. I *am* your share and your inheritance among the children of Israel.

21 "And, see, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance, for the work which they perform in the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. 22 From now on the children of Israel must not come near the tabernacle of the congregation, so that they will not bear guilt and die. 23 But the Levites shall perform the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity. *This shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations: they are to have no inheritance among the children of Israel. 24 But the tithes of the

**18:1-7** The work and responsibility of the priesthood was Aaron's and his descendants. The Levites were to be assistants in the work outside, in the courtyard of the tabernacle.

**18:3** 4:15-20; 1:51; 18:7.

**18:6** 3:9,12,45.

**18:7** "Gift" – it was a great privilege to be God's priests. It was all of God's grace (18:20; Deut 18:2; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6).

**18:8-32** The priests and Levites were to be supported by the offerings and tithes of the people they served. This is God's usual way of providing for His servants (Lev 7:14; Num 7:4,5). The priests and Levites were to recognize that these were holy gifts of God and be careful how they used them. The priests had their inheritance in God, not in land and property. In other words, they had the greatest inheritance of all the people.

children of Israel, which they offer *as* a lifted up offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit. Therefore I said to them, 'They shall have no inheritance among the children of Israel.'"

25 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26 "Speak to the Levites, and tell them this: When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer a lifted up offering from it for the LORD, a tenth of the tithe. 27 And *this* lifted up offering of yours will be put to your account as if *it were* the grain of the threshing floor, and the fulness of the winepress. 28 Also, in the same way, you shall offer a lifted up offering to the LORD from all your tithes, which you receive from the children of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD's lifted up offering to Aaron the priest. 29 Out of all your gifts you shall offer each lifted up offering of the LORD from all the best of it, from the most holy part of it.

30 "Therefore you shall say to them, When you have presented from it the best of it, then it shall be put to the account of the Levites just as the increase of the threshing floor, and the increase of the winepress. 31 And you shall eat it any place, you and your households; for it *is* your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. 32 And you shall bear no guilt for it, when you have presented from it the best of it. But you shall not defile the holy things of the children of Israel, so that you do not die."

**19** And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 "This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying, Tell the children of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which is no blemish, *and* on which a yoke never came. 3 You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, so that he can take it outside the camp; and *there someone* is to kill it in his presence. 4 And Eleazar the priest shall take *some* of its blood on his finger, and sprinkle its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of the congregation. 5 And *someone* is to burn the heifer in his presence. He shall burn its skin and its flesh and its blood, with its

dung. 6 And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet and throw it into the middle of the burning of the heifer. 7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterwards come into the camp; and the priest shall be unclean until evening. 8 And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening.

9 "And a man *who is* clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store *them up* outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel as a water to remove uncleanness. It *is* a purification for sin. 10 And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. This shall be a statute forever for the children of Israel, and for the foreigner who is staying among them.

11 "Anyone who touches the dead body of any person will be unclean for seven days. 12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself the third day, then the seventh day he will not be clean. 13 Whoever touches the dead body of any dead person and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. And that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water to remove uncleanness was not sprinkled on him, he will be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.

14 "This is the law, when a person dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who *is* in the tent, will be unclean for seven days. 15 And every open utensil that has no cover fastened on it *will be* unclean.

16 "And whoever touches someone who has been killed by a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, will be unclean for seven days.

17 "And as to the unclean *person*, they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and put running water with it in a container. 18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent, and on all the furnishings, and on the persons who were

They signify believers in Christ who have their inheritance in Christ and not in this world (Eph 1:10-14; Col 1:12; 3:24; Heb 13:14; 1 Pet 1:4; Rev 21:7).

**18:16** "Five shekels" - about 55 grams.

**19:2** Lev 22:20-25.

**19:3** Lev 4:11,12,21; Heb 13:11-13.

**19:5** Ex 29:14; Lev 4:11,12.

**19:7** Lev 16:26,28; 22:6.

**19:9** 8:7; 31:23.

**19:11** 5:2; 6:6. Note at Lev 21:1.

**19:12,13** The defilement of death must be

cleansed away by the water of purification, part of which came from a sacrifice. If a person brought his defilement into the camp he must be cut off (Lev 15:31; 20:3). The sin offering signifies Christ (Lev 4:3), the water signifies the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. That which spoke of the defilement of sin had to be cleansed with animal sacrifices. Sin itself, and death the fruit of sin, defile the heart and soul and life of man. They must be cleansed away by the sacrifice of Christ Himself and by the Spirit

there, and on the one who touched a bone, or one killed, or a dead person, or a grave. 19 And the clean *person* shall sprinkle *it* on the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at evening. 20 But as for the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from the congregation, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water that removes uncleanness has not been sprinkled on him; he *is* unclean.

21 "And it is to be a permanent statute to them, that the one who sprinkles the water that removes uncleanness shall wash his clothes; and the one who touches the water that removes uncleanness will be unclean until evening. 22 And whatever the unclean *person* touches will be unclean; and the person who touches *it* will be unclean until evening."

**20** Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the desert of Zin in the first month. And the people stayed in Kadesh, and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

2 And there was no water for the congregation; and they joined together against Moses and against Aaron. 3 And the people quarreled with Moses, and spoke, saying, "If only we had died when our brethren died in the LORD's presence!

4 Why have you brought the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die here? 5 And why have you made us come out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place? It *is* not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink."

6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they prostrated themselves; and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. 7 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod, and gather the assembly together, you, and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes; and it will give its water; and you will bring water for them out of the rock. In this way you shall give the congregation and their animals *water to drink*."

9 And Moses took the rod from the presence of the LORD, just as he commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said to them, "Now listen, you rebels! Do we have to bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and *also* their animals.

12 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe me so as to show me as holy in the eyes of the children of Israel, you will

and Word of God.

**19:19** This ordinance of the ashes of the heifer is referred to in Heb 9:13,14 and compared with Christ's sacrifice of Himself which cleanses the conscience. The way the spiritual meaning is fulfilled appears in Heb 10:22.

**20:2** Ex 17:1.

**20:3-5** See 14:2,3; 16:31-35,49; Ex 17:2. "You brought" – God brought them into the desert, not Moses. It was their unbelief, not Moses, that kept them in the desert. It is easier to blame others than oneself.

**20:6** 14:5.

**20:8** Ex 4:17,20; 17:5,6. The rock signifies Christ (1 Cor 10:4).

**20:10** Ps 106:33. Did Moses forget for the moment that he was a mere sinful man even as they were?

**20:11** The rock had already been struck (Ex 17:6), and must not be struck again. The rock speaks of Christ (note at Ex 17:6). Christ was struck for sinners once and for all (Isa 53:4; Heb 10:10,14; 1 Pet 3:18), never to be struck again. Here Moses in a moment of pride and anger disobeys God, and sins. Even the greatest leaders and saints have sin in them. It must be conquered and subdued or it can break out and cause great harm (Isa 64:6; Jer 17:9; Rom 7:18,21; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8. See what Moses himself wrote in Ps 90:7-9).

**20:12** In this case Moses did not believe God, did not treat God as holy, and rebelled against God's instruction (v 24). So the one through whom the law was given stands condemned by the law he gave, and was not able to enter the promised land (compare Ps 143:2; Rom 3:20). Of course this does not mean that he could not enter heaven as a redeemed man.

The picture, the typology here is very fitting. Canaan signifies life in the heavenly places in Christ (note at Num 14:45. See also Eph 1:3; 2:6; 6:12). Moses signifies the law, and the law can never bring us into the blessings of Christ (Rom 3:19,20; 8:3; Gal 2:19; 3:13,14). It brings condemnation and a curse on us because we fail to keep it. It can lead people to the borders of Canaan but cannot take them in (Gal 3:24,25). After the death of Moses, Joshua led the people into Canaan. Joshua means "Jehovah is salvation." The Greek form of the name is Jesus. It appears that the believer in Christ is in three places at once. Physically he is in the world (Egypt); spiritually he is in Canaan (heavenly places in Christ), experientially many times he is in the wilderness being tempted and tried and going as a pilgrim from the world to heaven. The author of these notes thinks the believer is in Romans chapters 7 and 8 at the same time. See notes at Num 14:45;



not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

13 This *is* the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and he showed himself holy among them.

14 And from Kadesh Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom: "Your brother Israel says this: You know all the hardship that has come to us. 15 Our fathers went down to Egypt, and we have lived in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly. 16 And when we cried to the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and has brought us out of Egypt. And, see, we *are* in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your territory. 17 Please let us pass through your country. We will not go through the fields or through the vineyards, and we will not drink water from the wells. We will travel on the king's highway, not turning to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory."

18 And Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my *land*. If you do I will come out against you with the sword."

19 And the children of Israel said to him, "We will go on the highway, and if I and my cattle drink your water, then I will pay for it. I will simply go through on foot, nothing else."

20 And he said, "You shall not pass through." And Edom came out against him with many people, and with a strong hand.

21 So Edom refused to give Israel permission to travel through its territory. Therefore Israel turned away from him.

22 And the children of Israel, the whole congregation, set out from Kadesh, and came to mount Hor. 23 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom, saying, 24 "Aaron is to be gathered to his people; for he will not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. 25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to mount Hor. 26 And strip Aaron of his garments,

and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron will be gathered *to his ancestors* and die there."

27 And Moses did as the LORD commanded. And they went up on mount Hor in the sight of the whole congregation. 28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them on Eleazar his son. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. And Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 29 And when the whole congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they, the whole house of Israel, mourned for Aaron for thirty days.

**21** And *when* king Arad the Canaanite, who lived in the south, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel and took *some* of them prisoners. 2 And Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, "If you completely deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." 3 And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. And he called the name of the place Hormah.

4 And they set out from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom; and the mind of the people was very vexed on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no bread, *and* there is no water, and our soul loathes this miserable food."

6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and many people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, so that he will take away the serpents from us." And Moses prayed for the people.

8 And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and put it up on a pole. And it will come about that anyone who is bitten will live when he looks at it." 9 And Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and it happened that if a

Ex 15:27; Deut 1:19.

**20:13** "Meribah" means "quarreling."

**20:14** It was time to start moving toward the eastern boundary of Canaan.

"Your brother" – Gen 25:24-34.

**20:16** Ex 2:23; 3:7; 14:19.

**20:21** Deut 2:2-6.

**20:24** Verses 11,12.

**20:25,26** 3:4; Heb 7:23-25.

**21:1-3** This was an unprovoked attack on Israel by a Canaanite king. The day had come for Israel to start destroying a very wicked people whose time of judgment had come. See notes at Gen 6:7; 15:16; Lev 18:24. "Hormah" means "destruction."

**21:4** Deut 2:8. Impatience can be one cause of grievous sin (Israel – Ex 32:1; Moses – Num 20:10,11; Saul – 1 Sam 13:8-13. See also Ps 37:7,8; Jam 1:2-4).

**21:5** 11:4-6; 14:2,3; 16:41; 20:2-5. In the desert the Israelites complained about their difficulties, their food, the strength of their enemies, God's judgments, and conditions in the desert. In other words, they complained about God's leading for them, God's provision for them, God's choice of a place for them, and God's appointed leader for them. Such complaining is a very grievous sin.

**21:6-9** Sin brings judgment. Sin is like the

serpent bit anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent he lived.

10 And the children of Israel set out and camped in Oboth. 11 And they set out from Oboth, and camped at Ijeabarim, in the wilderness which *is* before Moab, toward sunrise. 12 They moved on from there and camped in the valley of Zared. 13 They moved on from there and camped on the other side of the Arnon *river*; in the wilderness that extends from the territory of the Amorites; for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 14 Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD, "What he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon, 15 and at the slope of the ravine that goes down to the site of Ar, and lies on the border of Moab."

16 And from there *they went* to Beer. That is the well about which the LORD spoke to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." 17 Then Israel sang this song, "Spring up, O well! Sing to it! 18 The leaders dug the well, the nobles of the people sank it with their staves *at the word of* the lawgiver." And from the wilderness *they went* to Mattanah; 19 and from Mattanah to Nahaliel; and from Nahaliel to Bamoth; 20 and from Bamoth in the valley that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looks toward Jeshimon.

21 And Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, 22 "Let me pass through your land. We will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards. We will not drink the water of the wells; *but* we will travel by the king's highway until we pass through your territory."

23 But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory, but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out into the wilderness against Israel; and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 24 And Israel struck him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land

from Arnon to Jabbok, as far as the children of Ammon; for the border of the children of Ammon was fortified. 25 And Israel took all these cities, and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all its *surrounding* villages. 26 For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites. He had fought against the former king of Moab and captured all his land from his hand, as far as the Arnon.

27 Therefore those who speak in proverbs say,

"Come to Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and established!

28 For a fire has gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon. It has consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon.

29 Woe to you, Moab!

You are undone, O people of Chemosh. He has given his sons and his daughters who escaped into captivity to Sihon king of the Amorites.

30 But we have overthrown them.

Heshbon is ruined as far as Dibon, and we have laid them waste as far as Nophah, *which* reaches to Medeba."

31 So Israel lived in the land of the Amorites.

32 And Moses sent *men* to spy out Jaazer, and they captured its villages, and drove out the Amorites who *were* there. 33 And they turned and ascended by way of Bashan; and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.

34 And the LORD said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites

poison of a snake. All men have been bitten by the "serpent" of Rev 12:9, and have the poison of sin in their natures and are in a state of death (Gen 2:17; 3:1-8; Eph 2:1-5). For the snake-bitten Israelites in the desert there was one and only one remedy for their condition. They had to believe what God said and look at the serpent of brass on the pole.

All this speaks of God's remedy for sin through Christ, as He Himself said (see John 3:14,15). Our sins were laid on Him and he was "made sin" for us (Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21). The remedy in the desert was revealed to the Israelites when they confessed their sin and cried for help (v 7). So it will be now with God's remedy in Christ for our sin. When we recognize our sin and our need and call to God for salvation He

hears us. Simply looking in repentance and faith at Christ on the cross bearing our sins brings salvation. Salvation is by grace and received through faith (Rom 3:22-25; 10:10-13; Eph 2:8,9; Col 1:21-23).

**21:14** Nothing is known about this book, and the Hebrew of verses 14,15 is somewhat obscure in meaning.

**21:16** God knew their need and would supply it, so there was never a reason for them to complain (compare Phil 4:19).

**21:21** The Amorites were a people whose sin was now full and ripe for God's judgment (Gen 15:16; Ex 23:23; note at Gen 6:7).

**21:24,25** Amos 2:9,10.

**21:29** "Chemosh" – a principal god of the Moabites, pronounced Keymosh.

**21:34** Deut 3:2; 31:8; Josh 2:9; Jam 4:7.

who lived at Heshbon."

35 So they struck him down along with his sons, and all his people, until there was none of his left alive; and they took possession of his land.

**22** And the children of Israel set out, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan *opposite* Jericho.

2 And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was very much afraid of the people, because they were so many, and Moab was filled with dread because of the children of Israel.

4 And Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this horde will lick up everything *that is* around us like an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. 5 So he sent messengers to summon Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which *is* near the river *in* the land of the children of his people, saying, "*Lo and* behold, a people has come out from Egypt. See, they cover the surface of the earth, and they are staying opposite me. 6 Therefore, please come now *and* curse this people for me; for they *are* too strong for me. *If you come* perhaps I can succeed in striking them down and driving them out of the land. For I know that the one whom you bless is blessed and the one whom you curse is cursed."

7 And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian left with *the fee for* divination in their hand. And they came to Balaam, and told him Balak's words.

8 And he said to them, "Spend the night here,

and I will bring word back to you as the LORD speaks to me." And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam.

9 And God came to Balaam, and said, "Who are these men with you?"

10 And Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent *men* to me, *saying*, 11 '*Lo and* behold, a people has come out of Egypt, which covers the surface of the earth. Come now, curse them for me. *If you come* perhaps I will be able to overcome them and drive them out.'"

12 And God said to Balaam, "You must not go with them. You must not curse that people, for they *are* blessed."

13 And Balaam got up in the morning and said to Balak's princes, "Go to your country, for the LORD refuses to give me permission to go with you."

14 And the leaders of Moab rose up and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

15 And Balak again sent leaders, more numerous and more honoured than they. 16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, "This is what Balak the son of Zippor says, 'Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; 17 for I will greatly honour you, and will do whatever you say to me. So please come, curse this people for me.'"

18 And Balaam answered and said to Balak's servants, "Even if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. 19 Therefore you also please stay here tonight, and I will

**21:35** The victory over these two mighty kings, Sihon and Og, was much celebrated and remembered in Israel (Deut 31:3-6; Neh 9:22; Ps 135:10-12; 136:18-20). This event struck fear into the hearts of the people living in Canaan (Josh 2:10; 9:10).

**22:1-7** The Moabites were descended from Lot, Abraham's nephew (Gen 19:37). Their country was east of the southern part of Canaan. Knowing how Israel had defeated Sihon and Og they were very much afraid to come against them in battle. The strategy of Balak their king was this: he wanted the curse of God to come on them so that God would no longer give them victory in battle. The Midianites joined with him in this plot and sent for Balaam to Aram (23:7 - also called Mesopotamia. The river in v 5 is the Euphrates). Balaam must have had a great reputation, judging from Balak's words in v 6. He was familiar with the name Jehovah - Num 22:8; 23:8,12 (LORD is Jehovah in Hebrew). He was a prophet and received messages from God and delivered them. Chapters 23 and 24 contain true prophecies. (See note on prophet at Gen 20:7; on prophecy at Num 11:25.)

But Balaam was a bad man who loved the reward that Balak offered him and so he taught Balak a way to corrupt the children of Israel. This way was to tempt the Israelite men with the women of Midian and Moab (25:1-3; 31:15). Balaam was killed later in a battle against Israel (31:8). In the New Testament Balaam is condemned in three places (2 Pet 2:15,16; Jude 11; Rev 2:14). Like so many today who profess to be servants of God he loved money more than righteousness, truth, or God.

**22:8-13** So far Balaam does well. He clearly knows God's commands not to go and not to curse Israel, and he seems fully obedient.

**22:14-17** What are all the honors men can give compared to the honors God gives (John 12:26).

**22:18** Verse 38; 24:13. Balaam was sincere in this, it seems. He had his reputation as a prophet to consider. Also he would not want God to stop giving him messages to deliver.

**22:19** Here Balaam shows his weakness for the first time. He knew God's command not to go (v 12). What else was there to

find out what else the LORD will say to me."

20 And God came to Balaam at night, and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, get up *and* go with them; but you must do according to the word which I speak to you."

21 And Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the leaders of Moab. 22 And God's anger burned *against him* because he went, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23 And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand; and the donkey turned away from the road and went into the field. And Balaam struck the donkey to turn it back onto the road.

24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path in the vineyards, *with* a wall on this side, and a wall on that side. 25 And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed herself to the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he struck her again.

26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam. And Balaam's anger burned, and he struck the donkey with a staff. 28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me. I wish there was a sword in my hand, for I would kill you right now!"

30 And the donkey said to Balaam, "*Am* I not your donkey, which you have ridden your whole

*life* to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" And he said, "No."

31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand. And he bowed his head, and fell prostrate on his face.

32 And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Look, I went out to oppose you, because *your way* is contrary to me. 33 And the donkey saw me, and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away from me, I would surely have killed you by now, and preserved her life."

34 And Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned; for I did not know that you were standing in the road opposing me. Therefore, now, if you are displeased, I will go back again."

35 And the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men; but you must speak only the word that I speak to you." So Balaam went with Balak's princes.

36 And when Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him at a city of Moab which was on the border of Arnon, which *was* at the most distant part of the border. 37 And Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not urgently send to you to call you? Why didn't you come to me? Am I not able to honour you greatly?"

38 And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you. Now do I have any power at all to say anything? I will speak the word that God puts in my mouth."

39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath Huzoth. 40 And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent *some* to Balaam, and to the leaders who *were* with him. 41 And it came about

find out? No doubt he was hoping God would change His mind, so he could go and collect the reward (2 Pet 2:15; he was not of the same mind and character as Daniel - Dan 5:17). Once we know God's will about something it will be dangerous for us if we try to get God to change His instructions.

**22:20** God saw the secret desire of Balaam's heart, his eagerness to get different instructions, and gave him permission to go. God sometimes allows men to follow the evil desire of their hearts (Ps 18:25,26; 81:12; Acts 7:42; Rom 1:28; Job 5:13). It would have been much better for Balaam if he had obeyed the first command of God and stayed home. Following the lure of earthly reward he now heads for shame, dishonor and death.

**22:22** God was angry at what he saw in Balaam's heart which made his behavior perverse (v 32). Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

**22:28** 2 Pet 2:16.

**22:32** Here the angel of the LORD clearly

states that Balaam's behavior is not right and that God was against him. The meaning of the Hebrew of the last phrase of this verse is uncertain. It could also be translated "your way is perverse before me." In 2 Peter 2:16, Peter, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, describes Balaam's behavior as "madness". He was behaving like a crazy man. Yes indeed, is it not madness to go on in a way that is not God's way for the sake of financial benefits?

**22:34** In his heart Balaam still wanted to go to Balak. His confession and seeming repentance were not deep and genuine. This fact is revealed by what he later did (31:16; Rev 2:14). True repentance leads to righteous conduct. Compare 2 Cor 7:10,11.

**22:35** The angel put great fear into the heart of Balaam so that he would speak only God's message. Then he gave him permission to go on to Balak.

**22:41** Baal was one of the false gods of the nations in that time. Note at Jud 2:11.

the next day that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up to the high places of Baal, so that there he might see the distant *part* of the people.

**23** And Balaam said to Balak, "Build here seven altars for me, and prepare here seven oxen and seven rams for me." 2 And Balak did as Balaam said; and on each altar Balak and Balaam offered an ox and a ram. 3 And Balaam said to Balak, "Stand by your burnt offering, and I will go *aside*. Perhaps the LORD will come to meet me. And I will tell you whatever he reveals to me." And he went *to* a high place.

4 And God met Balaam, and *Balaam* said to him, "I have prepared seven altars, and on *each* altar I have offered an ox and a ram."

5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and tell him this."

6 And he returned to him and saw him and all the leaders of Moab standing by burnt sacrifice. 7 And *Balaam* began his poetic utterance, and said,

"Balak the king of Moab has brought  
me from Aram,  
out of the mountains of the east,  
saying,  
'Come, curse Jacob for me,  
and come, denounce Israel.'

8 How shall I curse those whom God  
has not cursed?  
Or how shall I denounce those whom  
the LORD has not denounced?  
9 For from the top of the rocks I see  
him, and from the hills I look at him.  
See, the people will live alone,  
and will not be reckoned among the  
nations.

10 Who can count the dust of Jacob,  
and the number of a fourth of Israel?  
Let me die the death of the righteous,  
and let my end be like his!"

**23:4,5** God had decided to use this prophet for His own purpose and so put His message in his mouth (v 16. Compare Deut 18:18; Isa 51:16; Jer 1:9).

**23:7** "Poetic utterance" – the Hebrew means "parable", "saying", "proverb", or a "song" or "poem." The word was also used to indicate a prophecy in poetic form.

**23:8** 22:12.

**23:9** Ex 19:4-6; Deut 7:6.

**23:10** "Israel" – Gen 13:16; 28:14.

"Like his" – he wanted to die the death of the righteous, but he did not want to live the life of the righteous. The one is impossible without the other. So Balaam's end was miserable; he was killed fighting God's people (31:7,8).

11 And Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, and, look, you have positively blessed them."

12 And he answered and said, "Must I not be careful to speak what the LORD has put in my mouth?"

13 Then Balak said to him, "Please come with me to another place. You can see them from there, but only the most distant part of them, but you won't see all of them. So curse them for me from there." 14 And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered an ox and a ram on each altar. 15 And Balaam said to Balak, "Stand here by your burnt offering, while I meet the LORD over there."

16 And the LORD met Balaam and put a word in his mouth, and said, "Go back to Balak, and say this."

17 And he came to him and saw him, and the leaders of Moab with him, standing by his burnt offering. And Balak said to him, "What has the LORD said?"

18 And he began his poetic utterance, and said,

"Rise up, Balak, and listen;  
hear me, you son of Zippor.

19 God *is* not a man, that he should lie;  
nor a son of man, that he should repent.  
Will he say *something*, and not do it?  
Or speak, and not make it stand?

20 Look, I have received *a command*  
to bless;  
and he has blessed;  
and I cannot turn it away.

21 He has seen no evil in Jacob,  
nor has he seen trouble in Israel.  
The LORD his God is with him,  
and the shout of a king *is* among them.

22 God brought them out of Egypt.  
He is like the horns of a wild ox for  
them.

23 Surely *there* is no sorcery against Jacob,

**23:13** Balak in his superstitious ignorance thought a change of place might bring a change of message (v 28).

**23:19** 1 Sam 15:29; Isa 40:8; 55:11.

**23:20** Isa 43:13.

**23:21** This can hardly refer to what God saw in their hearts, or their fallen nature, or their sinful rebellion and complaining. It refers to their standing with Him, His separation of them to be a holy people. Now the believer has by faith a perfect righteousness – the righteousness of Christ Himself (1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:9), and in this righteousness there is no taint of evil.

**23:23** 22:7. Balaam is telling Balak that it is a waste of time and effort to use mantras against God's people. The mighty God was



nor *is there* any divination against Israel.

Now it is to be said of Jacob and Israel,  
"What God has done!"

- 24 Look, the people will rise up like a great lion,  
and raise himself like a young lion.  
He will not lie down until he eats  
the prey,  
and drinks the blood of the slain."

25 And Balak said to Balaam, "Don't curse them at all, or bless them at all!"

26 But Balaam answered and said to Balak, "Didn't I tell you, saying *that* I must do whatever the LORD says?"

27 And Balak said to Balaam, "Please come; I will take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God for you to curse them for me from there."

28 And Balak brought Balaam to the top of Peor which faces Jeshimon.

29 And Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars for me here, and prepare seven oxen and seven rams for me here." 30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered an ox and a ram on each altar.

**24** And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to seek for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness. 2 And Balaam raised his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came on him. 3 And he began his poetic utterance and said,

"The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,  
the oracle of the man whose eyes are  
open,

- 4 the oracle of him *who* heard the words  
of God,  
who saw the vision of the Almighty,  
falling *into a trance*,  
but having his eyes open:  
5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob,  
*and* your tabernacles, O Israel!  
6 Like valleys they are spread out,  
like gardens by the river's side,  
like aloe trees planted by the LORD  
and like cedars beside the waters.

- 7 Water will flow from his buckets,  
and his descendants *will be* by many  
waters,  
and his king will be higher than Agag,  
and his kingdom will be exalted.

- 8 God brought him forth out of Egypt;  
he is like the horns of a wild ox  
to him.

He will devour the nations *who are* his  
enemies,  
and will break their bones,  
and pierce *them* with his arrows.

- 9 He crouched; he lay down like a lion,  
like a great lion.

Who will stir him up?

Blessed *is* anyone who blesses you,  
and cursed is anyone who curses you."

10 And Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together. And Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse mine enemies, and, see, you have positively blessed *them* these three times. 11 So now, quick, be off to your own place. I said I would greatly honour you, but, see, the LORD has kept you from honour."

12 And Balaam said to Balak, "And did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me and say, 13 even if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the command of the LORD, to do *either* good or bad of my own accord, but I will speak what the LORD says? 14 And now, look, I am going to my people, *so* come, *and* I will advise you what this people will do to your people in days after *these*."

- 15 And he began his poetic utterance and said,

"The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,  
the oracle of the man whose eyes are  
open,

- 16 the oracle of the one who heard the  
words of God  
and understands the knowledge of the  
Most High,  
*who* saw the vision of the Almighty,  
falling *into a trance*,  
but having his eyes open:  
17 I will look at him, but not now;  
I will see him, but not near.

with them. See Rom 8:31; 1 John 4:4.  
**23:26** 22:18.

**24:1** 23:23; Deut 18:10-12; Josh 13:22.

**24:2** The Spirit of God may use anyone to speak God's message, even Balaam, even Saul (1 Sam 10:10,11), even the evil Caiaphas (John 11:49-51).

**24:3,4** Balaam had such experiences, but still became a Judas.

"Almighty" - in Hebrew "Shaddai" -

Gen 17:1.

**24:7** Agag was probably the name or title of a succession of kings of the Amalekites (v 20).

**24:9** Gen 12:3; 27:29.

**24:17-19** This may refer to David who became king of Israel many years later, or it may refer to the Lord Jesus Christ, David's son according to His human nature. David conquered both Moab and Seir (Edom) and

A Star will come out of Jacob,  
and a Sceptre will rise out of Israel  
and will strike the sides of Moab,  
and beat down all the children of Sheth.

18 And Edom will be a possession,  
and Seir, his enemy, will be a  
possession;  
and Israel will do valiantly.

19 Out of Jacob will come the one who  
will have dominion,  
and destroy the survivors from the city."

20 And when he looked at Amalek, he began  
his poetic utterance and said,

"Amalek was the first of the nations;  
but his end *will be* destruction."

21 And he looked at the Kenites, and began his  
poetic utterance and said,

"Your dwelling place is secure,  
and your nest is set on a rock.

22 However the Kenites will be ruined.  
How long before Asshur carries you  
away captive?"

23 And he began his poetic utterance and said,

"Ah, who will live when God does this!

24 And ships *will come* from the coast  
of Kittim,  
and will afflict Asshur,  
and afflict Eber;  
and he also will perish for ever."

25 And Balaam got up, and proceeded to  
return to his own place. And Balak also went his  
way.

**25** And Israel stayed in Shittim, and the people  
began to commit sexual immorality with the  
daughters of Moab. 2 And *those women* called the  
people to the sacrifices for their gods; and the  
people ate *them*, and bowed down to their gods.  
3 And Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor; and  
the LORD's anger burned against Israel.

4 And the LORD said to Moses, "Take all the  
leaders of the people, and hang them in the LORD's  
presence, in the sunlight, so that the LORD's fierce  
anger may be turned away from Israel."

fulfilled what Balaam predicted here (2 Sam 8:2,14). Christ, of course, in a greater measure than David was a star and scepter and will be the conqueror of the whole earth (Gen 49:10; Isa 9:6,7; Matt 2:2; Luke 1:30-33; Heb 1:8; Rev 19:11-16). The meaning of the last sentence of v 17 in Hebrew is obscure and may be translated in different ways ("and beat down all the noisy boasters" or "beat down all the sons of strife").

**24:20** "First of the nations" may possibly mean first to war against Israel when they came from Egypt. Amalek was not at all the first nation in human history. Amalek the ancestor of the Amalekites was the grandson of Esau (Gen 36:12). Balaam is speaking about tribes and peoples (Moab, Edom, Amalek, Kenites) which lived in areas just east and south of the Dead sea.

**24:21,22** The Kenites were a part of the Midianite people (Ex 3:1; Jud 1:16; 4:11). The Midianites were descended from Abraham by his second wife Keturah (Gen 25:1,2).

**24:25** "Return to his own place" - later Balaam came back (31:7,8). Deut 23:5 reveals that Balaam did his best to curse Israel in spite of God's command not to do so (22:12). But when God has determined to bless individuals or a nation no one can curse them. Indeed all attempts at cursing them will turn into blessings. See note at Gen 50:20.

**25:1,2** This was a result of Balaam's secret counsel to Balak (31:16; Rev 2:14). Sacrifice and worship to other gods was strictly forbidden to Israel (Ex 20:3; 22:20; 34:15).

**25:3** "The LORD's anger" - see notes also at Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom

1:18; 2:5; Rev 6:15-17. The Bible speaks of God's anger and wrath hundreds of times. The one true God has an infinite love for goodness, truth, justice, righteousness and holiness. So of course the opposite of these things calls forth His anger. God's anger comes out of His perfectly holy nature, which hates evil.

Also we should understand that His anger comes out of His nature of love - love for all that is pure and true, and love for the highest good of the universe He has made. If He were not angry at all sin and wrong He would not be God. Even among men what person who loves justice is not angry at injustice? Or what person who loves kindness is not angry at cruelty? Or what person who loves truth is not angry at that which is false and deceitful? The more people love justice and kindness and truth the more they will hate their opposites. God is infinitely angry at all the sins of men because His love of holiness and righteousness and truth and goodness is also infinite.

In the light of the Bible it is clear that all of us deserve God's anger, none of us is worthy of His love. For a list of some sins which God says make Him angry see Deut 4:25.

Some important references on God's anger: 1:53; Ex 32:10; Lev 26:28; Deut 32:32; Josh 7:1; Jud 2:12; 2 Kings 17:18; 24:20; Ps 2:12; 7:11; 78:38,49,50; 90:7-11; Isa 5:25; 10:5; 13:9; 66:15; Jer 25:15; Nah 1:2,5; Matt 3:7; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5,8; 5:9; 9:22; Eph 2:3; 5:6; 1 Thess 1:10; Rev 6:16; 14:19; 15:1,7; 19:15.

**25:4,5** In order for God's anger to turn away, sin had to be condemned, judged, and punished.

5 And Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

6 And one of the children of Israel appeared coming and bringing a Midianite woman to his brothers in the sight of Moses and in the sight of the whole congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping *in front of* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he got up from among the congregation, took a spear in his hand, 8 went into the tent after the man of Israel, and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her stomach. So the plague on the children of Israel was stopped. 9 But twenty-four thousand died in the plague.

10 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 11 "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, for he was zealous for my sake among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in my jealousy. 12 Therefore say, See, I give him my covenant of peace. 13 And he will have it, and his offspring after him, *this* covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel."

14 Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, the one who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a leader of a chief household among the Simeonites. 15 And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur. He was a leader of a people, and of a chief household in Midian.

16 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 17 "Trouble the Midianites, and strike them down, 18 for they troubled you with their tricks, with which they deceived you in the affair of Peor, and in the affair of Cozbi, the daughter of a Midianite chief, their sister, who was killed on the day of the plague *that came* because of Peor."

**26** And this happened after the plague: the LORD spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, 2 "Take a census

of all the congregation of the children of Israel twenty years old and over, by their fathers' households, everyone in Israel who is able to go to war."

3 And Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab *by the river Jordan near Jericho*, saying, 4 "Take a census of the people twenty years old and over, as the LORD commanded Moses." And these are the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt:

5 Reuben, the eldest son of Israel; the children of Reuben: Hanoch, *from whom comes* the family of the Hanochites; from Pallu, the family of the Palluites; 6 from Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; from Carmi, the family of the Carmites.

7 These *are* the families of the Reubenites; and those of them who were counted were forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty.

8 And the sons of Pallu *was* Eliab. 9 And the sons of Eliab: Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram who *were* of reputation in the congregation, who struggled against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they struggled against the LORD; 10 and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, at the time the fire consumed two hundred and fifty men; and they became a *warning* sign. 11 However Korah's children did not die.

12 The sons of Simeon by their families: from Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; from Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; from Jachin, the family of the Jachinites; 13 from Zerah, the family of the Zarhites; from Shaul, the family of the Shaulites.

14 These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty-two thousand two hundred.

15 The children of Gad by their families: from Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; from Haggi, the family of the Haggites; from Shuni, the family of the Shunites; 16 from Ozni, the family of the Oznites; from Eri, the family of the Erites; 17 from Arod, the family of the Arodites; from Areli, the family of the Arelites.

18 These are the families of the children of Gad according to those of them who were counted, forty thousand five hundred.

**25:6** This was a terribly presumptuous sin from a leader in Israel (v 14; 15:30,31).

**25:7-13** Phinehas acted for God's honor, punished the sin, and so turned away God's anger. See notes at 31:2; Ex 21:23-25. He is one of many in the Bible who were zealous for God and felt keenly any affront to God's honor (1 Sam 17:26,46,47; 1 Kings 19:10). Indeed do not all true believers experience something of this? God sees this desire for His honor in His people

and He rewards it (1 Sam 2:30).

**25:16-18** 31:1-12.

**26:2** 1:2. It was time to think about dividing Canaan among the people of Israel. So the new census (vs 52-56).

**26:7** 1:21.

**26:10** 16:32.

**26:14** 1:23. The tribe of Simeon had a very large reduction in numbers. Did many of them die in various plagues because of leaders like Zimri (25:9,14)?

**26:18-27** 11:25-31.

19 The sons of Judah *were* Er and Onan, but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

20 And the sons of Judah by their families were: from Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; from Pharez, the family of the Pharzites; from Zerah, the family of the Zarhites.

21 And the sons of Pharez were: from Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; from Hamul, the family of the Hamulites.

22 These are the families of Judah according to those of them who were counted, seventy-six thousand five hundred.

23 *From* the sons of Issachar by their families: *from* Tola, the family of the Tolaite; *from* Pua, the family of the Punites; 24 *from* Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; *from* Shimron, the family of the Shimronites.

25 These *are* the families of Issachar according to those of them who were counted, sixty-four thousand three hundred.

26 *From* the sons of Zebulun by their families: *from* Sered, the family of the Sardites; *from* Elon, the family of the Elonites; *from* Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites.

27 These *are* the families of the Zebulunites according to those of them who were counted, sixty thousand five hundred.

28 The sons of Joseph by their families *were* Manasseh and Ephraim. 29 *From* the sons of Manasseh: *from* Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begot Gilead; *from* Gilead *comes* the family of the Gileadites.

30 These *are* the sons of Gilead: *from* Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites; *from* Helek, the family of the Helekites; 31 *and from* Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; *and from* Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; 32 *and from* Shemida, the family of the Shemidaite; *and from* Hephher, the family of the Hephherites. 33 And Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, only daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad *were* Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

34 These *are* the families of Manasseh, and those of them who were counted were fifty-two thousand seven hundred.

35 These are the sons of Ephraim by their families: *from* Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites; *from* Becher, the family of the Bachrites; *from* Tahan, the family of the Tahanites.

36 And these *are* the sons of Shuthelah: *from*

Eran, the family of the Eranites.

37 These *are* the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those of them who were counted, thirty-two thousand five hundred. These *are* the sons of Joseph by their families.

38 The sons of Benjamin by their families: *from* Bela, the family of the Belaites; *from* Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; *from* Ahiham, the family of the Ahihamites; 39 *from* Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites; *from* Hupham, the family of the Huphamites.

40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman; *from* Ard, the family of the Ardites, *and from* Naaman, the family of the Naamites.

41 These *are* the sons of Benjamin by their families; and those of them who were counted were forty-five thousand six hundred.

42 These are the sons of Dan by their families: *from* Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These *are* the families of Dan by their families. 43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those of them who were counted *were* sixty-four thousand four hundred.

44 *From* the children of Asher by their families: *from* Jimna, the family of the Jimnites; *from* Jesui, the family of the Jesuites; *from* Beriah, the family of the Beriites. 45 *From* the sons of Beriah: *from* Heber, the family of the Heberites; *from* Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46 And the name of the daughter of Asher was Sarah.

47 These *are* the families of the sons of Asher according to those of them who were counted, fifty-three thousand four hundred.

48 *From* the sons of Naphtali by their families: *from* Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; *from* Guni, the family of the Gunites; 49 *from* Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; *from* Shillem, the family of the Shillemites.

50 These *are* the families of Naphtali by to their families; and those of them who were counted *were* forty-five thousand four hundred.

51 These were those of the children of Israel who were counted: six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty.

52 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 53 "The land is to be divided among these as an inheritance according to the number of names. 54 You must give more inheritance to a larger *group*, and to a smaller *group* you must give a smaller inheritance. Each *group's* inheritance is to be given

**26:34** 1:35. A large increase in number in the tribe of Manasseh.

**26:37-50** 1:33-43.

**26:51** A reduction of 1,820 from the census taken a generation earlier. The nation did not prosper during the desert wanderings

and lost many people by plagues and rebellions (11:33,34; 14:37,45; 16:32,35,49; 25:9). Moses' view of those years is found in Ps 90:7-9. Psalm 78:32-41 sums up that time. Yet God taught them many valuable spiritual lessons through it all (Deut 8:1-5).

according to the number of those who were counted. 55 But the land is to be divided by lot; they shall inherit it according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56 Their inheritance is to be divided by lot between larger and smaller groups.”

57 And those of the Levites who were counted by their families are these: from Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; from Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; from Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58 These *are* the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begot Amram.

59 And the name of Amram's wife *was* Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bore to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister. 60 And to Aaron was born Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 61 And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the Lord.

62 And those of them who were counted were twenty-three thousand, all males a month old or more; for they were not counted among the children of Israel, because no inheritance was given them among the children of Israel.

63 These *are* those who were counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who counted the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by *the Jordan near* Jericho. 64 But among these there was not a man of those whom Moses and Aaron the priest counted when they counted the children of Israel in the desert of Sinai. 65 For the LORD had said of them, “They shall surely die in the desert.” And not a man was left of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

**27** Then the daughters of Zelophehad came *to Moses*. He *was* the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph. And these *are* the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 And they stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest and before the leaders and all the congregation, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 3 “Our father died in the wilderness, but he was not in the company of those who joined themselves together against the LORD,

the company of Korah, but he died for his own sin, and he had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son? *Therefore* give us a possession among the brothers of our father.”

5 And Moses brought their case before the LORD. 6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 7 “The daughters of Zelophehad speak justly. You shall surely give them possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers, and you shall have the inheritance of their father pass to them.

8 “And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying, If a man dies and has no son, then you shall have his inheritance pass to his daughter. 9 And if he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. 10 And if he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. 11 And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his closest relative in his family, and he shall possess it. And this is be to the children of Israel a statute of judgment, just as the LORD commanded Moses.”

12 And the LORD said to Moses, “Go up on this Mount Abarim, and look at the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also will be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother was gathered. 14 For in the desert of Zin you rebelled against my command to show me as holy before their eyes at the waters *there*, during the strife of the congregation.” (These *are* the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the desert of Zin.)

15 And Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, 16 “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 17 who can go out before them and can come in before them, and who can lead them out and can bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

18 And the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom *is* the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation, and give him a commission in their sight. 20 And you shall put *some* of your authority on him, so that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. 21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him in the LORD's presence according to the

**26:62** Deut 10:9.

**26:65** 14:26-35.

**27:7** 36:2; Josh 17:3,4.

**27:12-14** See note at 20:12.

**27:16,17** Moses experienced great disappointment at not being permitted to enter the promised land (Deut 3:25-27).

However he was not bitter, but still much concerned for the welfare of the people, and prayed for a successor who could lead them well. A wise and spiritual leader of God's people will encourage the development of leaders who can serve after he is gone.

**27:18** “Spirit” – God's Spirit alone made him



decision of Urim. At his word *the people* shall go out and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him, the whole congregation."

22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation. 23 And he laid his hands on him, and gave him a commission, just as the LORD commanded through Moses.

**28** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Give this command to the children of Israel, and say to them, Take care to present to me my offering, my food for my sacrifices made by fire, of a soothing aroma to me, in their due season. 3 And you shall say to them, This is the offering made by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two lambs a year old without defect, day by day, *as* a continual burnt offering. 4 One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at evening, 5 *with* a tenth of an ephah of flour as a grain offering, mixed with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil. 6 *This is* a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in Mount Sinai as a soothing aroma, a sacrifice made by fire to the LORD. 7 And its drink offering *shall be* the fourth of a hin for one lamb. You shall have the strong wine poured out to the LORD in the holy place as a drink offering. 8 And you shall offer the other lamb at evening; you shall offer *it* as the grain offering of the morning and as its drink offering, a sacrifice made by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

9 "And on the Sabbath day *offer* two lambs a year old without defect, and two tenths *of an ephah* of flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering. 10 *This is* the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.

11 "And in the beginning of each of your months you shall offer a burnt offering to the LORD: two young oxen, and one ram, seven lambs a year old without defect, 12 and three tenths *of an ephah* of flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each ox, and two tenths *of an ephah* of flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each ram, 13 and

for each lamb a tenth *of an ephah* of flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, *as* a burnt offering of a soothing aroma, a sacrifice made by fire to the LORD. 14 And their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine for an ox, and a third of a hin for a ram, and a fourth of a hin for a lamb. This is the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year. 15 And one young goat as a sin offering is to be offered to the LORD, besides the continual burnt offering, and its drink offering.

16 "And on the fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD's Passover. 17 And on the fifteenth day of this month there shall be a feast; bread made without yeast shall be eaten for seven days. 18 On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no type of hard work in it; 19 but you shall offer a sacrifice made by fire as a burnt offering to the LORD: two young oxen, and one ram, and seven lambs a year old. They shall be to you without blemish. 20 And their grain offering *are to be* of flour mixed with oil. You shall offer three tenths *of an ephah* for an ox, and two tenths of an ephah for a ram, 21 and offer a tenth of an ephah for each lamb, with all the seven lambs, 22 and one goat as a sin offering, to make atonement for you. 23 You shall offer these besides the burnt offering in the morning, which *is* for a continual burnt offering. 24 In this way you shall offer each day, for seven days, the food of the sacrifice made by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD. It is to be offered besides the continual burnt offering and its drink offering. 25 And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no hard work.

26 "Also on the day of first fruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD in your *Feast of Weeks*, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no hard work; 27 but you shall offer the burnt offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD, two young oxen, one ram, seven lambs a year old, 28 and their grain offering of flour mixed with oil, three tenths *of an ephah* for each ox, two tenths *of an ephah* for each ram, 29 a tenth *of an ephah* for each lamb, with all the seven lambs; 30 *and* one young goat, to make atonement for you. 31 You shall offer them besides the continual

a proper leader.

**27:23** Deut 1:7,8,23; Josh 1:1,2.

**28:1-15** For meanings of the offerings spoken in these verses see notes on the first chapters of Leviticus.

**28:2** Lev 3:11.

**28:3-8** Ex 29:38-42.

"Tenth of an ephah" (vs 5,7,14) - probably about one liter.

**28:11** 10:10.

**28:12** 15:4-12.

**28:14** "Half a hin" - probably about two liters.

**28:16** Ex 12:1-20; Lev 23:5-8.

**28:17** Ex 23:15; 34:18; Deut 16:3-8.

**28:18** Lev 23:7.

**28:22** Lev 4:23,24; 16:18.

**28:26** Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:15-21.

**28:30** Note on atonement at Ex 29:33. As they neared the land of promise they were reminded of the offerings God required of them - daily offerings (v 3-8), weekly

burnt offering, and its grain offering (they shall be to you without blemish), and their drink offerings.

**29** "And in the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no hard work; it is to be to you a day for blowing trumpets. 2 And you shall offer a burnt offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD: one young ox, one ram, *and* seven lambs a year old without blemish; 3 and their grain offering *shall be of* flour mixed with oil, three tenths *of an ephah* for an ox, and two tenths for a ram, 4 and one tenth for one lamb, for all the seven lambs; 5 and one young goat as a sin offering, to make atonement for you; 6 besides the burnt offering for the month, and its grain offering, and the daily burnt offering, and its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their regulations, as a soothing aroma, a sacrifice made by fire to the LORD.

7 "And on the tenth *day* of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; and you shall humble yourselves: you shall not do any work *on that day*; 8 but you shall offer a burnt offering to the LORD as a soothing aroma: one young ox, one ram, and seven lambs a year old. They shall be to you without blemish; 9 and their grain offering *shall be of* flour mixed with oil, three tenths *of an ephah* for an ox, and two tenths for one ram, 10 and a tenth for one lamb, for all the seven lambs; 11 one young goat *for* a sin offering; besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

12 "And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no hard work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD for seven days; 13 and you shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD: thirteen young oxen, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs a year old; they shall be without blemish. 14 And their grain offering *shall be of* flour mixed with oil, three tenths *of an ephah* for each of the thirteen oxen, two tenths for each of the two rams, 15 and a tenth for each lamb of the fourteen lambs; 16 and one young goat *for* a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

17 "And on the second day *you shall offer* twelve young oxen, two rams, and fourteen lambs a year old without defect; 18 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the oxen, for

the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, according to the regulations; 19 and one young goat *as* a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

20 "And on the third day eleven oxen, two rams, and fourteen lambs a year old without blemish; 21 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the oxen, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, according to the regulations; 22 and one goat as a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and its grain offering, and its drink offering.

23 "And on the fourth day ten oxen, two rams, and fourteen lambs a year old without blemish; 24 their grain offering and their drink offerings for the oxen, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, according to the regulations; 25 and one young goat as a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

26 "And on the fifth day nine oxen, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs a year old without spot; 27 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the oxen, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, according to the regulations; 28 and one goat as a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and its grain offering, and its drink offering.

29 "And on the sixth day eight oxen, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs a year old without blemish; 30 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the oxen, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, according to the regulations; 31 and one goat *as* a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

32 "And on the seventh day seven oxen, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs a year old without blemish; 33 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the oxen, for the rams, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, according to the regulations; 34 and one goat *as* a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

35 "On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly; *on that day* you shall do no hard work; 36 but you shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD: one ox, one ram, seven lambs a year old without blemish; 37 their grain offering and their drink

offerings (vs 9,10), monthly offerings (vs 11-15); also special festival offerings (28:16 - 29:40).

**29:1** A description follows of certain special festival offerings. Note on the feast of

trumpets at Lev 23:23-25.

**29:7** Lev 16:29-34; 23:26-32.

"Humble yourselves" - or possibly "fast."

**29:12** Lev 23:33-35; Deut 16:13-15.

**29:35** Lev 23:36.

offerings for the ox, for the ram, and for the lambs, *shall be* according to their number, according to the regulations; 38 and one goat as a sin offering; besides the continual burnt offering, and its grain offering, and its drink offering.

39 "These *things* you shall offer to the LORD at your appointed feasts, besides your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your grain offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings."

40 And Moses spoke to the children of Israel in accordance with all that the LORD commanded Moses.

**30** And Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying, "This is what the LORD has commanded. 2 If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind his soul with a binding obligation, he must not break his word; he must do according to all that came out of his mouth.

3 "Also if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds *herself* with a binding obligation *while she is* in her father's house in her youth, 4 and her father hears her vow, and her binding obligation with which she bound her soul, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand, and every binding obligation with which she bound her soul shall stand. 5 But if her father forbids her on the day that he hears *it*, not any of her vows or her binding obligations with which she bound her soul, shall stand; and the LORD will forgive her, because her father has forbidden her.

6 "And if she marries after she made vows, or rash statements from her lips, with which she bound her soul, 7 and her husband hears *of it*, and says nothing to her on the day that he hears *it*, then her vows will stand, and her binding obligations with which she bound her soul will stand. 8 But if her husband forbids her on the day that he hears *it*, then he makes void her vow which she made, and the rash statement that she made with her lips, with which she bound her soul; and the LORD will forgive her.

9 "But the vow of a widow, or of the divorced

woman, with which she has bound her soul, will be binding on her.

10 "And if she made the vow, or bound her soul with a binding obligation by an oath, in her husband's house, 11 and her husband heard *it*, and said nothing to her, *and did* not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand, and every binding obligation with which she bound her soul shall stand. 12 But if her husband made them completely void on the day he heard *them*, *then* whatever came from her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the binding obligation of her soul, shall not stand; her husband made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her. 13 Her husband may confirm or her husband may make void every vow, and every binding oath to humble the soul. 14 But if her husband says absolutely nothing to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows, or all her binding obligations on her; he confirms them because he said nothing to her on the day that he heard *them*. 15 But if he makes them void some time after he has heard *them*, then he will bear her guilt."

16 These *are* the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between a father and his daughter *who is still* in her youth in her father's house.

**31** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel; after that you will be gathered to your people."

3 And Moses spoke to the people, saying, "Some of you are to be armed for war, and go against the Midianites and take vengeance on Midian for the LORD. 4 You shall send to the battle a thousand from each tribe, for all the tribes of Israel." 5 So from the thousands of Israel, a thousand *men* from *each* tribe were selected, twelve thousand armed for battle. 6 And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand from each tribe. *He sent* them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and trumpets in his hand to sound the alarm.

7 And they fought against the Midianites, just as the LORD commanded Moses, and killed all the

**29:39** Lev 23:2.

**30:2** "Vow" – 6:2; 15:8; Lev 7:16; 23:38; Deut 23:21-23; Ps 50:14; 61:8; 76:11; Eccl 5:4,5.

**31:1-3** "Vengeance" – following the counsel of Balaam (25:1,6,15; 31:16) the Midianites joined with the Moabites to try to corrupt Israel. Because of this 24,000 people of Israel died (25:9). Now God's time has come to deal with Midian. Vengeance belongs to God alone (Deut 32:35,41; Ps

94:1; Rom 3:5,6; 12:19; Heb 10:30). It is God's anger in action against sin (25:3). It is God acting in perfect justice. It is God bringing on people what they deserve by their actions. See note at Nahum 1:7. We are not to take vengeance on our own (Lev 19:18; Prov 20:22; 24:29; Matt 5:39-41; Rom 12:17,19. See note at Ex 21:23-25). It is a terrible fault in some people that they try to take vengeance for wrongs done to them. Much harm results from this.

males. 8 And they killed the kings of Midian, besides the rest of those who were killed, *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword. 9 And the children of Israel took captive *all* the women of Midian and their little ones, and plundered all their cattle and all their flocks and all their goods. 10 And they burned all their cities where they lived and all their camps, with fire. 11 And they took all the plunder and all the prey, *both* of man and animal. 12 And they brought the captives, and the prey and the plunder, to Moses and Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the children of Israel, at the camp on the plains of Moab, which *are* by the Jordan *near* Jericho.

13 And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the congregation, went to meet them outside the camp. 14 And Moses was angry with the officers of the army, *with* the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, who came from the battle.

15 And Moses said to them, "Have you kept all the women alive? 16 Look, through the counsel of Balaam these caused the children of Israel to act treacherously against the LORD in the affair of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. 17 Therefore now kill every boy among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man through intercourse with him. 18 But keep alive for yourselves all the female children who have not known a man through intercourse with him.

19 "And stay outside the camp for seven days. Any of you who has killed any person, and anyone who has touched anyone who was killed, must purify *both* yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day. 20 And purify all *your* clothing and everything that is made of skins and everything made of goats' *hair* and everything made of wood."

21 And Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who went to the battle, "This is the regulation of the law which the LORD commanded Moses: 22 you shall put through fire only the gold and the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead, 23 everything that can stand fire, and it will be clean; but it must be purified with the water for

impurity; and everything that cannot stand fire you must put through water. 24 And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and you will be clean; and after that you may come into the camp."

25 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26 "You and Eleazar the priest and the heads of the fathers' *households* of the congregation must count the prey that was taken; 27 and divide the prey between the soldiers who went out to battle, and the whole congregation, 28 and levy a tax for the LORD from the soldiers who went to battle: one in five hundred of the persons and of the cattle and of the donkeys and of the sheep. 29 Take *it* from their half and give *it* to Eleazar the priest *as* a lifted up offering for the LORD. 30 And from the half of the children of Israel you shall take one in fifty of the persons, of the cattle, of the donkeys, and of the flocks, of each kind of animal, and give them to the Levites who are in charge of the tabernacle of the LORD." 31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32 And the plunder that remained of the prey which the soldiers had taken was six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, 33 and seventy-two thousand cattle, 34 and sixty-one thousand donkeys, 35 and altogether thirty-two thousand persons, women who had not known a man through intercourse with him.

36 And the half *which was* the portion of the soldiers by number was this: three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep; 37 and the LORD's tax of the sheep was six hundred and seventy-five. 38 And there *were* thirty-six thousand cattle, of which the LORD's tax was seventy-two. 39 And there *were* thirty thousand five hundred donkeys; of which the LORD's tax was sixty-one. 40 And there *were* sixteen thousand persons; of whom the LORD's tax *was* thirty-two persons.

41 And Moses gave the tax, *which was* the LORD's lifted up offering, to Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

42 And the half for the children of Israel which Moses separated from the soldiers, 43 the half *that belonged to* the congregation was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, 44 and thirty-six thousand cattle, 45 and thirty thousand five hundred donkeys, 46 and sixteen

**31:8** God's vengeance came on Balaam too. He once spoke for God, but betrayed God's people for reward.

**31:14-17** The women of Midian were as least as guilty as the men and vengeance must be taken on them too.

**31:17** See Deut 7:2; 20:16-18.

**31:19** 19:11-22.

**31:23** 19:9,17.

**31:27** The spoils were to be shared by everyone alike (Josh 22:8; 1 Sam 30:22-25). The Lord Jesus divides with His believers all the spoils He has won in His victory over Satan (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:7; Eph 3:6).

**31:28-30** The priests also must have their share. God did not forget His servants in the tabernacle even if they could not go to the battle.

thousand persons. 47 And from the half for the children of Israel Moses took one in fifty, *both* of man and of animal, and gave them to the Levites who were in charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

48 And the officers who were over thousands in the army, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near to Moses, 49 and they said to Moses, "Your servants have taken a census of the soldiers who *are* under our command, and not one man of us is missing. 50 Therefore we have brought an offering for the LORD, what each man has gotten, *ornaments* of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces, to make atonement for our souls in the LORD's presence."

51 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, all the crafted ornaments. 52 And all the gold of the offering that they offered to the LORD from the captains of thousands and from the captains of hundreds was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. 53 For the soldiers had taken plunder, each man for himself.

54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation as a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

**32** Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great number of livestock, and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that it appeared *to be* a good place for livestock, 2 the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, 3 "Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon, 4 the land which the LORD struck before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock."

5 "Therefore," they said, "If we have found grace in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession, *and* do not take us over the Jordan."

**31:49** Not one man of Israel fell in battle in this amazing victory. When God, not man, takes vengeance it will work out perfectly.

**31:50** Ex 30:12-16.

**31:52** "Sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels" – about 190 kilograms.

**32:1,2** Lot made a similar mistake (Gen 13:10,11).

**32:4** 21:21-24,33-35.

**32:5** Reuben and Gad, instead of going on to the promised land and accepting God's place for them in it, wanted to choose for themselves. This was a source of much

6 And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, "Shall your brothers go to war, and you sit here? 7 Now why do you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? 8 Your fathers did like this when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. 9 For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they would not go into the land which the LORD had given them. 10 And at that time the LORD's anger burned, and he made an oath, saying, 11 'Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, twenty years old and over, will see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me; 12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.' 13 And the LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he made them wander in the desert for forty years, until the whole generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.

14 "And, see, you have risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to make the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel still greater. 15 For if you turn away from following him, he will once more leave them in the desert, and you will destroy all these people."

16 And they came near him, and said, "We will build pens here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, 17 but we ourselves will be armed *and* ready *to go* in front of the children of Israel, until we have brought them to their place. And our little ones will live in the fortified cities, because of the inhabitants of the land. 18 We will not return to our houses, until each man of the children of Israel has taken possession of his inheritance. 19 For we will not have an inheritance with them on the other bank of the Jordan or beyond, because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan."

20 And Moses said to them, "If you will do this thing, if you will *arm yourselves* for battle in the presence of the LORD, 21 and all of you go armed

trouble in later years because the region they chose had no safe frontiers and was vulnerable to attack from enemies. Syria was on the north, Ammon on the east and Moab on the south. It is always better to leave the choice of our place to God (Ps 47:4).

**32:6-15** Moses was so displeased that he harshly compared them to their rebellious fathers at Kadesh who would not go into the land (13:31 – 14:4).

**32:16-19** Their promise to help the rest of Israel conquer Canaan pacified Moses, but



over the Jordan in the presence of the LORD, until he has driven out his enemies from before him, 22 and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterwards you may return and be guiltless before the LORD and before Israel, and this land will be your possession in the presence of the LORD.

23 "But if you will not do so, see, you have sinned against the LORD. And be sure your sin will find you out. 24 Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do what has come out of your mouth."

25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, "Your servants will do as my lord commands. 26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock will be there in the cities of Gilead, 27 but your servants will cross over, each man armed for war to battle in the presence of the LORD, just as my lord says."

28 So Moses gave orders concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the family heads of the tribes of the children of Israel. 29 And Moses said to them, "If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will cross over the Jordan with you, each man armed for battle in the presence of the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you will give them the land of Gilead as a possession. 30 But if they will not cross over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan."

31 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, "We will do just as the LORD has told your servants. 32 We will cross over armed in the presence of the LORD into the land of Canaan, so that the possession of our inheritance on this side of the Jordan *may remain* ours."

33 And Moses gave to them, *that is*, to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within *its* boundaries, the cities of the surrounding land.

34 And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, 35 and Atroth, Shopan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah, 36 and Bethnimrah, and

Bethharan, fortified cities; and folds for sheep. 37 And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim, 38 and Nebo, and Baal Meon (their names being changed) and Shibmah, and gave other names to the cities which they built.

39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and captured it, and drove out the Amorite *people* who *were* in it. 40 And Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he lived in it. 41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and captured its small towns, and called them Havoth Jair. 42 And Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

**33** These are the journeys of the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2 And Moses recorded their starting points according to their journeys by the command of the LORD, and these *are* their journeys according to their starting points.

3 And they left Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month. On the next day after the Passover the children of Israel went out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4 For the Egyptians buried all *their* firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down among them; also the LORD executed judgments on their gods.

5 And the children of Israel left Rameses, and camped in Succoth. 6 And they left Succoth, and camped in Etham, which *is* on the border of the desert. 7 And they left Etham, and turned back to Pi-Hahiroth, which *is* opposite Baal Zephon, and they camped before Migdol. 8 And they left Pi-Hahiroth, and passed through the middle of the sea into the desert, and went three days' journey in the desert of Etham, and camped in Marah. 9 And they left Marah, and came to Elim. And there *were* twelve fountains of water, and seventy palm trees in Elim; and they camped there.

10 And they left Elim, and camped by the Red Sea. 11 And they left the Red Sea, and camped in the desert of Sin. 12 And they took their journey from the desert of Sin, and camped in Dophkah. 13 And they left Dophkah, and camped in Alush.

it did not make their choice good.

**32:23** Not doing what we should do is sin just as much as doing what we should not (Deut 23:3,4; Jud 5:23; 1 Sam 12:23; Matt 21:28-32; 25:24-27, 41-46; 1 Tim 5:8). In either case, sin will bring great trouble.

**32:33** The half tribe of Manasseh was not mentioned when Reuben and Gad made their request. Evidently they decided later to join them.

**32:39-42** Deut 3:13-15.

**32:41** "Havvoth Jair" means "the villages of Jair."

**33:2** Another indication that Moses wrote the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). See also Ex 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Deut 31:9; John 5:46.

**33:3** Ex 12:37; 14:8.

**33:4** Ex 12:12.

**33:8** Ex 14:22; 15:22,23.

**33:9** Ex 15:27.

14 And they left Alush, and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

15 And they left Rephidim, and camped in the desert of Sinai. 16 And they left the desert of Sinai, and camped at Kibroth-Hattaavah. 17 And they left Kibroth-Hattaavah, and camped at Hazeroth. 18 And they left Hazeroth, and camped in Rithmah. 19 And they left Rithmah, and camped at Rimmon-Parez. 20 And they left Rimmon-Parez, and camped in Libnah.

21 And they left Libnah, and camped at Rissah. 22 And they journeyed from Rissah, and camped in Kehelathah. 23 And they went from Kehelathah, and camped in Mount Shapher. 24 And they left Mount Shapher, and camped in Haradah. 25 And they left Haradah, and camped in Makheloth.

26 And they left Makheloth, and camped at Tahath. 27 And they left Tahath, and camped at Tarah. 28 And they left Tarah, and camped in Mithcah. 29 And they left Mithcah, and camped in Hashmonah. 30 And they left Hashmonah, and camped at Moseroth. 31 And they left Moseroth, and camped in Bene Jaakan. 32 And they left Bene Jaakan, and camped at Hor Hagidgad. 33 And they left Hor Hagidgad, and camped in Jotbathah. 34 And they left Jotbathah, and camped at Ebronah. 35 And they left Ebronah, and camped at Ezion-Geber.

36 And they left Ezion-Geber, and camped in the desert of Zin, which *is* Kadesh. 37 And they left Kadesh, and camped in Mount Hor, on the border of the land of Edom. 38 And Aaron the priest went up on Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the first *day* of the fifth month. 39 And Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died in Mount Hor.

40 And king Arad the Canaanite, who lived in the south of the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. 41 And they left Mount Hor, and camped in Zalmonah. 42 And they left Zalmonah, and camped in Punon. 43 And they left Punon, and camped in Oboth. 44 And they left Oboth, and camped in Ijeabarim, on the border of Moab. 45 And they left Iim, and camped in Dibon-Gad.

46 And they left Dibon-Gad, and camped in Almon-Diblathaim. 47 And they left Almon-Diblathaim, and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. 48 And they left the mountains of Abarim, and camped in the plains of Moab by the

Jordan *opposite* Jericho. 49 And they camped by the Jordan, from Beth Jesimoth to Abel Shittim in the plains of Moab.

50 And the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, 51 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52 then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their carved images and destroy all their cast metal images, and demolish all their high places. 53 And you shall drive out *the inhabitants of* the land, and live in it, for I have given you the land to possess it. 54 And you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families. *And* to a larger group you shall give more inheritance, and to a smaller group you shall give less inheritance. Each man's *inheritance* is to be in the place where his lot falls. You are to inherit according to the tribes of your fathers.

55 "But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it will come about that those of them whom you allow to remain *will become* barbs in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and will trouble you in the land where you live. 56 Also it will come about *that* I will do to you, as I thought to do to them."

**34** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Command the children of Israel, and say to them, When you enter the land of Canaan this *is* the land that will come to you as an inheritance, the land of Canaan with these borders: 3 your south region will be from the desert of Zin along by the border of Edom, and on the east your southern border will extend from the end of the Salt Sea. 4 And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akkrabbim, and pass on to Zin, and its extent will be to the south of Kadesh-Barnea, and go on to Hazar-Addar, and pass on to Azmon. 5 And the border will change direction from Azmon to the Wadi of Egypt, and extend to the sea.

6 "And *as for* the western border, you will have the Great Sea as a boundary; this will be your western boundary.

7 "And this shall be your north border: from the Great Sea you shall draw your *boundary* to Mount Hor; 8 from Mount Hor you shall draw *the boundary* to the entrance of Hamath, and the boundary will extend to Zedad; 9 and the boundary will go on to Ziphron, and it will extend to Hazarenan. This will be your northern border.

**33:38** 20:28.

**33:40** 21:1.

**33:45** "Iim"—the same as Ijeabarim in v 44.

**33:52** Ex 23:24; Lev 26:1; Deut 7:5;

12:3,30.

**33:55** Josh 23:12,13.

**33:56** 2 Kings 24:2-4; 2 Chron 36:15-20.

**34:3-5** "The Salt Sea" – another name for

10 "And you shall draw your eastern border from Hazarenan to Shepham; 11 and the boundary will go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the eastern side of Ain; and the border will descend and reach to the eastern shore of the Sea of Kinnereth; 12 and the border will go along the Jordan, and extend to the Salt Sea: this will be your land with its surrounding boundaries."

13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, "This is the land which you will inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give to the nine tribes and to the half tribe; 14 for the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the households of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the households of their fathers, have received *their inheritance*; and half the tribe of Manasseh has received their inheritance. 15 The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan *opposite* Jericho, toward the rising of the sun."

16 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 17 "These *are* the names of the men who are to divide the land for you: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. 18 And you shall take one leader from each tribe to divide the land for inheritance.

19 "And these are the names of the men: from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 20 and from the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud; 21 from the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon; 22 and the leader of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli; 23 the leader of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod; 24 and the leader of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphthan; 25 and the leader of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach; 26 and the leader of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan; 27 and the leader of the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi; 28 and the leader of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud.

29 These *are the ones* whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance for the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

**35** And the LORD spoke to Moses on the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho, saying, 2 "Command the children of Israel to give to the Levites cities to live in from the inheritance of their possession. *Also* you shall give pasture lands to the Levites surrounding the cities. 3 And they will have the cities to live in, and their pasture lands will be for their livestock and for their herds and for all their animals.

4 "And the pasture lands of the cities which you give to the Levites *are to reach* from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits all around. 5 And you shall measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city *will be* in the center. This will become theirs as pasture lands for the cities.

6 "And among the cities which you give to the Levites *there are to be* six cities for refuge. You shall appoint them for the one who kills someone, for him to flee to; and in addition to them you give forty-two cities. 7 So the total of the cities which you give to the Levites *will be* forty-eight cities. You must give them with their pasture lands. 8 And the cities which you give *will be* from the possession of the children of Israel. From *those who have many cities* you shall give many, but from *those who have few* you shall give few. Each is to give to the Levites from his cities according to his inheritance which he obtains."

9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When you have gone over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 then you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, so that whoever kills anyone unintentionally may flee there. 12 And they will be for you cities for refuge from the avenger, so that the one who kills another will not die until he stands before the congregation for judgment. 13 And the cities which you are to give will be your six cities of refuge. 14 Give three cities on this side of the Jordan, and give three cities in the land of Canaan, to be cities of refuge. 15 These six cities are to be a refuge, *both* for the children of Israel, and for the foreigner, and for the settler among them, so that anyone who kills another person

the Dead Sea.

**34:11** "Kinnereth" – Galilee.

**34:16-29** So certain it was that Israel would conquer Canaan that the men who would divide the inheritance for the tribes in Canaan were chosen before an acre of ground had been captured. God's promises will never fail.

**35:1-8** The Levites as a tribe did not receive a portion of the promised land. They

did receive needed places to live and pasture land for cattle.

**35:9-32** The cities of refuge are mentioned also in Deut 19:1-13 and Josh 20:1-9. In those days (not now), in case of murder, a close relative of the murdered person had the right to execute God's vengeance on the murderer (v 19; Gen 9:6; Ex 21:12; Lev 24:17). But a person might kill another accidentally. The avenger, seeing his slain

unintentionally may flee there.

16 "And if he strikes him with an iron implement so that he dies, he *is* a murderer. The murderer must be put to death without fail. 17 And if he strikes him down by throwing a stone that could kill him, and he dies, he *is* a murderer. The murderer must be put to death without fail. 18 Or *if* he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon which could kill him, and he dies, he *is* a murderer. The murderer must be put to death without fail. 19 The avenger of blood himself shall kill the murderer; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. 20 And if he shoves him out of hatred, or throws *something* at him while lying in wait, so that he dies, 21 or in enmity struck him with his fist, so that he dies, the one who struck *him* must be put to death without fail, *for he is* a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

22 "But if he suddenly shoved him without enmity, or threw something at him without lying in wait, 23 or *threw* a stone which could kill a man, without seeing *him* and threw it on him so that he dies, not *being* his enemy, or seeking to harm him, 24 then the congregation shall judge between the one who killed the person and the avenger of blood according to these regulations. 25 And the congregation shall deliver the one who killed from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to his city of refuge where he had fled; and he is to stay in it until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the holy oil.

26 "But if the one who committed manslaughter at any time comes outside the boundary of his city of refuge where he has fled, 27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the boundaries of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the one who committed manslaughter, he will not be guilty of blood, 28 because the person should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the one who committed manslaughter shall return into the land of his possession.

29 "So these *things* shall be a statute of judgment for you throughout your generations

wherever you live.

30 "If anyone kills another person, the murderer shall be put to death at the testimony of witnesses; but the testimony of one witness against another person shall not be *sufficient to put him* to death.

31 "Moreover you shall not take a ransom for the life of a murderer who *is* guilty of *causing* death; he must be put to death without fail.

32 "And you shall not take a ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge to *allow* him to come again to live in the land before the death of the priest.

33 "So do not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and the land cannot be cleansed from the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. 34 Therefore do not defile the land which you shall inhabit, in which I will live; for I the LORD live among the children of Israel."

**36** And the heads of the fathers' families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, approached and spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the heads of the fathers' *households* of the children of Israel, 2 and they said, "The LORD commanded my lord to give the land by lot as an inheritance to the children of Israel; and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters. 3 And if they marry any of the sons of the *other* tribes of the children of Israel, then their inheritance will be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and be added to the inheritance of the tribe where they are received; so it will be taken from the lot of our inheritance. 4 And when the Jubilee of the children of Israel takes place, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe where they are received; so their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers."

5 And Moses commanded the children of Israel in accordance with the word of the LORD, saying, "The tribe of the sons of Joseph has spoken justly.

relative, could not know whether he was killed intentionally or unintentionally. So these cities of refuge were provided for the man who killed another accidentally, who was not worthy of death at the hands of the avenger. Such a person could flee to one of those cities and there wait safely until his trial (vs 12,24). He was secure as long as he remained there.

For believers now God Himself is the refuge from His own anger which would take vengeance on their sins. Instead of putting

us to death as we deserve God made a place of refuge for us. This refuge is Christ. He is also the High Priest and He will never die, and in Him believers will be safe forever.

"Refuge" – Deut 33:27; Ps 46:1; 48:3; 62:7,8; 91:2,9; Prov 14:26; Isa 4:6; 25:4; Rom 8:1; Heb 6:18.

**35:33** Ps 106:38; 2 Kings 24:3,4.

**35:34** "Among the children of Israel" – note at Ex 25:8.

**36:2** 27:5-7.

**36:4** Lev 25:10.

6 This *is* what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry whom they think best, but they shall marry only in the family of the tribe of their father. 7 So the inheritance of the children of Israel will not change from tribe to tribe; for each of the children of Israel will keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. 8 And every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall marry one of the family of the tribe of her father, so that each person of the children of Israel may enjoy the inheritance of his fathers. 9 And the inheritance will not change from *one* tribe to another tribe; but each person of the tribes of the

children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance."

10 The daughters of Zelophehad did just as the LORD commanded Moses. 11 For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, married their father's brothers' sons; 12 they married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

13 These *are* the commandments and the judgments which the LORD gave to the children of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho.

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**36:7** 1 Kings 21:3.



# DEUTERONOMY

## Title:

The name "Deuteronomy" came from the Septuagint into English (see the Introduction to Genesis). It means a second arrangement of, or a second reference to, the law or laws.

## Author and date:

See the Introduction to Genesis.

## Theme:

This is a book of remembrance (1:3; 4:9,10,23,31; 5:15; 6:12; 7:18; 8:2,11,14,18,19; 9:7; 11:2; 15:15; 16:3; 24:9; 25:19). It is a restatement of the law God gave at Mt Sinai, and a confirmation of God's covenant with Israel. Here the special privileges and duties of the people of Israel are clearly and fully stated. God especially emphasizes the relationship of love between Himself and Israel (4:37; 6:5; 7:8,13; 10:12,15; 19:9; 30:6,16,19,20; 33:3). God was well aware of Israel's tendency toward idolatry and warns them in very strong words to have nothing to do with images and other gods (6:14,15; 7:4; 8:19,20; 11:16; 13:1-18; 17:2-7; 27:15; 29:17,18; 30:17,18). He is God, and there is no other, and they must devote themselves to Him alone (6:4,5).

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**1** These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on the *east* side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain opposite Suph, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab. *2 It is* eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-Barnea.

3 And it came about in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses spoke to the children of Israel, according to all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them. *4 This was* after he had killed Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived at Astaroth in Edrei.

5 On the *east* side of the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to expound this law, saying,

6 The LORD our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying, "You have lived long enough at this mountain. 7 Turn and set out on your journey, and go to the hill country of the Amorites, and to all *the places* near it on the plain, in the hills, and in the lowland, and in the south, and by the sea shore, to the land of the Canaanites, and to Lebanon, to the great river, the river Euphrates. 8 See, I have set the land before you. Go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them."

9 And I spoke to you at that time, saying, "I am not able to bear you alone. 10 The LORD your God has increased your number; and, look, you are this day as many as the stars of heaven in number. 11 The LORD God of your fathers cause you to increase a thousand times more than you are, and bless you as he has promised you! 12 How can I, I alone, bear your load and your burden and your strife? 13 Select men of wisdom and understanding and reputation among your tribes, and I will make them your leaders."

**1:1** Moses first spoke the words of this book. Later he wrote them down (31:9).

"Suph" – the KJV has the "Red sea" here, but the Hebrew does not have the usual expression indicating the Red Sea, and it should not be so translated. The Israelites now were not near the Red Sea, but in the land of Moab east of the Jordan river.

**1:3** These words and messages came to Moses and to Israel at the command of God. They are the words of Moses, but they are also the words of God (1 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).

"Fortieth year" – since Israel left Egypt.

**1:4** Num 21:21-35.

**1:5** The word translated "law" also means "instruction."

**1:6** Num 10:11-13.

**1:7,8** Gen 12:7; 26:3; 28:13; Ex 33:1.

**1:9-15** Ex 18:18,24; Num 11:14.

**1:10** Gen 15:5; 22:17; Ex 32:13.

14 And you answered me, and said, "The thing which you have spoken *is* good to do."

15 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise men, and *men* of reputation, and made them your leaders, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. 16 And I charged your judges at that time, saying, "Hear *the cases* between your brethren, and judge righteously between each man and his brother, and the foreigner *who is* with him. 17 You must not show partiality in judgment, *but* you must hear the small as well as the great. You must not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment *is* God's. And the case that is too hard for you, bring *it* to me, and I will hear it." 18 And at that time I commanded you everything that you should do.

19 And when we left Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible desert which you saw, on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-Barnea. 20 And I said to you, "You have come to the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God gives to us. 21 Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you. Go up *and* possess *it*, as the LORD God of your fathers has said to you. Do not be afraid or discouraged."

22 And all of you came near me and said, "We will send men before us, and they will search out the land for us, and bring back word to us as to the way we should go up and the cities we should go to."

23 And the thing seemed good to me, so I selected twelve men of you, one from each tribe. 24 And they turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. 25 And they took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down to us, and brought back word to us, and said, "*It is*

**1:13** Ex 18:21,22.

**1:16-18** Deut 16:18-20; 2 Chron 19:5-7; Prov 24:23-25; John 7:24.

**1:19** Deut 8:15. Between Sinai (Horeb) and Kadesh the land is a dreary hot waste of sand and rock and barren mountains. Here and there are a few springs, a few valleys that have some vegetation after rain and a few oases where water is found. For a people who had lived in one of the best parts of Egypt it must have seemed indeed a vast and terrible desert. But it was the way God in His wisdom led them. The journey from Egypt to Canaan is a picture of believers' journey from the fallen world to the promised spiritual land above. Figuratively speaking, they too find their journey is sometimes through terrible "desert" areas abounding in difficulties (notes at Ex 15:27; 16:3; Num 14:45; 20:12).

**1:22-46** These verses recount events

a good land which the LORD our God gives us.”

26 However you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. 27 And you grumbled in your tents, and said, “Because the LORD hated us, he has brought us from the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. 28 Where shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, ‘The people *are* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* large and have walls reaching up to heaven; and also we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.’”

29 Then I said to you, “Do not dread them, or be afraid of them. 30 The LORD your God who goes before you will fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 31 and in the desert, where you have seen how the LORD your God carried you just as a man carries his son, all along the way that you came, until you arrived at this place.”

32 Yet in spite of this you did not believe the LORD your God, 33 who went on the way before you, in fire by night to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, and in a cloud by day to show you the way you should go. 34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, 35 “Not one of these men of this evil generation will see that good land, which I swore to give to your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give the land that he has walked on to him and to his children, because he has fully followed the LORD.”

37 Also the LORD was angry with me on your account, saying, “You will not go in there either. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, who stands in your presence, will go in there. Encourage him, for he will enable Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover your little ones, who you said would be a prey, and your children, who in that day had no discernment between good and evil, will go in there, and I will give it to them, and they will possess it. 40 But *as for* you, turn and set out on your journey into the desert on the way toward the Red Sea.”

41 Then you answered and said to me, “We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.” And when each of you had strapped on his

weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the hill country.

42 But the LORD said to me, “Say to them, do not go up, or fight; for I *will* not *be* among you, and you will be struck down before your enemies.”

43 So I spoke to you, but you would not listen, but rebelled against the command of the LORD, and went presumptuously up to the hill country. 44 And the Amorites, who lived in that hill country, came out against you, and chased you as bees do, and crushed you in Seir, as far as Hormah. 45 And you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice, or give ear to you. 46 So you stayed in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent *there*.

**2** Then we turned and set out on our journey into the desert on the way toward the Red Sea, as the LORD spoke to me; and we went around Mount Seir many days.

2 And the LORD spoke to me, saying, 3 “You have gone around this mountain long enough. Turn northward. 4 And command the people, saying, ‘You *are going* to pass through the territory of your brothers the children of Esau who live in Seir. And they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch out for yourselves. 5 Do not provoke them, for I will not give you *any* of their land, no, not as much as a foot’s breadth, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession. 6 You are to buy meat from them for money, for you to eat; and also you are to buy water from them for money, for you to drink.

7 “For the LORD your God has blessed you in everything you have done. He knows your walking through this great desert. The LORD your God *has been* with you for these forty years. You have lacked nothing.”

8 And when we passed beyond our brothers the children of Esau, who lived in Seir, by way of the plain from Elath and from Ezion Geber, we turned and passed along by the way of the wilderness of Moab.

9 And the LORD said to me, “Do not trouble the Moabites, or provoke them to battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar *as* a possession to the children of Lot.”

recorded in Numbers chapters 13 and 14. Now they are once again at the borders of the land, and so it was very important for them to remember the failure of their fathers so they might not fail likewise.

**1:28** “Anakim” – very tall people who were ancient inhabitants of Canaan. In Hebrew Anakim is the plural form of the word, “im” indicating the plural.

**1:32** Unbelief was the great sin that kept

them from entering the promised land 40 years earlier. Let them beware now (Num 14:11; Ps 106:24; Heb 3:19; 4:2; Jude 5). **2:1-15** These verses give events recorded in Numbers 20:14-21 and 21:12-20. “Red Sea” (v 1) – “Yom Suph” in Hebrew.

**2:7** Though they were a rebellious, unbelieving people God took care of them so perfectly that they lacked nothing (compare 2 Tim 2:13; 1 Cor 1:9).

10 (The Emim lived there in times past, a great and numerous people and as tall as the Anakim, 11 *and* they were also regarded as Rephaim, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. 12 The Horim also lived in Seir previously, but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and lived in their place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession, which the LORD gave to them.)

13 "Now rise up," *the LORD said*, "and go over the brook Zered." And we went over the brook Zered.

14 And it took us thirty-eight years to come from Kadesh-Barnea, to the time we crossed the brook Zered, until all that generation of the men of war had perished from the camp, just as the LORD swore to them. 15 For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the camp until they had perished.

16 So it came about, when death had finished carrying off all the men of war from among the people, 17 that the LORD spoke to me, saying, 18 "Today you are to pass by Ar, the territory of Moab. 19 And *when* you come opposite the children of Ammon, do not trouble them or provoke them; for I will not give you *any* possession from the land of the children of Ammon, because I have given it as a possession to the children of Lot. 20 (That also was regarded as a land of giants. In ancient times giants lived there, and the Ammonites call them Zamzummim. 21 *They were* a great and numerous people, and as tall as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and lived in their place; 22 just as he did for the children of Esau, who lived in Seir, when he destroyed the Horim from before them. And they succeeded them, and lived in their place even to this day. 23 And the Avim who lived in Hazerim as far as Azzah, the Caphtorim, who came forth from Caphtor, destroyed them and lived in their place.)

24 "Rise up, set out on your journey, and cross the river Arnon. See, I have given Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land into your hand. Begin to possess *it*, and engage him in battle. 25 This day I will begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you on the nations *that are* under the

whole heaven who hear reports about you, and they will tremble, and be in anguish because of you."

26 And I sent messengers from the wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, 27 "Let me pass through your land. I will go by the highway. I will not turn to the right hand nor to the left. 28 You may sell me meat for money, so that I may eat, and give me water for money, so that I may drink, as I pass through on foot, 29 just as the children of Esau who live in Seir and the Moabites who live in Ar, did for me, until I cross the Jordan into the land which the LORD our God gives us." 30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through his *land*. For the LORD your God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, so that he might deliver him into your hands, as *it is* this day.

31 And the LORD said to me, "See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess his land so that you can inherit *it*."

32 Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. 33 And the LORD our God handed him over to us, and we defeated him and his sons and all his people. 34 And at that time we took all his cities, and utterly destroyed the men and the women and the little ones of each city. We left not one remaining. 35 Only the cattle we took as prey for ourselves, and the plunder from the cities which we took. 36 From Aroer, which is on the bank of the Arnon river, and *from* the city that *is* by the river, as far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us. The LORD our God handed over everything to us. 37 You did not go to the land of the children of Ammon or to any place along the river Jabbok, or to the towns in the hill country, only *going* where the LORD our God commanded us.

**3** Then we turned and went up toward Bashan, and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

2 And the LORD said to me, "Do not be afraid of him, for I will give him and all his people and his land into your hand; and you will do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon."

3 So the LORD our God gave also Og, the king of Bashan, and all his people into our hands, and

**2:10** "Emim" - see note on the Hebrew plural form at 1:28.

**2:15** It is a dreadful thing to have the hand of almighty God against us - 32:29,41; Isa 1:25; 5:25; Dan 4:35; 5:23; Heb 10:31.

**2:16** God fulfilled to the letter His word against the rebels. So now it was time to start moving again toward the promised land.

**2:23** "Caphtor" - the island of Crete.

**2:24-37** Num 21:21-26.

**2:25** "Fear" - Ex 23:27; Deut 11:25; Josh 2:9. This contributed a great deal to Israel's victories. Their enemies were lacking confidence and were defeated before the fight began.

**2:34** A people so wicked in God's sight that they deserved, and received, complete destruction. Notes at Gen 6:7; Lev 18:24,25.

**3:1-11** These events are recorded in Num 21:33-35. Here we have added details.



we defeated him until not one of his was left remaining. 4 And at that time we took all of his cities. There was not a city which we did not take from them, sixty cities, the whole region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5 All these cities *were* fortified with high walls, gates, and bars. Besides there were a great many unwall towns. 6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women and children of each city. 7 But all the cattle and the plunder of the cities, we took as a prey for ourselves.

8 And at that time we took from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that was on this side of the Jordan, from the river of Arnon to mount Hermon 9 (this Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion, and the Amorites call it Shenir), 10 all the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, to Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 11 Only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Now his bedstead *was* an iron bedstead. *Is* it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? Its length *was* nine cubits, and its width *was* four cubits, according to man's cubit.

12 And this land, *which* we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, and half of Mount Gilead, and its cities, I gave to the Reubenites and to the Gadites. 13 And the rest of Gilead, and the whole of Bashan, *which was* the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half tribe of Manasseh, the whole region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants. 14 Jair the son of Manasseh took the whole country of Argob to the territories of Geshuri and Maachathi, and called them after his own name, Bashan Havoth Jair, *as it is called* to this day. 15 And I gave Gilead to Machir. 16 And to the Reubenites and to the Gadites I gave from Gilead as far as the river Arnon, the middle of the valley as the border even to the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon. 17 The plain also with the Jordan as *its* border, from Kinnereth to the sea of the plain, the Salt Sea, under Ashdath-Pisgah on the east.

18 And I commanded you at that time, saying, "The LORD your God has given you this land to

possess it; all you warriors shall cross over armed before your brethren the children of Israel. 19 But your wives and your little ones and your livestock (*for* I know that you have much livestock) shall stay in your cities which I have given you, 20 until the LORD has given rest to your brethren, as well as to you, and *until* they also possess the land which the LORD your God has given them beyond the Jordan; and *then* each of you shall return to his possession, which I have given you."

21 And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, "Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD will do to all the kingdoms into which you cross. 22 You must not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God will fight for you."

23 And at that time I pleaded with the LORD, saying, 24 "O Lord God, you have begun to show your servant your greatness, and your mighty hand; for what God *is there* in heaven or on earth who can do such works and such mighty deeds as yours? 25 I pray you, let me cross over and see the good land that *is* beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon."

26 But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, "Enough! Speak no more to me of this matter. 27 Go up to the top of Pisgah, and raise your eyes toward the west and north and south and east, and see *it* with your eyes; for you will not cross this Jordan. 28 But command Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he will cross in front of this people, and he will cause them to inherit the land which you will see." 29 So we stayed in the valley opposite Beth Peor.

**4** So now listen, O Israel, to the statutes and to the judgments, which I teach you to do, so that you may live and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives you. 2 You must not add to the word which I command you, or take away *anything* from it, so that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did

**3:6** 2:34.

**3:12-20** Note at Num 32:1-5.

**3:17** Kinnereth is Galilee, the Salt Sea is the Dead Sea.

**3:21,22** Moses' aim in recounting these victories is plain. He wanted to strengthen the faith and courage of Joshua and the people to go into Canaan and conquer it (v 28).

**3:26** God's forbidding Moses to enter Canaan was for Israel's sake. Moses was a very old man (31:2,3) and it is unlikely that he was able to lead the army. It was better for Joshua to lead Israel in the conquest of

Canaan. He had experience as army commander (Ex 17:8-13) and was a much younger man. See also note at Num 20:12.

**3:28** If God calls us to do any work for Him He will see that we get encouragement and strength for it (1:38; 1 Sam 23:16; 2 Chron 32:7,8; Neh 6:9; Ps 20:2; 27:14; Isa 41:10; Rom 15:5,6; Phil 4:13; 2 Tim 4:17; Heb 6:18).

**4:1** Obedience meant life to them (5:33; 8:1; 16:20; 30:16; Lev 18:5; Ezek 20:11; Rom 10:5).

**4:2** 12:32; Prov 30:6; Rev 22:18.

**4:3** Num 25:1-9.

because of Baal of Peor; for the LORD your God destroyed all the men who followed Baal of Peor from among you. 4 But each one of you who held fast to the LORD your God is alive this day.

5 See, I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you should do so in the land where you are going to possess it. 6 Therefore keep *them* and do *them*; for this *will be* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, who will hear all these statutes, and say, "Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people." 7 For what nation *is there so* great, who *has* God *so* near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us in everything for which we call on him? 8 And what nation is there so great, that has statutes and judgments *so* righteous as this whole law which I set before you *this* day?

9 Only watch yourselves and keep guard over souls carefully, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen, and so they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but teach them to your sons, and your sons' sons. 10 The day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, the LORD said to me,

"Assemble the people for me, and I will cause them to hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and *so that* they may teach their children."

11 And you came near and stood below the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire to the heart of the heavens, *with* darkness, clouds, and thick gloom. 12 And the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; *you* only *heard* a voice. 13 And he proclaimed his covenant to you, which he commanded you to put into practice, the ten commandments. And he wrote them on two tab-

lets of stone. 14 And at that time the LORD commanded me to teach you statutes and judgments, so that you might behave in accordance with them in the land which you are crossing over to possess.

15 Therefore watch yourselves carefully (for you saw no kind of form on the day that the LORD spoke to you in Horeb from the midst of the fire) 16 so that you do not corrupt *yourselves* and make an idol, the form of any image, *any* male or female form, 17 the form of any animal that *is* on the earth, the form of any winged bird that flies in the air, 18 the form of any thing that creeps on the ground, the form of any fish that is in the waters below the earth; 19 and so that you do not raise your eyes to the heavens and see the sun and the moon and the stars, the whole host of the heavens, and be enticed into worshipping them and serving them, which the LORD your God has allotted to all nations under the whole heaven. 20 But the LORD took you and brought you from the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as *you are* this day.

21 Also the LORD was angry with me on your account, and took an oath that I would not go over the Jordan, that I would not go into that good land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance; 22 But I must die in this land; I must not go over Jordan; but you will go over, and possess that good land. 23 Watch yourselves so that you do not forget the covenant of the LORD your God which he made with you, and make an idol for yourselves *or* the form of anything. The LORD your God has forbidden you this. 24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

25 When you beget children and grandchildren, and you remain in the land for a long time, and corrupt *yourselves* and make an idol *or* the form of any thing, and do evil in the sight of the LORD your

**4:5** Lev 26:46; 27:34.

**4:6** 30:19,20; 32:46,47; Ps 19:7; 111:10; Prov 1:7; 2 Tim 3:15.

**4:7** Ps 34:4,17,18; 85:9; 145:18; 148:14; Isa 55:6; John 16:23-27.

**4:8** Ps 89:14; 97:2; 119:144,160,172.

**4:9** "All the days of your life" - 6:2,12; 8:11,14,19; 12:1; 16:3; Prov 4:23; 23:19.

"Sons" - 6:7,20-25; 11:19; 32:46; Gen 18:19; Ps 78:5,6; Prov 22:6; Eph 6:4.

**4:10** See chapters 19 and 20 of Exodus; Deut 14:23; 17:19; 31:12,13.

**4:11** Ex 19:18; Heb 12:18.

**4:13** "Ten commandments" - Ex 20:1-17; 31:18; 34:1,28; Deut 10:4.

**4:15-17** Verse 12; Isa 40:18.

**4:16** Ex 20:4; Lev 26:1; Deut 5:8,9; 27:15; Rom 1:23.

**4:19** 17:3; Gen 2:1; 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3; Job 31:26-28; Rom 1:25. God forbids sun worship and calls it detestable (17:4). But Israel later practiced it and paid

the penalty for their sin - Ezek 8:15,16,18. **4:20** 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ex 19:5; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9.

**4:21** 1:37; Num 20:12.

**4:24** 5:9; 6:15; 9:5; Ex 20:5 (note); 24:17; Isa 30:27; 33:14; Heb 12:29.

**4:25-30** A dire warning fulfilled centuries later. See 2 Kings chapter 17 and 2 Chronicles chapter 36.

**4:25** "Anger" - see notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc. Here is a list of sins which God Himself has revealed make Him angry.

Refusal to do God's will (Ex 4:14)

Opposing Him and His people (Ex 15:7; Ps 21:8,9; 78:49; Ezek 38:18; 1 Thess 2:15,16)

Injustice toward the helpless (Ex 22:24) Determination to do one's own will instead of God's will (Ex 32:10; Num 22:22; Deut 9:7,8; 29:19,20; Ps 95:10,11; Rom 2:8)

Complaining and lack of contentment with the way God leads and what God gives (Num

God provoking him to anger, 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will surely perish quickly from off the land which you are crossing over the Jordan to possess; you will not live long in it, but will quickly be destroyed. 27 And the LORD will scatter you among the nations, and you will be left few in number among the peoples where the LORD will drive you. 28 And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or eat or smell. 29 But there if you seek the LORD your God, you will find *him*, if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul. 30 When you are in tribulation and all these things have come on you in later days, if you turn to the LORD your God and become obedient to his voice, 31 he will not forsake you or destroy you or forget the covenant of your fathers which he swore to them. For the LORD your God is a merciful God.

32 For ask now about former days, which were before you, from the day that God created man on the earth; ask from the one side of heaven to the other, whether there has been *anything* as great as this thing, or *whether anything* like it has been heard. 33 Did people ever hear the voice of God

speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? 34 Or has God attempted to go *and* take for himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, in accordance with all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 That was shown to you so that you might know that the LORD is God; *there is* no one else besides him. 36 He caused you to hear his voice from heaven so that he might instruct you. And on earth he showed you his great fire, and you heard his words from the midst of the fire. 37 And because he loved your fathers, he chose their offspring after them, and brought you from Egypt in his sight with his mighty power, 38 to drive out nations greater and more powerful than you from before you, to bring you in, to give you their land as an inheritance, *as it is* this day.

39 Therefore this day know, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD *is* God in heaven above, and on the earth below; *there is* no other. 40 Therefore you must keep his statutes and his commandments which I command you this day, so

11:1,10,33; Ps 78:31)

Speaking against God's appointed leaders (Num 12:1,9; 16:46)

Refusal to move forward in faith in obedience to God (Num 32:10,11,14,15)

Disobedience to God's Word (Josh 7:1,26; 2 Kings 22:13; 2 Chron 24:21; Isa 42:24,25)

Breaking vows or oaths (Josh 9:20)

Carelessness concerning God's holiness (Num 1:53; 2 Sam 6:7)

Worship of the stars, offering children to other gods, and practicing sorcery (2 Kings 17:16-18; 21:6)

Compromising with evil men (2 Chron 19:2)

Mistreating God's people (2 Chron 28:10,11)

Neglecting to worship Him (2 Chron 29:6-8)

Scorning God's Word and His messengers (2 Chron 36:16; Isa 5:24,25)

Forsaking God (Ezra 8:22)

Marriage between believers and unbelievers (Ezra 10:14)

Rebellious plots against God (Ps 2:12)

Forgetting God (Ps 50:22)

In unbelief questioning God's ability (Ps 78:19-22)

Secret sins (Ps 90:7,8)

Pride (Isa 2:10-21)

Self-righteousness (Isa 65:5)

Unfaithfulness to God (Ezek 16:26)

Murder (Hos 12:14)

Rejecting God's rule and looking to a human ruler (Hos 13:11; 1 Sam 8:7)

Evil leadership of God's people (Zech 10:3; Ezek 34:1-10)

Stubborn refusal to receive the truth (Mark 3:5; Rom 2:5,8)

Unbelief (John 3:36)

Self-seeking (Rom 2:8)

Immorality, impurity, greed (Eph 5:5,6; Col 3:5,6)

Any transgression of the law, such as lying, stealing, etc (Rom 4:15)

All sin and all sinners – Isa 13:9; 63:6; 66:15,16; Zeph 3:8; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; Rev 6:15-17; 19:15.

But one sin is mentioned far more than any others as being a sin which provokes God to anger. This is idolatry and the worship of other gods. See Num 25:3,4; Deut 4:25; 6:14,15; 7:4; 9:18,19; 11:16,17; 29:26-28; 32:16,21,22; Josh 23:16; Jud 2:12; 3:7,8; 1 Kings 11:9,10; 22:53; 2 Kings 22:17; 2 Chron 25:15; Ps 78:55; Jer 7:18,20; 8:19; 11:17; Hos 8:5; etc.

**4:28** Ps 115:4-8; 135:15-18; Isa 44:12-20.

**4:29** A wonderful promise to them and to us (Isa 55:6; Jer 29:13). Seeking God does not mean to travel to some holy place or other. God is everywhere, and seeking Him means to turn from our sins to Him and pray for His mercy and forgiveness and guidance.

**4:31** "Not forsake" – Deut 31:6,8; Josh 1:5; 1 Chron 28:20; Heb 13:5.

"Merciful" – Ex 34:6; 2 Chron 30:9; Neh 9:31; Ps 103:8; 11:4; 116:5.

**4:32-39** The events in the books of Exodus and Numbers are absolutely unique in the history of the world. God's dealings with Israel were for three clear reasons – for their

that it may go well with you, and with your children after you, and that you may live long in the land which the LORD your God gives you forever.

41 Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan toward sunrise, 42 so that the one who commits manslaughter, who kills his neighbour unintentionally, and did not hate him previously, might flee there, and fleeing to one of these cities might live: 43 Bezer in the wilderness, on the plateau, for the Reubenites, and Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

44 And this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel; 45 these are the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they had come from Egypt, 46 on the east side of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites. He lived at Heshbon and Moses and the children of Israel defeated him, after they had come from Egypt, 47 and they took possession of his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, who *were* on this side of the Jordan toward sunrise, 48 from Aroer which *is* on the bank of the river Arnon, to mount Sion, which *is* Hermon, 49 and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan to the sea of the plain, below the springs of Pisgah.

**5** And Moses called all Israel, and said to them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing this day, so that you may learn them, and keep, and do them. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *with* all of us who *are* alive here this day. 4 The LORD talked with you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire 5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to report to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up on the mountain), saying,

6 "I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

7 "You shall have no other gods besides me.

8 "You shall not make for yourselves *any* carved image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above or that *is* in the earth below or that is in the

waters below the earth. 9 You shall not bow down to them, or serve them; for I the LORD your God *am* a jealous God, visiting the wrongdoing of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generation* of those who hate me, 10 and showing mercy to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

11 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes his name in vain.

12 "Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, just as the LORD your God has commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; 14 but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work *in it*, *not* you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your ox, or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or your foreigner who *is* inside your gates; so that your male servant and your female servant may rest just as you do. 15 And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

16 "Honour your father and your mother, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live a long time and that it may go well with you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

17 "You shall not commit murder.

18 "You shall not commit adultery.

19 "You shall not steal.

20 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

21 "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, and you shall not covet your neighbour's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that *belongs* to your neighbour."

22 These words the LORD spoke to your whole assembly on the mountain, from the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice, and he added nothing more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone, and handed them over to me.

knowledge (vs 35,39; Ex 8:10; 9:4; Isa 43:10-12; 44:6-8; 45:5-7), for their discipline (v 36; Deut 8:5; 2 Sam 7:14; Prov 3:12; Heb 12:6; Rev 3:19), and for a demonstration of God's love (v 37; Deut 7:7,8; 10:15; 33:3).

**4:41-43** Num 35:9-15.

**4:48,49** "Sion" – or "Sirion" or "Siyon."

"Sea of the plain" is the Dead Sea.

**5:2-5** Ex 19:1-6,16,21-24.

**5:6-21** Notes at Ex 20:1-17.

**5:22** Ex 24:12; 31:8.

23 And it came about, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was blazing with fire, that you, *that is* all the heads of your tribes and your elders, approached me, 24 and you said, "See, the LORD our God has showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice from the midst of the fire. Today we have seen that God talks with man, yet he lives. 25 So now why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, we will die. 26 For *among* all flesh who *is there* who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived? 27 You go near, and hear all that the LORD our God says, and tell us all that the LORD our God speaks to you; and we will hear *it*, and do *it*."

28 And the LORD heard what you said when you spoke to me; and the LORD said to me, "I have heard what this people said, what they have spoken to you. Everything they have said is good. 29 Oh, that there was such a heart in them, that they would fear me and always keep all my commandments, so that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!

30 "Go say to them, 'Go back to your tents.' 31 But as for you, stand here with me, and I will tell

you all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which you are to teach them, so that they may do *them* in the land which I give them as a possession."

32 Therefore you shall observe to do just as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and *that it may be* well with you, and *that* you may live a long time in the land which you will possess.

**6** Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, so that you might do *them* in the land that you will cross over to possess, 2 so that you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may long continue. 3 Therefore hear, O Israel, and observe to do *it*, so that it may be well with you, and that you may increase mightily, just as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD; 5 and you shall love the LORD your God

**5:25** Ex 20:18,19.

**5:26** 4:33.

**5:29** Ps 81:13; Isa 48:18; Ex 18:30-32. God wants men to be holy, righteous, and good. In the beginning He made them so (Gen 1:31). But men now corrupted by sin must choose to be holy, righteous, and good (though their own will and strength will not make them so). They must repent and seek God. If they refuse to do this they will never have a heart to fear God and keep His commandments. Notes on the fear of God at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7. **5:31** Ex 24:12.

**5:32** 17:20; 28:14; Josh 1:7; 23:6; Prov 4:27.

**5:33** 10:12; Jer 7:23; Luke 1:6.

**6:2** "Fear the LORD" - Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"May long continue" - a reward for obedience under the law, but not now under grace.

**6:4** Many pious Jews still recite verses 4 and 5 daily, considering them of the utmost importance in the revelation God has given.

"The LORD our God is one LORD" - this means that there is no other LORD but the one who revealed Himself to the nation Israel. Other translations of the Hebrew here have been suggested as possible, such as "The LORD (Jehovah) is our God, the LORD alone" (compare Isa 43:10-13; 44:6; 45:18), or "The LORD is our God, the LORD is one." LORD (all capital letters) in this version always indicates Jehovah or Yahweh (as some transliterate the Hebrew

word. See note at Ex 3:14,15). However it is translated, we should understand that this verse is not in opposition to the truth of the Trinity, which is revealed in both the Old and New Testaments (see Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; etc). The same word translated "one" in this verse is used also in Gen 2:24 to indicate the union of two persons in "one flesh." Marriage is the union of two persons as one. The Trinity is the much closer union of three persons as one God, one LORD. Compare Matt 28:19; etc.

**6:5** The Lord Jesus called the words of this verse the greatest of all the commandments (Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). Love is the fulfilling of the whole law (Rom 13:10; Gal 5:14).

Some who have misunderstood the Bible have called God as revealed in the Old Testament a harsh and unloving God, and God as revealed in the Lord Jesus in the New Testament a God of love. This is a huge mistake. There is only one God and He is revealed in both Old Testament and New Testament as a God who loves people and who wants their love in return (Ex 34:6; Deut 7:7,8; Ps 86:15; 103:8; John 3:16; Rom 2:4; 1 John 4:7,8). If we do not love the God revealed in the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, we do not love God at all, and all our religion is a vain and empty thing.

The two greatest commands of the law are about love. This one in v 5 and the one in Lev 19:18. God is also a holy God who punishes sin and sinners and this too is revealed in both Old and New Testaments.



with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart, 7 and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the road, and when you lie down, and when you get up. 8 And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as something tied on your foreheads. 9 And you shall write them on the posts of your house, and on your gates.

10 And when the LORD your God has brought you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you great and fine cities which you did not build, 11 and houses full of everything good which you did not fill, and dug wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, when you have eaten and are satisfied, 12 *then* you must watch out that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

13 You shall fear the LORD your God, and serve him, and take your oaths in his name. 14 You shall not go after other gods, gods of the people who *are* around you, 15 so that the anger of the LORD your God does not burn against you, and destroy you from off the face of the earth; for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you. 16 You shall not tempt the LORD your God, as you tempted him in Massah. 17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he has commanded you. 18 And you shall do *what is* right

and good in the sight of the LORD, so that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore to your fathers, 19 by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has said.

20 *And* when your son asks you in time to come, saying, "What *is the meaning of* the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God has commanded you?" 21 Then you shall say to your son, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and the LORD brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand, 22 and before our eyes the LORD showed great and terrible signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh, and against all his household; 23 and he brought us from there, so that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore to our fathers. 24 And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, so that he might keep us alive, as it *is* today. 25 And it will be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments in the presence of the LORD our God, just as he has commanded us."

**7** When the LORD your God has brought you into the land where you are going to possess it, and has driven out many nations before you, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2 and when the LORD your God has delivered them up to you, you must strike them down *and* completely destroy them. You must make no covenant with them, or show mercy

Deuteronomy 6:4,5 teaches a truth continually emphasized in the Bible – there is only one God and He is the God revealed in the Bible as the God of Israel; the God who later in history came as a man in the Lord Jesus to redeem men (Deut 4:35,39; Isa 43:10-12; 44:6-8; 45:5-7; Rom 3:29,30; 1 Cor 8:4; 2 Cor 5:19; Col 2:9; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:15,16; Jude 4,25; Rev 15:4). **6:6-9** The importance of obeying and learning and meditating on and teaching and constantly remembering the word of God cannot be emphasized too much (Josh 1:8; Ps 1:2; 119:1; Luke 11:28; John 8:31; 15:7; Col 3:16).

"Teach. . .to your children" – 4:9; 11:19; Ps 78:4; Eph 6:4).

"Bind them" – 11:18; Prov 3:3; 6:21; 7:3.

"Write them" – 11:20.

**6:10,11** The peoples who inhabited Canaan before Israel had a well-developed civilization (9:1; Josh 24:13).

**6:13** Part of this verse was quoted by the Lord Jesus when He was being tempted by the devil (Matt 4:10). By doing so He emphasized the truth that men must be very

careful in the object of their worship, and that only Jehovah, the God of Israel, the God of the Bible, the Creator of the universe should be worshiped and served. The Hebrew word here translated "serve" also means "worship."

**6:14,15** Verses 4,5; Ex 24:17; Deut 4:24. Where there is real love there will be true jealousy of anything that would turn the heart of the loved one away or corrupt the loved one.

**6:16** Part of this verse too was quoted by the Lord Jesus when He was tempted by Satan (Matt 4:7). The event at Massah reveals what testing God means. See Ex 17:1-7.

**6:20-24** It is extremely important for parents to teach children the meaning of the Word of God (v 7; Eph 6:4).

**6:25** Rom 10:5.

**7:1** These nations were not small tribes living in the forest. They were a strong and numerous people, more powerful and with a more highly developed civilization than Israel.

**7:2** Notes at Gen 6:7 and Lev 18:24,25.

to them. 3 And you must not intermarry with them. You must not give your daughter to his son, or take his daughter for your son. 4 For they will turn your son away from following me, so that they will serve other gods; and the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and suddenly destroy you. 5 But this is how you must deal with them: you must destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their *sacred* groves, and burn their idols with fire. 6 For you are a holy people for the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a special people for himself, above all people who *are* on the face of the earth.

7 The LORD did not set his love on you, or choose you, because you *were* more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all people. 8 But because the LORD loved you and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Therefore know that the LORD your God *is* God, the faithful God, who, to a thousand generations, keeps covenant and mercy with those who love him and keep his commandments, 10 and repays those who hate him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slow concerning the one who hates him; he will repay him to his face. 11 Therefore you shall keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command you this day to do them.

12 So it will come about, if you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep the covenant and the mercy toward you which he swore to your fathers; 13 and he will love you, and bless you, and increase your numbers. He will also bless the fruit of your womb, and the fruit of your land, your grain, and your wine, and your oil, the increase of your cattle, and your flocks of sheep, in the land which he swore to your fathers to give you. 14 You

shall be blessed above all people. No male or female among you, or among your livestock, will be barren. 15 And the LORD will take away all sickness from you, and will not put on you any of the malignant diseases of Egypt, which you know, but will put them on all *those* who hate you. 16 And you must destroy all the people whom the LORD your God hands over to you. Your eye must not pity them. And you must not serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.

17 If you say in your heart, "These nations are more *numerous* than I; how can I drive them out?", 18 you must not be afraid of them, *but* must well remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh, and to all Egypt, 19 the great trials which your eyes saw, and the signs and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, with which the LORD your God brought you out. In the same way the LORD your God will do to all the people of whom you are afraid. 20 The LORD your God will also send the hornet among them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you, are destroyed. 21 You must not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God *is* among you, a mighty and awesome God.

22 And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you little by little. You will not be permitted to destroy them all at once, so that the beasts of the field do not increase against you. 23 But the LORD your God will hand them over to you, and throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed. 24 And he will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven. No man will be able to stand before you, until you have destroyed them. 25 You must burn the idols of their gods in the fire. You must not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, or take *it* for yourselves, so that you are not snared by it; for it *is* an abomination to the LORD your God. 26 And you must not bring an abomination into your house, so you will not become a cursed

**7:3** Ex 34:15,16; Josh 23:12.

**7:4** This is the worst possible thing that could happen to Israel. See notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**7:5** God hates idolatry like poison (Ex 23:24; 34:13).

"Groves" – or "Asherah poles" – symbols of the goddess Asherah.

**7:6** 4:20; 14:2,21; Ex 19:5,6; Ps 135:4; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9.

**7:7** 10:22; Gen 46:27.

**7:8** He loved them, not because they were good or wise or numerous or strong, or because they had great love for him (actually none of these things was true of them), but simply because He loved them (Jer 31:3).

**7:9** Ex 20:6; Isa 49:7; Dan 9:4; 1 Cor 1:9; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Tim 2:13.

**7:10** Isa 59:18; Nahum 1:2. In other words, He deals with all men in perfect justice.

**7:13** Ps 146:8; Prov 15:9; John 14:21.

**7:15** Ex 15:26; 3 John 2.

**7:16** Gen 6:7 – note.

**7:17-19** See v 1. Their confidence was not to be in themselves but in God alone.

**7:20** Ex 23:28; Josh 24:12.

**7:21** "Among you" – Ex 25:8; 29:45; Josh 3:10; etc.

"Awesome" – Deut 10:17; Neh 1:5; 9:32. The KJV has "terrible" here – a word that now conveys the wrong meaning to most readers today.

**7:22** Ex 23:29,30.

**7:24** Josh 1:5; 6:2; 10:8,23-25; 23:9.

**7:25,26** See v 5. Anything connected with idolatry is an abomination to the one true God.

thing like it; but you must utterly detest it and utterly abhor it; for it is an accursed thing.

**8** You must be careful to do all the commandments which I command you this day, so that you may live, and increase in number, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers. **2** And you must remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, *and* to test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

**3** And he humbled you, and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, and your fathers did not know, so that he might cause you to know that man does not live by bread alone, but *that* man lives by every *word* that comes out of the mouth of the LORD.

**4** These forty years your clothes on you did not become old, and your feet did not swell. **5** You must also consider in your heart, that just as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

**6** Therefore you must keep the commandments of the LORD your God to walk in his ways and to fear him. **7** For the LORD your God brings you into a good land, a land of streams of water, of wells and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; **8** a land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; **9** a land where you will eat bread without scarcity,

in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones *are* iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper.

**10** When you have eaten and are satisfied, then you must praise the LORD your God for the good land which he has given you. **11** Watch out that you do not forget the LORD your God, by not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command you this day, **12** so that *when* you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built fine houses, and lived *in them*, **13** and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold increase, and all that you have increases, **14** your heart will not become proud, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, **15** who led you through that great and terrible desert *where there were* fiery serpents and scorpions and drought without water, who brought water for you out of the flinty rock, **16** who fed you in the desert with manna, which your fathers did not know, so that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in your later times. **17** *Watch out that* you do not say in your heart, "My power and the strength of *my* hand have gotten me this wealth." **18** But you must remember the LORD your God; for *it is* he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may establish his covenant which he swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

**19** And it will come about if you at all forget the LORD your God, and go after other gods and serve

**8:1-5** These verses give us some very important truth. Part of verse 3 was quoted by the Lord Jesus in Matt 4:4. Verse 2 indicates that remembrance is an aid to faith and piety. The book of Deuteronomy is a book of remembrance, and several times it emphasizes the importance of the people remembering what they were and what God had done. See 5:15; 7:18; 9:7; 15:15; 16:3,12; 24:9,22; 32:7.

Forgetting God or His works is a very serious matter and would bring on them great trouble - 4:9,23,31; 6:12; 8:11,14,19; 25:19; 32:18. See also Jud 3:7; 1 Sam 12:9; Ps 50:22; 78:11; 106:13,21; Isa 17:10; Jer 2:32; 23:27; Hos 2:13; etc. The New Testament also speaks of the importance of remembering - Luke 24:6; John 15:20; 16:4; Acts 20:31; 2 Cor 9:6; Eph 2:11,12; 2 Tim 2:8; Heb 10:32; Jam 5:20; 2 Pet 1:15; Jude 17; Rev 2:5; 3:3.

God led His people through the desert of Sinai for at least five very good reasons:

- first, to humble them (vs 2,3),
- second, to test them (vs 2,16),
- third, to make known the condition of their heart (v 2),
- fourth, to make them understand the exceedingly important spiritual truth that man's true life is found in hearing and

obeying the Word of God (v 3),

fifth, to discipline them for their good that they might become strong, spiritual, obedient children (v 5).

All this was because of the great love He had for them. Welcome any desert than can help to accomplish such blessed results! God is now doing this same work by leading believers through the desert of this world (Heb 12:1-13). All that happens to believers is for this reason.

**8:3** "Mouth of the LORD" - where are these words that have come from the mouth of the Lord? In the Bible and nowhere else. The Lord Jesus quoted part of this verse when He was being tempted by the devil (Matt 4:4). By doing so He forever emphasized the importance of the whole of God's Word for the true life of man.

**8:10-14** Abundance has its perils too. Especially there is the danger of pride and hardness of heart (Prov 30:8,9; Ezek 28:5; Hos 13:6; Matt 13:22; Mark 10:22,23; Rev 3:17,18). Far better a life of faith lived in poverty than a life of abundance and forgetting God.

**8:16** Ex 16:15. Notes on testing at Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12.

**8:19,20** If Israel fell into idolatry the penalty would be destruction, just as it was with the nations before them.

them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you will surely perish. 20 You will perish just as the nations which the LORD destroys before your face, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.

**9** Hear, O Israel! You *are* to pass over the Jordan this day, to go in to dispossess nations greater and stronger than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2 a people great and tall, the children of the Anakim, whom you know, and of *whom* you have heard *it said*, "Who can stand before the children of Anak!" 3 Therefore today understand that the LORD your God is the one who goes over before you. He will destroy them *like* a consuming fire, and bring them down before your face. So you will drive them out, and destroy them quickly, just as the LORD has said to you.

4 After the LORD your God has driven them out from before you, do not say in your heart, "Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land." *It is* because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD drives them out from before you. 5 You are not going in to possess their land because of your righteousness or because of the uprightness of your heart, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and so that he may fulfil the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6 So understand that the LORD your God does not give you this good land to possess because of your righteousness; for you *are* a stiff-necked people.

7 Remember, *and* do not forget, how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the desert. From the day that you left the land of Egypt, until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. 8 Also in Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry enough with you to have destroyed you. 9 When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. I did not eat bread or drink water. 10 And the LORD entrusted to me two stone tablets written with the finger of God; and what *was written* on them was in accordance with all the words which the LORD spoke with you on

the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

11 And it came about at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. 12 And the LORD said to me, "Get up and quickly go down from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*. They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made an idol of cast metal for themselves."

13 The LORD spoke to me further, saying, "I have seen this people, and, look, it *is* a stiff-necked people. 14 Let me alone, so that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation stronger and greater than they."

15 So I turned and came down from the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant *were* in my two hands. 16 And I looked, and saw that you had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made a calf of cast metal for yourselves. You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you. 17 And I took the two tablets, and threw them out of my two hands, and broke them before your eyes.

18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, for forty days and forty nights. I did not eat bread or drink water, because of all your sins which you had committed, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. 19 For I was afraid of the LORD's anger and hot displeasure with which he was wrathful against you to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me at that time also. 20 And the LORD was angry enough with Aaron to have destroyed him; and I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. 21 And I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire, and crushed it, *and* ground *it* up very small, until it was as fine as dust. And I threw its dust into the stream that came down from the mountain.

22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth Hattaavah, you provoked the LORD to wrath. 23 Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-Barnea, saying, "Go up and possess the land which I have given you", then you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God, and you did not believe or listen to his voice. 24 You have been rebellious against the LORD from the

**9:1** 7:1.

**9:2** Num 13:22,28,33; Josh 11:21,22.

**9:3** 31:3; Josh 3:11; Heb 12:29.

**9:4,5** Lev 18:24 (note).

**9:6** They had nothing to boast about in self. The promised land was a gift. Compare Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:4-7.

**9:7** Ex 14:10-12; 15:23,24; 16:2,3;

17:3; 32:1; Num 11:1; 14:1-4; 16:41; 20:2-5; 25:1-3. We are no better than they by nature. But let us find better things through Christ.

**9:8-21** Ex 32:1-35; 34:28.

**9:22,23** Ex 17:7; Num 11:3,34; 14:1-4.

**9:24** This is the story of all mankind as well as Israel's history.

day that I knew you.

25 So I prostrated myself before the LORD for forty days and forty nights, as I prostrated myself *at the first*, because the LORD had said he would destroy you. 26 Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said, "O Lord God, do not destroy your people and your inheritance, whom you have redeemed through your greatness, whom you have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Do not look at the stubbornness of this people, or to their wickedness, or to their sin, 28 or else the land from which you brought us out will say, 'Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to kill them in the desert.' 29 Yet they *are* your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out by your mighty power and by your stretched out arm."

**10** At that time the LORD said to me, "Cut two stone tablets like the first, and come up to me on the mountain; and make an ark of wood. 2 And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke, and you shall put them in the ark."

3 And I made an ark *of* acacia wood, and cut two tablets of stone like the first, and went up on the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. 4 And he wrote on the tablets, like the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spoke to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. 5 And I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and they are there, just as the LORD commanded me.

6 (And the children of Israel set out from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan for Mosera. There Aaron died, and there he was buried. And Eleazar his son served as priest in his place. 7 From there they went to Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of streams of water. 8 At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD

to serve him, and to bless in his name, *as it is* to this day. 9 Therefore Levi has no part or inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.)

10 And I stayed on the mountain like the first time for forty days and forty nights; and the LORD listened to me at that time also, *and* the LORD would not destroy you. 11 And the LORD said to me, "Arise, set out before the people, so that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."

12 And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 to keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command you this day for your good?

14 Look, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *belongs* to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with everything that *is* in it. 15 Yet the LORD set his affection on your fathers to love them, and he chose their offspring after them, *even* you above all people, *as it is* this day. 16 Therefore circumcise your heart, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. 17 For the LORD your God *is* the God of gods and the Lord of lords, a great, mighty and awe-inspiring God who does not show partiality or take a bribe. 18 He executes judgment for the fatherless and widow, and shows love for the foreigner by giving him food and clothes. 19 Therefore you are to love the foreigner; for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. 20 You must fear the LORD your God; you must serve him, and cling to him, and take oaths by his name. 21 He is your praise, and he is your God who has done for you these great and awe-inspiring things, which your eyes have seen. 22 Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons; and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.

**11** Therefore you must love the LORD your God, and always keep his requirements, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments. 2 And this day you know (for *I am*

**9:25-29** Ex 32:11-13.

**10:1-4** Ex 34:1-4,28.

**10:5** Ex 40:20.

**10:8** Num 3:6; 18:1-7.

**10:12,13** Mic 6:8; 1 Tim 1:5. God requires of men reverence, obedience, love and hearty service. But how few give these to Him.

**10:14** 1 Kings 8:27; Neh 9:6; Ps 24:1; 68:33.

**10:15** 4:37; 7:7,8.

**10:16** "Circumcise your heart" – compare

30:6 where the Lord says He will do this for them. See also Jer 4:4 (note); Acts 7:51.

**10:17** Rev 19:16.

**10:18** Ex 22:22-24; Ps 68:5; 146:9.

**10:19** Lev 19:34.

**10:20** "Fear" – see notes on the fear of God at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"Cling to him" – Deut 11:22; 13:4.

**10:21** Ps 109:1; 148:14.

**10:22** 1:10; Gen 46:27.

**11:1** 10:12,13.



not *speaking* to your children who have not known and have not seen the discipline of the LORD your God), his greatness, his mighty hand and his stretched out arm, 3 and his miracles and his deeds which he did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and to all his land, 4 and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots, *and* how he made the water of the Red Sea to flow over them as they pursued you, and how the LORD brought destruction on them *lasting* to this day, 5 and what he did to you in the desert until you came to this place, 6 and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, how the earth opened her mouth and, in the middle of all Israel, swallowed them up with their households and their tents and all the substance that they had. 7 For your eyes have seen all the great deeds of the LORD which he did.

8 Therefore you must keep all the commandments which I command you this day, so that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land, where you are going to possess it; 9 and that you may live a long time in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring, a land that flows with milk and honey. 10 For the land which you go in to possess *is* not like the land of Egypt, which you came out from, where you sowed your seed, and watered it with your foot, like a vegetable garden. 11 But the land, where you are going to possess it, *is* a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinks water from the rain of heaven; 12 a land which the LORD your God cares for. The eyes of the LORD your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

13 And it will come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 that I will give rain for your land in its due season, the early rain and the later rain, so that you can harvest your grain, and your wine, and your oil. 15 And I will give grass in your fields for your livestock, so that you may eat and be satisfied.

16 Watch yourselves, so that your heart is not

deceived, and you turn away and serve other gods and worship them. 17 For *if you do*, the LORD's wrath will burn against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD gives you. 18 Therefore you must store up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and tie them as a sign on your hand, that they may be as frontlets on your forehead. 19 And you must teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 20 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates, 21 so that *the number of* your days and the days of your children may be increased in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

22 For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you, doing them, loving the LORD your God, walking in all his ways, and clinging to him, 23 then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will possess greater and stronger nations than yourselves. 24 Every place the soles of your feet tread on will be yours. Your territory will be from the desert to Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, to the western sea. 25 No man will be able to stand before you; *for* the LORD your God will put the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you tread on, just as he has said to you.

26 See, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; 27 a blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day, 28 and a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which you have not known. 29 And this is to be *done* when the LORD your God has brought you into the land where you are going to possess it: you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal. 30 *Are* they not on the other side of the Jordan, on the way toward the setting sun, in the land of

**11:3** Ex 7:8-21.

**11:4** Ex 14:28.

**11:6** Num 16:1-35.

**11:12** 1 Kings 9:3.

**11:13-15** Obedience to God brings great rewards.

**11:16** Heb 3:12; 12:25.

**11:17** Rain is a gift of God which He may withhold in anger against idolatry and false worship. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**11:18-21** Note at 6:6-9.

**11:24** Josh 1:3. "Western sea" - the

Mediterranean.

**11:26-28** 30:1,19; 28:1-14; 28:15-68. No one can ever get a true blessing from any god, but only from the one true God, the Creator, the God of the Bible. Whatever might seem like blessings derived from the worship of other gods are false and deluding and will result in a curse at last, as God Himself says. Sometimes in mercy the true God gives what people need, even though they pray to false gods.

**11:29** Josh 8:33.

the Canaanites who live in the plain opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh? 31 For you will cross over the Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you will possess it and live in it. 32 And you must be careful to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.

**12** These *are* the statutes and judgments which you must be careful to do in the land which the LORD God of your fathers gives you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth. 2 You must utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you will dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains, and on the hills, and under every green tree. 3 And you must throw down their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their *sacred* groves with fire. And you must cut down the idols of their gods, and destroy their names from that place.

4 You must not act so toward the LORD your God, 5 but you must seek *the LORD* at the place which the LORD your God chooses out of all your tribes to put his name there, at his dwelling place. You must come there, 6 and you must bring there your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the contribution of your hands, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn from your herds and from your flocks. 7 And there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, and rejoice in all that you put your hand to, you and your households, where the LORD your God has blessed you.

8 You must not do at all what we are doing here this day, each man whatever is right in his own eyes. 9 For you have not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the LORD your God gives you. 10 But *when* you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God gives you to inherit, and *when* he gives you rest from all your enemies around *you*, so that you live in safety, 11 then there will be a place which the LORD your God will choose to have his name dwell there. There you must bring all that I command you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hands, and all your choice vows which you make to the LORD. 12 And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you, and your sons and your daughters and your male servants and your female servants and the Levite who *is* inside your gates, since he has no part or inheritance with you. 13 Watch yourself that you

do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see, 14 but you must offer your burnt offerings in the place which the LORD chooses in one of your tribal *territories*, and there you must do all that I command you.

15 However you may kill and eat meat inside all your gates, whatever you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which he gives you. The unclean and the clean may eat of it, as if *it were* gazelle or deer. 16 But you must not eat the blood; you must pour it on the ground like water. 17 You must not eat the tithe of your grain or of your wine or of your oil or the firstborn of your herds or of your flock, or any of your vows which you make or your freewill offerings or the contribution of your hands, inside your gates, 18 but you must eat them in the presence of the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, you and your son and your daughter and your male servant and your female servant and the Levite who is inside your gates. And you shall rejoice in the presence of the LORD your God in all that you put your hands to. 19 Watch yourself that you do not abandon the Levite as long as you live on the earth.

20 When the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he has promised you, and you say, "I will eat meat", because you long to eat meat, you may eat meat, whatever you desire. 21 If the place which the LORD your God chooses to put his name is too far from you, then you may slaughter *animals* from your herd and from your flock which the LORD gives you, as I have commanded you, and eat inside your gates whatever you desire. 22 You may eat them just as the gazelle and deer are eaten; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. 23 But be sure that you do not eat the blood; for the blood *is* the life; and you may not eat the life with the meat. 24 You must not eat it; you must pour it on the ground like water. 25 You must not eat it, so that it may go well with you, and with your children after you, as you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD.

26 But you must take your holy things which you have, and your vows, and go to the place which the LORD chooses. 27 And you must offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God. And the blood of your sacrifices must be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you may eat the meat. 28 Be careful to hear all these words which I command you, so that it may go well with you, and with

**12:2,3** The very first duty Israel had after conquering Canaan was to cleanse it of all idols and false worship.

**12:5-14** Ex 20:24; 2 Chron 7:12; Ps 78:68.

**12:15** Acts 10:9-14; Rom 14:2,3;

1 Tim 4:4,5.

**12:16** Gen 9:4; Lev 17:10-12; Acts 15:20,29.

**12:19** 14:27.

**12:27** Lev 1:9,13.

your children after you forever, as you do *what is* good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

29 When the LORD your God cuts off the nations from before you, where you are going to dispossess them, and you succeed them and live in their land, 30 watch yourself that you are not snared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not enquire about their gods, saying, "How did these nations serve their gods? I will do just the same way." 31 You must not act so toward the LORD your God. For they have done for their gods everything abominable to the LORD, what he hates. For they have burned even their sons and their daughters in the fire for their gods.

32 Be careful to do whatever I command you. You must not add to it or take away from it.

**13** If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you, and designates to you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or the wonder comes about, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, "Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them," 3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 You must follow the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you must serve him and cling to him. 5 And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams must be put to death, because he has spoken to turn *you* away from the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of

bondage. *He has tried* to turn you out of the way which the LORD your God commanded you to walk in. So shall you purge the evil from among you.

6 If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who *is* like your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods," which neither you nor your fathers have known, 7 of the gods of the people who are around you, near you or at a distance from you, from one end of the earth to the *other* end of the earth, 8 you must not consent to him or listen to him; and your eye must not pity him, and you must not spare *him*, and you must not conceal him; 9 but you must surely kill him. Your hand must be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. 10 And you must stone him with stones so that he dies, because he has tried to turn you away from the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 11 And all Israel will hear and fear, and will no longer commit such wickedness as this among you.

12 If you hear in any of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to live in, someone saying, 13 "*Certain* men, children of Belial, have gone out from among you and drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods", whom you have not known, 14 then you must inquire and search and thoroughly investigate, and then *if you see that it is the truth and if it is certain that* such abomination is done among you, 15 you must certainly strike down the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, completely destroying it and everything that *is* in

**12:31** Lev 18:21; Deut 18:10; Ps 106:37; Jer 32:35.

**12:32** Prov 30:6; Rev 22:18.

**13:1-3** "Prophet" – note at Gen 20:7.

"Dreams" – dreams in themselves, of course, are not revelations of God's truth. Sometimes God may reveal truth in dreams, but the devil may try to teach something false through them. Notice here that a false prophet also may get dreams which seem to be revelations from God and which are actually fulfilled. Other notes on dreams at Gen 15:12; Num 12:6. A false prophet will try to turn people from the truth revealed in the Bible (v 2).

**13:3** "Testing" – 8:2,26; Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12; Jam 1:2-4,12; 1 Pet 1:6,7; 4:12,13. No believer will live in this world without being tested.

**13:5** Such a false prophet is worthy of death because he is opposing the first command of the law (see note Ex 20:2,3). God Himself says that such action is an abomination (v 14).

**13:6-11** The importance of God's first command in the law is emphasized here. A

mother or father was to perform the sad duty of casting the first stone in putting to death a son or daughter who encouraged people to break that law (see note on law at Ex 19:21-25). This was the way of things under the law of Moses. Compare this with the picture of grace given in Luke 15:11-14.

**13:12-18** To the one true God idolatry and the worship of false gods are so hateful that He commanded that whole towns and cities in Israel should be destroyed if their inhabitants engaged in such things. God knew that false worship permitted in one town could spread to the whole nation and corrupt it. A cancer in the body must be destroyed or it will destroy the whole body. And God knows perfectly well how to deal with the body of a nation. And such commands as this came out of His great love for the people as a whole. We should clearly understand the intimate connection between God's anger and His love and holiness. During this age of grace Christians are not, of course, to destroy towns and people. Their work is entirely different (preaching the Gospel of Christ).

it, and its livestock, with the edge of the sword. 16 And you must gather all its plunder into the middle of its street, and burn the city with fire and all its plunder, every bit of it, for the LORD your God. And it is to be a heap forever. It must not be rebuilt. 17 And none of the accursed thing is to cling to your hand, so that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger and show you mercy, and have compassion on you, and increase your *number*, as he has sworn to your fathers, 18 as you listen to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all his commandments which I command you this day, to do *what is* right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

**14** You *are* the children of the LORD your God. You must not cut yourselves, or shave the hair on your forehead because of the dead. 2 For you *are* a holy people for the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a special people for himself, above all the nations that are on the earth.

3 You must not eat any abominable thing. 4 These *are* the beasts which you may eat: the ox, the sheep and the goat, 5 the deer and the gazelle and the roe deer and the wild goat and the ibex and the antelope and the mountain sheep. 6 And you may eat any animal that divides the hoof and has the hoof split in two, and chews the cud among the animals. 7 However of those that chew the cud, or of those that divide the hoof in two, you must not eat these: the camel and the rabbit, and the coney; for they chew the cud but do not divide the hoof; *therefore they are* unclean for you. 8 And the pig, because it divides the hoof, yet does not chew the cud, *is* unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcass.

9 Of all that *are* in the waters you may eat these: all that have fins and scales you may eat. 10 But you must not eat anything that does not have fins and scales; it *is* unclean for you.

11 You may eat any of the clean birds. 12 But you must not eat of these: the eagle and the vulture and the osprey 13 and the glede and the kite and every kind of buzzard 14 and every kind of raven 15 and the owl and the night hawk and the cuckoo and every kind of hawk, 16 the little owl and the great owl and the swan 17 and the pelican and the gier eagle and the cormorant 18 and the

stork and every kind of heron and the lapwing and the bat.

19 And all the teeming things that fly are unclean for you; they must not be eaten. 20 *But* you may eat every clean bird.

21 You must not eat anything that dies of itself. You may give it to the foreigner who *is* inside your gates, so that he may eat it; or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you *are* a holy people for the LORD your God. You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

22 You must tithe all the produce from your seed that the field yields year by year. 23 And you must eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herds and of your flocks, in the presence of the LORD your God, in the place which he chooses to put his name there, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. 24 And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry it, *or* if the place which the LORD your God chooses to put his name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, 25 then you shall turn *it* into money, and secure the money in your hands and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses; 26 and you shall spend that money for whatever you desire, for oxen or for sheep or for wine or for strong drink or for whatever you desire, and eat there in the presence of the LORD your God, and rejoice, you and your household, 27 and the Levite who is inside your gates. You must not neglect him, for he has no portion or inheritance among you.

28 At the end of three years you must bring all the tithe of your produce in that year, and store it inside your gates; 29 and the Levite (because he has no portion or inheritance among you), and the foreigner and the fatherless and the widow, who *are* inside your gates, shall come and eat and be satisfied, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work which your hands do.

**15** At the end of every seven years you must make a cancellation *of debts*. 2 And the cancellation *should be* like this: every creditor who lends anything to his neighbour must cancel it; he must not require it from his neighbour, or from his brother, because it is called the LORD's cancellation. 3 You may require *repayment* from a

But at the end of this age God Himself will arise in anger and judge all who have practiced false worship (2 Thess 1:6-9; 2:8-12; Jude 14,15; Revelation chapter 16; 21:8). And this He will do for the good of the universe as a whole.

**14:1** John 1:12; Rom 8:16; 9:8,26; Gal 3:26; 1 John 3:1.

**14:2** Ex 19:5; Lev 20:26; Deut 7:6; 26:18.

**14:3-21** Note on Lev 11:2-33.

**14:22** Lev 27:30; Deut 12:6,17; Neh 10:37; Mal 3:8-10.

**14:23** 12:5.

**14:27** 10:9; 12:12; 18:2; Num 18:20.

**14:29** If they wanted God's blessing they had to provide for the needs of God's servants. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

**15:3** 23:20. Those who did not worship the

foreigner, but your hand must cancel what is yours with your brother. 4 However there should be no poor among you, for the LORD will greatly bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, 5 if only you will listen obediently to the voice of the LORD your God, to be careful to do all these commandments which I command you this day. 6 For the LORD your God will bless you, just as he promised you; and you will lend to many nations but you will not borrow, and you will reign over many nations but they will not reign over you.

7 If there is among you a poor man of one of your brethren inside any of your gates in your land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart, or close up your hand from your poor brother, 8 but you must open your hand wide to him and must lend him sufficient for his need, *for* that which he lacks. 9 Watch out so that there will not be an evil thought in your heart, saying, "The seventh year, the year of cancellation, is at hand", and your eye becomes hostile against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cries out to the LORD against you, and you become guilty of sin. 10 You must give to him, and your heart must not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works, and in all that you put your hand to. 11 For the poor shall never cease *to be* in the land. Therefore I command you, saying, You must open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and to your needy, in your land.

12 And if your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, and serves you for six years, then in the seventh year you must set him free from you. 13 And when you set him free from you, you must not let him go away empty-handed. 14 You must supply him liberally from your flock and from your *threshing* floor and from your winepress. You must give to him from what the LORD your God has blessed you with. 15 And you must remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you. Therefore I command you this thing today.

16 And if he says to you, "I will not go away from you," because he loves you and your household, because he is well off with you, 17 then you

shall take an awl and pierce *it* through his ear into the door, and he shall be your slave forever. And you shall do the same to your female slave also.

18 It must not seem hard to you when you set him free from you, for by serving you for six years he has been worth double *the service* of a hired servant *to you*. And the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

19 You must set apart for the LORD your God all the firstborn males that come from your herd and from your flock; you must do no work with the firstborn of your bull, or shear the firstborn of your sheep. 20 You must eat it in the presence of the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses, you and your household. 21 And if there is *any* blemish in it, *if it is* lame or blind or has any serious blemish, you must not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. 22 You must eat it inside your gates. The unclean and the clean *person* alike *may eat it*, as a gazelle or a deer. 23 But you must not eat its blood; you must pour it on the ground like water.

**16** Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God; for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2 Therefore you must sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to put his name. 3 You must eat no leavened bread with it; for seven days you must eat unleavened bread with it, the bread of affliction; for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste. *Do this* so that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. 4 And for seven days no unleavened bread is to be seen with you in your whole territory. And as for the meat which you sacrificed the first day at evening, there must not be *any of it* remaining all night until morning.

5 You must not sacrifice the Passover inside any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, 6 but in the place which the LORD your God chooses to put his name. There you must sacrifice the Passover at evening, at sunset, at the season that you came out of Egypt. 7 And you shall roast and eat *it* in the place which the LORD your God

God of Israel were not to receive the benefits that Israel did.

**15:4-11** The promise of the elimination of poverty was based on a condition – "if you obey." However God knew they would not fully obey, so He gives directions for the support of the poor (Lev 25:35. Compare Matt 5:42; Luke 6:34; Gal 2:10; 1 John 3:17; etc.).

**15:12-15** Note at Ex 21:2-6. This was

almost like payment for services they had given during the time of their slavery.

**15:16,17** Ex 21:5,6.

**15:19** Ex 13:2,12.

**15:21** Lev 22:19-25; Deut 17:1; Mal 1:6-14.

**15:23** Gen 9:4; Lev 7:26; 17:10.

**16:1,2** Ex 12:2-13; Lev 23:5.

**16:3,4** Ex 12:8,15,19,39; 13:3; 34:18.

**16:5-8** This was a national festival. The people had to go to Jerusalem to sacrifice.



chooses. And in the morning you shall return to your tents. 8 For six days you must eat unleavened bread; and on the seventh day there *will be* a solemn assembly to the LORD your God. You must do no work *on that day*.

9 *Then* you must count for yourselves seven weeks. Begin counting the seven weeks from *the time* that you begin *putting* the sickle to the grain. 10 And you must keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with a tax of a freewill offering from your hand, which you must give *to* the LORD *your God* in accordance with how the LORD your God has blessed you. 11 And you shall rejoice in the presence of the LORD your God in the place where the LORD your God chooses to put his name, you and your son and your daughter and your male servant and your female servant and the Levite who *is* inside your gates and the foreigner and the fatherless and the widow who are among you. 12 And you must remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you must observe and do these statutes.

13 You must observe the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days, after you have harvested your grain and your wine. 14 And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the foreigner and the fatherless and the widow who *are* inside your gates. 15 For seven days you must keep a solemn feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses; because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce, and in all the works of your hands, so you will surely rejoice.

16 Three times in a year all your males must appear before the LORD your God in the place which he chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they must not appear before the LORD empty-handed. 17 Each man *must give* as he is able, in accordance with the blessing of the LORD your God which he gives you.

18 You must select judges and officers for yourselves inside all your gates which the LORD your God gives you, throughout your tribes. And they must judge the people with just judgment. 19 You must not pervert judgment; you must not show

partiality or take a bribe; for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. 20 You must follow what is fully in accordance with justice, so that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God gives you.

21 You must not plant for yourself a grove of any trees near the altar of the LORD your God, which you make for yourselves. 22 And you must not set up *any* idol for yourselves; the LORD your God hates this.

**17** You must not sacrifice to the LORD your God *any* bull or sheep which has a blemish or any defect; for that *is* an abomination to the LORD your God.

2 If there is found among you, inside any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or woman who has done evil in the sight of the LORD your God, by breaking his covenant, 3 and has gone and served other gods and worshipped them, or the sun or moon or any of the *starry* host of heaven (I have commanded no such *worship*), 4 and it is told to you, or if you hear of it, *and* carefully investigate and see *that it is* true and certain *that* such abomination has been done in Israel, 5 then you must bring out to your gates that man or that woman who has done that wicked thing, and must stone that man or that woman with stones until they die. 6 The one who deserves death must be put to death by the testimony of two witnesses, or three witnesses, *but* he must not be put to death by the testimony of one witness. 7 The hands of the witnesses must first be on him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put evil away from among you.

8 If any case arises too hard for you to judge, between bloodshed and bloodshed, between lawsuit and lawsuit, and between violence and violence, *being* controversial cases inside your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses, 9 and you shall come to the priests the Levites, and to the judge that will be *there* in those days, and inquire; and they must pronounce the judgment to you. 10 And you must do according to the pronouncement which those of that place which the LORD chooses gives to you;

**16:9-12** Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:15.

**16:13-15** Lev 23:34-43.

**16:16** Ex 23:14-17; 34:23,24.

**16:17** 1 Cor 16:1,2; 2 Cor 8:1-4,9; 9:7-9.

**16:19,20** The God of the Bible is just, and loves justice and commands it, and He will punish those who pervert it (Ex 23:2,8; Lev 19:15; Deut 1:17; 10:17; Prov 17:23; 24:23).

**17:1** 15:21.

**17:2-7** Once again God says that false worship whether of idols or of sun, moon, and stars is "an abomination" and worthy of death.

"Starry host" – 4:19.

**17:6** 19:17; Num 35:30; Matt 18:16; John 8:17.

**17:8-11** Difficult cases were to be decided in Jerusalem before the high priest or a judge.

and you must be careful to do according to all their instructions to you. 11 You must do according to the pronouncement of the law which they teach you, and according to the judgment which they tell you. You must not decline *to* the right hand or *to* the left from the pronouncement which they give you. 12 And the man who acts presumptuously and will not listen to the priest who stands to serve there before the LORD your God, or to the judge, that man must die; and you must put away evil from Israel. 13 And all the people will hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.

14 When you have come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, and possess it and live in it, and say, "I will set a king over me like all the nations that *are* around me," 15 you must set as king over you the one whom the LORD your God chooses. You must set as king over you *one* of your brethren. You must not set a foreigner over you, who *is* not your brother. 16 And he must not multiply horses for himself, or cause the people to return to Egypt, so that he can multiply horses; for the LORD has said to you, "You are not to return that way again." 17 And he must not multiply wives for himself, so that his heart does not turn away; and he must not greatly increase silver and gold for himself.

18 And it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he must write for himself a copy of this law in a book from *that which* is with the priests the Levites; 19 and it is to be with him, and he must read it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them, 20 so that his heart will not be lifted up above his brethren, and so that he does not turn aside from the commandments to the right hand, or to the left; then he will live a long time in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.

**18** The priests the Levites, *and* the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire and his share. 2 Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their

brethren; the LORD *is* their inheritance, as he has said to them.

3 And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether *it is* an ox or a sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. 4 You shall *also* give him the firstfruits of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the *wool* from the first shearing of your sheep. 5 For the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes, to stand to serve in the name of the LORD, him and his sons forever.

6 And if a Levite comes from any of your gates from any part of Israel where he has been staying, and arrives with complete earnestness at the place which the LORD chooses, 7 then he shall serve in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites *do*, who stand there before the LORD. 8 They shall have equal portions to eat, besides that which comes from the sale of his family property.

9 When you arrive in the land which the LORD your God gives you, you must not learn to behave according to the abominations of those nations. 10 There must not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or* uses divination, *or* is a sorcerer, or interprets omens, or practices witchcraft, 11 or casts spells, or acts as a medium or a spiritist, or consults the dead. 12 For everyone who does these things *is* an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you. 13 You must be blameless in the presence of the LORD your God.

14 For these nations, which you will dispossess, listen to those who use sorcery and divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you *to do so*. 15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among you, of your brethren. You must listen to him. 16 *This is* in accordance with all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, "Do not let me hear again the voice of the LORD my God, or see this great fire any more, so that I will not die." 17 And the LORD said to me, "What they

**17:12,13** Num 15:30.

**17:14,15** God who knows the future knew they would do this (1 Sam 8:5,19,20; 10:19).

**17:16** 1 Kings 4:26; 10:26-29; Ps 20:7.

**17:17** 2 Sam 5:13; 12:11; 1 Kings 11:3-5.

**17:18-20** The Word of God is the only basis for a humble and just reign.

**18:1** 10:9; 1 Cor 9:13.

**18:2** Num 18:20.

**18:5** 10:8; Ex 29:9.

**18:9** 9:5.

**18:10** Ex 22:18; Lev 19:26,31; 20:6.

"Pass through the fire" - this refers to

the custom of some of the nations around them who sacrificed their children in the fire to false gods.

**18:11** Lev 19:31.

**18:12-14** Witchcraft was one of the terrible sins that corrupted the peoples of Canaan and made it necessary for God to drive them out. Witchcraft involves dealing, consciously or unconsciously, with evil spirits. Christians must have nothing to do with it.

**18:15-19** Note on "prophet" at Gen 20:7. These verses contain the great prophecy of Christ as prophet (compare Matt 21:11; Luke 7:16; 24:19; John 4:19; Acts 3:22-24).

have spoken is well said. 18 I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I command him. 19 And it shall come about *that* whoever will not listen to my words which he will speak in my name, I will require him *to give an account*. 20 But a prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die."

21 And if you say in your heart, "How can we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?" 22 When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or take place, the LORD has not spoken that word, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You must not be afraid of him.

**19** When the LORD your God has cut off the nations, whose land the LORD your God gives you, and you take their place and live in their cities and in their houses, 2 you must set apart three cities for you in the middle of your land which the LORD your God gives you to possess. 3 You must prepare the roads for yourselves, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God gives you to inherit, so that everyone who has killed another person may flee there.

4 And this *is* the case of the one who has killed another who flees there so that he can live: whoever unintentionally kills his neighbour whom he did not hate previously, 5 as when a man goes into the forest with his neighbour to cut wood, and his hand makes a swing with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head *of the axe* slips off the handle and strikes his neighbour and kills him, he shall flee to one of those cities, and live. 6 Otherwise the avenger of blood, in the heat of his anger, will pursue the one who has killed that person, and overtake him because the way is long, and kill him. But he *is* not deserving of death because he did not hate *his neighbour* previously. 7 Therefore I

command you, saying, "You must set apart three cities for yourselves."

8 And if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land which he promised to give to your fathers, 9 if you keep and do all these commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God and to walk in his ways always, then you must add three more cities for yourselves, besides these three. 10 *This is so* that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the LORD your God gives you *as an inheritance; otherwise* guilt concerning blood will be on you.

11 But if anyone hates his neighbour, and lies in wait for him, and rises up against him and strikes him so that he dies, and flees into one of these cities, 12 then the elders of his city must send *men* and bring him from there, and deliver him into the hands of the avenger of blood, so that he may die. 13 Your eye must not pity him, but you must put away *the guilt of* innocent blood from Israel, so that it may go well with you.

14 You must not move your neighbour's landmark which the ancestors set in your inheritance, which you inherit in the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.

15 A single witness must not rise up against a man for any crime, or for any sin which he may have committed; the matter must be established by the testimony of two witnesses, or by the testimony of three witnesses.

16 If a false witness rises up against any man to testify against him *about some* wrongdoing, 17 then both the men who have the disagreement must stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who will be *there* in those days; 18 and the judges must make a careful investigation; and, then, *if* the witness *is* a false witness, *and* has testified falsely against his brother, 19 then you must do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. In this way you must purge evil from among you. 20 And the rest will hear, and fear, and from then on not commit any such evil

(Jehovah) and those who spoke in the name of other gods. The former were more deceptive and dangerous, the latter more openly rebellious and contemptuous of the true God.

**18:22** The test of a prophet is very clear (Jer 28:9). We know the Bible was written by true prophets of God because of the fulfillment of their prophecies. See note on fulfilled prophecies in the topical index in the back of this Bible.

**19:1-10** Note on Num 35:9-32.

**19:11** Ex 20:13; 21:12; 1 Kings 2:31.

**19:16-20** Ex 23:1; Ps 27:12; 35:11; Matt 26:59-61.

**19:19** Prov 19:5.

Christ fulfilled all the great offices of the old covenant—priest, judge, king, mediator, shepherd, prophet. He is by far the greatest of all prophets who ever delivered God's messages to men (Heb 1:1,2; John 7:16; 8:26,28,38; 12:49; 17:8; Rev 1:1; 22:18,19; Matt 17:3-5). With the prophecy called "The Revelation", which Christ delivered to the churches, God's inspired teachings for men is concluded (Rev 22:18,19). Thereafter God sent no more infallible prophets and teachers, for none was needed. In the Bible we have the complete revelation of what God wanted to teach men.

**18:20** False prophets were of two kinds – those who spoke in the name of the LORD

among you. 21 And your eye must not pity; but life *must go* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

**20** When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and a people more *numerous* than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God who brought you up out of the land of Egypt *is* with you. 2 And *this is the way* it should be when you have come near the battle: the priest must approach and speak to the people, 3 and say to them, "Hear, O Israel, today you draw near to battle against your enemies. Do not let your hearts faint. Do not be afraid, and do not tremble, or be terrified because of them. 4 For the LORD your God *is* the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."

5 And the officers shall speak to the people, saying, "Who *is the* man that has built a new house, and not yet dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, or he may die in the battle, and another man will dedicate it. 6 And who *is the* man that has planted a vineyard, and has not yet eaten *grapes* from it? Let him *also* go and return to his house, or he may die in the battle, and another man will eat from it. 7 And who *is the* man that has become engaged to a woman, and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, or he may die in the battle, and another man will marry her." 8 And the officers shall speak further to the people and say, "Who *is the* man *that is* fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return to his house, or the heart of his brethren may faint just as his heart." 9 And it shall be, when the officers finish speaking to the people, that they appoint captains in the armies to lead the people.

10 When you come near a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace to it. 11 And if it gives you an answer of peace and opens *the gates* to you, then it shall be like this: all the people *who are* found in it shall become forced labor for you, and shall serve you. 12 And if it will not make peace with you, but wars against you, then you shall besiege it; 13 and when the LORD your God has given it into your hands, you must strike every male in it with the edge of the sword; 14 but the women, and the little ones, and the livestock, and everything that is in the city, all its plunder, you

shall take for yourself; and you shall eat the plunder of your enemies, which the LORD your God has given you. 15 This is how you shall do to all the cities *which are* at a long distance from you, which *are* not among the cities of these nations.

16 But concerning the cities of these people, which the LORD your God gives you *as* an inheritance, you must not save anything alive that breathes, 17 but you must completely destroy them, just as the LORD your God has commanded you; that is, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; 18 so that they do not teach you to behave according to all their abominations, which they have done for their gods, and so cause you to sin against the LORD your God.

19 When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it to capture it, you must not destroy its trees by taking an axe to them; for you can eat *fruit* from them; and you must not cut them down to use in the siege; for the trees of the field are for man's *benefit*. 20 But as for the trees which you know *are* not trees for food, you may destroy and cut them down; and you may build siege-works against the city that is fighting against you, until it is subdued.

**21** If *someone* is found slain in the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess, lying in the field, *and* it is not known who has killed him, 2 then your elders and your judges must come out and measure *the distance* to the cities which *are* around the one who has been slain. 3 And it must be *done like this*: the elders of *that* city which is nearest to the slain man shall take a heifer which has not been put to work and which has not pulled in the yoke, 4 and the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with flowing water, which has not been plowed or sown, and break the heifer's neck there in the valley; 5 and the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to serve him and to bless in the name of the LORD, and by their word every controversy and every act of violence must be *settled*. 6 And all the elders of that city *which is* nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer that has its neck broken in the valley, 7 and they shall respond and say, "Our hands have not shed this blood, and our

**19:21** Note at Ex 21:23-25.

**20:1-4** 2 Chron 32:7,8; Ps 23:4; 118:6; Isa 41:10; Rom 8:31.

**20:8** Jud 7:3.

**20:11** 1 Kings 9:21.

**20:16-18** Note at Lev 18:24. As long as such people lived they would be a danger

to morality and true worship in Israel.

**20:19,20** They were to protect the environment and not unnecessarily destroy it.

**21:4** The heifer which had done no wrong died to remove the guilt and cleanse the land (compare 1 Pet 3:18).

**21:6** Matt 27:24.

eyes have not seen *it done*. 8 Be merciful, O LORD, to your people Israel whom you have redeemed, and do not put innocent blood to the account of your people Israel." And the bloodshed will be forgiven them. 9 In this way you must purge the *guilt* of innocent blood from among you, by doing *what is* right in the sight of the LORD.

10 When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God has given them into your hands, and you have taken them captive, 11 and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her, to take her as your wife, 12 then you may bring her home to your house; and she must shave her head, and trim her nails, 13 and take off the clothes of her captivity, and remain in your house, mourning for her father and her mother for a full month. And after that you shall go in to her, and be her husband; and she shall be your wife. 14 And if it happens that you are not pleased with her, then you may let her go wherever she wishes. But you must not at all sell her for money, because you have humbled her; you must not make merchandise of her.

15 If a man has two wives, one loved and the other hated, and *both* of them, the loved and the hated, have borne him children, and *if* the firstborn son belongs to the one who is hated, 16 then, when it comes about that he causes his sons to inherit what he has, he must not make the son of the loved one the firstborn ahead of the son of the hated one *who is, in fact*, the firstborn. 17 But he must acknowledge the son of the hated one as the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he has. For he *is* the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

18 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *who* will not listen to them *even* after they have punished him, 19 then his father and his mother shall seize him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of his place, 20 and they shall say to the elders of his city, "This son of ours *is* stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey our voice. *He is* a glutton, and a drunkard." 21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, so that he dies. In this way you must purge evil from among you; and

all Israel will hear and be afraid.

22 And if a man has committed a sin deserving death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his body must not remain all night on the tree, but you must bury him that day (for a hanged person is accursed by God), so that your land, which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, does not become defiled.

**22** You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and ignore them. You must certainly bring them back to your brother. 2 And if your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to your own house, and it must remain with you until your brother looks for it, and you must give it back to him. 3 You must do the same way with his donkey, and do the same with his clothes, and do likewise with any lost thing of your brother which he has lost and you have found; you must not ignore it.

4 You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down by the road, and ignore them; you must certainly help him to lift *them* back up.

5 A woman must not wear what pertains to a man, and a man must not put on a woman's garment; for all who do so *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.

6 If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way in any tree or on the ground, *if there are* young ones or eggs, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, you must not take the mother with the young, 7 *but* you must certainly let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, so that it may be well with you, and *that* you may have a long life.

8 When you build a new house, then you must make a parapet for your roof, so that you do not bring *the guilt* of bloodshed on your house by someone falling from there.

9 You must not sow different kinds of seed in your vineyard, so that the crop from your seed which you have sown, and the fruit of your vineyard, is not defiled.

10 You must not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

11 You must not wear a garment of wool and linen mixed together.

**21:8** Num 35:33,34.

**21:10-14** Even a woman captured from an enemy people must be treated with kindness and respect.

**21:17** Gen 25:31; 49:3.

**21:18-21** "So that he dies" – this was to be the punishment of a rebellious son under the law. The law was not given as a basis of compassion or forgiveness but to reveal sin and condemn it (Rom 3:19,20). Grace came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). Compare these

verses with the story showing the prodigal son under grace – Luke 15:11-24.

**21:22,23** Josh 8:29; 10:26,27; John 19:31; Gal 3:13.

**22:1** Ex 23:4,5; Zech 7:9. God loves honesty, uprightness and kindness (Jer 9:24).

**22:6,7** Does God care for birds? Yes (Gen 1:21; Ps 84:3; Matt 6:26; 10:29; Ps 145:9). How much more for people! (Matt 6:25,26; 10:30,31).

**22:8-12** God was concerned with even the



12 You must make tassels for yourself on the four corners of your cloak, with which you cover *yourself*.

13 If any man marries a woman, and goes in to her, and hates her, 14 *then* uses abusive language about her, and gives her a bad name, saying, "I married this woman, but when I went in to her I found out she was not a virgin." 15 Then the father of the girl, and her mother, shall take *the evidence of* the girl's virginity and bring them to the elders of the city in the gate; 16 and the girl's father shall say to the elders, "I gave my daughter in marriage to this man, and he hates her, 17 and now has used abusive language *about her*, saying, 'I did not find your daughter to be a virgin.' But these are *the evidences of* my daughter's virginity." And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city must take that man and punish him, 19 and fine him a hundred *shekels* of silver, and give *them* to the father of the girl, because he has given a bad name to a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he must not divorce her all his days.

20 But if this thing is true, *and the evidences of* virginity are not found for the girl, 21 then they shall bring the girl out to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones until she dies, because she has committed an evil deed in Israel, by acting like a prostitute in her father's house. In this way you must purge evil from among you.

22 If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, *then both* of them shall die, both the man who lay with the woman and the woman. In this way you shall purge evil from Israel.

23 If a girl *who is* a virgin is engaged to a man, and another man meets her in the city and lies with her, 24 then you shall bring both of them out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them with stones until they die; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city; and the man, because he has

humbled his neighbour's wife. In this way you shall purge evil from among you.

25 But if a man meets an engaged girl in the field, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die, 26 but you shall do nothing to the girl. *There is* no sin in the girl *deserving* death; for this matter *is* the same as when a man rises up against his neighbour and kills him. 27 For he met her in the field, and the engaged girl cried out, but *there was* no one to save her.

28 If a man meets a girl *who is* a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are discovered, 29 then the man who lay with her must give the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall become his wife. Because he has humbled her, he must not divorce her all his days.

30 A man must not take his father's wife, or uncover his father's garment.

**23** He who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting in his private parts shall not enter the congregation of the LORD.

2 No one born of an illegal union shall enter the congregation of the LORD; none of his *descendants*, even to the tenth generation, shall enter the congregation of the LORD.

3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of the LORD; none of their descendants, even to their tenth generation, shall ever enter the congregation of the LORD, 4 because they did not meet you with bread and water along the way when you came up out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. 5 However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loved you. 6 All your days you must never seek their peace or their prosperity.

smallest details of their lives.

**22:19** "A hundred shekels of silver" – a little more than 1 kilogram.

**22:21-25** Lev 18:24-30; 20:10.

**22:29** "Fifty shekels of silver" – about 0.6 kilogram.

**22:30** Lev 18:8; 20:11; 1 Cor 5:1.

**23:1** The people in that region and time sometimes mutilated themselves for their gods. This instruction was probably aimed at preventing the introduction of this heathen practice into Israel.

**23:2** "One born of an illegal union" – many Jewish scholars believe that the Hebrew here indicates a child born of an adulterous or incestuous relationship – a relationship contrary to the laws laid down in Leviticus

chapters 18 and 20. The consequences of such a relationship were to be suffered until the tenth generation (compare Ex 20:5; 34:7). By such a command God is showing how terrible such sin is in His sight.

**23:3,4** See Matt 25:41-46; Num 22:1-6. Failure to show ordinary kindness to the needy, and a desire to bring a curse on God's people are both very grievous sins in God's eyes. On sins of omission see Num 32:23; 1 Sam 12:23; Matt 25:24-27, 41-46; 1 Tim 5:8.

**23:5** This was a display of God's wonderful working on behalf of His people. See note at Gen 50:20.

**23:6** This was commanded in this specific case because God was working out His

7 You must not despise an Edomite, for he *is* your brother. You must not despise an Egyptian, because you were a foreigner in his land. 8 The third generation of children who are born to them may enter the congregation of the LORD.

9 When the army goes out against your enemies, then keep yourselves from every wicked thing. 10 If there is any man among you who is not clean because of uncleanness that happens to him at night, then he must go outside the camp. *That day* he must not come into the camp. 11 But it shall be *like this*: when evening comes, he must wash *himself* with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp *again*.

12 Also you must have a place outside the camp where you go *to relieve yourselves*, 13 and you must have a spade with your equipment and it shall be, when you relieve yourself outside, you must dig *a hole* with it, and turn back and cover your excrement; 14 for the LORD your God walks about in your camp to protect you, and to deliver your enemies to you. Therefore your camp must be holy, so that he does not see any unclean thing among you and turn away from you.

15 You must not hand over to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you; 16 he shall live with you, among you, in the place he chooses inside one of your gates, wherever it pleases him most. You must not oppress him.

17 There must be no daughter of Israel who is a temple prostitute, or a son of Israel who is a temple prostitute. 18 You must not bring the earnings of a prostitute or the earnings of a dog into the house of the LORD your God for any vow; for both of these are abominations to the LORD your God.

19 You must not lend *anything* on interest to your brother, interest on money, interest on food items, interest on anything that is lent on interest. 20 You may lend on interest to a foreigner, but you must not lend on interest to your brother; so that the LORD your God may bless you in all that you put your hand to in the land which you are going to possess.

21 When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you must not be slow to pay it. *If you are*, the LORD your God will surely require it from you, and you will be *guilty* of sin. 22 But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be *guilty* of sin. 23 You must be careful to do according to what goes out of your lips, a voluntary offering, just as you have vowed to the LORD your God, which you have promised with your mouth.

24 When you enter your neighbour's vineyard, then you may eat grapes as you wish until you are satisfied, but you must not put *any* in your container. 25 When you enter the standing grain of your neighbour, then you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you must not put a sickle to your neighbour's standing grain.

**24** When a man takes a woman and marries her, and it so happens that she is not pleasing in his eyes, because he has found something indecent in her, then let him write her a divorce certificate, give *it* into her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she has left his house, she may go and become another man's *wife*. 3 And *if* this other husband hates her and writes her a divorce certificate, gives *it* into her hand and sends her out of his house, or if this other husband, who took her *as* his wife, dies, 4 her former husband, who sent her away, must not take her again as his wife, after she is defiled; for that *is* an abomination to the LORD; and you must not cause the land to sin, which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

5 When a man has taken a new wife, he must not go out to war, and he must not have any *public* duty laid on him; but he is to be free at home for one year and give happiness to his wife whom he has married.

6 No man is to take the upper or lower millstone as a pledge; for he is taking *a man's* life as a pledge.

7 If a man is discovered kidnapping any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and making him a slave or selling him, then that kidnapper shall die;

justice toward a sinful people.

**23:7** Gen 25:24-26.

**23:10,11** Lev 15:16.

**23:14** Lev 26:11,12; 2 Cor 6:16 - 7:1.

**23:17** This was a practice among the nations in that area and time which did not know the true God.

**23:18** "A dog" - a male prostitute.

**23:19,20** Loans to foreigners were probably business deals and interest could rightly be charged. But loans to fellow countrymen were loans to the poor who could not afford to pay interest, so none should be charged them. (Note also at 15:3).

**23:21,23** Num 30:1,2; Ps 61:8; Eccl 5:4,5.

**23:24,25** Matt 12:1; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:1.

**24:1** Matt 5:31,32; 19:7-9; Mark 10:4-9; 1 Cor 7:12-16. God did not command men to divorce their wives for any reason, but permitted it "because of the hardness of their hearts." But He did not permit it for each and every reason that might occur to a husband, and He insisted that a husband should not abruptly send away his wife, but give her a bill of divorce. This instruction was to correct abuses people were already guilty of, and to restrain men in this matter of quick and easy divorce. Divorce was not God's plan for mankind. See Mal 2:16.

**24:4** Jer 3:1.

**24:5** 20:7.

**24:7** Ex 21:16.

and you shall purge evil from among you.

8 Be careful about the plague of leprosy, so that you diligently observe and do according to all that the priests the Levites teach you. You must be careful to do just as I commanded them. 9 Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way, after you had come out of Egypt.

10 When you lend something to your brother you must not go into his house to take his pledge. 11 You must stand outside, and the man to whom you are giving a loan shall bring the pledge outside to you. 12 And if the man *is* poor, you must not sleep with his pledge *in your house*; 13 at sunset you must certainly hand the pledge back to him, so that he may sleep in his own garment, and bless you. And this will be righteousness for you in the sight of the LORD your God.

14 You must not oppress a hired servant *who is* poor and needy, *whether he is* of your brethren, or of your foreigners who *are* in your land inside your gates. 15 You must give *him* his wages on his *work* day, before the sun sets on it; for he *is* poor, and sets his heart on it. Otherwise he may cry out against you to the LORD, and you will be *guilty* of sin.

16 Fathers must not be put to death for *their* children, and children must not be put to death for *their* fathers; each man shall be put to death for his own sin.

17 You must not pervert justice in regard to foreigners, *or* to the fatherless; and you must not take a widow's garment as a pledge. 18 But you must remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you there. Therefore I command you to do this thing.

19 When you cut your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you must not go back to get it; it shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat your olive tree, you must not go over the boughs again. *What remains* shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean *it* afterwards; it shall be for the foreigner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. 22 And you must remember that you were a slave

in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.

**25** If there is a controversy between men, and they come for judgment, *the judges* are to decide *between* them, and they are to justify the righteous and condemn the guilty. 2 Then it shall be *like this*: if the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall have him lie down, and be beaten in his presence, with a certain number *of lashes* in accordance with his fault. 3 He may give him forty lashes, but must not exceed *that*. If he exceeds *that* and beats him with more lashes than these, then your brother might seem degraded to you.

4 You must not muzzle the ox when he tramples out *the grain*.

5 If brothers live together, and one of them dies and has no child, the wife of the dead one must not go out to marry a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. 6 And it shall come about *that* the firstborn whom she bears shall carry the name of his dead brother, so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

7 And if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go out to the gate to the elders, and say, "My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name for his brother in Israel. He will not perform the duty of my husband's brother." 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak to him; and if he stands firm and says, "I do not want to marry her," 9 then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and shall answer and say, "So shall it be done to that man who will not build up his brother's house." 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, "The house of him who has a removed sandal."

11 When men are fighting with each other, and the wife of one *of them* comes near to deliver her husband out of the hand of the one hitting him, and puts out her hand and seizes him by the private parts, 12 then you must cut off her hand; your eye must not pity *her*.

13 You must not have two different weights in

**24:8** Leviticus chapters 13 and 14. Note at Lev 13:1.

**24:9** Num 12:10. The disease referred to here was sometimes sent as a judgment from God (2 Kings 5:25-27).

**24:10-13** Ex 22:25-27.

**24:14** Lev 19:13; 25:35-43; Prov 14:31; Amos 4:1; 1 Tim 5:18.

**24:15** Lev 19:13; Jer 22:13; Jam 5:4.

**24:16** 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Chron 25:4; Jer 31:29,30; Ezek 18:20.

**24:17-22** Ex 23:9; Lev 19:33. The poor, the helpless, and the needy are much in God's heart.

**25:1,2** Prov 19:29; Luke 12:48.

**25:3** 2 Cor 11:24.

**25:4** Prov 12:10; 1 Cor 9:9-11; 1 Tim 5:17,18.

**25:5,6** Ruth 4:5,10; Matt 22:24.

**25:7-10** Ruth 4:5,6.

**25:13-16** Lev 19:35-37; Prov 11:1; 20:3. God hates all such crookedness.

your bag, a large and a small. 14 You must not have two different measures in your house, a large and a small. 15 *But* you must have a perfect and just weight; you must have a perfect and just measure, so that you may live a long time in the land which the LORD your God gives you. 16 For everyone who does such things, *and* everyone who acts unjustly, *is* an abomination to the LORD your God.

17 Remember what Amalek did to you along the way, when you had come out of Egypt; 18 how he met you along the way and attacked those of you lagging behind in the rear, all *who were* faint and weary; and he did not fear God. 19 Therefore it must be like this when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess it: blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!

**26** And it must be like this when you *have* come in to the land which the LORD your God gives you *as* an inheritance, and possess it and live in it: 2 take some of the first of all the produce of the ground which you bring in from your land that the LORD your God gives you, and put *it* in a basket and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses to put his name there. 3 And go to the priest who will be *there* in those days, and say to him, "I declare today to the LORD your God, that I have come to the country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us." 4 And the priest shall take the basket from your hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. 5 And you shall speak and say before the LORD your God, "My father *was* a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt, and stayed there with a few *persons* and there became a great, strong and populous nation. 6 And the Egyptians mistreated us and afflicted us and imposed hard labour on us. 7 And when we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction and our labour and our oppression, 8 and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror, and with signs and with

wonders. 9 And he has brought us into this place, and has given us this land, a land that flows with milk and honey. 10 And now, see, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which you, O LORD, have given me." And you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship in the presence of the LORD your God; 11 and you shall rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD your God has given to you, and to your household, you, and the Levite, and the foreigner who *is* among you.

12 When you have finished tithing all the tithes of your produce in the third year, *which is* the year of tithing, and have given it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat inside your gates and be satisfied, 13 then you shall say before the LORD your God, "I have brought the consecrated things from *my* house, and given them to the Levite, and to the foreigner, to the fatherless, and to the widow, in accordance with all your commandments which you have commanded me. I have not broken your commandments, and I have not forgotten them. 14 I have not eaten *any* of the *consecrated things* in my *time of* mourning, and I have not taken away *any* of them for any unclean use or given any of them for the dead, but I have listened to the voice of the LORD my God *and* have done everything just as you have commanded me. 15 Look down from your holy dwelling place, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the land which you have given us, just as you swore to our fathers, a land that flows with milk and honey."

16 This day the LORD your God has commanded you to do *according to* these statutes and judgments. Therefore you must keep and do *according to* them with all your heart and with all your soul. 17 Today you have declared that the LORD is your God, and that you will walk in his ways and keep his statutes and his commandments and his judgments, and listen to his voice. 18 And today the LORD has declared that you are his special people, just as he promised you, and that *you* must keep all his commandments, 19 and that he will set you high in praise, and in name and in honour above all nations which he has made, and that you must be a holy people for the LORD your God, just as he has said.

**25:17** Ex 17:8-16.

**25:18** Ps 36:1; Rom 3:18. The fear of God is a barrier to evil which Amalek did not have. See notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**25:19** 1 Sam 15:1-3. Note at Lev 18:24.

**26:2** Ex 22:29; 23:16,19; Num 18:13; Prov 12:5.

**26:5** "Aramean" - Jacob's mother came from Aram (Gen 24:10; 25:20), and he himself lived there 20 years (Gen 31:41).

"Into Egypt" - Gen 46:1-4.

**26:6,7** Ex 1:8-11; 2:23-25; 3:9.

**26:8** Ex 13:17 - 14:31.

**26:12** Lev 27:30; Num 18:24; Deut 14:28,29.

**26:15** God could justly bless the people and the land only when He saw their righteous behavior.

**26:17** Heb 10:35.

**26:18** Ex 6:7; 19:5; Deut 4:20; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9.

**26:19** 4:7,8; 28:1.

**27** And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, "Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. 2 And this must be *done* on the day you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God gives you: you shall set up large stones for yourselves, and coat them with plaster; 3 and when you have crossed over you shall write on them all the words of this law, so that you may go on into the land which the LORD your God gives you, a land that flows with milk and honey, just as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you. 4 Therefore this must be *done* when you have gone over the Jordan: set up these stones, which I command you today, on mount Ebal. And you must cover them with plaster. 5 And there you must build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones. You must not use *any* iron *tool* on them. 6 You shall build the altar for the LORD your God out of uncut stones, and on it you shall offer burnt offerings to the LORD your God. 7 And you shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there and rejoice before the LORD your God. 8 And you shall write very clearly on the stones all the words of this law."

9 And Moses and the priests the Levites spoke to all Israel, saying, "Be silent and listen, O Israel. Today you have become the people of the LORD your God. 10 Therefore you must obey the voice of the LORD your God, and act according to his commandments and his statutes, which I command you this day."

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying,

12 When you have gone over the Jordan, these *tribes* shall stand on mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Joseph and Benjamin; 13 and these shall stand on mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

14 And the Levites shall speak, and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice,

15 "Cursed *is* the man who makes *any* idol or

cast metal image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of a craftsman, and puts *it* in a secret place." And all the people shall answer and say, "Amen."

16 "Cursed *is* the one who dishonours his father or his mother." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

17 "Cursed *is* the one who moves his neighbour's landmark." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

18 "Cursed *is* the one who makes the blind wander out of the way." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

19 "Cursed *is* the one who perverts justice for the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

20 "Cursed *is* the one who lies with his father's wife, because he is uncovering his father's skirt." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

21 "Cursed *is* the one who lies with any kind of animal." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

22 "Cursed *is* the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

23 "Cursed *is* the one who lies with his mother-in-law." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

24 "Cursed *is* the one who strikes down his neighbour secretly." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

25 "Cursed *is* the one who takes a bribe to kill an innocent person." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

26 "Cursed *is* the one who does not uphold *all* the words of this law to do them." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

**28** And this will happen if you listen diligently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command you this day: the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth, 2 and all these blessings will come on you, and overtake you, if you will listen to the voice of the LORD your God.

**27:2-4** Josh 8:30-32.

**27:5** Ex 20:25.

**27:12** Josh 8:33-35.

**27:15** 4:16,23; Ex 20:4,23; 34:17; Lev 19:4; 26:1; Isa 44:9.

"Amen" – this comes from a Hebrew word meaning sure and faithful.

**27:16** 5:16; Ex 20:12; 21:17; Lev 19:3; 20:9.

**27:17** 19:14.

**27:18** Lev 19:14.

**27:19** Ex 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:33.

**27:20** 22:30; Lev 18:8; 20:11; 1 Cor 5:1.

**27:21** Ex 22:19; Lev 18:23; 20:15.

**27:22** Lev 18:19; 20:17.

**27:23** Lev 20:14.

**27:24** Ex 21:12; Lev 24:17; Num 35:30,31.

**27:25** 10:17; Ex 23:7.

**27:26** Ps 119:21; Jer 11:3,4; Gal 3:10. Observe in this list that the curse on idolatry comes first. Notice, too, that it was not necessary to break all the commands of God to bring a curse on oneself – just one transgression was enough (Jam 2:10).

**28:1,2** "Blessings" – notes on Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1-3; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12; Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:9; Eph 1:3. God loves to bless people and always will when it is just and right to do so. But observe the word "if." The promises which follow were conditional, based on the obedience of the people.



3 You *will be* blessed in the city, and blessed in the field.

4 The offspring of your body *will be* blessed, and the produce of your ground, and the offspring of your cattle, the issue of your cattle, and the flocks of your sheep.

5 Your basket and your kneading bowl *will be* blessed.

6 You *will be* blessed when you come in, and when you go out.

7 The LORD will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be struck down before your face. They will come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways.

8 The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses, and in all that you set your hand to, and he will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

9 The LORD will establish you as a holy people for himself, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. 10 And all people of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you. 11 And the LORD will give you abundant prosperity in goods, in the offspring of your body, and in the issue of your cattle, and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

12 The LORD will open to you his good treasure, the heavens to give the rain on your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hands. And you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow. 13 And the LORD will make you the head, and not the tail; and you will be at the top and not at the bottom, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you this

day, to observe and to do *them*. 14 And you must not go astray from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or *to* the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

15 But this will come about, if you will not listen to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command you this day: all these curses will come on you, and overtake you.

16 You *will be* cursed in the city, and cursed in the field.

17 Your basket and your kneading bowl *will be* cursed.

18 The offspring of your body *will be* cursed, and the produce of your land, the issue of your cattle and the your flocks of sheep.

19 You *will be* cursed when you come in, and when you go out.

20 The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke, in all that you put your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings, in which you have forsaken me. 21 The LORD will make the plague cling to you, until he has consumed you from off the land, where you go to possess it. 22 The LORD will strike you with wasting disease and with fever and with inflammation and with fierce heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew; and they will pursue you until you perish. 23 And your skies over your head will become brass and the ground under you *will be* iron. 24 The LORD will change the rain of your land into powder and dust; it will come down from the sky on you, until you are destroyed.

25 The LORD will cause you to be struck down before your enemies. You will go out one way

**28:3-14** To His people Israel, if they were obedient to Him, God promised all sorts of blessings, many of them material. In the Old Testament material possessions and property were regarded as a sign of God's blessing and it was often (but certainly not always) so. In the New Testament the blessings God promises are, for the most part, spiritual and eternal (Eph 1:3. Compare these blessings here in Deuteronomy with the words of the Lord Jesus in Matt 5:3-12 and Luke 6:20-26. See note at Gen 24:35).

Spiritual blessings are, of course, far more important than material ones. The Lord Jesus even said, "blessed are you poor for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20). It would be folly for believers living in this age to fall back on the Old Testament idea that material possessions or property is a sign of God's blessing. Many wealthy people (and some of them no doubt so-called Christians) are under the wrath of God because of their unbelief and disobedience (John 3:36; Jam 5:1-6). And many

poor people have eternal riches in Christ. Remember that Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan gives us types and pictures of spiritual realities.

**28:15-19** God does not wish to bring curses on people. Curses are always the results of man's sin, disobedience and rebellion. They are the outworking of God's justice (Gen 3:14-19). God will bless when He can, bring curses when He must. The very blessings He promised for obedience (vs 3-6) will be turned into curses by disobedience.

**28:20** God gave the law and all the instructions concerned with it through Moses. That is, Moses was His representative. Forsaking Moses and the teachings he gave would mean they were forsaking God.

**28:20-68** These terrible punishments were awaiting Israel and finally came upon them for their disobedience. The following references show this.

**28:21,22** Amos 4:9,10.

**28:23,24** 1 Kings 17:1,7.

**28:25** 2 Chron 29:8; Ezek 23:46-49.

against them, and flee seven ways before them. And you will become a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 And your carcass will be meat for all the birds of the air and for the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten *them* away.

27 The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with scabs and with the itch, from which you will not be healed. 28 The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and heart bewilderment. 29 And you will grope about at noon, just as the blind grope in darkness. And you will not prosper in your ways, but will be only oppressed and plundered continually, and there will be no one to save *you*.

30 You will be engaged to a woman, but another man will lie with her. You will build a house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but will not gather its grapes. 31 Your ox *will be* killed before your eyes, but you will not eat any of it. Your donkey *will be* forcibly taken away before your eyes, but it will not be restored to you. Your sheep *will be* given to your enemies, and you will have no one to rescue them. 32 Your sons and your daughters *will be* given to another people, and your eyes will look for them all day long and fail *with longing*, and your hands *will be* powerless. 33 A nation you do not know will eat up the produce of your land, and you will be only oppressed and crushed continually, 34 so that you will be driven mad because of the sights which your eyes will see. 35 The LORD will strike you on the knees and on the legs with miserable boils that cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

36 The LORD will cause you and your king whom you will set over you, to go to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known; and there you will serve other gods, *gods of wood and stone*. 37 And you will become a horror, a proverb and a byword, among all nations where the LORD drives you. 38 You will carry much seed out to the field, but will gather in *only* a little, because the locust will devour it. 39 You will plant vineyards and cultivate them, but will not drink *of* the wine or gather *the grapes*, because worms will eat them. 40 You will have olive trees throughout your whole territory, but you will not anoint *yourself* with the oil, because your olives will drop off. 41 You will have sons and daughters, but you will not enjoy them, because they will go into captivity. 42 The locust

will eat up all your trees and the produce of your land.

43 The foreigner who *is* among you will get very high above you, and you will come down very low. 44 He will lend to you, but you will not lend to him. He will be the head, and you will be the tail.

45 Moreover all these curses will come on you, and will pursue you, and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not listen to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded you. 46 And they will be a sign and a wonder on you, and on your descendants forever. 47 Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart in an abundance of all *things*, 48 therefore you will serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and in thirst and in nakedness and in a lack of all *things*. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you.

49 The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose tongue you will not understand, 50 a nation of fierce countenance, which will have no respect for the old person or show pity to the young. 51 And he will eat the offspring of your livestock and the produce of your land until you are destroyed. He will not leave you either grain, wine or oil, *or* the increase of your cattle or your flocks of sheep, until he has destroyed you. 52 And he will besiege you in all your gates until your high fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout your whole land. He will besiege you in all your gates throughout your whole land which the LORD your God has given you.

53 And you will eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and in the dire straits with which your enemies will distress you. 54 *So* the man *who is* refined and very delicate among you will give hostile looks at his brother, and at the wife of his bosom, and at the rest of his children who remain, 55 so that he will not give any of them any of the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because nothing is left to him in the siege and in the dire straits with which your enemies will oppress you in all your gates. 56 The refined and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole

**28:26** Jer 34:20.

**28:30** Jer 8:10; Amos 4:11.

**28:33** Jer 5:15.

**28:36** 2 Kings 17:4,6; 24:12,14; 25:7,11; 2 Chron 36:1-21; Jer 39:1-9.

**28:37** 1 Kings 9:7,8; Jer 19:8; 24:9; 29:18.

**28:38** Isa 5:10; Joel 1:4; Mic 6:15.

**28:48** Lam 4:4-6; Jer 28:13,14.

**28:49** Isa 5:26-30; 7:18-20; Jer 5:15; 6:22,23; Lam 4:19.

**28:52-57** 2 Kings 6:28,29; Lam 2:20; 4:10.

of her foot on the ground because of delicateness and refinement, will give hostile looks at the husband of her bosom, and at her son and at her daughter, 57 and at the afterbirth that comes from her, and at her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly because of the lack of all *things* in the siege and in the dire straits with which your enemy will oppress you in your gates.

58 If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, so that you may fear this glorious and awe-inspiring name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, 59 then the LORD will bring plagues on you and plagues on your offspring *that are* extraordinary, great plagues that last a long time, and severe sicknesses that last a long time. 60 Moreover he will bring on you all the diseases of Egypt, which you were afraid of, and they will cling to you. 61 Also the LORD will bring on you every sickness and every plague which *is* not written in the book of this law, until you are destroyed. 62 And you will be left few in number, when once you were as many as the stars of the sky, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. 63 And it will come about *that* just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and to increase your numbers, so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you and to bring you to nothing. And you will be torn from the land which you are going to possess.

64 And the LORD will scatter you among all people, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you will serve other gods which neither you nor your fathers have known, *gods of* wood and stone. 65 And among these nations you will find no ease, and the sole of your foot will have no rest; but the LORD will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and sorrow of mind; 66 and your life will hang in suspense before you, and you will be afraid day and night, and your life will have no assurance. 67 In the morning you will say, "Would God it were evening!" And at evening you

will say, "Would God it were morning!" Because you will be afraid from the fear of your heart and from the sights which your eyes will see. 68 And the LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I spoke to you, "You will never see it again", and there you will offer to sell yourselves to your enemies as male and female slaves, and no one will buy *you*."

**29** These *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

2 And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, 3 the great trials, the signs, and those great miracles which your eyes have seen.

4 Yet even to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand and eyes to see and ears to hear.

5 And I led you forty years in the desert. Your clothes did not become old on you, and your shoes did not become old on your feet. 6 You did not eat bread, and you did not drink wine or strong drink, so that you might know that I *am* the LORD your God.

7 And when you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us to battle, and we struck them down, 8 and took their land, and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh.

9 Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, so that you may prosper in all that you do. 10 Today all of you stand before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, *with* all the men of Israel, 11 your little ones, your wives, and your foreigners who *are* in your camp, from those who

**28:58** With what care we should use the glorious and fearful name of God! Compare Ex 20:7.

**28:59-61** God Himself sometimes sends sickness as punishment (v 27; Ex 9:9; Deut 7:15).

**28:62** Ezra 2:1,64; Neh 7:4; etc.

**28:63** Their evil would become so ripe for judgment that God would delight in fulfilling justice in their destruction! A similar idea is found in Prov 1:24-26.

**28:64** 2 Kings 17:6; 25:1-4,8-11.

**28:65** Lam 1:3; psalm 137. God brought all these things upon Israel because they deserved them, and would not repent and turn to God who could bless them and rescue them from calamity. Notice vs 20,45,47,

58,62. By these disasters God was teaching that unbelief and disobedience are terrible sins which justice must punish. We have the same teaching in the New Testament (John 3:36; 2 Thess 1:5-9; 2 Pet 2:9-13; Rev 15:1,3; 16:5-7; 21:8).

**29:1** God wanted this new generation to make a new beginning as they face the promised land, so He renews the covenant with them which He had made at Sinai (Exodus chapter 19).

**29:4** Isa 29:10; Rom 11:8. The reason for this was their unbelief and rebelliousness.

**29:6** 8:3.

**29:7** Num 21:21-24,33,35.

**29:8** Num 32:32,33.

**29:9** 4:6.

cut your wood to those who draw your water, 12 so that you should enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, and into his oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today, 13 that he may establish you today as a people for himself, and *that* he may be God to you, as he has said to you, and as he has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 14 And I do not make this covenant and this oath just with you, 15 but *both* with *the one* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, and with *the one* who is not here with us today.

16 For you know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the nations which you came through. 17 And you saw their abominations and their idols of wood and stone, silver and gold, which *were* among them. 18 If there should be among you man or woman or family or tribe whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, if there should be among you a root that bears gall and bitterness, 19 and when he hears the words of this curse, it so happens that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, "I will have peace even though I walk according to the imagination of my heart to add drunkenness to thirst," 20 the LORD will not spare him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will burn against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book will rest on him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven. 21 And the LORD will single him out for disaster from all the tribes of Israel, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.

22 And the coming generation of your children who will rise up after you, and the foreigner who will come from a distant land, will speak out when they see the plagues of that land and the

sicknesses which the LORD has brought on it, 23 *and that* the whole of its land *has become* sulfur and salt *and* burning, *that it* is not sown and does not produce, and that no grass grows on it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger and in his wrath, 24 then all nations will say, "Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this great burning anger?"

25 Then men will say, "Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. 26 For they went and served other gods and worshipped them, gods whom they did not know and *whom* he had not given to them. 27 And the anger of the LORD burned against this land to bring on it all the curses that are written in this book. 28 And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger and in wrath and in great indignation, and drove them into another land, as *it is* this day."

29 The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, so that we may do all the words of this law.

**30** And this *is what* will happen: when all these things have come on you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, 2 and turn back to the LORD your God, and you and your children obey his voice in accordance with all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 then the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity and have compassion on you, and will return and gather you from all the nations, where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 If

**29:12,13** The covenant was that He would be their God and they would be His people (Ex 6:6,7). Now believers in Christ have this greatest of all privileges and blessings (2 Cor 6:16; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9,10).

**29:18** 32:32. Idolatry and worship of gods other than the Creator Jehovah are bitter poison.

**29:19-21** The warning here is against the person who knows the curse of God on idolatry and false worship and yet arrogantly, presumptuously engages in it, knowing he is acting against God (1 Sam 2:25; 2 Chron 36:16; Prov 1:24-31; 29:1).

**29:22,23** Isa 1:7; 34:9; 64:11; Jer 17:6; Zeph 2:9.

**29:24** 1 Kings 9:8; Jer 22:8.

**29:25** 2 Kings 17:9-23; 2 Chron 36:13-21.

**29:27** Dan 9:11.

**29:28** 2 Chron 7:20; Ps 52:5; Prov 2:22; Ezek 19:12,13. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18.

**29:29** Acts 1:7. There are many things God has not yet revealed. We must leave those mysteries to Him. He has revealed all we need to know on this earth to believe Him, know Him, obey Him, serve Him, love Him, and be prepared to live with Him forever. Let us occupy ourselves with these matters. Compare Josh 15:15; 17:8; 1 Cor 2:9,10; 2 Tim 3:16,17.

**30:1** God sees the future and knew exactly what was going to happen to Israel (31:16-18; Isa 46:9,10; 48:3).

**30:2** God also knew that eventually they would turn to Him again (4:29,30).

**30:3** "Will bring you back from captivity" – or it could be translated "will restore your well-being."

**30:3-5** Isa 43:6; 48:20; 62:11; Jer 29:11-14; 32:37; Ezek 34:13. There was a partial fulfillment of this in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 2:1; Neh 7:6). The people remained in the land until 70 A.D., at

any of you have been driven out to the end of the heavens, the LORD your God will gather you from there, and bring you from there. 5 And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you will possess it; and he will do you good and make you more numerous than your fathers. 6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your offspring, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. 7 And the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.

8 And you will return and obey the voice of the LORD and obey all his commandments which I command you this day. 9 And the LORD your God will make you prosperous in every work of your hand, in the offspring of your body, and in the offspring of your cattle, and in the produce of your land, for good; for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as he rejoiced over your fathers, 10 if you will listen to the voice of the LORD your God to keep his commandments and his statutes *which are* written in this book of the law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

11 For this command which I give you this day *is* not hidden from you, and it is not far off. 12 It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?" 13 Neither *is* it beyond the sea, so that you should say, "Who will cross the sea for us and bring it to us, so that we may hear it and do it?" 14 But the word *is* very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

15 See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and disaster, 16 in that I command you this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, so that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land where you going to possess it.

17 But if your heart turns away so that you do

not hear, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, 18 I declare to you this day, that you will surely perish, *and that* you will not have a long life in the land which you are going to possess when you cross the Jordan.

19 Today I call heaven and earth to witness against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore choose life, so that both you and your offspring may live, 20 so that you may love the LORD your God *and* that you may obey his voice and that you may cling to him. For he *is* your life and the length of your days, so that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give them.

**31** And Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. 2 And he said to them, Today I am a hundred and twenty years old. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the LORD has said to me, "You will not cross this Jordan. 3 The LORD your God will go over before you, *and* he will destroy these nations from before you, and you will possess their *territories*. And Joshua will go over before you, just as the LORD has said. 4 And the LORD will do to them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed, and to their land. 5 And the LORD will deliver them up in your sight so that you may treat them in accordance with all the commandments which I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified of them, because the LORD your God *is* the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.

7 And Moses summoned Joshua, and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD swore to their fathers to give them. And you will enable them to inherit it. 8 And the LORD *is* the one who goes before you; he will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not be afraid or be dismayed."

9 And Moses wrote down this law and delivered

which time the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and scattered Israel once again. This was in accordance with the prophecy of Christ in Luke 21:24. The prophets spoke of a future restoration of Israel which would be permanent (Isa 60:21; Ezek 37:25; Amos 9:14,15). **30:6** 10:16. Compare Heb 10:16.

"Circumcise your hearts" - 10:16; Jer 4:4 (note); Acts 7:51.

**30:7** 28:16-20.

**30:9** Jer 31:27,28.

**30:11-14** Rom 10:6-8. They alone of all the peoples on earth had God delivering His word to them through His prophets.

**30:15** 11:26.

**30:16** 28:1,2.

**30:17,18** 4:25,26; 8:19.

**30:19,20** How solemnly God declared the truth to them! Life and death, blessing and the curse, were before them. The choice was theirs to make (compare Josh 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21; Ezek 18:31,32; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34,35; Rev 22:17). He pleads with them to choose life and blessing by choosing loving obedience. **31:2** 1:37; 3:27.

**31:3** 9:3; Num 27:18.

**31:6** 1:29; 7:18; 20:1,4; Josh 10:25; 1 Chron 22:13; Heb 13:5.

**31:8** Josh 1:5.

**31:9** Another very clear statement that Moses wrote down the law. See also Ex 24:4;



it to the priests the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. 10 And Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of *every* seven years, at the fixed time of the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which he chooses, you must read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12 Gather the people together, men, women and children, and your foreigner who is inside your gates, so that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and observe to obey all the words of this law, 13 and *that* their children, who have not known *anything*, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess."

14 And the LORD said to Moses, "Look, the day of your death is approaching. Call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, so that I may give him a commission." And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. 16 And the LORD said to Moses, "Look, you will lie down with your fathers, and this people will rise up and act the prostitute with the gods of the foreigners of the land where they are going to *be* among them, and will forsake me and break my covenant which I have made with them. 17 In that day my anger will burn against them, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them. And they will be consumed, and many calamities and troubles will come on them, so that they will say in that day, 'Haven't these calamities come on us because our God *is* not among us?' 18 And I will certainly hide my face in that day because of all the evils which they will have done in turning to other gods.

19 "Now therefore write down for yourselves this song, and teach it the children of Israel. Put it in their mouths, so that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. 20 For after I have brought them into the land which I swore to their fathers, *a land* that flows with milk and honey, and they have eaten and satisfied themselves and become fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and provoke me and break my covenant. 21 And it will come about, after many

calamities and troubles have come on them, that this song will be a witness to testify against them; for it will not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants. For I know their frame of mind which they are forming even now before I have brought them into the land which I promised on oath."

22 So Moses wrote down this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.

23 And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a commission, and said, Be strong and courageous, for you will take the children of Israel into the land which I promised to them on oath; and I will be with you.

24 And this took place when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book, until they were completed: 25 Moses commanded the Levites, who were the carriers of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, 26 Take this book of the law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, so that it may be there as a witness against you. 27 For I know your rebelliousness and your stubbornness. Look, today while I am still alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD; so how much more so after my death! 28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, so that I may speak these words in their hearing, and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29 For I know that after my death you will utterly corrupt *yourselves* and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and disaster will come on you in later days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, and provoke him to anger through the works of your hands.

30 And Moses spoke in the hearing of all the congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were finished.

**32** Listen, O heavens, and I will speak;  
and hear, O earth,  
the words of my mouth.

- 2 My teaching will drop like the rain,  
my speech will distill like the dew,  
like the fine rain on the tender grass,  
and like the showers on the grass,
- 3 because I will proclaim the name  
of the LORD.  
Ascribe greatness to our God.
- 4 *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect;  
for all his ways are just.

34:27; Num 33:2; John 5:46.

**31:11-13** Josh 8:34,35; 2 Kings 23:2; Neh 8:1-8. Note on fear at Gen 20:1.

**31:15** Ex 33:9.

**31:16-18** Isa 46:10.

**31:19** Seen in 32:1-43.

**31:20,21** Matt 9:4; John 2:24,25; 6:64; 13:11.

**31:24-26** Ex 25:10,11.

**31:27** 9:7,13,24.

**31:28** 4:26; 30:19; 32:1; Isa 1:2.

**32:1** Isa 1:2.

**32:2** Ps 72:6; Isa 55:10,11.

**32:3** Ex 33:19; 34:5,6. Proclaiming His name

means to speak of His nature and attributes.

**32:4** "Rock" - vs 15,18,30; 2 Sam 22:47;

- A God of truth and without iniquity,  
just and upright *is* he.
- 5 They have corrupted themselves;  
*this is* their defect.  
*They are* not his children.  
*They are* a perverse and crooked  
generation.
- 6 Is this the way you repay the LORD,  
O foolish and unwise people?  
*Is* he not your father *who* has bought you?  
Has he not made you and established you?
- 7 Remember the days of old;  
consider the years, the many generations.  
Ask your father, and he will inform you.  
*Ask* your elders, and they will tell you.
- 8 When the Most High gave to the  
nations their inheritance,  
when he separated the sons of Adam,  
he set the boundaries of the peoples  
according to the number of the  
children of Israel.
- 9 For the LORD's portion *is* his people.  
Jacob is his allotted inheritance.
- 10 He found him in a desert land,  
and in the waste and howling wilderness.  
He led him about, he instructed him,  
he kept him as the apple of his eye.
- 11 As an eagle stirs up her nest,  
flutters over her young,  
spreads out her wings, takes them,  
carries them on her wings,
- 12 *so* the LORD alone lead him,  
and no foreign god *was* with him.

- 13 He made him ride on the high places  
of the earth,  
so that he might eat the produce  
of the fields;  
and he made him to suck honey  
from the rock,  
and *fed him with* oil from the flinty rock,  
14 cattle butter, and sheep's milk,  
with the fat of lambs,  
and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats,  
with the fat of kernels of wheat.  
And you drank the pure blood of the grape.
- 15 But Jeshurun became fat, and kicked.  
You have become fat,  
you have grown thick,  
you are covered *with fatness*.  
Then he forsook God *who* made him,  
and lightly regarded the Rock of  
his salvation.
- 16 They made him jealous with foreign *gods*,  
they provoked him to anger with  
abominations.
- 17 They sacrificed to demons, not to God;  
to gods whom they did not know,  
to new gods *that* came up recently,  
whom your fathers did not fear.
- 18 You ignored the Rock *who* gave you birth,  
and forgot God who formed you.
- 19 And when the LORD saw *this*,  
he abhorred them,  
because of the provocation of his sons,  
and of his daughters.
- 20 And he said, "I will hide my face from them.  
I will see what their end *will be*;

23:3; Ps 18:2,31; 28:1; 31:3; 42:9; 62:2; 71:3. In the Old Testament God is spoken of as a Rock about thirty times. The word suggests strength, refuge, unchangeableness, a solid foundation for the faith of God's people, and a refuge from His anger against sin.

This name for God was a favorite one in the Psalms. The writers there called God "the Rock of my salvation" (Ps 95:1), "the Rock of my refuge" (Ps 94:22), "the Rock of my strength" (Ps 62:7), "the Rock of my heart" (the Hebrew of Ps 73:26 – note). In the New Testament Christ is also called "rock" (1 Cor 10:4; Ex 17:4-6), "stone", and chief "cornerstone" (Matt 21:42-44; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4,6).

"Perfect" – Ps 18:30; Matt 5:48.

"Just" – 2 Sam 22:31; Ps 18:30; 19:7; 145:17; Rev 15:3.

**32:5** The majority of the people, though called to be God's special people among all who lived on the earth, were not true believers and so individually not children of God. This was true also in the time of the Lord Jesus (Matt 17:17; John 8:42-45; Acts 2:40). This verse could also be translated

"Corrupt are they and not His children, a generation warped and twisted to their shame."

**32:6** As a nation God was their father who created them and brought them out of Egypt. But individually most of them neither trusted Him nor behaved as His children.

**32:8** Acts 17:26.

**32:9** 1 Sam 10:1; 1 Kings 8:51,53; Jer 10:16.

**32:10** Ps 17:8; Prov 7:2; Zech 2:8.

**32:11** Ex 19:4. In other words, He was teaching them to fly. Compare Isa 40:31.

**32:13** 8:8; Ps 81:16; Isa 33:16; 58:14; Hab 3:19.

**32:15** Jeshurun is a poetical name for Israel (33:5,26; Isa 44:2). The name means the upright or righteous one.

**32:16** Ps 78:58; 106:29. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**32:17** A very significant verse indicating that the gods other than the one true God, the Creator of the universe, are demons. See also Lev 17:7; 1 Cor 10:20. At the temptation of Christ Satan revealed that worship is what he desires (Matt 4:9,10).

**32:18** Here the nation is viewed collectively.

**32:19** Lev 26:30; Ps 106:40; Jer 44:21-23.

for they *are* a very perverse generation,  
children in whom is no faith.

- 21 They have made me jealous with *that*  
*which is* not God.

They have provoked me to anger  
with their vanities.

So I will make them jealous  
with *those* who are *not a people*.

I will provoke them to anger  
with a foolish nation.

- 22 For a fire has been kindled in my anger,  
and will burn to the realm of the dead,  
and will consume the earth with its produce,  
and set the foundations  
of the mountains on fire.

- 23 "I will heap disasters on them.

I will use up my arrows on them.

- 24 *They will* waste away with hunger,  
and be devoured with burning heat,  
and with bitter destruction.

I will also send the teeth of beasts on them,  
and the poison of the serpents of the dust.

- 25 The sword outside and terror inside  
will destroy  
both the young man and the virgin,  
the sucking infant *along* with the man  
of gray hairs.

- 26 I *almost* said *that* I would shatter  
them to pieces,  
I would cause the memory of them to  
cease from among men,

- 27 but I feared the provocation of the enemy,  
lest their adversaries should  
miscalculate and say,

'We *have* the upper hand,  
and the LORD has not done all this.'

- 28 For they are a nation lacking counsel,  
*there is no* understanding in them.

- 29 O that they were wise,  
that they understood this,  
*that* they would consider their final end!"

- 30 How could one chase a thousand,

and two put ten thousand to flight,  
unless their Rock had sold them,  
and the LORD had given them up?

- 31 For their rock *is* not as our Rock,  
as even our enemies themselves judge.

- 32 For their vine *is* from the vine of Sodom,  
and of the fields of Gomorrah.  
Their grapes *are* grapes of gall,  
their clusters *are* bitter.

- 33 Their wine *is* the poison of snakes  
and the cruel venom of cobras.

- 34 *The LORD* says "*Is* this not stored up  
with me,  
*and* sealed up in my treasures?

- 35 Vengeance *belongs* to me, and retribution.  
Their foot will slide in *due* time,  
because the day of their calamity  
*is* at hand,  
and the things that will come on them  
approach quickly."

- 36 For the LORD will judge his people  
and have compassion on his servants,  
when he sees that *their* power is gone,  
and *there is* no one left,  
slave or free.

- 37 And he will say, "Where *are* their gods,  
*their* rock in whom they trusted,

- 38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,  
*and* drank the wine of their drink offerings?  
Let them rise up and help you,  
*and be* your protection.

- 39 "See now that I, *I alone am* he,  
and *there is* no god with me.  
I kill, and I make alive;  
I wound, and I heal;  
and *there is* no one who can deliver  
out of my hand.

- 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven,  
and say, I live for ever.

- 41 If I sharpen my glittering sword,  
and my hand takes hold of judgment,  
I will take vengeance on my enemies,

**32:21** See notes on jealousy and idolatry  
at Ex 20:4-6, on anger at Num 25:3. See 1  
Kings 15:30; 16:13,26.

"People" – part of this verse is quoted in  
Rom 10:19.

**32:22** Ps 18:7,8; Isa 24:1-6; Lam 4:11.

"Realm of the dead" – in Hebrew "Sheol"  
– note at Gen 37:35.

**32:23** Ps 18:14; 45:5.

**32:24,25** 28:22,48; Ps 91:6; Lam 1:20.

**32:26,27** Ex 32:9-14.

**32:28,29** Isa 1:3; Jer 9:3,6; John 8:54,55;  
Titus 1:16.

**32:30** Lev 26:7,8.

**32:31** Verse 4; Ex 14:25.

**32:32** Gen 18:20,21; 19:1-11; Isa 1:9,10;

3:9; 13:19; Jer 23:14; 49:18; Ezek  
16:46-49; 2 Pet 2:6; Jude 7.

**32:33** 29:18; Ps 140:3; Rom 3:13.

**32:34** There is a place where the deeds of  
men are recorded and kept (Rev 20:12)

**32:35** Notes at Ex 21:23-25; Num 31:2,3;  
Ps 94:1; Nah 1:7; Rom 12:19; 2 Thess  
2:6-9; Heb 10:30,31.

**32:36** Ps 50:4; 135:14.

**32:37,38** Jud 10:14; 1 Kings 18:27;  
Jer 11:12.

**32:39** "With me" – v 12; Isa 41:4; 43:10;  
45:5.

"Make alive" – 1 Sam 2:6; Ps 68:20.

"My hand" – Ps 50:22; Dan 4:35.

**32:41,42** Verse 35; Isa 34:6-8; Jer 12:12;

and will repay those who hate me.

42 I will make my arrows drunk with blood,  
and my sword will devour flesh,  
the blood of the slain and of the captives,  
and the heads of the leaders of the enemy."

43 Rejoice, O you nations, *with his* people;  
for he will avenge the blood of his servants,  
and will take vengeance on his adversaries,  
and be merciful to his land, *and* to his people.

44 And Moses came and spoke all the words of  
this song in the hearing of the people, he, and  
Joshua the son of Nun. 45 And Moses finished  
speaking all these words to all Israel, 46 and said  
to them, Take to your hearts all the words which I  
solemnly declare among you today, which you will  
command your children to be careful to do, all the  
words of this law. 47 For this *is* not an empty word  
for you; because it *is* your life; and through this  
word you will live long in the land, which you will  
cross the Jordan to possess.

48 And that same day the LORD spoke to Moses,  
saying, 49 "Go up into this mountain *range of*  
Abarim, to mount Nebo, which is in the land of  
Moab, opposite Jericho, and see the land of  
Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a  
possession. 50 And *you will* die on the mountain  
which you climb, and be gathered to your people,  
just as Aaron your brother died in mount Hor and  
was gathered to his people; 51 because *both of*  
you were unfaithful to me among the children of  
Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh in the desert  
of Zin, because you did not show me to be holy in  
the midst of the children of Israel. 52 So you will  
see the land before *you*, but you will not go there,  
to the land which I give to the children of Israel."

**33** And this *is* the blessing with which Moses  
the man of God blessed the children of  
Israel before his death. 2 And he said,

The LORD came from Sinai,  
and dawned on them from Seir;  
he shone forth from mount Paran,

46:10,14; 50:28-32; Rev 19:15-21.  
**32:43** Isa 1:24,25; Rev 6:10; 19:2.  
**32:46** 4:9; Eph 6:4.  
**32:47** 8:3; 30:20; Matt 4:4; John 6:63,68.  
**32:48-52** Num 20:8-12.  
**33:1** Josh 14:6; Ps 90 (title). See also  
1 Kings 12:22; 2 Kings 4:9; 1 Tim  
6:11; 2 Tim 3:17. Moses now gives  
prophetic blessings for the people as  
Isaac did for his sons and Jacob did  
for the twelve tribes (Gen 27:27-29,  
39-40; 49:1-28).  
**33:2** Ex 19:18,20; Ps 68:17; Jud 5:4;  
Num 10:12; Hab 3:3; Dan 7:10; Acts  
7:53; Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2.  
**33:3** "Loved" - 4:37; 7:7,8; Mal 1:2;

and he came with ten thousands holy ones.  
From his right hand a fiery law  
*went out* for them.

3 Yes, he loved the people.  
All his saints *are* in your hand,  
and they sit at your feet,  
*and* receive of your words.  
4 Moses commanded us a law,  
the inheritance of the congregation  
of Jacob.  
5 And *the LORD* was king in Jeshurun,  
when the heads of the people  
*and* the tribes of Israel  
were gathered together.  
6 He said, Let Reuben live, and not die,  
nor his men be few.  
7 And this *is* what he said of Judah,  
Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah,  
and bring him to his people.  
Let his hands be sufficient for him,  
and be a help *to him* from his enemies.

8 And of Levi he said,  
*Let* your Thummim and your Urim *be*  
with your holy one, whom you  
proved at Massah,  
*and with* whom you contended at the  
waters of Meribah.  
9 He said of his father and of his mother,  
"I did not consider them,"  
and he did not acknowledge his  
brothers or regard his own children;  
for they have observed your word,  
and kept your covenant.  
10 They will teach Jacob your judgments,  
and Israel your law.  
They will put incense before you,  
and whole burnt sacrifices on your altar.  
11 Bless, LORD, his abilities,  
and accept the work of his hands.  
Strike through the loins of those who  
rise up against him,  
and of those who hate him,

John 3:16; 1 John 4:8.  
"Your hand" - John 10:28,29; Rev  
1:16,20.  
**33:4** This verse may indicate that someone  
else, possibly Joshua, wrote down these  
words after Moses' death.  
**33:5** Note on Jeshurun at 32:15.  
**33:6** Gen 49:3,4.  
**33:7** Gen 49:8-12.  
**33:8** Note at Ex 28:30. "Meribah" - Ex 17:7;  
Num 20:13,24.  
**33:9** Ex 32:27-29; Matt 10:34-38; Luke  
14:26. The Levites put God first in a very  
difficult and trying time.  
**33:10** Lev 10:11; 16:12,13; Deut 31:9-13;  
Lev 1:7-13.

so that they do not rise up again.

- 12 *And of Benjamin he said,*  
The one the LORD loves will live  
in safety by him,  
*and the LORD* will shield him all day long;  
and he will live between his shoulders.
- 13 *And of Joseph he said,*  
May his land *be* blessed by the LORD  
with the precious things of heaven,  
with the dew, and with the deep that  
lies below,
- 14 *And with the precious fruits brought  
forth by the sun,*  
and with the choice produce of the months,
- 15 *And with the best things of the ancient  
mountains,*  
and with the precious things of the  
everlasting hills,
- 16 *And with the precious things of the  
earth and its fulness,*  
and *with* the good will of the One who  
dwelt in the bush.  
Let the *blessing* come on the head of  
Joseph,  
and on the crown of the head of the one  
who was separated from his brothers.
- 17 His glory *is like* the firstborn of his bull,  
and his horns are like the horns of the  
wild ox.  
With them he will push the people  
together to the ends of the earth.  
And they *are* the myriads of Ephraim,  
and they *are* the thousands of  
Manasseh.
- 18 *And of Zebulun he said,*  
Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out;  
and, Issachar, in your tents.
- 19 They will summon peoples to the mountain.  
There they will offer sacrifices of  
righteousness;  
for they will draw out the abundance of

the seas,  
and treasures hid in the sand.

- 20 *And of Gad he said,*  
Blessed *is* he who enlarges Gad.  
He lives like a lion, and tears the arm  
and the crown of the head.
- 21 *And he provided the first part for  
himself, because there, in the  
governor's portion,*  
*he was seated.*  
And he came with the leaders of the  
people;  
he executed the justice of the LORD,  
and his judgments with Israel.
- 22 *And of Dan he said,*  
Dan *is* a lion's cub;  
he will leap from Bashan.
- 23 *And of Naphtali he said,*  
O Naphtali, satisfied with favour,  
and full of the blessing of the LORD,  
possess the sea and the south.
- 24 *And of Asher he said,*  
Let Asher *be* blessed with children.  
Let him be acceptable to his brethren,  
and let him dip his foot in oil.
- 25 Your bolts *will be* iron and brass,  
and your strength *will be* as your days.
- 26 *There is* none like the God of Jeshurun,  
*who* rides in the heavens for your help,  
and in the sky in his majesty.
- 27 The eternal God *is your* refuge,  
and underneath *are* the everlasting arms;  
and he will drive out the enemy  
from before you, and will say,  
"Destroy *them!*"
- 28 So Israel will live in safety alone.  
The spring of Jacob *will be* in a land of  
corn and wine,  
and his heavens will drop down dew.
- 29 Happy are you, O Israel!

**33:12** Ex 28:12; Luke 15:5.

**33:13** Gen 49:22-26. Ephraim and Manasseh settled in some of the most fruitful areas of Israel.

**33:16** "Bush" - Ex 3:2,4.

**33:18** Gen 49:13-15.

**33:19** Ps 4:5; 51:19.

**33:20** Gen 49:19.

**33:21** Num 32:1-5. They came across the Jordan river to help the other tribes conquer Canaan (Josh 22:1-4).

**33:22** Gen 49:6.

**33:23** Gen 49:21. This tribe's land was to be south and west of the sea of Galilee.

**33:24,25** Gen 49:20.

**33:26** From this verse onwards not Asher only but all the tribes of Israel are meant.

Compare 10:14; Ps 68:33,34; 104:3; Hab 3:8.

**33:27** "Refuge" - v 12; Ps 90:1,2; 91:1. God is above (v 26) and around all men (Acts 17:28; Job 12:10; Dan 5:23). But this is true of God's people in a special sense (John 14:23; 17:21).

"Before you" - Ex 34:11; Josh 24:18; Eph 6:10-17; 2 Thess 1:6-8; Rev 6:9-11; 19:11-15. Believers now fight spiritual enemies. God Himself will deal both with them, and with all flesh and blood enemies as well at the proper time.

**33:28** Jer 23:6; John 10:28,29; 2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 1.

**33:29** Israel had the greatest privileges of any people in the world. See Rom 9:3-5.



Who *is* like you,  
O people saved by the LORD,  
who *is* the shield of your help and  
the sword of your majesty!  
And your enemies will be found liars to you,  
and you will trample on their high places.

**34** And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is opposite Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead, to Dan, 2 and all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh and all the land of Judah, as far as the western sea, 3 and the south and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar.

4 And the LORD said to him, "This *is* the land which I promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, I will give it to your offspring. I have enabled you to see *it* with your eyes, but you will not go over there."

5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there

in the land of Moab, in accordance with the word of the LORD. 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but to this day no man knows *the place* of his tomb. 7 And Moses *was* a hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eye was not dim, and his natural vigour had not abated. 8 And the children of Israel grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days; then the days of grieving *and* mourning for Moses were over.

9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. And the children of Israel listened to him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

10 And since then no prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11 in regard to all the signs and the wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, 12 and in regard to all that mighty power and all the great awe-inspiring *deeds* which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

**34:1** We don't know who wrote this final chapter. Possibly it was Joshua. Moses himself wrote all the rest – 31:9.  
**34:2** "Western" here means the Mediterranean Sea.  
**34:4** Gen 12:7; 26:3; 28:13.  
**34:6** God buried Him, possibly through the archangel Michael (see Jude 9). The tendency of fallen humanity is to glorify

and deify their great leaders and ancestors, and make their burial places into shrines. This may be the reason that God did not reveal Moses's burial place.  
**34:9** Num 27:18,23; Isa 11:2.  
"Spirit" – perhaps this refers to God's Spirit.  
**34:10-12** Ex 33:11; Num 12:8; Deut 18:15.

# JOSHUA

## Author:

According to Jewish tradition Joshua was the author of this book, except for 24:29-33. There is evidence in the book itself that points to Joshua's authorship. See 24:26. See the use of the word "we" in 5:1. Joshua came out of Egypt with Moses and spent 40 years with him and Israel in the desert. He was an experienced military leader (Ex 17:8-13), a man of faith and faithfulness (Num 14:6-9). The name Joshua means "Jehovah gives salvation" or "Jehovah gives victory."

## Date:

The invasion of Canaan took place probably about 1406 BC. Joshua wrote when most of the land had been taken, toward the end of his life.

## Themes:

God's people taking the land God had promised them, the way God gave them victory, and the lessons they learned in the battle for Canaan. This book has many spiritual lessons for believers now. Some, at least, of the events seen in it are pictures of our spiritual life and warfare. See the note at 1:17. Another theme in Joshua is the destruction of wicked peoples. See 6:21; 8:26; 10:28,35,37,39,40; etc. This was done at God's command. See Deut 7:1,2,16. And it was done under divine leadership (Josh 5:13-15). But was it just and right for God to destroy whole peoples? Certainly it was just and right. That is why God did it. Everything God does is just and right, and He is the one who is the proper judge of what is just and right, not sinful man. On the destruction of wicked people see notes at Gen 6:7; 15:16; Lev 18:24,25; Deut 13:12-18; Ps 47:2; 2 Thess 1:5-9; Rev 16:5-7. The inhabitants of Canaan practiced idolatry, the sacrifice of infants to idols, and sexual perversions in the name of their gods. They were extremely cruel and corrupt. Mingling with them would be disastrous for the people of Israel, whom God had chosen to worship Him and to proclaim the truth about Him. The sins of the peoples of Canaan were ripe for judgment, so God wisely and justly decided the time had come to destroy them.

Some key verses in this book are 1:3-9; 5:13-15; 21:43-45; 24:14,15.

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**1** Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came about that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying,

2 "Moses my servant is dead. Now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you, and all this people, to the land which I give to them, to the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot treads on, I have given to you, just as I said to Moses. 4 Your territory will be from the wilderness and this Lebanon to the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, to the great sea toward the sunset. 5 No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not fail you, or forsake you.

6 "Be strong and courageous; for you will cause this people to possess the land, which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, so that you may be careful to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This book of the law must not depart from your mouth, but you must meditate in it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you?

**1:1** "Death of Moses" – Deut 34:5. The book of Joshua continues the story of Israel where Deuteronomy left off. When one leader passed off the scene God raised up another. For the accomplishment of His purposes He was not dependent on any one man.

**1:2** "My servant" – Ex 14:31; Deut 34:5; Hab 3:5.

"Jordan" – marked the eastern boundary of Canaan.

"Give" – God had already given it to them by promise (v 6; Gen 12:6,7; 15:18-21; Ex 3:8). Now He was giving them the actual possession of it.

**1:3** Deut 11:24,25. God gave them the land but they had to occupy it.

**1:4** "Wilderness" – in the far south of the land.

"Euphrates" – in the far north.

"Hittites" – Ex 33:2; 34:11. The Hittites once occupied much of Canaan and in ancient times the whole land was sometimes called after them.

"Sea" – Mediterranean.

**1:5** "Stand" – Deut 7:24. In spiritual matters compare Luke 10:18,19; Jam 4:7.

"I will be with you" – vs 9,17; Gen 26:3; 39:2; Deut 31:8; Isa 7:14; Heb 13:5,6.

**1:6** "Strong and courageous" – two qualities very necessary in a leader. No doubt it was a matter of trembling to Joshua to be called to take the place of one of the greatest men in history, and to lead a nation into

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, and do not be dismayed; for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11 "Pass through the camp, and command the people, saying, Prepare food for yourselves; for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess."

12 And Joshua spoke to the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to half the tribe of Manasseh, saying, 13 "Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God has given you rest, and has given you this land. 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock, will remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but you, all the valiant warriors, must go armed before your brethren, and help them 15 until the LORD has given your brethren rest, just as *he has given* you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God gives them.' Then you shall return to enjoy the land of your possession, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrise."

16 And they answered Joshua, saying, "We will do all that you command us, and will go wherever you send us. 17 Just as we listened to Moses in all things, so we will listen to you. Only may the LORD

a strange land to conquer powerful enemies.

"Cause. . .to possess" – Joshua had already been chosen as Moses's successor (Deut 31:1-8). Here God confirms his call. It is God who must appoint leaders for His people. The initiative is His, and He will equip them for the task to which He calls them.

**1:7,8** For a leader obedience to God was more necessary than any other quality (Deut 8:1; 11:8). This is still true. The Book of the Law was the revelation God gave through Moses at Mt Sinai (Ex 20:1; 21:1; Lev 1:1; Deut 4:5-8). Moses had written down all God gave him to write – Ex 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Num 33:22; Deut 31:9. God's people had to give it the highest importance in their lives (Deut 6:6,7). That was the only way to victory and the enjoyment of God's blessings. Now we have God's full revelation in the Bible, and God's Word is of the utmost importance in the life of every believer (John 8:31,32; 14:24; Rom 15:4; Col 3:16; 2 Tim 3:16,17; Jam 1:22-25). Obedience to it is the only way to have success in the Christian life.

**1:9** God with us is the remedy for fear and discouragement (v 5; Deut 33:27; Ps 23:4; 27:1-3; 46:1-3; 2 Tim 4:16,17; Heb 13:5,6).

**1:10,11** A true leader obeys God's instructions and urges the people to obey them.

**1:12-18** Numbers chapter 32; Josh 22:1-4.

your God be with you, as he was with Moses. 18 Whoever rebels against your command, and will not listen to your words in all that you command him, he shall be put to death. Only be strong and courageous."

**1:18** They were right to insist that Joshua live in the presence and blessing of God. It is a risky thing to follow a leader out of touch with God.

The taking of Canaan by the people of Israel has many lessons for believers now, and the physical events involved in it are pictures of our spiritual walk and warfare. Consider the following:

(a) Canaan was the "promised land." God had given it to Israel and told them repeatedly that He had (note on v 2 above). It was their inheritance and they had a right to it. Now believers in Christ have been given a very precious thing – life in Christ and exceeding precious promises relating to it (2 Pet 1:4). They have spiritual possessions in Christ (Eph 1:3) which they have a right to claim and enjoy. These include victory over spiritual enemies and in all the circumstances of life (Rom 8:37), the fullness of God's Spirit (Eph 5:18), and similar blessings. Just as the giving of Canaan to Israel was all of grace so this life in Christ is all of grace (Eph 2:8-10).

(b) What was promised to Israel they had to claim and possess. Believers in Christ now must claim the blessings given them in Christ. Their success in the Christian life will depend in large measure on claiming the promises of God by faith. What God gives, men must take. Believers may claim many things from God, and fight for them, and possess and enjoy them. Though the words "faith" and "believe" are not found in Joshua, faith was at the very basis of what they did. If they had not believed that God had given them the land they would not have gone in to possess it. If they had not believed God had appointed Joshua they would not have followed him. If they had not had faith in God's instructions they would not have taken Jericho (see Heb 11:30). The relationship between faith and victory in the spiritual life now is made clear in the New Testament – Eph 6:16; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; Heb 6:12; 10:35,36; 1 Pet 5:9; 1 John 5:4,5. By faith we receive the empowering Holy Spirit (Gal 3:2,14); by faith we walk (2 Cor 5:7; Gal 3:11); by faith we fight (Eph 6:16; 1 Tim 6:12).

(c) There were mighty enemies opposing Israel and they were determined that Israel should not possess the land (for example see 11:1-5). Believers in Christ have enemies far stronger and more determined than the Canaanites (Eph 6:10-12). These enemies would, if they could, prevent us from claiming our possessions in the heavenly places.

(d) Because there were enemies Israel was required to fight. Being passive or lazy

**2** And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two spies secretly, saying, "Go view the land, and Jericho." And they went and entered the house of a prostitute, named Rahab, and lodged there.

2 And the king of Jericho was told, saying,

would have been ruinous. Believers now too are engaged in a warfare, whether they like it or not, but this warfare is spiritual (2 Cor 10:4; Eph 6:12; 1 Pet 5:8,9). To be passive is to be defeated.

(e) To enter into their inheritance Israel had to follow the leader God had appointed – Joshua. Believers now have a God-appointed leader whom they must follow or face certain defeat – Jesus. Joshua means "Jehovah saves." In Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the name became Iesus, with the same meaning. Jesus is our leader to glory, our captain in the battle of life (Heb 2:10; 12:1-3).

(f) For victory in Canaan certain qualities were very necessary to Israel – courage, strength, an obedient heart, and a mind always occupied with the word of God. These qualities are no less needed in the believer's spiritual warfare now.

(g) God gave Israel the promise of victory (1:5). He does so now to believers (John 8:31-36; 16:33; Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57).

(h) God promised Israel His continual presence, which indeed was the basis for their victory (1:5). So with us now (Matt 28:20; Heb 13:5,6).

(i) By overcoming the enemy Israel inherited the land and dwelt in it. Compare Rev 21:7.

(j) Taking the land was a process. It did not happen in a single day (11:18). Believers now do not immediately understand, claim, and enjoy all they have in Christ. See Paul's prayers in Eph 1:15-19; 3:14-19.

(k) Even when Joshua was an old man and much of Canaan was taken there was still much land to be possessed (13:1; 23:4,5). Now how little of our riches in Christ do most believers ever claim and enjoy in this life! There is more to come (Matt 25:31-34; 1 Pet 1:4).

**2:1** Shittim was east of the Jordan river in the plains of Moab. Jericho was a very ancient city eight kilometers west of the Jordan. It was a walled and fortified city which stood in the path of Israel's invasion route into Canaan. Like all of the nations in Canaan the people of Jericho were hopelessly sinful and depraved (Lev 18:24-26; 20:23; Deut 18:9-12). God used Israel as an instrument of judgment on them.

Yet there was mercy for anyone who turned to the Lord in repentance and faith. The experience of Rahab, herself a sinful woman, shows this (Josh 6:17; Heb 11:31; Jam 2:25). Rahab became one of the ancestors of Boaz into whose line king David was born (Ruth 4:21,22; Matt 1:5-6). From the line of David our Lord Jesus Christ was born. This



"Look, tonight men from the children of Israel have come here to search out the country." 3 And the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house; for they have come to search out the whole country."

4 And the woman took the two men and hid them and spoke like this: "*Some* men came to me, but I did not know where they *came* from. 5 And it so happened that *about the time* the gates were being shut, when it was dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Go after them quickly, for you can catch up with them." 6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hidden them in the stalks of flax which she had spread out on the roof. 7 And the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

8 And before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 9 and she said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that your terror has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts melted, and no one had any courage left, because of you. For the LORD your God is God in heaven above, and in earth below. 12 Now, therefore, since I have showed you kindness, please swear to me by the LORD that you will also show kindness to my father's household, and give me a true token 13 *that* you will save alive my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

shows us the greatness of God's grace and how He can use a person who believes in Him. We are not told why the spies entered Rahab's house. It is probable that she saw them first and invited them in so she could make an agreement with them that would save her life. Some Jewish scholars of olden times taught that Rahab was an innkeeper. If so, this might account for the spies going into her place.

**2:5** Rahab told a deliberate lie to protect the spies. She had come to believe in the power of the one true God (Josh 2:9-11). The New Testament commends her for her faith (Heb 11:31; Jam 2:25), but not for her lying. God does not need the help of man's lies to carry out His purposes. And no doubt God could have saved the lives of these spies without it. But even in lying Rahab showed her faith in the LORD. And

14 And the men answered her, "Our life for yours, if you do not tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window; for her house *was* on the town wall, and she lived on the wall. 16 And she said to them, "Go to the mountain, so that the pursuers will not come across you, and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers have returned; and afterwards you can go your way."

17 And the men said to her, "*We will be* blameless about this oath to you which you have made us swear. 18 See, *when* we come into the land, you must tie this scarlet cord in the window from which you let us down. And you must bring your father and your mother and your brothers, and all your father's household, to your home. 19 And it will be *like this*: whoever goes out of the doors of your house into the street, *his blood* will be on his head, and we *will be* blameless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood *will be* on our head, if a hand is laid on him. 20 But if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free of this oath to you which you have made us swear."

21 And she said, "Let it *be* according to your words." And she sent them away, and they left. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

22 And they went away and came to the mountain and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had gone back. And the pursuers looked *for them* everywhere along the way but did not find *them*. 23 So the two men returned, came down from the mountain, crossed *the Jordan* and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him everything that had happened to them. 24 And they said to Joshua, "The LORD has definitely delivered the whole land into our hands, for all the inhabitants of the country are fainting because of us."

faith is very powerful with God.

**2:8-11** Rahab's words gave the spies a knowledge of the state of mind of the people of Jericho and of all of Canaan's people. Of course this was encouraging information for Joshua (v 24).

**2:10** Ex 14:21; Num 21:23-24,33-35.

**2:11** Deut 4:39; Isa 42:8.

**2:15** The outer wall of Jericho may have been as much as 30 feet high, and several feet thick. Rahab's house may have been built between this wall and an inner wall, with a window over or through the outer wall.

**2:18** Rahab's house was the only safe place in Jericho. The scarlet line, the color of blood, may speak symbolically of protection through sacrifice (Ex 12:7,13; Heb 9:19-22). We are saved from the penalty of lying through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 9:28). His blood protects believers

**3** And Joshua rose early in the morning. And he and all the children of Israel set out from Shittim and came to the Jordan, and stayed there before they crossed over. **2** And this occurred after three days: the officers went through the camp, **3** and commanded the people, saying, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites carrying it, then you must set out from your place, and go after it. **4** Yet there must be a distance of about two thousand cubits between you and it. Do not go near it. *This is so* that you may know the way you should go; for you have not come *this* way before this."

**5** And Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." **6** And Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Pick up the ark of the covenant, and cross over before the people." And they picked up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

**7** And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to make you great in the sight of all Israel, *so* that they may know that I will be with you just as I was with Moses. **8** And you shall command the priests who carry the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you must stand still in the Jordan.'"

**9** And Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and listen to the words of the LORD your God." **10** And Joshua said, "This is how you will know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* he will without fail drive out from before you

the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites. **11** See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. **12** Therefore now take twelve men for yourselves out of the tribes of Israel, one man from each tribe. **13** And it will come about, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of the whole earth, rest in the water of the Jordan, *that* the water of the Jordan will be cut off *from* the water that come down from *upstream*, and they will stand up in a heap."

**14** And so it happened. When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, and the priests carried the ark of the covenant before the people, **15** as those carrying the ark came to the Jordan and the feet of the priests carrying the ark touched the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all of its banks throughout the time of harvest), **16** the water which came down from *upstream* stood *and* rose up in a heap, a great distance away at the town of Adam, that *is* near Zaretan. And the *water* that came down toward the Sea of the Plain, the Salt Sea, failed and was cut off. And the people crossed over directly opposite Jericho. **17** And the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, and all the Israelites crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan.

from eternal destruction. Observe that Rahab's faith could be a means of salvation to all in her family (6:25).

**3:1** This chapter records a very important event in the history of Israel. After repeated promises by God to give them the land, after a few centuries in Egypt, and 40 years of wandering in the desert, at last they enter the promised land.

**3:3-4** "Ark" – Ex 25:10-16. The ark of the covenant symbolized the presence of God with His people. Among other things it contained a copy of the law (Deut 31:9). Carrying it before the people signified God's guidance and their readiness to follow Him and to accept His standards.

"Priests" – note at Ex 28:1.

"Levites" – notes at Num 8:10-19.

**3:4** "Two thousand cubits" – the people had to keep a certain distance from the ark. They were to show their respect for the holy things of God. We must never treat the things of God and His Word lightly. To do so is a very serious matter (Num 4:15; 1 Sam 6:19; 2 Sam 6:6-7; Heb 12:28).

**3:5** "Sanctify yourselves" – people who want to follow the Lord need to be clean, separated from all that might defile them, fully dedicated to Him. Compare Rom 12:1,2; 2 Cor 7:1. The Lord works wonders among those who fully consecrate

themselves to Him.

**3:7** It was very important for the people to recognize that Joshua was God's appointed leader. Otherwise they would not have followed him and disaster would have resulted. So God exalted him by openly demonstrating that He was with him. This demonstration was the miracle which follows.

**3:8** The river Jordan was the border of the promised land, the boundary between the old life and the new. Crossing it is a symbol of entering into our possessions in Christ.

**3:10** In the following miracle (vs 16,17), similar to the one performed at the Red Sea (Ex 14:21,22), God revealed His presence with His people.

**3:11** "Lord of the whole earth" – Canaan belonged to God, not to the Canaanites, and He could give it to whomever He chose.

**3:12** The twelve represented the whole nation. They had a work to do – 4:2-9.

**3:15** "Harvest" – March to May was a time of harvest in that area. It was flood time in the Jordan because of seasonal rains and melting snow in the mountains to the north.

**3:16** "Rose up in a heap" – God can as easily stop the flow of a flood as stop a small trickle of water. Great miracles are no more difficult to Him than small miracles. And when there is faith and obedience God will not be reluctant to do what He has promised.

**4** And it came about when all the people had finished crossing over the Jordan that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, **2** "Take for yourself twelve men from the people, a man from each tribe, **3** and command them, saying, Take up for yourselves twelve stones here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm, and carry them over with you, and leave them in the camping place, where you will camp tonight."

**4** Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he appointed from the children of Israel, a man from each tribe, **5** and Joshua said to them, "Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God to the middle of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, in accordance with the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, **6** so that this may be a sign among you, *so that* when your children ask *their fathers* in the future, saying, 'What *do* these stones *mean* to you?' **7** Then you shall answer them, 'That the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off.' And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

**8** And the children of Israel did just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, just as the LORD told Joshua, in accordance with the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they camped, and laid them down there. **9** And Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day.

**10** For the priests who carried the ark stood in the middle of the Jordan until everything that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people was finished, in accordance with all that Moses commanded Joshua. And the people hurried and crossed over. **11** And it came about when all the people had finished crossing over that the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed over, in

the presence of the people.

**12** And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, crossed over armed before the children of Israel, just as Moses had told them. **13** About forty thousand of *them* prepared for war crossed over to battle, in the presence of the LORD, to the plains of Jericho.

**14** On that day the LORD made Joshua great in the sight of all Israel, and they feared him, just as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.

**15** And the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, **16** "Command the priests, who carry the ark of the Testimony, to come up out of the Jordan."

**17** So Joshua commanded the priests, saying, "Come up out of the Jordan."

**18** And it came about, when the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come up out of the middle of the Jordan, *and* the soles of the priests' feet were set on dry land, that the water of the Jordan returned to its place and overflowed all its banks, just as it did before.

**19** And the people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month and camped in Gilgal, on the eastern boundary of Jericho. **20** And Joshua set up those twelve stones, which they took from the Jordan, in Gilgal. **21** And he spoke to the children of Israel, saying, "When your children ask their fathers in the future, saying, 'What *do* these stones *mean*?' **22** Then you must tell your children, saying, 'Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. **23** For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan from before you until you had passed over, just as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea which he dried up from before us until we had crossed over, **24** so that all the people of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you might fear the LORD your God forever.'"

**5** And it came about, when all the kings of the Amorites who *were* on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were near the sea, heard that the LORD had dried

"Sea of the Plain" – the Dead Sea.

**4:2-8** Verses 21-22. This memorial pillar was a remembrance, not simply of the crossing of the Jordan river, but of the great grace God showed to His people in bringing them thus far. It was to serve as a reminder of God's goodness and power to the following generations. God often impressed on His people the duty of remembering His great acts (24:26; Deut 7:18; 8:2-4; 24:9). Compare 1 Cor 11:24-26; 2 Tim 2:8; Ps 103:2; 105:5. The believer should always call to mind the great things God has done and the way God has worked in his life.

**4:12** Num 32:20-27.

**4:13** Those 40,000 were from these

3 tribes only.

**4:14** Note at 3:7.

**4:19** "First month" – Ex 12:3.

"Gilgal" – probably about three kilometers north of Jericho.

**4:23** Ex 14:21-22.

**4:24** God had two purposes in performing this miracle at the Jordan. He wanted all nations to know that He, the God of Israel, not their gods and idols, was the God of power. And He wanted His people to have a reverential awe of Him that would produce obedience in their lives. Notes on fear of the Lord at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**5:1** "Amorites" – Gen 15:16. "Melted" – 2:11.

up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until we had crossed over, that their heart melted and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the children of Israel.

2 At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make sharp knives for yourself, and circumcise the children of Israel the second time." 3 And Joshua made sharp knives for himself, and circumcised the children of Israel at the Hill of the Foreskins.

4 And this *is* the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males among the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, died in the desert on the way, after they came out of Egypt. 5 Now all the people who came out were circumcised, but they had not circumcised all the people *who were* born in the desert on the way after they came out of Egypt. 6 For the children of Israel walked about forty years in the desert until all the men of war among the people who came out of Egypt had perished, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD. The LORD swore that he would not show them the land which the LORD swore to their fathers that he would give us, a land that flows with milk and honey. 7 Their children *are the ones* he raised up in their place; Joshua circumcised them, for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them on the way.

**5:2-3** See note on Gen 17:9-14. Circumcision was a sign first given to Abraham (Rom 4:11). The law to circumcise each male child on the eighth day from his birth was incorporated in the Law of Moses (Lev 13:3), but it was neglected during the years of wilderness wandering (vs 5,7). No reason is given for this failure. According to the New Testament, circumcision is symbolic of putting off the flesh, the sinful nature (Phil 3:3; Col 2:11). It means that in an ungodly world we are willing to follow the Lord in godliness and righteousness.

**5:4-6** The men who had come out of Egypt had been circumcised, but that did not automatically mean God's blessing. The outward sign was useless if the heart and life were wrong. Though they were circumcised, they were unbelieving and disobedient (Num 14:21-23; Heb 3:19). No outward rite or ceremony is of any use to us if our hearts are not right with God – Rom 2:28,29; Gal 6:15; Isa 1:11-17.

**5:7** God did not overlook the neglect of the sign of His covenant. He calls His people to obedience. In spite of their neglect of His law He showed grace and mercy to the nation during the long years of wandering (Deut 2:7), but they had to show obedience before they could enter their inheritance. Believers now cannot expect to overcome in the life of faith and enjoy their inheritance in Christ if they deliberately go on disobeying Him.

**5:9** The "reproach of Egypt" possibly refers to the reproach the Egyptians would have

8 And it came about when they had finished circumcising all the people that they stayed in their places in the camp until they were healed.

9 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.

10 And the children of Israel camped in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate the old grain of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened cakes and parched *grain* on the same day. 12 And the manna ceased on the day after they ate the old grain of the land, and the children of Israel did not have manna any more; but they ate the produce of the land of Canaan that year.

13 And this occurred when Joshua was near Jericho: he raised his eyes and looked, and a man appeared standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went up to him and said to him, "*Are* you for us or for our enemies?"

14 And he said, "No, but I have now come as captain of the army of the LORD."

And Joshua prostrated himself to the ground and worshipped, and said to him, "What does my Lord say to his servant?"

brought against Israel as they wandered in the desert uncircumcised and thus disobeying God's covenant and seemingly forsaken by God. In Gilgal they became obedient to God's covenant and ready to move forward with God. There was no longer any reason to reproach them. Gilgal became the base for Israel's military operations in Canaan. Gilgal sounds like the Hebrew word for "roll."

**5:10** See notes on Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:5. No uncircumcised person was allowed to eat the Passover (Ex 12:48), so those who had grown up in the wilderness had been debarred from taking part in this remembrance. Their obedience in being circumcised now enabled them to remember the grace of God, and opened up a whole new pathway of blessing. A first step of obedience to God can mean the same for anyone.

**5:11,12** "Without yeast" – Ex 12:15; Lev 23:6.

"Grain" – not corn. Corn (maize) was not known in that day in that part of the world.

"Manna stopped" – the manna stopped because there was no longer need of it. Israel could begin to eat the food of the promised land.

**5:13** "Man" – no doubt the angel of Jehovah. See note at Gen 16:7. Joshua did not recognize Him as a heavenly being.

**5:14** The Lord did not come to join one side or the other. He came as the supreme commander of God's army. This army was the nation of Israel, and any angelic forces which might be engaged in the conflict.

15 And the captain of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Remove your sandal from your foot, for the place you are standing on *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

**6** Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the children of Israel. No one went out and no one came in.

2 And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho and its king *and* valiant warriors into your hand. 3 And you must go around the city, all you men of war circling the city once. You must do this for six days. 4 And seven priests must carry seven ram's horn trumpets before the ark. And on the seventh day you must go around the city seven times, and the priests must blow with the trumpets. 5 And it shall be when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a loud shout. Then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people must go up, each man straight before him."

6 And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and have seven priests carry seven ram's horn trumpets before the ark of the LORD." 7 And he said to the people, "Pass on and go around the city, and have him who is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD."

8 And it came about, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests carrying the seven ram's horn trumpets passed on before the LORD and blew with the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9 And the armed men went before the priests who blew with the trumpets, and the rear guard came after

the ark, *the priests* going on and blowing with the trumpets. 10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You must not shout or make any noise with your voice, and do not let a word come out of your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." 11 So the ark of the LORD went around the city, circling *it* once. Then they came into the camp and stayed in the camp.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 And seven priests carrying seven ram's horn trumpets before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them, but the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on and blowing with the *trumpets*. 14 And the second day they went around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.

15 And this happened on the seventh day: they rose early at the dawning of the day and went around the city in the same way seven times. On that day only they went around the city seven times. 16 And it came about at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city. 17 And the city, it and all that *is* in it, will be accursed by the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute is to live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 And you must keep *your-selves* from the accursed thing, so that you will not make yourselves accursed by taking the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel accursed, and trouble it. 19 But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are consecrated to the LORD. They are to come into the LORD's treasury."

Israel would not conquer and claim their inheritance with God merely on their side while they fought in their own way. They would conquer only in full obedience to God as their leader and commander. He would tell them where to go and what to do. So with believers now in their spiritual warfare. **5:15** The message is this: Joshua is in the presence of the supremely Holy One (compare Ex 3:5), and he must behave accordingly.

**6:1** Verse 1 is a parenthesis. Verse 2 connects with 5:15. The commander of the LORD's host goes on speaking to Joshua. He is Jehovah Himself.

**6:2-5** Jericho was not conquered by military might. Its defeat was a result of God's miraculous activity, and Israel's faith. As in the crossing of Jordan (3:14-17), the ark of the covenant went before the people. This symbolized the powerful presence of the Lord guiding His people. Marching, trumpets and shouts do not bring down great walls and conquer cities. God works on principles

which are different from men's (Isa 55:8,9; Luke 16:15; 2 Cor 10:3-5). He uses people and things which human wisdom counts totally inadequate (1 Cor 1:27-29).

**6:6-21** Though the Lord's instructions may have seemed strange to them, they obeyed their supreme commander, and obtained the very results He had described. Trust and obedience cannot be overemphasized in all our dealings with God. See Heb 11:30.

**6:17** "Accursed by the LORD" – the Hebrew words indicate that Jericho was set apart for destruction (v 21), and that nothing in it was to come into the possession of the Israelites. The destruction was God's judgment upon a totally debased people. See notes on God's judgment at Gen 6:7; 15:16; Lev 18:24; Deut 13:12-18; 28:18,19; Rev 16:5-7.

**6:18,19** Everything in Jericho was for God, nothing for man. Possibly this was to safeguard Israel from the corruption that comes from lusting and looting. Self-seeking always leads to spiritual ruin



20 So the people shouted when *the priests* blew with the trumpets. Then this took place: when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a loud shout, the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, each man straight before him. And they took the city, 21 and with the edge of the sword they utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey.

22 But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out of there the woman and all who belong to her, just as you swore to her." 23 And the young men who had been the spies went in and brought out Rahab and her father and her mother and her brothers and all that she had. They brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.

24 And they burned the city with fire, and everything that was in it; only the silver and the gold and the articles of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25 And Joshua saved Rahab the prostitute alive, and her father's household, and all that she had. And she lives in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 And Joshua made *them* take this oath at that time, saying, "Cursed in the presence of the LORD be the man who rises up and builds this city of Jericho. He will lay its foundation on his first-born, and set up its gates on his youngest son."

27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was *heard of* throughout the whole country.

(Jer 45:5; 1 Cor 10:24; Col 3:5).

**6:20** The Bible does not tell us the means God used to bring the walls of Jericho crashing down. Whatever they were, the event was a miracle, the result of divine action working with the faith of the people (Heb 11:30).

**6:21** Verse 17. Notes on destruction of nations at Gen 6:7; 15:6; Lev 18:24; Deut 13:12-18.

**6:22-25** Rahab and her family were saved according to the promise made to her (2:14,17-20). Rahab is an example of faith (Heb 11:31; James 2:25). She was a Gentile, separated from Israel, but through faith became identified with the people of God. Her faith was effective in saving her entire family. Compare Gen 6:18; 7:1; Acts 16:31.

**6:26** Five hundred years later, in the time of king Ahab, Joshua's pronouncement against Jericho was disregarded. The city was rebuilt by a man called Hiel at the cost of two of his sons (1 Kings 16:34).

**7:1** "Acted unfaithfully" – one man sinned but God regarded the whole nation as responsible. God looks upon His people as a unity. The sin of one affects all and is the

**7** But the children of Israel acted unfaithfully concerning the accursed thing, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the accursed thing. And the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.

2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and look at the land." And the men went up and looked at Ai.

3 And they returned to Joshua, and said to him, "Don't have all the people go up, but have about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai, *and* do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few *in number*." 4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, and they fled before the men of Ai. 5 And the men of Ai struck down among them about thirty-six men; for they chased them *from* in front of the gate to Shebarim, and struck them in the descent *there*. So the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

6 And Joshua tore his clothes and prostrated himself on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, *both* he and the elders of Israel, and they put dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord God, why did you ever bring this people over the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we had been content and stayed on the other side of the Jordan. 8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turns their backs before their enemies! 9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear *of it*, and will surround us and cut our name

responsibility of all (v 11; 22:20; Lev 4:13-21; 2 Sam 21:1,2). No one lives to himself alone. Our actions always affect others for good or bad (compare Rom 14:7,13; 1 Cor 5:1,2,6; 12:26-27).

"Anger" – note at Num 25:3; Ps 90:11; Rom 1:18.

**7:2-5** Achan's sin resulted in a humiliating defeat for the whole nation.

**7:2** "Ai" – about 25 Kilometers from Jericho on the top of the hills that face the Jordan valley.

**7:3** Does this suggest too much confidence in themselves? Did Joshua consult the Lord about this? See 8:1,3.

**7:6** Tearing clothes, falling prostrate, and sprinkling dust are all evidence of their utter dismay, grief, and dejection.

**7:7-9** Compare Ex 5:22; 14:11,12; 16:3; 17:3. This is not the language of faith and obedience, but of confusion and discouragement. Joshua should have been trying to find out the reasons for Israel's defeat rather than questioning God's guidance.

**7:9** "What will you do for your great name" – Num 14:13-16; Deut 9:28,29. We should always be more concerned with God's

off from the earth. And what will you do for your great name?"

10 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying like this on your face? 11 Israel has sinned, and they have broken my covenant which I commanded them; for they have taken *some* of the accursed thing and have stolen and also used deception, and they have put it among their own things. 12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned their backs before *their* enemies, because they were accursed. And I will not be with you any more unless you destroy the accursed among you.

13 "Get up! Sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD God of Israel says, *There is* an accursed thing among you, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies, until you take away the accursed thing from among you. 14 Therefore in the morning you shall be brought near according to your tribes. Then it shall be *that* the tribe which the LORD takes shall approach, according to *its* families; and the family which the LORD takes shall approach by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall approach man by man. 15 And it is to be like this: the one who is caught with the accursed thing shall be burned in the fire, he and all that he has, because he has broken the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel."

16 So Joshua got up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken. 17 And he brought the family of Judah;

and he took the family of the Zarahites. And he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man; and Zabdi was taken. 18 And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19 And Joshua said to Achan, "My son, please give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to him, and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide *it* from me."

20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, "Yes, I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: 21 when I saw among the plunder a fine Babylonian garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them. And, look, they *are* hidden in the ground in the middle of my tent, and the silver *is* under it."

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there *it was*, hidden in his tent, and the silver *was* under it. 23 And they took them from the middle of the tent, and brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.

24 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the garment and the bar of gold and his sons and his daughters and his oxen and his donkeys and his sheep and his tent and all that he had, and they brought them to the valley of Achor.

25 And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? Today the LORD will trouble you." And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them

reputation than with our own.

**7:10-12** The Lord rebukes Joshua, because it was not a time to pray, but to obey (Ex 14:15). Sin had to be judged. Remember this – prayer is never a substitute for obedience. And why should God ever answer our prayers if we will not do what He says?

**7:11** The sin was by one man, Achan, but notice "Israel has sinned", "they have broken."

"Covenant"–6:17-19. See also Ex 20:15,17.

"Accursed thing" – Achan was stealing from God – 6:19.

"Used deception" – the sin of deception or lying is often committed to cover up other sins. Notes and references on lying at Ex 20:16. Learn here also that God knows what people are doing (Heb 4:13). Achan hid everything from men but he could not hide anything from God.

**7:12** "I will not be with you unless" – imagine what an impact such words had on Joshua. He knew very well that if God was not to be with them the whole war for Canaan was already lost. Two important lessons for us also are here – sin, if we do not judge it and put it away, will make us liable to

"destruction." That is, God may abandon us to punishment for it. Compare Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:1-5; 11:30,31. And sin may make it impossible for God to work with us.

**7:13** Nor can we successfully fight Satan and enjoy our inheritance in Christ if we permit sin to remain unconfessed, unjudged in our lives and churches.

**7:14** "Takes" – evidently they cast lots to determine this. Compare Jud 20:9; 1 Sam 14:41,42; 1 Chron 24:5.

**7:15** "Disgraceful thing" – Deut 22:21; Judges 19:23,24; 20:6,10; 2 Sam 13:12.

**7:19** Confession and repentance was the only hope for Achan, and for Israel.

**7:20,21** Many people have wrecked their lives and lost their souls because of greed for money and possessions (Mark 10:22,23; 1 Tim 6:9,10; etc).

"Two hundred shekels" – about 2.3 kilograms.

**7:24,25** God holds us responsible for the effects of our sin on others (6:18; Luke 17:1,2). Achor means "trouble." Oh, sin is the great troubler of the people of God. Achan's wife and children were also put to death. They must have had guilty knowledge of what Achan had done and kept

with fire, after they stoned them with stones. 26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones. *They are there* to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called The Valley of Achor to this day.

**8** And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid or dismayed. Take all the warriors with you, arise and go up to Ai. See, I have given the king of Ai and his people and his city and his land into your hand. 2 And you will do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. But you may take its plunder and its livestock as prey for yourselves. Place an ambush for the city behind it."

3 So Joshua arose, and all the warriors, to go up against Ai. And Joshua picked out thirty thousand brave fighting men and sent them away at night. 4 And he commanded them, saying, "Look, you are to lie in wait against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, and all of you be ready. 5 And I, and all the people who are with me, will approach the city. And it will come about that, when they come out against us, as at the first, we will run away from them. 6 (For they will come out after us) until we have drawn them away from the city. For they will say, 'They are running away from us, as at the first.' So we will run away from them. 7 Then you must rise up from the ambush, and capture the city; for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hands. 8 And when you have taken the city, it is to be *like this*: set the city on fire. You must act in accordance with the command of the LORD. See, I have commanded you."

9 So Joshua sent them away; and they went to lie in ambush and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai. But Joshua stayed that night among the people.

10 And Joshua rose up early in the morning and quiet about it.

"Stoned him" – stoning was the penalty for breaking God's law (Lev 20:2; 24:23; Num 15:36).

**7:26** If we repent and accept His judgment upon our sins, God will turn from His anger (Num 25:4; Deut 13:17; etc).

"Achor" – the Hebrew word means "trouble" or "disaster." From there Israel went on to victory at Ai and everywhere else. One defeat did not mean the war for Canaan was lost. So now a defeat in the Christian life does not mean that we cannot be overcomers and win the victory.

**8:1** "Afraid or dismayed" – 7:6-9. Sin, defeat, and judgment would naturally bring fear and discouragement.

"All the warriors" – compare 7:3. God wanted the whole army to see the victory He would give at Ai, and so get back their courage and faith in His working.

counted the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. 11 And all the people, the warriors who *were* with him, went up and drew near and came in front of the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now *there was* a valley between them and Ai. 12 And he took about five thousand men, and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. 13 And that night when they had placed the people, all the army that was on the north of the city and their *people* in ambush on the west of the city, Joshua went out into the middle of the valley.

14 Then *this* happened: when the king of Ai saw *it*, they hurriedly got up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a set time, before the plain. But he did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city. 15 And Joshua and all Israel acted as if they were beaten before them, and ran away on the wilderness road. 16 And all the people who *were* in Ai were called together to pursue them, and pursuing Joshua they were drawn away from the city. 17 And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, who did not go out after Israel. And they left the city open and pursued Israel.

18 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hands." And Joshua stretched out the spear that *he had* in his hand toward the city. 19 And the ambush got up quickly out of their place, and as soon as he stretched out his hand they ran, entered the city, and took it, and hurriedly set the city on fire.

20 And when the men of Ai turned and looked behind them, they saw the smoke of the city rising up to the sky, and they were powerless to flee this way or that. And the people who had run toward the wilderness turned back on *their* pursuers. 21 And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the

**8:2** If Achan had waited, he would have received his part in this plunder. God gives us what He wants us to have in His own time (Matt 6:33) – if we trust and obey Him.

**8:5** "Run away" – 7:4,5.

**8:8** Deut 20:16-18.

**8:12** There were apparently two ambushes, the one mentioned in vs 3,4 which was "behind the city", and the one mentioned here "between Bethel and Ai", possibly to deal with any attack that might come from Bethel. Ai and Bethel were very close together (12:9). There is no independent account of the conquest of Bethel, though the city was overcome in the taking of Canaan (12:16). It appears from v 17 that Bethel was an ally of Ai in this battle.

**8:14** "The plain" – here means the Jordan valley.

**8:18** 8:26; Ex 17:11-12; Ps 44:3.

ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city was rising up, they turned back and killed the men of Ai. 22 And the other *men* came out of the city against them, so they were in the middle of Israel, some on this side, and some on that. And they struck them down, not letting any of them remain or escape. 23 But they took the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.

24 And when Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the field in the wilderness where they had chased them, and when they had all fallen by the edge of the sword until they were destroyed, it came about that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. 25 And so it was *that* all who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand. All the men of Ai *fell*. 26 For Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he had stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. 27 Only the livestock and the plunder of that city Israel took as a prey for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua.

28 And Joshua burned Ai and made it a heap forever, a desolation to this day. 29 And he hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening, but as soon as the sun had set, Joshua commanded them to take his carcass down from the tree and throw it down at the entrance of the gate of the city, and pile on it a great heap of stones. *It remains* to this day.

30 Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal, 31 just as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel (as it is written in the book of the law of Moses), an altar of uncut stones, on which no one had used *any* iron *tool*. And on it they offered burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32 And there on the stones *Joshua* wrote a copy of the law of Moses. He wrote it in the presence of the children of Israel. 33 And all Israel

and their elders and officers and their judges stood on *both* this side and that side of the ark before the priests the Levites, the carriers of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, also the foreigners, just as those who had been born among them. Half of them *stood* in front of Mount Gerizim, and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had previously commanded, so that they might bless the people of Israel.

34 And afterwards *Joshua* read all the words of the law, the blessings and curses, just as everything was written in the book of the law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua did not read before all the congregation of Israel with the women and the little ones and the foreigners who were living among them.

**9** Then it came about when all the kings who *were* on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the valleys and on all the coasts of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite heard *about this*, 2 that they gathered together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel.

3 And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, 4 they acted cleverly and went and behaved as if they were ambassadors and took old sacks on their donkeys, and old, torn and patched wineskins, 5 and *put* old mended sandals on their feet and *wore* old clothes. And all the bread *they took* for their provisions was dry *and* mouldy. 6 And they went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; so now make a treaty with us."

7 And the men of Israel said to *those* Hivites, "Perhaps you are living among us, and so how shall we make a treaty with you?"

8 And they said to Joshua, "We *are* your

**8:29** Deut 21:22-23.

**8:30-35** Deut 11:26-30; 27:1-8,14-26; chapter 29. Here Israel renews their covenant with God. They acknowledge that He is their God, they are His people.

**8:30** "Mount Ebal" – the fortified town of Shechem lay at the foot of this mount. There is no record that Israel conquered it. Perhaps the town surrendered without a fight. Or its inhabitants may have shut themselves up inside the town from fear (compare 6:1; 5:1; 2:11).

**8:31** Ex 20:25. "Peace offerings" – Lev 3:1.

**8:32-35** At the beginning of their life in Canaan the people were called to renew their acceptance of God's covenant. God wanted them to know clearly their responsibilities and privileges.

"Joshua read all" – he knew how very

important it was that the people of God (including the children) hear and understand the Word of God. Compare Deut 6:6-9.

"Foreigners" – people, such as Rahab, who had joined themselves to Israel.

**9:1** "Kings" – these kings were kings merely of cities with their surrounding villages, not of any very large areas.

"The great sea" – the Mediterranean.

**9:3** "Gibeon" – in those days an important city (10:2) situated about 13 kilometers northwest of Jerusalem.

**9:4-6** They were sure they faced certain defeat at the hands of Israel and sought a way to preserve themselves (v 24).

**9:7** "Treaty" – God had forbidden Israel to make such agreements with people in Canaan. See Ex 23:31-33.

**9:8** "Servants" – indicates complete

servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?"

9 And they said to him, "Your servants have come from a very distant country, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of his fame, and all that he did in Egypt, 10 and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. 11 Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions with you for the journey and go to meet them, and say to them, "We *are* your servants.'" Therefore now make a treaty with us. 12 This *is* our bread *which* we brought *for* our provisions hot from our houses on the day we set out to come to you. But now, look, it is dry and mouldy. 13 And these wineskins *were* new when we filled them, and, look, they are torn. And these clothes and sandals of ours have worn out because of the very long journey."

14 And the men *of Israel* took *some* of their provisions, and did not ask *counsel* from the mouth of the LORD. 15 And Joshua made peace with them and made a treaty with them to let them live. And the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

16 And it so happened that at the end of three days after they had made a treaty with them, they heard that they *were* their neighbours and *that* they lived among them. 17 And the children of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kirjath-Jearim. 18 And the children of Israel did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD of Israel. And all the congregation grumbled against the leaders.

submission.

**9:9** "We have heard" – 2:9,10; 5:1.

**9:14,15** The defeat at Ai had taught Israel the need to obey God, but they still had not learned the need for God's guidance at every step. Joshua was an experienced man and a spiritual one, but he made the error of using his own judgment and trusting in outward appearances. Every believer should learn to live under the constant guidance of God. If we do not seek God's guidance about our activities we are certain to make many mistakes.

**9:16** When men use their own judgment without reference to God, they should not be surprised if men deceive them.

**9:18,19** A promise once made must be honored (Ps 15:4; Eccl 5:4,5; Matt 5:37; Jam 5:12). The Israelites had been deceived, but this was no reason for them to break their word. When someone else does wrong, that does not give us also the right to do wrong. Speaking the truth must

19 But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; so now we must not touch them. 20 This is what we will do to them: we will let them live so that wrath does not come on us, because of the oath which we swore to them." 21 And the leaders said to them, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and drawers of water for the whole congregation." *They did* as the leaders told them.

22 And Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We *live* very far from you', when you were living among us? 23 Therefore now you *are* accursed, and none of you will be freed from being slaves and woodcutters and drawers of water for the house of my God."

24 And they answered Joshua and said, "Because your servants were plainly told that the LORD your God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you. Therefore we had great fear for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. 25 And now, see, we *are* in your hands. Do to us what seems good and right to you to do."

26 And so he did to them and delivered them from the hands of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. 27 And that day Joshua made them woodcutters and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this very day, in the place which he chose.

**10** Now it came about when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it (he had done to Ai and its king just as he had done to Jericho and its king), and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, 2 that

be an essential part of the believer's life and witness in an untruthful world – Ps 15:2; 51:6; Phil 2:15.

"Grumbled" – the people, possibly with their eyes on the possessions they might gain by attacking Gibeon and its allies, resisted the decision of their leaders to keep their promises. They should have known that God's standards cannot be set aside simply because obedience is inconvenient or costs something.

**9:23** "Accursed" – lying and deception will always have unhappy consequences.

"Drawers of water" – these Canaanites became a partial fulfilment of Gen 9:25,26. Later on the tabernacle was at Gibeon for a time (2 Chron 1:3,5). This curse that made them menial laborers, without freedom to become anything else, perhaps became a means of blessing to many of these Gibeonites, for their service was for the house of God. And it is God's way to turn curses into blessings when He sees faith in



they were very afraid, because Gibeon *was* a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it *was* greater than Ai and all its men *were* mighty.

3 Therefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent *word* to Hoham king of Hebron and to Piram king of Jarmuth and to Japhia king of Lachish and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, 4 "Come up to me, and help me, so that we may attack Gibeon, for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel."

5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped in front of Gibeon and made war against it.

6 And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Do not forsake your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who live in the mountains have gathered against us."

7 So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him and all the brave fighting men. 8 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for I have delivered them into your hand. Not a man of them will stand before you."

9 Therefore Joshua came on them suddenly, going up from Gilgal all night. 10 And the LORD threw them into confusion before Israel and struck them down with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the road that goes up to Beth-Horon and struck them down as far as Azekah, and Makkedah. 11 And it happened as they fled from before Israel, *and* were in the descent to Beth Horon, that the LORD hurled great stones down from heaven on them as far as Azekah; and many died. More died from the hailstones than those whom the children of Israel killed with the sword.

the human heart. Compare Gen 50:20.

**10:3,4** Here are five of the most important cities of southern Canaan at that time.

**10:6,7** Joshua had made a pact with the Gibeonites, so he thought it was right to honor it and defend them.

**10:8** 1:5; 21:44. God used confusion (v 10), hailstones (v 11), and a mighty miracle (v 13) to defeat these armies.

**10:9** Gilgal was about 30 kilometers east of Gibeon and the terrain was hill country.

**10:10** "Makkedah" – towns in the foothills west of Gibeon.

**10:11** God sometimes used natural things in a supernatural way. Compare Ex 14:21; 1 Sam 7:10; Josh 24:12.

**10:12** Joshua was inspired to offer this unique and wonderful prayer. And he prayed it publicly.

**10:13,14** The book of Jasher has been lost and we do not know what else it contained. This miracle recorded in it was unparalleled in the history of man. There have been

12 Then Joshua spoke to the LORD on the day that the LORD delivered up the Amorites to the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

"Sun, stand still on Gibeon, and you, moon, in the valley of Ajalon!"

13 And the sun stood still and the moon stopped until the people had taken vengeance on their enemies. *Is* this not written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the middle of the sky and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, *a day* when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

15 And Joshua returned to the camp at Gilgal, and all Israel *went* with him.

16 But those five kings fled and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. 17 And *someone* told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in a cave at Makkedah." 18 And Joshua said, "Roll large stones over the mouth of the cave and place men by it to guard them. 19 And do not stay *there*, *but* pursue your enemies and attack those in the rear. Don't let them enter their cities; for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hands."

20 And it came about, when Joshua and the children of Israel had finished striking them down with a very great slaughter until they were destroyed, that those of them *who* remained entered fenced cities. 21 And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace; no one moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

22 Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings out of the cave to me." 23 And they did so, bringing those five kings out of the cave to him, the king of Jerusalem, the

many days when God heard the prayers of His servants and did miraculous things, but none like this day. We do not know what changes occurred in the rotation of the earth or moon, or whether the entire solar system was affected in some way. But the author of these notes is sure that on that exceptional day, from the point of view of the earth, the sun and moon seemed to stand still in the sky for several hours.

If God arises to fight for His people He may use any of what are called the forces of nature He chooses, and it would be no more difficult for Him to make a temporary change in the whole solar system than to cause hailstones to fall from the sky. Compare Ex 14:21; Ps 18:6-15; Acts 16:25,26.

"Taken vengeance on" (v 13) – or it could be translated "triumphed over."

**10:15** Verse 43. Verses 16-42 give a further description of events that took place before Joshua returned to Gilgal.

king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon. 24 And it happened, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel and said to the captains of the warriors who went with him, "Come near. Put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they came near and put their feet on their necks.

25 And Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid or be dismayed. Be strong and courageous, for the LORD will do like this to all your enemies that you fight against." 26 And afterwards Joshua struck them down and killed them, and hung them on five trees. And they were hanging on the trees until evening. 27 And it happened at the time of sunset *that* Joshua gave a command, and they took them down from the trees and threw them into the cave where they had hidden and laid large stones at the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

28 And that day Joshua took Makkedah and struck it with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed its king and every soul who *was* in it. He did not allow anyone to remain. He did to the king of Makkedah just as he had done to the king of Jericho.

29 Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, went on to Libnah and fought against Libnah. 30 And the LORD delivered it also and its king into the hands of Israel. And he struck it with the edge of the sword and every soul who *was* in it. He did not allow anyone to remain in it, but did to its king just as he had done to the king of Jericho.

31 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, went on from Libnah to Lachish and camped against it and fought against it. 32 And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hands of Israel. They took it on the second day and struck it with the edge of the sword and every soul who *was* in it, just as he had done everything to Libnah. 33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people down until he left no one left to him.

**10:24** "Put your feet on" – signifying Israel's complete victory.

**10:25** 1:9; 8:1.

**10:26,27** Deut 21:22-23.

**10:28-40** In these verses the words "utterly destroyed" and "did not leave anyone" appear again and again. In this Israel was obeying God's clear command (Deut 7:2,16; 20:16-18). The time to judge and destroy godless, hardened, unrepentant peoples had come. See Gen 6:7; 15:16; Lev 18:24; Rev 16:1-7.

**10:40,41** This concluded the campaign to conquer the southern portion of the land of Canaan. The Goshen in v 41 was a place in the southeast part of the desert region of Canaan, not the Goshen in the land of Egypt seen in Gen 45:10 and 47:1.

34 And from Lachish Joshua, and all Israel with him, went on to Eglon and camped against it and fought against it. 35 And they took it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword and that day utterly destroyed every soul who *was* in it, just as he had done everything to Lachish.

36 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, went up from Eglon to Hebron and fought against it, 37 and took it and with the edge of the sword struck it and its king and all its cities and every soul that was in it. He did not leave anyone remaining, just as he had done everything to Eglon. He utterly destroyed it and every soul who *was* in it.

38 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, returned to Debir and fought against it. 39 And he took it and its king and all its cities. And they struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed every soul who *was* in it. He did not leave anyone. He did to Debir and to its king just as he had done to Hebron, and just as he had done to Libnah and to its king.

40 So Joshua attacked the whole hill country and the *land* of the south and of the valley and of the springs, and all their kings. He did not leave anyone, but utterly destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD God of Israel commanded. 41 And Joshua struck them from Kadesh-Barnea to Gaza, and all the country of Goshen to Gibeon. 42 And Joshua captured all these kings and their land at the same time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

43 And Joshua, and all Israel with him, returned to the camp at Gilgal.

**11** And it happened when Jabin king of Hazor heard *these things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon and to the king of Shimron and to the king of Achshaph 2 and to the kings who were in the northern mountains and in the plains south of Kinneroth and in the valley and in the regions of Dor on the west 3 *and to the Canaanite in the east*

**10:42** "Because" – we are reminded again that Israel's victories were not the result of their skill in warfare, but because of God's presence with them, fighting for them. This is a key verse in Joshua. The person seen in 5:13-15 was with them all the way as commander of their army. See also v 14; 23:10; Ex 14:14; Ps 136:24.

**11:1** This chapter brings us to the final section of Joshua's campaign. It records how the northern regions of the promised land were conquered. Hazor was the largest and best fortified of all the cities in Canaan. It was located about 15 kilometers north of the sea of Galilee. Today there remains only ruins (v 11).

**11:2-5** Jabin collected a mighty army from his own people and from his numerous

and in the west and to the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Jebusite in the mountains and *to* the Hivite below Hermon in the land of Mizpeh. 4 And they went out, they and all their armies with them, a people as many as the sand on the seashore in number, with a great many horses and chariots. 5 And all these kings assembled and came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

6 And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them, for about this time tomorrow I will deliver them up before Israel, all killed. You shall hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire."

7 So Joshua, and all the warriors with him, suddenly came against them at the waters of Merom and attacked them. 8 And the LORD delivered them into Israel's hands, who struck them and chased them to great Sidon, and to Misrephoth Maim and to the valley of Mizpeh on the east, and struck them down until they had no survivor left. 9 And Joshua did to them just as the LORD had ordered him; he hamstringing their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

10 And at that time Joshua turned back and took Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for previously Hazor was the head of all those kingdoms. 11 And with the edge of the sword they struck down every soul in it, utterly destroying *them*. There was no one left breathing. And he burned Hazor with fire.

12 And Joshua captured all the cities of those kings and all their kings, and struck them with the edge of the sword *and* utterly destroyed them, just as Moses the LORD's servant commanded. 13 But as for the cities standing on their mounds, Israel did not burn any of them, except Hazor. Joshua did burn *that*. 14 And the children of Israel took all the plunder of these cities, and the

allies from all over the northern area of Canaan. Their horses and chariots should have given them military advantage. But God fought for Israel. Merom was (probably) about thirteen kilometers northwest of the sea of Galilee. "Kinnereth" is another name for Galilee.

**11:6** "Hamstring" – this means cutting the great tendon at the back of the leg near the foot. The animals could not be used again. The Canaanites trusted in horses and chariots; Israel trusted in God. Compare 1 Chron 5:20; Ps 20:7.

**11:8** The Lord once again gained the victory for them.

**11:11,12** 10:28-40.

**11:15** It was this obedience that was so important in conquering the land of promise (1:7,8).

**11:18** "A long time" – several years (14:10). The believer's fight now against spiritual

livestock, as prey for themselves; but they struck down every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, not leaving anyone breathing. 15 Moses commanded Joshua just as the LORD commanded his servant Moses, and Joshua did accordingly. He left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses. 16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills and all the south country and all the land of Goshen and the valley and the plain and the hill country of Israel and its lowland, 17 from Mount Halak that rises toward Seir to Baal Gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. And he captured all their kings, struck them down and killed them. 18 For a long time Joshua waged war with all those kings. 19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the Hivites who lived in Gibeon; all *the others* they captured in battle. 20 For it was the LORD's purpose to harden their hearts, so that they would come against Israel in battle, that *Joshua* might utterly destroy them; that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

21 And at that time Joshua went and cut off the Anakim from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah and from all the mountains of Israel. Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. 22 None of the Anakim was left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod. 23 So Joshua took the whole land, in accordance with all that the LORD said to Moses. And Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

**12** Now these *are* the kings of the land whom the children of Israel struck down and took possession of their land on the other side Jordan

enemies will not be over in a day.

**11:20** "Harden" – see note on Ex 4:21.

"Might utterly destroy them" – note at 10:28-40.

**11:21,22** "Anakim" – the sight of this strong and tall people had brought fear to the hearts of the spies who searched the land in the days of Moses (Num 13:33). Later Moses spoke of them (Deut 9:2). Here special mention is made of the victory over them. No foe is too strong for the Lord (Rom 8:31; Eph 6:10; 1 John 4:4; 5:4).

**11:23** Verse 15; Deut 12:10; Num 34:2. For believers now there are times of rest before the final rest (Heb 4:9,11). And a greater than Joshua leads us there. The Lord Jesus has fought and won our inheritance for us and enables us to enter into it and gives to each his portion.

**12:1-6** A list of the kings defeated by Moses on the west side of Jordan (Num 21:21-35;

toward the sunrise, from the Arnon river to Mount Hermon and all the eastern plain:

2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon *and* ruled from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the Arnon river, and from the middle of the river and from half Gilead to the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon, 3 and from the plain to the sea of Kinneroth on the east, and to the Sea of the Plain, the Salt Sea, on the east, the way to Beth Jeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdod-Pisgah; 4 and the territory of Og king of Bashan, *who was one* of the survivors of the giants, who lived at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, 5 and reigned in Mount Hermon and in Salcah and in all Bashan to the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

6 Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel struck them down, and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it as a possession to the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh.

7 And these *are* the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel struck down on this, the western, side of the Jordan, from Baal Gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak that rises to Seir, which Joshua gave to the tribes of Israel as a possession according to their divisions, 8 in the mountains and in the valleys and in the plains and in the slopes and in the desert and in the south country, *among* the Hittites, the Amorites and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites:

9 The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which *is* next to Bethel, one; 10 the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; 11 the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; 12 the king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; 13 the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; 14 the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; 15 the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; 16 the king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; 17 the king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; 18 the king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; 19 the king of Madon, one; the

king of Hazor, one; 20 the king of Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; 21 the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; 22 the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one; 23 the king of Dor in the region of Dor, one; the king of the nations of Gilgal, one; 24 the king of Tirzah, one; thirty-one kings in all.

**13** Now Joshua was old *and* advanced in years; and the LORD said to him, "You are old *and* advanced in years, and there still remains very much land to be possessed.

2 "This *is* the land that still remains: all the areas of the Philistines, and all Geshuri, 3 from Sihor, which *is* east of Egypt, to the borders of Ekron on the north, *which is* counted as Canaanite *territory*, five lords of the Philistines; the Gazaites and the Ashdodites, the Ashkalonites, the Gittites and the Ekronites; also the Avites; 4 from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah which *is controlled* by the Sidonians, to Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites; 5 and the land of the Glibites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to the entrance to Hamath.

6 "As for all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-Maim, *and* all the Sidonians, I will drive them out from before the children of Israel. Only divide it by lot to the Israelites as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. 7 Now therefore divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh."

8 With *Manasseh's other half*, the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them beyond Jordan eastward. Moses, the LORD's servant, gave them 9 from Aroer, that is on the bank of the Arnon river, and the city that *is* in the middle of the river *valley* and all the plain of Medeba to Dibon, 10 and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, to the border of the children of Ammon, 11 and Gilead and the territory of the Geshurites and Maachathites and all Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salcah, 12 all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained from the survivors of the giants.

2:24-33; 3:8-17).

"Kinnereth" (v 3) – Galilee.

"Sea of the Plain" – the Dead Sea.

**12:6** Num 32:29-33.

**12:7-24** A list of the kings defeated by Joshua on the west side of Jordan.

**12:7** See 11:17.

**13:1** "Joshua was old" – probably over 90.

"Very much land to be possessed" – mostly areas along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and in the far north of the land. As regards the believer's inheritance in Christ, no matter how much he has

claimed for himself there is still a very great deal to be claimed and enjoyed. We should never think we have attained everything attainable (Phil 3:12).

**13:6,7** Joshua was to divide the land in anticipation of final victory. Each tribe, each individual was responsible to enter into the allotted inheritance. How much of our spiritual inheritance in Christ have we entered into? Oh, what riches of glory are in Him, what spiritual fields and flowing valleys and high mountain peaks! – Eph 1:3.

**13:8-12** Num 21:33-35; 32:31-33.

For Moses attacked these and drove them out. 13 However the children of Israel did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites; and the Geshurites and the Maachathites live among the Israelites to this day.

14 Only he did not give an inheritance to the tribe of Levi. Their inheritance *is* the sacrifices by fire to the LORD God of Israel, just as he said to them.

15 And Moses gave to the tribe of the children of Reuben *an inheritance* according to their families. 16 And their boundary was from Aroer, that *is* on the bank of the Arnon river, and the city that *is* in the middle of the river *valley* and all the plain at Medeba; 17 Heshbon and all its towns in the plain; Dibon and Bamoth Baal and Beth Baal Meon 18 and Jahaza and Kedemoth and Mephaath 19 and Kirjathaim and Sibmah and Zareth Shahar on the hill in the valley 20 and Beth Peor and Ashdoth Pisgah and Beth Jeshimoth 21 and all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses struck down with the princes of Midian, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, *who were* princes with Sihon, living in the country.

22 Among those whom the children of Israel slaughtered with the sword they also killed Balaam the son of Beor, who practiced divination.

23 And the border of the children of Reuben was the Jordan and *its* border. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.

24 And Moses gave *an inheritance* to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. 25 And their territory was Jazer and all the cities of Gilead and half the land of the children of Ammon to Aroer that *is* before Rabbah, 26 and from Heshbon to Ramath-Mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir; 27 and in the valley, Beth-Aram and Beth-Nimrah and Succoth and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and *its* border, to the shore of the Sea of Kinnereth on the other side of the Jordan, eastward. 28 This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad according to

their families, the cities and their villages.

29 And Moses gave *an inheritance* to the half tribe of Manasseh. And *this was the possession* of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families: 30 their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which *are* in Bashan, sixty cities; 31 and half Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, *were* for the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir by their families.

32 These *are the regions* which Moses allotted as an inheritance on the plains of Moab, on the other side of the Jordan, opposite Jericho, eastward. 33 But Moses did not give *any* inheritance to the tribe of Levi. The LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said to them.

**14** And these *are the regions* which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the heads of the tribes of the fathers of the children of Israel allotted as an inheritance to them. 2 Their inheritance (for the nine tribes and for the half tribe) *was* by lot, just as the LORD commanded through Moses. 3 For Moses had given the inheritance of two and a half tribes on the other side of the Jordan. But he did not give any inheritance among them to the Levites. 4 For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim; so they gave no portion in the land to the Levites, except cities to live *in*, with their pasture lands for their livestock and for their property. 5 The children of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses, and they allotted the land.

6 Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said to him, "You know the word that the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning me and you in Kadesh-Barnea. 7 I *was* forty years old when the LORD's servant Moses sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him back word just as *it was* in my heart. 8 Nevertheless my brothers who went up with me caused the heart of the people to melt, but I fully followed

**13:13** The land as a whole was conquered, but the individual tribes failed to drive all of their enemies out of their territories. See Judges 1:19-36, and see the result in Judges 2:1-3.

**13:14** Verse 33; Deut 10:9; 18:1-2. Note at Num 18:8-32.

**13:22** "Balaam" - Num 22:5; 31:8.

**13:27** "Kinnereth" - Galilee.

**14:1** Num 34:16-19.

**14:2** Num 26:55,56; Prov 16:33. In this way God Himself was the one who allotted an inheritance to each tribe, to each family.

It was never a matter of personal choice. Now too God gives to each believer what He, in His wisdom, sees he should have in the matter of spiritual gifts as he serves in the heavenly places (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:4-11). And God determines our place in Christ's Body, the Church (1 Cor 12:14-26).

**14:3,4** "Levites" - 13:14.

"Ephraim" - Gen 48:5.

**14:6** Num 14:6-9,24,30; 32:11,12. This took place 38 years before but it was still fresh in the mind of the 85-year-old Caleb.

**14:7-8** Num 13:31-32.



the LORD my God. 9 And that day Moses gave an oath, saying, 'Surely the land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance, and your children's, forever, because you have fully followed the LORD my God.'

10 "And now, see, the LORD has kept me alive, just as he said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while *the children of* Israel wandered in the desert. And now, look, today I am eighty-five years old. 11 Yet I *am* as strong today as I *was* on the day that Moses sent me. My strength now *is* the same as my strength was then, for war and to go out and come in. 12 Now therefore give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* large *and* fortified. If the LORD *will* be with me, then I will be able to drive them out, just as the LORD said."

13 And Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. 14 Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite to this day, because he fully followed the LORD God of Israel. 15 And previously the name of Hebron was Kirjath-Arba (*this* Arba *was* a great man among the Anakim). And the land had rest from war.

**15** *This* then was the allotment for the tribe of the children of Judah by their families: *it reached* the border of Edom, on the south the desert of Zin at the farthest southern point. 2 And their southern border was from the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces south. 3 Then it went on south to Maaleh-Akrabbim and passed along to Zin and rose on the south side to Kadesh-Barnea and passed along to Hezron and went up to Adar and turned about to Karka. 4 *From there* it went to Azmon and continued to the river of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This will be your southern border.

5 And the eastern border was the Salt Sea, up to the end of the Jordan. And *their* northern border *was* from the bay of the sea at the extreme end of the Jordan. 6 And the border went up to Beth-Hoglah and continued to the north of Beth-Arabah; and the border went up to the stone

of Bohan the son of Reuben; 7 and the border went on up to Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, facing Gilgal, that *is* before the ascent to Adummim, which *is* on the south side of the river; and the border continued to the waters of En-Shemesh, and its end was at En-Rogel. 8 And the border proceeded by the valley of the son of Hinnom to the south side of the Jebusite (this *is* Jerusalem); and the border went up to the top of the mountain that *rises* before the valley of Hinnom on the west, which *is* at the end of the Valley of the Giants on the north. 9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill to the spring of the water of Nephtoah, and went on to the cities of Mount Ephron, and the border was drawn to Baalah, which *is* Kirjath-Jearim. 10 And the border turned around from Baalah on the west to Mount Seir and passed along to the side of mount Jearim, which *is* Kesalon, on the north, and went down to Beth-Shemesh and continued on to Timnah. 11 And the border went on to the side of Ekron on the north; and the border was drawn to Shicron and continued along to Mount Baalah and went out to Jabneel. And the end of the border was at the Sea.

12 And the western border *was* at the Great Sea and *its* coast. This is the border around the children of Judah, according to their families.

13 And he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron. 14 And Caleb drove away from there the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak. 15 And he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (previously the name of Debir was Kirjath-Sepher).

16 And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage to the one who attacks Kirjath-Sepher and captures it." 17 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, captured it; and he gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage. 18 And it came about when she came *to him*, that she persuaded him to ask a field from her father. And as she descended from her donkey Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

19 She answered, "Give me a blessing. Since you have given me a land in the south, give me also

**14:9** Deut 1:34-36.

**14:10** This was 7 years after Israel under Joshua moved into Canaan.

**14:11,12** Caleb maintained his spiritual vitality and faith right into old age. Even then he did not look for an easy way, but for more opportunities to serve the Lord in difficult places. He is an example to all who are advanced in years. The Bible has messages for the old, as well as for everyone else.

See Ps 92:12-15; Isa 40:29-31; 46:4.

**14:13,14** Caleb was the only individual, except Joshua (19:49,50), who was permitted to choose his inheritance. These were the only two left alive of all the generation, aged 20 years and over, that came out of Egypt.

**15:2** "Salt Sea" - Dead Sea (also v 5).

**15:12** "Great Sea" - the Mediterranean.

**15:13-19** 14:12; Jud 1:10-15,20.

**15:18,19** "The south" - in Hebrew "The

springs of water." And he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

20 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families.

21 And the most distant cities of the tribe of the children of Judah on the south toward the territory of Edom were Kabzeel and Eder and Jagur 22 and Kinah and Dimonah and Adadah 23 and Kedesh and Hazor and Ithnan, 24 Ziph and Telem and Bealoth, 25 and Hazor, Hadattah and Kerioth and Hezron, which *is* Hazor, 26 Amam and Shema and Moladah 27 and Hazar-Gaddah and Heshmon and Beth-Palet, 28 and Hazar Shual and Beersheba and Bizjothjah, 29 Baalah and Iim and Azem, 30 and Eltolad and Chesil and Hormah, 31 and Ziklag and Madmannah and Sansannah, 32 and Lebaoth and Shilhim and Ain and Rimmon; in all, twenty-nine cities, with their villages.

33 And in the lowlands were Eshtaol and Zoreah and Ashmah, 34 and Zanoah and Engannim, Tappuah and Enam, 35 Jarmuth and Adullam, Socoh and Azekah, 36 and Sharaim and Adithaim and Gederah and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages; 37 Zenan and Hadashah and Migdal-Gad, 38 and Dilean and Mizpeh and Joktheel, 39 Lachish and Bozkath and Eglon, 40 and Cabbon and Lahmam and Kithlish, 41 and Gederath, Beth-Dagon and Naamah and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages; 42 Libnah and Ether and Ashan, 43 and Jiphtah and Ashnah and Nezib, 44 and Keilah and Achzib and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages; 45 Ekron, with her towns and her villages; 46 from Ekron to the sea, all that *lay* near Ashdod, with their villages; 47 Ashdod with her towns and her villages; Gaza with her towns and her villages, to the river of Egypt, and the Great Sea and *its* shoreline; 48 and in the mountains, Shamir and Jattir and Socoh, 49 and Dannah and Kirjath-Sannah, which *is* Debir, 50 and Anab and Eshtemoah and Anim, 51 and Goshen and Holon and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages; 52 Arab and Dumah and Eshean, 53 and Janum and Beth-Tappuah and Aphekah, 54 and Humtah and Kirjath-Arba, which *is* Hebron, and Zior; nine cities

with their villages; 55 Maon, Carmel and Ziph and Juttah, 56 and Jezreel and Jokdeam and Zanoah, 57 Cain, Gibeah and Timnah; ten cities with their villages; 58 Halhul, Beth-Zur and Gedor, 59 and Maarath and Beth-Anoth and Eltekon; six cities with their villages; 60 Kirjath-Baal, which *is* Kirjath-Jearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages; 61 in the wilderness, Beth Arabah, Middin and Secacah, 62 and Nibshan, and the city of Salt and Engedi; six cities with their villages.

63 As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out, and the Jebusites live among the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

**16** And the allotment of the children of Joseph fell from the Jordan at Jericho to the water of Jericho on the east to the wilderness that extends up from Jericho through the hill country of Bethel, 2 and continues out from Bethel to Luz, and proceeds along to the borders of Archi to Ataroth, 3 and goes down on the west to the border of Japhleti to the border of Upper Beth-Horon and on to Gezer. And its end was at the Sea.

4 So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim took their inheritance.

5 And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was *this*: the border of their inheritance on the east was Ataroth-Addar, to Upper Beth-Horon; 6 and the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north; and the border turned about on the east to Taanath-Shiloh and continued on by it on the east to Janohah; 7 and it went down from Janohah to Ataroth and to Naarath and came to Jericho, and came out at the Jordan. 8 The border went out from Tappuah on the west to the stream of Kanah; and its end was at the sea. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families. 9 And the cities set apart for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

10 And they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, and the Canaanites live among

Negev." This was a dry desert area in the south of Canaan. Therefore Achsah's request for springs of water was reasonable. **15:63** Judges 1:21; 2 Sam 5:6-7. The efforts of Judah and Benjamin were unsuccessful in driving out the Jebusites. Other tribes had similar difficulties - Jud 1:19-36. God had assured Joshua that no one would be able to withstand them if they were obedient to His law (1:5-8). The weakness or defeat, not only of Benjamin and Judah, but of other tribes also, was the result of partial obedience, and feeble faith. If we now fail to claim and experience victories in the heavenly

places the reasons will be the same.

**16:1** The two tribes descended from Joseph (Manasseh and Ephraim) received as their inheritance some of the finest, most fruitful areas in Canaan. See the blessings pronounced on them by Jacob in Gen 49:22-26 and by Moses in Deut 33:13-17. Since the lot for their inheritance was determined by God this suggests that past behavior, God's foreknowledge of the future, and the inspired words of Jacob and Moses concerning the tribes, had much to do with the inheritance each tribe received.

**16:10** Another instance of incomplete

the Ephraimites to this day and serve as forced laborers.

**17** There was also an allotment for the tribe of Manasseh, for he was the firstborn of Joseph; *an allotment* for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead. Because he was a warrior, he had Gilead and Bashan. **2** There was also *an allotment* for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families, for the children of Abiezer and for the children of Helek and for the children of Asriel and for the children of Shechem and for the children of Hephher and for the children of Shemida. These were the male *descendants* of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.

**3** But Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh had no sons, only daughters; and these *are* the names of his daughters: Mahlah and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. **4** And they approached the presence of Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the leaders, saying, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brothers." Therefore, in accordance with the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among the brothers of their father. **5** And ten portions fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which *were* on the other side of the Jordan, **6** because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons, and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

**7** And the border of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, which *was* east of Shechem; and the border went along toward the south to the inhabitants of En-Tappuah. **8** *Now* Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *belonged* to the children of Ephraim. **9** And the border descended to the river Kanah, to the south of the river. These cities of Ephraim *are* among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh also *was* on the north side of the river, and it ended at the Sea. **10** On the south it was Ephraim's, and on the north *it was* Manasseh's, and the Sea was their border; and they met in

victory because of disobedience. In this case it is not written that they *could not* drive them out, only that they *did not*. They had been commanded not to permit any of the Canaanites to live among them – Deut 20:16-18. The Canaanites were still in Gezer a few centuries later, in king Solomon's time (1 Kings 19:16). Note at Josh 15:63.

**17:3-4** Num 27:1-11. In Christ women and men share equally in the inheritance – in regard to that there is neither male nor female (Gal 3:28).

**17:11-13** 15:63; 16:10; Jud 1:27-28. Here is yet another example of weakness due to disobedience. See note at 15:63.

Asher on the north and in Issachar on the east.

**11** And Manasseh had in the territories of Issachar and Asher Beth-Shean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, three areas.

**12** But the children of Manasseh could not drive out *the inhabitants of* those cities; for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. **13** But it happened, when the children of Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not completely drive them out.

**14** And the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me *only* one allotment and one portion to inherit, since I *am* a numerous people? Up to now the LORD has blessed me."

**15** And Joshua answered them, "If you *are* a numerous people, *then* go up to the forest *area* and clear *land* for yourself there in the region of the Perizzites and the giants, since the hill country of Ephraim is too cramped for you."

**16** And the children of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the lowlands have iron chariots, *both the ones who belong* to Beth-Shean and her towns, and *the ones who are* in the valley of Jezreel."

**17** And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, "You *are* a numerous people and have great strength; you are not to have *just* one allotment, **18** for the mountain will be yours. It *is* forest, and you shall clear it, and it shall be yours to the end of it. For you shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have iron chariots *and* though they are strong."

**18** And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

**17:14** "Joseph" – Manasseh and Ephraim.

**17:15-18** They claimed to be a great people in v 14, yet now (v 16) express their fear that they would not be able to defeat the Canaanites. Where was their faith? Joshua tells them to act like the great people they profess to be. It was faith in operation that would lay hold of all their inheritance, not their boasting of God's blessing.

**18:1** The tent of meeting, the tabernacle, was set up at Shiloh which remained the principal holy place throughout the time of the Judges. Shiloh was located in the territory of Ephraim about 16 kilometers north of Bethel and about twice that distance from

2 And seven tribes remained among the children of Israel which had not yet received their inheritance.

3 And Joshua said to the children of Israel, "How long *will you be* slack in going to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers has given you? 4 Appoint from among yourselves three men for each tribe, and I will send them out; and they will rise and go throughout the land and write a description of it according to their inheritance, and come *back* to me. 5 And they shall divide it into seven parts. Judah is to stay in their borders in the south, and the house of Joseph is to stay in their borders in the north. 6 So you shall write a description of the seven divisions of the land, and bring *the description* here to me, so that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. 7 But the Levites are to have no portion among you; for the priesthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance. And Gad and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which the LORD's servant Moses gave them."

8 And the men arose and went away. Joshua had given orders to those who went to write a description of the land, saying, "Go and walk through the land, and write a description of it, and come back to me, so that I may cast lots for you before the LORD here in Shiloh."

9 And the men went and passed through the land and wrote a description of it by cities in seven divisions in a book and came *back* to Joshua to the camp at Shiloh. 10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there Joshua apportioned the land to the children of Israel according to their divisions.

11 And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families. And the territory of their lot came between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. 12 And their border on the north was from the Jordan; and the border went up by the side of Jericho on the north and continued up through the mountains to the west; and its end was at the wilderness of Beth-Aven. 13 And the border went on from there toward Luz, at the side of Luz, which *is* Bethel, to the south; and the border went down to Ataroth-Adar, near the hill that *rises* to the south of Lower Beth-Horon. 14 And the border was drawn *from there* and went around the edge of the sea on the

south, from the hill that *rises* before Beth-Horon on the south. And its end was at Kirjath-Baal, which *is* Kirjath-Jearim, a city of the children of Judah. This was the western side.

15 And the south side was from the end of Kirjath-Jearim, and the border went on to the west and continued to the well of the waters of Nephtoah; 16 and the border came down to the end of the mountain that rises before the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is in the Valley of the Giants on the north, and went down to the valley of Hinnom to the southern side of Jebusi, and descended to En-Rogel. 17 And it was drawn from the north, and went on to En-Shemesh, and continued toward Gelliloth, which *is* opposite the ascent of Adummim, and went down to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben, 18 and proceeded along toward the side opposite the Arabah on the north and went down to the Arabah; 19 and the border continued along by the side of Beth-Hoglah on the north; and the end of the border was at the north bay of the Salt Sea at the southern end of Jordan. This *was* the southern boundary.

20 And the Jordan was its border on the eastern side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by its surrounding boundaries, according to their families.

21 Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho and Beth-Hoglah and the valley of Keziz, 22 and Beth-Arabah and Zemaraim and Bethel, 23 and Avim and Parah and Ophrah, 24 and Kephar-Haammonai and Ophni and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages; 25 Gibeon and Ramah and Beeroth, 26 and Mizpeh and Kephirah and Mozah, 27 and Rekem and Irpeel and Taralah, 28 and Zelah, Eleph and Jebusi, which *is* Jerusalem, Gibeath and Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This *is* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

**19** And the second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.

2 And in their inheritance they had Beersheba and Sheba and Moladah, 3 and Hazarshual and Balah and Azem, 4 and Eltolad and Bethul and Hormah, 5 and Ziklag and Beth-Marcaboth and

Jerusalem. The tabernacle remained in Shiloh until the time of Samuel. Note on the tent of meeting at Ex 25:8. The land as a whole had been conquered but it had to be claimed by the individual tribes and settled.

**18:6** Note on 14:2.

**18:7** 13:33; Num 18:20; Deut 18:1-6. The priests and Levites had the greatest

inheritance of them all.

**18:10** The division of the land was begun at Gilgal (13:7), and was then continued at Shiloh where land was allotted to the remaining seven tribes (v 2).

**18:19** "Salt Sea" – Dead Sea.

**19:1-9** Simeon's inheritance was in the south of the land, within the allotment made to

Hazar-Susah, 6 and Beth-Lebaoth and Sharuhén; thirteen cities and their villages; 7 Ain, Remmon and Ether and Ashan; four cities and their villages; 8 and all the villages that surrounded these cities to Baalath-Beer, Ramath of the south. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. 9 The inheritance of the children of Simeon was from the portion of the children of Judah; for the portion of the children of Judah was too much for them. So the children of Simeon had their inheritance within their inheritance.

10 And the third lot came out for the children of Zebulun according to their families; and the border of their inheritance was to Sarid; 11 and their border went up toward the Sea and Maralah, and extended to Dabbasheth and went on to the river that *is* before Jokneam, 12 and turned from Sarid on the east toward sunrise to the border of Kisloth-Tabor, and then went on to Daberath and went up to Japhia. 13 And from there it continued along on the east to Gittah-Hepher, to Ittahkazin, and went on to Remmon-Methoar to Neah; 14 and the border circled around it on the north to Hannathon; and its end was in the valley of Jiphthahel; 15 and *it included* Kattath, and Nahallal and Shimron and Idalah and Bethlehem; twelve cities with their villages.

16 This *is* the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

17 And the fourth lot came out for Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. 18 And their border was toward Jezreel, and *included* Kesulloth and Shunem 19 and Haphraim and Shihon and Anaharath 20 and Rabbith and Kishion and Abez 21 and Remeth and Engannim and Enhaddah and Beth-Pazzez; 22 and the border extended to Tabor and Shahazimah and Beth-Shemesh; and the end of their border was at the Jordan; sixteen cities with their villages.

23 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

24 And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. 25 And their border was at Helkath and Hali and Beten and Achshaph, 26 and Alammelech and Amad and Misheal, and it extended to Carmel on the west and to Shihor-Libnath; 27 and turned toward the sunrise to Beth-Dagon and extended to Zebulun

and to the valley of Jiphthahel toward the north of Beth-Emek and Neiel and went on to Cabul on the north, 28 and Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, even to greater Sidon; 29 and *then* the border turned toward Ramah and to the strong city of Tyre; and the border turned to Hosah; and its end was at the sea from the coast to Achzib; 30 *it included* Ummah also and Aphek and Rehob; twenty-two cities with their villages.

31 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

32 The sixth lot came out for the children of Naphtali, for the children of Naphtali according to their families. 33 And their border was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim and Adami, Nekeb and Jabneel, to Lakum; and its end was at the Jordan; 34 then the border turned to the west to Aznoth-Tabor, and went on from there to Hukkok, and extended to Zebulun on the south and extended to Asher on the west and to Judah on the Jordan toward sunrise. 35 And the fortified cities *are* Ziddim, Zer and Hammath, Rakkath, and Kinnereth, 36 and Adamah and Ramah and Hazor 37 and Kedesh and Edrei and En-Hazor 38 and Iron and Migdalel, Horem and Beth-Anath and Beth-Shemesh; nineteen cities with their villages.

39 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

40 And the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. 41 And the border of their inheritance included Zorah and Eshtaol and Ir-Shemesh 42 and Shaalabbin and Ajalon and Jethlah 43 and Elon and Thimnathah and Ekron 44 and Eltekeh and Gibbethon and Baalath 45 and Jehud and Bene-Berak and Gath-Rimmon 46 and Mejarkon and Rakkon, with the border before Japho.

47 And the border of the children of Dan encompassed too little for them; therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it and struck it with the edge of the sword and possessed it and lived in it, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

48 This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

49 When they had finished apportioning the land for an inheritance by their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua

the tribe of Judah. See Gen 49:7.

**19:10-16** Zebulun was in Galilee, west of the sea.

**19:17-23** Issachar was southeast of Zebulun.

**19:24-31** Asher was along the Mediterranean coast, north of Mt Carmel.

**19:32-39** Naphtali was east of Asher, north of Issachar.

**19:40-48** Dan was west of Ephraim and extended to the coast of the Mediterranean.

**19:47** Leshem was in the far north of the land, near Mt Hermon – Jud 18:27-31.



the son of Nun among them. 50 In accordance with the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, Timnath-Serah in the hill country of Ephraim. And he built the city and lived in it.

51 These are the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the leaders of the tribes of the fathers of the children of Israel, apportioned as an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they finished apportioning the country.

**20** Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Set apart for yourselves cities of refuge, about which I spoke to you through Moses, 3 so that a man who kills another person, striking him unintentionally, unwittingly, may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4 "And when the one who flees to one of those cities stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall let him come to them inside the city and give him a place to stay, so that he can live among them. 5 And if the avenger of blood pursues him, then they shall not hand the one who killed the other over to them, because he struck his neighbour unwittingly, and did not hate him previously. 6 And he is to live in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest who will be in those days. Afterwards the man who killed the other shall return to his own city and to his own house, to the city that he fled from."

7 And they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and Kirjath-Arba, which is Hebron, in the mountains of Judah. 8 And on the other side of the Jordan near Jericho on the east, from the tribe of Reuben, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, and Ramoth in Gilead from the tribe of

Gad, and Golan in Bashan from the tribe of Manasseh. 9 These were the cities set apart for all the children of Israel and for the foreigners living among them, so that whoever kills a person unintentionally might flee there, and remain until he stands before the congregation, and not die at the hand of the avenger of blood.

**21** Then the heads of the Levite fathers' families approached Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the heads of the tribes of the fathers of the children of Israel, 2 and spoke to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, "The LORD gave orders through Moses to give us cities to live in, with their pasture lands for our cattle."

3 And in accordance with the command of the LORD, the children of Israel gave these cities and their pasture lands to the Levites, from their inheritance:

4 And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites; and the children of Aaron the priest, who were of the Levites, had thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah and from the tribe of Simeon and from the tribe of Benjamin. 5 And the rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim and from the tribe of Dan and from the half tribe of Manasseh.

6 And the children of Gershon *had* thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar and from the tribe of Asher and from the tribe of Naphtali and from the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

7 The children of Merari by their families *had* twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben and from the tribe of Gad and from the tribe of Zebulun.

8 And the children of Israel gave these cities with their pasture lands to the Levites by lot, just as the LORD commanded through Moses.

9 And from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon they

**19:50** 14:13,14; 24:30.

**19:51** 16:1-9. The land was apportioned as God saw fit. Some tribes were given more land than the others and some areas were more fruitful than others. But all received something and there was a suitable place for each tribe, family and individual. Reward for past behavior entered into the allotment for each though everything given was of God's grace, since no one fully deserved anything. It seems clear that the prophetic blessings pronounced by Jacob in Genesis chapter 49 and by Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 33 were in line with what each tribe received.

**20:1-9** See note on cities of refuge at Num 35:9-32.

**20:4-5** In addition to the regulations given to Moses, there are here laid down the

responsibilities of the city elders. A person who fled to a city of refuge had to respect their position, and the elders should be people of discernment who upheld justice. Trials were not to be held in secret but before the assembly.

**21:1-42** Num 35:1-8; 1 Chron 6:54-81.

**21:2** "Cities" – they did not possess the towns but lived with the other people there.

**21:3** "From their inheritance" – it was the privilege and duty of the people of Israel to provide for the servants of God who served in the tabernacle and temple. So is it now – 1 Cor 9:7-14.

**21:4-7** The three families of the Levites sprang from the three sons of Levi (Ex 6:16; Num 3:17).

**21:9-40** All the tribes, not just one or two,

gave these cities which are *here* mentioned by name, 10 which the children of Aaron, *being* of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi, possessed; for theirs was the first lot.

11 And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *is* Hebron, in the hill *country* of Judah, with its surrounding pasture lands. 12 But the fields of the city and its villages, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.

13 So they gave Hebron with its pasture lands to the children of Aaron the priest *to be* a city of refuge for anyone who killed *another person*; and Libnah with its pasture lands 14 and Jattir with its pasture lands and Eshtemoa with its pasture lands 15 and Holon with its pasture lands and Debir with its pasture lands 16 and Ain with its pasture lands and Juttah with its pasture lands *and* Beth-Shemesh with its pasture lands; nine cities from those two tribes; 17 and from the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with its pasture lands, Geba with its pasture lands, 18 Anathoth with its pasture lands, and Almon with its pasture lands; four cities.

19 The cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities in all, with their pasture lands.

20 And as for the families of the children of Kohath, the rest of the Levites of the children of Kohath, by their lot they had the cities from the tribe of Ephraim.

21 For they gave them Shechem with its pasture lands in the hill country of Ephraim *to be* a city of refuge for anyone who killed *another person*; and Gezer with its pasture lands 22 and Kibzaim with its pasture lands and Beth-Horon with its pasture lands; four cities; 23 and from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its pasture lands, Gibbethon with its pasture lands, 24 Aijalon with its pasture lands, Gath-Rimmon with its pasture lands; four cities; 25 and from the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its pasture lands and Gath Rimmon with its pasture lands; two cities.

26 All the cities with their pasture lands for the families of the children of Kohath who were left *were* ten.

27 And they gave to the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, from the *other* half tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan with its pasture

lands, to be a city of refuge for anyone who killed *another person*, and Beeshterah with its pasture lands; two cities; 28 and from the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with its pasture lands, Dabareh with its pasture lands, 29 Jarmuth with its pasture lands, Engannim with its pasture lands; four cities; 30 and from the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands, 31 Helkath with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands; four cities; 32 and from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands *to be* a city of refuge for anyone who killed *another person*, and Hammoth-Dor with its pasture lands and Kartan with its pasture lands; three cities.

33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families *were* thirteen cities, with their suburbs.

34 And *they gave* to the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its pasture lands and Kartah with its pasture lands, 35 Dimnah with its pasture lands, Nahalal with its pasture lands; four cities; 36 and from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with its pasture lands, and Jahazah with its pasture lands, 37 Kedemoth with its pasture lands, and Mephaath with its pasture lands; four cities; 38 and from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands *to be* a city of refuge for anyone who killed *another person*, and Mahanaim with its pasture lands, 39 Heshbon with its pasture lands, Jazer with its pasture lands; four cities in all.

40 So all the cities by their lot for the children of Merari by their families, which were left of the families of the Levites, were twelve cities.

41 All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel *were* forty-eight cities with their suburbs. 42 Each of these cities was with its surrounding pasture lands; *it was* the same for all these cities.

43 And the LORD gave to Israel all the land which he swore to give to their fathers; and they took possession of it, and lived in it. 44 And the LORD gave them rest on all sides, in accordance with all that he swore to their fathers; and not a man of all their enemies stood before them. The LORD delivered all their enemies into their hands. 45 No good thing that the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

had the responsibility of providing for the servants of God.

**21:41** The cities for the Levites were scattered throughout the nation. No tribe was left out. The Levites had to be in touch with the people as a whole and always in a position to serve them. This would have been a unifying factor in the social and religious life of Israel.

**21:43** Gen 15:18-21; 17:8; 28:13.

**21:44** "Rest" – 1:13.

**21:45** 23:14. 1 Kings 8:56; Neh 9:8. God always fulfills His word – Num 11:23; 23:19; Ps 119:140; 145:13; Isa 45:19; Matt 5:18; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18. Verses 43-45 do not deny the measure in which Israel failed to enter fully into their inheritance. God is faithful, but sometimes the unfaithfulness and disobedience of God's people rob

**22** Then Joshua called the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh, 2 and said to them, "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. 3 You have not left your brethren these many days until today, but have been careful *to fulfil* the responsibility of the commandment of the LORD your God. 4 And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brethren, as he promised them. Therefore return now and go to your homes and to the land of your possession, which the LORD's servant Moses gave you on the other side of the Jordan. 5 But be very careful to keep the command and the law, which the LORD's servant Moses commanded you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, and to cling to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

6 So Joshua blessed them and sent them away. And they went to their homes. 7 Now to *one* half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given *territory* in Bashan; but to the *other* half of it Joshua gave *territory* among their brethren on the western side of the Jordan. And so when Joshua sent them away to their homes, he blessed them, 8 and he spoke to them, saying, "Return to your homes with great riches and with very much livestock, with silver and with gold and with bronze and with iron and with a great quantity of clothing. Share the plunder from your enemies with your brethren."

9 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned *home*, leaving the children of Israel from Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the region of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they had taken in accordance with the word of the LORD through Moses.

10 And when they came to the vicinity of the Jordan, in the land of Canaan, the children of

Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar near the Jordan, in appearance a great altar.

11 And the children of Israel heard *it* said, "See, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the border of the land of Canaan, in the vicinity of the Jordan, on the side *belonging* to the children of Israel."

12 And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go out to war against them.

13 And the children of Israel sent *men* to the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh into the land of Gilead. *They were* Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, 14 and ten leaders with him, a leader from each chief household throughout all the tribes of Israel. Each one *was* the head of the household of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.

15 And they came to the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, 16 "This is what the whole congregation of the LORD says, What *is* this unfaithful deed that you have committed against the God of Israel, turning away this day from following the LORD by building an altar for yourselves to rebel this day against the LORD? 17 *Was* the sin at Peor too little for us? We are not cleansed from that until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD. 18 And must you turn away this day from following the LORD? And *since* you are rebelling today against the LORD, it will come about that tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.

19 "If, however, the land of your possession *is* unclean, *then* cross over to the land of the LORD's possession, where the LORD's tabernacle is

them of the full reception or enjoyment of what God has given.

**22:1-4** Num 32:20-22; Deut 3:18-20.

**22:5** Deut 10:12,13.

**22:7** 17:1-3.

**22:8** "Riches" – gained from the captured land and cities of Canaan.

"Brethren" – those left behind in the territories east of the Jordan (Lev 17:8-9; Deut 12:5-13).

**22:10-34** This records a misunderstanding that almost had disastrous consequences (v 12). The misunderstanding was the result of a hasty conclusion about an ambiguous action. Fortunately the Israelites sent delegates to learn the facts, and trouble was averted. We should always be careful not to leap to conclusions about things we hear about others, and not to

form opinions without real evidence.

**22:11,12** God commanded the people not to give offerings on any altar except the one He chose – Lev 17:8,9; Deut 12:5-13. The nine and one half tribes in Canaan thought that the two and one half tribes east of the Jordan river were planning to break this command and set up a rival altar. The unity of the nation was in danger.

**22:13,14** Fortunately they were not as hasty in going to war as they were in misunderstanding and condemning. Cooler heads prevailed and the matter was thoroughly investigated.

**22:15-20** These ambassadors expressed the reason for the concern Israel felt. Rebellion would bring God's anger on the whole nation (v 18).

**22:17** "Peor" – note at Num 25:1-9.

staying, and take possession *of land* among us. But do not rebel against the LORD, or against us, by building an altar for yourselves in addition to the altar of the LORD our God. 20 Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit an unfaithful deed in *regard to* the accursed thing? And anger fell on all the congregation of Israel. And that man did not perish alone in his sin."

21 Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the thousands of Israel, 22 "The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knows, and Israel should know. Do not save us this day if *it is* in rebellion or in unfaithfulness against the LORD 23 that we have built an altar for ourselves to turn from following the LORD, or if *we built it* to offer burnt offering or grain offering on it, or if to offer peace offerings on it. May the LORD himself demand *an account*, 24 if we have not rather done it for fear of *this* thing, saying, In the future your children might speak to our children, saying, 'What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel? 25 For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between us and you, you children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD.' So your children may cause our children to stop fearing the LORD.

26 "Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build an altar for ourselves, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, 27 but *that it may be* a witness between us and you, and our generations after us, that we will serve the LORD before him with our burnt offerings and with our sacrifices and with our peace offerings, so that in the future your children may not say to our children, 'You have no part in the LORD.'

28 "Therefore we said that it shall come about, if they say *this* to us or to our future generations, that we may say *in response*, See this copy of the

altar of the LORD which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.

29 "God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, in addition to the altar of the LORD our God that *is* before his tabernacle."

30 And when Phinehas the priest, and the leaders of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel who *were* with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them. 31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben and to the children of Gad and to the children of Manasseh, "Today we see that the LORD *is* among us, because you have not acted unfaithfully against the LORD. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD."

32 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest and the leaders *left* the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the land of Gilead, and returned to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them. 33 And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel praised God and spoke no more of going up against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad lived.

34 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar "Witness." "For", they said, "it *shall be* a witness between us that the LORD is God."

**23** And it came about a long time after the LORD had given rest to Israel from all their enemies on every side, that Joshua became old *and* advanced in age. 2 And Joshua called for all Israel *and* for their elders and for their heads and

**22:20** They well remembered the lesson God taught through Achan's sin. See 7:1-26.

**22:22** The repetition of these names of God suggests strong emphasis.

**22:23-29** Here is an emphatic denial of wrong motives and a clear explanation of their actions. The tribes of Israel were independent to some extent but were united by their worship of Jehovah which was carried on at one central place (at that time this place was Shiloh). The two and one half tribes were building an altar, not for sacrifice (v 26), but as a witness to the unity of God's people (v 27). What they were accused of was the exact opposite of the truth. So easily the inner thoughts and motives of fellow believers can be misunderstood because of some unexplained action. Believers now should have no less burden than the Israelites

to maintain their unity in the Lord in the bonds of peace (Eph 4:3-6,13; Phil 4:2; Col 3:11).

"Peace offerings" – Lev 3:1.

**22:31** "Delivered" – by their clear explanation of their actions they had averted an unjust and unreasonable war between the tribes, which would surely have brought the anger of God on the whole nation.

**22:33** The result of reconciliation and unity. Compare Ps 133.

**22:34** The witness was that the LORD (Jehovah), the God who chose Israel and made a covenant with them, was the only God in existence. See 20:1-6; Deut 4:35; Isa 43:10-12; 44:6; 45:21,2.

**23:1** "Rest" – 1:13.

**23:2** Israel's leader, after a lifetime of faithful service, desired to give parting words of wisdom and counsel.

for their judges and for their officers, and said to them, "I am old *and* advanced in age; 3 and you have seen all that the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; for the LORD your God is the one who has fought for you. 4 See, I have apportioned to you by lot these nations that remain, with all the nations that I have cut off, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan to the great sea on the west. 5 And the LORD your God will expel them from before you, and drive them out of your sight; and you shall possess their land, as the LORD your God has promised to you.

6 "Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you turn not aside from it to the right hand or to the left, 7 so that you do not mingle with these nations, these that remain among you, or mention the name of their gods or make oaths *by them* or serve them or bow down to them, 8 but cling to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day.

9 "For the LORD has driven out from before you great and strong nations; but *as for* you, no man has been able to stand before you to this day. 10 One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God *is* the one who fights for you, as he has promised you. 11 Therefore be careful about yourselves. See that you love the LORD your God.

12 "For if you ever turn back and cling to the survivors of these nations, these that remain among you, and intermarry with them and go in to them and they to you, 13 know for a certainty that the

LORD your God will no longer drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps to you and whips on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. 14 And, see, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth. And you all know in your hearts and in your souls that not one of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed. All have been fulfilled for you, *and* not one word of it has failed. 15 Therefore this *is how it* will be: just as all the good things which the LORD your God promised you have come on you, so the LORD will bring on you every bad thing until he has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. 16 When you break the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you will quickly perish from the good land which he has given to you."

**24** And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel and for their heads and for their judges and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'In olden times your fathers, Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, lived on the other side of the *Euphrates* river; and they served other gods.

**23:3** 10:14,42; Ps 44:3.

**23:4,5** Joshua calls to mind all that God had already given to His people. Every believer should always keep in remembrance the grace of God shown toward them in the past, and so have confidence for the future. The promise in v 5 refers to those enemies that still remained in the land (13:1,13; 16:10; 17:12,13).

"Great sea" – Mediterranean.

**23:6** 1:7. Joshua had learned by experience the importance and blessedness of this. The promise of v 5 was based on this condition. If they did not do this, God would not do that.

**23:7** "Mingle" – Ex 34:15,16; Deut 7:1-4; 1 Cor 15:33; 2 Cor 6:14-18. Fellowship with evil people who do not want to walk in God's ways will almost surely corrupt God's people.

"Bow down to them" – Ex 20:1-5; 23:13; Ps 16:4. God's people must maintain their separation from the evils and godless standards of the world around them, and from the many gods of the world.

**23:8** "Cling" – Deut 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; 30:20.

**23:10** Lev 26:8; Deut 32:30. The presence of the Lord with even one of His people provides greater power than is possessed

by all the forces of evil (Ps 18:32-39; Rom 8:31; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14; Phil 4:13; 1 John 4:4).

**23:11** "Love" – Deut 6:5; 11:1; Matt 22:36-40; John 14:15,21,23. Love for God would be the motive power that would cause them to obey God's commandments, and keep them from the evils of the world.

**23:12** Deut 7:3-4. Marriage is forbidden between God's special people and those who are not. This is a principle clearly taught in the New Testament also (2 Cor 6:14-15).

**23:13** Ex 23:33; 34:12; 7:16. God's promises were based on certain conditions. Obedience would bring great blessing, disobedience would bring disaster.

**23:14** 21:45.

**23:15,16** Lev 26:14-33; Deut 28:15-63. These verses show very clearly that these promises God made to them were based on conditions.

"Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**24:1** This chapter records a public renewal of the covenant God made with Israel.

**24:2** "Thus says the LORD God" – from here to v 14 Joshua speaks the very words God had given him to say.

"Fathers" – Gen 11:27-33.



3 And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the river and led him through the whole land of Canaan, and increased the number of his offspring and gave him Isaac. 4 And I gave Jacob and Esau to Isaac; and I gave Mount Seir to Esau to possess. But Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

5 "And I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt by what I did among them; and afterwards I brought you, 6 and I brought your fathers out of Egypt; and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. 7 And when they cried out to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea over them and covered them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt; and you lived in the desert for a long time.

8 "And I brought you into the land of the Amorites who lived on the other side of the Jordan. And they fought with you; and I gave them into your hands, so that you might possess their land. And I destroyed them from before you. 9 Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent *men* and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. 10 But I would not listen to Balaam. Therefore he had to bless you. So I delivered you out of his hands.

11 "And you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the men of Jericho fought against you, *as did* the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. And I delivered them into your hands. 12 And I sent hornets before you, which drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, *but* not with your sword or with

your bow. 13 And I have given you a land for which you did not labour and cities which you did not build, and you live in them. You eat the *fruit* of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

14 "Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the river and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, today choose whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you live. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

16 And the people answered and said, "God forbid that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods. 17 For the LORD our God *is* the one who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us all along the way where we travelled and among all the people through whom we passed. 18 And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, the Amorites who lived in the land. *Therefore* we too will serve the LORD; for he *is* our God."

19 And Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for he *is* a holy God, he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. 20 If you forsake the LORD and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you harm and make an end of you, after the good he has done you."

21 And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD."

22 And Joshua said to the people, "You *are*

**24:4** Gen 25:25-26; 46:6-7; Deut 2:15.

**24:5** Ex 4:14-16; 7:8-10:29; 12:29,51.

**24:6** Ex 14:1-9. "Horsemen" – or it could be translated "charioteers."

**24:7** Ex 14:10-31. "Long time" – 40 years.

**24:8** Num 21:21-35.

**24:9** Num 21:1-6.

**24:10** Numbers chapters 23,24.

**24:11** 6:1-27.

**24:12** "Hornets" – Ex 23:28; Deut 7:20.

"Bow" – 10:14,42; Ps 44:3,6,7.

**24:13** Deut 6:10-12. The land was God's gift to them. It was all of grace. Just as the believer's possessions in Christ are all of grace (Eph 1:3-6).

**24:14** Now Joshua himself speaks to Israel.

"Fear" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"Serve him. . . in truth" – faithfully – an essential quality for the people of God (1 Sam 12:24).

"Put away" – it seems from this that, at least in heart, some of the people were worshipping false gods even then (v 23).

**24:15** "Choose" – he calls them to an open, deliberate choice. See 1 Kings 18:21. And

the choice was to be made immediately "today." A decision like this is not to be put off into the indefinite future. To put it off is to reveal that there is no intention of serving the true God. As for himself Joshua's choice had already been made and he publicly testifies to it.

"Household" – he was not one to let his family members serve other gods. Doubtless he spoke in faith. Compare 6:25; Acts 16:31; Eph 6:4; 1 Tim 3:4,5; Heb 11:7.

**24:16-18** The people knew much of God's Word and doings; they professed strongly their intention to be faithful to Him. Yet false gods were in their midst (v 23), and in heart they were a rebellious (v 19) people. In every generation some who profess to be God's people are ignorant of the power of their sinful natures and easily think and say they will serve God (Ex 19:8; Jer 17:9; etc.).

**24:19** "Cannot" – Joshua knew them better than they knew themselves. And the whole book of Judges (not to speak of the rest of the Bible) shows how right he was in this.

"Holy" – note at Lev 20:7. "Jealous" –

witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve him.”

And they said, “We are witnesses.”

23 “Now therefore”, *he said*, “put away the foreign gods which *are* among you and turn your heart to the LORD God of Israel.”

24 And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God, and obey his voice.”

25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day and set before them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. 26 And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone and set it up there under an oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD.

27 And Joshua said to all the people, “See, this stone will be a witness to us; for it has heard all the words of the LORD which he spoke to us; so it will be a witness to you, that you should not deny your God.”

28 So Joshua let the people depart, each one to his inheritance.

29 And it came about after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* a hundred and ten years old. 30 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-Serah, which *is* in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash. 31 And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, and who knew all the deeds of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

32 And in Shechem they buried the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, in a plot of ground which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver. And it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

33 And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill *that belonged to* Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the hill country of Ephraim.

Ex 20:5,6.  
“Not forgive” – this should be understood in the light of the next verse and verses like Lev 26:14-45. Of course God always forgives the individual who comes to Him in repentance and faith (Ex 34:6,7; Ps 130:4; Luke 24:47; Acts 3:19; Eph 1:7).  
**24:23** Verse 14.  
**24:24** Three times they insisted on this. But the people did not keep their word very long (Jud 2:6-13).  
**24:25-27** Joshua made this occasion as solemn as possible to impress on the minds of the people the importance of obedience

and faithfulness.  
“Book of the law of God” – God’s revelation, instructions and commandments contained in the writings of Moses.  
**24:31** Jud 2:6-13.  
**24:32** “Bones” – Gen 50:24,25; Ex 13:19. The burial of Joseph’s bones in Shechem was a fitting reminder of the faithfulness of God to the nation from the time of Jacob to their possessing the promised land.  
“Jacob bought” – Gen 33:19.  
**24:33** Eleazar was the high priest who served with Moses and Joshua – Num 20:28; Josh 14:1; 17:4; 21:1.

# JUDGES

## Title:

The Hebrew word here translated "Judges" also means leaders or defenders. In this book the "judges" God raised up did more than try to administer justice; they led the people and delivered them from their enemies.

## Author:

According to ancient Jewish tradition Samuel wrote this book, but there is no definite proof either for or against this. The author left no clues in the text itself to indicate who wrote it. The writers of the Bible were not concerned with promoting themselves. They would all have agreed with the psalmist who said "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory" (Ps 115:1). They wrote by the inspiration of the one true God (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21), and their concern was to record exactly what God inspired them to record. In a very real sense the author of every book of the Bible was God Himself using human instruments. This does not mean that the writers of the Bible were like robots or inanimate word processors. God took the writers as they were, with their faults and failings, with their human intellects and emotions and wills, and worked in them and through them to bring His Word into the world, just as He wanted it to be. God is great enough and wise enough to be able to do this, and He did do it. Men wrote the Bible, but what they wrote came from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4).

## Date:

Probably about 1000 BC.

## Themes:

This book contains events in the history of Israel from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel. It reveals what any people can become when they do what they please rather than what God pleases. It reveals also God's compassion and help for the people even when they were guilty of detestable sins. It speaks too of God's hatred of sin and how He punished it. From another viewpoint it is the story of God's deliverance of an unworthy people and the great heroes of the faith He used to do this. Some key verses are 2:10-23; 21:25.

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**1** Now after the death of Joshua this took place: the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, "Who should first go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them?"

2 And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up. See, I have delivered the land into his hand."

3 And Judah said to his brother Simeon, "Come up with me into my allotment to fight against the Canaanites; and likewise I will go with you into your allotment." So Simeon went with him.

4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hands, and in Bezek they killed ten thousand of them. 5 And they found Adonibezek in Bezek and fought against him, and killed the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6 But Adonibezek fled, and they pursued him, caught him and cut off his thumbs and his large toes.

7 And Adonibezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and their large toes cut off gathered *their food* under my table. God has repaid me in accordance with what I have done." And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

8 Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem and had taken it and struck it with the edge of the sword and had set the city on fire.

9 And afterwards the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the mountains and in the south and in the lowlands. 10 And Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now previously

the name of Hebron was Kirjath-Arba), and they killed Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmi.

11 And from there he went against the inhabitants of Debir (now previously the name of Debir was Kirjath-Sepher). 12 And Caleb said, "The one who attacks Kirjath-Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage." 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; and he gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage. 14 And it happened when she came to him that she moved him to ask her father for a field. And she got down from her donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?"

15 And she said to him, "Give me a blessing; for you have given me an area in the south. Give me springs of water also." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

16 And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which *lies* to the south of Arad. And they went and lived among the people.

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother and they killed the Canaanites who lived in Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah. 18 Also Judah took Gaza with its territory and Askelon with its territory and Ekron with its territory.

19 And the LORD was with Judah, and Judah drove out the inhabitants of the mountains, but could not drive out *the inhabitants of* the

**1:1** "Joshua" – Josh 24:29. The date of his death is probably about 1390 B.C.

"Canaanites" – see Gen 10:15-19. In Joshua's day Israel had occupied much of the land of Canaan, but there were still areas where the Canaanites opposed them (Josh 13:1-5; 23:4,5). The question the Israelites asked reveals their belief that God had given them all the land and that He would enable them to take it.

**1:3** "Judah said to his brother Simeon" – here obviously means the descendants of Judah said to the descendants of Simeon. Of course, both Judah and Simeon had died long before this. The territory Joshua allotted to the tribe of Simeon was within the territory allotted to Judah (Josh 19:1,9). So these two tribes joined forces to occupy their land.

**1:4** "Perizzites" – Gen 10:18; 15:20; 34:30; Ex 3:17.

**1:6,7** "Adonibezek" – compare Ex 21:23-25; Lev 24:19,20. See Esther 7:10.

"Table" – he had treated his captured enemies like dogs.

**1:8** "Jerusalem" – Israel did not occupy the city at that time (v 21). See 2 Sam 5:6-9.

**1:9** "Mountains" – south of Jerusalem.

"The south" – the Negev, the desert area in the southern part of Canaan (v 17).

**1:10** "Hebron" – Josh 14:15. Hebron was in the hill country about 40 kilometers south of Jerusalem.

**1:11** "Debir" – a town near Hebron.

**1:12** "Caleb" – Num 14:6-9,30; Josh 14:6-15.

**1:13** "Othniel" – 3:7-11.

**1:16** "Father-in-law" – Ex 2:16-21.

"Kenite" – the Kenites were a tribe descended from Midian, a son of Abraham by his second wife Keturah.

"City of palm trees" – Jericho.

**1:17** Hormah means "destruction."

**1:18** The Philistines lived in the Mediterranean coastal area west of Judah. Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron were three of their five principal cities, the other two being Ashdod and Gath. Judah took the three cities mentioned here but later the Philistines regained control of them (14:19; 16:21; 1 Sam 6:17; 7:14).

**1:19** "Could not" – Josh 15:63; 17:12. They were unable only because they had disobeyed God and so He did not enable them to have complete victory (2:1-3, 20-23; Josh 23:12,13).

"Iron" – Josh 17:16. Iron chariots posed no problem to God, but He permitted them to be a problem to Judah. The people of Israel did not use iron chariots themselves,



lowlands, because they had chariots of iron. 20 And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said; and he drove out the three sons of Anak from there. 21 But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; but the Jebusites live among the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

22 Likewise the house of Joseph went up against Bethel; and the LORD was with them. 23 And the house of Joseph sent *men* to spy out Bethel (now previously the name of that city was Luz). 24 And the spies saw a man coming out of the city and said to him, "Please show us a way into the city, and we will show you mercy." 25 And when he showed them a way into the city, they struck the city with the edge of the sword; but they let the man and his whole family go. 26 And the man went into the land of the Hittites and built a city and called its name Luz, which *is* its name to this day.

27 And Manasseh did not drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth Shean and its towns, or Taanach and its towns, or the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its towns, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. 28 But it happened when Israel became strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labour, but did not completely drive them out. 29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer; but the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them. 30 Nor did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites lived among them and became

forced labour. 31 Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, or of Achzib, or of Helbah, or of Aphik, or of Rehob; 32 but the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out. 33 Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-Shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-Anath, but they lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. However the inhabitants of Beth-Shemesh and of Beth-Anath became forced labour for them. 34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, and would not let them come down into the lowlands. 35 For the Amorites were determined to live in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim; yet the hand of the house of Joseph grew powerful, so that the *Amorites* became forced labour. 36 And the boundary of the Amorites *was* from the ascent to Akkrabbim, from the rock, and *continued* upwards.

**2** And the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt, and led you to the land which I swore to your fathers. And I said, I will never break my covenant with you; 2 and you must make no treaty with the inhabitants of this land. You must throw down their altars. But you have not obeyed my voice. Why have you acted like this? 3 Therefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they will be *like thorns* in your sides, and their gods will be a snare to you."

4 And it came about, when the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of

it seems, until the time of David's sons.

**1:20** "Caleb" – v 12. "Anak" – Num 13:22.

**1:21** Even after the victory of Judah (v 8), Benjamin failed to hold Jerusalem which was in the territory allotted to them (Josh 18:21-28).

"Jebusites" – Gen 10:15-20; 15:16-21.

**1:22** "Joseph" – the descendants of Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Half of the tribe of Manasseh had territory east of the Jordan river (Josh 13:8).

**1:26** "Hittites" – then a powerful people to the north of Israel.

**1:27** "Did not drive out" – this refrain is repeated in vs 29, 30, 31, 33. Israel's disobedience to God cost them a great deal of trouble and large areas of land. On the importance of obedience see Josh 1:7,8.

**1:28** "Forced labor" – vs 30,33,35; Josh 17:13; 1 Kings 5:13; 9:20-22. Notes on slavery at Ex 21:2; Eph 6:5. God commanded Israel to exterminate these depraved peoples living in Canaan, not to make forced laborers of them (Deut 7:1,2,16).

**1:34** "Amorites" – Gen 10:15-20; 15:16-21.

**2:1** "Angel of the LORD" – note at Gen 16:7. Here He speaks as Jehovah God Himself – "I brought you up out of Egypt" (Ex 20:1,2);

"I swore to" (Gen 17:8); "my covenant" (Deut 7:9).

"Gilgal" – the headquarters of the armies of Israel under Joshua (Josh 4:19-22; 5:10; 9:6; 10:6,15,43; 14:6). It was in the low-lying plain of the Jordan river.

**2:2** "This land" – Ex 23:22; 34:12; Deut 7:2. Compare 2 Cor 6:14-18; Jam 4:4.

"Altars" – Ex 23:24; 34:13; Deut 7:5. The worship of the true God must not be mixed with the worship of the false gods of Canaan. See 1 Kings 18:21; etc.

"Not obeyed" – 1:27-36. Israel's determination to drive out all the Canaanites should have been greater than the determination of the Canaanites to stay (1:27). By full submission to God in faith they could have cleared out their enemies from the whole land. See note at Josh 1:17.

**2:3** "From before you" – Josh 23:12,13. God's promise to expel the Canaanites was based on the condition that Israel obey Him.

"Snare" – thorns may speak of pains and troubles that would come from the Canaanites, snares may speak of the hidden dangers of their false worship (Ex 23:33; 34:12; Num 33:55; Deut 7:16).

**2:4,5** Their tears did not change God's mind.

Israel, that the people raised their voice and wept. 5 And they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD.

6 And when Joshua let the people go, each one of the children of Israel went to his inheritance to possess the land. 7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works that the LORD did for Israel.

8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the LORD's servant, died, *being* a hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-Heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, on the northern side of the hill Gaash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, which did not know the LORD, or even the deeds which he had done for Israel. 11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals, 12 and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, *some* of the gods of the people who *were* around them, and bowed down to them and

provoked the LORD to anger. 13 And they forsook the LORD and served Baal and Ashtaroth. 14 And the anger of the Lord burned against Israel and he delivered them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies around *them*, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them to *make things go* wrong, just as the LORD had said and just as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

16 However, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 But still they would not listen to their judges, but prostituted themselves to other gods and bowed down to them. They quickly turned out of the way in which their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not do so. 18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, then the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to compassion because of their groanings on account of those who oppressed them and troubled them.

The Hebrew word Bochim means "weepers." **2:6-9** These verses take the story back to Josh 24:28-31. They serve to introduce what follows.

**2:10** "Gathered to their ancestors" – note at Gen 25:8.

"The LORD" – they were called the people of God but did not know God. Compare 1 Sam 2:12; 3:7.

"For Israel" – as is often the case the previous generation had failed in their duty to teach their children the things of God – Deut 4:9,10; 6:6,7; 11:19. Compare Ps 78:4.

**2:11** "Did evil" – this will follow from the ignorance revealed in v 10 as surely as night follows day. The knowledge of God acts as some restraint on men. If this restraint is removed evil will sprout, blossom, and flourish. Compare Rom 1:28-31; Eph 4:18,19.

"Baals" – Baal means "lord", or "owner." In the Old Testament the word is used of a certain false god more than 70 times. The Canaanites worshiped him under several different forms, so the plural is used here. He was sometimes worshiped as the storm god, or as the god of fertility. Sometimes he was worshiped with shameful sexual rites involving temple prostitutes. Sometimes his worshipers offered children in the fire to him (Jer 19:5). He was sometimes represented as standing on a bull.

**2:12** "Gods" – they broke the very first of God's commandments (Ex 20:2,3; Deut 6:4,5), and all other evils flowed from that.

"Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**2:13** "Ashtoreth" – a goddess supposed to be the wife of Baal. Note at 1 Kings 11:5.

**2:14** Their punishment fit their crime. In disobedience they let their enemies remain in the land and started worshiping their gods, so God handed them over to those same enemies (6:1; 13:1). Compare Rom 1:24,26,28; 1 Tim 1:20. See Gal 6:7.

**2:15** What chance of victory can there be, either in the physical or spiritual realm, if the hand of God is against His people? There is only one thing that will bring the hand of God against them – sin; and only one way to cause the hand of God to work for them again – repentance and faith (2 Chron 7:14; Ps 32:4,5; Isa 55:7).

**2:16-19** This is the brief story of the book of Judges and, for that matter, in some measure, the story of the whole Old Testament. And though we live in other places, other times than Israel, we would make a big mistake if we thought we were superior to them by nature. The Bible teaches the truth that all are sinners, by nature all are rebellious against the true God, all are disobedient to His Word. God did not give us the history of Israel that we could learn how bad they were, but that we might realize to some extent what we are and what He is and what He wants us to be.

In this book it is said that God raised up twelve judges. Othniel was the first and Samson the last named. The last judge and the greatest was Samuel, whose story is in the book of 1 Samuel. The judges were from different tribes (Othniel – Judah; Ehud – Benjamin; Shamgar – unknown; Deborah – unknown, but probably Ephraim; Gideon – Manasseh; Tola – Issachar; Jair – Manasseh; Jephthah – Manasseh; Ibzan – either Judah or Zebulun; Elon – Zebulun;

19 And it came about when the judge was dead, *that* they went back and corrupted *themselves* more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and to bow down to them. They did not stop their practices or their stubborn ways.

20 And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he said, "Because this people have broken my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not listened to my voice, 21 from now on I will not drive out from before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, 22 so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk in it, as their fathers kept *it*, or not." 23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, not driving them out speedily; and he did not deliver them into the hands of Joshua.

**3** Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to test Israel by them, as many in *Israel* as had not known all the wars of Canaan, 2 so that the generations of the children of Israel might learn; *that is*, to teach war to those who previously knew

Abdon - Ephraim; Samson - Dan; Samuel - Levi).

The enemies they faced were from all sides of Israel: northeast, southeast, east, south, west, north. In other words, people of Israel in all parts of the country were involved in the testing and teaching of 2:22 and 3:2 (see notes there).

"LORD raised up" (v 16) - this was God's grace at work toward an unworthy people.

"Judges" - the Hebrew word means either judges or leaders. On the whole it seems that those whom God raised up to deliver Israel performed both of these functions, but with some of the individuals named their leading was more in prominence than their judging.

"Prostituted themselves" (v 17) - notes at Lev 20:5; Jer 2:20; etc.

"Fathers" - v 7.

"Compassion" (v 18) - this wonderful quality in God is seen everywhere in the Bible - Ex 2:24,25; 3:7; 22:27; 34:6; 2 Kings 13:23; 2 Chron 36:15; Ps 78:38; 86:15; 103:13,14; Isa 49:13; Jer 12:15; Lam 3:22; Mic 7:19; Matt 9:36; Mark 1:41; Rom 9:15. **2:19** "Corrupted themselves" - in spite of God's grace and compassion, the people got worse and worse. They did not understand the truth later recorded in Rom 2:4.

"Stubborn" - Ex 32:9; Deut 9:6; 1 Sam 15:23; Acts 7:51.

**2:20** "Anger" - notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**2:21** Note at v 3.

**2:22** "Test" - notes at Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10,12; etc. Now Christians also are tested by the unbelieving people among whom they live (as well as by Satan without and their own sinful natures within). The test is whether they will keep the ways of the Lord when the vast majority does not, whether

nothing about it: 3 five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites and Sidonians and Hivites who lived in Mount Lebanon from Mount Baal-Hermon to the entrance to Hamath. 4 And they were to test Israel by them, to know whether they would listen to the commandments of the LORD which he commanded their fathers through Moses.

5 And the children of Israel lived among the Canaanites, Hittites and Amorites and Perizzites and Hivites and Jebusites; 6 and they took their daughters to be their wives and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs. 8 Therefore the anger of the LORD burned against Israel and he sold them into the hand of Cushan Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan Rishathaim for eight years. 9 And when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them, Othniel the son of

they will be a separate holy people, or adopt the customs and habits of false religion and corrupt society.

**3:1** "Test" - 2:22.

**3:2** "Teach warfare" - compare Ps 18:34-40; 144:1. God wanted to prepare them to live in the kind of world they lived in. Israel was a nation in the land God had given them, but all through their history they were surrounded by enemy nations bent on their destruction (see Ps 83:1-8). Warfare is a continual theme of the historical books of the Bible. It was essential for Israel to know how to fight. Now the battles of God's people are not physical ones but spiritual (Eph 6:10-12. See note at Josh 1:17), and They need to learn how to fight them.

**3:3** "Philistines" - note at 1:18. Hermon and Hamath were in the far northern parts of the land.

**3:4** Note at 2:22.

**3:5,6** Deut 7:1-6; Josh 23:12; 1 Kings 11:1-8; 2 Chron 18:1; 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**3:7** "Did evil" - v 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1.

"Baals" - 2:11-13.

"Asherahs" - Asherah was a goddess (similar to Ashtoreth) worshiped by the Canaanites. They considered her the wife of their chief god (whom they called El). Her worshipers used to carve wooden poles to represent her and placed them at her shrines - 6:26; Ex 34:13; 1 Kings 15:13; 2 Chron 15:16; 17:6; 34:3,4; Mic 5:14.

**3:8** "Anger" - 2:13,14,20; 6:39; 10:7; Num 15:3; Ps 90:7-11. God's anger is an important theme of Judges which describes events when "everyone did as he saw fit" (21:25). And what sinful people see fit to do always deserves God's anger.

"Mesopotamia" - an area northeast of Israel.

**3:9** "Cried out" - another common theme

Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 And the Spirit of the LORD came on him, and he judged Israel and went out to war; and the LORD delivered Cushan Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, into his hands, and he got the upper hand over Cushan Rishathaim. 11 And the land had rest for forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

12 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. 13 And Eglon gathered to himself the children of Ammon and Amalek and went and attacked Israel, and took possession of the city of palm trees. 14 So the children of Israel served Eglon, the king of Moab, for eighteen years.

15 But when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a left-handed man. And the children of Israel sent a present through him to Eglon, the king of Moab. 16 But Ehud made a double-edged sword a cubit long, and he bound it on his right thigh under his clothes. 17 And he brought the present to Eglon king of Moab. Now Eglon *was* a very fat man. 18 And when *Ehud* had finished offering the present, he sent away the people who had carried the present. 19 But he himself turned back from the quarries that *were* at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king". The *king* said, "Keep quiet!" And all who stood around him went out from his presence.

20 And Ehud came to him. And he was sitting alone in a room of the summer palace. And Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." And he

got up from *his* seat, 21 and Ehud put out his left hand and took the sword from his right thigh and drove it into his belly. 22 And the handle also went in after the blade; and the fat closed on the blade, so that he could not draw the sword out of his belly; and dirt came out. 23 Then Ehud went out to the porch and shut the doors of the room behind him and locked them.

24 When he had gone out, *the king's* servants came, and when they saw that the doors of the room *were* locked, they said, "He must be relieving himself in his summer palace." 25 And they waited until they were ashamed, but he did not appear opening the doors of the room. So they took a key and opened *them*, and saw that their lord had fallen down on the floor, dead.

26 And Ehud escaped while they were waiting, and went beyond the quarries and escaped to Seirath. 27 And it came about when he arrived that he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the hills, with him in front of them.

28 And he said to them, "Follow me! For the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands." And they went down after him and captured the fords of the Jordan toward Moab, and did not let anyone cross over. 29 And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all tough men and brave fighters, and not a man escaped.

30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

31 And after *Ehud* Shamgar the son of Anath was *judge*. He killed six hundred men of the

of this book – v 15; 4:3; 6:6,7; 10:10,12. The sad thing is that they cried out to the Lord only when in trouble, and not for power to live consistent, holy lives.

"Raised up" – note at 2:16-19.

"Othniel" – 1:13. He was of the tribe of Judah.

**3:10** "Spirit of the LORD" – 6:34; 11:29; 14:6,19. God gave power to those He raised up, and enabled them to do what He called them to do – as indeed He always will. References to the Spirit at Gen 1:2; notes at John 14:16,17; etc.

**3:11** 2:18.

**3:12** "Did evil again" – 2:19.

"Moab" – a country east of Israel. Note at Gen 19:37.

**3:13** Ammonites were to the east of Israel. The Amalekites were a nomadic people who generally roamed the deserts south and southeast of Israel.

"City of Palm Trees" – Jericho.

**3:15** "Ehud" – what follows reveals Ehud as a very bold, very clever man.

"Left-handed" – many of the descendants

of Benjamin, the "son of (Jacob's) right hand" (Gen 35:18), were left-handed (Jud 20:15,16).

"Present" – probably the yearly payment demanded by Eglon.

**3:20** "Message from God" – God had raised up Ehud (v 15) to deliver His people from Eglon. Ehud means that God's message to Eglon was a message of God's vengeance.

**3:21** This was not personal vengeance on Ehud's part, but the working out of God's justice in the deliverance of His people.

**3:27** "Trumpet" – 6:34; 7:18; Lev 23:23; Num 10:1-10.

**3:28** "Fords" – 12:5; Josh 2:7 – where the water of the river was shallowest and crossing easiest.

**3:30** "Eighty years" – the longest period of peace mentioned in Judges.

**3:31** "Shamgar" – nothing more is known of this man except that his times and those of Deborah overlapped – 5:6,7.

"Six hundred" – a feat of personal strength and daring exceeded only by Samson (15:15), and one of David's mighty

Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.

**4** Then, after Ehud died, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. **2** And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth of the Gentiles. **3** And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, for *Jabin* had nine hundred iron chariots and he mightily oppressed the children of Israel for twenty years.

**4** And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time. **5** And she used to stay under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the children of Israel would come up to her for judgment. **6** And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel given a command? Go and proceed to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the children of Naphtali and from the children of Zebulun. **7** And I will draw Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude to you at the Kishon river, and I will deliver him into your hands."

**8** And Barak said to her, "If you go with me, then I will go; but if you do not go with me, *then* I will not go."

**9** And she said, "Certainly I will go with you.

warriors (2 Sam 23:8).

**4:1** 2:18,19; 3:12.

**4:2** "Jabin" – Joshua killed a king of the same name who ruled in the same area (Josh 11:1,10).

"Hazor" – a city in Galilee, north of the Sea, in the territory of Naphtali.

**4:3** "Iron chariots" – 1:19.

**4:4** The Hebrew name Deborah means "bee."

"Prophetess" – Ex 15:20; 2 Kings 22:14; Isa 8:3; Luke 2:36; Acts 21:9. Note at Gen 20:7. Deborah was the only woman among the judges or leaders of Israel.

"Led" – or "judged."

**4:5** "Bethel" – a town about 20 kilometers north of Jerusalem.

"Ephraim" – we are not told that Deborah was of this tribe, but this indicates she may have been. She could have moved to this area from some other place. Compare 10:1.

**4:6** "Barak" – his name means "lightning." In the story which follows he takes second place to Deborah, but is mentioned by name in Hebrews chapter 11 among the great heroes of faith, and she is not (Heb 11:32 – not all the best and greatest of Old Testament saints are listed there by name).

"Tabor" – a hill steeply rising from the plain not far from the Sea of Galilee. Its peak is about 600 meters above sea

level. However, the journey that you are about to take will not result in your honour. For the LORD will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman." And Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. **10** And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men on foot, and Deborah went up with him.

**11** Now Heber the Kenite, *who was* of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and camped in the plain of Zaanaim, which is near Kedesh.

**12** And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. **13** And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred iron chariots, and all the people who *were* with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles to the Kishon river.

**14** And Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this *is* the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone out before you?"

So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men behind him. **15** And the LORD routed Sisera, and all *his* chariots and *his* whole army, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera got down from *his* chariot and fled away on foot. **16** But Barak pursued after the chariots and after the army, to Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the whole of Sisera's army fell by the edge of the sword and not a man was left.

level.

"Given a command" – Deborah was a true prophetess and got God's message and delivered it in God's name.

**4:7** "Draw" – v 13; Prov 21:1.

"Kishon" – this river flows through part of the plain of Jezreel (also called Megiddo or Megeddon), west of Mt Tabor.

**4:8** It was not enough for Barak that God had told him to go and that God would be with him. Obviously his faith was weak, yet he had true faith. In Hebrews chapter 11 his timid nature and his fears are not mentioned. God will remember the best things about His people and forgive and eventually forget the worst (Heb 6:10; 8:12). But this does not mean that they can follow the worst without penalty.

**4:9** "Kedesh" – not to be confused with the Kadesh-Barnea in the south of Israel.

**4:11** "Heber" – the Kenites (1:16) had been friends of Israel. Heber became friendly with Israel's enemies (v 17).

"Hobab" – Num 10:29.

**4:13** Verse 7.

**4:14** "Before you" – see Josh 5:13-15; 23:3; 2 Sam 5:24. God Himself would lead him into battle.

**4:15** "Routed" – 7:21,22; Ex 14:24; Jud 10:10; 1 Sam 7:10; 14:15; 2 Kings 7:6; Ps 18:14.



17 However Sisera fled away on foot to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite, for *there was* peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the household of Heber the Kenite.

18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me. Don't be afraid." And when he had turned aside to her into the tent, she covered him with a rug.

19 And he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." And she opened a container of milk and gave him a drink, and covered him.

20 Again he said to her, "Stand in the door of the tent, and if it so happens that any man comes and asks you, saying, 'Is there any man here?' you must say, 'No.'"

21 Then Heber's wife Jael took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temples and fastened it into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

22 And as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael appeared, coming out to meet him, and she said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man you are looking for." And when he came into her tent, there lay Sisera, dead, with the peg through his temples.

23 So on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the children of Israel bore down more and more heavily on Jabin the king of Canaan until they had destroyed Jabin the king of Canaan.

**5** And on that day Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang a *song*, saying,

2 "Praise the LORD for vengeance

taken for Israel,  
when the people willingly offered themselves.

3 "Listen, O you kings!  
Give ear, O you princes!  
I, even I, will sing to the LORD;  
I will sing *praise* to the LORD God of Israel.

4 LORD, when you went out of Seir,  
when you marched out from the field of Edom, the earth trembled  
and the heavens dripped,  
yes, the clouds dripped water.

5 The mountains melted away before the LORD,  
*even* that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

6 "In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,  
in the days of Jael,  
the highways were deserted,  
and the travelers walked through byways.

7 *Life* in the villages came to a stop,  
came to a stop in Israel,  
until I, Deborah, arose,  
*until* I arose a mother in Israel.

8 "They chose new gods;  
then war *came* to the gates.  
Was there a shield or spear seen among  
forty thousand in Israel?

9 My heart *is* with the leaders of Israel  
who offered themselves willingly  
among the people.  
Praise the LORD.

**4:17** Verse 11. Jael means "mountain goat."

**4:18** "Tent" – it seemed to Sisera the perfect place to hide. No one but her husband or father would think of entering her tent uninvited – it would have been altogether against custom.

**4:19** "Container" – in those days there were no glass bottles like we have today. The usual containers for liquids were skins of goats or sheep made watertight. See Matt 9:17.

**4:21** Barak with an army had been afraid to meet Sisera (v 8). This woman, alone and without weapons of war, dared to slay him. Obviously she did not agree with her husband when he forsook Israel to become friends of Israel's enemies.

**4:24** "Destroyed" – with his army destroyed and his general dead, Jabin was no match for an Israel whose courage had been revived by two women.

**5:1** "Song" – victory over their enemies naturally brought songs to the victors' hearts and lips (Ex 15:1-18; 2 Sam 22:1-51). Spiritual victories too will result in joyful singing (Eph 5:15-20; Rev 15:2-4). This song

sung by Deborah and Barak is a superb example of early Hebrew poetry.

**5:2** "Willingly offered" – v 9; 1 Chron 29:5; Rom 12:1,2.

**5:4,5** These verses refer to the time when God brought Israel through the Sinai desert, around Edom, and into Canaan. Compare Deut 33:2; Ps 68:7-10.

**5:6** "Shamgar" – 3:31.

"Deserted" – the main roads were unsafe because of the enemy – 4:2,3.

**5:7** "I" – in the whole of Israel there was no other leader to rally the people and defeat the enemy. God may use women to do a man's job when there are no men available or willing to do it.

**5:8** "New gods" – 2:13,19. Compare Deut 32:17.

"Israel" – the people had compromised with the Canaanites and had no will to resist (3:5,6), so they were totally unprepared to fight. Can it not be said of many Christians now "not a shield of faith, not a sword of the Spirit is seen among them" (Eph 6:14-17)

**5:9** "My heart is with" – this is the reason

- 10 "Speak, you who ride on white donkeys,  
you who sit in judgment  
and walk by the way.
- 11 "*Those who are delivered* from the noise  
of archers in the watering places,  
there they will declare the righteous  
acts of the LORD,  
the righteous acts toward the  
*inhabitants* of his villages in  
Israel.  
Then the people of the LORD went down  
to the gates.
- 12 "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake!  
Utter a song!  
Arise, Barak!  
And lead your captivity captive,  
you son of Abinoam.
- 13 "Then he caused the survivors to have  
dominion over the nobles among the  
people;  
the LORD caused me to have  
dominion over the mighty.
- 14 "From Ephraim a root of those in Amalek  
*came down*;  
after you, Benjamin, among your people.  
Leaders came down from Machir,  
and out of Zebulun those who handle  
the pen of the writer.
- 15 And the princes of Issachar were with  
Deborah;

- Issachar, and also Barak;  
he was sent on foot into the valley.  
In the divisions of Reuben *there were*  
great searchings of heart.
- 16 Why did you stay among the sheepfolds  
to hear the bleatings of the flocks?  
Concerning the divisions of Reuben  
there were great searchings  
of heart.
- 17 Gilead stayed beyond Jordan.  
And why did Dan remain in ships?  
Asher continued at the seashore,  
and stayed at his breakwaters.
- 18 Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people  
| *who* put their lives  
in jeopardy of death  
on the high places of the field.
- 19 "The kings came *and* fought,  
then the kings of Canaan fought in  
Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;  
they took no plunder of silver.
- 20 They fought from the heavens;  
the stars in their courses  
fought against Sisera.
- 21 The river of Kishon swept them away,  
that ancient river, the river Kishon.  
O my soul, you have trampled down  
strength.
- 22 Then the hooves of the horses hammered  
because of the prancing,  
the prancing of their mighty ones.

she was able to inspire leaders and people alike.

**5:10** "Donkeys" – indicates the leaders and the wealthy (10:4; 12:14). Horses were not used by the Israelites until later in history.

**5:11** "Righteous acts of the LORD" – God's delivering His people, and destroying the ungodly were righteous acts. God, as always, was acting in perfect justice. See 1 Sam 12:7-11; Ps 145:17; Rev 15:3; 16:5,6.

**5:12** "Awake" – a stirring call to action. Compare Ps 7:6; 35:23; 44:23.

"Captive" – compare Ps 68:18; Eph 4:8.

**5:13** "Me" – v 1.

**5:14** "Amalek" – note at Ex 17:8. Though usually occupying desert areas south and east of Israel, at some time before Israel came into Canaan Amalekites lived in what became Ephraim's territory. See 12:15. Ephraim put down its roots in what had once been possessed by Amalek.

"Machir" – Manasseh's firstborn son. His descendants settled on both sides of the Jordan river. Here the reference is to those west of the river.

**5:16** "Searchings of heart" – evidently the Reubenites were shaken by doubts about helping their brother tribes in the fight. This was in accordance with the character of their forefather. See Gen 49:3,4.

**5:17** "Gilead" – an area east of the Jordan river occupied by the half tribe of Manasseh.

"Asher" – Dan and Asher had territories along the Mediterranean Sea.

**5:18** In the battle of God against the enemies of His people, both those who fought (Ephraim, Benjamin, part of Manasseh, Zebulun, Issachar, Naphtali), and those who refused to fight (Reuben, Dan and Asher) are revealed. So at the end of this age it will be revealed who fought and who did not fight the Lord's spiritual battles. See 1 Tim 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim 2:3; 4:7,8.

**5:19** "Megiddo" – 4:7.

**5:20** This is poetry, and means that God Himself fought against Sisera (see 4:6,7). It does not mean that the position of the stars was unfavorable to Sisera, or any other such superstitious nonsense. The position of the stars and planets has no power to influence men's fate. The true and living God will deal with every individual according to His own will and wisdom. Our business should be to know Him, serve Him, and please Him in everything, not to try and find out what our horoscopes may be. Every day is a good day if we love and serve the true God. No day is a good day if we do not. See the note at Gen 25:24.

**5:21** Their dead bodies fell into the river

- 23 'Curse Meroz',  
said the angel of the LORD,  
'curse its inhabitants bitterly,  
because they did not come to the  
help of the LORD,  
to the help of the LORD against the  
mighty.'
- 24 "Most blessed of women be Jael,  
the wife of Heber the Kenite;  
most blessed shall she be of women  
in the tent.
- 25 He asked water,  
and she gave *him* milk;  
she brought forth curds in an excellent  
bowl.
- 26 She put her hand to the peg,  
and her right hand to the workmen's  
hammer,  
and with the hammer she struck Sisera.  
She crushed his head,  
and she pierced and struck through  
his temples.
- 27 At her feet he bowed, he fell,  
he lay down.  
At her feet he bowed, he fell.  
Where he bowed, there he fell down  
dead.
- 28 "The mother of Sisera looked out  
at a window,  
and cried out through the lattice,  
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
Why are the wheels of his chariots  
delayed?'
- 29 "Her wise ladies answered her,  
indeed she gave answer to herself,  
30 'Have they not found,

have they *not* divided the plunder;  
to each man a girl *or* two;  
to Sisera a plunder of *garments of*  
various colours,  
a plunder of various colours of  
needlework,  
of various colours of needlework  
on both sides,  
for the necks of *those who take* the  
plunder?'

31 "So may all your enemies perish,  
O LORD.  
But *may* those who love him be like  
the sun when it goes forth in its might."

And the land had rest for forty years.

**6** And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hands of Midian for seven years. 2 And Midian had the upper hand against Israel; *and* because of the Midianites the children of Israel made for themselves the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves and strongholds. 3 And it so happened that when Israel sowed seed, the Midianites would come up, and the Amalekites, and the eastern peoples would come up against them, 4 and would camp against them and destroy the produce of the ground as far as Gaza, and leave no supply of food for Israel, no sheep or ox or donkey. 5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, and they would come as numerous as grasshoppers; for both they and their camels were beyond counting. And they would enter the land to destroy it. 6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. 7 And it came about, when the children of

and were carried away.

**5:23** "Meroz" – a town in Naphtali. It was cursed, not because of what it did, but because of what it did not do. Compare Matt 25:31-33,41-46; 1 Cor 16:22. Note at v 18. See also Matt 12:30. In the Lord's battles neutrality is not acceptable. If we do not help Him it is as though we hinder Him. If we are not for Him we show we are for His enemies, or at least we reveal an evil indifference to Him and His cause. And men will pay the penalty for that, even though they may pride themselves on their tolerant spirit of neutrality.

"Angel of the LORD" – note at Gen 16:7. **5:24-27** "Jael" – 4:21. She did not believe in trying to be neutral but came to the help of God's people against a powerful and ungodly foe.

**5:28** "Mother" – eventually mothers of enemies of God will be disappointed; mothers in Israel (v 7) will joyfully sing of

God's grace and power.

**5:31** "Perish" – Num 10:35; Ps 68:1,2. See note at Ps 35:8. Notice that there are only two classes of people here – God's enemies and those who love God. Not loving God means enmity with God – v 23; John 15:18; Rom 8:7; 1 Cor 16:22.

**6:1** "Did evil" – 2:18,19; 3:7,12; 4:1.

"Midian" – Gen 25:2 – a people to the south and east of Israel.

**6:2,3** Midian was not strong enough alone to subjugate Israel. Midian had allies in the Amalekites and other peoples in the region. And God was working against Israel because of its sins (v 1).

**6:5** "Grasshoppers" – 7:12. They were compared to grasshoppers both because of their numbers and because they left the land stripped bare. Compare Ex 10:13-15. The prophet Joel used similar language about another invasion.

**6:6** "Cried out" – 3:9,15; 4:3. The Israelites

Israel cried to the LORD because of the Midianites, 8 that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'I brought you up from Egypt and led you out of the house of bondage, 9 and I rescued you from the hands of the Egyptians and from the hands of all who oppressed you, and drove them out from before you and gave you their land. 10 And I said to you, I *am* the LORD your God. Do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But you have not obeyed my voice.'"

11 And the angel of the LORD came and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite. And his son Gideon was threshing wheat near the winepress, to hide *it* from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, "The LORD *is* with you, you mighty warrior."

13 And Gideon said to him, "Oh my Lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all of this happened to us? And where *are* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

14 And the LORD looked at him and said, "Go in this strength of yours, and you will save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?"

15 And he said to him, "Oh my Lord, how will I save Israel? See, my family *is* poor in Manasseh and I *am* the least in my father's household."

16 And the LORD said to him, "I will certainly be

as usual waited until they were completely desperate before crying to God. Men in general try to use God as a last resort, when everything else has failed them.

**6:8-10** This time God, instead of immediately raising up a deliverer, sent a prophet to remind them of His grace and power and the people's sins. See Ex 20:1-6. Instruction was needed as much as or more than deliverance.

**6:11** "Angel of the LORD" – 5:23. Note at Gen 16:7. Here He appeared as an ordinary man.

**6:12** "With you" – Ex 3:12; Josh 1:5; Isa 7:14; Heb 13:5,6.

"Warrior" – this word was based on what the angel knew Gideon would do in the future.

**6:13** "Why then has all this happened to us" – compare Ps 42:9,10. If we get our eyes away from God and His Word we will fall into perplexity and discouragement.

**6:14** "LORD" (Jehovah) – here is proof that "the angel of the LORD" (v 11) is to be identified with Jehovah Himself. Gideon could not save Israel from Midian, but Gideon sent by God could.

**6:15** "Lord, how" – another reluctant servant of God. Compare Ex 3:1; 4:13; Jer 1:6; Josh 1:1-3. Isa 6:8 is different.

with you, and you will strike down the Midianites as one man."

17 And he said to him, "If now I have found grace in your sight, then show me a sign that *it is* you talking with me. 18 Please do not leave here until I come *back* to you and bring out my offering and place *it* before you."

And he said, "I will wait until you come back."

19 And Gideon went in and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes with an ephah of flour. He put the meat in a basket and put the broth in a pot and brought *them* out to him under the oak and presented *them*.

20 And the angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened cakes and lay *them* on this rock and pour out the broth." And he did so. 21 Then the angel of the LORD stretched out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire came up out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed from his sight.

22 And when Gideon perceived that he was the angel of the LORD, Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face."

23 And the LORD said to him, "Peace *be* to you. Do not fear. You will not die."

24 Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it Jehovah Shalom. To this day it *is* still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25 And it came about on the same night that

"Least" – see 1 Cor 1:26-31.

**6:17** "Sign" – Gideon was wise to ask for this sign. The person before him appeared as an ordinary man. And it seems Gideon was fully aware that anyone could come and speak in God's name and try to convince him to take action against Midian. For notes on asking for signs see also vs 36-40; 2 Kings 20:8-11; Isa 7:10,11; etc. When men want to do God's will and ask for a sign to make sure of His will, God is willing to grant them. But signs should be asked for in faith, not in unbelief (see Matt 12:38,39).

**6:18** "I will wait" – in this something of God's gracious character is revealed. God longs to bless men (Isa 30:18). He waits for them. Compare Rev 3:20.

**6:19** "Ephah" – probably about one half bushel.

**6:21** Lev 9:24. "Fire" – note at Ex 3:2. This was the sign Gideon asked for in v 17 and it showed that his offering was accepted.

**6:22** "Face to face" – 13:22; Gen 32:30. This was a recognition, and fear, of God's fiery holiness.

**6:24** "Altar" – see Gen 8:20.

"Shalom" – v 23. A beautiful name of the true God – The LORD is Peace. Note on Jehovah at 3:14,15.

**6:25** Note on Baal and Asherah at 2:11; 3:7.

the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the seven year old second bull, and throw down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the *Asherah* grove that is by it, 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of this rock, in the ordered way. And take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which you cut down."

27 Then Gideon took ten of his male servants and did as the LORD told him. But it was *like this*: he did not do it in daylight, because he was afraid of his father's household and the men of the city; so he did *it* at night.

28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, see, the altar of Baal was thrown down and the grove by it was cut down and the second bull was offered on the altar *that was* built.

29 And they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they made a search and inquired, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing."

30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son to die, because he has thrown down the altar of Baal and because he has cut down the grove that was by it."

31 And Joash said to all who stood against him, "Will you plead for Baal? Will you save him? May the one who pleads for him be put to death while *it is still* morning. If he *is* a god, let him plead for himself, because *someone* has thrown down his altar." 32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because *he* has thrown down his altar."

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the eastern peoples gathered together and crossed over and camped in the valley of Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and the Abiezerites were called

out to follow him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who was also called out to follow him. And he sent messengers to Asher and to Zebulun and to Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

36 And Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said, 37 see, I will put a fleece of wool on the *threshing* floor; and if the dew comes only on the fleece, and all the ground *is* dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you have said." 38 And it happened like that. For he got up early the next day and squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water.

39 And Gideon said to God, "Let not your anger burn against me, and I will speak just once more. I pray you, please let me test with the fleece just once more. Now let the fleece be dry and let there be dew all over the ground." 40 And God did so that night. For only the fleece was dry and there was dew all over the ground.

**7** Then Jerubbaal, who *is* Gideon, and all the people who were with him, got up early and camped beside Harod's well, so that the army of the Midianites was to the north of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. 2 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands. *If I did*, Israel would boast against me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me'. 3 Now therefore make an announcement in the hearing of the people and say, 'Whoever is trembling and afraid, let him go back and leave early from Mount Gilead.'" And twenty-two thousand of the people went back, leaving ten thousand.

4 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people *are* still *too* many. Bring them down to the water, and

**6:27** "Afraid" – v 12! Here is an important lesson for all of us – Gideon did not allow his fears to keep him from obeying God.

**6:30** "Die" – how utterly perverse their thoughts! Because of their idol worship they were the ones who deserved to die, not Gideon. See Deut 13:6-15. This is an example of how the world, and, alas, sometimes God's people, turn the truth on its head.

**6:31** "His altar" – an excellent answer that reminds us of Elijah's treatment of the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:21-27.

**6:32** "Jerubbaal" means "let Baal contend."

**6:33** "Jezreel" – 4:7; 5:19.

**6:34** "Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon" – See 3:10. The Hebrew literally means "the Spirit clothed Himself with Gideon." This expression in Hebrew is found in only two other places – 1 Chron 12:18; 2 Chron 24:20.

"Trumpet" – 3:27.

**6:35** "Manasseh" – Gideon was of this tribe. **6:36-40** Gideon should have believed the promise and the sign God had already given (vs 14,16,21). But God did not rebuke Gideon for asking for another sign. He was willing to stoop to Gideon's weakness and meet his need of further assurance. He knew that by nature Gideon was a fearful and cautious man (vs 15,27; 7:10). Psalm 103:13,14 is always true.

**7:1** "Valley" – the plain of Jezreel (6:33).

**7:2** "Too many" – see 1 Sam 14:6; Ps 33:16. "Boast" – compare Jer 9:23,24; 1 Cor 1:27-31; 3:21; Eph 2:9. Boasting in themselves would have been disastrous for them.

**7:3** "Afraid" – compare Deut 20:8. God did not want many men for the battle but the few He did want had to be willing in faith to risk everything for Him. This is not less true now.

**7:4** "Test them" – doubtless God's process of testing men goes on continually in



I will test them for you there. And it shall be *like this*: if I say to you about someone, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go with you; and if I say about someone *else*, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."

5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps the water with his tongue, like a dog laps, set him apart by himself; likewise everyone who kneels down to drink." 6 And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water.

7 And the LORD said to Gideon, "I will save you through the three hundred men who lapped, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. As for all the others, let each man go to his place." 8 So the people took provisions in their hands and their trumpets. And he sent all *the rest of* Israel away, each man to his tent, and kept those three hundred men. And the army of Midian was below him in the valley.

9 And it came about the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down to the army, for I have delivered it into your hands. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down with your servant Phurah to the army, 11 and you can hear what they are saying. And after that your hands will be strengthened to go down to the army." Then he went down with Phurah his servant to the outposts of the armed men in the camp. 12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the eastern people lay along in the valley like grasshoppers in number; and their camels *were* beyond counting, as many as the sand on the seashore.

13 And when Gideon came, just then a man was telling a dream to his companion and saying, "Look, I had a dream, and see, a cake of barley bread came rolling into the camp of Midian, and came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned it, so that the tent lay flat."

14 And his companion answered and said, "This

unseen ways.

**7:6** The 300 remained alert and prepared for action, while the remainder relaxed and showed themselves vulnerable to attack. God did not need many men, but the few He wanted had to be watchful and ready for anything. Can we think it is any different for the Lord's spiritual battles now?

**7:10** "Afraid" – God knew that Gideon by nature was a man tempted to timidity and fear (6:15,27), and gave him further encouragement in the incident which follows (vs 11-14).

**7:15** God's method of encouraging His timid servant bore fruit. In general we can say that anything that encourages our faith in the one true God is from God (compare

*is* nothing else except the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel. For God has delivered Midian and all the army into his hands."

15 And it happened *that* when Gideon heard the dream being told and its interpretation, he worshipped and returned to the camp of Israel and said, "Arise! For the LORD has delivered the army of Midian into your hands." 16 And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in each man's hand, with empty pitchers, with torches inside the pitchers.

17 And he said to them, "Watch me and do likewise. And, look, when I come to the outskirts of the camp, you must do just as I do. 18 When I blow on a trumpet, I and all those who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on all sides of the whole camp and say, 'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!'"

19 So Gideon and the hundred men who *were* with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set a new guard. And they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *on*. And they cried out, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" 21 And each man stood in his place around the camp. And the whole army ran, and cried out as they fled.

22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow *soldier*, throughout the whole army. And the army fled to Beth-Shittah in Zererath *and* to the border of Abel-Meholah, to Tabbath. 23 And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali and from Asher and from all Manasseh and chased after the Midianites. 24 And Gideon sent messengers throughout all the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and in advance of them seize the water *crossings* as far as Beth-Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men

2 Thess 2:17), anything that discourages our faith is from some source in opposition to God.

**7:18** "Gideon" – Gideon was not concerned for his own honor here – he knew that the enemy feared his name (v 14).

**7:19** "Middle watch" – there were three watches during the night. The middle one was at a time when sleep would have fallen on the camp.

**7:21,22** Compare Josh 23:10; 1 Sam 14:14,15; 2 Kings 7:6,7. Obedience to God and boldness of faith can always defeat superior forces. Compare Luke 10:9,20; Jam 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8,9.

**7:24** "Jordan" – to present the enemy escaping eastward across the river.

of Ephraim gathered together and seized the water *crossings* as far as Beth-Barah and the Jordan.

25 And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they killed Oreb on the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. And they pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

**8** And the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you treated us like this, not calling us when you went to fight against the Midianites?" And they rebuked him sharply.

2 And he said to them, "What have I done now compared with you? *Is* not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the grape harvest of Abiezer? 3 God has delivered the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, into your hands. And what was I able to do compared with you?" Then their anger toward him subsided, when he said that.

4 And Gideon came to the Jordan *and* crossed *it*, he and the three hundred men with him, weary but still pursuing *the enemy*. 5 And he said to the men of Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who are following me; for they *are* weary, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

6 And the princes of Succoth said, "*Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hands, that we should give bread to your army?"

7 And Gideon said, "So when the LORD delivers Zebah and Zalmunna into my hands, then I will rip up your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars."

8 And he went up from there to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered *him*. 9 And he spoke also to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower."

**7:25** "Zeeb" – Ps 83:11.

**8:1** "Sharply" – those who win great victories are not always applauded for them. See 12:1 also. These critics in their self-centeredness could not praise God for a success won through someone else.

**8:2** Gideon is saying that Ephraim's final pursuit of the enemy ("gleanings of Ephraim's grapes") was far more important than his own initial attack ("full grape harvest of Abiezer." Abiezer was Gideon's clan – 6:11).

**8:3** "Subsided" – Prov 15:1. Gideon did not add fuel to the flames of envy that had begun to blaze in their hearts. He did not want the campaign against Midian to be hindered. He would rather win the battle against the enemy than win the argument against allies, and was willing to praise them

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand *men*, all who were left of all the armies of the eastern peoples. For a hundred and twenty thousand men who drew sword had fallen. 11 And Gideon went up by way of the tent dwellers to the east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the army; for the army was off guard. 12 And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them and seized the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

13 And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun *was up*, 14 and caught a young man of the men of Succoth and questioned him; and *the youth* wrote down for him the *names of the* leaders of Succoth, and its elders, seventy-seven men. 15 And he came to the men of Succoth and said, "See Zebah and Zalmunna about whom you taunted me, saying, '*Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna already in your hands, that we should give bread to your weary men?'" 16 And he took the elders of the city, and thorns and briars from the wilderness, and with them gave a lesson to the men of Succoth. 17 And he broke down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.

18 Then said he to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men *were those* whom you killed at Tabor?"

And they answered, "They *were* like you. Each one looked like the children of a king."

19 And he said, "They *were* my brothers, the sons of my mother. *As* the LORD lives, if you had saved them alive, I would not kill you." 20 And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Get up *and* kill them." But the youth did not draw his sword, because he was afraid; for he was still a youth.

21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, "You rise up and strike us down. For as the man, *so is* his strength." And Gideon got up and killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that *were* on the necks of their camels.

rather than himself. In all this he displayed true wisdom.

**8:4** "But still pursuing" – this should be true also in our spiritual life in Christ. Paul was sometimes exhausted (2 Cor 4:8,9; 7:5; etc), but he kept pursuing the goal (Phil 3:13,14).

**8:5** "Succoth" – Gen 33:17; Josh 13:27; 1 Kings 7:46. This was an Israelite town east of the Jordan river. Its people should have been glad to help Gideon in his efforts to destroy his and their enemies.

**8:7** Compare 5:23.

**8:8** "Penuel" – Gen 32:30,31; 1 Kings 12:25. Another Israelite town which should have helped Gideon.

**8:15-17** Again we see the seriousness of the sin of refusing to help God's servants in their fight against God's enemies. Note at 5:23.

22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son and your grandson; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian."

23 And Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD shall rule over you." 24 And Gideon said to them, "I would request that each one of you give me the earrings from his plunder." (For they had golden earrings, because the *enemy had been* Ishmaelites.)

25 And they answered, "We will willingly give *them*." And they spread a cloth, and each man threw on it the earrings from his plunder. 26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand seven hundred shekels of gold. Besides *there were* ornaments and necklaces and purple clothing that had been on the kings of Midian, besides the chains that were around the necks of their camels. 27 And with this *gold* Gideon made an ephod and put it in his city, in Ophrah. And all Israel went there prostituting themselves to it. This became a snare to Gideon and to his household.

28 In this way Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they no longer lifted up their heads. And the country had rest for forty years in the days of Gideon.

29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and lived in his own house. 30 And Gideon had seventy

sons, his bodily descendants; for he had many wives. 31 And his concubine, who was in Shechem, also bore him a son, and he called his name Abimelech. 32 And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 And it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned back and prostituted themselves to the Baals and made Baal-Berith their god. 34 And the children of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side. 35 And they did not show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, *that is*, Gideon, for all the good which he had done to Israel.

**9** And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem to his mother's brothers, and spoke with them and with the whole family of the household of his mother's father, saying, 2 "Please say in the hearing of all the men of Shechem, 'What *is* better for you, that all the seventy sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one reign over you? Remember also that I *am* your bone and your flesh.'"

3 And his mother's brothers spoke all these words about him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem; and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He *is* our brother." 4 And they gave him seventy *pieces* of silver from the

**8:22** "Rule over us" – they revealed the desire in the hearts of men to have, not God, but a strong man rule them. See note at 1 Sam 8:5-22. Very briefly these Israelites unknowingly voiced a fact evident in the whole history of the world – a tendency to make benefactors into dictators.

**8:23** "I will not rule over you" – Gideon is in great and wonderful contrast to many even in Christian circles who grasp for power at any cost and love to lord it over others.

"The LORD will rule over you" – Num 23:21; 1 Sam 12:12. Now there is only one Head of the Church that God approves – the Lord Jesus Christ the King (Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23). Beware that any speak of Him as those in the parable He taught (Luke 19:14).

**8:24** Ishmaelites formed a part of the defeated army.

**8:26** "A thousand seven hundred shekels" – about 19.5 kilograms.

**8:27** "Ephod" – Ex 28:6-30; 39:2-26; Lev 8:7.

"Prostituting themselves to it" – this means they worshipped it in place of the true God. As usual they, as men in general do, took something once appointed by God, and perverted it into something against God (compare 2 Kings 18:4). Indeed, throughout their history many in Israel perverted the use of the whole law of God and made it an instrument for self-righteousness and

self-worship, and so found themselves in opposition to Him.

**8:29** "Jerubbaal" – Gideon (6:32).

**8:30** "Many wives" – this is not an example God wants us to follow – Gen 30:1; 2 Sam 3:2-5; 1 Kings 11:1-8.

**8:33,34** 2:18,19. "Prostituted" – Ex 34:15; Lev 20:5; Jer 2:2; etc. Baal Berith means "Lord of the covenant." They worshiped a false god who could neither make nor keep a covenant and rejected the one true God who was in a living covenant relationship with them (Ex 19:5,6). Notes on Baal at 2:11. This is what spiritual prostitution is like.

**8:35** People who are not grateful to God may not show much gratitude to His servants either.

**9:1** 8:29-31. Once again, as the following story reveals, the having of multiple wives proved disastrous. See Gen 30:1; 2 Sam 3:2-5; 1 Kings 11:1-8. Those who do not follow God's appointed way will suffer the consequences.

**9:2** 8:23.

**9:3** They did not inquire what sort of man Abimelech was. Since he was a relative he was acceptable as their leader, regardless of his character. In this way people will often get the worst kind of leaders, and will deserve them.

**9:4** "Seventy silver shekels" – about 0.8 kilogram.

"Baal Berith" – 8:33.

house of Baal-Berith. With it Abimelech hired worthless and reckless persons to follow him. 5 And he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, on the same stone. However Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, was left, for he hid himself. 6 And all the men of Shechem and all Beth Millo gathered together and went and made Abimelech king, by the oak at the pillar in Shechem.

7 And when they told *this* to Jotham, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim and raised his voice and shouted and said to them, "Listen to me, you men of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. 8 *Once* the trees went out to anoint a king over them, and they said to the olive tree, 'Reign over us.'

9 "But the olive tree said to them, 'Should I leave my fatness, with which God and man are honoured, and go to hold sway over the trees?'

10 "And the trees said to the fig tree, 'You come *and* reign over us.'

11 "But the fig tree said to them, 'Should I leave my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to hold sway over the trees?'

12 "Then the trees said to the vine, 'You come *and* reign over us.'

13 "And the vine said to them, 'Should I leave my wine, which cheers God and man, and go to hold sway over the trees?'

14 "Then all the trees said to the bramble, 'You come *and* reign over us.'

15 "And the bramble said to the trees, 'If you anoint me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust in my shadow. But if not, may fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

16 "Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt fairly with Jerubbaal and his household and have done to him as he deserved 17 (For my father fought for you and risked his life and

delivered you from the hands of Midian. 18 And at this time you have risen up against my father's household and have killed his seventy sons on the same stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his female slave, king over the people of Shechem, because he is your brother); 19 if then you have dealt in truth and sincerity with Jerubbaal and with his household this day, *then* be happy with Abimelech, and let him also be happy with you. 20 But if not, may fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth-Millo, and may fire come out from the men of Shechem and Beth-Millo, and devour Abimelech."

21 And Jotham ran off and escaped. He went to Beer and stayed there, for fear of his brother Abimelech.

22 And Abimelech reigned three years over Israel. 23 Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech. 24 *God's purpose was* that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come back on their brother Abimelech who killed them, and *the shedding* of their blood be put on him and on the men of Shechem who assisted him in the killing of his brothers. 25 And the men of Shechem set men in ambush for him on the top of the mountains, and they robbed everyone who came near them along that way. And this was told to Abimelech.

26 And Gaal, the son of Ebed, came with his brothers and went over to Shechem. And the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. 27 And they went out into the fields, and harvested their vineyards and trampled out *the grapes* and held a festival, and went into the house of their god and ate and drank and cursed Abimelech. 28 And Gaal, the son of Ebed, said, "Who *is* Abimelech and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *Is he* not the son of Jerubbaal? And *isn't* Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem;

**9:5,6** "Beth Millo" – or "the house of Millo" – the Hebrew word "Beth" means "house."

"King" – little they cared that Abimelech was a murderer of his brothers. It was enough that he was their relative! In this way, sometimes even in Christian circles, thieves and immoral men gain positions of leadership. But if God's true blessing is desired, God's principles must be followed.

**9:8-15** Jotham means that his slain brothers were like good and profitable trees and not one had desired to be king. The people of Shechem had chosen one like a thorn bush to rule them.

**9:20** Jotham is saying that Abimelech and the people of Shechem would be the destruction of one another. This curse on them God fulfilled (v 57).

**9:22** Abimelech ruled only that part of

Israel that submitted to him.

**9:23** "Evil spirit" – this may mean that God, for purposes of judgment, created an attitude of enmity between Abimelech and the people. Or it may mean that an evil spirit in the unseen world was sent to Shechem. Compare 1 Sam 16:14,23; 1 Kings 22:19-23. See also notes at 2 Sam 24:1; Job 1:7.

**9:24** Verses 56,57 – an example of how God takes vengeance on evil men for their evil deeds. Note and references at Num 31:2,3.

**9:26-55** An example of the way men behave when God is not their king and they do what they please (21:25).

**9:28** "Hamor" – Hamor was the Canaanite who founded the city of Shechem before Israel even arrived in the land

for why should we serve him? 29 Would to God that this people were under my hand! Then I would get rid of Abimelech." And he said to Abimelech, "Increase your army and come out."

30 And when Zebul, the governor of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger burned. 31 And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Look, Gaal, the son of Ebed, and his brothers have come to Shechem. And, see, they are stirring up the city against you. 32 Now therefore get up at night, you and the people who *are* with you, and lie in wait in the field. 33 And in the morning, as soon as the sun rises, it should be that you get up early and attack the city. And, look, *when* he and the people who *are* with him come out against you, then you can do to them as you see the opportunity."

34 And Abimelech, and all the people who *were* with him, got up at night and set an ambush against Shechem in four groups. 35 And Gaal, the son of Ebed, went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city. And Abimelech, and the people who *were* with him, got up out of the ambush.

36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the top of the mountains." And Zebul said to him, "You see the shadow of the mountains *looking* like men."

37 And Gaal spoke again and said, "See, people are coming down from the middle of the land, and another group is coming along by the plain of Meonenim."

38 Then Zebul said to him, "Now where *is* your mouth with which you said, 'Who *is* Abimelech, that we should serve him?' *Are* not these the people whom you have despised? Please go out and fight with them."

39 And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem and fought with Abimelech. 40 And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many fell wounded, up to the entrance of the gate. 41 And Abimelech stayed at Arumah. And Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers out, so that they could not stay in Shechem.

42 And it came about on the next day, that the people went out into the field and told Abimelech. 43 And he took the people and divided them into three groups and set an ambush in the field, and watched. And now the people came out of the city, and he rose up against them and attacked them. 44 And Abimelech, and the group that was

with him, rushed forward and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city. And the *other* two groups rushed on all *the people* who *were* in the fields and killed them. 45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city and killed the people who *were* in it, and broke down the city and sowed it with salt.

46 And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard *that*, they entered the inner room of the temple of the god Berith. 47 And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem had gathered together. 48 And Abimelech went up to Mount Zalmon, he and all the people who *were* with him. And Abimelech took an axe in his hand and cut down a branch from the trees and picked it up and put *it* on his shoulder, and said to the people who *were* with him, "Hurry *and* do the same thing that you have seen me do." 49 And each man among all the people also cut down his branch and followed Abimelech, and put *them* against the inner room and set fire to the room on the men; so that all the persons of the tower of Shechem also died, about a thousand men and women.

50 Then Abimelech went to Thebez and camped against Thebez and captured it. 51 But there was a strong tower inside the city, and all the men and women, everyone in the city, fled there and shut themselves in and went up to the top of the tower. 52 And Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it, and went near the door of the tower to burn it with fire. 53 And a certain woman threw a piece of a millstone on Abimelech's head and broke his skull.

54 Then he quickly called to the young man *who was* his armour-bearer and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that men do not say about me, 'A woman killed him.'" And his young man pierced him through, and he died. 55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, each man left for his place.

56 In this way God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech which he did to his father, in killing his seventy brothers. 57 And God returned on the heads of the men of Shechem all their evil. And the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal, came on them.

**10** And after Abimelech, Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, rose up to defend Israel. And he lived in Shamir in Mount

(Gen 33:18,19).

**9:46** "The god Berith" – or "El-Berith." The name means "god of the covenant." This god is the same as Baal-Berith (v 4; 8:33). **9:49** Verses 3,20.

**9:54** Even while dying, pride was the ruling passion of his heart. There is no confession

of sin, no calling on God. So ends the sad account of the son of a great man in Israel. **9:56,57** Once again we see the unseen God justly judging the actions of men and causing them to reap what they sow. See Esther 7:10; Ps 18:25-27; etc.

**10:1** This Tola is never mentioned again in



Ephraim. 2 And he judged Israel twenty-three years, and died and was buried in Shamir.

3 And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty-two years. 4 And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty young donkeys, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-Jair to this day. They *are* in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died and was buried in Camon.

6 And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and Ashtaroth and the gods of Syria and the gods of Sidon and the gods of Moab and the gods of the children of Ammon and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD and did not serve him. 7 And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the children of Ammon. 8 And that year they troubled and oppressed the children of Israel. For eighteen years *they oppressed* all the children of Israel who *were* on the other side of the Jordan in Gilead, in the land of the Amorites. 9 Moreover the children of Ammon crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah also and against Benjamin and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was greatly distressed.

10 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against you by forsaking our God, and also by serving the Baals."

11 And the LORD said to the children of Israel, "*Did I not rescue you* from the Egyptians and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon and from the Philistines? 12 Also the Sidonians and the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you; and you cried out to me, and I delivered you from their hands. 13 Yet you have forsaken me and served other gods. Therefore I will no longer deliver you. 14 Go and cry out to the gods which you have

chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation."

15 And the children of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do to us whatever seems good to you. Only deliver us, we pray you, this day." 16 And they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD. And his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.

17 Then the children of Ammon gathered together and camped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves and camped in Mizpeh. 18 And the people *and* leaders of Gilead said to one another, "Who *is* the man who will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? He will be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

**11** Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a brave warrior, and he *was* the son of a prostitute. And Gilead was the father of Jephthah. 2 And Gilead's wife bore him sons. And his wife's sons grew up and drove out Jephthah and said to him, "You will not have an inheritance in our father's house, for you *are* the son of another woman." 3 Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and stayed in the land of Tob. And worthless fellows gathered around Jephthah and went around with him.

4 And it so happened in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. 5 And it happened *that* when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to bring Jephthah from the land of Tob, 6 and said to Jephthah, "Come and be our leader, so that we can fight with the children of Ammon."

7 And Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "Did you not hate me and drive me from my father's house? And why have you come to me now when you are in trouble?"

the Bible. We are not told why he, being of the tribe of Issachar, came to live in Ephraim. Perhaps it was merely because Ephraim was centrally located in the whole land.

**10:2** "Judged" – or "led."

**10:3-5** "Jair" – we know nothing more of Jair than is given in these verses. Gilead was east of the Jordan river. "Havoth Jair" means the villages of Jair.

**10:6** "Again" – 2:18,19; 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1. Nothing could long prevent them from following the desires of their depraved hearts. Are we better by nature than they? See Rom 3:9.

"Baals and Ashtoreth" – see 2:11-13; 1 Kings 11:5. These gods were not enough for these stubborn and sinful people. They wanted to worship all the gods of all Israel's enemies. If we do not choose the true God as our one God, we will never be satisfied with the gods, no matter how many they may be.

**10:7** "Anger" – 2:12,20; Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

"Ammon" – the Philistines were on the west of Israel, the Ammonites on the east. Israel was as if between two grinding stones.

**10:10** "Cried out to the LORD" – 3:9,15; 4:3; 6:6,7. Did they wait eighteen years to cry to God (v 8)?

"We have sinned" – confession of sin that is merely the result of some physical distress (v 9) is not the kind of confession God requires. See Ex 9:27.

**10:11** "The LORD said" – probably through a prophet.

**10:14** "Tribulation" – Isa 44:17; 45:20; 46:7; 57:13.

**10:15,16** These words and actions showed a measure of repentance, but God knew their good intentions would be like the dew of the morning of a hot day.

**11:1** "Warrior" – 6:12; 1 Tim 6:12.

**11:3** "Tob" – 2 Sam 10:6,8. A land on the Syrian border.

8 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "So we turn again to you now, so that you may go with us and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

9 And Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you take me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them up to me, will I be your head?"

10 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "May the LORD be a witness between us, if we do not do according to your words." 11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and leader over them. And Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.

12 And Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the children of Ammon, saying, "What is there between you and me, that you have come against me to fight in my land?"

13 And the king of the children of Ammon answered the messengers of Jephthah, "Because when Israel came up from Egypt, they took away my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan. Now therefore restore those *regions* again peaceably."

14 And Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the children of Ammon, 15 and they said to him, "This is what Jephthah says: 'Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the children of Ammon, 16 but when Israel came up from Egypt and travelled through the desert to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh, 17 then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, "Please let me pass through your land." But the king of Edom would not hear *of it*. And in the same way they sent *word* to the king of Moab. But he would not consent. And Israel stayed in Kadesh.

18 "Then they went along through the desert and went around the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and travelled to the east of the land of Moab

and camped on the other side of the Arnon, but did not enter the territory of Moab. For the Arnon was the border of Moab.

19 "And Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon, and Israel said to him, "Please let us pass through your land to my place." 20 But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory, and Sihon gathered all his people together and camped in Jahaz and fought against Israel.

21 "And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hands of Israel, and they defeated them. So Israel took possession of the whole land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. 22 And they took over all the territories of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok, and from the desert to the Jordan.

23 "So the LORD God of Israel dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and now should you possess it? 24 Will you not possess that which Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whomever the LORD our God drove out from before us, their *land* we will possess.

25 "And now *are* you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel or did he ever fight against them? 26 While Israel lived in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that *are* along by the territories of the Arnon for three hundred years, why did you not recover *them* during that time? 27 Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you are wronging me by warring against me. May the LORD the Judge be the judge today between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon."

28 However the king of the children of Ammon did not listen to the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came on

**11:9** "LORD delivers them up to me" – a recognition that victory would not come by his skill in battle but by God's grace. Jephthah is listed with the heroes of faith in Heb 11:32.

**11:13** "My land" – this was a false claim, as Jephthah makes clear in the following verses. When there is greed for land the facts of history are often ignored or perverted.

**11:15-22** Jephthah gives the truth about things – Num 20:14-21; 21:10-12, 21-35.

**11:20** "Did not trust Israel" – or the meaning might be "would not make an agreement with Israel."

**11:21** Verse 9.

**11:24** "Chemosh" – pronounced Key-mosh. Note at 1 Kings 11:7. Actually their god Chemosh had given them nothing, and could give them nothing – Ps 115:1-8. It was the God of Israel, the one true God,

who divided to all nations their lands (Acts 17:24-28). But this was not understood by everyone in Old Testament days any more than it is now.

**11:25** "Balak" – Num 22:1,2.

**11:26** Three hundred years had elapsed since Moses led Israel to the Jordan river. This places the time of this story at about 1100 B.C., almost a hundred years before David began his reign.

**11:27** "Judge" – 1 Sam 24:12-15. They are wise who let God decide what they should have or not have, and leave the working out of justice to Him (Gen 18:25; Deut 32:4; 2 Chron 19:7; Ps 58:11; 71:9; 75:7; 89:14; 94:2).

**11:28** They who are determined to pursue their own course will not be changed by reason, or by appeals to history.

**11:29** 3:10; 6:34; 13:25; 14:6,19.

Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpeh of Gilead; and from Mizpeh of Gilead he went *on* to the children of Ammon. 30 And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, "If you deliver the children of Ammon into my hands without fail, 31 then it shall be *that* whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it as a burnt offering."

32 So Jephthah went on to the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands. 33 And he struck them down from Aroer as far as Minnith, twenty cities, and to the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. In this way the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

34 And Jephthah came to Mizpeh to his house, and just then his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing. And she *was* his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

35 And it came about, when he saw her, that he tore his clothes and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you are one of those who trouble me; for I have opened my mouth to the LORD and I cannot go back *on it*."

36 And she said to him, "My father, *if* you have opened your mouth to the LORD, do to me according to what came out of your mouth, since the LORD has taken vengeance for you on your enemies, on the children of Ammon."

37 And she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: leave me alone for two months, so that I may go up and down on the mountains and lament because of my virginity, I and my companions."

**11:30,31** "Vow" – Israelites practiced the making of vows (Gen 28:20; Lev 7:16; 22:17; 27:2; 1 Sam 1:11; 2 Sam 15:7), and since they were often foolish sometimes their vows must have been foolish. Certainly the vow of Jephthah was.

"Burnt offering" – an offering that was killed and completely burned on the altar (Lev 1:3-9).

**11:32** "LORD delivered" – Jephthah's victory was not because of his vow, but because God had raised him up for that very purpose (v 29). The victory would have been just as certain without his rash vow.

**11:35** "Tore his clothes" – in Israel a usual way to show dismay, sorrow, or alarm.

"I cannot go back on it" – see Num 30:2; Deut 23:21-23; Eccl 5:45. He was not as many who treat lightly their promises to God and easily forget them.

**11:36** She too knew how serious a matter it was to break a vow to God.

**11:37** "Lament because of my virginity" –

38 And he said, "Go." And he sent her away *for* two months; and she went with her companions and on the mountains lamented because of her virginity. 39 And it came about at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he did with her *in accordance* with the vow which he had made. And she did not know a man. And it became a custom in Israel, 40 *that* the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite for four days in a year.

**12** And the men of Ephraim gathered together and went northward, and said to Jephthah, "Why did you pass over to fight against the children of Ammon and not call us to go with you? We will burn down your house on you with fire."

2 And Jephthah said to them, "I and my people were struggling greatly with the children of Ammon, and when I called you, you did not rescue me from their hands. 3 And when I saw that you did not rescue *me*, I put my life in my hands and went out against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hands. Why then have you come up to me today to fight against me?"

4 Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim; and the men of Gilead struck Ephraim down, because they said, "You Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites *and* among the Manassites." 5 And the Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites; and it happened that when those Ephraimites who escaped said, "Let me go over", that the men of Gilead said to him, "*Are* you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No", 6 then they said to him, "Now say Shibboleth." And he would say "Sibboleth", unable to pronounce *it* correctly. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the

lament because she would not be able to marry. In Israel virginity before marriage was regarded as the normal thing, and something to be honored, as it should be now. Women of Israel considered not marrying and not having children a thing of sorrow and shame.

**11:39** "Vow" – vs 31,35.

**12:1** "Ephraim" – compare 8:1.

"Fire" – a great reward for saving Israel!

**12:4** "Fugitives" – Ephraim and Manasseh were both descended from one forefather – Joseph. The Gileadites, most of whom were of the tribe of Manasseh, had asked for and received their inheritance east of the Jordan river, away from the rest of the people of Manasseh and Ephraim. This was sometimes a source of friction between those to the east and those to the west of the Jordan. See Joshua chapter 22. Now a civil war erupted – the first, it seems, among any of the tribes of Israel.

**12:5** "Fords" – 3:28; Josh 2:7.

**12:6** "Forty-two thousand of the Ephraimites"

Jordan. And at that time forty-two thousand of the Ephraimites fell.

7 And Jephthah judged Israel for six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died, and was buried in *one* of the cities of Gilead.

8 And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. 9 And he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, *whom* he sent outside *the family*, and brought in thirty girls from outside for his sons. And he judged Israel for seven years. 10 Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.

11 And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel. And he judged Israel for ten years. 12 And Elon the Zebulonite died and was buried in Aijalon in the region of Zebulun.

13 And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. 14 And he had forty sons and thirty grandsons who rode on seventy young donkeys. And he judged Israel for eight years. 15 And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill of the Amalekites.

**13** And once more the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.

2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren and had not borne *children*. 3 And the angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Look now, you *are* barren and have not borne *children*; but you will conceive and bear a son. 4 Now therefore you must be careful and not drink wine or strong drink. And do not eat any unclean *thing*. 5 For, look, you

will conceive and bear a son. And no razor is to come on his head; for the child is to be a Nazirite to God from birth. And he will begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines."

6 Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like the appearance of an angel of God, very awesome. But I did not ask him where he *was* from, and he did not tell me his name. 7 But he said to me, 'Look, you will conceive and bear a son. And now drink no wine or strong drink and do not eat any unclean *thing*;' for the child is to be a Nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death."

8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD and said, "O my Lord, let the man of God whom you sent come back to us and teach us what we should do for the child that will be born."

9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the angel of God came back to the woman as she was sitting in the field, but her husband Manoah *was* not with her. 10 And the woman ran quickly and told her husband and said to him, "Look, the man who came to me the *other* day has appeared to me."

11 And Manoah arose and followed his wife and came to the man and said to him, "*Are* you the man who spoke to the woman?" And he said, "I am."

12 And Manoah said, "Now let your words be fulfilled. What should the boy's rule of life be and *what* should his work be?"

13 And the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Let the woman be careful about all that I said to her. 14 She must not eat anything that comes from the vine, and she must not drink wine or strong drink or eat any unclean *thing*. She must observe all that I commanded her."

- such was the sad consequences of their envy. Oh, envy is a bitter thing, unfit to have a place in a Christian's heart. Compare Prov 14:30; 27:4; Matt 27:18. **12:7** "Judged" - or "led." The Hebrew word means both things.

**12:8** "Bethlehem" - besides the famous Bethlehem in Judah there was another in Zebulun about 11 kilometers from Nazareth (Josh 19:15,16). It is not known which Bethlehem is meant here.

**12:12** "Aijalon" - there were also two Aijalons, the other was in Ephraim where God performed a miracle for Joshua (Josh 10:12-14).

**12:15** "Amalekites" - note at 5:14.

**13:1** "Once more" - 2:18,19; 3:7,12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6.

"Philistines" - see Gen 10:14.

**13:2** "Zorah" - a town in Dan (Josh 19:40,41) near the territory occupied by the Philistines.

"Barren" - Gen 11:30; 16:1; 25:21; 1 Sam 1:2; Luke 1:7.

**13:3** "Angel of the LORD" - note at Gen 16:7.

**13:5** "Nazirite" - notes at Num 6:2-5.

"Begin" - many years later king David completed the deliverance Samson had begun (2 Sam 5:17-25; 8:1). God does not always immediately deliver His people from those persons or those things which trouble and torment them.

**13:6** The angel appeared to her in the form of a man.

**13:8** "Teach us" - all parents would do well to look to God to find out how to bring up their children, and not assume that they know how, or get their only information on the subject from some book or other written by worldly men (see Eph 6:4).

**13:13,14** It is interesting that the instruction the angel gave was not for the son but for the mother. In other words, the most important thing in bringing up children is for parents first to obey God and be what He wants them to be.

15 And Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "I pray you, let us detain you until we prepare a young goat for you."

16 And the angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Though you may detain me, I will not eat your bread. But if you offer a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD." For Manoah did not know that he *was* the angel of the LORD.

17 And Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "What *is* your name? *Tell us*, so that when your words come true we can honour you."

18 And the angel of the LORD said to him, "Why do you ask my name, since it *is* a wonder?" 19 So Manoah took a young goat, with a grain offering, and offered it on a rock to the LORD. And *the angel* did a wonderful thing as Manoah and his wife looked on. 20 For it happened that when the flame rose up toward heaven from the altar, the angel of the LORD went up in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife saw *it* and fell on their faces to the ground. 21 But the angel of the LORD did not appear again to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he *was* the angel of the LORD.

22 And Manoah said to his wife, "We will certainly die, because we have seen God."

23 But his wife said to him, "If the LORD wanted to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, and he would not have shown us all these *things* or told us *such things* as these at this time."

24 And the woman bore a son and called his name Samson. And the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

**14** And Samson went down to Timnath and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 And he came up and told his father and his mother and said, "I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. So now get her for me as *my* wife."

3 Then his father and his mother said to him, "*Is there* no woman among the daughters of your brethren or among all my people, that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well."

4 But his father and his mother did not know that it was of the LORD, that he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines; for at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel. 5 Then Samson and his father and his mother went down to Timnath and came to the vineyards of Timnath, and a young lion appeared, roaring against him. 6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily on him, and he tore it just as he would have torn a young goat, and *he had* nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. 7 And he went down and talked with the woman, and she pleased Samson well.

8 And after a time he returned to get her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion and saw that *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. 9 And he took some of it in his hands, and walked on eating *it* and came to his father and mother, and he gave *some* to them, and they ate *it*. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

10 So his father went down to the woman. And Samson made a feast there, for doing so was the

**13:15,16** Heb 13:2.

**13:17** "Name" – Gen 32:29. Manoah thought he was speaking with a human prophet.

"Come true" – Deut 18:21,22.

**13:18** "A wonder" – see Isa 9:6. It was not possible for the angel of the LORD, who was a manifestation of Jehovah Himself, to tell Manoah all His name, that is, all His nature and attributes. Ex 34:5-7 gives the briefest possible summary of them. But the whole Bible is hardly sufficient to reveal all of God's name. It is wonderful indeed, beyond our full comprehension at present. Compare Rom 11:33-36.

**13:21,22** "God" – Manoah realized something that some readers of the Bible today do not realize – that the angel of the LORD was a manifestation of God Himself. He thought death would result from their seeing Him. See 6:23; Ex 33:20.

**13:23** Sometimes wives have more common sense than their husbands.

**13:24** "Samson" – the name comes from a Hebrew word meaning "sun" or "brightness."

**13:25** "Spirit of the LORD" – 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6,19. Notes and references on the Holy Spirit at Gen 1:2; Matt 3:16; John 14:16,17; etc.

**14:2** "Get her for me" – parents then, as now among most people in India, arranged marriages for their sons and daughters.

**14:3** "Uncircumcised" – 1 Sam 14:6. Note on circumcision at Gen 17:9-14. Samson's parents were unhappy with Samson's choice. Doubtless they knew that God had prohibited marriages between His people and those not His people – Deut 7:1-3. Compare 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**14:4** "Of the LORD" – compare Gen 45:8 and 2 Sam 24:1 with 1 Chron 21:1; 12:15; 2 Chron 25:20; Acts 2:23. God can use even the weaknesses and sinful acts of his own people (as well as those who are not His people) to fulfill His purposes.

**14:6** "Spirit" – 13:25.

"What he had done" – Samson was not like some men who have to boast of every small thing they do.



custom of the young men. 11 And it came about, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12 And Samson said to them, "I will now give you a riddle. If you can tell it to me within the seven days of the feast and find out *its meaning*, then I will give you thirty linen sheets and thirty changes of clothes. 13 But if you cannot tell *it* to me, then you shall give me thirty linen sheets and thirty changes of clothes." And they said to him, "Give your riddle, and we will listen to it."

14 And he said to them,

"Out of the eater came something to eat,  
and out of the strong came something sweet."

And in three days they could not explain the riddle. 15 And it came about on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, so that he will tell us the riddle, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you called us to take what we have? *Is it not so?*"

16 And Samson's wife wept in front of him and said, "You only hate me and do not love me. You have given a riddle to the sons of my people, and have not told it to me."

And he said to her, "Look, I have not told *it* to my father or my mother, and will I tell *it to* you?"

17 And she wept in front of him for the seven days, while their feast lasted; and it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressured him so hard. And she told the riddle to the sons of her people.

18 And the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before sunset, "What *is* sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them, "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have found out my riddle."

19 And the Spirit of the LORD came on him and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, and took the plunder from them and gave changes of clothes to those who explained the

riddle. And his anger burned, and he went up to his father's house. 20 But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion who had been his friend.

**15** But a little time later, in the time of wheat harvest, it came about that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "I will go in to my wife in *her* room." But her father would not let him go in.

2 And her father said, "I really thought that you utterly hated her, so I gave her to your companion. Isn't her younger sister prettier than she? Please take her instead of her."

3 And Samson said about them, "Now I will be blameless in regard to the Philistines, even though I harm them." 4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches and turned *the foxes* tail to tail and put a torch in the middle between two tails. 5 And when he had set the torches on fire, he let *them* go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and also the standing grain, together with the vineyards *and* olive groves.

6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?" And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to his friend." And the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

7 And Samson said to them, "Since you have done this, I will take vengeance on you, and after that I will stop." 8 And he struck them hip and thigh with a great slaughter. And he went down and stayed on the top of the rock Etam.

9 Then the Philistines went up and camped in Judah and spread out in Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?"

And they answered, "We have come up to bind Samson, to do to him as he has done to us."

11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What *is* this you have done to us?"

And he said to them, "I did to them just as they did to me."

**14:15** "Seventh" – some versions have "fourth."

"Fire" – another unpleasant glimpse of man's nature – Rom 1:28-31.

**14:16** "Love me" – 16:15. A common method of some women who want to bring unjust pressure on their men to get them to do something or other.

"My people" – the thirty companions (v 11-13) were Philistines.

**14:18** "My heifer" – a heifer is a young cow, especially one that has not had a calf. Samson means his wife.

**14:19** "Spirit of the LORD" – 13:25; 14:6.

"Ashkelon" – one of the chief cities of the Philistines.

**15:3** "Philistines" – 13:1; 14:4.

**15:4** "Foxes" – the word in Hebrew may also mean jackals.

**15:7** "Vengeance" – note at Num 31:2,3.

**15:9** "Lehi" – the exact location of Lehi (and Etam – v 8) is not known.

**15:11** "Three thousand men" – a huge force to capture one man – an indication of their respect for Samson's prowess.

"Rulers over us" – 14:4.

"Did to me" – compare Matt 5:38-41; 7:12; Luke 6:27-31.

12 And they said to him, "We have come to bind you, so that we can deliver you into the hands of the Philistines."

And Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not attack me yourselves."

13 And they spoke to him, saying, "No; but we will bind you fast and deliver you into their hands. But we will certainly not kill you." And they bound him with two new cords and brought him from the rock.

14 And when he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily on him, and the cords that *were* on his arms became like flax burned in the fire and his bonds came loose from his hands. 15 And he saw a fresh jawbone of a donkey and put out his hand and picked it up, and with it killed a thousand men.

16 And Samson said,

"With the jawbone of a donkey,  
heaps on heaps!

With the jaw of a donkey I have killed  
a thousand men."

17 And it came about, when he finished saying *this*, that he threw the jawbone out of his hand and called that place Ramath-Lehi. 18 And he was very thirsty, and called out to the LORD and said, "You have given this great deliverance into the hand of your servant, and now must I die from thirst and

fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" 19 But God hollowed out a place there in Lehi, and water came out of it. And when he had drunk, his strength returned and he revived. Therefore he called its name En-Hakkore. It *is* in Lehi to this day.

20 And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines for twenty years.

**16** Then Samson went to Gaza, and he saw a prostitute there and went in to her. 2 And *someone told* the Gazites, saying, "Samson has come here." And they surrounded *him* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city, and were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him."

3 And Samson lay down until midnight, and got up at midnight and picked up the doors of the city gate and the two posts and went away with them, bar and all. And he put *them* on his shoulders and carried them up to the top of a hill that *is* before Hebron.

4 And it came about afterwards, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek whose name *was* Delilah. 5 And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, "Entice him and see what his great strength *lies* in, and how we can overpower him, so that we can bind him and subdue him, and each one of us will give you eleven hundred *shekels* of silver."

**15:12** Instead of opposing their enemies they accepted their authority over them and opposed the one who would not – not an unknown thing in spiritual matters as well.

**15:14** "Spirit of the LORD" – 13:25. Four times the account speaks of the Spirit of the LORD in connection with the work of Samson – more often than with any other person in the book of Judges, or indeed with any other Old Testament character except Ezekiel. Yet Samson sometimes revealed himself as a carnal man. He is an illustration of the truth of Zech 4:6.

**15:15** "A thousand men" – compare 3:31; 2 Sam 23:8. Samson's feat was unequaled by any man in the Bible.

**15:17** "Ramath-Lehi" – the name means "jawbone hill."

**15:18** "To the LORD" – the first mention of Samson praying. There is only one other (16:28).

"Deliverance" – as all the heroes of faith did, Samson acknowledged that victory was given by God – 12:3. Compare Deut 20:4; Josh 21:44; Ps 44:7; 144:9,10. All spiritual victories will come the same way.

**15:19** "Out of it" – God is perfectly able to supply the needs of His servants any time, anywhere – Ex 16:3,4,11,12; 17:6; 1 Kings 17:2-6,9; Ps 23:1,5. Let us not speak as Israel did in Ps 78:19. En-Hakkore is Hebrew and means "The spring of the one who calls out."

**15:20** "Judged" – or "led" – the Hebrew word means both.

**16:1** "Gaza" – another (14:19) of the five chief cities of the Philistines.

"To her" – Samson was physically strong, morally weak. His moral weakness eventually cost him his freedom, his eyes, and his life (vs 21,30). Prov 23:27,28 is always true and Gal 6:7 is a principle that applies to all.

**16:3** "Hebron" – a city in Judah 60 or 70 kilometers from Gaza. Did Samson go all that distance? or just to the top of some high hill which looked toward Hebron?

**16:4** "Delilah" – probably another Philistine, though this is not certain. She could have been of some other people or even a traitorous Israelite. Her name probably means "a flirt" or "a devotee." The verses which follow show she flirted with money and was more devoted to it than to Samson or probably anything else. Samson did not have the moral strength to resist her (v 1). But in all this too God would work out His purposes against the Philistines (14:4).

**16:5** "Eleven hundred shekels" – about 13 kilograms. Comparison with 17:10 shows something of the value of so much silver in those days. There are always people who will sell lovers, friends, principles, and their own souls for money – Matt 26:14-16.

"His great strength" – it seems from this that Samson did not have the appearance of an exceptionally strong man. They

6 And Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me what your great strength *lies* in and what you can be bound with to subdue you."

7 And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh straps that have never been dried, then I will be weak and become like any other man."

8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh straps which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. 9 Now men were lurking there, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines are on you, Samson." And he broke the straps, as a piece of string snaps when it touches the fire. So *the secret* of his strength was not known.

10 And Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now please tell me what you can be bound with."

11 And he said to her, "If they bind me tightly with new ropes that have never been used, then I will be weak and become like any other man."

12 So Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines *are* on you, Samson." And *there were* men in ambush staying in the room. And he snapped them off his arms like a thread.

13 And Delilah said to Samson, "Up till now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you can be bound with."

And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of *hair* on my head with the cloth on a loom."

14 And she fastened it with the peg, and said to him, "The Philistines *are* on you, Samson." And he woke from his sleep, and went away with the peg of the beam and with the cloth on the loom.

15 And she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you', when your heart *is* not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me what your great strength *lies* in." 16 And it came about as she pressed him daily with her words and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed to death, 17 that he told her all his heart and said to her,

"No razor has come on my head, for I *have been* a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will go from me and I will become weak and be like any *other* man."

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up just this once, for he has told me all his heart." Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought money in their hands. 19 And she put him asleep on her knees; and she called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. And she began to subdue him, and his strength went from him.

20 And she said, "The Philistines *are* on you, Samson."

And he awoke out of his sleep and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself." And he did not know that the LORD had left him.

21 Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with bronze fetters. And he became a grinder in the prison house. 22 However, after he had been shaved, the hair of his head began to grow again.

23 Then the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, "Our god has delivered Samson our enemy into our hands."

realized there was some secret that did not meet the eye.

**16:7** Samson foolishly begins to play a dangerous game that concerned holy truth about his relationship with God. It resulted in disaster (v 17), as it was bound to do.

**16:11** Even Samson, not the most intellectual of men, knew now that Delilah was trying to trap him for the Philistines. But he continued the game.

**16:13** "Hair on my head" – now Samson gets closer to the truth.

**16:15** "Love you" – Samson finally gave in to this argument as he had before (14:16). Some people make the same mistake again and again. In this respect Samson the deliverer was like the people he tried to deliver.

**16:16** Compare Prov 27:15,16.

**16:17** He knew his great strength was not in his physical frame but in his relationship to God (13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14). So now the believer's strength is not in himself but in the Lord (Eph 6:10). Samson revealed his secret. His behavior was something like that which the Lord Jesus warned against in Matt 7:6.

**16:20** His hair, the sign of his special relationship to God as a Nazirite, was gone, and it seems that at first he was not aware of it. But with it went the special relationship that alone had made him strong. He had knowingly betrayed himself and his relationship to God into the hands of the enemy, and now paid the price of his betrayal. He sold his strength for pleasure with a sinful woman – not the last to do so. For example, both David and Solomon failed in the same way.

**16:21** See Prov 5:7-11; 7:21-27. Samson's story is an illustration, one of the saddest in the Bible, of how far even a man dedicated to God's service may fall. Sexual sin alone brought the mighty "warrior" of 15:14,15 down to the pathetic wreck of this verse. Lust had found another victim to add to its long list of ruined men – see notes at 2 Sam 11:1; 1 Kings 11:1. The Bible tells things as they are and does not make its heroes to be sinless and perfect. Notes at Gen 9:21; 12:13; 27:18-26; Ex 32:2-4; Num 20:12; 2 Sam 11:1; Matt 26:69-75. **16:23,24** "Dagon" – 1 Sam 5:1-12. This is another sad result of the sin and fall of any of God's servants – the true God is thought

24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, "Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the destroyer of our country, who killed many of us."

25 And it came about, while their hearts were in good *spirits*, that they said, "Call for Samson, so that he may amuse us." And they called for Samson from the prison house, and he was an amusement for them. And they placed him between the pillars.

26 And Samson said to the boy who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars the temple is resting on, so that I can lean on them." 27 Now the temple was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there, and about three thousand men and women *were* on the roof, who were watching as Samson was being an amusement for *them*.

28 And Samson called out to the LORD and said, "O Lord God, remember me, I pray you, and strengthen me, I pray you, just this once, O God, so that at once I may have revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." 29 And Samson took hold of the two central pillars on which the temple rested and by which it was held up, the one *pillar* with his right hand and the other with his left. 30 And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." And he bowed down with *all his* might, and the temple collapsed on the lords and on all the people who *were* in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than *those* whom he killed in his life.

31 Then his brothers and all the household of his father came down, took him and brought *him* up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burial place of Manoah his father. And he had judged Israel for twenty years.

to be weak and His name is dishonored, and often false gods are praised. Compare 1 Chron 10:8-10.

**16:25** "Amuse us" – the Hebrew word here indicates something that produces mocking laughter. What can be sadder than a mighty man of God made a spectacle for ridicule to the ungodly?

**16:28** Though this prayer was offered from a bad motive (personal vengeance), God heard it. If God waited till His people's prayers were absolutely pure and selfless before answering, how many answers would they ever get? But God is compassionate and remembers we are but dust (Ps 103:13,14).

**16:30** Note at 14:4.

**16:31** Samson is listed with the great heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter 11, his sins and failings passed over. Compare 4:8; Ps 103:10-14; Isa 44:22; Micah 7:18,19.

"Judged" – may also be translated "led."

**17:1** "Micah" – a shortened form of Micaiah which means "who is like Jah (Jehovah)?" It was a common name in Israel. The

**17** And there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim whose name *was* Micah. 2 And he said to his mother, "The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver which were taken from you, about which you uttered a curse and also spoke about in my hearing, look, the silver is with me. I took it."

And his mother said, "*May you be blessed by the LORD, my son.*"

3 And he returned the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, and his mother said, "I had wholly dedicated the silver to the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a carved image and a cast idol. So now I will give it back to you."

4 So when he returned the money to his mother, his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver and gave them to the silversmith, who made a carved image and a cast metal idol with it. And they were in Micah's house.

5 And the man Micah had a shrine *for the* gods, and he made an ephod and household idols and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

6 In those days *there was* no king in Israel, but everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

7 And there was a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, among the family of Judah, who was a Levite and was staying there. 8 And the man left the town of Bethlehem in Judah to live where he could find a *place*. And as he travelled he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim.

9 And Micah said to him, "Where are you coming from?"

And he said to him, "I *am* a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am going to stay wherever I can find a *place*."

10 And Micah said to him, "Stay with me, and

prophet Micah lived several hundred years after this one.

**17:2** "Eleven hundred shekels" – about 13 kilograms.

"Curse" – Micah's mother probably pronounced a curse on whoever stole the money, and he was afraid disaster would come on him. She immediately pronounces a blessing on him, thinking this would counteract the curse.

**17:3** Making idols in the name of Jehovah God who had forbidden all idolatry (Ex 20:4,5,23)! This is the sort of thing that happened when "every one did what was right in his own eyes" (v 6), and did not do what was right in the Lord's eyes.

**17:5** "Ephod" – 8:27; Ex 28:6.

"Priest" – another violation of the law. Only descendants of Aaron were to be priests (Ex 28:1; 29:9).

**17:6** Note at 21:25.

**17:7** "Levite" – note on Levites at Num 1:51.

**17:10** "Father" – here used as a word of respect (2 Kings 2:12; 6:21; 13:14).

"Ten shekels" – about 110 grams.

be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you ten *shekels* of silver yearly and a set of clothes and your food." So the Levite went in.

11 And the Levite was content to stay with the man; and to him the young man was like one of his sons. 12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest and was in the house of Micah. 13 Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will do good to me, since I have a Levite as *my* priest."

**18** In those days *there was* no king in Israel. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was looking for an inheritance for themselves to live in; for to that day no inheritance had fallen to them among the tribes of Israel. 2 And the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, brave men from Zorah and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land and to explore it. And they said to them, "Go, explore the land." When they came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim, they spent the night there.

3 When they *were* by the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young man, the Levite, and they turned aside there and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this *place*? What do you have here?"

4 And he said to them, "Micah has done such and such for me and has hired me, and I am his priest."

5 And they said to him, "Please ask counsel from God, so that we may know whether our journey, which we are going on, will be successful."

6 And the priest said to them, "Go in peace. Your journey which you are going on *is* in the LORD's presence."

7 Then the five men departed and came to Laish, and saw the people who *were* there, how they lived carelessly, just like the Sidonians, quiet and carefree. And *there was* no ruler in the land who might humiliate *them* in *any* way. And they *were* far from the Sidonians, and had no dealings with anyone.

8 And the *Danites* came to their brethren at Zorah and Eshtaol; and their brethren said to them, "What *do* you say?"

9 And they said, "Arise, let's go up against them; for we saw the land, and, look, it *is* very good. And *will* you *do* nothing? Don't hesitate to go and enter to take possession of the land. 10 When you go, you will come to a carefree people, and to a spacious land; for God has given it into your hands. *It is* a place where *there is* no lack of anything on earth."

11 And six hundred men of the family of the Danites, armed with weapons of war, set out from Zorah and from Eshtaol. 12 And they went up and camped in Kirjath-Jearim, in Judah. Therefore they call that place Mahaneh-Dan to this day. Look, *it is* west of Kirjath-Jearim. 13 And they went from there to the hill country of Ephraim and arrived at the house of Micah.

14 Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish, responded and said to their brethren, "Do you know that in these houses there are an ephod and household gods and a carved image and a cast metal idol? So now consider what you have to do." 15 And they turned aside there and came to the house of the young man, the Levite, to Micah's house, and greeted him. 16 And the six hundred men who *were* of the children of Dan, armed with their weapons of war, stood by

**17:11** As with many in Christian circles so with this Levite – he was willing to work where the money was. God's will and the principles of God's Word didn't enter into his decision (vs 19,20). Alas, that there should be any Christian workers who hire themselves out to the highest bidder! They should remember that he who pays the piper calls the tune.

**17:13** Micah in his ignorance made three mistakes in his thinking – that God was pleased with his idols (vs 3,4), that God was pleased to have all Levites as priests (v 5), and that God would bless him merely because of what someone else was and did. If the Lord was good to Micah it was in spite of these things, not because of them.

**18:1** The tribe of Dan had been allotted a small territory west of Ephraim and Judah which extended to the Mediterranean coast (Josh 19:40-46). However, they had not been able to possess all of their inheritance (1:34).

**18:2** "Zorah" – 13:2.

**18:3** "Levite" – they either knew him before or recognized from his accent or speech that he was not a native of Ephraim.

**18:5** God had already revealed where the tribe of Dan should be (Josh 19:40-46. Note at Josh 14:2). It was up to them to trust God to enable them to take all the territory allotted to them, and not to run away from it. It is never good for anyone to try to escape from the place where God has placed him (or her).

**18:6** He did not know whether or not the Lord approved. He told them what they wanted to hear, and he used God's name in vain.

**18:7** Laish is the same as the Leshem of Josh 19:47. It was about 160 kilometers from where they started. The Sidonians were to the west on the Mediterranean coast.

**18:10** "Your hands" – sometimes, as in this case, men take what God has not put in their hands.

**18:12** "Mahaneh-Dan" – this means "Dan's camp."



the entrance of the gate. 17 And the five men who had gone to spy out the land went up, entered there, *and* took the carved image and the ephod and the household gods and the cast idol. And the priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men *who were* armed with weapons of war.

18 And these went into Micah's house and brought out the carved image, the ephod and the household gods and the cast metal idol. Then the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

19 And they said to him, "Keep quiet! Put your hand on your mouth, and go with us and be a father and a priest to us. *Is it* better for you to be a priest to the house of one man, or to be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?" 20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod and the household gods and the carved image and went among the people. 21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the valuables before them.

22 *And* when they were some distance from the house of Micah, the men who *were* in the houses near Micah's house gathered together, and caught up with the children of Dan. 23 And they shouted to the children of Dan. And they turned their faces and said to Micah, "What's wrong with you, that you come with such a crowd?"

24 And he said, "You have taken away my gods, which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. And what else do I have? And what *is* this you say to me, 'What's wrong with you?'"

25 And the children of Dan said to him, "Let not your voice be heard among us, or else some angry fellows will rush at you, and you will lose your life, with the lives of your household." 26 And the children of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.

27 And they took *the things* which Micah had made, and the priest he had, and came to Laish, to a people at peace and carefree, and they struck them down with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. 28 And *there was* no one to save *them*, because it *was* far from Sidon, and they had no dealings with anyone. And it was in the

valley that *lies* near Beth-Rehob. And they built a city and lived in it.

29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of their father Dan, who was born to Israel. But at first the name of the city was Laish. 30 And the children of Dan set up the carved image; and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 And they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he had made. *It was there* all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

**19** And it came about in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that a certain Levite staying in a remote place in the hill country of Ephraim, took a concubine for himself from Bethlehem in Judah. 2 And his concubine acted like a prostitute against him and went away from him to her father's house to Bethlehem in Judah, and was there for four whole months. 3 And her husband arose and went after her to speak to her in a friendly way and to bring her back. He had his servant with him, and a couple of donkeys. And she brought him into her father's house; and when the girl's father saw him, he was glad to meet him. 4 And his father-in-law, the girl's father, pressed him *to stay*, and he remained with him for three days. So they ate and drank and spent the nights there.

5 And it came about on the fourth day, when they got up early in the morning, that he rose up to leave, but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a piece of bread, and afterwards go on your way." 6 And they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together; and the girl's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry." 7 And when the man got up to leave, his father-in-law urged him to stay. So he spent the night there again. 8 And he got up early in the morning on the fifth day to leave, and the girl's father said, "Please refresh your heart." And they waited until afternoon, and both of them ate.

9 And when the man got up to leave, he, and his concubine and his servant, his father-in-law,

**18:17** 17:3; 21:25.

**18:20** "Glad" – note at 17:11.

**18:24** "Taken away my gods" – compare Gen 31:30,53.

"What else do I have" – a sad, pathetic thing for a man of Israel to say. Israel was the nation in covenant relationship with the one true God. And it is a sad thing that some people still have nothing but idols and priests, for this means they have nothing at all.

**18:25** They were willing to break another of God's laws and murder fellow Israelites for

the sake of idols! 21:25. It is not surprising that Dan later became a center of idolatry – 1 Kings 12:28-30.

**18:30** "Manasseh" – because the priest who went with the Danites was a Levite, and because Gershom was the name of one of the sons of Moses, some scholars seem quite certain that this should read "Moses" and not Manasseh, but there is no proof for this, and the best Hebrew manuscripts have "Manassah."

**18:31** "Shiloh" – Josh 18:1; 1 Sam 1:3.

**19:1** 21:27.

the girl's father, said to him, "Look, now the day is drawing toward evening. Please stay all night. See, daylight is coming to an end. Spend the night here and let your heart be merry. And tomorrow get away early on your journey to your home." 10 But the man would not stay that night, but he rose up and left, and came opposite Jebus, which is Jerusalem. And with him *there were* two saddled donkeys. His concubine also *was* with him.

11 By the time they *were* near Jebus, daylight was almost over, and the servant said to his master, "Please come and let us turn into this city of the Jebusites and spend the night in it."

12 And his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into the city of strangers who *are* not of the children of Israel. We will go on to Gibeah." 13 And he said to his servant, "Come on, and let us *try to* reach one of these places to spend all night: Gibeah or Ramah." 14 And they passed on by and went on their way. And *when they came* near Gibeah, which *belongs* to Benjamin, the sun set. 15 And they turned aside there to go in and spend the night in Gibeah. And when he went into the city, he sat down in a street, for no one took them into his house to spend the night.

16 And then an old man came in the evening from his work out of the field, which was also in the hill country of Ephraim. He was living in Gibeah, but the men of the place *were* Benjamites. 17 And when he raised his eyes, he saw a traveller in the street of the city. And the old man said, "Where are you going? And where are you coming from?"

18 And he said to him, "We *are* passing through from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote place in the hill country of Ephraim, where I *come* from. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, but I am *now* going to the house of the LORD. And no one has taken me to his house. 19 Yet there is both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and also there is bread and wine for me and for your maid servant and for the young man who is with your servants. *There is* no lack of any thing."

20 And the old man said, "Peace be with you. However, I *will see* to all your needs. Only do not spend the night in the street." 21 So he brought him into his house and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet and ate and drank.

22 Now while they were making their hearts merry, suddenly some men of the city, wicked scoundrels, surrounded the house *and* pounded on the door and spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who has come into your house, so that we can know him."

23 And the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren, please, no! Don't do *such* a wicked thing, since this man has come into my house, do not do this foolish thing. 24 Look, *here is* my daughter, a virgin, and his concubine. I will bring them out now, and you can humble them and do with them whatever seems good to you. But do not do such a vile thing to this man."

25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning, and when day began to dawn they let her go. 26 Then the woman came at the dawn of day and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master *was*, until it was light.

27 And her master got up in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his way; and there was the woman, his concubine, fallen down *at* the door of the house, and her hands *were* on the threshold. 28 And he said to her, "Get up, and let us be going." But no one answered. Then the man lifted her *up* onto a donkey, and the man rose up and went to his place.

29 And when he came into his house, he grasped a knife and took hold of his concubine and divided her into twelve pieces, *along* with her bones, and sent her into all the territories of Israel. 30 And it came about that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt

**19:10** 1:21; 2 Sam 5:6,7.

**19:12** "Gibeah" – this Gibeah was in Benjamin, a short distance north of Jerusalem. There were two other Gibeahs, one in Judah, one in Ephraim.

**19:15** "No one took them into his house" – this was contrary to the custom of the times. Compare 6:18,19; 13:15; Heb 13:2.

**19:18** "House of the LORD" – 18:31.

**19:22** Notes at Gen 19:4,5. These men were Israelites who had picked up the vile ways of the Canaanites – Lev 18:22,24. By their actions they were grinding God's law beneath their unholy feet.

**19:23** Compare Gen 19:7; Rom 1:26,27.

**19:24** Note at Gen 19:8. Surely it was also a disgraceful thing for this man to offer de-

fenseless women to these vile men, even to save the life of the Levite.

**19:25** The Levite was willing to sacrifice the woman to save himself. Such is the way men may behave when they do only as they see fit.

**19:28** "Get up" – these words reveal no love, no sympathy, no basic human concern for the woman he had condemned to terrible abuse. This is the kind of character that develops when people do what is right in their own eyes, and not what is right in God's eyes.

**19:29** "Israel" – compare 1 Sam 11:7. The Levite chose this startling way to inform the tribes of what had taken place, doubtless with the hope that they would take vengeance

to this day. Think about it, take advice, and speak *your minds*."

**20** Then all the children of Israel came out from Dan to Beersheba and *from* the land of Gilead. The congregation was gathered together to the LORD as one man in Mizpeh. **2** And the leaders of all the people, of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers who drew sword. **3** (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpeh.) Then the children of Israel said, "Tell *us*. How did this wickedness happen?"

**4** And the Levite, the husband of the woman who had been killed, answered and said, "I came to Gibeah that *belongs* to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to spend the night. **5** And the men of Gibeah rose against me and at night surrounded the house where I *was*, intending to kill me. And they forced my concubine so that she died. **6** And I took my concubine and cut her in pieces and sent her throughout the whole country of the inheritance of Israel, for they have committed a lewd and disgraceful act in Israel. **7** Look, you *are* all children of Israel. Give here your advice and counsel."

**8** And all the people arose as one man, saying, "Not a one *of us* will go to his tent, nor will any *of us* return to his house. **9** But now this *is* the thing which we will do to Gibeah: we will *cast* lots and *go up* against it, **10** and we will take ten men out of a hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred out of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to bring provisions for the people, so that when they arrive at Gibeah in Benjamin, they may deal *with them* in accordance with all the

vileness that they have committed in Israel." **11** So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united as one man.

**12** And the tribes of Israel sent men through the whole tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What *is* this wickedness that has been done among you? **13** Now therefore deliver *to us* the men, the wicked scoundrels who *are* in Gibeah, so that we can put them to death and put away evil from Israel." But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel, **14** but the children of Benjamin gathered together from the cities to Gibeah to go out to battle against the children of Israel. **15** And at that time the children of Benjamin from the cities were counted, twenty-six thousand men who drew sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who were counted as seven hundred choice men. **16** Among all this people seven hundred choice men *were* lefthanded. Each one could sling stones at a hair and not miss.

**17** And besides Benjamin, the men of Israel were counted, four hundred thousand men who drew sword. All these *were* warriors.

**18** And the children of Israel arose and went up to the house of God and asked counsel of God and said, "Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin?" And the LORD said, "Judah *shall go up* first."

**19** And the children of Israel got up in the morning and camped against Gibeah. **20** And the men of Israel went out to the battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. **21** And the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah and that day destroyed twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites on the field. **22** And the people, the men of

on Gibeah.

**20:1** "All the children of Israel" – that is, men from every section of the country from the far north to the far south (Dan to Beersheba). Only Jabesh Gilead was not represented (21:8,9).

"Mizpeh" – there are several Mizpahs mentioned in the Bible, but this one was in Benjamin, not far from Gibeah.

**20:9** "Cast lots" – a common practice among the Israelites – Josh 7:14; 18:6; 1 Sam 14:41,42; 1 Chron 24:5.

**20:10** "Deal with them in accordance with all the vileness" – what they deserved was death – v 13. See note at Ex 21:36.

**20:13** "Put away evil" – compare Deut 13:5; 17:7; 19:19,20. Possibly they had in mind what happened in Israel when one man sinned in Joshua's day and the whole of Israel suffered for it (Joshua chapter 7). They realized that to avoid God's punishment on themselves they had to do something about this terrible violation of God's law. Notes at Josh 7:1,12,13,26; 2 Sam

21:1,5,6; Acts 5:1-11. Their stand shows that there was still some moral fiber left in the nation even in those dark times.

**20:14** This was totally unreasonable. They mobilized to defend guilty men, violent sexual perverts and murderers who were worthy of death, simply because they were of the same tribe. This naturally resulted in a terrible disaster. Let us all understand that defending the guilty is sharing their guilt, and God will punish it. When evil people should be exposed and punished we must not cover up their evil deeds just because they are related to us. If we do, we cannot escape God's judgment ourselves. See note on v 48.

**20:16** "Sling stones" – 1 Sam 17:40.

**20:18** "To the house of God" – in Hebrew "house of God" is one word – "Bethel", and this phrase could be translated "to Bethel" (also v 26).

"Asked counsel of God" – it seems they did not ask whether they should fight with Benjamin, only who should go to fight first.

Israel, encouraged themselves and again set their battle lines in the place where they put themselves in array the first day. 23 And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up again to fight against the children of Benjamin my brother?" And the LORD said, "Go up against him."

24 And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day. 25 And Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah the second day, and again destroyed eighteen thousand men of the children of Israel on the field. All these were swordsmen.

26 Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up and came to the house of God, and wept and sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27 And the children of Israel inquired of the LORD (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, 28 and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days), saying, "Shall I again go out to fight against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I stop?" And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."

29 And Israel set an ambush around Gibeah. 30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. 31 And the children of Benjamin went out against the people *and* were drawn away from the city, and, as at other times, they began to strike down and kill *some* of the people, about thirty men of Israel, in the highways, one of which went up to the house of God and the other to Gibeah *and* in the field.

32 And the children of Benjamin said, "They *are being* struck down before us, just like at first." But the children of Israel said, "Let us run away and draw them from the city into the highways."

33 And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place and put themselves in array at Baal-Tamar, and those of Israel waiting in ambush came out of

their places, out of the meadows of Gibeah. 34 And ten thousand choice men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce, but the *Benjamites* did not know that disaster *was* near them. 35 And the LORD struck down Benjamin before Israel; and that day the children of Israel destroyed twenty-five thousand one hundred men of the Benjamites. All these were swordsmen.

36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were defeated; for the men of Israel gave ground to the Benjamites, because they trusted those who were waiting in the ambush they had placed near Gibeah, 37 and those who had been in ambush quickly rushed on Gibeah. And those who had been in ambush spread out and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword. 38 Now the arranged sign between the men of Israel and those who had been in ambush, was that they should make a great cloud of smoke rise up from the city. 39 And when the men of Israel drew back from the battle, Benjamin began to strike down and kill about thirty of the men of Israel, for they said, "No doubt they are being struck down before us, just as *in* the first battle." 40 But when the cloud began to rise up from the city *like* a column of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them and saw the cloud from the city rising up to the sky. 41 And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin were alarmed, for they saw that disaster had come upon them. 42 Therefore they turned *their backs* on the men of Israel toward the wilderness road. But the battle overtook them, and those who came out of the cities destroyed them between them. 43 *In this way* they surrounded the Benjamites *and* chased them and easily trampled them down opposite Gibeah toward the sunrise. 44 And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell. All these *were* brave men. 45 And they turned and fled toward the wilderness toward the rock of Rimmon. And they picked off five thousand of them in the highways, and pursued *the rest of* them to Gidom and killed two thousand of them.

46 So that the total *number* of the Benjamites who fell that day was twenty-five thousand

**20:23** A different and humbler question than that of v 18. The Lord sent them, but it resulted in further great bloodshed and defeat (v 24). It seems that God was using the occasion to punish all Israel, or at least to teach them some severe lessons. This is not stated in this chapter, but there is enough reason in other parts of Judges to cause us to think so.

**20:26** They humbled themselves still further to seek the Lord and He heard them.

"Offerings" – notes at Leviticus chapters 1-3.

**20:28** "Phinehas" – if this is the same

Phinehas that was the priest in the days of Joshua (Josh 22:13), the events of these last three chapters took place not long after Joshua's death.

"Your hand" – God had not told them this before.

**20:35** Even with a numerical superiority of 15 to 1 (vs 15,17), it was the Lord who had to give them the victory. No doubt the Benjamites were fierce and skillful fighters, but it is probable also that they had less reluctance to kill their fellow Israelites than their fellow Israelites had to kill them. But at last almost the whole of the armed men

swordsmen. All these *were* brave men. 47 But six hundred men turned and fled into the wilderness to the rock Rimmon, and stayed at the rock Rimmon for four months. 48 And the men of Israel turned back on the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword, both the men of *every* city and the cattle and all that was encountered. They also set on fire all the cities that they came to.

**21** Now the men of Israel had made an oath in Mizpeh, saying, "None of us will give his daughter to Benjamin in marriage."

2 And the people came to the house of God, and stayed there until evening before God and raised their voices and wept bitterly. 3 And they said, "O LORD God of Israel, why has this happened in Israel, that today there should be one tribe lacking in Israel?"

4 And it came about the next day that the people rose early and built there an altar and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. 5 And the children of Israel said, "Among all the tribes of Israel who *is there* who did not come up with the congregation to the LORD?" For they had made a great oath concerning the one who did not come to Mizpeh to the LORD, saying, "He shall surely be put to death."

6 And the children of Israel were grieved for Benjamin their brother and said, "Today one tribe is cut off from Israel. 7 What shall we do about wives for those who are left, since we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them our daughters in marriage?" 8 And they said, "Which of the tribes of Israel did not come up to Mizpeh to the LORD?" And, *lo and* behold, no one from Jabesh-Gilead had come to the camp for the assembly. 9 For the people were numbered, and, *lo and* behold, none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead *were* there.

10 And the congregation sent twelve thousand of the bravest men there and commanded them, saying, "Go and strike down the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead with the edge of the sword, with the

women and the children. 11 And this *is* what you must do: utterly destroy every male and every woman that has lain with a man." 12 And they found four hundred young virgins among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead who had not known a man by lying with him. And they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan.

13 And the whole congregation sent *some men* to speak to the children of Benjamin who *were* at the rock Rimmon, and to proclaim peace to them. 14 And at that time Benjamin came out again; and they gave to them in marriage those women of Jabesh Gilead whom they had saved alive. But still they were not sufficient for them.

15 And the people were grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a gap in the tribes of Israel. 16 Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do about wives for those who are left, since the women in Benjamin have been destroyed?" 17 And they said, "*There must be* an inheritance for those of Benjamin who have escaped, so that a tribe of Israel is not destroyed. 18 However, we must not give them our daughters in marriage, for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, 'Cursed *be* the one who gives *anyone* in marriage to Benjamin.'" 19 Then they said, "Look, *there is* an annual feast of the LORD in Shiloh *in a place* to the north of Bethel, to the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem and to the south of Lebonah."

20 So they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go and lie in wait in the vineyards 21 and watch, and when the daughters of Shiloh come out to take part in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and each man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. 22 And it shall come about, when their fathers or their brothers come to us to complain, that we will say to them, 'Do this favour to them for our sakes; because we did not take a wife for each man in battle. And you did not give *wives* to them at this time, *that* you should be guilty.'" 23 And the children of Benjamin did so, and

of Benjamin were destroyed.

**20:48** Because of the sin of a few vile men in Gibeah and the senseless defense of them by the Benjamites, more than 65,000 men lost their lives (vs 21,25,35), Gibeah and other cities were destroyed with their population of many thousands more (vs 37,48), and a whole tribe was almost obliterated (v 47; 21:3). Is not the defense of wickedness a very costly matter? The reason it is so costly is this: those who defend wickedness share in the guilt of those they defend and will have God fighting against them.

**21:1** Note on vows at 11:30,31. This one had a curse on anyone who broke it (v 18).

**21:2** "The people came to the house of God" – or "the people went to Bethel."

**21:2-4** Verses 6,15. The experience of civil war resulted in some brokenness of spirit – a flower that blossomed from the muck of the occasion, great good in the midst of a terrible disaster (compare Ps 51:17).

**21:5** "Death" – they considered that failing to do one's duty in that time of crisis was as worthy of death as the defense of wickedness. Compare 5:23; 8:15-17.

**21:10,11** This was in fulfillment of the vow of v 5.

**21:18** Verse 1.

**21:21** "Shiloh" – this was in the territory of Ephraim.



they caught *some* of those who were dancing and took wives *for themselves*, according to their number. And they went away and returned to their inheritance and repaired the cities and lived in them.

**21:25** "Right in his own eyes" – they had no earthly king and did not submit to their heavenly King. They forsook the Word of God, did not bow to its authority, and did as they pleased. The result was the events recorded in this book of Judges. This is one of the saddest accounts of human failure in the Bible, indeed in the whole literature of the world. It is a story of failure we see anytime, anywhere when men do as they see fit instead of doing as God sees fit. Human nature has not improved since the days of Judges and those who cast off

24 And the children of Israel left there at that time, each man to his tribe and to his family, and each man left there and went to his inheritance.

25 In those days *there was* no king in Israel. Everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

authority and restraint now will behave as people did then.

But in the gloom of these final words of the book and in the darkness of the times let us not forget the bright beams of faith that shone here and there. Four persons from Judges are named among the heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 – more than from any other book except Genesis. And in the midst of the sinful behavior of His people, God’s grace and compassion and mercy shine even brighter than they otherwise might have done.

# RUTH

**Author and date:**

Ancient Jewish tradition indicates Samuel as the author, but there is no proof either for or against this, and there is no certainty about the time of writing.

**Themes:**

One theme is the kindness and love between individuals and the resulting rewards. Another theme is how a foreign woman joined the people of Israel by faith in the one true God and became an important person in their history, an ancestress of king David and the Lord Jesus Christ. Another theme is the office of kinsman-redeemer. The kinsman-redeemer is a type or picture of Christ. See the note at 2:20. This redeemer had to be a blood relative. Christ our Redeemer became man (Heb 2:9-18), and so our relative. The kinsman-redeemer had to have enough means to purchase a person's lost possession (Ruth 4:2-10). Christ alone was able to pay the price of redemption for us (Ps 49:7-9; 1 Pet 1:18,19). The kinsman-redeemer had to be willing to pay the price of redemption (Ruth 4:4,6,9). Christ was willing to pay the price for us (Matt 20:28; John 10:11,17,18). The kinsman-redeemer had to be willing to marry the wife of the dead relative. In a spiritual sense Christ fulfills this also. See Rom 7:1-4.

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**1** Now it came about in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live for a time in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. **2** And the man's name was Elimelech and his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. *They were* Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah, and they came into the country of Moab and stayed there.

**3** And Naomi's husband Elimelech died, and she and her two sons were left. **4** And they married *two* of the women of Moab. The name of one *was* Orpah and the name of the other *was* Ruth. And they stayed there about ten years. **5** And both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

**6** Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return *home* from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited his people by providing food for them. **7** Therefore she, and her two daughters-in-law with her, left the place where she was and set out on the road to return to the land of Judah.

**8** And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go. Each of you return to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, just as you have dealt with *those now* dead, and with me.

**1:1** "Ruled" – or "judged" (the Hebrew word means both of these). The judges led Israel for more than 300 years.

"Famine in the land" – this famine is not mentioned in the book of Judges. It must have been very severe to cause people to leave their homes and inheritances and go to another country. The cause of the famine is not given here, but during the times of the judges the people often forsook God, broke His laws and worshiped idols (Judges 2:16-19). It is no surprising thing that a famine came on them (compare Lev 26:25,26; Deut 28:15,23,24; 1 Kings 8:35; 2 Kings 8:1; Jer 14:10-12; 24:10; Ezek 5:16; 14:21; Amos 8:11).

**1:2** "Naomi" – a Hebrew name meaning "Pleasant."

"Ephrathites" – Bethlehem was located in an area called Ephrathah – Micah 5:2.

"Moab" – note on Moab at Gen 19:36-38. The Moabites, being descended from Abraham's nephew Lot, were "cousins" of the Israelites.

**1:6-8** "Providing food" – God gave rain and good crops once more in Israel.

"From. . . Moab" – evidently Naomi and her daughters-in-law at first agreed to go together to Judah, but after setting out on the journey Naomi changed her mind. Possibly this was because the thought struck her that there was probably no future in Israel for these widowed Moabite women.

**1:8** "With me" – 2:11,12. Compare Ps 18:25,26; 62:12. We have no right to

**9** May the LORD grant that each *of you* find rest in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them; and they raised their voice and wept.

**10** And they said to her, "We will certainly return with you to your people."

**11** And Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters. Why will you go with me? *Are there any more* sons still in my womb, that they may become your husbands? **12** Turn back, my daughters. Go on *your* way. For I am too old to get a husband. If I should say, 'I have hope,' if even tonight I would have a husband and would also bear sons, **13** would you wait for them until they were grown up? Would you refrain from marrying for them? No, my daughters; for I am very much grieved for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me."

**14** And they raised their voice and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law but Ruth clung to her.

**15** And *Naomi* said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Go back after your sister-in-law."

**16** And Ruth said, "Do not ask me to leave you or to go back from following you, for where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people *will be* my people and your God my God. **17** Where you die I will die, and there I will be

expect God to be kind to us if we are not kind to others. From one point of view this book of Ruth is the story of kindness and its rewards (v 8; 2:11,12,15,20; 3:10). On kindness see 1 Cor 13:4; Eph 4:22

**1:11** "Husbands" – see Deut 25:5,6. An illustration of this is found in Gen 38:6-11.

**1:13** "Against me" – vs 20,21; Jud 2:15; Job 19:21. Naomi assumed that her suffering in the famine in Bethlehem, and the loss of her husband and both sons meant that God's hand was against her. But this may not have been so. See note at Job 6:4; 7:17-19; 19:21,22. Troubles that come to individuals may, it is true, be judgments of God, but they may be blessings in disguise and intended for some great good. Notes at Gen 50:20.

**1:15** "Her gods" – the Moabites were idolaters. Chemosh was their principal god (notes at 1 Kings 11:7).

**1:16** "My God" – this speaks well of both Ruth and Naomi – of Ruth because she showed unselfish loyalty and love to her mother-in-law, of Naomi because evidently she had lived in such a way that her daughter-in-law was attracted to both her and the God she worshiped. Ruth left her homeland, her father and mother (2:11) and their gods to go on into the unknown with Naomi. This determination is an illustration of what our attitude should be towards the Lord Jesus – Matt 4:18-22; Luke 14:33; John 6:66-68.

**1:17** 2 Sam 15:21.

buried. May the LORD deal *harshly* with me, and worse also, *if anything* but death parts you and me." 18 When *Naomi* saw that she was determined to go with her, then she said no more to her.

19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they arrived in Bethlehem, it came about that the whole city was stirred concerning them and they said, "*Is* this Naomi?"

20 And she said to them, "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. *So* why should you call me Naomi, seeing the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

22 So Naomi returned, and with her Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, coming back from the country of Moab. And they arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

**2** And Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's *side*, a wealthy man of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz.

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me now go to the field and glean heads of grain after *someone* who looks on me with favour." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

3 And she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to a part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who was a relative of Elimelech.

4 And just then Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, "The LORD *be* with you." And they answered him, "The LORD bless you."

5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman *is*

this?"

6 And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It *is* the Moabite girl who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has stayed from morning until now, *except* that she sat for a while in the house."

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field and do not go away from here, but stay here close to my servant girls. 9 *Keep* your eyes on the field that they are reaping and go after them. Have I not ordered the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the water pots and drink what the young men draw."

10 Then she prostrated herself, bowing down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have you looked on me with favour to take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?"

11 And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and *how* you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth and have come to a people whom you have not known before this. 12 May the LORD repay you for your work and may a full reward be given to you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to trust."

13 Then she said, "Let me find favour in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and have spoken kindly to your maid servant, even though I am not like one of your maid servants."

14 And Boaz said to her, "At mealtime come here and eat bread and dip your pieces in the vinegar."

**1:19** "Naomi" – at least 10 years had passed since Naomi left Bethlehem (v 4), and she was without husband or sons, and sorrow had doubtless left its mark on her face.

**1:20** "Mara" – this Hebrew word means "bitter." Naomi is saying "Don't call me 'the pleasant one', but 'the bitter one.'" This means that her experiences had filled her with sorrow, not that she was bitter against God. If she had been bitter against God, it is very unlikely that Ruth would not have wanted Naomi's God to be her God (v 16). On Mara see Ex 15:23-25.

"Almighty" – in Hebrew "Shaddai" – Gen 17:1.

**1:21** "Empty" – when she left she had husband, sons, and hope.

"Afflicted" – v 13; Job 30:11; Ps 88:7; Lam 3:1.

**1:22** "Beginning of barley harvest" – in Israel in those days this would have been sometime in March or April.

**2:2** "Grain" – see Lev 19:9,10; 23:22; Deut 24:19-21. God put these instructions in His law because He is concerned for the

poor (Ex 22:25; Ps 41:1; 82:3,4; Prov 14:21; Luke 6:20; Jam 2:5). Ruth's suggestion shows that she and Naomi were without any means of support. It shows also that she was willing to do the lowliest of jobs because of her love for her mother-in-law – a thing all too rare in this world.

**2:3** "Happened to come" – God guided her there, as Naomi realized when she heard it (vs 19,20). God was answering the prayer of Naomi in 1:8.

**2:4** This was in the days of the judges when Israel was often sunk in sin, defeat and apostasy (Jud 2:16-19). But there were lamps in that darkness and Boaz was one of them – as every believer should be (Matt 5:14,15; Phil 2:15). Evidently Boaz was a man who honored God and was honored by his workers and peers (4:11,12).

**2:11,12** 1:8. "A full reward" – 1 Sam 24:19; 26:23; Prov 25:21,22; 10:42; Luke 6:38; Heb 6:10.

"Under whose wings" – 1:16; Ps 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4; Matt 23:37. **2:13** "Your maid servant" – Ruth obviously

And she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted *grain*, and she ate and was satisfied and left.

15 And when she got up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean among the sheaves and do not embarrass her. 16 And also let *some* handfuls intentionally fall for her and leave *them*, so that she can glean *them*. And do not rebuke her."

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. 18 And she picked *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. And she took it out and gave to her what she had left after she had been satisfied.

19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you." And she told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with and said, "The name of the man with whom I worked today *is* Boaz."

20 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "*May* he *be* blessed by the LORD, who has not ceased being kind to the living and to the dead." And Naomi said to her, "The man *is* a near relative of ours, one of our closest kinsmen."

21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, "Also he said to me, 'Stay close to my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

22 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, "It *is* good, my daughter, that you go out with his maid servants, so that *some men* do not happen to meet you in another field."

23 So she kept close to the maid servants of Boaz to glean to the end of barley harvest and

wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

**3** Then her mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, shall I not look for a *place* for you to rest, so that it will be well with you? 2 And now *is* not Boaz, with whose maid servants you have been *working*, our relative? Look, tonight he will be winnowing barley in the threshing floor. 3 Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself and dress yourself, and go down to the *threshing* floor. *But* do not make your presence known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 And let it be *like this*: when he lies down, notice the place where he is lying, and you go in and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do."

5 And she said to her, "I will do everything you tell me." 6 And she went down to the *threshing* floor and did everything that her mother-in-law had ordered her.

7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. And she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8 And it so happened at midnight that the man was startled, and he turned and saw a woman lying at his feet.

9 And he said, "Who *are* you?" And she answered, "I *am* your maid servant Ruth. So spread your covering over your maid servant, for you *are* a near kinsman."

10 And he said, "*May* you *be* blessed by the LORD, my daughter, for this last kindness you have shown is greater than the first. You have not gone after the young men, whether poor or rich. 11 And

means herself.

**2:15** Boaz was a kind man willing to give more to the poor and needy than the law required (v 2). He is in great contrast to some men who want every grain for themselves.

**2:17** "Ephah" – an ephah equals about one half of a large bushel or 22 liters.

**2:19** It was obvious to Naomi that the owner of the field had left a large amount of grain for Ruth to glean.

**2:20** "Being kind" – 1:8.

"Closest kinsmen" – here is another large theme in this small book. Closest kinsman is one word in Hebrew – "goel" – and could be translated "kinsman-redeemer." This Hebrew word appears in Ruth 2:20; 3:9,12,13; 4:1,3,6,8,14. In other places in the Old Testament the word refers to a near relative who takes vengeance on anyone who had killed a member of the family. The "goel" was not only a redeemer but an avenger. The responsibilities of the "goel" are found in Lev 25:25-28,47-49; Num 35:19-21; Deut 25:5-10. He was to look after the best interests of his family and relatives in every

way consistent with justice and holiness.

The Lord Jesus is the Goel of all those who trust under the shadow of His wings. He redeems them from slavery to sin, restores what they lost by sinning, gives them an inheritance with Himself, and avenges them against their enemies.

**3:1,2** 1:9; 2:20. "For you to rest" – Naomi means a home and family of her own.

**3:3,4** Naomi was not suggesting that Ruth should try to seduce Boaz. Both Boaz and Ruth were godly, moral people (v 11). Naomi's idea was that Ruth should appeal to Boaz as her kinsman-redeemer (v 9; 2:20).

**3:9** "Near kinsman" – in this way Ruth was asking for his protective care as a husband. There was no brother of her husband living to marry her in accordance with Deut 25:5-10, so this responsibility passed to the nearest relative.

**3:10** "The first" – 2:11,12.

**3:11-13** Boaz expresses his willingness to marry her and buy the family property, but he would not be able to do so if the man who was a closer relative of Naomi's family



now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all that you need, for all the people in the city know that you *are* a virtuous woman. 12 And now it is true that I *am your* near kinsman, but there is a kinsman nearer than I. 13 Stay tonight, and in the morning it will be that if he acts as the kinsman-redeemer toward you, all right, let him redeem *you*. But if he will not act as the kinsman-redeemer toward you, then, *as* the LORD lives, I will act as the kinsman-redeemer toward you. Lie down until morning."

14 And she lay at his feet until morning, then rose up before one could recognize another. And he said, "Don't let it be known that a woman came into the *threshing* floor."

15 He also said, "Bring the veil that *you have* on and hold it out." And when she held it out, he measured six *measures* of barley and laid *it* on her; and she went into the city.

16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How *did it go with* you, my daughter?" And she told her all that the man had done for her.

17 And she said, "He gave me these six *measures* of barley, for he told me, 'Don't go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"

18 Then said she, "Sit quietly, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out. For the man will not rest until he has finished the matter this *very day*."

**4** Then Boaz went out to the gate and seated himself there, and when the kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken came by *Boaz* said to him, "Come, *friend*, turn aside, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.

2 And he brought ten of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." And they sat down.

3 And he said to the kinsman, "Naomi, who has returned from the country of Moab, is selling a plot of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech.

4 And I thought to inform you *and say*, Buy *it* in

the presence of those sitting *here* and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*. But if you will not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, so that I may know. For *there is* no one besides you to redeem *it*, and I *am* after you." And he said, "I will redeem *it*."

5 Then Boaz said, "On the day that you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead man, to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance." 6 And the kinsman said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself. If *I did* I would put my own inheritance at risk. You redeem my right for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*."

7 Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging *land*: to confirm anything a man took off his sandal and gave *it* to the one next to him. And this *was* a testimony in Israel.

8 Therefore the kinsman having said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself", he took off his sandal.

9 And Boaz said to the elders and *to* all the people, "You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi everything that *belonged* to Elimelech, and everything that *belonged* to Chilion and Mahlon. 10 Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the *former* wife of Mahlon, to be my wife to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased is not cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place. You *are* witnesses this day."

11 And all the people who *were* at the gate and the elders said, "*We are* witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who will come into your house like Rachel and like Leah, the two who built the house of Israel. And may you be mighty in Ephratah and famous in Bethlehem, 12 and may your house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD gives you by this young woman."

wished to act as "goel."

**3:14** Rom 14:17; 2 Cor 8:21.

**4:1** Gen 34:20.

**4:2** This was a public transaction of official business.

**4:3** "Selling" - it was the duty of the kinsman-redeemer to see that the land was kept in the family and not sold to outsiders. Naomi's plan, of course, was not simply to sell the land but to obtain a good husband for Ruth.

"Brother" - here means relative, as the Hebrew word sometimes does.

**4:5,6** "My own inheritance" - he wanted Naomi's property but he didn't want to marry Ruth. If he married her and only one son was born to them, that one would take the

name of Ruth's first husband and become the heir not only of Elimelech and Naomi but of the kinsmen-redeemer also, and so all the property of the kinsman would come into the hands of the family of Elimelech (compare Deut 25:5,6; Gen 38:9). This kinsman was not willing for this to happen. **4:11** "Rachel and Leah" - Jacob's two wives who between them had many children (Genesis chapters 29,30; 35:16-18). In other words, the elders are expressing the wish that Boaz and Ruth might have a large family.

**4:12** "Judah" - Genesis chapter 38. Perez became a leader of the tribe of Judah and an ancestor of Boaz, David, and the Lord Jesus.

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. And when he went in to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she bore a son. 14 And the women said to Naomi, "Blessed *be* the LORD who has not left you this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. 15 And may he renew you in *your* life and sustain *you* in your old age, for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."

16 And Naomi took the child and laid it in her

bosom and became its nurse. 17 And the neighbour women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begot Hezron, 19 and Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab, 20 and Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon, 21 and Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed, 22 and Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

**4:13** "Conceive" – it is possible that Ruth, like some other famous women in the Bible had been unable to have children (Gen 11:30; 29:31; 1 Sam 1:2,5; Luke 1:7). She had none by her first husband.

**4:15** To say that Ruth was better to Naomi than seven sons was to say the highest thing about her they could think of.

**4:17** "Obed" means "servant." Giving this

name doubtless revealed their desire that their son should become a true servant of God.

**4:18-21** Matt 1:3-6. Because of her kindness to her mother-in-law and her faith in the God of Israel, this foreign widow became one of the ancestors, not only of King David, but of the Lord Jesus. Such is God's great grace.

# 1 SAMUEL

## Title:

Originally 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel were one book. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the translators divided this one book into two.

## Author and date:

The human author is unknown. See the note in the introduction to Judges on the authorship of the books of the Bible. The author must have written after the death of Solomon, because 1 Sam 27:6 speaks of the “kings of Judah”, indicating some time after Judah and Israel had become separate kingdoms. This did not happen until the time of Rehoboam, Solomon’s son (1 Kings chapter 12).

## Themes:

The birth, life, and work of Samuel, the last and greatest of the judges (7:15-17); Israel’s rejection of God as King, and the appointment of human kings to rule Israel; the early life of David up to the death of king Saul. As with all parts of the Bible, there are many important spiritual lessons in this book for believers now (2 Tim 3:16,17).

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**1** Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim in the hill country of Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah. *He was* the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. **2** And he had two wives. The name of one *was* Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

**3** And yearly this man went up out of his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there. **4** And when the time came that Elkanah made an offering, he gave portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and her daughters, **5** but he gave a double portion to Hannah, for he loved Hannah. But the LORD had shut up her womb. **6** And also her rival provoked her severely to irritate her, because the LORD had shut up her womb. **7** And *it happened* year by year when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her. Therefore she wept, and did not eat.

**8** Then her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? And why aren't you eating? And why is your heart grieved? *Am* I not better to you than ten sons?"

**9** So Hannah got up after they had eaten in Shiloh and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a seat by a post of the temple of the

LORD. **10** And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept much. **11** And she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant, and remember me and not forget your maidservant, but give to your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will come on his head."

**12** And as she continued praying before the LORD, it so happened that Eli noticed her mouth. **13** Now Hannah had spoken in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. **14** And Eli said to her, "How long are you going to be drunk? Put your wine away from you."

**15** And Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have not drunk either wine or strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. **16** Do not regard your maidservant as a wicked woman, for I have been speaking out of the abundance of my complaint and grief."

**17** Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant *you* your petition that you have asked of him."

**18** And she said, "Let your maidservant find favour in your sight." So the woman went her *way*, and ate, and her appearance was no longer *sad*.

**19** And they rose up early in the morning and

**1:1** "Ramathaim" – called Ramah in v 19. Elkanah was descended from Levi. See 1 Chron 6:16,26-28.

**1:2** "Two wives" – see note at Gen 30:1.

**1:3** Ex 34:23; Deut 12:5-7; Josh 18:1. The tabernacle and the ark of the covenant were at Shiloh (4:3).

"LORD of hosts" – in Hebrew "Jehovah Tsabaoth." This is the first mention in Scripture of this great title. It is used in the Bible 281 times, very frequently by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. It indicates God in His almighty power, who marshals all the resources of creation to accomplish His own glorious purposes. In the Old Testament "hosts" may refer both to earthly armies (Ex 12:41 – where the people of Israel coming out of Egypt are called "the LORD's armies" or "hosts"), and to heavenly bodies (2 Kings 17:16; Isa 34:4; 45:12), and to angels (Ps 103:21; 148:2). God, Jehovah of hosts, is the absolute ruler of all. He has created the universe for His glory, and to fulfill His plans He exercises control over every kind of "host", whether earthly or heavenly (compare Dan 4:34,35).

"Priests" – note at Ex 28:1.

**1:4** Deut 12:17,18.

**1:5** Gen 11:30; 29:31. God is sovereign in these matters and has His own good purposes in what He does.

**1:6-7** Verse 2; Gen 2:23,24.

**1:9** "Temple" – here this word indicates the tabernacle. The temple had not yet been built, but the tabernacle could be called a temple, because it was a holy sanctuary where God was worshipped.

**1:10-20** Hannah's sorrow drove her to prayer (sorrow can result in much good if it causes a person to do that). And here she prayed to the one true God who knows our sorrows, has compassion on us, and can hear our prayers (Ex 2:23-25; Ps 6:6-9; 38:9; 102:19,20). Her example shows how to pray effectively – she was in a right relationship with God; she had a deep burden (vs 10,13,15); her petition was specific (v 11); she wanted to use what God gave her for His glory, not for her own selfish satisfaction (v 11); she had faith (vs 17-19); and she acknowledged God's answer when it came (v 20).

**1:11** "I will give him to the LORD" – our children will be in the best hands when given to God.

"No razor" – Num 6:1-5; Jud 13:5.

**1:13,14** Acts 2:4,13. How easily the best actions may be misunderstood by others. Note on Josh 22:10-34.

**1:15** Ps 42:3-4; 62:8; Lam 2:11,19.

**1:17** Jud 18:6; 1 Sam 25:35; 2 Kings 5:19; Mark 5:34.

**1:18** Answered prayer will brighten up the face (Ps 34:4,5).

**1:19** "Knew" – note at Gen 4:1.



worshipped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. 20 Therefore it came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she bore a son. And she called his name Samuel, *saying*, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

21 And the man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow. 22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "*I will not go up* until the child is weaned, and *then* I will take him, so that he may appear before the LORD and stay there permanently."

23 And her husband Elkanah said to her, "Do what seems good to you. Wait until you have weaned him. Only may the LORD confirm his word." So the woman stayed *at home*, and nursed her son until she weaned him.

24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls and one ephah of flour and a bottle of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh; and the child *was* young. 25 And they killed a bull, and brought the child to Eli.

26 And she said, "Oh my lord, *as* your soul lives, my lord, I *am* the woman who stood near you here, praying to the LORD. 27 I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me my request which I asked from him. 28 Therefore I have also given him to the LORD. As long as he lives he will be given to the LORD." And he worshipped the LORD there.

- 2 And Hannah prayed, and said,  
"My heart rejoices in the LORD.  
My horn is exalted in the LORD:  
my mouth is opened wide against  
my enemies,  
because I rejoice in your salvation.
- 2 *There is* no one holy like the LORD,  
for *there is* no one besides you,  
nor *is there* any rock like our God.
- 3 "Do not any longer speak so exceedingly  
proudly,  
or let arrogance come out of your mouth.  
For the LORD *is* a God of knowledge,  
and by him actions are weighed.
- 4 "The bows of the mighty men *are* broken,  
and those who stumbled are clothed  
with strength.
- 5 *Those who were* full have hired  
themselves out for bread,  
and *those who were* hungry cease  
*to be so*.  
While the barren has given birth to seven,  
she who has many children has become  
feeble.
- 6 The LORD kills, and makes alive.  
He brings down to the grave, and raises up.
- 7 The LORD makes poor, and makes rich;  
he brings low, and lifts up.
- 8 He raises the poor up from the dust,  
and lifts the beggar up from the ash  
heap to set *them* among princes,  
and to make them inherit the throne of glory.

"Remembered" – Gen 30:22.  
**1:20** Samuel probably means "Heard of God."  
**1:21** "Vow" – Lev 7:16; 22:21; Num 15:3,8; 30:2; Deut 12:11; Ps 65:1; 76:11; Eccl 5:4,5.  
**1:22** Verses 11,29; 2:11.  
**1:24,25** Num 15:8-10. On the meanings of the various sacrifices see notes on the first chapter of Leviticus.  
"With three bulls" – this could also be translated "A three-year-old bull."  
"Ephah" – probably about one half bushel.  
**1:27,28** She was obviously a godly woman, and she was faithful to her promises to God, unlike many who make vows and do not perform them. Unlike so many, Hannah was concerned with what her son could do for God, not what he might eventually do for her. This gift of Hannah to God had a profound effect for good on the life of the whole nation. When believers give gifts to God He accepts and uses them.  
**2:1-10** Compare Hannah's song of praise with that of Mary in Luke 1:46-55. This song shows a good grasp of important theological truth and no little poetical ability.  
**2:1** "Rejoices" – in the Lord, not merely in

her son. Ps 9:2; 32:11; 33:1; 105:3.  
"Horn" – in the Bible this often symbolizes power, authority, strength, honor. Here it means strength.  
**2:2** "Holy" – note at Lev 20:7.  
"Rock" – note at Deut 32:4.  
**2:3** "Arrogance" – a thing God hates (Prov 3:34; 6:16,17; James 4:6).  
"God of knowledge" – 16:7; Ps 139:1-4; Prov 16:2; 24:12; Jer 17:10; Heb 4:13.  
**2:4** Ps 18:39; 46:9; 76:3; Eph 6:10-13; Heb 11:32-34.  
**2:5** God by his grace can completely reverse conditions among men. God's power and sovereignty over the earth are declared in the verses which follow.  
**2:6** Deut 32:39; Isa 26:19; John 5:28,29; Rev 1:18.  
"Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol." See note on Gen 37:35.  
**2:7,8** Deut 8:17-18; Job 5:11; Ps 113:7,8; James 1:9,10; 2:5; 4:10.  
"Pillars of the earth" – this does not mean there is some sort of foundation on which the planet rests. It is poetic language which declares God as the Creator, and suggests a good purpose in creation.

For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's, and he has set the world on them.

- 9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked will be silent in darkness; for no man will prevail by strength.

- 10 The enemies of the LORD will be broken to pieces.

He will thunder on them from the heavens. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth, and he will give strength to his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child ministered to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest.

12 Now the sons of Eli *were* wicked scoundrels. They did not know the LORD. 13 And the priests' custom with the people *was this*: when anyone offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, 14 and he would stick *it* into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest took for himself. This is how they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat to roast for the

priest; for he will not have boiled meat from you, but raw."

16 And *if* anyone said to him, "Let them first burn the fat, and *then* take *as much* as your soul desires", then he would answer him, "*No*, but you must give *it to me* now. If not, I will take *it* by force."

17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great in the eyes of the LORD; for men despised the offering of the LORD.

18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, a child wearing a linen ephod. 19 Moreover his mother would make him a little robe, and bring *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife and said, "The LORD give you offspring by this woman for the gift which is given to the LORD." And they went to their own home. 21 And the LORD looked after Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 23 And he said to them, "Why do you such things? For I hear of your evil

**2:9** "Keep" – Ps 37:23-24; 91:11,12; 94:18; 121:3; John 10:28; 1 Pet 1:5.

"Darkness" – Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Jude 13.

"Strength" – 17:47; Ps 33:16,17; Zech 4:6.

**2:10** "Thunder" – 7:10; 12:17; 2 Sam 22:14; Ps 18:13; Isa 66:6.

"Judge" – Ps 96:13; 98:9; Acts 17:31.

"King", "Anointed" – Hannah speaks as a prophetess. When she spoke there was as yet no king in Israel, and up to that time only priests had been anointed. The Hebrew noun "anointed" ("masheeakh") comes into English as Messiah. This is the first use of this noun in the Bible.

**2:11** "Ministered" – 2:18; 3:1.

**2:12** "Did not know" – they knew about the LORD, but they had no spiritual experience of Him.

"LORD" – if they had known Him they would not have turned out to be wicked. This terrible condemnation of Eli's sons should be a lesson to every believer. They were brought up at the center of the worship of God, but they had no regard for the Lord. Believers must be careful to teach their children respect for God (Eph 6:4).

**2:13,14** See Lev 7:31-36; 10:14,15; Deut 18:1-5.

**2:15,16** "Fat" – the fat was to be burned as an offering to God before the priests received their portion (Lev 3:16; 4:10,26, 31,35; 7:28,30,31; 17:6). Alas, like these wicked sons of Eli, many who profess to be servants of God are known more for

their greed than for their piety.

**2:17** If they had no respect for the Lord they certainly would have no respect for His offerings or for His people. Lack of the fear of God (Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14) accounts for many of the sad and sinful things that go on today in some Christian circles.

**2:18** "Ministered" – Samuel was a mere boy, so his work must have been of a simple nature. Nevertheless, it was a ministry before the Lord. The simplest task can be a ministry to the Lord if done in an attitude of devotion to Him (2 Kings 3:11; Ps 84:10; Matt 10:42). Before Samuel did great things in Israel he learned as a child to do small things faithfully. See Luke 16:10.

"Ephod" – note at Ex 28:31-35.

**2:19** The robe Samuel's mother lovingly brought him each year was not the ephod (v 18), but a garment for every day use.

**2:20,21** 1:11,27,28. Acts of faith and devotion such as Hannah's will always be rewarded – if not in this world, then certainly in the next. God loves to be gracious to His people. Hannah gave one son to God and received five children in return. Compare Luke 6:38.

"Before the LORD" – what better place on earth to grow up in? Or to live in (Ps 31:20; 140:13)?

**2:22** Verse 12. Because of the evil lives of Eli's sons Samuel was in some danger of learning a corrupt life style. But God guarded the lad and kept him pure for His service (v 9).

**2:23-25** It seems that Eli was an indulgent

actions from all this people. 24 No, my sons, for *it is* not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD's people to transgress. 25 If one man sins against another, the judge will judge him, but if a man sins against the LORD, who will plead for him?" However they did not listen to the voice of their father, because the LORD had determined to kill them.

26 And the child Samuel grew and was in favour with both the LORD and also with men.

27 And a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, Did I *not* plainly reveal *myself* to the household of your father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? 28 And did I *not* choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to make offerings on my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? And did I *not* give to the house of your father all the offerings made by fire from the children of Israel? 29 Why do you kick at my sacrifice and at my offering, which I have commanded *in my dwelling*, and honour your sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of my people Israel?

30 "Therefore the LORD God of Israel says, I indeed said *that* your household and the household of your father, would walk before me forever; but now the LORD says, Be it far from me. For those who honour me I will honour; and those who despise me will be lightly esteemed. 31 See, the days are coming when I will cut off your arm, and the arm of your father's household, so that there will not be an old man in your house. 32 And you will see an enemy *in my dwelling*, among all *the wealth* which God will give Israel; and there will never be an old man in your house. 33 And every man of you *whom* I do not cut off from my altar, *will be* to cause your eyes to perish, and to grieve your heart. And all the issue of your house will die in the flower of their age.

34 "And this *will be* a sign to you: it will come on your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas. In one day both of them will die. 35 And I will raise up a faithful priest for myself *who* will act in accordance with what *is* in my heart and in my mind, and I will firmly establish a house for him; and he will walk

parent who had not trained his children properly and had let them do as they pleased (v 29). They had been guilty of persistent wickedness (vs 12-17), but as far as we can tell from the record Eli did not so much as rebuke them until he heard of their sexual immorality. When his rebuke came, it was far too mild. The penalty under the law for such sins as theirs, as Eli should have known, was death, not a mild rebuke. See Ex 21:36. Those parents who will not bring up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, who let them have their own way, will spoil them and bring grief to themselves (1 Kings 1:6; Prov 19:18; 22:6,15; 23:13; 29:15).

**2:25** "Who will plead" – compare 1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 2:1.

"The LORD had determined" – compare Ex 7:1-5; 11:9; Josh 11:20.

"Kill" – Ezek 18:4,30-32. God delights in mercy, but He will certainly punish persistent sin and rebellion.

**2:26** Verse 21; 3:19. Compare Luke 2:20,52. Note the contrast between the family of Eli and the family of Elkanah. God's blessing was denied the sons of the high priest and granted to the son of the humble Levite. The most important thing for the blessing of one's children is not wealth or position or power, but humble faithfulness to God.

**2:27** "Man of God" – a name often given to prophets in the Bible – 9:6,10; Deut 33:1; Josh 14:6; 1 Kings 13:1,6-8; 17:18,24; 2 Kings 4:7.

"Household of your father" – Aaron (Ex 4:27-30).

**2:28** Ex 28:1-4; 30:7,8; Lev 8:5-9.

**2:29** "You" here in Hebrew is plural and includes both Eli and his sons. The sons

scorned God's offerings by their sinful actions (v 16), Eli did so by letting them behave as they did. Eli did not stand up for God against his sinning sons and thus honored them over God. Also it seems Eli ate of the offerings his sons obtained in their greed. Let us beware of putting blood relationship above righteousness. Let us beware of a weak acceptance of evil in our own families (see 3:13). Such things may lead to disaster for ourselves and for the work of God. Compare Jud 20:14,48.

**2:30** Ex 29:9; Leviticus chapters 8 and 9; Numbers chapters 16 and 17; 25:13. God was not breaking his promise to the house of Aaron. He is saying that because of their sinful behavior the family of Eli would no longer have a part in that ministry. See also Lev 10:1-3. God never breaks His promises (Titus 1:2). But some of His promises are based on conditions, that is, based on the behavior of those to whom the promises are given. Compare Lev 26:3; Deut 28:1,2; Isa 1:19,20.

"Honour" – v 29; Ps 91:15; 112:9; Prov 22:4; John 12:26. What are all the honors men may give compared with the honor God gives?

**2:31-35** The sins of Eli and his family must have their consequences. It was too late to change anything. The whole future of this family was to be a sad one because of those sins (Ex 34:7). This was worked out in the death of Eli's sons (4:11), the destruction of the priests at Nob (22:18,19), and Solomon's removal of Abiathar from office (1 Kings 2:26,27).

**2:35** "Faithful priest" – 2 Sam 8:17; 1 Kings 1:8,26; 2:35; Heb 2:17; 5:5,6; 7:23-28).

"Anointed one" – the king of Israel (2:10).

before my anointed one forever. 36 And it will come about *that* everyone who is left in your house will come *and* bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and will say, 'Please assign me to one of the priests' duties so that I can eat a piece of bread.'"

**3** And the child Samuel ministered to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions *were* not frequent.

2 And it came about at that time, when Eli *was* lying down in his place (and his eyes had begun to grow dim, *so that* he could not see), 3 and before the lamp of God had gone out in the sanctuary of the LORD where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was lying down *to sleep*, 4 that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I *am*." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I *am*, for you called me."

And he said, "I did not call. Lie down again." And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, "Samuel." And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I *am*, for you called me."

And he answered, "I did not call, my son. Lie down again."

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

**2:36** God is gracious and long-suffering, but He has His own ways of humbling those who are unfaithful to Him.

**3:1** "Ministered" – there is emphasis on this. Here is the third time it is said (2:11,18).

"Rare" – the ritual of religion went on but God was not often sending messages to the people. Perhaps this was because there were so few who wanted to hear God or obey Him. Remember that this was at the close of the years described in Judges when everyone did as he pleased (Jud 21:25).

"Visions" – note at Gen 15:1; etc.

**3:3** "Lamp" – Ex 25:31-37; 27:20,21; Lev 24:2-4.

"Sanctuary" – note at 1:9; Ex 25:8. This was the "tent of meeting" (2:22), the tabernacle. Samuel did not sleep in the Most Holy Place. He would not have been permitted even to enter there (Heb 9:7). He was in the tabernacle which contained the ark, but in the outer room which was called the Holy Place.

**3:4** God speaks to men and He always takes the initiative – Gen 3:8,9; 12:1; 28:12,13; Ex 3:4; Josh 1:1; Jer 1:4,5; Matt 9:9; Acts 9:1-4; Rom 3:11.

**3:5,6** Eli was slow to understand spiritual things.

**3:7** Samuel was not willfully ignorant of the Lord as Eli's sons were (2:12). He knew many things about the Lord, was willing to learn more, but as yet had no direct spiritual experience with God. Many religious people

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I *am*, for you called me." And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be if he calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel, Samuel."

Then Samuel answered, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

11 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Look, I will do a thing in Israel which will cause both ears of everyone who hears it to tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli *everything* that I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin I will also make an end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the sin which he knows; because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 14 And therefore I have *sworn* to the house of Eli, that the sin of Eli's house will never be purged with sacrifice or offering."

15 And Samuel lay *there* until the morning, then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he answered, "Here I *am*."

17 And he said, "What *is* the thing that *the*

are in the same condition, not realizing that to know God is essential to salvation, indeed, *is* salvation (John 17:3; Eph 4:18; 2 Thess 1:8; 1 John 5:20).

"Revealed" – Num 12:6; Amos 3:7. This means that Samuel had not yet been called to begin his ministry as a prophet.

**3:8** "Third time" – when God chooses a person He will keep calling until that person understands.

**3:9** Ps 85:8; Hab 2:1. The Lord is always ready to speak to those who are ready to hear and obey (though He may sometimes test them by silence).

**3:10** "Samuel" – compare Isa 45:3. God knows each of our names and everything else about us (Ps 139:1-4).

**3:11-14** God chose to give His message through a mere boy. Those who are old and experienced in God's service should not think themselves superior and look down on the young (Ps 8:2; Matt 21:15,16; Jer 1:6-8; 1 Tim 4:12).

**3:12** 2:27-36.

**3:13** 2:12,17,22,29. By not restraining his sons Eli became a partaker of their sins and as guilty as they.

**3:14** Num 15:30; Isa 22:14; Matt 12:32; Gal 6:7,8; Heb 10:26-31. When people go on knowingly, willfully persisting in sin, there comes a time when God determines to judge them and closes the door to forgiveness.

**3:17** We should all want to know everything God has said. Contrast 2 Chron 25:16; etc.

LORD said to you? Please do not hide *it* from me. May God deal *harshly* with you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that he said to you." 18 And Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It *is* the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel *was* established to be a prophet of the LORD. 21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh; for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

**4** And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines and camped beside Ebenezer; and the Philistines camped in Aphek. 2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel *was* defeated by the Philistines, and the *Philistines* killed about four thousand of the army in the field. 3 And when the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD caused us to be defeated by the Philistines today? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh for us, so that, when it comes among us, it may save us from the hands of our enemies."

**3:18** "Everything" – servants of God should never cut and trim God's message for people, but declare the Word of God as it is. Samuel's fear (v 15) did not prevent him from doing so. Compare Acts 20:20,27.

"Good to him" – Eli accepted humbly what God had to say, and bowed meekly before His judgment. His character was a mixture of godliness and weakness.

**3:19** "With him" – Gen 21:22; 39:2; Jud 1:5.

"Fall to the ground" – none of Samuel's words failed to be fulfilled. This was the mark of every true prophet (Deut 18:21,22).

**3:20** Dan was in the far north of Israel, Beersheba in the far south.

**3:21** Observe that God reveals Himself to individuals through His Word. And those to whom the Word comes have the responsibility to declare it to others. God's revelation of Himself to Samuel was not for Samuel alone.

**4:1** The first part of this verse relates to 3:21.

"Philistines" – note at Gen 10:14. When Israel conquered Canaan they did not drive out the Philistines (Josh 13:1,2). They were a source of trouble to Israel for a great many years.

**4:2** Israel's defeats were always because of Israel's sins (Josh 7:4,5,11; Jud 2:10-15).

**4:3,4** The elders did well to inquire into the reason for the defeat. However, they did not wait for an answer from God, but expected the ark to do for them what only

4 So the people sent *men* to Shiloh to bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth reechoed. 6 And when the Philistines heard the sound of the shout, they said, "What *is the meaning of* the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?" And they learned that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp.

7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For there has never been such a thing before. 8 Woe to us! Who will deliver us out of the hands of these mighty gods? These *are* the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. 9 Be strong, and act like men, O Philistines, so that you do not become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Act like *men*, and fight."

10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and each man fled to his tent. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. 11 And the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and

God could do. The ark had been a symbol of the Lord's presence, but this truth had been perverted and the people thought that the mere presence of the ark, presided over by Eli's evil sons Hophni and Phinehas, would bring them victory. It did not, and thinking it would do so was a very vain and foolish thing. If God is not with His people, nothing on earth can bring them victory. That which merely symbolizes God's presence can never accomplish what God's presence accomplishes. Compare David's attitude in 2 Sam 15:25. Note on the ark at Ex 25:10-16. Note on the cherubim at Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-20.

**4:5** "Shouted" – did they vainly imagine that their shout would accomplish what God did at Jericho (Josh 6:16,20)? If God is not with His people nothing that seemed to work before will work again.

**4:6,7** This kind of superstition was to be expected among the Philistines who did not know the true God. They did not know that if God was not already with Israel in the battle, the ark could not bring Him there. Let us all know that in these New Testament times no ritual, no ceremony, no relic, no symbol, nor any other such thing that men can perform can bring God to men.

**4:8** The Philistines knew something of God's mighty acts in Egypt (6:6; Ex 9:16; Josh 2:8-10).

**4:9** "To you" – Jud 10:7; 13:1.

**4:10** Verse 2; Deut 28:15,25.

**4:11** "Ark" – Ex 25:10-22; Ps 78:56-64.



Phinehas, were killed.

12 And a man of Benjamin ran from the camp and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and with dust on his head. 13 And when he arrived, there Eli sat on a seat by the roadside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told *what had happened*, the whole city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the sound of the crying, he said, "What *is the meaning of* this uproar?" And the man came quickly and told Eli. 15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see. 16 And the man said to Eli, "I *am* the one who came from the *battle* lines. Just today I ran from the lines." And he said, "What is happening there, my son?"

17 And the messenger answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and also there has been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken."

18 And it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that *Eli* fell from the seat backwards at the side of the gate, and his neck broke and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

19 And his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and *about* to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God had been taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed down and gave birth, for her *labour* pains came on her. 20 And

about the time of her death the women who stood near her said to her, "Don't be afraid; for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention.

21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God had been taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. 22 And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been taken."

**5** And the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 When the Philistines brought the ark of God, they took it into the house of Dagon and set it near Dagon. 3 And when the *people* of Ashdod arose early the next day, there was Dagon fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And they picked Dagon up and set him in his place again. 4 And when they arose early the next morning, there *was* Dagon fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both palms of his hands *were severed and lying* on the threshold. Only Dagon's *body* was left to him. 5 Therefore to this day neither the priests of Dagon, nor anyone who comes into Dagon's temple, will step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod.

6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the *people* of Ashdod, and he destroyed them and plagued them with tumours, *both* Ashdod and its territories. 7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel shall

"Were killed" – 2:34. God always fulfills His word.

**4:12** "Dust" – Josh 7:6; 2 Sam 1:2; Neh 9:1; Job 1:20; 2:12.

**4:13-18** It is not said that Eli feared for his sons but only for the ark of God. He had already accepted God's word about the death of his sons and knew he could not change that (2:34; 3:18). But the capture of the ark was such a shock that it killed him. It is not likely that he agreed with the foolish act recorded in v 4. In v 18 he is included among the judges of Israel.

**4:18** "Judged" – or "led." The Hebrew word has both meanings.

**4:21,22** Ichabod means "no glory" or, possibly, "where is glory?" God's presence rested above the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place (holy of holies) in the tabernacle – Ex 25:22; Ps 80:1; 99:1. When God permitted the ark to be taken it was a sign that His glory was departing. Compare Ps 78:61. The ark never returned to Shiloh. But God had not left His people and later His glory filled the temple Solomon built (1 Kings 8:10,11).

**5:1** Ashdod was one of the major cities of the Philistines.

**5:2** "Dagon" – the chief god of the Philistines (Jud 16:23-25; 1 Chron 10:8-

10). The Philistines were ready to give Jehovah God a place beside their own god. Their thought probably was that all gods were worthy of respect. Or that all gods, all religions were good. This is an idea very common today. But the one true God will never agree to it. See Ex 20:1-6; 1 Kings 18:21; Ps 115:1-8; Isa 44:6,7; 46:9; Jer 16:20; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**5:3** "On his face" – compare Ps 97:7; Isa 46:5-9. The Philistines learned nothing from the collapse of Dagon. When gods prove powerless and worthless why not cast them away? When God would tear down the things we trust in, do we try to put them again in their place?

**5:4** Since the Philistines would not learn the first time, Jehovah gave them a second and a stronger lesson. He was the mighty God, their Dagon was helpless and false. In different ways the true God has demonstrated this same truth again and again in human history concerning the gods and idols men have chosen.

**5:5** "To this day" – even then they did not forsake the worship of this false and powerless god. Such is the hold that idolatry and false religion can have on people.

**5:6,7** God continued to judge Dagon and his worshippers. Compare Ex 12:12.

not stay with us, for his hand is severe on us and on our god Dagon." 8 So they sent *men* and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried around to Gath." And they carried the ark of the God of Israel around *there*.

9 And it happened, after they had carried it around *there*, that the hand of the LORD was against the city, *causing* very great destruction. And he plagued the men of the city, both small and great, and they had tumours in their secret parts. 10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came about, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people."

11 So they sent *men* and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people." For there was death *and* destruction throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there. 12 And the men who did not die were plagued with the tumours, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

**6** And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines for seven months. 2 And the Philistines called for the priests and those who practiced divination, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it to its place."

3 And they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means send back a trespass offering to him. Then you will be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you."

4 Then they said, "What *should* the trespass offering *be* which we send back to him?" They answered, "Five gold tumours and five gold rats, *in accordance with* the number of the lords of the Philistines, for the same plague *was* on you all and on your lords. 5 Therefore you must make models

of your tumours, and models of your rats that are ruining the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will relax his hand from you and from your gods and from your land. 6 Why then do you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had worked wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and did they *not* depart?"

7 "Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milk cows on which a yoke has never come, and tie the cows to the cart, and take their calves home from them. 8 And take the ark of the LORD and lay it on the cart, and put the gold articles, which you are sending back to him *as* a trespass offering, in a box by its side, and send it away, so that it may go *its own way*. 9 And see, if it goes up by the road of its own territory to Beth-Shemesh, *then* he has done us this great harm. But if not, then we will know that *it is* not his hand *that* struck us, *but that* it happened to us by chance."

10 And the men did so. They took two milk cows and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. 11 And they placed the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the box with the gold rats and the models of their tumours. 12 And the cows took the straight way on the road to Beth-Shemesh *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth-Shemesh.

13 And the *people* of Beth-Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*. 14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there where *there was* a great stone. And they chopped up the wood of the cart, and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. 15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the box that *was* with it, in which *were* the gold articles, and put *them* on the great stone. And the same day the men of Beth-Shemesh offered burnt offerings and offered sacrifices to the LORD. 16 And when the five lords of the Philistines saw *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.

**5:8** Instead of admitting that their god was false and that the LORD (Jehovah) was the true and living God, they preferred to get rid of the evidence. How like men in general!

**5:9-12** All this happened but it seems there was no repentance, no abandoning of idolatry, no seeking of the true God. Compare Rev 9:20. Such is fallen man.

**6:2** "Divination" – Deut 18:9-15; Isa 2:6.

**6:3-6** There was a recognition that they had dishonored the God of Israel and were being punished for it.

**6:5** The plague which came on the Philistines was probably brought by rats, and it resulted

in tumors (5:6).

**6:6** 4:8; Josh 2:10. Good advice, but far better advice would have been to cast all their gods away and serve Jehovah alone.

"He" – that is, God.

**6:7-9** Even yet they were not sure that the plague which struck them was from Jehovah. This final test should have convinced them beyond doubt.

**6:9** Beth-Shemesh was a town in Judah near the border of Philistine-held territory.

**6:14** "Burnt offering" – notes at Leviticus chapter 1.

**6:15** "Levites" – in the days of Joshua, Beth-Shemesh had been assigned to the Levites

17 And these *are* the gold tumours which the Philistines sent back *as* a trespass offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Askelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron, 18 and the gold rats *in accordance with* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* fortified cities and country villages. *These things came* to the great stone of Abel, on which they set down the ark of the LORD. *This stone remains* to this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite. 19 And *the* LORD struck the men of Beth-Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy of the people. And the people lamented, because the LORD had struck down *many* of the people with a great slaughter. 20 And the men of Beth-Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall he go up from us?" 21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD. Come down *and* take it up to you."

**7** And the men of Kirjath-Jearim came, took up the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and set apart Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it happened that the ark stayed in Kirjath-Jearim for a long time, for it was twenty years.

as a place to live (Josh 21:13-16).

**6:18** Of course, the Joshua here is not the one who had been the leader of Israel.

**6:19** There was joy at the return of the ark (v 13), but, on the part of some, a lack of reverence which God punished severely. God wants us to rejoice in all He has given us, but we must never lose our reverence for the holy things of God. Here God was teaching His people a lesson concerning His holy nature. See Num 4:5,15,20; 2 Sam 6:7; 1 Chron 13:9,10.

"Fifty thousand and seventy" – some manuscripts have "seventy."

**6:20** "Holy" – Ex 15:11; Lev 11:44,45; 20:7 (note); Ps 29:2; Isa 6:3; 2 Cor 7:1; Heb 12:14; Rev 4:8. The men of Beth-Shemesh had learned, at least to some extent, the lesson God taught. But they were afraid to have the ark near them, just as the Philistines had been. But God does not teach us about holiness so that we might put Him at a distance, but that near Him we might learn to be holy ourselves.

**6:21** Kirjath Jearim was a town about 14 kilometers from Beth-Shemesh. It was also called Baalah (Josh 15:9; 2 Sam 6:2).

**7:2** The ark was not removed from Kiriath Jearim until after David became king, more than 20 years after this. The 20 years here probably takes the story forward to the time of repentance indicated by v 4.

"Sought" – Israel was in a low condition, oppressed by the Philistines, guilty of

And all the house of Israel mourned *and sought* the LORD. 3 And Samuel spoke to the whole house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD and serve him only. Then he will deliver you out of the hands of the Philistines." 4 Then the children of Israel put away the Baals and Ashtaroth, and served only the LORD.

5 And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpeh and I will pray to the LORD for you." 6 And they gathered together at Mizpeh and drew water and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hands of the Philistines." 9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered *it as* a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against

idolatry, and too weak to stand against either their enemies or their own sins. Seeking the Lord was the very best thing to do and held promise for the future. Compare 2 Chron 7:14; Isa 55:6,7; Jer 29:12-14.

**7:3** They who seek the Lord must be willing to put away those things which displease Him. Otherwise they will get nowhere. Observe that though Israel sought the Lord they still had their idols of other gods. Compare Josh 24:14,15; Jud 2:11-13.

"Ashtoreth" – a goddess worshiped widely at that time by the nations around Israel. Note at 1 Kings 11:5.

**7:5** Because they were willing to put away false gods Samuel was able to intercede for them and lead them further into fuller repentance and spiritual life. Samuel was the great intercessor for God's people in those days (7:8,9; 8:6; 12:17-19,23; 15:11; Ps 99:6; Jer 15:1).

**7:6** "Poured it out" – may speak of pouring out of the heart (1:15; Ps 42:4; 62:8; Lam 2:19).

"Judged" – or "led" (the Hebrew word means both). Samuel was now recognized as judge or leader over Israel. He was the last and the greatest of those so recognized. **7:8** 12:19-24.

**7:9** "Burnt offering" – notes at Leviticus chapter 1.

"Heard" – Ps 99:6; Jer 15:1.

**7:10** 2:10; Josh 10:10; 2 Sam 22:14,15; Ps 18:13,14; 29:3,4.

Israel. But on that day the LORD thundered with a great thunder on the Philistines and routed them; and they were struck down before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh and pursued the Philistines and struck them down until *they came* below Beth-Car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." 13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come any more into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel freed their territories from the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his

**7:12** "Stone" – erecting of stones as memorials (not as objects of worship) was a common practice (Gen 28:18; 35:14; Josh 4:9; 24:26). Ebenezer means "stone of help."

**7:13** "Any more" – they did not at that time try to counterattack. Later they came again (9:16; 10:5; etc.).

**7:14** Victory and peace were a result of repentance and faith (vs 4,6).

**7:17** "Ramah" – 1:1,19.

"Altar" – the ark was gone from Shiloh, never to return there. The town of Ramah became the center of Samuel's ministry and, therefore, of the spiritual life of Israel. The Hebrew word Ramah means "a height."

**8:1** Deut 1:16; 16:18,19. Samuel was now too old for all the travel and work involved in judging Israel. He was a great man and much used by God, but here he made a big mistake. No doubt he sincerely thought that his sons were fit to act as judges, but they were not. Perhaps because of his constant traveling ministry he had failed to bring them up as he should have done. Everyone in God's ministry should be careful about their children, and they need to pray for discernment, especially in assessing the character of members of their own families.

**8:3-5** It was partly due to the unfaithfulness of Samuel's sons that the people wanted a king. The people's unfaithfulness to the Lord is not to be excused on this account. At the same time we need to realize the bad effects people such as Samuel's sons can have upon others.

**8:3** "His ways" – the Old Testament gives many examples of the failure of family succession in the leadership of God's people – Gideon and Abimelech (Jud 8:28 – 9:1); Eli and his sons (2:12); Samuel and his sons; David and his sons (2 Sam 15:12; 1 Kings 1:5); Solomon and Rehoboam (1 Kings 11:43); etc.

"Perverted judgment" – they were the exact opposite of what judges should be (Ex 23:6-8; Deut 16:19; Ps 15:5; psalm 82).

life. 16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. 17 Then he would return to Ramah, for his house *was* there, and he judged Israel there, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

**8** And it came about, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second, Abiah. *They were* judges in Beersheba. 3 And his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

Some people when put in a position of authority, like Samuel's sons, fail miserably. They give in to the temptations of corruption and greed.

**8:5** Israel refused to learn from history. Their insecurity and defeats were due to their own sin and rejection of God's authority, but they blamed Samuel's age and the character of his sons. They thought that an established human leadership, like other nations had, would be the cure for all their problems (v 20). But to desire what "all the other nations have" was both a great mistake and a great sin (v 7; Hos 13:10,11). God's people were to be a separate, unique, holy people, unlike any other on earth (Ex 19:5,6; Deut 7:6). The same is true of believers now (1 Pet 2:9). It is not their business to desire to be like the people around them who do not know God.

**8:5-22** The request for a king and the establishment of the kingdom teach us many important lessons.

(a) The system of kings was not God's ideal, and it actually symbolized the people's rejection of God (v 7).

(b) God gave them what they wanted. He even chose their king for them. God does not force His will on us. He may let us have our way, but it will not bring the blessing He wants us to have. Compare Ps 78:29-31; 106:15.

(c) They had to pay a price for their willfulness. God warned them where their desire would lead, but they would not listen (vs 9-19).

(d) God did not withdraw His grace from them because of their failure. God's blessings are given in grace, often when His people badly fail. He continues to deal with His people even when they foolishly choose their own way.

(e) Although the system of kings was not God's first choice for the people, in His grace He worked out His purposes through individual kings such as David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and others.

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, so that I should not reign over them. 8 They are doing to you in accordance with all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt to this day, in which they have forsaken me and served other gods. 9 Now therefore listen to their voice, but yet protest solemnly to them and show them the kind of king who will reign over them."

10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked a king from him. 11 And he said, "This will be the kind of king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and *some* will run in front of his chariots. 12 And he will appoint for himself leaders over thousands and leaders over fifties, and *will set them* to plow his ground and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 And he will take your daughters *to be* perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 And he will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. 15 And he will take the tenth of your seed grain and of your vineyards, and give *them* to his officers and to his servants.

16 And he will take your male and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put *them* to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your sheep. And you will become his servants. 18 And you shall cry out in that day

because of your king whom you choose for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and said, "No, but we will have a king over us, 20 so that we also may be like all the nations, and so that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. 22 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and make a king for them." And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Each of you go to his city."

**9** Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name *was* Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a strong and brave man. 2 And he had a son whose name *was* Saul, a choice young man and impressive, and *there was* no more impressive person among the children of Israel than he. From his shoulders up *he was* taller than any of the people.

3 And the donkeys of Saul's father Kish were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, "Take now one of the servants with you and get up *and* go look for the donkeys." 4 And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find *them*. Then they passed through the land of Shalim, but *they were* not *there*. And he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find *them*.

5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who *was* with him, "Come on and let's go back, or my father will stop *being concerned* for the donkeys and start worrying

(f) Perhaps the most surprising thing of all is that by God's grace Israel's kingdom became in some measure a picture of God's kingdom, and its king a "type" of the Lord Jesus as King (2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 2:7; 45:1,6; 89:33-37; Isa 9:6,7; Matt 1:1; 2:2; Luke 1:32,33; Rev 3:21; 19:11-16). But perhaps this is not so surprising after all, considering that man's greatest acts of wickedness brought forth God's greatest act of love and mercy – the cross of Christ.

**8:6** 12:17.

**8:7** 10:19. Up until then God had been King in Israel (12:12). They had the ideal form of government – not democracy, not aristocracy, not plutocracy, not monarchy, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, but theocracy – the rule of God. If the system failed in any way, this was not because God is not the perfect ruler, but because the people continually rejected His authority and broke His laws, and often descended into anarchy (Jud 21:25). Here Israel rejects God's rule altogether. Let us as individuals be careful that we do not do the same thing. Compare Luke 19:14; Rom 14:9.

**8:9** God does not let His people abandon a good way without warning them.

**8:11** 14:52; 2 Chron 1:14.

**8:12** 22:7.

**8:14** 1 Kings 21:7,15; Micah 2:2.

**8:15** 17:25.

**8:18** He would let them suffer the consequences of their foolish and sinful choice. See Gal 6:7. We cannot demand our own way and then rightly expect God to keep us from the sad results of it.

**8:20** "Battles" – but see Josh 5:14; 10:14,42; 23:3! In spiritual matters see Rom 8:31; 1 Cor 15:57; Gal 3:3.

**8:22** Verse 7; Hos 13:11.

**9:1** In this chapter and the next we have the record of how Samuel found Saul and anointed him to be the first king of Israel.

**9:2** There is no mention here of Saul's inner character. God chose for the people as their king a man after their own heart, a man who looked the part (10:23,24). Contrast this with God's choice of a man after His own heart (16:7,12).

**9:3** Saul was sent after donkeys; David looked after sheep (16:11-13; Ps 78:71,72).



about us."

6 And *the servant* said to him, "Look now, *there is* a man of God in this city, and *he is* held in honour. All that he says takes place without fail. Now let's go there. Perhaps he can show us the way that we should go."

7 Then said Saul to his servant, "But, look, *if* we go, what shall we take the man? For the bread is gone from our sacks, and *there is* no present to take to the man of God. What do we have?"

8 And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have in hand a fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give *that* to the man of God to tell us our way." 9 Previously in Israel when a man went to inquire from God, he spoke like this: "Come and let us go to the seer", for *one who is* now *called* a prophet was previously called a seer.

10 Then said Saul to his servant, "Well said. Come, let's go." So they went to the city where the man of God *was*.

11 As they went up the hill to the city, they found *some* young women coming out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

12 And they answered them and said, "He is. Look, *he is* in front of you. Hurry now, for today he has come to the city, because *there is* a sacrifice of the people today in the high place. 13 As soon as you have come into the city, you will meet him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he blesses the sacrifice. *And* afterwards those who have been invited eat. So now go on up, for about now you will find him."

**9:6** "This city" – probably Ramah, Samuel's home town. The servant knew what Saul, apparently, did not. See v 18.

"Man of God" – see 2:27.

"Takes place" – 3:19; Deut 18:21,22; Jer 28:9.

**9:7** It was right that the people should have a sense of obligation in material things to the prophet who ministered to them. On his part, the true prophet did not look for any material reward. He ministered only because the Lord had called him. In the Bible those who played prophet for what they could get are condemned (Ezek 13:17-19; Micah 3:5,11).

**9:8** "Fourth of a shekel" – about 3 grams.

**9:9** The word "seer" in Hebrew (as in English) comes from the verb "to see." What the seer saw was the truth God revealed in whatever way God chose to reveal it. They were enlightened to know God and to receive messages from Him. Nine persons in the Bible are called seers. Samuel was the first and doubtless the greatest. The others were Zadok, Gad, Heman, Iddo, Hanani, Asaph, Jeduthun, and Amos. All the true prophets were also seers.

**9:12** Note at Lev 26:30.

**9:15-17** God had promised that when the

14 And they went up into the city. *And* when they entered the city, there Samuel came out opposite them to go up to the high place.

15 Now a day before Saul came the LORD had spoken in Samuel's ear, saying, 16 "About this time tomorrow I will send a man to you from the region of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him *to be* the leader over my people Israel, so that he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines. For I have looked on my people, because their cry has come to me."

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "See the man whom I spoke to you about. This is the one who will reign over my people."

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, "Please tell me where the seer's house *is*."

19 And Samuel answered Saul and said, "I *am* the seer. Go up ahead of me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today. And tomorrow I will let you go, and will tell you all that *is* in your heart. 20 And as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they are found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on you, and on all your father's house?"

21 And Saul answered and said, "*Am* I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And *is not* my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak so?"

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall and had them sit in the chief place among those who had been invited, who *were* about thirty persons. 23 And Samuel

people wanted a king He would choose one for them (Deut 17:14,15). This does not mean, however, that Saul was God's ideal person to be king. God chose him in anger with Israel (Hos 13:11); that is, God gave them Saul with judgment and punishment in His mind. Note at v 2.

**9:16** "Cry" – 8:19,20; Ex 2:23-25.

**9:17** An example of how God revealed things to a seer.

**9:18** Let us learn something of Saul by this. Samuel was the most famous man in Israel, a great spiritual leader who traveled widely in the land, including the territory of Benjamin. Saul lived in Gibeah (10:26), not far from Samuel's town. Yet it seems Saul had never heard of Samuel (v 6), and he certainly did not recognize him. His interest in spiritual matters must have been very small indeed.

**9:19** "In your heart" – this is another thing that God may give a seer to see. But not always – 8:1-3; 16:6,7.

**9:20** "Found" – a seer could see such things as this also.

"Desire" – 8:5,20.

**9:21** At first, Saul seemed humble and without personal ambition (10:21-23; 15:17). He started well enough. What is

said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, put it near you."

24 And the cook took up the leg and what *was* on it and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, "See what has been keep *for you*. Put *it* in front of you *and* eat. Because it has been kept for you for this time, since I said *that* I have invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

25 And when they had come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* spoke with Saul on the roof of the house. 26 And they arose early and about the break of day, it happened that Samuel called to Saul on the roof of the house, saying, "Arise, so that I may send you away." And Saul arose, and both of them, he and Samuel, went outside. 27 As they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us," (and he went on) "but you stand still for a while, so that I may tell you the word of God."

**10** Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured *it* on his head and kissed him and said, "*Is it* not because the LORD has anointed you *to be* the leader over his inheritance? 2 When you have left me today, then you will find two men by Rachel's tomb on the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to seek are found, and, look, your father has stopped caring about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, 'What shall I do about my son?'

more important, however, is how a person finishes.

**9:27** "The word of God" – this was the work of a seer, and the work of Samuel's whole life from childhood (3:18) to old age (15:16).

**10:1** Anointing with oil spoke of God's anointing. Saul was declared king on three separate occasions. Here at Ramah the anointing was private and no one but Samuel observed it. At Mizpah there was a public proclamation (10:17-24), and later still at Gilgal Saul was confirmed as king (11:12-15). Samuel accepted Saul as king although, in doing so, his own public position and that of his family was eclipsed. How important it is that God's servants should be ready to step aside and fade into the background when God's time comes, and allow others to take the prominent position. Compare John 3:30.

"Inheritance" – God's inheritance is His people. See Ex 34:9; Deut 4:20; Ps 33:12.

**10:2-7** Saul had not known Samuel and could not know whether he delivered God's message. Samuel gave him three signs which would show that Samuel was a true prophet of God and that Saul should believe his message.

**10:5** "Hill of God" – or "Gibeah" – v 26; 11:4.

"Prophets" – note at Gen 20:7.

3 "Then you shall go on from there and come to the plain of Tabor, and there three men will meet you going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a wineskin *full* of wine. 4 And they will greet you and give you two *loaves* of bread, which you are to take from their hands.

5 "After that you will come to the hill of God, where the garrison of the Philistines *is*. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a harp and a tambourine and a flute and a lyre before them, and they will prophesy. 6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come on you, and you will prophesy with them and will be changed into another man. 7 And let it be *like this*: when these signs come to you, do for yourself as the occasion demands; for God *is* with you.

8 "And you shall go down before me to Gilgal. And, look, I will come down to you, to offer burnt offerings *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings. You must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."

9 And it happened when he had turned his back to go away from Samuel, that God gave him another heart. And all those signs took place that day. 10 And when they came to the hill, there a company of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God came on him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And it came about, when all who knew him previously saw that now he prophesied among the

**10:6** "Spirit" – 11:6; Num 11:25-29; Jud 14:6. This sign in particular would confirm Saul as being anointed by God to be king.

"Changed" – Saul was a shy farmer's son (11:5), not interested in national events. He became a warrior able to command an army and lead a nation. When God chooses a person for any task He equips him for that task. Saul miserably failed to be the kind of leader he should and could have been, but this was not because God had not given him the ability for leadership.

**10:7** "Do" – do whatever would establish him as king.

"With you" – Josh 1:5; Jud 6:12.

**10:8** This was a test for Saul which he failed – 13:8-10.

"Peace offerings" – see Lev 3:1.

**10:9** "Took place" – this confirmed to Saul that Samuel was a true prophet and had given him God's message. When God appoints a person to a task He wants that person to know that He has done so.

**10:10** Verses 5,6. It is not revealed what sort of prophesying this was. It was done to the accompaniment of music and among a group of prophets (v 5). Perhaps in this case it was simply praising God under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Compare 1 Chron 25:1.

**10:11,12** The Spirit of God had begun His

prophets, that the people said to one another, "What *is* this *that* has happened to the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?" 12 And someone from that place answered and said, "But who *is* their father?"

Therefore it became a proverb, "*Is* Saul also among the prophets?" 13 And when he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.

14 And Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?"

And he said, "To look for the donkeys. And when we did not see *them* anywhere, we went to Samuel."

15 And Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."

16 And Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys were found." But he did not tell him about the subject of the kingdom, which Samuel spoke about.

17 And Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpeh, 18 and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hands of the Egyptians and out of the hands of all the kingdoms *and* of those who oppressed you. 19 And today you have rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your disasters and your distresses, and you have said to him, '*No*, but set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands."

20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. 21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he could not

be found. 22 Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD answered, "Look, he has hidden himself among the baggage."

23 And they ran and brought him there. And when he stood up among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders on up. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, "See the one whom the LORD has chosen; for *there is* no one like him among all the people." And all the people shouted and said, "God save the king!"

25 Then Samuel told the people the plan of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, each man to his house.

26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah, and a band of men, whose hearts God had touched, went with him. 27 But *some* wicked fellows said, "How will this man save us?" And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he kept silent.

**11** Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and camped against Jabesh-Gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you."

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "I will make *a covenant* with you on this *condition*: that I may gouge out all of your right eyes, and so bring disgrace on all of Israel."

3 And the elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days' respite, so that we can send messengers to all the territories of Israel. And then, if *there is* no one to save us, we will come out to you."

4 Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people, and all the people raised their voices and wept. 5 And just then Saul came from the field behind his oxen,

work of making Saul a different person, and people noticed it with great surprise.

**10:16** "Kingdom" – it would probably have sounded absurd to Saul's uncle.

**10:18** Jud 6:8,9.

**10:19** 8:6-8; 12:12.

**10:20** Apart from God speaking through His prophets, Israel had two methods of determining God's will in public matters – casting lots (14:42; Josh 18:6-10; Neh 10:34), and the Urim and Thummin (Ex 28:30). In this case they probably cast lots. Only Samuel knew at this time that God had chosen Saul as king. This event was for the purpose of revealing it to the nation.

**10:22** Saul was initially a shy and retiring person. God's Spirit made him a different person (v 6), but the old still struggled with the new.

**10:24** "No one like him" – in physical appearance and personality. The people were delighted with God's choice – at first.

**10:25** "Plan" – see Deut 17:14-20.

**10:26** "Touched" – when God plans a new work He will raise up men to do it.

**10:27** "Wicked fellows" – when God does a new thing there will always be those who scornfully oppose it. Compare Acts 2:13.

"Save us" – compare Matt 27:41-43.

**11:1** The Ammonites were the descendants of Lot (Gen 19:36-38; Deut 2:19), and therefore related to Israel. But they were enemies of God's people (Jud 3:13; 11:4-32). Jabesh-Gilead was a town east of the Jordan river and north of Ammon.

**11:2** Any sort of treaty with evil people results in some kind of loss (Ex 34:12; 1 Kings 20:34,42; 2 Chron 18:1; 2 Cor 6:14-18).

**11:3** Apparently the Ammonites thought no one would be willing to come to help. Israel was at war with the Philistines.

**11:4** Gibeah was in Benjamin and Benjamin had close family ties with the people of Jabesh (Jud 21:12-14).

**11:5** Was Saul more interested in farming than in being king?

and Saul said, "What *is wrong* with the people that they are weeping?" And they told him the news about the men of Jabesh.

6 And the Spirit of God came on Saul when he heard that news, and his anger burned greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent *them* throughout all the territories of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, "So will it be done to the oxen of the one who does not come out after Saul and after Samuel." And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man. 8 And when he counted them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9 And they said to the messengers who had come, "This is what you are to say to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, 'Tomorrow, *by the time* the sun is hot, you will have help.'" And the messengers came and told *this* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. 10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said to *Nahash*, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you can do with us all that seems good to you."

11 And on the next day this occurred: Saul put the people in three groups, and they came into the middle of the camp in the morning watch, and killed the Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it came about that those who remained were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

12 And the people said to Samuel, "Who *is* the one who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men so we can put them to death."

13 And Saul said, "Not a man will be put to death this day, for today the LORD has worked deliverance in Israel."

14 Then said Samuel to the people, "Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there."

**11:6** The Spirit of God now propelled Saul into the forefront of the national life of Israel.

**11:7** "Fear of the LORD" – to fulfill His purposes, God can as easily move a whole people as He can one man.

**11:8** Bezek was west of the Jordan, but not far from Jabesh east of the Jordan.

**11:11** "Morning watch" – nights were divided into three "watches." The third was from 2 to 6 A.M.

**11:12** 10:27.

**11:13** Once more Saul shows modesty.

**11:14,15** 10:8,25. Though here Saul is confirmed as king, in the chapter which follows Samuel teaches the people that God was still the Ruler over Israel, and that both they and king Saul must obey God (vs 13-15).

**11:15** "Peace offerings" – see Leviticus chapter 3.

"Rejoiced greatly" – they had gotten their way and everything seemed to be going well.

**12:1** "Israel" – in this chapter, which gives Samuel's speech on handing over the reins

15 And all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal, and there they offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

**12** And Samuel said to all Israel, "See, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me, and have set a king over you. 2 And now, look, the king walks before you. And I am old and gray, and, see, my sons *are* with you. And I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. 3 Look, here I *am*. Testify against me before the LORD and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind my eyes with it? *Tell me* and I will return it to you."

4 And they said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us, and you have not taken anything from anyone's hand."

5 And he said to them, "The LORD *is* a witness against you, and his anointed *is* a witness too, that you have not found anything in my hand."

And they answered, "*He is* a witness."

6 And Samuel said to the people, "*It is* the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. 7 Now therefore stand there, so that I may reason with you in the LORD's presence about all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he has done for you and for your fathers.

8 "After Jacob had come into Egypt, and your fathers had cried to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and caused them to live in this place.

9 "And when they forgot the LORD their God,

of government to Saul, he retires from his administrative responsibilities, but not his work as spiritual leader.

"You" – 8:5-7; 10:24.

**12:2** 3:10,19,20; 8:1,5.

**12:3** Samuel is saying that he has not used his position of leadership to oppress the people or to make gain for himself. Compare Paul's speech to the elders of the church of Ephesus in Acts 20:17-35. In every age the church desperately needs these kinds of leaders.

**12:4,5** A great testimony to Samuel's good character.

**12:5** "Anointed" – Saul.

**12:6** Because they testified to his good character he can go on. If religious leaders are known to be bad men, they should keep their mouths shut until they are willing to repent and serve God from the heart.

**12:7** Compare Micah 6:1-5.

**12:8** Ex 2:23-25; 3:10; 4:14-16.

**12:9** The people could find no fault with Samuel's life, but the reverse was not the

he sold them into the hands of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the king of Moab and they fought against them. 10 And they cried to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and Ashtaroth. But now deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.' 11 And the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hands of your enemies on every side, and you lived in safety.

12 "And when you saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God *was* your king. 13 Now therefore see the king whom you have chosen *and* whom you have desired. And, see, the LORD has set a king over you. 14 If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandments of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. 15 But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandments of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

case. The history of Israel was full of rebellion against God.

"Forgot" – Deut 32:18; Jud 3:7; Ps 106:21.

**12:10** Jud 2:4,12,13; 3:7,15; 10:10,15,16.

**12:11** 7:13; Jud 4:6; 6:31,32; 7:1; 11:1.

"Jerubbaal" – Gideon.

"Bedan" – possibly another name for Barak.

**12:12** "God was your King" – 8:6,7; Jud 8:23.

**12:14,15** "LORD" – Samuel is saying that Jehovah God is still the Ruler and will exercise His authority over them. Notes on fear of God at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"Fathers" – Samuel clearly warns the people that simply having a king will not be the answer to their problems. Political changes will never be effective if people rebel against God. There is never any solution to the problems of God's people apart from obedience to Him and submission to His will.

**12:16,17** God was willing to give striking evidence at the word of Samuel to demonstrate how evil the motive of the people had been.

**12:18** "Called" – Ps 99:5.

"Samuel" – compare Ex 14:31.

**12:19** The people now recognized their sin, but it was too late. When men have made a choice they have to face the consequences of it.

**12:20** "Do not be afraid" – if people have faith and an obedient heart, God can turn even evil into blessing. Compare Gen 50:20. If a bad choice has been made and

16 "Now therefore stand there and see the great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes. 17 *Is it* not wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, and he will send thunder and rain, so that you may perceive and see that great *is* your wickedness which you have done in the sight of the LORD in asking a king for yourselves."

18 So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day. And all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19 And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we do not die, for to all our sins we have added *this* evil of asking for a king for ourselves."

20 And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid. You have done all this wickedness, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart, 21 and do not turn aside. For *then you would go* after vain *things*, which cannot profit or deliver, for they *are* vain. 22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you his people. 23 Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. 24 Only fear the LORD and serve him in truth with all your heart. For

cannot be changed, believers should not despair but go forward with God and let Him work things out for the best.

**12:21** Ps 115:3-8; Isa 41:29; 44:17-20; Jer 16:19; Hab 2:18,19.

**12:22** "His great name's sake" – God's reputation was (and is) bound up with His people (Num 14:13-16; Ps 23:3; 25:11; Isa 48:9; Jer 14:21; Ezek 20:9). What they do affects what others think of Him.

"His people" – Deut 7:6-11; 31:6; 1 Kings 6:13; Isa 43:21.

**12:23** "Ceasing" – not doing something God requires (sins of omission) is just as much sin as doing what God forbids (sins of commission). See Num 32:23; Deut 23:3,4; Matt 25:24-27,41-46; 1 Tim 5:8. Both kinds of sin are "against the LORD." See Ps 51:4.

"Teach" – Samuel was old and no longer the administrative leader of the people. But God still had a spiritual ministry for him. He could still pray and teach. And if the time ever came when he could no longer teach, he could still pray. There is ministry for every believer in Christ, though the ministry of many may be hidden from the eyes of others.

**12:24** "Fear" – v 14; Deut 10:12.

"Great things" – Ex 14:31; Deut 4:32; 10:21; 11:7; Josh 24:17,18. By considering the great things God has done for His people their hearts may be moved to gratitude, praise, and obedience. Consider what great things God has done through Christ for believers now, as recorded in the New Testament!



consider what great *things* he has done for you. 25 But if you continue to do wickedly, you will be swept away, both you and your king."

**13** Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, 2 Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. *Of these* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in Bethel mountain, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. And he sent the rest of the people away, each one to his tent.

3 And Jonathan struck the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout the whole land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." 4 And all Israel heard *it* said *that* Saul had struck a garrison of the Philistines, and also *that* Israel had become odious to the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

5 And the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and people as numerous as the sand on the seashore, and they came up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-Aven. 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a tight place (for the people were hard pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves and in thickets and in rocks and in high places and in pits. 7 And *some*

**12:25** 31:1-7; Josh 24:20.

**13:1** Some manuscripts of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament (Septuagint) have Saul's age here as thirty when he became king. The Hebrew here does not have the word generally used for "one", and has the plural for year. So some scholars think the first line of the text should read - "Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign." Acts 13:21 says that Saul reigned for forty years.

**13:2** "Jonathan" - Saul's oldest son (14:49).

**13:3** "Trumpet" - Num 10:9; Jer 4:19.

"Hebrews" - another name for Israelites (Gen 10:21; 14:13).

**13:4** "Odious" - Gen 34:30; Ex 5:21; 2 Sam 10:6; 16:21.

**13:5** "Thirty" - some ancient manuscripts have "three." Since there were only 6000 charioteers 3000 chariots seems more likely. In any case, theirs was a mighty army, superior to Israel's.

"Beth-Aven" - that is, Bethel.

**13:6,7** Their joy and confidence in their king (8:20; 11:15) seems to have evaporated.

**13:8** "Samuel" - 10:8.

**13:9** Samuel's instructions had been very clear and they had been given at a time when he had given three signs that God was speaking through him (10:1-7).

**13:12** "Favour" - we cannot gain the Lord's favor by disobedience (15:22,23).

"Forced myself" - he was compelled only by his fear, rash spirit, and lack of confidence in God.

*of* the Hebrews went over the Jordan to the region of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8 And he waited seven days in accordance with the time that Samuel had set, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. 9 And Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering here to me, and peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. 10 And it came about that as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, suddenly Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him to greet him.

11 And Samuel said, "What have you done?"

And Saul said, "Because I saw that the people were scattering from me, and *that* you did not come within the appointed days, and that the Philistines had gathered together at Michmash, 12 therefore I said, Now the Philistines will come down on me to Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favour. So I forced myself and offered a burnt offering."

13 And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you. *If you had*, now the LORD would have established your kingdom in Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom will not continue. The LORD has sought for himself a man after his own heart, and the

**13:13** Saul had some good qualities, but here are two great weaknesses. He was foolish (26:21), and he lacked an obedient heart (15:10,11,24). Many people there are who cannot be trusted with leadership because of these two failings. In our study of Saul we can see many ways in which a leader may fail and make himself unfit for leadership.

"Commanded you" - through Samuel (9:27; 10:8).

"Forever" - Saul was tested as to his worthiness for the office of king, and he failed, as God knew he would fail.

**13:14** 15:28; 16:1; Ps 89:20; Acts 13:22. From the context we can understand that a man after (or according to) God's heart is a person who will be spiritually wise and obedient, and not like Saul who was foolish and disobedient. But no doubt it will be profitable for us to consider in more detail why God regarded David as a man after His own heart. We can see why David was such a man by studying his history and the psalms he wrote. In general it means that David knew something of the heart of God and tried to keep his heart in harmony with what he knew. But more specific qualities and attitudes of heart can be mentioned.

Let us strive to obtain the following qualities and heart attitudes seen in David, and earnestly pray that God will produce them in us. And let us remember that David did not have such qualities and attitudes by nature. He was a fallen human being with a sinful nature just like the rest of the human

LORD has commanded him *to be* the leader over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

15 And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul counted the people *who were* present with him, about six hundred men.

16 And Saul and his son Jonathan and the people *who were* present with them, stayed in Gibeah of Benjamin, but the Philistines were camping at Michmash. 17 And the raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three groups; one group turned toward the road *that goes to* Ophrah, to the region of Shual, 18 and another group turned toward Beth-Horon, and another group turned toward the border that overlooks the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19 Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout the whole land of Israel, for the

Philistines said, "So that the Hebrews cannot make swords or spears *for themselves*." 20 But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines, so that each one could sharpen his plowshare and his sickle and his axe and his mattock. 21 And there was a sharpening *charge* for the mattocks and for the sickles and for the forks and for the axes and to set the points of the goods.

22 So it came about on the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who *were* with Saul and Jonathan, but they were found with Saul and with his son Jonathan. 23 And an outpost of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

**14** Now one day it came about that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who was his armour bearer, "Come and let us go over to the Philistines' outpost that is on the other side."

race, and this he himself understood quite well (Ps 51:5). His sins were his own, his good qualities were produced in him by the Spirit of God, with, of course, David's cooperation.

(a) David had great confidence and trust in God, not in himself – 1 Sam 17:37,47; Ps 18:2; 23:1-6; 28:7; 44:6-8; 56:4; etc.

(b) David always praised God for what was accomplished, not himself – Ps 9:1; 28:7; 33:1-3; 34:1; 56:4; etc.

(c) David wanted glory and honor to be given to God, not to himself – 1 Sam 17:26, 36,46; Ps 25:11; 29:1,2; 31:3; 34:3; 115:1; etc.

(d) David wanted to obey God's will, not his own – Ps 143:10; 1 Sam 23:2; 2 Sam 5:19,22,23; etc.

(e) David delighted in the Word of God and made it his business to know it and obey it – Ps 12:6; 17:4; 19:9-11; 56:10; 119:11,16,17, 67,74,89,101,105,133,148, 160,162,172 (assuming here that David wrote psalm 119); 130:5.

(f) David was a man of integrity, faithful in the tasks given him to do, whether it was tending sheep or ruling a kingdom – 1 Sam 17:34,35; 1 Kings 9:4; Ps 78:70-72. Dishonesty, unfaithfulness, lying, crookedness of any kind were all hateful to him – Ps 15:1-5; 26:4,5; 101:1-8; etc. He knew that God was a God of truth and faithfulness and determined that he would be a man of truth and faithfulness – Ps 25:5; 26:3; 31:5; 51:6; 86:11; etc.

(g) David did not strive to gain position or power (as is the usual way of men), even though God had chosen him to be king. He patiently waited for God's time and God's way – 1 Sam 24:4-7; 26:7-11; 31:15; etc.

(h) David was a humble man who was aware of his weakness and helplessness and tried to keep himself free of that pride and arrogance which God hates – 2 Sam 12:7-13; Ps 25:7,11; 40:17; 51:1-17; 131:1,2; etc.

(i) David loved God, God's name, God's

work, God's people, God's house – Ps 8:1; 16:3; 18:1; 26:8; 27:4; 34:3; 51:13; 119:97,127; 2 Sam 24:17; etc. We may say that this love was at the center of his being, governing his whole course of life.

(j) David had the fear of the Lord which made him spiritually wise and obedient – Ps 5:7; 19:9; 34:11-14; 119:63,120; etc.

(k) David showed his love and gratitude toward God by both words and deeds – Ps 30:12; 35:18; 119:62; 2 Sam 24:24; 1 Chron 29:2-5; etc.

(l) David was teachable. He longed to understand God's truth and God's ways and walk in them, and was willing to examine himself and correct anything he saw to be wrong – Ps 25:4; 27:11; 43:3; 86:11; 119:59; 139:23,24.

(m) David was a man of prayer who acknowledged his need and helplessness and opened his heart and life to God to meet his need, a man who nourished his spiritual life in the presence of God – Ps 5:3,7; 40:17; 42:1,2; 51:11; etc (his psalms are full of this and innumerable references might be given).

(n) He loved God's holiness and wanted his whole life to be conformed to it – Ps 19:13,14; 24:3,4; 29:2; 30:4; 51:7-10; 103:1,3; 119:11,133; 145:21.

Such are some of the qualities which made David a man after God's own heart. Others could be added to this list but these are enough to show why God was pleased with him.

**13:15** 13:2,4,6,7. Fear had made many hundreds run away.

**13:19-21** The Philistines believed in total disarmament – for Israel, not for themselves. Of course this gave them a tremendous advantage in any battle between the two nations.

**13:22** Two swords for a whole nation! But they had bows and arrows and spears, etc.

**14:1** The first 23 verses of this chapter record one of the great individual military exploits in

But he did not tell his father.

2 And Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron, and the people who *were* with him *were* about six hundred men. 3 And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

4 And on the pass by which Jonathan sought to reach the Philistines' outpost, *there was* a rocky crag on one side and a rocky crag on the other side. The name of one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The one crag was situated toward the north opposite Michmash, and the other toward the south, opposite Gibeah.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man who was his armour bearer, "Come, and let us go over to the outpost of these uncircumcised *men*. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can prevent the LORD from saving *whether* by many or by few."

7 And his armour bearer said to him, "Do all that *is* in your heart. Turn yourself *forward*. See, I *am* with you according to your desire."

8 Then Jonathan said, "Look, we will cross over to *these* men, and we will let ourselves be seen by them. 9 If they speak to us like this: 'Wait until we come to you', then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. 10 But if they speak like this: 'Come up to us', then we will go up, for the LORD has delivered them into our hands. And that *will be* a sign to us."

11 And both of them let themselves be seen by the outpost of the Philistines, and the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews have come out of the holes where they have hidden themselves." 12 And the men of the outpost responded to Jonathan and his armour bearer and said, "Come up to us, and we will tell you something."

the Bible.

**14:3** "Ephod" – Ex 28:6-8.

**14:6** "Uncircumcised" – the Philistines were not in covenant relationship with God (Gen 17:9-14), and they had no right to remain in the land. All of Canaan as far as the Mediterranean Sea had been given to Israel (Josh 1:2-5; 13:2).

"Few" – if it is God who works He can accomplish His purpose with very small, very frail instruments (17:46,47; Lev 26:8; Jud 7:4,7; 2 Chron 14:11). What God wants to see is not large numbers but faith and obedience. Jonathan's faith made him bold. **14:10** 6:9; Gen 24:14; Jud 6:36-40.

**14:11** "Hebrews" – 13:3.

**14:12** "LORD has delivered" – Jonathan's dependence was not on his skill and ability but on God.

**14:13** "Feet" – the terrain was very difficult,

And Jonathan said to his armour bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hands of Israel."

13 And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and on his feet, and his armour bearer after him. And the *Philistines* fell before Jonathan, and his armour bearer killed *some* after him. 14 And about twenty men *fell* in that first attack which Jonathan and his armour bearer made, within about half an acre of land, *which a yoke of oxen might plow*.

15 And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled, and the earth quaked, so it became a very great trembling.

16 And Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and saw the mob melting away, moving here *and there*. 17 Then Saul said to the people who *were* with him, "Make a count now and see who has gone from us." And when they had made a count, it was seen that Jonathan and his armour bearer *were* not *there*.

18 And Saul said to Ahiah, "Bring here the ark of God." For at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel. 19 And it came about, while Saul was talking to the priest, that the noise in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased. And Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

20 And Saul and all the people who *were* with him assembled and went to the battle, and they saw that every man's sword was against his fellow *soldier*; *and that there was* very great confusion. 21 Moreover the Hebrews *who* had previously been with the Philistines, who had gone up with them to the camp *from the* surrounding *countryside*, they also *turned and came* to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. 22 Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines had fled, they also followed close behind them in the battle. 23 So the LORD saved Israel

but faith looks to God, not at difficulties.

**14:14** "Half an acre" – in Hebrew "half a yoke." A "yoke" was the amount of land a yoke of oxen could plow in one day.

**14:15** "Great trembling" – all this because of the faith of one man. See also 7:10; Josh 10:9,11; Ps 18:6-15.

**14:18** Saul's intention was to find God's will for the present occasion. Compare 23:9-11; 30:7,8. Like Saul some people want to find God's will when there is the prospect of some success or other, but think little of seeking Him simply to know their duty.

**14:19** It seems Saul decided to pursue the Philistines without waiting to see what God would say. Such action was typical of Saul.

**14:20** Jud 7:22; 2 Chron 20:23.

**14:23** "The LORD" – 11:13; Ex 14:30; Josh 23:4,5; 2 Chron 32:22; Ps 3:16-19; 44:6,7; Hos 1:7.

that day, and the battle passed over to Beth-Aven.

24 And the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had put the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed *be* the man who eats *any* food until evening, so that I may take vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted *any* food.

25 And all *the people* of the land came into the woods, and there was honey on the ground. 26 And when the people came into the woods, *they* saw the honey dripping, but no man put his hand to his mouth, because the people were afraid of the oath. 27 But Jonathan did not hear when his father charged the people with the oath, so he put out the end of the staff that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes shone. 28 Then one of the people responded and said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed *be* the man who eats *any* food today.'" And the people were faint.

29 Then said Jonathan, "My father has troubled the land. Please see how my eyes have shone, because I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How much more *they could have done*, if the people today had eaten freely of the plunder of their enemies which they found! For would there not have been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

31 And they struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon, and the people became very faint. 32 And the people fell on the plunder and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered *them* on the ground, and the people ate *them* with the blood. 33 Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD, by eating *meat* with the blood."

And he said, "You have transgressed. Roll a great stone to me today." 34 And Saul said, "Scatter among the people and say to them, 'Each man must

bring here to me his ox and each man his sheep, and slaughter *them* here and eat, and not sin against the LORD by eating *meat* with the blood.'" And each man from all the people brought his ox with him that night and slaughtered *it* there. 35 And Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

36 And Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them."

And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." Then the priest said, "Let us here draw near to God."

37 And Saul asked counsel from God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you deliver them into the hands of Israel?" But *the LORD* did not answer him that day.

38 And Saul said, "Draw near here, all you leaders of the people, and find out and see how this sin has happened today. 39 For, *as* the LORD who saves Israel lives, even if it is in my son Jonathan, he shall surely die." But *there was* not a man among all the people *who* answered him.

40 Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side."

And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

41 Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, "Give a perfect *lot*." And Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people were cleared.

42 And Saul said, "Cast *lots* between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was taken. 43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done."

And Jonathan told him, saying, "I just tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that *was* in my hand, *and*, look, I must die!"

44 And Saul answered, "God do so and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

"Beth-Aven" – Bethel.

**14:24** "Oath" – Saul again shows a rash and foolish spirit. His oath may have had an appearance of spiritual devotion, but it meant that the strength of the army was sapped before the day was over (vs 28,31).

**14:27** "His eyes shone" – even a little nourishment brought strength to a tired man – vs 29,30.

**14:29** "Troubled" – one rash oath brought trouble to the whole country, and showed once again that Saul was not fit to be king.

**14:32** "Blood" – forbidden by God (Gen 9:4; Lev 3:17; Deut 12:23,24; Acts 15:19,20).

**14:35** "The first" – Saul was not suddenly becoming spiritual and devoted to God. Evidently he was much worried that God would forsake his army because of its sin in

eating blood.

**14:36** Having gone through the forms of devotion, Saul's self-confidence returns, his fear abates. He is ready to rush after the Philistines without seeking God's will. He needed the priests' reminder to "enquire of God."

**14:37** "The LORD did not answer" – even though Saul's oath was a foolish one, an oath was an oath, and God heard it, and the people were bound by it (v 24). See Eccl 5:2-7. Far better to make no oaths (Matt 5:33-37). For another very foolish oath see Jud 11:30,31.

**14:39** Saul adds another vow to his original one. This one too went unfulfilled.

**14:41,42** Casting lots to find God's will was a common practice then – Josh 7:14; 18:6; 1 Chron 24:5.

**14:44** It would have been better for Saul if

45 And the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? God forbid! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he has worked with God today." So the people rescued Jonathan, so that he did not die.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

47 So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab and against the children of Ammon and against Edom and against the kings of Zobah and against the Philistines, and wherever he turned, he troubled them. 48 And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

49 Now Saul's sons were Jonathan and Ishui and Melchishua. And these were the names of his two daughters: the name of the firstborn was Merab and the name of the younger was Michal. 50 And Saul's wife's name was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. 51 And Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

52 And the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul, and when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for his service.

**15** And Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you to be king over his people, over Israel. Now therefore listen to the message from the voice of the LORD. 2 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he opposed him along the way when Israel

he had been as determined to put Agag to death as he was to kill Jonathan (15:8).

**14:45** The men decided that if it came to a matter of oaths they too could make them.

**14:46** The confusion of the previous incident meant that a great opportunity to crush the Philistines was lost.

**14:47,48** Israel was surrounded by enemies. Moab and Ammon were to the east beyond the Jordan river. Edom was south, Zobah north, the Philistines west.

**14:49** "Ishvi" – he was also known as "Ish-bosheth" and "Esh-Baal."

**14:52** "Service" – 8:11,12.

**15:1** 9:16.

**15:2** See Ex 17:8-16; Num 24:20; Deut 25:17-19. The time had come for God to punish this wicked people. Notes on such punishment at Gen 6:7; 15:16; Lev 18:24; Deut 13:12-18.

**15:3** Similar to instructions God gave about Jericho – Josh 6:17-21.

**15:6** The Kenites were a Midianite tribe living to the south of Israel in the desert. Moses' father-in-law was a Kenite.

came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and sucking child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

4 And Saul gathered the people together and counted them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. 6 And Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, get away from among the Amalekites, or I will destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites went away from among the Amalekites.

7 And Saul struck down the Amalekites from Havilah until you come to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fat animals and the lambs and all that was good, and were not willing to utterly destroy them, but they utterly destroyed everything that was despised and worthless.

10 Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 11 "I regret that I have appointed Saul to be king, for he has turned back from following me and has not carried out my commandments." And Samuel was troubled and cried out to the LORD all night.

12 And Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and, look, he set up a monument for himself, and has turned and proceeded to go down to Gilgal."

13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to

**15:8** This refers to the chief town of the Amalekites (v 5). There were Amalekites living in other places whom Saul did not destroy (27:8; 31:1,18; 2 Sam 1:1; 8:11,12).

**15:9** Once again we see that Saul was the kind of person who did what he pleased regardless of God's commands (10:8; 13:8,9). Disobedience to God cost him a great deal, as it will anyone, any time.

**15:11** "I regret" – Gen 6:6; 2 Sam 24:16; Ps 78:40; Hos 11:8; Matt 23:37; Luke 19:41,42; Eph 4:30.

"Troubled" – the prophets in tune with God's mind experienced something of what God felt. See Jer 4:19-26; 6:11.

**15:12** "Carmel" – not Mt Carmel in the north of Israel, but a town south of Hebron.

"Monument for himself" – by this Saul showed again that he was on the slippery slope to ruin (Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14). God does not give success that we might glorify ourselves.

**15:13** A show of outward spirituality that covered deception.



him, "May you *be* blessed by the LORD. I have carried out the commandment of the LORD."

14 And Samuel said, "Then what *is the meaning* of this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! Now I will tell you what the LORD said to me tonight."

And he said to him, "Speak on."

17 And Samuel said, "When you *were* little in your own sight, *were* you not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and *did not* the LORD anoint you king over Israel? 18 And the LORD sent you on a journey and said, 'Go and utterly destroy those sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are no more.' 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but fell on the plunder and did evil in the sight of the LORD?"

20 And Saul said to Samuel, "Yes, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took *some* of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

**15:14** Fire can be hidden for a time, but what about the smoke? What good is a mask of piety when evidence of disobedience cries out all around?

**15:15** Saul, the leader who was responsible for everything, tries to put the blame on his men (vs 21,24). Compare Gen 3:12,13.

**15:17** "Little" – a comparison of 9:21 and 10:22 with 15:12 gives us an example of how power and position can corrupt a leader.

**15:18** Verse 3.

**15:19** "Not obey" – 13:13.

**15:20,21** Saul seemed to think that partial obedience would be acceptable to God. Actually partial obedience is disobedience. God did not send him to bring back Agag and those animals. His command was to destroy all and everything.

"To sacrifice" – to escape from the charge of disobedience Saul again makes a show of piety.

**15:22** These are words we should all write on our hearts and read daily. Outward ritual can never take the place of heart obedience – Ps 50:7-23; 51:16,17; Prov 21:3; Isa 1:11-17; Jer 7:22,23; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Mark 12:33; Heb 10:6-9.

**15:23** "Witchcraft" – see Lev 19:26; Deut 18:9-12.

"Stubbornness" – 12:14,15. The one thing above all Saul should not have done he did. He stubbornly rebelled against

22 And Samuel said, "Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Look, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, and to listen *is better* than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion *is like* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is like* wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you as king."

24 And Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and your words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, so that I may worship the LORD."

26 And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel."

27 And as Samuel turned around to go away, *Saul* clutched the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 And Samuel said to him, "Today the LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you and has given it to a neighbour of yours *who is* better than you. 29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie or repent, for he *is* not a man that he should repent."

30 Then he said, "I have sinned. *Yet* please honour me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God." 31 So Samuel followed Saul back, and Saul worshipped the LORD.

God's command. To ignore God's commands and do one's own will is really a kind of idolatry – worship of oneself.

"Rejected" – anyone unwilling for God's rule over himself is not fit to rule others.

**15:24** Confession with repentance is a fine thing. Confession without repentance is worse than useless. See Ex 10:16,17. And true repentance does not include an excuse for sin as Saul makes here. Compare with this David's simple, heartfelt statements in 2 Sam 12:13 and Ps 51:3,4.

**15:25** "Pardon" – in this too Saul seems lacking in true repentance – he asks for Samuel's forgiveness, not God's.

"Worship" – judging from all that is said about him Saul was never much interested in worshipping God, and here, too, he had other motives (v 30).

**15:28** "Better" – 13:14; 16:1,13; 28:17,18. **15:29** Num 23:19; Isa 40:8; Titus 1:2; Jam 1:17.

**15:30** "Honour" – Matt 23:5-7; John 5:44; 12:43; Rom 2:29. Saul had his eyes on people, not on God. He was afraid that Samuel and all Israel would reject him, and thought that a little honor from men might help him to retain his position. He is an example of the kind of person we often see in Christian circles today. Contrast all this with David's concern with his inner being (Ps 51:10).

**15:31** Samuel loved Saul (v 11; 16:1), and

32 Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him weakly.

And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

33 And Samuel said, "Just as your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless among women." And Samuel cut Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel did not come again to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel grieved for Saul, and the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

**16** And the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have chosen a king for myself among his sons."

2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me."

And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will tell you what you must do, and you shall anoint for me *the one* whom I name to you."

4 And Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come in peace?"

5 And he said, "In peace. I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves, and come

with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came about, when they arrived, that he looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him."

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance, or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does* not *see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 9 Then Jesse had Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 10 And Jesse had seven of his sons pass in front of Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."

11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all *your* children here?"

And he said, "There still remains the youngest, and, see, he is tending the sheep."

And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he has come here."

12 And he sent and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* with a fine appearance and handsome *features*. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him, for this *is the* one."

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD came on David from that day onwards. So Samuel got up and went to Ramah.

14 But the Spirit of the LORD left Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

gave in to his desperate request.

**15:32** Perhaps Samuel's reason for going with Saul was not to honor him but to finish the work God gave Saul to do.

**15:33** Gen 9:6; Ex 21:23-25; Deut 19:21; Jud 1:7. This was absolute justice at work.

**15:35** Though Samuel loved Saul he refused to have fellowship with him because Saul was disobedient and rejected by God. Compare 1 Cor 5:1,2,9-11.

**16:1** "How long" – it was right for Samuel to mourn. God Himself was grieved (15:35). But he had mourned enough and there was work to do. No servant of God should let his grief keep him from fulfilling his responsibilities in God's service.

"Jesse" – Ruth 4:18-22.

**16:2** Saul's instability was apparently quite obvious. He had become treacherous and vindictive (19:1,9-11; 22:18,19). It is unlikely that Samuel was afraid to die. He wondered, though, how he would be able to obey God's command.

**16:3** "I will tell you what you must do" – when we set out to obey God we can expect His constant guidance (Ps 25:9; Prov 3:6; Isa 30:21; 58:10,11).

**16:4** Evidently the visit of a prophet was not

always welcome. Did the elders at Bethlehem have a guilty conscience about something?

**16:5** "Consecrate" – Ex 19:10,14; Leviticus chapter 15; Num 19:11-22.

**16:6** Even Samuel the seer could be deceived by outward appearances. See 9:19.

**16:7** 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron 28:9; Ps 139:1-4; Luke 16:15; Heb 4:13.

**16:11** "Tending the sheep" – the one the Lord chose to shepherd Israel was a shepherd – Ps 78:71,72. He is a small picture of another who has a shepherd's heart (John 10:11-16; Heb 13:20).

**16:12** But God did not choose him for his handsome looks (13:14).

**16:13** "Brothers" – Samuel knew why he anointed David (v 1), but as far as we know he did not give the reason at that time. David knew, of course, that he was being set apart for some special purpose. Observe that the Spirit of God Himself anointed David to be king as He had Saul (10:10).

**16:14** "LORD" – God's Spirit had anointed Saul to be king. He was now rejected as king and so the Spirit departed from him. This has nothing to do with the question of whether Saul was saved or lost as an individual. It has to do only with his position

15 And Saul's servants said to him, "Look now, an evil spirit from God is troubling you. 16 Let our lord now command your servants, *who are* before you, to seek for a man *who* plays the harp skillfully. And it will be *like this*: when the evil spirit from God is on you, he will play *the harp* with his hand, and you will get well."

17 And Saul said to his servants, "Find me now a man who can play well, and bring *him* to me."

18 Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *who is* skillful in playing. And *he is* a strong man and a brave warrior, and prudent in speech and handsome, and the LORD *is* with him."

19 Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David who *is* with the sheep." 20 And Jesse took a donkey, *loaded it* with bread, and a wineskin of wine and a young goat, and sent *them* to Saul by his son David.

21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armour bearer. 22 And Saul sent *word* to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stay *here* with me, for he has found favour in my sight."

23 And it would come about, whenever the *evil* spirit from God was on Saul, that David would take a harp and play *it* with his hand. So Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would leave him.

**17** Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and assembled at Shochoh, which *belongs* to Judah, and camped between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-Dammim. 2 And Saul and the men of Israel gathered together and camped at the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. 3 And the Philistines

took a stand on a hill on one side, and Israel took a stand on a hill on the other side, with a valley between them.

4 And a champion came out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. 5 And *he had* a bronze helmet on his head, and he *was* wearing a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of bronze. 6 And *he had* bronze shin guards on his legs, and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. 7 And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron. And one carrying a shield went before him.

8 And he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel and said to them, "Why have you come out to set *your* battle in array? *Am* I not a Philistine, and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants, but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you will be our servants and serve us." 10 And the Philistine said, "Today I defy the armies of Israel. Give me a man, so that we can fight together." 11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

12 Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah, whose name *was* Jesse. And *Jesse* had eight sons. And in the days of Saul he passed *for* an old man among men. 13 And the three oldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle; and the names of his three sons who went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shamhah. 14 And David *was* the youngest, and the three oldest followed Saul. 15 But David went back and

as king.

"Evil spirit" – or "injurious spirit" – 18:10; Jud 9:23; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Job 1:12; 2:6; Mark 5:11-13; 2 Cor 12:7. Evil spirits cannot do as they please. They need God's permission for their activities (even men know how to keep dangerous dogs on leashes or chains). It seems God sometimes sends evil spirits in judgment on men to punish them for their sin.

"Troubled" – a thing evil spirits delight to do (Job 2:7; Mark 5:1-5; 9:20-22; Luke 13:11,16). With Saul it seems the torment took the form of mental anguish.

**16:18** This was God's way of bringing David to the king's court and eventually into great popularity in Israel.

**16:20** Prov 18:16.

**16:21** Prov 22:29. "Armour bearer" – probably it was after David defeated Goliath that this took place.

**16:23** Good music can have good influences on the mind. Evil music (and there is much of

it in the world) has evil influences on those who listen to it.

**17:1** "Shochoh" – west of Bethlehem near the border between Israel and the Philistines.

**17:4** Num 13:32,33. "Six cubits and a span" – slightly less than three meters.

**17:5** "Five thousand shekels" – nearly 57 kilograms.

**17:7** "Six hundred shekels" – about 7 kilograms.

**17:8,9** In ancient days it sometimes happened that chosen representatives of opposing armies met in combat to decide the issue between the armies.

**17:10** Goliath was defying not only Israel but the God of Israel. But it seems only David understood this fully and took it to heart – vs 26,36,45.

**17:11** If the leader is afraid, what can be expected of his men?

**17:12** "Ephrathite" – the area around Bethlehem was called Ephratha (Mic 5:2).

**17:15** 16:11.

forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself for forty days.

17 And Jesse said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this parched *grain* and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to your brothers. 18 And take along these ten cheeses to the captain of *their* thousand, and see about the welfare of your brothers, and bring *some* token from them." 19 Now Saul and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took *the things* and went, just as Jesse had ordered him. And he came to the lines just as the army was going out to the fight and were shouting the war cry. 21 For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up the battle lines, army against army. 22 And David left his baggage in the hands of the baggage keeper, and ran in among the troops and came and greeted his brothers. 23 And as he talked with them, suddenly there came the champion, the Philistine of Gath, named Goliath, from the armies of the Philistines, and spoke those same words, and David heard *them*. 24 And when all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were very afraid.

25 And the men of Israel said, "Did you see that man who came up? He comes up to defy Israel. And it *so* happens *that* the man who kills him will be given great riches by the king. And *he* will give him his daughter, and make his father's household free in Israel."

26 And David spoke to the men who were standing near him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away this reproach from Israel? For who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

27 And the people answered him like this,

**17:17** "Ephah" – probably about one half bushel.

**17:20** Even in the exciting prospect of visiting the battlefield David did not forget his sheep. He was faithful in small matters before he was faithful in large matters (Luke 16:10).

**17:25** Saul was afraid to fight, but by making promises of great reward tried to find someone else willing to fight.

**17:26** "God" – David saw the main point right away. To him it was disgraceful that the people of the true and living God should cringe in fear from someone who did not know God. He here revealed one of the reasons why he was a man after God's own heart – 13:14.

**17:28** "Anger" – his language was very scornful, very unfair. Was jealousy at work

saying, "So it will be done for the man who kills him."

28 And his oldest brother Eliab was listening when he spoke to the men, and Eliab's anger burned against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the wickedness of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."

29 And David said, "What have I done now? Can't *I speak* a word?" 30 And he turned away from him toward another *man* and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him with the same words as before. 31 And when the words David spoke were overheard, they reported *them* to Saul; and he sent for him.

32 And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you *are only* a youth, and he *is* a warrior from his youth."

34 And David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went after it and attacked it, and rescued *the lamb* from its mouth. And when it rose against me, I caught *it* by its beard and struck it and killed it. 36 Your servant killed both the lion and the bear. And this uncircumcised Philistine will become like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 David also said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

38 And Saul put his tunic on David, and put a bronze helmet on his head and dressed him in a coat of mail. 39 And David fastened his sword over his tunic and tried to walk *around*, for he had not tested *it*. And David said to Saul, "I cannot go with

in Eliab? Compare Gen 37:3-11. He had been passed by and David, his younger brother, had been anointed (16:6,7,13).

**17:29-32** David did not allow ill-will and discouraging words from his brother to hinder his faith.

**17:32** 16:18; Deut 20:1-4.

**17:33** In any venture of faith there may be those who speak words of discouragement. What Saul did not realize was that David was trusting God for victory, not himself.

**17:34-37** Past experiences of God's help gave confidence that God would help him now.

**17:38,39** David's trust was in God. He did not need someone else's armor and weapon. He was willing, as we all should be, to go forward in the abilities God had given him rather than to try to imitate others with

these, for I have not tested *them*." And David took them off. 40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose for himself five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, in a pouch. And his sling *was* in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near to David, and the man who was carrying the shield *went* before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was *only* a youth, and ruddy and with a handsome appearance. 43 And the Philistine said to David, "*Am* I a dog, that you come to me with staves?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field."

45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 Today the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I will strike you down and take off your head, and today give the carcasses of the armies of the Philistines to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, so that the whole world may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 And all this assembly will know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear, for the battle *is* the LORD's and he will give you into our hands."

48 And it came about, when the Philistine came on up and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag and took from there a stone and slung *it*, and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead. And he fell on his face to the ground.

different abilities.

**17:40** David was not a small boy with a boy's sling. He had already killed fierce wild animals with his bare hands (vs 34,35), and the sling could be a deadly weapon of war (Jud 20:16; 2 Kings 3:25; 2 Chron 26:14). With such slings stones weighing up to 500 grams could be hurled at speeds up to 150 kilometers an hour.

**17:42** "Youth" – this is a translation of a Hebrew word that could mean a boy, or a grown-up young man. In v 55 David is called a "young man."

**17:43** "Cursed" – David well knew that Goliath's gods were powerless and he did not fear any curses uttered in their name.

**17:45** "Spear" – Goliath's trust was in his own strength and weapons. David's trust was in God, and that made all the difference. Against such a superior force Goliath had not the slightest chance of victory.

"Name of the LORD of hosts" – 2 Chron 14:11; 32:8; Ps 9:10; 20:7,8; 124:8; Prov 18:10.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But *there was* no sword in David's hand. 51 Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, and seized his sword and drew it out of its scabbard, and killed him and cut off his head with it.

And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. 52 And the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron. And the Philistines' wounded *men* fell down along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and to Ekron. 53 And the children of Israel returned from pursuing, the Philistines and plundered their tents. 54 And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent.

55 Now when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the captain of the host, "Abner, whose son *is* this young man?" And Abner said, "*As* your soul lives, O king, I do not know."

56 And the king said, "Find out whose son the young man *is*."

57 And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

58 And Saul said to him, "Whose son *are* you, young man?"

And David answered, "*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

**18** And it came about, when he had finished speaking with Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and

**17:46** "World may know" – this was David's great desire, the desire of all God's true servants. This fight between two men was to have far-reaching results.

**17:47** 14:6; 2 Chron 20:15; Ps 33:16,17; 34:2; 44:4-8; Zech 4:6; 1 Tim 6:12.

**17:48** "David ran quickly" – confident and eager for victory and the glory of God's name.

**17:51** Heb 11:34. The power of faith can equally well overcome other kinds of enemies – Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14; Jam 4:7.

**17:55-58** Saul knew David (16:18-23). But he had forgotten David's family background. Remember, he was much troubled in mind (16:14), and occupied with his own fears.

**18:1** "Jonathan" – 20:17; 2 Sam 1:26. Saul's oldest son was a great warrior himself and a man of faith (14:1-15). He recognized in David a kindred spirit and a man superior to himself (he had not dared to go against Goliath). He was filled with admiration for David.



Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 And Saul took him that day, and would no longer let him go home to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe he *had* on and gave it to David, and his tunic, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

5 And David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* conducted himself wisely. And Saul appointed him over the warriors, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6 And it so happened when David was returning from killing the Philistine, as they were coming, the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. 7 And the women responded to *each other* as they played, and said,

"Saul has slain his thousands,  
and David his tens of thousands."

8 And Saul became very angry, for the saying displeased him, and he said, "They have given credit to David *for* tens of thousands, and to me they have given credit *for only* thousands. And *what* more can he have but the kingdom?" 9 And Saul kept an eye on David from that day on.

10 And it so happened on the next day that the evil spirit from God came on Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. And David was playing *the harp* with his hand, as at other times, and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand. 11 And Saul threw the javelin, for he said *to himself*, "I will strike David to the wall *with it*." And David escaped from his

**18:3,4** Jonathan's love caused him to make a covenant (19:1; 20:8,13-16,41,42; 23:18); to give David prized possessions (v 4); to do anything possible to help him (20:4); to risk his own life for David (20:30-35; 23:16); and to willingly take second place to David (23:17,18). Jonathan was more than a great warrior – he was a true friend, absolutely loyal to the end. The friendship of these two men of God is an example of what true, sanctified friendship can be in God's service. And Jonathan's attitude to David is a picture of what ours should be for the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our love for Him should cause us to give everything we have to Him and to gladly do anything possible in His service. **18:5** God was training David for his future position as king. A person who is going to be in authority should first learn to be under authority.

"Wisely" – or "successfully" (as it could be translated) – vs 14,30; Gen 39:3,23; 2 Kings 18:7; 2 Chron 20:20; Ps 1:3.

**18:8,9** Saul adds to his other sins the destructive sin of envy. On envy see Prov 14:30; 27:4; Dan 6:3,4; Matt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5; Jam 3:16; Rom

presence twice.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and had departed from Saul. 13 Therefore Saul removed him from his *presence*, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. 14 And David conducted himself wisely in all his ways, and the LORD *was* with him. 15 Therefore, when Saul saw that he conducted himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

17 And Saul said to David, "See my elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you as *your* wife. Only *serve* me bravely, and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul said *to himself*, "Let not my hand be on him, but let the hand of the Philistines be on him."

18 And David said to Saul, "Who *am* I? And what *is* my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be a son-in-law of the king?" 19 But it came about at the time when Saul's daughter Merab should have been given to David, that she was given as a wife to Adriel the Meholathite.

20 And Saul's daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 21 And Saul said, "I will give her to him, so that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "Today you will become my son-in-law."

22 And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, "Speak with David secretly and say, 'Look, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you. So now become the king's son-in-law.'"

13:13,14.

**18:10** "Evil" – or "injurious."

"From God" – note at 16:14.

"Prophesied" – note at Gen 20:7. Evidently Saul was uttering words under the control of the evil spirit. This is a debased kind of prophesying which is common enough in the world.

**18:11** 19:10; 20:33. Since Saul was acting under the control of the evil spirit this was doubtless an attempt by Satan to thwart God's plan for David and the future of Israel. But God enabled David to escape.

**18:12** 16:13,14,18; 18:15,29.

**18:13** The ungodly always want to get rid of the godly by some means or other. Saul hoped David would be killed in battle (vs 17,21,25).

**18:14-16** Saul's plan resulted in the complete opposite of what he had hoped, for it resulted in even further success and popularity for David. Compare Ps 33:10,11; 37:12,13. Note at Gen 50:20.

**18:17** See Saul's promise at 17:23. He had not fulfilled it. But breaking his word was nothing to a man like Saul.

**18:18** Verse 23; 9:21. Unlike Saul David remained modest to the end (2 Sam

23 And Saul's servants spoke those words in the ears of David. And David said, "Does it seem a light *thing* to you to be a king's son-in-law, since I *am* a poor man and lightly esteemed?"

24 And Saul's servants told him, saying, "This is the way David spoke."

25 And Saul said, "You shall tell David this: 'The king does not want any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law. Before the days had expired, 27 David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, so that he could become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal as *his* wife.

28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Saul's daughter Michal loved him. 29 And Saul was even more afraid of David, and Saul became David's permanent enemy.

30 Then the leaders of the Philistines came out *to battle*, and after they came out, it happened *that* David conducted himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name *was* highly honoured.

**19** And Saul told his son Jonathan, and all his servants, that they should kill David. 2 But Saul's son Jonathan greatly delighted in David, and Jonathan told David, saying, "My father Saul is seeking to kill you. Now therefore, please watch out for yourself until morning, and stay in a secret *place* and hide yourself. 3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you *are*, and I will talk with my father about you. And I will tell you what I find out."

4 And Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul, and said to him, "May the king not sin

against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his actions toward you *have been* very good. 5 For he put his life in jeopardy and killed the Philistine, and the LORD accomplished a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw *it* and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?"

6 And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul gave *his* oath, "As the LORD lives, he will not be killed."

7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

8 And there was war again, and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and killed them in a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

9 And the evil spirit from the LORD was on Saul as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand, and David was playing *the harp* with *his* hand. 10 And Saul tried to strike David to the wall with the javelin, but he slipped away from Saul's presence, and *Saul* struck the javelin into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

11 And Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And David's wife Michal told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." 12 So Michal let David down through a window, and he went out and fled and escaped. 13 And Michal took an idol and laid it in the bed, and put a rug of goats' *hair* at its head, and covered it with a cloth.

14 And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He *is* sick."

15 And Saul *again* sent the messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me on the bed, so that I can kill him." 16 And when the messengers went in, they saw that *there was* an idol in the bed, with a rug of goats' *hair* at its head.

17 And Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me so, and sent my enemy away, so that

7:18).

**18:23** "Poor man" – it was the custom in Israel for the bridegroom to pay a dowry to the parents of the bride (Gen 34:12; Ex 22:16). Saul names the price in v 25, hoping for David's death.

**18:27** The Philistines were enemies of God's people and had no right to be in the land with Israel (Josh 1:4; 13:1,2; 23:4,5). Israel was not to treat the idolatrous nations of Canaan with any respect or pity, but rather to destroy them (Deut 7:16). See note at 15:2.

**18:30** "David conducted himself more wisely" – or "David met with more success."

**19:1,2** "Kill" – 18:10,11,25.

"Greatly delighted" – 18:1.

**19:6** Saul was quick to make oaths, but not to keep them (14:24,44). He was, like Reuben (Gen 49:4), unstable as water.

**19:9** "Evil" – or "injurious" – 16:14; 18:10. **19:10** 18:11.

**19:11** "Morning" – David wrote a whole psalm about this event – psalm 59. In it he claims God as his refuge and is able to praise God in faith.

**19:12** Saul hoped that by giving Michal to David he would be killed (18:25). Instead, she becomes a means of his escape. Note at 18:14-16.

**19:13** "Idol" – in Hebrew "teraphim." It is not recorded where Michal obtained this idol.

**19:14** Josh 2:4,5.

**19:17** Michal was as quick to lie as Saul to

he has escaped?"

And Michal answered Saul, "He told me, 'Let me go; why should I kill you?'"

18 So David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. 19 And it was told Saul, saying, "Look, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah." 20 And Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the group of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *there as* their leader, the Spirit of God came on the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. 21 And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. 22 Then he also went to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu, and asked and said, "Where *are* Samuel and David?" And *someone* said, "Look, *they are* at Naioth in Ramah."

23 And he went there, to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came on him also, and he went on, prophesying, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 And he stripped off *his* clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel, like *the others*, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

**20** And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my wickedness, and what *is* my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

2 And he said to him, "God forbid! You will not die. Look, my father will do nothing either great or small without telling me, and why should my father hide this thing from me? *It is* not *so*."

3 And David again solemnly swore, saying, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favour in your eyes, and he says, 'Don't let Jonathan know this, or he will be grieved.' But *as* surely *as* the

make oaths.

**19:18** 7:17.

**19:20** 10:5,6,10.

**19:23** Note at 10:10. He went to kill David and yet here he is prophesying. By this we can see that a certain kind of prophesying, even by the Spirit of God (as here), had nothing to do with the character or life style of the person who did it, and was no mark of spirituality. See also Num 24:2; John 11:49-51.

**19:24** "Samuel" – this is the last time we read of Samuel until his death in 25:1. After Saul became king he retired from administrative responsibilities to Ramah, but he went out on occasion to deliver God's message. It seems he lived his last years with a "company of prophets" (v 20), no doubt passing on to younger men the truth he himself had learned. Compare 2 Tim 2:2.

LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, *there is* but a step between me and death."

4 Then said Jonathan to David, "I will do for you whatever your soul desires."

5 And David said to Jonathan, "Look, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, so I can hide myself in the field until evening of the third *day*. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked *leave* from me so he could run to his city Bethlehem, for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' 7 If he speaks like this, '*It is* well', your servant will be safe. But if he becomes very angry, *then* be sure that he is set on evil. 8 Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant. For you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. However, if there is any iniquity in me, kill me yourself; for why should you bring me to your father?"

9 And Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew for a fact that my father was set on bringing evil on you, then would I not tell you *about* it?"

10 Then said David to Jonathan, "Who will tell me? Or what *if* your father answers you roughly?"

11 And Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." And both of them went out into the field.

12 And Jonathan said to David, "The LORD God of Israel *be witness!* When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, *or on* the third *day*, and see that *the situation is* good for David, then if I do not send *word* to you, and tell it to you, 13 the LORD *do harm* and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father *to do* you harm, then I will tell you *about* it and send you away, so *that* you may go in peace. And *may* the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. 14 And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I am still alive, so that I do not die, 15 but *also* you shall never cut off your kindness from my

"Night" – to enable His servants to escape, God can overpower any enemy and make him unable to do any harm. Notes at Gen 31:7; 50:20.

**20:1** The event recorded in 19:24 gave David the opportunity to escape to his friend.

**20:2** Jonathan's loyalty to his father made him try to think the best of him. In spite of what Saul had said to him (19:1), he could not believe that his father could have such evil intentions against David.

**20:5** "New moon" – Num 10:10 (note); 28:11-15. The new moon, the beginning of the month of the lunar calendar used by Israel, was a special festival time.

**20:6** Apparently once a year families came together to observe a new moon festival.

**20:8** "Covenant" – 18:3.

**20:13-15** Jonathan recognized that one day David would be king. See 23:16,17. It was

household; no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

16 So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, "May the LORD demand *an account* at the hand of David's enemies."

17 And Jonathan had David take an oath again, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow *is* the new moon, and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 And *when* you have stayed *here* three days, *then* you must go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself on the day of the incident, and remain by the stone Ezel. 20 And I will shoot three arrows to the side of *it*, as though I shot at a mark. 21 And, look, I will send a lad, *saying*, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I plainly say to the lad, 'See, the arrows *are* on this side of you; pick them up', then you come; for *there is* peace for you, and no harm, *as sure as* the LORD lives. 22 But if I say this to the young man: 'See, the arrows *are* beyond you', go your way, for the LORD is sending you away. 23 And *as for* the matter which you and I have spoken about, look, the LORD *is witness* between you and me forever."

24 So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. 25 And the king sat on his chair, as at other times, the chair by the wall. And Jonathan got up, and Abner sat down at Saul's side, but David's place was empty. 26 Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him. He *is* not clean, surely he *is* not clean." 27 And it happened on the next day, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why has not the son of Jesse come to eat, either yesterday or today?"

28 And Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked *leave* from me *to go* to Bethlehem. 29 And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has ordered me *to be there*. And now, if I have found favour in

your eyes, please let me go and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."

30 Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now send and bring him to me; for he shall surely die."

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" 33 And Saul hurled a javelin at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to kill David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food on the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had dishonoured him.

35 And it came about in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a small lad *was* with him. 36 And he said to his lad, "Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot." *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 And when the lad went to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, "*Is* not the arrow beyond you?" 38 And Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Hurry! Be quick! Don't stop!" And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came to his master. 39 But the lad did not know anything; only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40 And Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go, carry *them* to the city."

41 As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from the south side *of the place*, and prostrated himself to the ground and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another and wept together, but David's *grief* was greater.

42 And Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for both of us have sworn in the name of the LORD, *saying*, 'The LORD *is a witness* between me and you, and between my offspring and your

not uncommon in ancient times for kings come newly to the throne to kill all who could be rivals (1 Kings 15:29; 16:11; 2 Kings 10:7; 11:1).

**20:16** If the first covenant was one of friendship (v 42), this was one of allegiance to the future king.

**20:17** 18:1.

**20:23** "Spoken about" - vs 14-17.

**20:26** "Not clean" - Lev 7:20,21; 11:24,25, 39,40; Deut 23:10,11. Ceremonial uncleanness made a person ineligible to take part in a sacrificial feast. However, the uncleanness lasted for only a day, so when David

did not appear on the second day, Saul knew there was another reason for his absence.

**20:30-33** "Anger" - v 7. In his anger, Saul uses the most bitter language against his son, and is ready to kill him to satisfy his own jealousy. Uncontrolled jealousy is murderous - Prov 27:4.

**20:32** Envy and hatred do not need good reasons to kill. Compare Matt 27:22,23.

**20:36,37** Verses 20-22.

**20:41** "Bowed" - David showed honor to a true and loyal friend.

**20:42** "Departed" - this marks the start of a long period during which David was a

offspring forever.” And he arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

**21** Then David went to Nob to Ahimelech the priest, and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting with David, and said to him, “Why *are* you alone, and no one with you?”

2 And David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king gave me orders about a matter and said to me, ‘Let no one know anything of the matter about which I am sending you, and what I have commanded you.’ And I have directed *my* servants to such and such a place. 3 So now what do you have on hand? Give five *loaves* of bread into my hand, or whatever is there.”

4 And the priest answered David and said, “*There is* no ordinary bread at hand, but there is consecrated bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.”

5 And David answered the priest and said to him, “Certainly women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came away, and the vessels of the young men are holy. And *the bread is*, in a manner of *speaking*, ordinary, yes, even though it has been consecrated today in the vessel.” 6 So the priest gave him consecrated *bread*. For there was no bread there except the Showbread, that had been taken from the presence of the LORD, in order to put hot bread on the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a man *who was one* of Saul’s servants was there that day, detained before the LORD, and his name *was* Doeg. *He was* an Edomite, the

chief of Saul’s shepherds.

8 And David said to Ahimelech, “And is there not here a spear or a sword on hand? For I have not brought my sword or my weapons with me, because the king’s business required haste.”

9 And the priest said, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, look, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you wish to take that, take *it*, for *there is* none here except that.”

And David said, “*There is* none like that. Give it *to me*.”

10 And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

11 And the servants of Achish said to him, “*Is* not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another about him in dances, saying, ‘Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?’”

12 And David took these words to his heart, and was very afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13 And he changed his behaviour before them and pretended to be insane in their hands, and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spit run down on his beard.

14 Then Achish said to his servants, “Look, you see the man is mad. Why *then* have you brought him to me? 15 Do I have a lack of madmen, that you have brought this *fellow* to play the madman in my presence? Should this *fellow* come into my house?”

**22** So David left there and escaped to the cave Adullam. And when his brothers and

fugitive from Saul.

**21:1** Nob was a town of priests (22:19) very near Jerusalem.

**21:2** Why did David invent this story? There seems to be two possibilities. Perhaps his faith and courage failed him. He may have feared that if he told the truth Ahimelech would not help him but report him to Saul. Or it could be that David was trying to protect Ahimelech. He may have thought that Saul would spare him if he was not knowingly involved in David’s escape. In either case, this deception was both wrong and unnecessary. God does not need man’s tricks to fulfill His purposes, but people often seems to think otherwise. See notes at Gen 12:13; 27:18-26.

**21:4** Verse 6; Ex 25:30; Lev 24:5-9. This bread had been offered to God and so was only for the priests.

“Kept themselves from women” – that is, ceremonially clean (Ex 19:15; Lev 15:18).

**21:6** See Matt 12:3-7. There the Lord Jesus showed that compassion is more important than the letter of the ceremonial law.

**21:7** Doeg went and reported the matter to Saul (22:9,10). This became the occasion of David’s writing psalm 52. In that psalm he

reveals that his faith had not failed (Ps 52:8,9). **21:9** 17:54.

**21:10** “Gath” – one of the five major cities of the Philistines. Psalm 34 was written by David after his experience with Achish. Achish is called Abimelech in the title of psalm 34. Abimelech was probably a title of successive kings as Pharaoh was of Egypt’s kings. David, anointed to be king, is here in exile. Often it may appear that God leads His people in ways opposed to the fulfilling of His purposes, but all is part of His preparation. Consider the experiences of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37-50.

**21:12** “Afraid” – very brave men can be afraid in certain situations.

**21:13** This trick also was not necessary, but a man alone and afraid may act strangely on the spur of the moment. Later he acknowledged that his escape was God’s gracious answer to his prayer (Ps 34:4,6,17,19).

**22:1** “Adullam” – Gen 38:1; 2 Sam 23:13. This was situated in the hills southwest of Bethlehem. David spent considerable time in the area and may have written psalms 57 and 142 while there. See 24:3,4, and the titles of those psalms.



all his father's household heard *it*; they went down there to him. 2 And everyone *who was* in distress, and everyone who *was* in debt, and everyone *who was* discontented, gathered around him and he became their leader. And about four hundred men were with him.

3 And David went from there to Mizpeh in Moab, and said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come over *and be* with you, until I know what God is going to do for me." 4 And he brought them before the king of Moab, and they lived with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.

5 And the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not remain in the stronghold. Leave and go into the land of Judah." Then David departed and came into the forest of Hareth.

6 When Saul heard that David and the men who *were* with him had been discovered (now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing around him). 7 Then Saul said to his servants who were standing around him, "Listen now, you Benjamites! Is the son of Jesse giving each one of you fields and vineyards, *and* making you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, 8 so that all of you have conspired against me, and no one tells me that my son has made a treaty with the son of Jesse, and none of you is sorry for me, or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in ambush, as *it is* today?"

9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who had been appointed over the servants of Saul, answered and said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. 10 And he consulted the LORD for him, and gave him food and gave him

the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

11 Then the king sent *men* to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's household, the priests who *were* in Nob. And all of them came to the king. 12 And Saul said, "Listen now, you son of Ahitub."

And he answered, "Here I *am*, my lord."

13 And Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you gave him bread and a sword, and consulted God for him, so that he would rise up against me to lie in ambush, as *it is* today?"

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And among all your servants who *is as* faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and goes on your orders, and is honoured in your house? 15 Did I just begin consulting God for him today? Be it far from me. Let not the king impute anything to his servant *or* to the whole household of my father, for your servant knew nothing whatever of all this."

16 And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you, and all your father's household."

17 And the king said to the guardsmen who stood around him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not tell it to me." But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to attack the priests of the LORD.

18 And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and attack the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned and attacked the priests, and on that day killed eighty-five persons who wore a linen ephod. 19 And he struck Nob, the city of the priests, with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants, and oxen and donkeys and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

"Brothers" – compare 17:28. By now everyone recognized David's ability.

**22:2** "Discontented" – those unhappy with Saul's reign.

**22:3** "Moab" – David's ancestress, Ruth, was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4; 4:13,21,22).

**22:5** "Gad" – the first mention of an important prophet in David's time. See 2 Sam 24:11; 1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 29:25.

"Go" – God knew just where David should be to escape Saul, and informed him through Gad. This was in answer to David's prayer (Ps 142:6). See also Ps 56:4; 118:6; Rom 8:31.

**22:7** Saul appeals for loyalty on two grounds – tribal connection (Saul was from Benjamin, David from Judah), and worldly matters (property and power). Alas, caste and money are often still the chief considerations today, even in Christian circles. True servants of God should avoid these considerations like they would the plague.

**22:8** "Conspired" – Saul's disordered mind sees enemies behind every bush.

"Sorry for me" – another disagreeable

aspect of Saul's character – self-pity.

"As it is today" – totally false.

**22:9** "Doeg" – 21:1,7. In psalm 52 (written about Doeg) David says Doeg plotted destruction, loved harmful words, and practiced deceit. What Doeg said to Saul was true but not the whole truth, and it created a false impression. To practice deceit it is not always necessary to tell lies – hiding part of the truth can be just as effective. Both ways of deceiving are hateful to God. **22:14,15** This was true. Often those in authority prefer to believe deceptive words rather than the plain truth.

**22:16-19** Reveals Saul totally corrupted by power and envy.

**22:17** Saul's guards were right in their refusal to obey. When the choice is between obeying God or man, God must be obeyed. Compare Acts 4:19; 5:29.

**22:18** See 2:31.

**22:19** Saul was not willing to kill God's enemies (15:9), but God's priests were a different matter.

20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. 21 And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD's priests. 22 And David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have brought about *the death* of all the persons of your father's household. 23 You stay with me. Don't be afraid, for the one who is seeking my life is seeking your life, but you *will be* safe with me."

**23** Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and they are robbing the threshing floors." 2 Therefore David consulted the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."

3 And David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"

4 Then David consulted the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hands." 5 So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and struck them down with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. 6 And it so happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod in his hand.

7 And it was told Saul that David had gone to Keilah. And Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hands, for by entering a town that has gates and bars, he is closed in." 8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

9 And David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him, and he said to Abiathar the priest,

"Bring the ephod here." 10 Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, your servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on account of me. 11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hands? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech you, tell your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will come down."

12 Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hands of Saul?"

And the LORD said, "They will deliver *you* up."

13 Then David and his men, *who were* about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. And it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, and he decided not to go *there*.

14 And David stayed in the desert in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the desert of Ziph. And Saul looked for him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hands.

15 And David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life; and David *was* in the desert of Ziph in a wooded area. 16 And Saul's son Jonathan arose and went to David in the woods, and strengthened his hand in God. 17 And he said to him, "Do not be afraid, for the hand of my father Saul will not find you. And you will be king over Israel, and I will be next to you. And my father Saul also knows this." 18 And the two of them made a covenant before the LORD, and David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his house.

19 Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeath, saying, "Is not David hiding himself among us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* south of Jeshimon? 20 Now therefore, O king, come down whenever it pleases you to come down, and our part *will be* to deliver him into the king's hand."

21 And Saul said, "*May you be* blessed by the

**22:20** 23:6,9; 1 Kings 2:26,27.

**22:22** David's meaning may be that he made a mistake in not dealing with Doeg at the time. Or it may be he meant that his very appeal to Ahimelech for help resulted in this tragedy.

**23:1** "Keilah" – a town belonging to Israel near the Philistine border.

**23:2** "Consulted" – 2 Sam 5:19,23. David made a practice of finding God's will before acting. Observe that David, though persecuted by Saul, is concerned for others, and desires to help them, leaving his own situation in the hands of the Lord.

**23:4** When others were in doubt David sought confirmation of God's will.

**23:6** In Israel in those days it was possible to find God's will by means of the Urim and Thummin in the ephod. Note at Ex 28:30. In these days the Holy Spirit is willing to infallibly guide the earnest believer.

**23:7** "God" – God had departed from Saul (16:14), and the kingdom had been stripped from him (15:28). But he still vainly imagined God is working with him in his murderous designs! Another illustration of Jer 17:9. **23:9-12** Verse 6. An example of using the Urim and Thummin.

**23:13** "Six hundred" – 22:2. David's men were growing in number.

**23:14** 26:2; Ps 32:7.

**23:16,17** "Jonathan arose and went to David" – note at 18:3,4.

**23:18,19** 3; 20:12-17; 2 Sam 9:1; 21:7. **23:19,20** At this time David wrote psalm 54 by inspiration of God's Spirit, in which he revealed the character of his enemies (v 3), and declared his own trust in God (vs 4,7).

**23:21** "The LORD" – v 7. The men of Ziph would not be blessed by trying to destroy God's anointed! Saul had no right even to take God's name on his lips. Compare

LORD, for you have compassion on me. 22 Please go, make further preparations, and find out and take a look *at* his place, where his feet *take him* and who has seen him there, for I have been told *that* he is very cunning. 23 Therefore look and learn about all the lurking places where he hides himself, and come back to me with definite *information*, and I will go with you. And it will be, if he is in the land, that I will search him out through all the thousands of Judah."

24 And they arose and went to Ziph before Saul, but David and his men *were* in the desert of Maon, in the plain south of Jeshimon. 25 And Saul and his men went to look for *him*. And they told David, so he came down to the rock and stayed in the desert of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued David in the desert of Maon.

26 And Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain, and David was hurrying to get away for fear of Saul, for Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to take them. 27 But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land." 28 Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines. So they called that place Sela Hammahlekoth. 29 And David went up from there and stayed in strongholds at Engedi.

**24** And it happened, when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Look, David *is* in the desert of Engedi." 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to look for David and his men at the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

3 And he came to the sheepfolds on the way, where *there was* a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. And David and his men *were* sitting far back in the cave. 4 And David's men said to him, "See, *this is* the day about which the LORD said to you: 'Look, I will deliver your enemy into your hands, so that you can do to him as seems

Ps 50:16,17; Isa 29:13.

**23:26-29** God has many ways to protect His people. See Gen 37:22,26,27; 1 Kings 18:13; Esther 6:1,2; Jer 38:7-10; Dan 3:25,26; 6:21-23; Acts 12:5-11.

**23:28** "Sela Hammahlekoth" - means "rock of parting."

**24:3,4** "The LORD said to you" - there is no record of God saying this to David. God's way for David to attain the throne was not by murder and violence, and David knew it. His tender conscience was bothered even by the simple act of cutting off the hem of Saul's garment. God's purposes must be fulfilled in God's way, and men should learn to wait on God in faith. See Ps 57:2 (possibly written at this time).

**24:5** "David was conscience-stricken" -

good to you.'" Then David got up, and stealthily cut off the edge of Saul's robe.

5 And it so happened afterwards that David was conscience-stricken, because he had cut off the edge of Saul's *robe*. 6 And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he *is* the anointed of the LORD." 7 So David held back his men with these words and did not allow them to rise against Saul. Then Saul arose, left the cave and went on *his* way.

8 Afterwards David also stood up and went out of the cave, and cried out after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bent over with his face toward the ground and bowed down. 9 And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to men's words, saying, 'Look, David is seeking to harm you'? 10 Look, today your eyes have seen how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. And *some* told *me* to kill you, but I spared you, and said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the LORD's anointed.'

11 "Moreover, my father, look, yes, see the edge of your robe in my hand. Because in my cutting off the edge of your robe and not killing you, you can know and understand that *there is* no evil or rebellion in my hand, and that I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12 The LORD will judge between me and you, and the LORD will take vengeance for me on you. But my hand will not be against you. 13 As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Wickedness comes from the wicked', but my hand will not be against you.

14 "After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? After a dead dog, after a flea. 15 Therefore may the LORD be the judge, and judge between me and you, and see and plead my cause, and rescue me out of your hands."

16 And it came about, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "*Is* this your voice, my son David?" And Saul raised his

literally, "David's heart struck him."

**24:6** 26:11.

**24:8** David showed that he was willing to submit to Saul's authority and respect him as king.

**24:9** 22:13.

**24:11** "Father" - 18:27.

**24:12** "Judge" - v 15; Gen 31:53; Jud 11:27; Job 5:8. David was confident that God would work everything out according to perfect justice. Compare the behavior of the Lord Jesus (1 Pet 2:21-23).

"Vengeance" - Ex 21:23-25; Num 31:2; Ps 94:1.

**24:13** Compare Matt 7:16-20.

**24:16** Saul was mentally and emotionally unstable, an example of the man in Jam 1:8. This was a result of his sin and disobedience - as it so often is among

voice and wept. 17 And he said to David, "You *are* more righteous than I, for you have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. 18 And you have showed today how you have treated me well, for when the LORD delivered me into your hands, you did not kill me. 19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore the LORD reward you well for what you have done for me this day. 20 And now, look, I well know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. 21 Therefore now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house."

22 And David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

**25** And Samuel died, and all the Israelites assembled and mourned for him and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

2 And *there was* a man in Maon whose possessions *were* in Carmel, and the man *was* very rich. He had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats, and he sheared his sheep in Carmel. 3 Now the name of the man *was* Nabal, and the name of his wife *was* Abigail; and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful appearance. But the man *was* mean and evil in his dealings; and he *was a descendant* of the house of Caleb.

4 And David in the wilderness heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep. 5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel and approach Nabal and greet him in my name. 6 And you are to say this: 'Long life to you! Peace *be* to you, and peace be to your household and peace *be* to all that you have!

7 "And now I have heard that you have shearers. Now your shepherds *were* with us. All

human beings. His remorse here is an example of false repentance. Afterwards he again pursued David to kill him (26:1,2). **24:17** 26:21.

**24:20** 23:17.

**24:21** 20:14-17; 2 Sam 21:5-9.

**24:22** David had no confidence in Saul's seeming repentance.

**25:1** "Mourned" - they recognized Samuel as a great man and a great leader. Compare Gen 50:10; Num 20:29; Deut 34:8.

**25:2** 23:24.

**25:3** Nabal means "fool." See v 25, and note at Ps 14:1 where the same word is used in Hebrew. Very intelligent men can be fools in the Bible sense of the word. Abigail means "father of joy."

"Caleb" - it is sad that a descendant of the faithful Caleb (Num 13:30; 14:24; Josh 14:6-14) should be a fool. Alas, a man's

the time they were at Carmel we did them no harm, and nothing of theirs was missing. 8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let *our* young men find favour in your eyes, for we come on a good day. Please give to your servants, and to your son David, whatever you find at hand."

9 And when David's young men arrived, they spoke to Nabal all those words in the name of David, and waited.

10 And Nabal answered David's servants and said, "Who *is* David? And who *is* the son of Jesse? There are many servants today, each man breaking away from his master. 11 Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give *it* to men who *are* from I know not where?"

12 So David's young men turned around and went on their way again, and came and told him all these words. 13 And David said to his men, "Each one of you fasten on his sword." And each one of them fastened on his sword, and David also fastened on his sword. And about four hundred men followed David, and two hundred stayed with the baggage.

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he screamed at them. 15 But the men *were* very good to us, and we were not harmed, and while we were in the fields we did not miss anything, as long as we went about with them. 16 They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them, keeping the sheep. 17 Now therefore know *this* and consider what you should do. For something bad is being devised against our master and against his whole household, for he *is such* a wicked man that *no one* can speak to him."

18 Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves and two wineskins of wine and five sheep already dressed and five measures of roasted grain

sinful nature is inherited by his descendants (Gen 5:3; Ps 51:5), but not any spiritual qualities he may have attained by God's grace.

**25:7,8** David had not only refused to steal from Nabal's shepherds, he kept others from stealing from them. He thought Nabal would recognize this and reward it.

**25:10,11** Nabal showed he was indeed a fool.

**25:13** See vs 21,22. David had not taken vengeance on Saul, but now determined to personally avenge himself on Nabal - a thing he knew was contrary to God's Word. When even a godly man gives in to bad passions which arise from his sinful nature he is capable of all manner of sin and foolishness. Not one man on earth, except the Lord Jesus, was ever fully consistent all his days.

**25:18** Abigail realized that David's anger

and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and placed *them* on donkeys. 19 And she said to her servants, "Go on ahead of me. See, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

20 And it *so* happened, *as* she rode on the donkey, that she came down by a hidden place in the hill, and there appeared David and his men coming down opposite her, and she met them. 21 Now David had said, "It certainly has been useless for me to guard all that this *fellow* has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *belonged* to him. For he has repaid me evil for good. 22 May God do *harm* and more also to the enemies of David, if, of all who *belong* to him, I leave any male *alive* until morning light."

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey, and prostrated herself before David and bowed down to the ground, 24 and fell at his feet and said, "On me, my lord, *let this blame be on* me; and please let your maid servant speak in your hearing, and listen to the words of your maidservant. 25 Please, may my lord pay no attention to this wicked man Nabal, for he *is* just like his name. His name *is* Nabal, and folly *is* with him. But I, your maid servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent.

26 "Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives, since the LORD has kept you from bloodshed, and from taking vengeance for yourself with your own hand, may your enemies and those who seek to harm my lord, be like Nabal. 27 And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. 28 Please forgive the trespass of your maid servant, for the LORD will certainly make a sure house for my lord, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and no evil has been found in you *all* your days. 29 Yet a

man has risen to pursue you and to seek your life. But the soul of my lord will be bound up in the bundle of life with the LORD your God, but he will hurl away the souls of your enemies, *as from* the pocket of a sling. 30 And it will be, when the LORD does for my lord all the good that he has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, 31 that this will not become a grief to you or reason for a troubled heart to my lord, that you have shed blood needlessly or that my lord has taken vengeance for himself. And when the LORD deals well with my lord, then remember your maid servant."

32 And David said to Abigail, "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel who sent you today to meet me, 33 and may your discernment *be* blessed, and *may* you *be* blessed, who have kept me today from bloodshed and from taking vengeance for myself with my own hand. 34 For indeed, *as* the LORD God of Israel lives, who has kept me from harming you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, by morning light there certainly would not have been left to Nabal any male."

35 So David took from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have listened to your voice and have accepted you."

36 And Abigail came to Nabal and saw that he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, and he *was* very drunk. Therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until the morning light. 37 But it came about in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him and he became like a stone. 38 And it happened about ten days *later* that the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

39 And when David heard that Nabal was dead,

could have terrible results and set out to avert them.

**25:19** "Husband" – in his folly he would have forbidden her to go.

**25:21** Ps 109:5.

**25:22** Even David who loved justice could be moved to act unjustly, and resolved to kill many because of the insult of one. Oh, what is man, even the best of men.

**25:24** Prov 15:1.

**25:26** "Vengeance" – Lev 19:18; Num 31:2; Deut 32:35; Ps 94:1; Matt 5:39; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30.

**25:28** "A sure house" – a royal dynasty. Abigail had great perception.

"Battles of the LORD" – against the enemies of Israel.

"No evil" – to keep David from doing wrong was a chief aim of her coming.

**25:29** Ps 91:9,10; 121:7; Isa 25:4; Phil 1:6; 2 Tim 1:12.

**25:30** 13:14; 15:28.

**25:31** "Grief", "troubled heart" – to a good man with a tender conscience like David, this would have been the result.

**25:32** David recognized her as a messenger of God and praises the One who sent her. All men should be this quick to praise God when kept from doing wrong.

**25:33,34** David fully confesses his evil intention and immediately forsakes it – the mark of a spiritual man who wants God's best.

**25:38** "Struck" – 2:6; Gen 38:7,10; Lev 10:1,2; Num 16:31,35; Acts 5:4,5,10. God can take vengeance on wicked men directly. To slay Nabal He did not need David's sword – He has His own (Deut 32:41; Ps 7:12; Jer 12:12). God's judgment on Nabal may well have confirmed David in his view that God would deal with Saul also when the time came. See 26:10.

**25:39** Ps 7:15,16.



he said, "Blessed *be* the LORD who has pleaded my cause concerning the reproach at the hands of Nabal, and has kept his servant from evil. For the LORD has returned the wickedness of Nabal onto his own head." And David sent a message to Abigail about taking her as his wife.

40 And when the servants of David had come to Abigail to Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David sent us to you to take you as his wife."

41 And she arose, and bowed down with *her* face to the ground, and said, "See your maid servant. *She will be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." 42 And Abigail hurriedly got up and rode on a donkey, with her five maids who attended her, and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife. 43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them were his wives. 44 But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, who *was* from Gallim.

**26** And the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon?"

2 Then Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. 3 And Saul camped by the road at the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4 David therefore sent out spies, and found out that Saul had indeed arrived.

5 And David arose and came to the place where Saul was camping; and David saw the place where Saul and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army, were lying. And Saul was lying inside the lines, and the people were camped all around him. 6 Then David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, the brother to Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul at the camp?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with you."

7 So David and Abishai came to the people at night and saw that Saul lay sleeping inside the lines, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and

**25:42-44** Abigail became David's third wife, after Michal (18:27), and Ahinoam (27:3; 30:5). Later he married five other women. In this he was not a good example but a bad one (note at Gen 30:1). Eventually it brought great trouble on himself and his family. See 2 Samuel chapters 13 and 15 and 1 Kings 5-7.

**26:1** 23:19. See psalm 54, written when David heard that the Ziphites had betrayed him to Saul.

**26:2** Note at 24:16.

**26:6** "Hittite" – note at Gen 26:34,35. Uriah

Abner and the people lay all around him. 8 Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now therefore please let me strike him with the spear into the ground at once, and I will not *strike* him the second time."

9 And David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed and be innocent?" 10 David also said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day to die will come, or he will go down to the battle and perish. 11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please now take the spear that *is* at his head and the jug of water, and let us go."

12 So David took the spear and the jug of water from near Saul's head and they went away. And no man saw *it* or knew *it*, and no one woke up, for they *were* all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

13 Then David went over to the other side and stood on the top of a hill at a distance, *with* a wide space between them. 14 And David cried out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Abner! Will you not answer?"

Then Abner answered and said, "Who *are* you *who* calls to the king?"

15 And David said to Abner, "Are you not a *brave* man? Who *is* like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. 16 This thing you have done *is* not good. As the LORD lives, you *deserve* to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now look! Where *is* the king's spear, and the jug of water that *was* at his head?"

17 And Saul recognized David's voice, and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?"

And David said, "It *is* my voice, my lord, O king." 18 And he said, "Why does my lord pursue his servant like this? For what have I done? Or what evil *is* in my hands? 19 Now therefore please let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let him accept an offering. But *if it* is the children of men, *may* they *be* cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out today from living in the

also was a Hittite (2 Sam 11:3).

"Zeruiah" – an older sister of David.

**26:8,9** 24:4-7. David's first concern was not for his own safety, but to be blameless before God.

**26:10** 25:38.

**26:12** "All asleep" – God gave David further opportunity to prove his innocence to Saul.

**26:17** 24:16.

**26:19** "Driven me out" – men were trying to drive David from Israel, the land of the one true God, to another land where false gods were worshiped. Compare the alarm of the

inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' 20 Now therefore, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when someone hunts a partridge in the mountains."

21 Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no longer harm you, because my life *was* precious in your eyes today. Look, I have played the fool and have erred exceedingly."

22 And David answered and said, "See the king's spear! Let one of the young men come over and get it. 23 The LORD repays every man *according to* his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into *my* hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. 24 And, look, as your life was very valuable today in my eyes, so let my life be very valuable in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all trouble."

25 Then Saul said to David, "*May you be blessed*, my son David! You will both do great *things* and also prevail." So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

**27** And David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. *There is* nothing better for me than to escape quickly to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of seeking me any more in any territory of Israel. So I will escape out of his hands."

2 And David arose and crossed over with the six hundred men who *were* with him to Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath. 3 And David stayed with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, David with his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel, Nabal's wife. 4 And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath

tribes of Reuben and Gad in Josh 22:24-27. **26:21** There are many ways to confess one's sins, but only one way is acceptable to God - 15:24,30; Ex 9:27; Num 22:34; Josh 7:20; 2 Sam 12:13; 24:10; Matt 27:4; Luke 15:21. See 2 Chron 7:14; Prov 28:13; Isa 55:7.

"Return" - David did not trust him (24:22). He well knew Saul's instability.

**26:23** Ps 7:8; 18:25,26; 62:12; Rev 22:12.

**26:25** Even Saul had to acknowledge David's greatness. As far as we know, Saul and David never met again after this parting.

**27:1** David had no reason to trust Saul, but he had much reason to trust God more than he did. This was a failure of faith, and was contrary to what David had written and believed (Ps 54:4,7; 56:3,4; 57:2,3,7). Even men of great faith may sometimes waver under continual pressure and depressing circumstances. And do not all of us have reason to use words such as are found in Mark 9:24?

**27:2** Achish had once driven David away (21:10-15). Now he receives him, thinking

and he did not search any more for him.

5 And David said to Achish, "If I have now found favour in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, so that I can live there; for why should your servant live in the royal city with you?"

6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah to this day. 7 And the time that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

8 And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites and the Gezrites and the Amalekites, for in former times those *nations were* the inhabitants of the land as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. 9 And David attacked the land and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep and the oxen and the donkeys and the camels and the clothing, and turned back and came to Achish.

10 And Achish said, "Where have *you* made a raid today?"

And David said, "Against the south of Judah and against the south of the Jerahmeelites and against the south of the Kenites." 11 And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring *news* to Gath, saying, "Or they will tell about us, saying, 'This is the way David acted, and this *will be* his way all the time he lives in the country of the Philistines.'"

12 And Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel to utterly *abhor* him; therefore he will be my servant forever."

**28** And it came about in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "Know for certain that you will go out with to use him for his own purposes (v 12; 28:1).

**27:3** This flight of David to the land of the Philistines and his attaching himself to Achish were completely unnecessary, and involved David in further difficulties.

**27:5** David did not want to be under Achish's control. He well knew Achish would direct him to do things he would not wish to do.

**27:8** David and his men had raided common enemies of the Philistines and Israel.

"Amalekites" - Ex 17:16.

**27:9** Deut 7:16; Josh 6:21; 8:1,2,24. Note at Gen 6:7. In David's case he had a further reason for destroying those people (v 11).

**27:10** One failure (v 1) leads to another. Even though Achish was an idolatrous king of an enemy people, David was wrong to practice this deception.

**28:1** 27:2. David was in a very awkward situation, faced with fighting against God's people with their enemies. God in mercy delivered him from this (chapter 29).

me to the battle, you and your men."

2 And David said to Achish, "You will really find out what your servant can do."

And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you my bodyguard forever."

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put away mediums and spiritists from the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered together and came and camped in Shunem, and Saul gathered all Israel together and they camped in Gilboa. 5 And when Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart greatly trembled. 6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, not by dreams or by Urim or by prophets. 7 Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and consult her."

And his servants said to him, "Look, *there is* a woman at Endor who is a medium."

8 And Saul disguised himself and put on different clothes, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman at night, and he said, "Please use divination for me by a spirit, and bring up for me *the one* whom I name to you."

9 And the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off mediums and spiritists from the land. So why are you laying a snare for my life, to cause my death?"

10 And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment will come to you for this thing."

11 Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring

up for you?"

And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you *are* Saul."

13 And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. For what did you see?"

And the woman said to Saul, "I saw gods ascending out of the earth."

14 And he said to her, "What *is* his appearance *like*?"

And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he *is* wrapped in a cloak." And Saul knew that it *was* Samuel, and he bent over with *his* face toward the ground and bowed down.

15 And Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me, to bring me up?"

And Saul answered, "I am very distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me any more, either by prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have called you, so that you may tell me what I should do."

16 Then Samuel said, "Then why do you consult me, since the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? 17 And the LORD has done for him just as he spoke through me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom from your hand and given it to your neighbour, to David, 18 because you did not obey the voice of the LORD, or execute his fierce wrath on Amalek. Therefore the LORD has done this thing to you today. 19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel, along

**28:3** Strict instructions are given in the Old Testament against trying to have dealings with the realm of spirits, and sorcerers and sorceresses were to be put to death. Notes at Ex 22:18; Deut 18:10-14.

**28:4** Shunem was in the plain of Megiddo, or Mageddon, also called Jezreel. Mt Gilboa is a range of hills to the east of the plain.

**28:5** If Saul had kept close to the Lord he would not have been afraid of the Philistines (Heb 13:6).

**28:6** "Did not answer" – Saul had demonstrated many times that he was disobedient to God and wanted his own way. There comes a time when God will no longer answer such people. If we ignore God we have no right to expect Him to save us out of our troubles. See Ps 66:18; Prov 1:24-31; 15:29; Isa 1:15; 59:2; John 9:31; 1 John 3:21,22. This verse speaks of three ways God revealed His will in Old Testament days.

"Dreams" – Gen 15:12; 28:12; Num 12:6.

"Urim" – Ex 28:30.

"Prophets" – 15:16; Deut 18:18-22.

**28:7** Saul's disobedience was the reason God would not answer him. He shows his character by going further into disobedience.

This time it cost him his life. See 1 Chron 10:13,14.

**28:12** It is not said that the woman brought up Samuel, only that she saw him. Samuel's appearance was a great shock to her and made her realize that this was God's doing. It seems clear that the person who came up was indeed Samuel. It is said that she saw him, and the message he brought was later completely fulfilled. Spirit mediums can contact demons who impersonate human beings, but there is no good reason to think they can contact any spirit of a human being who has died.

**28:13** "gods" – this was the impression the event created in the mind of this superstitious woman. She thought some sort of divine beings were appearing.

**28:14** 15:27.

**28:15** For the righteous, the realm of the dead was a place of quietness and rest. Compare Job 3:17; etc.

**28:16** "Enemy" – Saul's behavior had made God his enemy. See also Isa 63:10; Jer 21:5; Lam 2:5.

**28:18** 15:20.

**28:19** "Will be with me" – in death's realm.

with you, into the hands of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons *will be* with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

20 Then immediately Saul fell prostrate on the ground, and was very afraid, because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had not eaten any bread all day and all night.

21 And the woman came to Saul, and saw that he was very troubled and said to him, "Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have listened to your words which you spoke to me. 22 So now please listen also to the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you, and eat, so that you can have strength when you go on your way."

23 But he refused and said, "I will not eat." But his servants, together with the woman, pressed him, and he listened to their voice. So he arose from the ground and sat on the bed.

24 And the woman had a fat calf in the house, and she hurriedly killed it, and took flour and kneaded *it* and baked unleavened bread with it. 25 And she brought *it* to Saul and to his servants, and they ate. Then they got up and went away that night.

**29** Now the Philistines gathered all their armies together at Aphek, and the Israelites camped by a spring which *is* in Jezreel. 2 And the lords of the Philistines marched on, by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men marched on in the rear with Achish.

3 Then said the commanders of the Philistines, "What *are* these Hebrews *doing here*?"

And Achish said to the Philistine commanders, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or *indeed* these years? And I have found no fault in him since he deserted *to me* to this day."

4 But the Philistine commanders were angry with him, and the Philistine commanders said to him, "Make this fellow go back, so that he will return to his place which you have assigned him, and do not let him go down with us to fight. *Otherwise* in the battle he may become our enemy. For with what would he regain his master's favour, *if* not with the heads of these men? 5 *Is* this not David, of whom

they sang to one another in dances, saying, 'Saul killed his thousands, and David his ten of thousands?'"

6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "As the LORD lives, you have certainly been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army *has been* good in my sight, for I have not found evil in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. However, you are not acceptable to the lords. 7 Therefore return now, and go in peace, so that you do not displease the Philistine lords."

8 And David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you to this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

9 And Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you *are* good in my sight, like an angel of God. However, the Philistine commanders have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' 10 So now rise up early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you, and leave as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light."

11 So David and his men rose up early in the morning to leave *and* to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

**30** And it came about when David and his men had come to Ziklag on the third day, *they saw* that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and had attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, 2 and had taken captive the women who *had been* in it. They did not kill any, either great or small, but carried *them* off and went on their way.

3 So David and his men came to the city and saw *that it had been* burned with fire, and *that* their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. 4 Then David and the people who *were* with him raised their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail the wife of Nabal from Carmel, had been taken captive. 6 And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of every one of the people was grieved, each man for his sons and for his daughters. But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

**29:1-7** Note at 28:1. This was God's way of saving David from the sin of fighting against God's people.

**29:5** 18:7; 21:11.

**29:8** David kept up his pretense of loyalty to Achish. No doubt inwardly he was rejoicing in this escape from going into battle against Israel.

**30:1** "Amalekites" – 15:2,7; 27:8.

**30:6** "Spoke of stoning him" – this is an indication of the fickleness and unspirituality of some of the people who gathered around David. Compare Ex 17:4; Num 14:5,10; John 8:59.

"Encouraged himself" or "found strength" – Ps 18:1,2; 27:1; 29:11; 37:39; 46:1.

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod there to David. 8 And David consulted the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue after this troop? Will I overtake them?"

And he answered him, "Pursue, for you will certainly overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*."

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who *were* with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed, 10 but David continued to pursue, he and four hundred men. But two hundred, who were so weary that they could not cross the brook Besor, stayed behind.

11 And they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he ate, and they gave him water to drink, 12 and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit revived in him, for he had not eaten bread or drunk *any* water for three days and three nights.

13 And David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where *are* you from?"

And he said, "I *am* a young man from Egypt, a servant of an Amalekite. And my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. 14 We made a raid on the south of the Kerethites and on *the* territory which *belongs* to Judah and on the south of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire."

15 And David said to him, "Can you take me down to that troop?"

And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me, or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to that troop."

16 And when he had brought him down, there *they were* spread out all over the ground, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great plunder that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and out of the land of Judah. 17 And David struck them down from twilight to the evening of the next day, and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. 18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. 19 And there was nothing of theirs missing, either small or great, either sons or daughters, or plunder, or anything that they had

taken for themselves. David recovered all. 20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drove ahead of the *other* livestock, and said, "This *is* David's plunder."

21 And David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they had stay at the brook Besor. And they went out to meet David and to meet the people who *were* with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. 22 Then all the wicked men and evil scoundrels among those who had gone with David, answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them *any* of the plunder that we have recovered, except to each man his wife and his children, so that they can lead *them* away and leave."

23 Then said David, "My brethren, you must not do so with what has been given us by the LORD, who has preserved us and delivered the troop that came against us into our hands. 24 And who will listen to you in this matter? But the portion of the one who stayed with the baggage *will be* the same as the portion of the one who went down to the battle. They shall share alike." 25 And *so* it was from that day on. He made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

26 And when David came to Ziklag, he sent *some* of the plunder to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Look, a present for you from the plunder from the enemies of the LORD."

27 *He sent to those who were* in Bethel, and to *those who were* in south Ramoth, and to *those who were* in Jattir, 28 and to *those who were* in Aroer, and to *those who were* in Siphmoth, and to *those who were* in Eshtemoa, 29 and to *those who were* in Rachal, and to *those who were* in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *those who were* in the cities of the Kenites, 30 and to *those who were* in Hormah, and to *those who were* in Korashan, and to those who were in Athach, 31 and to *those who were* in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men had gone about.

**31** Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines closely pursued Saul and his

**30:7,8** 23:2,4,9.

**30:18-20** This was in accordance with God's good promise in v 8. When believers lose ground in the spiritual life, by God's grace it is possible for them to regain it (Ps 51:12; Isa 57:17-19; Jer 30:17; Joel 2:25; Gal 6:1; Rev 2:4,5). Actually David gained more than he had before; he took all that had belonged to the Amalekites.

**30:22** "Evil scoundrels" – v 6; 22:2. Every

leader has to beware of such people trying to join his ranks.

**30:24** Num 31:25-27; Josh 22:8. Not every person could be on the front line, but every one had a task that deserved reward when faithfully done. This is true now with believers.

**30:26** An unselfish, gracious, and wise thing to do.

**31:1-13** 2 Sam 1:6-10; 1 Chron 10:1-12.

**31:2** "Saul's sons" – one son, Ish Bosheth,



sons, and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Melchishua, Saul's sons. 3 And the battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was badly wounded by the archers.

4 Then Saul said to his armour bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, or these uncircumcised *men* will come and pierce me through and abuse me." But his armour bearer would not, for he was very afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. 5 And when his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. 6 So Saul and his three sons and his armour bearer and all his men died together that same day.

7 And when the men of Israel who *were* on the other side of the valley, and *those* who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead,

survived and became king for a little while (2 Sam 2:8,9).

**31:4** "Uncircumcised" – 14:6.

**31:6** "All his men" – Saul's close associates in the kingdom.

**31:9** "Idols" – they did not realize that their victory was a result of God's judgment on

they abandoned the cities and fled. And the Philistines came and stayed in them.

8 And it came about the next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 And they cut off his head and stripped off his armour, and sent *word* into the land of the Philistines all around, to proclaim *it* in the temple of their idols and among the people. 10 And they put his armour in the temple of Ashtaroth and fastened his body to the wall of Beth-Shan.

11 And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the valiant men arose and travelled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-Shan, and came to Jabesh and burned them there. 13 And they took their bones and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

Israel, and so they ignorantly attributed it to their gods. Compare Jud 16:23,24.

**31:10** "Ashtaroth" – note at 1 Kings 11:5.

**31:11-13** They remembered how Saul had delivered them (11:1-13), and showed their gratitude in this way.

# 2 SAMUEL

## Author and date:

See the introduction to 1 Samuel.

## Themes:

David's reign over Judah and Israel, its success and glory; God's covenant with David; David's sin and punishment.

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**1** Now it came about after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, that David stayed two days in Ziklag. **2** On the third day it happened that a man appeared *who* had come from the camp of Saul with his clothes torn and dust on his head. And it was like this: when he came to David, he dropped to the ground and prostrated himself.

**3** And David said to him, "Where are you coming from?"

And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."

**4** And David said to him, "How did things go? Please tell me."

And he answered, "The people fled from the battle, and also many of the people fell and are dead, and also Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

**5** And David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

**6** And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened *to be* on Mount Gilboa, and saw Saul leaning on his spear. And, lo *and behold*, the chariots and horsemen followed him closely. **7** And when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I *am*.'

**8** "And he said to me, 'Who *are* you?'

"And I answered him, 'I *am* an Amalekite.'

**9** "And he said to me, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for agony has seized me, because my life *is* still wholly in me.'

**10** "So I stood over him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that *was* on his head and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."

**11** Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, as *did* all the men who *were* with him.

**12** And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening, for Saul and for his son Jonathan and for

the LORD's people and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

**13** And David said to the young man who told him, "Where *are* you from?"

And he answered, "I *am* the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite."

**14** And David said to him, "Why were you not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?"

**15** And David called one of the young men and said, "Go near *and* attack him." And he struck him so that he died. **16** And David said to him, "Your blood *be* on your *own* head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.'"

**17** And David mourned with this lamentation over Saul and over his son Jonathan **18** (also he instructed them to teach the children of Judah *this song of the bow*. Look, *it is* written in the book of Jasher):

**19** "The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places.

How the mighty have fallen!

**20** Tell *it* not in Gath!

Proclaim *it* not in the streets of Ashkelon!

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,

lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

**21** "You mountains of Gilboa, *may there be* no dew or rain on you, or fields *yielding* offerings; for there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

**22** From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,

**1:1** "Death of Saul" – 1 Sam 31:6.

"Ziklag" – 1 Sam 30:1,26.

**1:2** 13:19; 15:32; 1 Sam 4:12.

**1:6-10** This man fabricated this story, hoping, it seems, to gain David's favor. He thought David would reward him if he presented himself as Saul's executioner. Compare 1 Sam 31:1-7; 1 Chron 10:1-12.

**1:10** "Crown" – he thought, no doubt, David would be exceptionally pleased with this.

**1:11** 3:31; 13:30,31; Gen 37:34; Job 2:12.

**1:12** David did not gloat at his enemy's death. Compare Prov 24:17,18. The sincerity of his grief can be seen in the poetical lament which follows (vs 19-27). Saul's death freed David from his troubles, but David well knew that there are far more important matters than being freed from personal difficulties and dangers.

**1:14** 1 Sam 24:6; 26:9,11,16. To David

the office of king in Israel was a sacred appointment from God, and only God should remove the king He had appointed.

**1:16** "On your own head" – Lev 20:9; Deut 22:30; Josh 2:19; 1 Kings 2:37; Ezek 18:13; 33:4,5; Matt 27:24,25; Acts 18:6; 20:26.

**1:17** "Lamentation" – Jer 7:29; Ezek 19:1,14; 26:17; 27:2,32; 28:12; 32:2. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, or in disasters which He must justly send, and He sometimes inspired His servants to lament. See notes at Gen 6:6,7; Jer 4:19-26; 48:36-39; Luke 19:41-44.

**1:18** "Jasher" – Josh 10:13.

**1:19** "Beauty" – this refers to God's appointed leaders of Israel.

**1:20** 1 Sam 31:8-10. David is here concerned with the glory of the true God.

**1:22** 1 Sam 18:7.

and the sword of Saul did not return empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan *were* loved and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.

They were swifter than eagles; they were stronger than lions.

24 "You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with fine things, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

25 "How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle!  
O Jonathan, *you were* slain on your high places.

26 "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan!  
Very pleasant have you been to me.  
Your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women.

27 "How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

**2** And it came about after this that David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?"

And the LORD said to him, "Go up."

And David said, "Where shall I go up?"

And he said, "To Hebron."

2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, Nabal's wife, from Carmel. 3 And David took along his men who *were* with him, each man with his household; and

**1:23** "Pleasant" – true in full measure of Jonathan, in some measure of Saul. Saul's behavior toward his own people would not have been the same as it was toward David whom he considered his chief rival.

**1:26** 1 Sam 18:1-4. Jonathan's pure and holy friendship for David caused him to exalt David and deny himself the opportunity to be king (23:15-18). This is what struck David as being so exceptional, so wonderful.

**2:1** "Inquired" – this was always David's practice – 1 Sam 23:2,4,9-12; Ps 5:8; 25:4,5; 27:11; 31:3; etc. This is one principal reason he met with such success.

"Hebron" – an important city about 30 kilometers south of Jerusalem.

**2:3** 1 Sam 27:2,3.

**2:4** "King" – 1 Sam 16:13.

"Jabesh-Gilead" – 31:11-13.

**2:5-7** David was trying to unite the whole country behind him, beginning with the people of Jabesh who had been strong supporters of Saul.

they lived in the towns of Hebron. 4 And the men of Judah came and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying *that* the men of Jabesh-Gilead *were the ones* who buried Saul.

5 And David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-Gilead and said to them, "*May* you be blessed by the LORD, because you have showed this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him. 6 And now the LORD show kindness and faithfulness to you. And I too will repay you for this kindness, because you have done this thing. 7 Therefore now let your hands be strong and be valiant, for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

8 But Abner the son of Ner, the commander of Saul's army, took Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim, 9 and made him king over Gilead and over the Ashurites and over Jezreel and over Ephraim and over Benjamin and over all Israel.

10 Saul's son Ish-bosheth *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. 11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out, and they *all* met by the pool of Gibeon. And they sat down, the one *group* on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

14 And Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now get up and have a contest in front of us." And Joab said, "Let them get up."

15 Then they got up and went over by count,

**2:8,9** Abner was Saul's close relative – 1 Sam 14:50,51. We are not told here that Abner sought God's will in this. David was God's man to be king of all Israel and Abner knew it – 3:9,10. It seems Abner was playing power-politics, and putting family connections ahead of God's will. This caused trouble then, and it will cause trouble now.

"Ashurites" (v 9) – or "Asher."

**2:11** 5:5.

**2:12** Mahanaim was east of the Jordan river, Gibeon was west of the river in the territory of Benjamin.

**2:13** Joab was David's nephew (1 Chron 2:13-16). He was a very capable general of David's army, but a hard and bloodthirsty man (3:27; 18:14; 20:9,10).

**2:14** This suggestion perhaps meant they should try to settle their differences by letting representatives of each side fight. Compare 1 Sam 17:8-10.

**2:15,16** The fight between these representatives resulted in the death of all of them,

twelve from Benjamin, which *belonged* to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. 16 And each of them took hold of his opponent's head, and *thrust* his sword into his opponent's side. So they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Helkath Hazzurim. It *is* in Gibeon.

17 And there was a very severe battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by the servants of David.

18 And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel *was as* light on *his* feet as a wild gazelle. 19 And Asahel pursued Abner, and did not turn to the right or to the left from following Abner. 20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, "*Are you Asahel?*"

And he answered, "*I am.*"

21 And Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right or to your left, and seize one of the young men and take his armour." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him.

22 And once more Abner said to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? Then how could I hold up my face to your brother Joab?"

23 However he refused to turn aside, so Abner struck him in the stomach with the butt end of the spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell down there and died in the same place. And it came about *that* everyone who came to the place where Asahel fell and died stood still.

24 Joab and Abishai also pursued Abner, and the sun went down when they came to the hill of Ammah, that *lies* before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. 25 And the children of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became one band and stood on the top of a hill.

26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said, "Will the sword devour forever? Don't you know that it will result in bitterness in the end? How long will it

be then, before you order the people to return from following their brethren?"

27 And Joab said, "*As* God lives, unless you had spoken, surely then in the morning each one of the people would have gone up from following his brother."

28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still and did not pursue Israel any more or fight any more.

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and crossed the Jordan and went through the whole of Bithron and came to Mahanaim.

30 And Joab returned from following Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, nineteen men of David's servants and Asahel were missing. 31 But the servants of David had struck down *many* of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and seventy men died. 32 And they took up Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father, which *was in* Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and came to Hebron at break of day.

**3** Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David, but David became stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.

2 And sons were born to David in Hebron, and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam from Jezreel; 3 and his second, Kileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal, from Carmel; and the third, Absalom, the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur; 4 and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5 and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

6 And it came about, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul. 7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name

and so nothing was settled between the two factions.

"Helkath Hazzurim" – this means "Field of daggers" or "Field of hostilities."

**2:17** "Battle" – between the two armies.

**2:18** "Zeruiah" – she was an older sister of David.

**2:21-23** Abner knew that further trouble would result if he killed Asahel. In fact it resulted in Abner's own death (3:27).

**2:26** Abner was trying to avert civil war between the tribes. He was a more peaceable man than Joab. It was he who suggested the representative combat to settle their differences (v 14), and he who later made overtures of peace to David (3:12). But his action in vs 8,9 was the real source of this trouble.

**2:29** "The plain" – here means the Jordan

valley, the Arabah.

"Bithron" – the meaning of this Hebrew word is uncertain. It may possibly mean "morning" or "ravine."

**3:1** This was a sad and unnecessary war brought about by personal rivalries and a desire to cling to power on the part of the family of Saul.

**3:2-5** Polygamy is not God's instructions for men. See note at Gen 30:1. Of David's six sons born in Hebron, none was outstanding, and three at least, Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah, were self-seeking, scheming men who died in sad circumstances (chapters 13-18; 1 Kings chapters 1 and 2).

**3:7** Abner denied this accusation in the next verse, but it could have been true. Taking a king's concubine was, in the eyes of the people, practically the equivalent of taking



was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. And *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

8 Then Abner was very angry at the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, "*Am* I a dog's head, who against Judah am showing kindness today to the house of your father Saul, to his brethren and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David, that you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman? 9 So may God do *harm* to Abner, and more also, unless I do for David just as the LORD has sworn to him, 10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba." 11 And he could not answer Abner another word, because he was afraid of him.

12 And Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, "Whose land *is* this? *I* say make your treaty with me, and see *that* my hand *will be* with you, to bring all Israel over to you."

13 And *David* said, "Good! I will make a treaty with you. But one thing I require of you, that is, you will not see my face unless you first bring Saul's daughter Michal, when you come to see my face."

14 And David sent messengers to Saul's son Ish-bosheth, saying, "Deliver my wife Michal *to me*, whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines."

15 And Ish-bosheth sent *men* and took her from *her* husband, from Phaltiel the son of Laish. 16 And her husband went along with her, weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go, return." And he returned.

17 And Abner spoke with the elders of Israel, saying, "In times past you were seeking for David *to be* king over you. 18 Now then do *it*. For the LORD has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies.'"

19 And Abner also spoke in the ears of *the people of* Benjamin, and Abner also went to Hebron

to speak in the ears of David all that seemed good to Israel and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin. 20 So Abner came to David at Hebron, and twenty men *came* with him. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who *were* with him. 21 And Abner said to David, "I will arise and go and gather all Israel to my lord the king, so that they may make a treaty with you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires." And David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

22 And just then the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in great plunder with them. But Abner *was* not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. 23 When Joab and all the army that *was* with him had come, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has sent him away, and he has gone in peace."

24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? See, Abner came to you! Why have you sent him away? And he is already gone! 25 You know Abner the son of Ner. He came to deceive you and to find out your going out and your coming in, and to learn all that you are doing."

26 And when Joab came away from David, he sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know *this*. 27 And when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly and stabbed him there in the stomach, so that he died, because of the blood of his brother Asahel.

28 And afterwards, when David heard *this*, he said, "Before the LORD I and my kingdom *are* forever innocent of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. 29 May it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house, and may the house of Joab never fail to have someone who has a discharge or who is a leper or who leans on a cane or who falls by the sword or who lacks bread."

30 So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31 And David said to Joab and to all the people

his throne (16:20-22; 1 Kings 2:22). And Abner had been strengthening his own position (v 6).

**3:9,10** 1 Sam 15:28; 23:16,17. Since Abner knew this he had no business making Ish-Bosheth king (2:8,9). Ish-Bosheth was a weak man, Abner the real power behind him.

**3:10** "Dan to Beersheba" – the most northern town in the land to the most southern town.

**3:12** Did Abner think the land belonged to the two of them? Where did this leave God in Abner's thinking? But see Lev 25:23; Ex 19:5; Ps 24:1.

**3:13,14** 1 Sam 18:20,25,27; 25:44.

**3:17** Ish-Bosheth had little support in Israel except for the tribe of Benjamin and the

people of Gilead.

**3:19** Abner knew that the tribe of Benjamin could be the greatest stumbling-block to an agreement with David.

**3:22** All went smoothly and peaceably until Joab arrived.

**3:25** This was a completely false charge.

**3:27** 2:23; 20:9,10; 1 Kings 2:5. Joab had no right whatever to take personal vengeance (Lev 19:18; Num 31:2). Compare Prov 20:22; 24:29; Rom 12:17,19.

**3:28** David did not know what Joab intended to do (v 26).

**3:29** 1 Kings 2:31-33.

"A leper" – see note at Lev 13:2.

**3:31** 1:11.

who were with him, "Tear your clothes, and tie on sackcloth and mourn in front of Abner." And king David *himself* followed the bier. 32 And they buried Abner in Hebron, and the king raised his voice and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

33 And the king lamented over Abner and said,

"Should Abner have died as a fool dies?

34 Your hands *were* not bound,  
nor your feet put into fetters.

You fell as a man falls before wicked men."

And again all the people wept over him.

35 And when all the people came to have David eat food while it was still day, David took an oath, saying, "May God do *harm* to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else until the sun sets."

36 And all the people took note *of it*, and it pleased them, just as whatever the king did pleased all the people. 37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not *the idea* of the king to kill Abner the son of Ner.

38 And the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen today in Israel? 39 And today I *am* weak, even though the anointed king, and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, *are* too hard for me. The LORD will repay the evildoer in accordance with his wickedness."

**4** And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became weak, and all the Israelites were troubled. 2 And Saul's son had two men *who were* captains of bands. The name of one *was* Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab. *They were* the sons of Rimmon, a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin (for Beeroth also was reckoned *part* of Benjamin. 3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and have been staying there until this day).

4 And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *who was* lame in *his* feet. He was five years old when the

news came from Jezreel about Saul and Jonathan, and his nurse picked him up and fled; and it so happened that as she hurried to get away, he fell and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth.

5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went and in the heat of the day arrived at the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. 6 And they came there into the middle of the house, *as if* to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and his brother Baanah escaped. 7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedroom, and they struck him and killed him and beheaded him, and took his head and travelled through the plain all night. 8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, "See the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul your enemy who sought your life. And the LORD has taken vengeance on Saul and on his offspring, for my lord the king."

9 And David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of all adversity, 10 when someone told me, saying, 'Look, Saul is dead', thinking he had brought good news, I took hold of him and killed him in Ziklag. He *thought* that I would give him a reward for his news. 11 When wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed, shall I not much more *certainly* now require his blood from your hand and take you away from the earth?"

12 And David gave an order to his young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and their feet, and hung *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried *it* in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

**5** Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Look, we *are* your bone and your flesh. 2 Also in time past, when Saul

**3:32** In spite of living in violent times and frequently engaging in warfare, David had a tender heart, like God's (1 Sam 13:14; Ps 35:11-14).

**3:33** 1:17.

**3:37** One reason for David's public display of sorrow was to convince them of this.

**3:39** "Too hard" – David admits his weakness to deal with Joab and Abishai as he should have done. David should have judged Joab's crime and removed him from any position of leadership, difficult as that might have been to accomplish. Because he did not do so, others later lost their lives at Joab's murderous hand.

"Repay" – v 29. David, feeling his weakness, left it to God to deal with Joab.

**4:1** "Troubled" – they had lost Abner, their

one strong leader.

**4:4** Mephibosheth was next in line in the house of Saul for the throne of Israel. David later dealt very kindly with him (9:1-13).

**4:8** They actually thought David would be pleased with their murder of Ish-Bosheth, and reward them. They claimed God's approval upon their deed, though they were not concerned for God's interests. Some people who pursue their own ends still like to make a show of piety by bringing God's name into their talk.

**4:9,10** 1:2-16.

**4:11,12** Treachery and murder received their just reward.

**5:1** "The tribes" – that is, leaders who represented all the tribes (v 3).

**5:2** 1 Sam 13:13,14; 16:1,13; 18:5,13,

was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought *them* in. And the LORD said to you, "You will shepherd my people Israel and you will be a ruler over Israel."

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem to the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land. They spoke to David, saying, "You will not come in here, for the blind and the lame will turn you away," thinking, "David cannot get in here." 7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.

8 And David said on that day, "Anyone who would strike down the Jebusites, and those 'lame' and the 'blind', *whom* David's soul loathes, should go up by the water channel." Therefore they said, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

9 So David lived in the fortress, and called it the city of David. And David built all around from Millo and inward. 10 And David went on to become great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him.

11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees and carpenters and masons; and they built David a house. 12 And

16,30; 23:17; 25:26-31. In Old Testament times the term "shepherd" was applied not only to religious leaders, but frequently to civil rulers, the kings (Ps 78:70-72; Isa 44:28; Jer 2:8; Ezek 34:1-4). **5:3** 2:4; 1 Sam 16:13.

**5:4** "Thirty" – Gen 41:46; Luke 3:23. All of David's previous life with its trials, troubles, and tribulations, its victories and successes, was God's preparation for the throne.

**5:6-10** 1 Chron 11:4-9.

**5:6** Jerusalem was more centrally located in the land than Hebron, and on the border between Judah and Benjamin, and so was the ideal place for David's capital city (v 9). It was an ancient city (Gen 14:16) that had been briefly taken at the time of Joshua, but Israel had not been able to keep it in their possession (Jud 1:8,21; Josh 15:63). Jerusalem was easy to defend because it was on high ground surrounded on three sides by deep valleys. So the Jebusites thought they could taunt David.

**5:8** 1 Chron 11:6.

**5:10** "LORD God of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"With him" – 3:1; 7:9; Gen 37:2,21,23; Josh 1:5; Ps 18:39; 46:7,11; Matt 1:23.

**5:11-25** 1 Chron 14:1-16.

David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

13 And David took *for himself* more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David. 14 And these *are* the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammuah and Shobab and Nathan and Solomon 15 and Ibhar and Elishua and Nepheg and Japhia 16 and Elishama and Eliada and Eliphalet.

17 But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to search for David. And David heard *of it*, and went down to the stronghold. 18 And the Philistines came and spread out in the valley of Rephaim. 19 And David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go up, for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into your hands."

20 And David came to Baal-Perazim and David defeated them there, and said, "The LORD has broken out against my enemies before me, like waters break out." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-Perazim. 21 And they left their idols there, and David and his men burned them.

22 And the Philistines came up again and spread out in the valley of Rephaim. 23 And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, "You shall not go up, *but* circle around behind them, and come on them opposite the mulberry trees. 24 And it *is* to be *like this*: when you hear the sound of marching in the

**5:11** "Hiram" – 1 Kings 5:1-18; 2 Chron 2:1-12. Tyre was a city on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel.

**5:12** David recognized that God had established him as king, not for his personal benefit, but for the benefit of the people whom he was to shepherd. Happy any people who have such a leader, civil or religious. Compare Mark 9:35; 10:44,45; 1 Cor 10:33; 2 Cor 4:5. Alas, that so many in Christian circles seek position and power for their own sake, and have no regard for the people whom they should serve.

**5:13** No doubt this was the custom of kings in those days, but it was forbidden in God's law – Deut 17:14-17. Note at 3:2-5.

**5:17** The "stronghold" possibly refers to some place in the desert area of southern Judah where he had found refuge from Saul (1 Sam 22:4; 23:14).

**5:19** 2:1; 1 Sam 23:2,6.

**5:20** Baal-Perazim means "The Lord who breaks out."

**5:21** They burned these idols which the Philistines had carried into battle – 1 Chron 14:12.

**5:23** "Inquired" – a believer should make no plans without this.

**5:24** "Marching" – angelic forces going with

tops of the mulberry trees, then you must move quickly, for then the LORD will go out before you to strike the army of the Philistines." 25 And David did just as the LORD commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba until you come to Gazer.

**6** David again gathered together all *the* chosen *men* of Israel, thirty thousand, 2 and David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from Baalah of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, the name of which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwells *between* the cherubim. 3 And they set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. 4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah with the ark of God, and Ahio was walking in front of the ark. 5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments made of* fir wood and on harps and on lyres and on tambourines and on castanets and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his hand* to the ark of God and took hold of it, because the oxen were shaking *it*. 7 And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And David was displeased, because the LORD broke out against Uzzah, and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah, *its name* to this day.

David. Compare Ex 23:23; 33:2; Ps 34:7; 35:5; 68:17; 91:11; Isa 37:36; 63:9; Matt 26:53; Heb 1:14.

**5:25** A distance of nearly 30 kilometers.

**6:1-11** 1 Chron 13:1-14.

**6:2** "Ark of God" – note at Ex 25:10-16.

"Baalah of Judah" – another name for Kiriath-Jearim (Josh 15:9). The ark had been left there during Saul's reign (1 Sam 7:1).

**6:3** God had given instructions as to how the ark was to be carried (Num 4:4-6,15; 7:9). David used the same method used by the Philistines (1 Sam 6:7,8). The result was disastrous. God's work must be done in God's way to obtain God's blessing.

**6:5** Compare psalm 150.

"Playing before the LORD on all kinds of instruments made of fir wood" – or it could be translated "celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with songs" (see note on Hebrew at Ps 14:7).

**6:6** "Took hold of" – this was plainly forbidden by God in Num 4:15,19,20.

**6:7** "God struck him" – 1 Sam 6:19. It may seem to some people that Uzzah's punishment was too severe, but God is the one who must determine such matters. He sometimes has to use stern measures to emphasize the importance of holiness and

9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, "How will the ark of the LORD come to me?" 10 So David would not move the ark of the LORD to him in the city of David, but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.

11 And the ark of the LORD stayed in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

12 And it was told king David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that *belongs* to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and joyfully brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of David. 13 And it was *like* this: when those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and *another* fat animal, 14 and David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* wearing a linen ephod. 15 So David, and all the house of Israel, brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

16 And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked through a window and saw king David leaping and dancing in the presence of the LORD, and she despised him in her heart.

17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, in the middle of the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 18 And as soon as David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the

obedience to His instructions. Compare Lev 10:1-3; Num 15:30-36; Josh 7:25,26; Acts 5:1-11. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**6:8** David was angry and perplexed at God's dealings (this temptation comes to all of us at times). Joy (v 5) was turned to gloom. He had wanted to honor God but he had not done it in God's way. He later admitted that he had not inquired of the Lord about it (1 Chron 15:13). The way of obedience may be harder, but it is the only way God will accept. Perez Uzzah means "breaking out against Uzzah."

**6:9-12** David was afraid that wherever the ark went there would be danger and trouble. God's blessing the household of Obed-Edom showed him this was not so. So David went and got the ark. He had now realized his error in method and used God's way. See 1 Chron 15:1,2,11-15.

**6:12** "City of David" – 5:7.

**6:14,15** Obedience to God's instruction brought restored joy.

**6:16** "Michal" – the carnal and worldly cannot stand to see others zealous for God. Note at Ps 69:9.

**6:17** "Offerings" – notes at Leviticus chapters 1 and 3.

**6:18** 1 Kings 8:14,15.

people in the name of the LORD of hosts. 19 And he gave out to each one among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, to the women as well as to the men, a cake of bread and a good piece of *meat* and a *raisin* cake. So all the people departed, each one to his house.

20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids, as one of the worthless fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"

21 And David said to Michal, "*It was* in the presence of the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and instead of all his household, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will celebrate before the LORD. 22 And I will be still more insignificant than this and will be lowered in my own eyes, but I will be held in honour by the maidservants of whom you have spoken."

23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

**7** And it came about, when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest all around from all his enemies, 2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I live in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within *tent* curtains."

3 And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you."

**6:20** "Uncovered" – David had not worn his royal robes (v 14), only ordinary clothing, and Michal thought he had been very undignified in the expression of his joy and zeal for God. She little realized there are things more important than human dignity.

**6:21,22** "The LORD" – David was thinking only of God, not what people might think of him. The dignity of his office did not appeal to him as did lowly, humble rejoicing in God. **7:1-29** 1 Chron 17:1-27.

**7:2** "Nathan – 12:1; 1 Kings 1:8,22; 1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 9:29.

"Tent" – note at Ex 25:8. David recognized God as the heavenly king of Israel (Ps 10:16; 24:7,8). The ark which symbolized God's presence was in a tent (6:17), while David the earthly king lived in a fine palace. A person as concerned with God's glory as David could not but think this was unfitting. He wanted to build a magnificent temple for God (1 Chron 22:1-5; 28:2). This desire was good, but David was not permitted to build the temple (1 Kings 8:17-19; 2 Chron 22:7,8). Each of God's servants has his own work which God has given and will not be able to do the work committed to someone else.

**7:3** Nathan said this without getting God's thoughts about it. Even great prophets may

4 But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying,

5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Will you build me a house for me to live in? 6 For I have not lived in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt to this day, but have moved about with a tent and with a tabernacle. 7 In any *place* I have travelled with all the children of Israel did I speak a word with any of the *leaders of the* tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why do you not build me a house of cedar?'

8 "Now therefore you shall say this to my servant David: 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel, 9 and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from your sight, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great *men* who *are* in the earth. 10 Moreover I will provide a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, so that they can live in a place of their own and move no more. Nor will the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as before, 11 even from the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, for I have caused you to rest from all your enemies.

"Also the LORD tells you that he will make a house for you. 12 And when your days are fulfilled, and you sleep with your ancestors, after you I will appoint your offspring, who comes forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He will

speak rashly.

**7:4-7** God was satisfied with His tent. He (with His people) was a pilgrim on earth (v 6. Think of it!). The tent was an adequate symbol of His presence with Israel. He had not desired a temple, had not asked for one.

**7:4-11** God preferred to do something for David, rather than have David build a temple for Him (vs 9,11). He had already done great things for David (vs 8,9). Now He would do still greater things for him and for Israel (vs 9-11).

**7:10** "Afflict" – refers to the oppression Israel experienced in Egypt and later in their own land during the times of the Judges.

**7:11** "Judges" – or "leaders" – the Hebrew word means both.

"You" – David wanted to build a material house for God. God would build a "house" for David – a royal dynasty. This promise to David was not based on conditions and it finds its final fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David and the inheritor of David's throne (Ps 89:27-29; Matt 1:1; Luke 1:32,33,69; Acts 2:30; 13:23; Rom 1:2,3; Rev 3:7; 22:16).

**7:12** "Offspring" – Solomon (1 Kings 1:29-40).

**7:13** See 1 Kings chapter 6. God here gives His approval for the building of a temple.



build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men and with the blows of the children of men, 15 but my mercy will not depart from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom will be established forever before you; your throne will be established forever.”

17 Nathan spoke to David in accordance with all these words and in accordance with this whole vision.

18 Then king David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, “Who *am* I, O Lord God? And what *is* my house, that you have brought me this far? 19 And even this was a small thing in your sight, O Lord God, but you have also spoken of your servant’s house for a great time to come. And *is* this the custom of man, O Lord God?

20 “And what more can David say to you? For you, Lord God, know your servant. 21 For your word’s sake, and in accordance with your own heart, you have done all these great things, to make your servant know *them*.

22 “Therefore you are great, O LORD God, for *there is* no one like you, nor *is there any* God besides you, according to all that we have heard

with our ears. 23 And what one nation in the earth *is* like your people, like Israel, whom God went to redeem as a people for himself and to make a name for himself, and to do great and awe-inspiring things for yourself, for your land, before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods? 24 For you have established for yourself your people Israel *to be* your people forever, and you, LORD, have become their God.

25 “And now, O LORD God, establish forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have said. 26 And let your name be magnified for ever, saying, ‘The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel’; and let the house of your servant David be established before you.

27 “For you, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, have made a revelation to your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore your servant has found *it* in his heart to pray this prayer to you. 28 And now, O Lord God, you *are* God, and your words are true, and you have promised this goodness to your servant. 29 Therefore now let it please you to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever before you, for you, O Lord God, have said *it*. And let the house of your servant be blessed with your blessing forever.”

He had not asked men to build one for Him, but He would permit it and use the temple as a picture to set forth certain aspects of the spiritual work of Christ (Eph 2:19-22; etc.). See note on something similar at 1 Sam 8:5-22.

“Throne of his kingdom” – Solomon’s kingdom was the nation of Israel. He had no other.

“Forever” – v 16; 2 Sam 22:51; 1 Kings 2:4,45; Isa 9:7; Jer 17:25; 33:14-18; Luke 1:33. Is it necessary that Christ reign on earth over the nation Israel to fulfil this promise? Bible commentators are divided about this. Some think that this promise and others such as Isa 9:7; 11:1-9; 32:1-5 have only a spiritual fulfilment in the Church. Others think there will be some kind of literal fulfilment, that the nation of Israel, brought back to God, will occupy the central position during a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Certainly it seems both David and Solomon thought that God was referring to a literal kingdom on earth (vs 24-26; 2 Chron 6:16,17). And it seems that Christ’s disciples, after receiving instruction by Christ Himself for forty days about the kingdom of God, also thought so (Acts 1:3,6). Certainly the writer of these notes thinks so. See also notes at Isa 2:1-4; Rev 20:4-6; etc.

**7:14** “Discipline” – Deut 8:5; Prov 3:11,12; Heb 12:5-11; Rev 3:19.

“The rod of men” – God uses other men to chastise His people. See Ps 66:10-12. Later He chastised Solomon in this way – 1 Kings 11:9,14,23,26.

**7:15** “Saul” – 1 Sam 15:23,28; 16:14.

**7:18** “Who am I” – Ex 3:11; Jud 6:15; Jer 1:6; John 1:27; Eph 3:8; Luke 17:10; Matt 23:12.

**7:20** 1 Sam 16:7; Ps 139:1-4; John 2:24,25.

**7:21** “Your word’s sake” – probably means here all the promises God had made concerning Israel.

**7:22** “LORD God” – in Hebrew, Jehovah Elohim.

“No one like you” – a truth emphasized everywhere in the Bible – Ex 15:11; Deut 3:24; 1 Sam 2:2; Ps 86:10; Isa 44:6,8; 45:18,22; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 1 Tim 6:15,16.

**7:23** Deut 4:7,32-38; 10:21; 15:15; Josh 21:43-45

**7:24** Gen 17:7; Ex 6:7; 19:6; Deut 10:15; 26:18; 32:6; Isa 43:21. Observe that the nation Israel is God’s people *forever*. Compare Jer 31:35-40; 33:17-26.

**7:27** Effective prayer will be based on God’s revelation of His will. Compare 1 John 5:14,15.

**7:28** “True” – or “trustworthy” – Ex 34:6; Deut 7:9; Ps 36:5; Titus 1:2; Rev 1:5; 19:11.

**7:29** “Blessing” – notes at Gen 12:2,3; 24:35; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:1,2; Ps 1:1,2.

**8** And after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and David took Methegammah out of the hands of the Philistines.

2 And he defeated Moab, and measured them with a cord, making them lie down on the ground. He measured *those* to be put to death with two cord *lengths*, and *those* to be kept alive with one full cord *length*. And so the Moabites became subject to David *and* brought tribute.

3 David also defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates. 4 And David took from him a thousand *chariots* and seven hundred horsemen and twenty thousand foot soldiers, and David hamstrung all the chariot *horses*, except *what* he kept of them *for* a hundred chariots.

5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrian men. 6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus, and the Syrians became subject to David *and* brought tribute. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 And king David brought a great amount of bronze from Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer.

9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hadadezer, 10 then Toi sent his son Joram to king David to greet him and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, for Hadadezer had *waged* wars with Toi. And *Joram* brought with him silver articles and gold articles and bronze articles.

**8:1-14** 1 Chron 18:1-13.

**8:2** "Moab" – Gen 19:37. David's great-grandmother was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4; 4:13,21,22), and previously David had a friendly relationship with Moab (1 Sam 22:3,4).

**8:3** 1 Sam 14:47. "Zobah" – a kingdom on Israel's northern border.

"Euphrates river" – God's promise to Abraham was of a land that extended as far as the Euphrates (Gen 15:18-21; Deut 1:7; 11:24; Josh 1:4).

**8:4** "Hamstrung" – Josh 11:9.

**8:5** "Damascus" – capital of Syria and later a continual enemy of Israel.

**8:6** 3:18; 5:10.

**8:9** "Hamath" – a kingdom north of Zobah.

**8:11** These were later used in the construction of the temple (1 Kings 7:51). Observe that David did not enrich himself by his position and his victories. He gave to God what he could have kept for himself. How different from many today who keep for themselves what they should give to God, or even steal from funds given to God's work

11 And these king David dedicated to the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he subdued, 12 from Syria and from Moab and from the children of Ammon and from the Philistines and from Amalek and from the plunder from Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David got a name *for himself* when he returned from striking down eighteen thousand of the Syrians in the Valley of Salt.

14 And he put garrisons in Edom. He put *these* garrisons throughout the whole of Edom and all the Edomites became subject to David. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Israel, and David executed judgment and justice to all his people. 16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder, 17 and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar *were* the priests, and Seraiah *was* the scribe, 18 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and David's sons were chief ministers.

**9** And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

2 And in the household of Saul *there* was a servant whose name *was* Ziba. And when they had called him to David, the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?"

And he said, "Your servant."

3 And the king said, "Is no one of the house of Saul still left, that I may show the kindness of God to him?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Jonathan still has

to enrich themselves.

**8:13** "A name" – 7:9. "Valley of Salt" – Probably just south of the Dead Sea.

**8:14** The Edomites were descended from Esau, son of Isaac (Gen 25:21-26).

**8:15** In psalm 101 David records his principles of just administration in the kingdom of Israel. Psalm 15 gives some of his inspired views on personal conduct. David did more than make resolutions or write about justice; he practiced what he preached.

**8:16** "Joab" – 2:13. Note at 3:39.

**8:18** "Kerethites" – 1 Sam 30:14. They lived in the south of the land of Canaan near the Philistines. Nothing is known for certain about the origins of this people.

"Pelethites" – possibly (but not certainly) comes from the word "Philistine." Men from these alien nations composed a private army or bodyguard for king David.

**9:1** "Jonathan's sake" – 1 Sam 20:14-17,42.

**9:2** "Ziba" – 16:1-4; 19:17,29.

**9:3** "Lame" – 4:4. Mephibosheth was five years old when Saul and Jonathan were killed, and now he was a young man with a

a son, *who is* lame in *his* feet."

4 And the king said to him, "Where *is* he?"

And Ziba said to the king, "See, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar."

5 Then king David sent *men* and had him brought from the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. 6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he went down on his face and prostrated himself.

And David said, "Mephibosheth!"

And he answered, "See your servant!"

7 And David said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I will certainly show you kindness for your father Jonathan's sake, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul, and you will eat bread at my table permanently."

8 And he bowed down and said, "What *is* your servant, that you should look on such a dead dog as I?"

9 Then the king called for Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given all that belonged to Saul and to his whole household to your master's grandson. 10 You, therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall till the land for him and bring in *the harvests*, so that your master's grandson may have food to eat. However Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, will always eat food at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will act in accordance with all that my lord the king has commanded his servant to do."

*The king said*, "As for Mephibosheth, he will eat at my table, like one of the king's sons."

12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name *was* Micha. And all who lived in the house of Ziba *were* servants of Mephibosheth.

13 So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he regularly ate at the king's table. And he was lame in both of his feet.

**10** And it came about after this that the king of the children of Ammon died and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. 2 Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me." And David sent to comfort him through his servants about his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 And the leaders of the children of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David is honouring your father, because he has sent comforters to you? Has not David sent his servants to you to explore the city, and to spy it out and to overthrow it?" 4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants and shaved off one half of their beards and cut off their cloaks in the middle at their hips, and sent them away.

5 When they told *it* to David, he sent *someone* to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Stay at Jericho until your beards are grown, and *then* return."

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they had become odious to David, the children of Ammon sent *agents* and hired the Syrians of Beth-Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers, and a thousand men from king Maacah, and twelve thousand men from Ishtob.

7 And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. 8 And the children of Ammon came out and drew up battle lines at the entrance of the gate, and the Syrians of Zoba and of Rehob and Ishtob and Maacah *were* by themselves in the field.

9 When Joab saw that there were *two* battle fronts against him, in the front and in the rear, he selected *some* of all the choice *men* of Israel and put *them* in array against the Syrians, 10 and the rest of the people he put into the hands of his brother Abishai, so that he could put *them* in array

son of his own (v 12). Many years elapsed before David fulfilled his obligation to Jonathan. Mephibosheth was in a distant place (v 4), and David had been busy establishing his kingdom and warring with his enemies.

**9:4** "Machir" – he seems to have been a kind-hearted and God-fearing man. He befriended the dead Jonathan's crippled son who had fallen on hard times. Later he helped David when he fled from Absalom (17:27-29).

"Lo-Debar" – a town east of the Jordan river and deep into Gilead.

**9:7** "Afraid" – he had probably heard that kings often exterminated any in the family of the previous monarch who could be a rival for the throne.

"Kindness for. . . Jonathan's sake" – here is a beautiful picture which suggests how God

shows grace to fallen and sinful men. Compare Eph 4:32; 1 John 2:12.

**9:8** The name Mephibosheth means "destroyer of shame." He was not ashamed to accept the grace and kindness of a king. Nor should sinful men be ashamed to accept the grace of the heavenly king (Rom 1:16; 2 Tim 1:8). But because of pride many cannot endure the thought of being completely cast on the mercy and grace of God for salvation.

**9:11** "Like one of the king's sons" – 1 John 3:1; Rev 3:20.

**10:1-19** 1 Chron 19:1-19.

**10:2** We have no record of the kindness Nahash showed David. But this reveals a very good quality in David – gratitude.

**10:6** "Odious" – Gen 34:30; 1 Sam 13:4; 27:12.

against the children of Ammon. 11 And he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you help me, but if the children of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. 12 Be courageous, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do what seems good to him."

13 And Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near to the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians had fled, then they also fled before Abishai and entered the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon and came to Jerusalem.

15 And when the Syrians saw that they were defeated before Israel, they gathered themselves together. 16 And Hadarezer sent *men* and brought the Syrians who *were* beyond the river. And they came to Helam, and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *was* leading them.

17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed over the Jordan and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David and fought with him. 18 And the Syrians fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred charioteers of the Syrians and forty

thousand horsemen, and struck down Shobach, the captain of their host, who died there. 19 And when all the kings *who were* subject to Hadarezer saw that they were defeated before Israel, they made peace with Israel and became subject to them. So the Syrians were afraid to help the children of Ammon any more.

**11** And this happened at the turn of the year, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*: David sent out Joab and his servants with him and all Israel. And they destroyed the children of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David still stayed at Jerusalem.

2 And it so happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing. And the woman *was* very beautiful in appearance. 3 And David sent and inquired about the woman. And *someone* said, "*Is* not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in to him, and he lay with her, for she was purified from her uncleanness. Then she returned to her house. 5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David and said, "*I am*

**10:12** "May the LORD" – though Joab was a hard, bloodthirsty man, he was brave and made some acknowledgment of God.

**10:13** 1 Kings 20:13-21.

**10:16** "The river" – Euphrates (8:3).

**10:18** In the parallel account in 1 Chron 19:18 the number of charioteers is recorded as seven thousand. This is one example of several differences in numbers between the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. There were no printing presses in those days or any sort of duplicating machines. Manuscripts had to be laboriously copied by hand. Although great care, really amazing care, was taken to copy accurately, minor copying errors were sometimes made. It was particularly easy to make mistakes in copying numbers. There is no doctrine of the Bible the least affected by any such mistakes in copying, and we can only marvel at the accuracy of the manuscripts as a whole which were transmitted over many centuries and copied again and again.

**11:1** "Stayed at Jerusalem" – because David did not go with the army he fell into temptation and great sin. We see in this chapter once again that the Bible does not try to hide the sins and failures of God's people, but tells things just as they were. Compare Gen 9:21; 12:13; 27:18-26; Ex 32:2-4; Num 20:12; Judges chapter 16; etc. From this account of David's sin we can learn that even the greatest men of faith may fall to a very low level. From the next chapter we can learn that God forgives the worst of sins if there is genuine repentance. We should remember that bad example is put in the

Bible, not that we should follow it, but that we might avoid it. See 1 Cor 10:1-13.

**11:2** "He saw" – see Job 31:1. Compare David's behavior with Joseph's (Gen 39:7-12). Later David rightly accepted the blame for the sin recorded in this chapter (see psalm 51), but this does not excuse Bathsheba. She must have realized that the courtyard of her house was in full view of the roof of David's palace. Bathsheba is not explicitly accused of trying to tempt David, but she did not resist the sin of adultery with him (v 4), and was willing to marry him as soon as possible (v 27). Surely she was not entirely without guilt in all this.

**11:3** "Wife" – when David found out that Bathsheba was another man's wife, his one business should have been to forget her. Even the lust he felt for her was sin (Ex 20:17).

"Uriah" – this man was not an unknown soldier, but one of the 37 greatest heroes in David's army (23:39). At that very moment he was in the battle against the Ammonites (vs 6,7).

**11:4** Ancient heathen kings had their harems and brought anyone they wanted into them. But God's standards for His people are different (Lev 18:1-4), and David knew this. Under God's law David's (and Bathsheba's) sin was worthy of death (Lev 20:10). In the New Testament such sins are seen to be worthy of eternal damnation – 1 Cor 6:9,10; Rev 21:8.

"Uncleanness" – Lev 15:19-30.

**11:5** Her sin would soon be evident to Uriah. Bathsheba leaves the solution of this problem to David.





other poor. 2 The rich *man* had a great many flocks and herds, 3 but the poor *man* had nothing, except one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished. And it grew up with him and with his children. It ate from his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom, and was like a daughter to him.

4 "And a traveller came to the rich man, and he spared his own flock and his own herd, *refusing* to take from *them* to prepare for the traveller who had come to him, but took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

5 And David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this *thing* shall surely die! 6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

7 And Nathan said to David, "You *are* the man. Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hands of Saul, 8 and I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom,

and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And *as* if *that was* too little, in addition I would have given to you *other* such things. 9 Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife *to be* your wife, having killed him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10 Now therefore the sword will never depart from your house, because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

11 "Thus says the LORD: 'See, I will raise up evil against you from your own house, and before your eyes I will take your wives and give *them* to your neighbour, and he will lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.'"

13 And David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD has also put away your sin. You will not die. 14 However, because by this deed you have given great

that God does not quickly abandon men in their sin but seeks to bring them to repentance. This visit of Nathan took place a considerable time after David's sin with Bathsheba. A child had already been born to them. David still had not repented.

"Nathan" – once Nathan had come from the Lord with a message of great blessing (7:4-17). Now his message is of judgment and disaster. God's messengers must be ready to speak forth whatever God gives them to speak. Nathan was a truly spiritual man who was willing to declare to the king his sin. We all need someone like Nathan who will fearlessly point out what may be wrong in our lives.

**12:2-4** Parables and stories can sometimes point to truths in a gripping way that catches those who listen before they realize they are the persons in the parable. The Lord Jesus often used this method.

**12:5** How easy it is to see faults in others and to ignore the same faults in ourselves. And how quick men are to condemn others and excuse themselves (Rom 2:1,21-24). David had a keen sense of justice (8:15; 1 Sam 24:11-15), but it had been asleep until Nathan aroused it with this story.

**12:6** Ex 22:1. David insisted on the penalty of the law for others.

**12:7** "You are the man" – since David did not see himself in the parable, Nathan fearlessly and faithfully made the application.

**12:8** "Master's wives" – suggests Saul's concubines may have been brought into David's household. David had seven wives before he took Bathsheba (3:2-5; 1 Sam 19:11). This did not keep him from wanting others. Polygamy is no barrier to lust and, in fact, may be just the opposite.

"Judah" – 2:4; 5:2,3.

**12:9** David's sin had been against the God

who had shown him continual grace (vs 7,8).

"Despised the commandment" – Isa 5:24; Ezek 20:13; Amos 2:4; Mal 1:6. By his actions David showed this attitude toward God's Word (compare Num 15:31). If David had been asked he would have said, no doubt, that he loved God's Word, and usually he did love it, but he had slipped away from this love.

"You have killed" – Uriah fell in battle, but David ordered his death, and this was the same as killing him with his own hand (11:14-17).

**12:10** "The sword" – later on three of David's sons were killed (13:28; 8:14,15; 1 Kings 2:25). All this is another example of men (even God's people) reaping what they sow (Gal 6:7).

**12:11** "Evil" – or "disaster". Sin has consequences which cannot be averted in this life. If God does not chastise us for our sins it only shows we do not belong to Him (Heb 12:6-8).

"House" – David's sin was against a household, trouble would come to him from his own household.

**12:12** Fulfilled by Absalom. See 16:20-22.

**12:13** "I have sinned" – note on confession at 1 Sam 26:21. David accepted the truth about himself and repented. The genuineness of his repentance is clear from psalm 51 which he wrote at this time. David did not count Nathan an enemy because he told him the truth. See also Ps 141:5. He knew that it is very beneficial to have someone who will speak the truth without fear or favor. Contrast all this with the attitude of Ahab toward Elijah and Micaiah (1 Kings 21:20; 22:8). See also Gal 4:16.

"You will not die" – because of God's mercy David was forgiven and would not suffer the just penalty of the law for his sin.

**12:14** "To blaspheme" – this is one of the

occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child *who has been* born to you will also surely die."

15 And Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it was very sick. 16 So David begged God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. 17 And the elders of his house arose *and went* to him to raise him up from the ground, but he was not willing, and did not eat food with them.

18 And it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "Look, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him, and he would not listen to our voice. How will we tell him the child is dead? Then he may harm himself."

19 But when David saw that his servants were whispering, David understood that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?"

And they said, "He is dead."

20 Then David arose from the ground, and washed and anointed *himself* and changed his clothes, and came into the house of the LORD and worshipped. Then he came to his own house, and when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate.

21 Then his servants said to him, "What *is* this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child *while it was* alive, but when the child was dead, you got up and ate food."

22 And he said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, so that the child may live? 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

sad results of the sins of God's people (Ezek 36:22; Rom 2:24). See also 1 Tim 5:14; 6:1; Titus 2:5,8; 1 Pet 2:12.

"Die" – though David was forgiven and the full penalty of the law was not carried out, there were still consequences of his sin which he had to endure. See also vs 10,11. We cannot do as we please and then expect God to shield us from any trouble that may result.

**12:15** 1 Sam 25:38.

**12:16,17** David hoped God would change His mind (v 22).

**12:20** David humbly accepted God's punishment.

**12:22** Isa 38:1-3; Joel 2:14; Jonah 3:9.

**12:23** "He will not return to me" – David meant he too would some day go into the realm of the dead, but that the child would not come back from there. Gen 37:35; 1 Sam 28:19; Job 7:8-10.

24 And David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him. 25 And he sent *word* by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

26 And Joab fought against Rabbah, belonging to the children of Ammon, and took the royal city. 27 And Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the City of Waters. 28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together and camp against the city and take it. Otherwise, if I take the city, it will be called after my name."

29 And David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, and fought against it and took it. 30 And he took their king's crown from his head. Its weight *was* a talent of gold with the precious stones; and it was *placed* on David's head. And he brought plunder out of the city in great abundance. 31 And he brought out the people who *were* in it, and put *them to work* with saws and with iron instruments and with iron axes, and made them go into the brick kiln. And this he did to all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

**13** And this *is what* happened after that: David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and David's son Amnon loved her.

2 And Amnon *was* so distressed that he felt sick for his sister Tamar, for she *was* a virgin, and Amnon thought it hard for him to do anything to her.

3 But Amnon had a friend whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah. And Jonadab *was* a very shrewd man. 4 And he said to him, "Why *are* you, a son of the king, so haggard

**12:24** "Solomon" – 1 Chron 22:9,10. No reason is given here why God had a special affection for this one of David's many sons. Compare Deut 7:7,8; Rom 9:10-13.

**12:25** Jedidiah means "one the LORD loves." The name Solomon probably comes from the Hebrew word for peace.

**12:26-31** These verses describe the end of the campaign mentioned in chapter 11. It probably took place between the time of David's adultery and his exposure by Nathan.

**12:30** "Talent" – about 34 kilograms.

"Head" – placing the crown on David's head was a symbolic way of saying that henceforth he would be ruler of that land.

**13:1** "David" – in this chapter the prophecy of 12:10 begins to be fulfilled. Amnon was the son of David's second wife Ahinoam. Absalom and Tamar were born to his wife Maacah and so Amnon was their half brother. See 3:2-5.

from day to day? Will you not tell me?"

And Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

5 And Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be sick, and when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, so that I may see *it* and eat *it* from her hand.'"

6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick, and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, so that I may eat from her hand."

7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go now to your brother Amnon's house and prepare him food." 8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. And she took flour and kneaded *it* and made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. 9 And she took a pan and served *them* to him, but he refused to eat.

And Amnon said, "Have everyone go out from me." And every one of them went out from him. 10 And Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the room, so that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the room to Amnon her brother. 11 And when she had brought *them* to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come lie with me, my sister."

12 And she answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing. 13 And I, where would I get rid of my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you." 14 However he would not listen to her voice, and, being stronger than she, forced her and lay with her.

15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her *was* greater than the love with which he had loved her. And

**13:5** "Jonadab said" – Ps 1:1. Jonadab's evil counsel resulted in rape, murder, and rebellion, and great trouble and sorrow for David.

**13:7** David, completely unsuspecting, becomes an instrument in his son's hand to accomplish his evil purpose.

**13:12,13** "She answered him" – Tamar's words were based on God's laws for Israel which were public knowledge (Lev 18:9-11; Deut 27:22).

**13:14** His "love" was only lust which turned to disgust when satisfied.

**13:16** Amnon is a type of the utterly selfish person who does not care what wrong he does to someone he says he loves.

**13:19** "Tore" – a sign of great sorrow – Gen 37:29; 1 Sam 4:12; Esther 4:1 – here a

Amnon said to her, "Get up! Be gone!"

16 And she said to him, "No! because this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that you did to me." But he would not listen to her. 17 Then he called his servant who attended on him and said, "Now put this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her."

18 And *she had* on a multi-coloured robe; for the king's daughters *who were* virgins wore such robes. Then his servant took her out and bolted the door after her. 19 And Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her multi-coloured robe that she *was* wearing, and put her hand on her head, and walked away, crying as she went.

20 And her brother Absalom said to her, "Has your brother Amnon been with you? But now keep quiet, my sister. He *is* your brother. Do not take this thing to heart." So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21 But when king David heard of all these things, he was very angry. 22 And Absalom did not speak to his brother Amnon anything, good or bad, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 And it came about two full years later that Absalom had sheep shearers in Baal-Hazor, which *is* near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons. 24 And Absalom came to the king and said, "Look, now your servant has sheep shearers. Please, will the king and his servants go with your servant?"

25 And the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go now, or we will be a burden to you." And he pressed him. However he would not go, but blessed him.

26 Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?" 27 But Absalom pressed him, so that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "You observe now when Amnon's heart is symbol of the loss of her virginity.

**13:21** David was angry but evidently did nothing to punish Amnon. According to the law of God, Amnon's sin was worthy of death (Lev 20:17). It is possible that David's remembrance of his own sexual sin made him too lenient to Amnon. He well knew the bad example he had set. Or it may be that David had always been reluctant to discipline his children – see 1 Kings 1:6. If so, this could account for the sad way some of them turned out. See Prov 13:24; 22:15; 23:13,14. David's inaction at this time may well have been the cause of the death of both Amnon and Absalom later on. **13:22** "Hated" – Lev 19:17,18; Matt 18:15,16; Luke 17:3; 1 John 3:15. **13:28** Though Amnon's sin was worthy of

merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant." 29 And the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each man got himself onto his mule and fled.

30 And it came about, while they were on the way, that news came to David, saying, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and not one of them is left." 31 Then the king arose and tore his clothes and lay on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.

32 And Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, answered and said, "Let not my lord suppose *that* they have killed all the young men, the king's sons; for only Amnon is dead. For this has been determined in Absalom's mind from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. 33 Now therefore my lord the king should not take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead, for only Amnon is dead."

34 And Absalom fled. And the young man who was on watch raised his eyes and looked, and saw many people coming by the way of the hillside behind him.

35 And Jonadab said to the king, "Look, the king's sons are coming. It's just like your servant said."

36 And it came about, as soon as he finished speaking, that there were the king's sons coming and raising their voices and weeping. And the king also and all his servants wept very bitterly.

37 But Absalom fled and went to Talmi, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day.

38 So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. 39 And king David longed to go to Absalom, for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead.

death, Absalom had no right to take personal vengeance. Note at Ex 21:23-25; Lev 19:18; Num 31:2. If others sin against us, that does not give us the right to sin against them.

**13:34** The last sentence of this verse is found in the Septuagint, but not in the Hebrew manuscripts now available.

**13:35** "Like your servant said" – it seems the evil Jonadab (v 5) was trying to pass himself off as a wise counselor and comforter.

**13:37** "Talmi" – Absalom's maternal grandfather (3:3). He fled there because as a murderer there was no refuge for him in Israel. Cities of refuge were only for those who had killed someone unintentionally – Num 35:9-26,31.

"Mourned" – David was paying dearly for

**14** Now Joab, the son of Zeruiah, perceived that the king's heart *was* toward Absalom. 2 And Joab sent to Tekoah and brought a wise woman from there, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning clothes now, and do not anoint yourself with oil, but be like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time, 3 and go to the king and speak like this to him" (then Joab put the words in her mouth).

4 And when the woman of Tekoah spoke to the king, she bowed down and prostrated herself on the ground and did obeisance, and said, "Help, O king."

5 And the king said to her, "What is troubling you?"

And she answered, "I *am* indeed a widow woman, for my husband is dead. 6 And your maid servant had two sons, and the two of them fought together in the field, and *there was* no one to part them, and the one struck the other and killed him. 7 And, see, the whole family has risen up against your maid servant, and said, 'Hand over the one who struck his brother, so that we can kill him, for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.' And so they would put out the *burning* coal that I have left, and not leave to my husband *either* name or survivor on the earth."

8 And the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give a command concerning you."

9 And the woman of Tekoah said to the king, "My lord, O king, may the guilt be on me, and on my father's house, and may the king and his throne *be* innocent."

10 And the king said, "Whoever says *anything* to you, bring him to me, and he will not touch you any more."

11 Then she said, "Please, let the king remember the LORD your God, so that you do not allow the avengers of blood to destroy any more,

his own sins of adultery and murder.

**13:39** Once again David does nothing to make the wrong situation right. He longed to go to Absalom, but he did not. Nor did he ask Absalom to return. Memory of one's own sins sometimes tends to paralyze proper action.

**14:1,2** "Joab" – 2:13. His motives here are unclear. It may be only that he saw David grieving for Absalom and wanted him to be happy.

**14:7** "Hand over" – see Num 35:16-25; Deut 19:11-13.

**14:8** Once more David speaks without realizing he is involving himself. See 12:5,6.

**14:9** Gen 43:9; 1 Sam 25:24; 1 Kings 1:52.

**14:11** "Avengers of blood" – Num 35:12; Deut 19:4-10. Absalom had fled probably because he feared an avenger would seek him.

so they will not destroy my son."

And he said, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son will fall to the ground."

12 Then the woman said, "Please let your maid servant speak *one* word to my lord the king."

And he said, "Speak."

13 And the woman said, "Why then have you thought such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this like someone who is at fault, because the king does not bring his banished *one* back home. 14 For we must die, and *are* like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. And God does not show favoritism, but he devises ways so that his banished *ones* are not exiled from him. 15 Now the *reason* that I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king *is* because the people have made me afraid, and your maid servant said, I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant. 16 For the king will listen and deliver his maidservant out of the hands of the man *who would* destroy me and my son together from God's inheritance. 17 Then your maid servant said, The word of my lord the king will now be comforting, for my lord the king *is* like an angel of God in discerning good and bad. Therefore the LORD your God will be with you."

18 Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me what I am going to ask you."

And the woman said, "May my lord the king now speak."

19 And the king said, "*Is not* the hand of Joab with you in all this?"

And the woman answered and said, "As your soul lives, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken; for *it was* your servant Joab who gave me orders and put all these words in the mouth of your maid servant. 20 Your servant Joab has done this to change the appearance of things. And my lord is wise, with wisdom like an angel of God, to

know all *things* that *are* in the earth."

21 And the king said to Joab, "Look now, I will do this thing. So go bring the young man Absalom back."

22 And Joab bowed down and prostrated himself on the ground, and thanked the king, and Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favour in your sight, my lord, O king, because the king has fulfilled the request of his servant."

23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24 And the king said, "Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face." So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face.

25 But in all Israel no one was so highly praised for his handsome *appearance* as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. 26 And when he cut *the hair* of his head (for he cut it at the end of each year; he cut it because *the hair* was heavy on him), he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels by the king's weights.

27 And three sons were born to Absalom, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful appearance.

28 So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, and did not see the king's face. 29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come. 30 Therefore he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire." And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose and came to Absalom at *his* house, and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

32 And Absalom answered Joab, "Look, I sent *word* to you, saying, Come here so I can send you to the king to say, 'Why have I come from Geshur? *It would be* good for me *to be* there still.' Now therefore let me see the king's face. And if I am guilty of *anything*, let him kill me."

33 So Joab came to the king and told him. And

**14:13** 12:7. "His banished one" – she argues that if David is willing to pardon and protect the son of a strange woman, how much more his own son.

**14:14** The woman emphasizes the mercy and grace of God rather than God's justice, in order to move the king to behave in the same way. But she was wrong when she said God does not take away life (Gen 6:7; 9:5,6; etc.).

**14:17** Unfortunately this was not true. But she thought a little flattery might help.

**14:22** Joab's part in all this is mysterious – vs 2,29.

**14:23** "Geshur" – 13:37.

**14:24** This was neither proper punishment nor proper pardon. And it resulted in further

trouble.

**14:25** 1 Sam 16:7.

**14:26** "Two hundred shekels" – about 2.3 kilograms.

**14:32** "If I am guilty" – probably Absalom persuaded himself that he was completely justified in killing Amnon. He wanted David to restore him to full favor. It is not uncommon for men to justify themselves after committing the worst sorts of crimes against God's law.

**14:33** "Kissed" – reconciliation seems complete, but there has been no repentance on Absalom's part and his sin has not been dealt with. The next chapter reveals the further progress of sin in his heart.



when he called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.

**15** And it came about after this that Absalom prepared chariots and horses for himself, and fifty men to run before him. 2 And Absalom would rise early and stand beside the gate road, and it happened that when any man who had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom would call to him and say, "What city *are* you from?" And he would say, "Your servant *is* from one of the tribes of Israel." 3 And Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims *are* good and right, but *there is no representative* of the king to listen to you." 4 And Absalom would say, "Oh that I were made judge in the land, so that whoever has any suit or case might come to me, and I could administer justice for him!"

5 And it happened that when any man came near *him* to bow down to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. 6 And this is the way Absalom acted to every Israelite who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7 And this took place after forty years: Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow in Hebron, which I have made to the LORD. 8 For your servant made a vow while I was staying at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD indeed brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD."

9 And the king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron.

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is reigning in Hebron!'" 11 And two hundred men from Jerusalem, *who were* invited, went with

Absalom, and they went in their innocence and knew nothing *of the plot*. 12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, from Giloh, when he was offering sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the *number of* people with Absalom increased continually.

13 And a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom."

14 And David said to all his servants who *were* with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee; for *otherwise* we will not escape from Absalom. Leave quickly, or he will come on us suddenly and bring disaster on us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

15 And the king's servants said to the king, "See, your servants *are ready to do* whatever my lord the king chooses."

16 And the king went out, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, *who were* concubines, to keep the house. 17 And the king went out, and all the people after him, and stopped in a place that was at a distance. 18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Kerethites and all the Pelethites and all the Gittites, six hundred men who followed him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return to your place, and stay with the king; for you *are* a foreigner and also an exile. 20 You came *only* yesterday, and shall I today make you go up and down with us while I go where I am going? Return, and take back your brethren. May mercy and truth *be* with you."

21 And Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or life, surely there your servant will also be."

**15:1** As far as the record goes, no leader in Israel had ever used a chariot before. Absalom was now trying to make something big of himself.

**15:3** He was suggesting to the people that king David cared nothing for their troubles and complaints, but that he himself did.

**15:4** If Absalom aspired to be a judge he should first have judged himself for the murder of his brother Amnon (13:28). Often those who seek a high position are least fit to hold it. Actually, Absalom wanted a higher office than judge (v 10).

**15:6** Compare Rom 16:18.

**15:7** "Forty" – this could possibly mean after Absalom's fortieth year. Some versions have "four" here. That would mean four years after Absalom's return to Jerusalem.

**15:8** Often when men are bent on evil they make a show of piety and religion. Compare Isa 1:10-17. They want to think God is on their side. "In Hebron" is in the Septuagint, but not in the available Hebrew manuscripts.

**15:9** Apparently David was ignorant of what had been going on.

**15:10** 1 Kings 1:34; 2 Kings 9:13.

**15:12** Verse 31; 1 Chron 27:33; Ps 3:1.

"Ahitophel" – he was the grandfather of Bathsheba (11:3; 23:34). We are not told why he joined Absalom's rebellion. For all we know he may have harbored resentment against David for David's sin against Bathsheba (chapter 11). Ahitophel's treachery was probably the cause of David's complaint in Ps 41:9; 55:12-14.

**15:13** Verse 6.

**15:14** 12:11; 13:28. David knew Absalom would not hesitate to kill.

**15:16** "Concubines" – 5:13.

**15:18** "Pelethites" – note at 8:18.

**15:19** "Ittai" – 18:2. He was a Philistine, but showed more loyalty to David than many from Israel showed (v 21). When we are in trouble we find out who our real friends are. Prov 18:24.

**15:21** Ruth 1:17; Prov 17:17.

22 And David said to Ittai, "Go and pass by." And Ittai the Gittite and all his men, and all the little ones who *were* with him, passed by.

23 And the whole country wept with a loud voice. And all the people passed by, and the king himself crossed over the brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over, on toward the wilderness.

24 And Zadok also appeared, and all the Levites *were* with him, carrying the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people had passed out of the city.

25 And the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and show *both* it and his dwelling place to me. 26 But if he says, 'I have no delight in you', see, *here I am*. Let him do to me as seems good to him."

27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, "*Are you not* a seer? Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, your son Ahimaaz, and Abiathar's son Jonathan. 28 See, I will wait in the plain of the wilderness, until word comes from you to inform me." 29 Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem and waited there.

30 And David went up by the ascent of *Mount Olivet*, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered, and went barefoot. And each man among all the people who *were* with him covered his head, and they went up, weeping as they went. 31 And *someone* told David, saying, "Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom."

And David said, "O LORD, I pray you, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness."

32 And it came about that *when* David arrived at the top of *the mountain*, where God was worshipped, Hushai the Archite appeared, coming to meet him with his coat torn and dust on his head. 33 David said to him, "If you go on with me, then

you will be a burden to me. 34 But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king. *Just as* I *have been* your father's servant before this, *so* now I *will be* your servant also,' then you can defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. 35 And *have you* not there with you Zadok and Abiathar the priests? Therefore let it be that whatever word you hear from the king's house, tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36 See, *they have* there with them their two sons, Zadok's *son* Ahimaaz and Abiathar's *son* Jonathan. And everything you hear you must send to me by them."

37 So David's friend Hushai came into the city as Absalom was arriving at Jerusalem.

**16** And when David had passed a little beyond the top of *the mount*, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, appeared, meeting him with a couple of donkeys. On them *were* two hundred *loaves* of bread and a hundred clusters of raisins and a hundred summer fruits and a wineskin of wine.

2 And the king said to Ziba, "What do you mean by these?"

And Ziba said, "The donkeys *are* for the king's household to ride on, and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who become faint in the wilderness to drink."

3 And the king said, "And where *is* your master's son?"

And Ziba said to the king, "See, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'"

4 Then the king said to Ziba, "See, all that *belonged* to Mephibosheth *is* yours."

And Ziba said, "I humbly bow. May I find grace in your sight, my lord, O king."

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, suddenly a man of the family of the house of Saul came out, whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera. He came out, uttering curses as he came.

**15:23** "Kidron" – a valley just outside the southeast wall of Jerusalem.

**15:24** "Zadok" – 8:17.

"Ark" – note at Ex 25:10-16.

**15:25** David knew that the ark was only a symbol of God's presence and that God's presence could go with him regardless of where the ark was. Compare this with Israel's superstition in 1 Sam 4:3.

**15:26** David also knew that the only important factor was God's favor, and that he was unworthy of that favor.

**15:27** "Seer" – note at 1 Sam 9:9.

**15:31** This prayer God answered – 17:14,23.

**15:32** "Hushai" – v 37; 1 Chron 27:33.

**15:34** God would have answered David's prayer without David urging Hushai to be deceitful to Absalom. See notes at Gen

12:13; 27:18-26; Josh 2:5; 1 Sam 27:10. God is always perfectly able to work His will among men altogether without man's tricks.

**16:1** "Ziba" – 9:2-13.

**16:3** "Master's son" – Saul's grandson Mephibosheth. In Hebrew son indicated a wider range of relationships than in English. When David returned, Mephibosheth gave him an altogether different explanation than Ziba's (19:25-28). Which man told David the truth? The Bible does not say and David himself did not know (19:29).

**16:4** David was too quick to believe Ziba, and later changed this decision (19:16-23; 1 Kings 2:8,9,44-46; Ex 22:28).

**16:5-8** Evidently Shimei thought David was finished forever and wanted to give him a kick while he was down.

6 And he hurled stones at David, and at all the servants of king David. And all the people and all the mighty men *were* at his right hand and at his left.

7 And as Shimei cursed he said, "Get out! Get out! You man of blood, you wicked scoundrel!

8 The LORD has brought back onto you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead you have reigned, and the LORD has handed over the kingdom to the hands of your son Absalom. And, see, you *are caught* in your wickedness, because you *are* a man of blood."

9 Then Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please let me go over and take off his head."

10 And the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then will say, 'Why have you done so?'"

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, "Look, my son, who came out of my body, is seeking my life. How much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it*? Leave him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him *to do it*. 12 It may be that the LORD will look on my suffering, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day."

13 And as David and his men proceeded on the road, Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and uttered curses as he went, and hurled stones at him and threw dust. 14 And the king, and all the people who *were* with him, arrived *at their stopping place* exhausted, and they refreshed themselves there.

15 And Absalom, and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel *was* with him. 16 And this happened when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom: Hushai said to Absalom, "God save the king! God save the king!"

17 And Absalom said to Hushai, "*Is* this your kindness to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?"

18 And Hushai said to Absalom, "No; but I will belong to the one whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel choose, and I will stay with him. 19 And besides, whom should I serve? *Should I* not *serve* in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so I will be in your presence."

20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your counsel. What shall we do?"

21 And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you are abhorrent to your father. Then the hands of all who *are* with you will be strengthened." 22 So they spread a tent for Absalom on the roof of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, *was* as if a man had inquired of the word of God. All the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom *was* like *that*.

**17** Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me now choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. 2 And I will come on him while he *is* weary and his hands weak, and I will put fear into him. And all the people who *are* with him will flee, and I will strike down only the king. 3 And I will bring all the people back to you. When all return, *except* the man you are seeking, all the people will be in peace." 4 And the suggestion pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

5 Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Archite too, and let us hear what he says also." 6 And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom spoke to him, saying, "Ahithophel has spoken like this. Shall

**16:8** "Saul" – Shimei perhaps was referring to the events of 21:1-9, which probably took place before the events in this chapter.

**16:9** 19:21; 1 Sam 26:8.

**16:10** 3:39; 19:22.

**16:11** David knew that though he was innocent in the matter of Saul's household, he had shed the innocent blood of others (11:14-17; 12:9,10).

**16:12** Deut 23:5; Neh 13:2; Prov 20:22; Heb 12:10,11.

**16:14** Sometime during his flight from Absalom, perhaps here, David wrote psalm 3 and (probably) psalm 63. Both psalms show David's great confidence in God in a time of danger.

**16:15** 15:12.

**16:16** 15:32,33,37.

**16:17-19** Did Absalom suspect that Hushai's heart was with David? Hushai's answer

evidently deceived him and put his mind at rest (15:34).

**16:21,22** "Concubines" – 12:11,12. This was a symbolic act showing that Absalom was claiming the throne. Note on 3:7.

**17:1** Both David and Absalom recognized the wisdom of Ahithophel (16:23).

**17:4** From a military point of view his advice was shrewd and, if followed, might well have succeeded.

**17:5** "Absalom said" – 15:32-34. God was beginning to answer David's prayer of 15:31.

**17:5-13** Hushai shows his knowledge of Absalom's character and state of mind, and how to use them to help David. Absalom was in doubt what to do, was afraid of his father's skill in battle, wanted to be thought a great man, and liked a big show (15:1; 18:18).

we follow his suggestion? If not, you speak out.”

7 And Hushai said to Absalom, “The counsel that Ahithophel has given *is* not good at this time. 8 For,” said Hushai, “you know your father and his men, that they *are* mighty men, and their minds *are* embittered. *They are* like a bear robbed of its cubs in the field. And your father *is* a warrior, and will not spend the night with the people. 9 Look, he is hidden now in some cave or in some *other* place. And when some of *your men* fall at the first attack, it will happen that whoever hears it will say, ‘There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.’ 10 And even the one *who is* valiant, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt away. For all Israel knows that your father *is* a mighty man and that *those* who are with him *are* valiant men.

11 “Therefore, I counsel that all Israel should be gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, in number like the sand that *is* by the sea, and that you personally go to the battle. 12 So we can come on him in some place, wherever he is to be found, and we will fall on him like dew falls on the ground; and neither he nor all the men who *are* with him, not one, will be left. 13 Moreover, if he has gone into a city, then all Israel can bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river until not even a small stone will be found there.”

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel.” For the LORD had ordained that the good counsel of Ahithophel be defeated, to the intent that the LORD might bring disaster on Absalom.

15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, “This is the counsel Ahithophel gave to Absalom and the elders of Israel, and this is what I counselled. 16 Now therefore send quickly and tell David, saying, ‘Do not spend tonight in the plains of the wilderness, but quickly cross over *the Jordan*, so that the king and all the people who *are* with him will not be destroyed.’”

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at Enrogel, for they could not be seen entering the city. And a servant girl went and reported to them, and they went and told king David. 18 However a lad saw them and told Absalom. But both of them went away quickly, and at Bahurim came to a man’s house who had a well in his compound, and they went down into it. 19 And the woman took a covering and spread it over the

well’s mouth, and scattered crushed grain on it; and the matter was not known.

20 And when Absalom’s servants came to the woman at the house, they said, “Where *are* Ahimaaz and Jonathan?”

And the woman said to them, “They have gone over the water brook.” And when they had looked and could not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem.

21 And it came about, after they had left, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David and said to David, “Arise and quickly cross over the water, for this is what Ahithophel counselled against you.” 22 Then David and all the people who *were* with him arose and crossed the Jordan. At the morning light there was not a one of them who had not gone over the Jordan.

23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* donkey and got up and went to his house in his city, put his household in order, and hanged himself and died. And he was buried in the tomb of his father.

24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. 25 And Absalom made Amasa commander of the army instead of Joab. This Amasa *was* the son of a man whose name *was* Ithra, an Israelite who went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, the sister of Joab’s mother Zeruiah. 26 So Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.

27 And this is what happened when David came to Mahanaim: Shobi, the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir, the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai, the Gileadite of Rogelim, 28 brought beds and basins and clay pots and wheat and barley and flour and roasted *grain* and beans and lentils and parched *pulse*, 29 and honey and butter and sheep and cheese from cows’ *milk*, for David and for the people who *were* with him to eat, for they said, “The people *are* hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.”

**18** And David counted the people who *were* with him, and appointed captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. 2 And David sent out a third of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab’s brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, “I myself will certainly

**17:14-17** 15:27-36.

**17:19,20** Josh 2:4-6. Note at 15:34.

**17:23** “Hanged himself” – he realized that if Hushai’s advice was followed rather than his own, probably David would be victorious. Ahithophel is an example of the uselessness of human wisdom without the fear of the

Lord (Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7; 1 Cor 1:19,20). He was not the last “wise” man to end up in suicide.

**17:24** 2:8,9; 19:32; Gen 32:2.

**17:25** Amasa was David’s nephew.

**17:27,28** God can provide for His own, no matter where they may have to flee.

go out with you also."

3 But the people answered, "You should not go out. For if we flee, they will not be concerned about us. Even if half of us die, they will not be concerned about us. But now *you are* worth ten thousand of us. Therefore *it is* better now that you help us from the city."

4 And the king said to them, "I will do what seems best to you." And the king stood at the side of the gate, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands. 5 And the king gave a command to Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "For my sake *deal* gently with the young man, with Absalom." And all the people heard the king giving all the officers *this* order concerning Absalom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim. 7 There the people of Israel were defeated before the servants of David, and that day there was a great slaughter of twenty thousand *men*. 8 For the battle there scattered over the whole countryside, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom was riding on a mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head was caught in the oak, and he was taken up between heaven and earth, and the mule that *had been* under him went away.

10 And a certain man saw *it* and told Joab and said, "Look, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."

11 And Joab said to the man who told him, "And, *lo and* behold, you saw *him*! And why didn't you strike him there to the ground? And I would have given you ten *shekels* of silver and a belt."

12 And the man said to Joab, "Even if I got a thousand *shekels* of silver in my hand, I still would not put out my hand against the king's son, for in our hearing the king ordered you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Beware that no one *touches* the young man Absalom.' 13 Or if I had acted deceitfully, *endangering* my own life (for nothing is hidden from the king), you would have kept yourself away from *me*."

14 Then said Joab, "I can't wait around like this with you." And he took three *sharp* stakes in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absalom, while he *was* still alive in the middle of the oak. 15 And ten young men who carried Joab's armour surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.

**18:5** Absalom's rebellion did not destroy David's love for him (13:37,38; 19:29,33). **18:11** "Strike him" – Joab's murderous character is revealed once more – v 14. Note at 2:13.

"Ten shekels" – about 115 grams.

**18:12** "A thousand shekels" – about 11

16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, because Joab was restraining the people. 17 And they took Absalom and threw him into a large pit in the forest and laid a very great heap of stones on him. And all Israel fled, each one to his tent.

18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken a pillar and set *it* up for himself in the king's valley, for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." And he called the pillar after his own name, and to this day it is called Absalom's Monument.

19 Then Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, said "Let me run now, and take to the king the news of how the LORD has avenged him, *delivering him* from his enemies."

20 And Joab said to him, "You shall not take the news today, but you can take news another day. But today you shall not take any news, because the king's son is dead."

21 Then said Joab to Cushi, "Go tell the king what you have seen." And Cushi bowed to Joab and ran off.

22 Then Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, said to Joab once again, "However that may be, please let me also run after Cushi."

And Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?"

23 "However that may be", *he said*, "let me run."

And he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by the road through the plain, and outran Cushi.

24 And David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate by the wall, and raised his eyes and looked, and saw a man running alone. 25 And the watchman shouted and told the king.

And the king said, "If he *is* alone, *there is* news in his mouth." And he kept on coming and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called out to the gatekeeper, and said, "Look! *Another* man running alone."

And the king said, "He also brings news."

27 And the watchman said, "I think the running of the one in front is like the *way* Zadok's son Ahimaaz runs."

And the king said, "He *is* a good man, and comes with good news."

28 And Ahimaaz called out and said to the king,

kilograms. Some people are not for sale at any price, but others, alas, will do almost anything for money, even small amounts of money.

**18:15** 12:10.

**18:18** Absalom's three sons (14:27) must have died before he erected this pillar.



"All is well." And he prostrated *himself* on his face on the ground before the king and said, "Blessed *be* the LORD your God, who has handed over the men who lifted up their hand against my lord the king."

29 And the king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

And Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* your servant, I *saw* a great tumult, but I did not know what *it was*."

30 And the king said to *him*, "Turn aside, and stand here." And he turned aside and stood still.

31 And just then Cushai arrived, and Cushai said, "News, my lord the king! For today the LORD has avenged you on all those who rose up against you."

32 And the king said to Cushai, "*Is* the young man Absalom safe?"

And Cushai answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to harm *you*, be *as that* young man *is*."

33 And the king was very moved, and went up to the room over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he was saying this: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would to God I had died for you! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

**19** And it was told Joab, "See, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." 2 And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning, for all the people. For the people heard *it* told that day how the king was grieved for his son. 3 And that day the people came by stealth into the city, like people steal away ashamed when they flee in battle.

4 And the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

5 And Joab came into the house to the king and said, "Today you have brought shame to the faces of all your servants, who saved your life today, and the lives of your sons and of your daughters and the lives of your wives and the lives of your

**18:33** In David's pathetic sorrow over his son there was the guilty knowledge that his own sin had a part in all that had happened (12:9-12).

**19:5-7** "Joab. . . said" – Joab's blunt rebuke of David was justified and saved the situation. David was so taken up with his own grief that he expressed no appreciation to those who had fought for him. One of David's fine qualities was that he could receive criticism in the right spirit, and face up to his own failings.

**19:9-15** David did not immediately march back to Jerusalem at the head of his victorious army. Absalom's revolt had produced disunity among the people of Israel, and David wanted to win their loyalty and approval before he returned. In particular he appealed to Judah where the

concubines, 6 by loving your enemies and hating your friends. For today you have shown that you have no concern for leaders or servants. For today I understand that if Absalom had lived, and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well. 7 Now therefore get up! Go out and speak to the hearts of your servants. For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you tonight. And that will be worse for you than all the bad things that have happened to you from your youth until now."

8 Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, "Look, the king is sitting in the gate." And all the people came before the king, for Israel had fled, each man to his tent.

9 And all the people, throughout all the tribes of Israel, were quarreling, saying, "The king saved us from the hands of our enemies, and delivered us from the hands of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land, because of Absalom. 10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why do you not speak a word about bringing the king back?"

11 And King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah and say, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his house? 12 You *are* my brethren, you *are* my bones and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' 13 And you are to say to Amasa, '*Are* you not of my bone and of my flesh? God do *harm* to me, and more also, if you do not become commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.'"

14 And he turned the hearts of all the men of Judah as one man so that they sent *this word* to the king: "Return and all your servants." 15 So the king came back and arrived at the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, going to meet the king to conduct the king over the Jordan.

16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, rebellion had started.

**19:9** The people remembered, too late to avert a tragedy, what David had done for them.

**19:10** They confess that the rebellion was far more than the one man Absalom and a few of his friends usurping power.

**19:12** David is signifying that he will not seek vengeance on those who followed Absalom.

**19:13** "Amasa" – 17:25. Joab, as commander of the army, had fought faithfully in David's best interests. But David could no longer endure his murderous ways, since they had now touched his own family.

**19:14** "Turned the hearts" – David's attitude to those who had rebelled against him was gentle. He did not try to use force to regain his place of authority. He waited to be asked.

who *was* from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. 17 And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him. And they went over the Jordan before the king. 18 And they went over to ferry the king's household across, and to do whatever he thought good.

And Shimei, the son of Gera, fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan, 19 and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty, and do not remember what your servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, so that the king should take it to his heart. 20 For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, see, today I have come the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king."

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?"

22 And David said, "What is there between me and you, you sons of Zeruiah, that today you should be my adversaries? Should any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know today that I *am* king over Israel?" 23 Therefore the king said to Shimei, "You will not die." And the king swore to him.

24 And Mephibosheth, the grandson of Saul, came down to meet the king, and he had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his beard or washed his clothes from the day the king departed until the day he came *back* in peace. 25 And it came about, when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not come with me, Mephibosheth?"

26 And he answered, "My lord the king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself so that I may ride on it, and go to the king,' because your servant *is* lame. 27 And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king *is* like an angel of

God. So do *whatever is* good in your eyes. 28 For all *of* my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you placed your servant among those who eat at your own table. What right, therefore, do I have to cry any more to the king?"

29 And the king said to him, "Why speak any more of your matters? I have said, 'You and Ziba shall divide the land.'"

30 And Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him even take all *of it*, since my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house."

31 And Barzillai, the Gileadite, came down from Rogelim and crossed the Jordan with the king, to conduct him over the Jordan. 32 Now Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years *of age*; and he had provided for the king while he *was* staying at Mahanaim, for he *was* a very great man. 33 And the king said to Barzillai, "You come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem."

34 And Barzillai said to the king, "How long do I have to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? 35 Today I *am* eighty years old, *and* can I discern between good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I any longer hear the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a burden to my lord the king? 36 Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king, but why should the king repay me with such a reward? 37 Please let your servant turn back again, so that I may die in my own city *and be buried* by the grave of my father and my mother. But see your servant Kimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you."

38 And the king answered, "Kimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you. And I will do for you whatever you ask me."

39 And all the people crossed the Jordan. And when the king had crossed, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him; and he returned to his own place.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Kimham

**19:17** "Ziba" – 3:19-21; 9:2-10; 16:1-4. **19:18-20** Shimei admits his sin (16:5-8). Such people will do anything to save their unworthy necks.

"House of Joseph" – the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh here signify all the northern tribes of Israel.

**19:21** The law did not demand death for the sin of cursing a ruler (Ex 22:28). Abishai was the same sort of man as his brother Joab. David lumps them together more than once (3:39; 16:10).

**19:22** It was time to show mercy to enemies and David knew it.

**19:23** David did not trust Shimei, but he kept this oath as long as he lived. See

1 Kings 2:8,9.

**19:24** 9:6-10.

**19:26-30** "He answered" – there is a ring of truth in Mephibosheth's words and behavior, but we cannot be certain whether it was he or Ziba who was telling the truth (16:3,4).

**19:29** David himself did not know whom to believe. Often leaders of God's people, hearing conflicting stories, find themselves in a similar position.

**19:31** 17:27-29; 1 Kings 2:7.

**19:37** Kimham may have been Barzillai's son. **19:38** David showed the fine quality of gratitude for help received.

**19:40** Verses 9-14.

went on with him, and all the people of Judah and also half the people of Israel conducted the king.

41 And then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household and all David's men with him, over the Jordan?"

42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king *is* a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry about this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's *expense*? Or has he given us any gift?"

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, "We have ten parts in the king, so we also have more *right* to David than you. Why then did you despise us? Was it not our advice first to bring back our king?"

And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

**20** And there happened to be a wicked man there, whose name *was* Sheba. *He was* the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet and said, "We have no part in David, nor do we have an inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, O Israel!"

2 So every man of Israel went away David *and* followed Sheba, the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah stayed with their king, from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem, and the king took the ten women, *his* concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and put them under guard and provided for them, but he did not go in to them. So they were confined to the day of their death, living as widows.

4 Then the king said to Amasa, "Assemble the men of Judah for me within three days, and you be present here." 5 So Amasa went to assemble *the men of Judah*, but he stayed away longer than the

set time which *David* had fixed for him.

6 And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba, the son of Bichri, will do us more harm than Absalom *did*. Take your lord's servants and pursue him, so that he does not get away into fortified cities and escape us." 7 And Joab's men and the Kerethites and the Pelethites and all the mighty men went out after him, and they left Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they *were* at the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. And Joab was dressed in his military tunic, and over it was a belt *with* a sword fastened to his waist in its scabbard. And as he went on it fell out.

9 And Joab said to Amasa, "Are you in good health, my brother?" And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. 10 But Amasa paid no attention to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand, so he struck him with it in the stomach, and spilled out his bowels onto the ground and did not strike him again. And he died. Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba, the son of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men stood near him and said, "Whoever favours Joab and whoever *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab." 12 And Amasa was wallowing in blood in the middle of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he moved Amasa out of the highway into the field and threw a cloth over him, seeing that everyone who came near him stood still. 13 When he had been moved out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel, and to Beth-Maachah and all the Berites, and they were gathered together and also went after him. 15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-Maachah, and they threw up a mound against the city, and it stood by the wall; and all the people who *were* with Joab battered the wall to

**19:41-43** The men of the northern tribes of Israel had spoken before the men of Judah of bringing David back (v 11), but Judah performed the ceremony of bringing him over Jordan. In the argument which resulted, Israel claimed their right on the ground of numbers (v 43), Judah claimed theirs on the ground of relationship (v 42). What should have been a time of united rejoicing became an occasion for jealousy and dissension.

**20:1** "Wicked man" - Prov 15:18; 16:28; 17:14,19; 20:3; 28:25. There will always be someone ready to promote dissension among God's people, for his own ends.

**20:2** A brief time before (19:43) the men of these northern tribes insisted they had ten shares in David. Now they say they have none. The affection of the masses is a fickle thing

(Num 14:10; 1 Sam 30:6; Matt 27:20-26). **20:3** 15:16; 16:21,22.

**20:4** "Amasa" - David did what he said he would do in 19:13. He ignored Joab.

**20:5** "The set time" - no reason is given for this. Perhaps the men of Judah were hesitant about following a new commander. They showed their loyalty to Joab in vs 11,13,15.

**20:6** David turned for help again to one of the sons of Zeruiah who were "too much" for him, whom he had called "adversaries" (19:21,22). Indeed they were adversaries of everything gentle, humble, and spiritual.

**20:7** "Pelethites" - 8:18.

**20:9** "Kiss him" - the hypocrite's way (Matt 26:49).

**20:10** 2:23; 3:27; 18:14; 1 Kings 2:5.

**20:14** "Maachah" - in the far north of the land.

bring it down. 16 Then a wise woman cried out from the city, "Listen! Listen! Please say to Joab, 'Come near here, so that I may speak with you.'" 17 And when he had come near her, the woman said, "Are you Joab?"

And he answered, "I am."

Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your maid servant."

And he answered, "I am listening."

18 Then she spoke, saying, "In olden times they used to speak, saying, 'They will surely ask *counsel* at Abel' and so they ended *any dispute*. 19 I am *one of the peaceable and faithful* in Israel. You are seeking to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?"

20 And Joab answered and said, "Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. 21 The case *is* not like *that*; but a man from mount Ephraim, Sheba by name, the son of Bichri, has raised his hand against the king, against David. Only hand him over, and I will depart from the city."

And the woman said to Joab, "Look, his head will be thrown to you over the wall." 22 Then the woman went to all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba, the son of Bichri, and threw *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they withdrew from the city, each man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

23 Now Joab *was* over all the army of Israel, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Kerethites and over the Pelethites, 24 and Adoram *was* over the tribute, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder, 25 and Sheva *was* scribe, and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests, 26 and Ira the Jairite also was a minister under David.

**20:19** "Mother" – in the Bible towns and cities are sometimes spoken of using the female gender (Ps 137:8; Isa 1:8; 23:10, 12; Jer 50:12; Gal 4:26; Rev 17:5,18; etc).

**20:22** "Jerusalem" – and the king accepted Joab again as commander of the army (v 23). Joab was not the kind of person one could shunt aside. David had tried and failed.

**20:23-25** 8:15-18; 1 Chron 18:14-17.

"Adoram" (v 24) – a variant of Adoniram.

**21:1** "Famine" – observe that God sent a famine because of the nation's sin. Putting the Gibeonites to death violated the promise Joshua made to them (Josh 9:3-21). The sin was Saul's, but the trouble came to all. Compare Josh 7:1,11. God dealt with the nation as a unit. And the nation had not confessed and dealt with this sin.

**21:2** "Gibeonites" – Josh 9:15,18-26.

**21:3** "Atonement" – when wrong has been done it has to be put right. Otherwise God's blessing should not be expected (Ex 22:1-15; Lev 6:4,5; 24:18,21; 1 Sam 12:3; 2 Sam 12:6; Luke 19:8).

**21** Then there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year, and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, "*It is* on account of Saul and on account of *his* house of bloodshed, because he killed the Gibeonites."

2 And the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites *were* not *a part* of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites. And the children of Israel had sworn to *spare* them, but Saul sought to strike them down in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah. 3 Therefore David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And how shall I make atonement, so that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?"

4 And the Gibeonites said to him, "For us *it is* not *a matter* of silver or gold with Saul or with his house; nor should any man in Israel be put to death for us."

And he said, "I will do for you whatever you say."

5 And they answered the king, "*As for* the man who consumed us, and who planned *that* we should be ruined with no *place* remaining for us in any of the territories of Israel, 6 let seven men among his offspring be handed over to us, and we will hang them up before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD."

And the king said, "I will hand *them* over."

7 But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul. 8 But the king took the two sons of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and

"Inheritance" – the land of Israel.

**21:5,6** Gen 9:5,6; Num 25:4; 35:31. Saul himself was dead, so retribution was made on his descendants. Many more than seven Gibeonites had been killed, but they were willing to accept the death of seven of Saul's descendants as a just retribution. Was it right for Saul's descendants to pay the penalty of sin committed by Saul? In this case it was right, for God accepted it and stopped the famine (v 14), and certainly we may say that God would not have done so if the action by David had not been right. At first sight this all seems contrary to God's word in Ezekiel chapter 18. But there sin is regarded as a personal matter; in Saul's case God regarded it as a national matter, as in the case of Achan. Also, for all we know, it may be that Saul's descendants had guilty knowledge of Saul's wicked deed, were one with him in it, were wicked people themselves.

**21:7** 1 Sam 18:3; 20:12-17; 23:18; 2 Sam 4:4; 9:10.

the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel, the son of Barzillai, the Meholathite, 9 and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites. And they hanged them on the hill before the LORD. And *all* seven of them fell together, and were put to death during the first *days* of harvest, in the beginning of the barley harvest.

10 And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock *there*, from the beginning of harvest until rain fell on them from the sky, and did not let either the birds of the air come on them by day or the beasts of the field by night. 11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. 12 And *David* went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh Gilead, who had stolen them from the street of Beth-Shan, where the Philistines had hanged them after the Philistines had killed Saul in Gilboa. 13 And David brought the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son up from there; and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged.

14 And they buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the tomb of his father Kish, and they did all that the king commanded. And after that God heard prayer for the land.

15 Once again the Philistines were at war with Israel, and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines, and David became exhausted. 16 And Ishbi-benob, who *was one* of the descendants of a giant, and the weight of whose spear *was* three hundred bronze *shekels* in weight, and who was girded with a new *sword*, said he would kill David. 17 But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, helped him, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, saying, "You shall no longer go out with us to battle, so that you do not extinguish the light of Israel."

18 And it happened after this, that again there was a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbechai, the Hushathite, killed Saph, who *was one* of the descendants of a giant.

19 And again there was a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan, the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, killed *the brother* of

Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was another battle in Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number, and he too had been born to a giant. 21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan, the son of Shimeah the brother of David, killed him.

22 These four were born to a giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

**22** And David spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day *that* the LORD delivered him out of the hands of all his enemies and out of the hands of Saul,

2 And he said,

"The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress,  
and my deliverer,

3 My God, my rock.

In him I will trust.

*He is* my shield, and the horn of  
my salvation, my high tower,  
and my refuge, my saviour.  
You save me from violence.

4 I will call on the LORD,

*who is* worthy to be praised,  
and I will be saved from my enemies.

5 "When the waves of death came around me,  
the floods of ungodly men made me  
afraid.

6 The sorrows of hell came all around me;  
the snares of death were before me.

7 In my distress I called to the LORD,  
and cried out to my God;  
and he hear my voice from his temple,  
and my cry *came* into his ears.

8 "Then the earth shook and trembled;  
the foundations of heaven moved and  
shook, because he was angry.

9 There went up a smoke out of his  
nostrils,  
and devouring fire out of his mouth.  
Coals were kindled by it.

10 And he bowed the heavens and came down,  
and darkness *was* under his feet.

**21:10** "Rain" – God sent rain in answer to prayer (v14), because just retribution had been made.

**21:12** 1 Sam 31:8-13.

**21:14** "After that God heard prayer" – 24:25; Josh 7:26; 2 Chron 7:13,14.

**21:16** "Three hundred shekels" – about 3.5 kilograms.

**21:17** "Light" – 18:3; 1 Kings 11:36. David was like a light to Israel only because God was a light to him (22:29).

**22:1** Ex 15:1; Jud 5:1; Rev 15:2-4.

**22:2-51** Apart from a few slight changes this song is the same as Ps 18:2-50. See notes there. It was written just after the victories recorded in 2 Sam 8:1-14, before David's sin with Bathsheba. Chapters 21-23 of this book (for the most part) refer to events before those recorded in chapter 20.

**22:6** "Hell" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.



- 11 And he rode on a cherub and flew,  
and he was seen on the wings of the wind.
- 12 And he made darkness canopies  
around him, dark waters,  
and thick clouds of the skies.
- 13 Through the brightness before him coals  
of fire were kindled.
- 14 The LORD thundered from heaven,  
and the Most High uttered his voice.
- 15 And he sent out arrows, and scattered  
them; lightning, and routed them.
- 16 And the channels of the sea appeared,  
the foundations of the earth were  
uncovered, at the rebuke of the LORD,  
at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.
- 17 "He sent from above; he took me;  
he drew me out of many waters.
- 18 He delivered me from my strong enemy,  
and from those who hated me,  
for they were too strong for me.
- 19 They confronted me in the day of my  
calamity,  
but the LORD was my support.
- 20 And he brought me out into a spacious  
place.  
He delivered me because he delighted  
in me.
- 21 "The LORD has rewarded me in accordance  
with my righteousness;  
in accordance with the cleanness of my  
hands he has repaid me.
- 22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,  
and have not wickedly departed from  
my God.
- 23 For all his judgments *were* before me;  
and *as for* his statutes,  
I did not depart from them.
- 24 And I was blameless before him,  
and have kept myself from my iniquity.
- 25 Therefore the LORD has repaid me in  
accordance with my righteousness,  
in accordance with my cleanness in  
his eyes.
- 26 "With the merciful you show yourself  
merciful,  
and with the blameless man you  
show yourself *to be* blameless.
- 27 With the pure you show yourself pure,  
and with the twisters you show yourself  
able to twist.
- 28 "And you will save the afflicted people;  
but your eyes *are* on the haughty,  
*whom* you will bring down.
- 29 For you *are* my lamp, O LORD,  
and the LORD will light up my darkness.
- 30 For by you I have run through a troop.  
By my God I have leaped over a wall.
- 31 "As for God, his way *is* perfect.  
The word of the LORD *is* tested.  
He is a shield to all those who trust in him.
- 32 For who *is* God, except the LORD?  
And who *is* a rock, except our God?
- 33 "God *is* my strength *and* power,  
and he makes my way perfect.
- 34 He makes my feet like *the feet* of  
a deer, and sets me on my high places.
- 35 He teaches my hands to war,  
so that a bow of bronze is broken  
by my arms.
- 36 You have also given me the shield  
of your salvation;  
and your gentleness has made me great.
- 37 You have enlarged *the place* of my  
steps under me;  
and my feet did not slip.
- 38 "I pursued my enemies, and destroyed  
them, and did not turn back until  
I had made an end of them.
- 39 And I made an end of them, and crushed  
them, so that they could not rise;  
yes, they fell under my feet.
- 40 For you have clothed me with strength  
for battle.  
You have subdued under me those who  
rose up against me.
- 41 You have also given me the necks of  
my enemies,  
so that I could destroy those who  
hate me.
- 42 They looked, but *there was* no one  
to save;  
*even* to the LORD, but he did not  
answer them.
- 43 Then I beat them as small as the dust  
of the earth.  
I stamped them like the mire of the  
street, *and* scattered them around.
- 44 "You have also delivered me from the  
strivings of my people.  
You have kept me *as* head of the nations.  
A people *that* I did not know serve me.
- 45 Foreigners submit themselves to me.  
As soon as they hear, they become  
obedient to me.
- 46 Foreigners lose heart and are afraid  
from their strongholds.
- 47 "The LORD lives; and blessed *be* my rock,  
and exalted be the God of the rock

of my salvation.

- 48 It *is* God who avenges me and who brings down the people under me,  
 49 And who brings me out from my enemies.  
 And you have lifted me up on high above those who rose up against me.  
 You have delivered me from the violent man.  
 50 Therefore I will give thanks to you,  
 O LORD, among the nations,  
 and I will sing praises to your name.  
 51 *He is* the tower of salvation for his king,  
 and shows mercy to his anointed,  
 to David and to his seed forever."

## 23 Now these *are* the last words of David.

David the son of Jesse said,  
 and the man *who was* raised up on high,  
 the anointed of the God of Jacob,  
 and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

- 2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me,  
 and his word *was* in my tongue.  
 3 The God of Israel spoke,  
 the Rock of Israel said to me,  
 'He who rules over men *must be* just,  
 ruling in the fear of God.  
 4 And *he will be* like the light of the morning,  
 when the sun rises,  
 a morning without clouds;  
*like* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain.'  
 5 Although my house *is* not so with God;  
 still he has made an everlasting covenant with me,  
 ordered in all *things*, and sure.  
*As* for all my salvation and all *my*

desire, will he not make *it* grow?

- 6 But wicked men, all of them, *will be* like thorns thrown aside because they cannot be taken by hand,  
 7 and the man *who* touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear;  
 and they will be utterly burned with fire in the *same* place."

8 These *are* the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite who sat in the seat, chief among the captains; he *was called* Adino the Eznite. *He lifted up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he killed at one time. 9 And after him *was* Eleazar, the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines *who* were gathered together there to battle, and the men of Israel had drawn back. 10 He arose and struck down the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. And the LORD accomplished a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder.

11 And after him *was* Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together in a band where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. And the people fled from the Philistines, 12 but he stood in the middle of the ground and defended it and killed the Philistines; and the LORD accomplished a great victory.

13 And at harvest time three of the thirty chief *men* went down and came to David at the cave of Adullam; and the Philistine troops were camping in the valley of Rephaim. 14 And David *was* then in a stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then in Bethlehem. 15 And David felt a longing and said, "Oh that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well at Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate!" 16 And the three mighty men broke

**23:1** "Last words" – the first seven verses of this chapter were words David spoke by inspiration (the Hebrew means this) toward the end of his life. From v 8 the narrative returns to events much earlier in his life.

"Anointed" – 1 Sam 16:12,13.

"Sweet psalmist" – seventy-three of the psalms are attributed to David, and he probably wrote several more of them.

**23:2** Matt 22:43; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21. When David declared the Word of God he was conscious of the inspiration of God's Spirit.

**23:3** "Rock" – note at Deut 32:4.

"Just" – this was always David's aim. See Ps 101.

"Fear of God" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**23:4** "Light" – 21:17; Prov 4:18. An unjust ruler is all black clouds and darkness, without rain.

**23:5** "Covenant" – 7:12; Ps 89:29; Isa 55:3.

"Desire" – Ps 37:4.

**23:6** Isa 9:18; 10:17; Mic 7:4; Nah 1:10; Mal 4:1; Matt 13:41,42; Heb 6:8; Rev 21:8.

**23:8-39** "Mighty men" – 1 Chron 11:10-41. David's day was a time of much warfare. Here his most notable warriors are singled out for honor. It is not unlikely there will be something similar at Christ's return, for those who have fought in His spiritual battles. See 2 Tim 4:7,8.

**23:9** "Three" – two groups of three and one group of thirty are referred to (vs 8-12, 13-23, 23-39).

**23:12** If those engaged in spiritual warfare would show this courage and determination there would be more victories.

**23:13** "Three" – a different three from those in vs 8-12. Of these three, only Abishai and Benaiah are named.

**23:14** 1 Sam 22:4,5.

**23:16,17** In David's eyes their action was

through the army of the Philistines, and drew water from the well at Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took *it* and brought *it* to David. However he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD.

17 And he said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! *Is not this* the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" So he would not drink it. These things these three mighty men did.

18 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred *and* killed *them*, and had a name among the three. 19 Was he not the most honoured of the three? Therefore he was their captain. However he did not attain to the *level of the first* three.

20 And *there was* Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who did many deeds. He killed two lion-like men of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit in a time of snow. 21 And he killed an Egyptian, an impressive man; and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but *Benaiah* went down to him with a staff and pulled the spear out of the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. 22 These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and had a name among three mighty men. 23 He was more honoured than the thirty, but he did not attain to the *level of the first* three. And David appointed him over his guard.

like a sacrifice of their lives. And the blood of sacrifices was to be poured out or sprinkled around the altar – Ex 29:12; Lev 1:5; 4:7; 17:10.

**23:18** 2:18; 10:10; 8:2; 19:21; 1 Sam 26:6.

**23:20** 8:18; 20:23.

**23:23** "First three" – the three mentioned in vs 8-12.

**23:24** "Asahel" – 2:18.

**23:34** "Eliam" – the father of Bathsheba.

**23:39** "Uriah" – the husband of Bathsheba whom David later had killed (11:14,15; 12:9).

"Thirty-seven" – the names of replacements for those who died are probably included in this list. Notice that Uriah appears in this list but Joab does not.

**24:1-25** 1 Chron 21:1-27.

**24:1** "Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11. The specific reason for God's anger here is not given, but we may be sure there was a good reason for it. God is never angry without good reason.

"Moved" – 1 Chron 21:1 says that Satan moved David to take a census of Israel. God's will was the root cause, Satan's work in David's mind was the immediate cause. Behind the act of Satan stood the purpose of God in judgment. When God determines to test someone, or send punishment, or

24 Asahel, the brother of Joab, *was* one of the thirty; *as were* Elhanan, the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite, 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira, the son of Ikkeš the Tekoite, 27 Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, 29 Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai, the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, 30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai, from the brooks of Gaash, 31 Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, 32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam, the son of Sharar the Hararite, 34 Eliphelet, the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam, the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, 35 Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, 36 Igal, the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Nahari the Beerothite, armour bearer to Joab, the son of Zeruiah, 38 Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite, 39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.

**24** And again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, "Go, count Israel and Judah."

2 For the king said to Joab the commander of the army, who *was* with him, "Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, so that I may know the number of the people."

work His will in anything, He may use any instrument He chooses. See 1 Kings 22:19-23; Job 1:6-12; 2:6; Isa 10:5,6; Jer 51:20-23; Hab 1:6; Acts 2:23; 4:28; Rev 17:17. God is the sovereign ruler of the universe and rules justly and righteously over the nations (Ps 22:28; 47:2; 93:1; 97:1). God does not tempt any man to do wrong (Jam 1:13,14), and taking a census itself was not wrong (in Num 1:1-3 God Himself ordered a census to be taken). But God, in accordance with His wise will, permits Satan to tempt men, and taking a census from wrong motives was wrong. And the verses which follow make it clear that David demanded a census from wrong motives.

**24:2** "From Dan to Beersheba" – an expression meaning from one end of the country to the other. Like saying from "Kashmir to Cape Comorin."

"That I may know" – this suggests David wanted to take pride in the number of his fighting men, or that for success he had begun to depend on them instead of on God. It seems that he forgot, for the time, that the power and security of Israel were not in arms and soldiers, but in God. He was acting contrary to the mind he himself had shown more than once – 22:2-4, 47-51; 1 Sam 17:26,37,45-47; Ps 33:16-20.

3 And Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add a hundredfold to the people, however many they may be, so that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it*. But why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"

4 However the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the officers of the army. And Joab and the officers of the army went out from the presence of the king, to count the people of Israel.

5 And they crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lies* in the middle of the river *valley* of Gad, and toward Jazer. 6 Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-Hodshi, and they came to Dan-Jaan, and around to Sidon, 7 and came to the stronghold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites. And they went out to the south of Judah, to Beersheba.

8 So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9 And Joab handed over to the king the sum of the number of the people. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.

10 And David was struck to the heart after he had counted the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. And now, I beg you, O LORD, take away the wickedness of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

11 And when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, 12 "Go and tell David, 'Thus says the

LORD: I offer you three *things*. Choose one of them, so that I may *do it* to you.'"

13 So Gad came to David and told him and said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' of plague in your land? Now find out and see what answer I should take back to the one who sent me."

14 And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall now into the hands of the LORD, for his mercies *are* great. But do not let me fall into the hands of man."

15 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from morning to the time appointed, and seventy thousand men of the people, from Dan even to Beersheba, died. 16 And when the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented concerning the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough. Now hold back your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 And David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel that struck down the people, and said, "Look, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? I pray you, let your hand be against me and against my father's house."

18 And Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19 And David, in accordance with the word of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. 20 And Araunah looked and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him, and Araunah went out and

**24:3** Even Joab, unspiritual man that he was, recognized the folly of David's action.

**24:4** David does not give a reason for wanting a census. Did he realize himself that his motives were wrong? In any case, he stubbornly rejected Joab's criticism, and insisted on having his own way. God's servants should learn to weigh humbly and carefully any criticism of their actions. It could save them much trouble.

**24:10** "Sinned" – now David fully realized that his motives in making a census were sinful. He repented, and no doubt was forgiven. But there were serious consequences of his sinning.

**24:11** "Gad" – 1 Sam 9:9; 22:5.

"Seer" – note at 1 Sam 9:9.

**24:12,13** Compare 12:9-14. Confession and forgiveness do not mean that God's chastisement will not come. Famine, defeat by enemies, and plague were three of the means God threatened to use to punish a disobedient people (Deut 28:15-25; Jer 14:12; Ezek 14:21). David chose to have

God deal directly with him and the people rather than indirectly through famine or enemies.

**24:14** "Mercies" – Ex 34:6; Ps 103:8-13.

**24:15** "Seventy thousand" – remember that God's anger burned against the whole nation (v 1).

**24:16** "Angel" – Ex 12:23; 33:2; 2 Kings 19:35; Ps 35:5,6; 78:49.

"Relented" – David's choice to put himself and the people in God's hand was a good one. It once again brought out God's compassion.

**24:17** "Sheep" – David may not have been aware that God was angry with the whole nation. In any case, he is willing to take the whole blame for the disaster if only the people could be spared. Though he had sinned he was still a true shepherd (Ps 78:71,72).

**24:18** "Gad" – the angel of the Lord sent him. See 1 Chron 21:18.

"Altar" – for the purpose of offering sacrifices which God had appointed (v 25).

prostrated himself before the king with his face on the ground.

21 And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, so that the plague may be held back from the people."

22 And Araunah said to David, "May my lord the king take and offer up whatever *seems* good to him. Look, *here are* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for wood. 23 O king, all these *things* Araunah gives to

the king." And Araunah said to the king, "The LORD your God accept you."

24 And the king said to Araunah, "No, but I must buy *it* from you at a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God from what costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David built an altar there to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heard prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.

"Jebusite" – 5:6.

**24:21** "Held back" – compare Num 16:44-50. For the significance of sacrifices under the law see notes at Lev 1:2.

**24:24** Alas, that many of God's people are willing to give their worst to God, or that which costs them the least (Mal 1:13,14). In this way they show that their love for Him is very small or non-existent. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

"Fifty shekels" – about 0.6 kilogram.

David paid 50 shekels of silver for the threshing floor and oxen. He paid 600 shekels of gold for the area which contained the threshing floor (1 Chron 21:25; 22:1).

**24:25** These offerings spoke of dedication to God and reconciliation after sinning against Him. See notes at Leviticus chapters 1 and 3. After the events of this chapter, the people might well have prayed the prayer of Moses (psalm 90). It is a fitting commentary on this chapter.



# 1 KINGS

## Title:

Originally 1 Kings and 2 Kings were one book (in the Hebrew Bible). The translators of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) divided the one book into two.

## Author, date:

According to ancient Jewish tradition the author was the prophet Jeremiah, but there is no proof for this. It was probably written shortly after the Jews went into captivity in Babylon.

## Themes:

This book continues the history of the kings who ruled the people of Israel from David to Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah. Some important events recorded here are the construction of the temple by Solomon, the division of the tribes of Israel into two kingdoms, the rapid descent of the northern kingdom into idolatry and corruption, and the remarkable ministry of the prophet Elijah. The events in 1 Kings cover a period of 118 years.

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**1** Now king David was old *and* advanced in years, and they put covers over him, but he did not keep warm. **2** Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young virgin be sought for my lord the king, and let her attend the king and take care of him, and let her lie in your bosom, so that my lord the king may keep warm."

**3** So they looked for a beautiful girl throughout all the territories of Israel, and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. **4** And the girl *was* very beautiful, and took care of the king and ministered to him, but the king did not know her.

**5** Then Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself, saying, "I will be king," and he prepared chariots and horsemen for himself, and fifty men to run before him. **6** And his father had not displeased him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" And he also *was* a very handsome man; and *his mother* bore him after Absalom.

**7** And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest; and they followed Adonijah *and* helped *him*. **8** But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and David's mighty men, were not with Adonijah.

**9** And Adonijah slaughtered sheep and oxen and fat cattle at the stone of Zohemoth, which is by En-rogel, and invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants. **10** But he did not invite Nathan the prophet and Benaiah and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother.

**1:1** "Years" – David was about seventy years old (2 Sam 5:4).

**1:3** "Shunam" – Josh 19:17,18; 1 Sam 28:4; 2 Kings 4:8.

**1:4** "Know" – note at Gen 4:1.

**1:5** "Adonijah" – he was the fourth son of David. Haggith was one of the wives of David (2 Sam 3:4). But both Amnon and Absalom were dead, and probably Kileab also (after his birth nothing is written about him anywhere). Evidently Adonijah thought he should be next in line for the throne of Israel.

"Exalted himself" – he (and all Israel) knew that God had chosen Solomon to be king after David. See 1 Chron 28:5-7. But Adonijah was not willing to accept this. Now Christians do not have the right to put themselves forward to grasp power and position. See Jer 45:5; Matt 10:38,39; 16:24,25; 20:25-28.

"Run before him" – like Absalom (2 Sam 15:1).

**1:6** "Not displeased him" – parents who let their children do what they please, instead of disciplining them and bringing them up in the fear of the Lord, will be storing up trouble and sorrow for later years. David is now once again reaping what he had sown.

**11** Therefore Nathan spoke to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has become king, and our lord David does not know it? **12** Now therefore come, please let me give you counsel, so that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. **13** Go and approach king David and say to him, 'My lord the king, did you not swear to your maid servant, saying, 'Your son Solomon shall certainly reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne?' Why then has Adonijah become king?' **14** Look, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you, and confirm your words."

**15** And Bathsheba went in to the king in *his* room. And the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite ministered to the king. **16** And Bathsheba bowed and prostrated herself to the king.

And the king said, "What do you wish?"

**17** And she said to him, "My lord, you swore by the LORD your God to your maid servant, *saying*, 'Your son Solomon shall certainly reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.' **18** And now, look, Adonijah has become king, and now, my lord the king, you do not know *it*. **19** And he has slaughtered oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army, but he has not invited your servant Solomon. **20** And *as for* you, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel *are* on you, that you should tell them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king

On bringing up children see Prov 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:15,17; Eph 6:4; 1 Tim 3:4,5; Heb 12:5-11.

**1:7** "Joab" – the commander of the army (2 Sam 8:16).

"Helped him" – power lovers will usually find a following of some kind or other.

**1:8** "Benaiah" – captain of David's bodyguard (2 Sam 8:18).

"Shimei and Rei" – or perhaps it could be translated "Shimei and his friends." It is very unlikely that this means the Shimei of 2:8,9 and 2 Sam 16:5-9.

**1:9** "En-Rogel" – just outside the wall of Jerusalem to the southeast.

**1:10** "Solomon" – 2 Sam 12:24,25.

**1:11** "Bathsheba" – 2 Sam 11:3,27. Adonijah had not actually ascended the throne, but his conspiracy was well supported and certain to succeed unless something was done.

**1:13** This promise is not recorded in the Bible, but David says in v 30 that he had made it. And God had made it clear to David that Solomon was the one to be David's successor (1 Chron 22:6-10; 28:5-7). One main difference between Adonijah and Solomon is that Adonijah "exalted himself" (v 5), but God appointed Solomon.

after him. 21 Otherwise it shall come about, when my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be regarded as offenders."

22 And, then, while she was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. 23 And they told the king, saying, "Look, Nathan the prophet." And when he had come in before the king, he bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

24 And Nathan said, "My lord the king, have you said 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne?' 25 For he has gone down this day, and slaughtered oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons and the officers of the army and Abiathar the priest, and, see, they are eating and drinking in his presence, and they are saying, 'God save king Adonijah!' 26 But he has not invited me, me your servant, or Zadok the priest or Benaiah the son of Jehoiada or your servant Solomon. 27 Is this thing done by my lord the king? And have you not told your servant who would sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

28 Then king David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba for me." And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

29 And the king took an oath and said, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of all distress, 30 just as I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel, saying, 'Solomon your son shall certainly reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my stead', just so I will certainly do today."

31 Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth and prostrated herself to the king, and said, "May my lord king David live forever."

32 And king David said, "Call Zadok the priest for me, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." And they came before the king. 33 And the king said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon, 34 and have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king there over Israel, and blow with the trumpet, and say, 'God save king Solomon.' 35 Then you shall come up after him, that he may come and sit on my throne. For he shall be king in my place, for I have appointed him to be ruler over

Israel and over Judah."

36 And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, answered the king, and said, "Amen! May the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*. 37 As the LORD has been with my lord the king, even so may he be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David."

38 So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Kerethites and the Pelethites, went down and had Solomon ride on king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. 39 And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, "God save king Solomon!" 40 And all the people came up after him, and the people were playing on flutes and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth split with their noise.

41 And Adonijah and all the guests who *were* with him heard *it* as they finished eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, "Why *is that* noise of uproar *coming* from the city?"

42 And while he was still speaking, suddenly Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came, and Adonijah said to him, "Come in, for you *are* a brave man, and bring good news."

43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, "On the contrary. Our lord king David has made Solomon king. 44 And the king has sent with him Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and they had him ride on the king's mule. 45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon. And they have come up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar again. This *is* the noise that you heard. 46 And also Solomon is seated on the throne of the kingdom. 47 And, moreover, the king's servants have come to congratulate our lord king David, saying, 'May God make the name of Solomon better than your name, and make his throne greater than your throne.' And the king bowed down on the bed. 48 And also the king has said, 'Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who has given *one* to sit on my throne today, with my eyes seeing *it*."

**1:21** She was afraid that Adonijah would put to death any potential rivals for the throne.  
**1:24** Nathan could be blunt when that was needed (2 Sam 12:7). He could also be diplomatic and shrewd. He well knew that David had not chosen Adonijah.

**1:29** "Distress" – 2 Sam 4:9; Ps 34:6.

**1:30** Verse 13.

**1:33** "Gihon" – a spring on the slope of Mt Zion.

**1:34** 1 Sam 10:1; 16:3,12; 2 Sam 15:10.

**1:38** "Pelethites" – note at 2 Sam 8:18.

**1:39** Anointing with oil indicated that God was setting apart a person to be king.

**1:41** Gihon was not far from En-Rogel and loud noise from one place would carry to the other.

**1:48** "Who has given someone to sit on my throne" – 2 Sam 7:12; Ps 132:11,12. David did what he could to see that Solomon succeeded him, but he knew that it was God's doing.

49 And all the guests who *were* with Adonijah were afraid and rose up, and every man went his way. 50 And Adonijah was afraid because of Solomon, and arose and went and took hold of the horns of the altar. 51 And it was told Solomon, saying, "Look, Adonijah is afraid of king Solomon, for, see, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let king Solomon swear to me today that he will not kill his servant with the sword.'"

52 And Solomon said, "If he shows himself a worthy man, not a hair of his will fall to the ground, but if wickedness is found in him, he will die." 53 So king Solomon sent *men*, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed down to king Solomon, and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

**2** Now David's time to die drew near, and he gave a charge to his son Solomon, saying,

2 "I am going the way of all the earth, therefore be strong, and show yourself a man, 3 and keep the charge of the LORD your God to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and his commandments and his judgments and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn, 4 so that the LORD may fulfil his word which he spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your children are careful about their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you will not lack (he said) a man on the throne of Israel.'

5 "Moreover, you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two

commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner, and to Amasa the son of Jether. He killed them, shedding the blood of war in peace, and putting the blood of war on his belt that *was* around his waist, and on his shoes that *were* on his feet. 6 Therefore act according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace.

7 "But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom your brother.

8 "And, look, *you have* with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, who cursed me with a terrible curse on the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' 9 Now therefore do not consider him innocent, for you *are* a wise man, and know what you ought to do to him, and bring his gray head down to the grave with blood."

10 So David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David. 11 And the time that David reigned over Israel was forty years. He reigned seven years in Hebron, and he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem. 12 Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his kingdom was firmly established.

13 And Adonijah, the son of Haggith, came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. And she said, "Do you come peaceably?"

And he said, "Peaceably." 14 He also said,

**1:49** When Adonijah's attempt to be king failed he suddenly lost his supporters. As so often among men, fear destroyed any loyalty they may have had.

**1:50** "Horns" – Ex 27:2. By this action Adonijah was seeking sanctuary and safety in God's place of worship – a custom common in many times and places.

**2:1** "Time to die" – compare Deut 31:1-8; Josh 23:1-16; 1 Sam 12:1-25.

**2:2** "Be strong" – Deut 31:6,23; Josh 1:6,7; 23:4.

**2:3** "His ways" – Deut 4:5,6; 10:12,13; 17:18-20; Josh 1:7.

**2:4** "His word" – see 2 Sam 7:11-16.

"With all their heart" – Deut 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 30:6. Both Solomon and most of his successors on the throne failed to do this, and eventually disaster overtook the people of Israel. But the promise to David was not canceled. Christ, the Son of David, will fulfil it.

**2:5** "He killed them" – 2 Sam 3:27-39; 20:4-10. See also 18:9-14. Joab was a skillful general but a hard and bloodthirsty man. David was never able to deal with him as he should have.

**2:6** David wanted Solomon to do what he

himself had been too weak to do. David knew that if Joab lived he could be a continual source of trouble to Solomon's reign.

"Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol" (also v 9) – note at Gen 37:35.

**2:7** 2 Sam 17:27-29; 19:31-38.

**2:8** "Shimei" – 2 Sam 16:5-8; 19:18-23.

**2:9** "Innocent" – Shimei could not be considered innocent. See Ex 22:28. David knew that Shimei too could be a source of trouble to the new king. For the sake of a peaceful reign it was better, David thought, to rid the kingdom of such people as Joab and Shimei. See notes on psalm 101. Compare Luke 19:27; etc.

**2:10** "Slept" – a choice of word by the Holy Spirit which indicated death, but this word may also suggest, as some think, survival after death. For those who sleep wake again. See Dan 12:2. It is the body which "slept", the spirit went into the unseen world.

"City of David" – 2 Sam 5:6,7; Acts 2:29.

**2:11** 2 Sam 5:4,5. His reign was from about 1010 to 970 B.C.

**2:13** 1:5. "Peaceably" – Adonijah had not shown himself to be a man of peace and



"I have something to say to you."

And she said, "Speak."

15 And he said, "You know that the kingdom was mine, and *that* all Israel was looking to me to be king. However the kingdom has turned around and become my brother's, for it was his from the LORD. 16 And now I make one request of you. Do not deny me."

And she said to him, "Speak."

17 And he said, "Please speak to Solomon the king (for he will not refuse you) that he may give Abishag the Shunammite to me as *my* wife."

18 And Bathsheba said, "*Very* well. I will speak for you to the king."

19 So Bathsheba went to king Solomon to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne, and had a seat placed for the king's mother; and she sat at his right hand.

20 Then she said, "I will make one small request of you. Please do not refuse me."

And the king said to her, "Ask, my mother, for I will not refuse you."

21 And she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to your brother Adonijah as *his* wife."

22 And king Solomon answered and said to his mother, "And why are you asking Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask the kingdom for him also, for he is my older brother. *Ask it* for him and for Abiathar the priest and for Joab the son of Zeruiah."

23 Then king Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, "God do *harm* to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life. 24 Now therefore, *as* the LORD lives, who has established me and placed me on the throne of my father David, and who has founded a house for me, as he promised, Adonijah will be put to death

today." 25 And king Solomon sent orders to Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and Adonijah died.

26 And the king said to Abiathar the priest, "Go to Anathoth, to your own fields, for you *are* worthy of death. But I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the LORD God in front of my father David, and because you suffered in everything my father suffered." 27 So Solomon dismissed Abiathar from being a priest to the LORD in fulfillment of the word of the LORD, which he spoke in Shiloh concerning the house of Eli.

28 Then news came to Joab, for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he had not turned after Absalom. And Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and took hold of the horns of the altar. 29 And it was told king Solomon that Joab had fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and *was* there by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, "Go, strike him down."

30 And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said to him, "This is what the king says, 'Come out.'"

And he said, "No, but I will die here."

And Benaiah brought word back to the king, saying, "This *is what* Joab says, and this *is what* he answered me."

31 And the king said to him, "Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, so that you can remove from me and from my father's house the innocent blood which Joab shed. 32 And the LORD will bring back his blood onto his own head. He struck down two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword, my father David being unaware *of it*, Abner the son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah.

Bathsheba had reason to doubt his purpose in coming.

**2:15** He may have thought that as the oldest living son of David, the kingdom was his. However, the kingdom was really God's and He had not given it to Adonijah.

**2:17** "Abishag" – 1:3,4. This request was not a simple, innocent one. See v 22.

**2:19** "Right hand" – place of honor. Eph 1:20,21, etc.

**2:22** "Kingdom for him" – obviously Abishag was regarded as David's concubine or wife, and Adonijah's desire to marry her was the same as making a claim to the throne. See 2 Sam 3:7; 12:8; 16:21.

**2:23** See 1:52. Adonijah had proved unworthy.

**2:24** "Promised" – 2 Sam 7:11-13; 1 Chron 22:10.

**2:26** "Abiathar" – 1:7,25. He deserved to die because he, with Adonijah, was in rebellion against God's appointed king and so against God Himself.

"Suffered" – 1 Sam 22:20-23; 23:6-9; 30:7; 2 Sam 17:15; 19:11.

**2:27** 1 Sam 2:27-36.

**2:28** "Altar" – 1:50.

**2:29** "Strike him down" – Joab was guilty of murder and rebellion, sins worthy of death under the law. He had no right to seek asylum in God's place of worship. Asylum of any kind was only for those who accidentally killed someone. See Ex 21:12-17. It is no use at any time for the guilty to try to find safety under the shelter of religion, without repentance. God will not spare such. See Ezek 9:1-6. There is refuge in God only for the truly repentant and believing.

**2:31** "Remove. . .innocent blood" – this was a very important concept. The guilt of one leader could cling to a whole nation and cause great trouble. Compare 2 Sam 21:1. See also Joshua chapter 7.

**2:32** "Bring back his blood" – Gen 9:6; Deut 32:40,41; Jud 9:24,57; 2 Sam 3:27,29,39; 20:9,10; Ps 7:15,16;

33 Therefore their blood will return onto the head of Joab, and onto the head of his offspring forever, but there will be peace from the LORD forever on David, and on his offspring, and on his house, and on his throne."

34 So Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, went up and struck him down and killed him. And he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. 35 And in his place the king put Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar.

36 And the king sent and called for Shimei and said to him, "Build a house for yourself in Jerusalem, and live there, and do not go anywhere from there. 37 For *this is the way* it will be: on the day you go out and cross the brook Kidron, you may know for certain that you will surely die; your blood will be on your own head."

38 And Shimei said to the king, "The word *is* good. Your servant will do just as my lord the king has said." And Shimei lived in Jerusalem many days.

39 And it so happened at the end of three years, that two of Shimei's servants ran away to Achish, son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, "Look, your servants *are* in Gath." 40 And Shimei arose and saddled his donkey and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants. So Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath.

41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and had returned. 42 And the king sent and called for Shimei and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD, and solemnly warned you, saying, 'Know for certain *that* on the day you go out and travel around anywhere, you shall surely die'? And you said to

me, 'The word I have heard is good.' 43 Why then have you not kept the oath *you swore* by the LORD, and the command that I gave you?"

44 Moreover the king said to Shimei, "You know all the evil that you did to my father David which your heart is aware of; therefore the LORD will bring back your evil on your own head, 45 and king Solomon *will be* blessed, and the throne of David will be established before the LORD forever."

46 So the king gave a command to Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck him down, and *Shimei* died.

And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

**3** And Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter in marriage and brought her into the city of David, until he had finished building his own house and the house of the LORD and the wall around Jerusalem. 2 However the people sacrificed on the high places, because up to that time there was no house built for the name of the LORD. 3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David. However he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night and God said, "Ask. What shall I give you?"

6 And Solomon said, "You have shown great mercy to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in truth and in righteousness, and in integrity of heart with you; and you have

Jer 25:14; Gal 6:7.

**2:33** Only by cleansing the kingdom from guilt could peace be expected.

**2:37** A wise way of making Shimei himself responsible for whether he was to live or die.

**2:44** "Evil that you did" - 2 Sam 16:5-13.

"Bring back" - v 32.

**2:45** Verses 32,33.

**2:46** The death of two potential troublemakers helped to make Solomon's position stable.

**3:1** "Marriage" - this cemented a political alliance.

"City of David" - 2 Sam 5:6,7.

**3:2** The high places were shrines used in idol worship by the people of Canaan before the Israelites entered the land. The Israelites used them as places in which to worship Jehovah the true God. But this violated the law (Deut 7:5; 12:3-6,13,14). Later in history they forsook Jehovah and worshipped idols and false gods on the high places.

**3:3** Solomon loved the Lord, but he failed in this one matter early in his reign. This seed of disobedience or carelessness regarding God's laws came to full and terrible flower in his later years - 11:4-8.

**3:4-15** 2 Chron 1:3-13.

**3:4** "Gibeon" - Josh 9:3-27; 18:25; 21:17. The reason for Gibeon's importance was that the tabernacle and bronze altar (Ex 25:8,9; 27:1,2) were there - 1 Chron 21:29; 2 Chron 1:2-6.

**3:5** "Dream" - notes at Gen 15:12; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1.

"Ask. What shall I give you" - God loves to give good gifts to men (Rom 8:32; James 1:17; John 3:16; etc). If God promised to give us the one thing we asked for, what would we ask? Wisdom, as Solomon asked? Riches? Power? Humility? Love? Purity? The thing we asked for would reveal what kind of people we are. Is it spiritual blessings we would ask for? Then see Eph 1:3. We should understand what these spiritual blessings are and ask for them all. In our asking God does not limit us to one thing, but we should always be very careful what we ask for.

**3:6** "Solomon said" - the prayer which follows shows Solomon at his spiritual best.

"Integrity of heart" - notes at Ps 18:20-26.

"Given him a son" - 1:48; 2 Sam 7:8-16.

kept for him this great kindness, and you have given him a son to sit on his throne, *as it is* this day.

7 "And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, and *I am but* a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And your servant *is* among your people whom you have chosen, a great people, who are so many they cannot be numbered or counted. 9 Therefore give your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, so that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this your so great people?"

10 And the speech (that Solomon had asked this thing) pleased the Lord. 11 And God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked for yourself long life and have not asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern judgment, 12 see, I have done according to your words; I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there was no one like you before you, and after you no one will arise like you. 13 And I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honour, so that all your days there will not be any among the kings like you. 14 And if you will walk in my ways to keep my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will prolong your days."

15 And Solomon awoke and saw *that it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings and offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

16 Then two women, prostitutes, came to the king and stood before him. 17 And the one woman said, "O my lord, I and this woman live in one house. And I gave birth to a child, with her in the house. 18 And it came about the third day after I gave

birth that this woman also gave birth. And we were together. No stranger *was* with us in the house – just the two of us in the house. 19 And this woman's child died during the night, because she lay on top of it. 20 And she got up at midnight and took my son from my side, while your maid-servant was sleeping, and put it in her bosom, and put her dead child in my bosom. 21 And when I arose in the morning to nurse my child, see, it was dead. But in the morning when I looked at this *child*, see, it was not my son, the one I had borne."

22 And the other woman said, "No, but the living *one is* my son, and the dead *one is* your son." And this *one* said, "No, but the dead *one is* your son, and the living *one is* my son." Thus they spoke before the king.

23 Then the king said, "The one says, 'This living one is my son. Your son is the dead one.' And the other says, 'No, but your son *is* the dead *one*, and my son *is* the living *one*.'" 24 And the king said, "Bring me a sword." And they brought a sword into the king's presence. 25 And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other."

26 Then the woman whose son was alive spoke to the king, for she was moved with compassion for her son, and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and do not at all kill him!" But the other had said,

"Let it be neither mine nor yours, but divide *it*."

27 Then the king answered and said, "Give her the living child, and do not at all kill him. She is his mother."

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had given, and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to give judgment.

**3:7** "I am but a little child" – compare Jer 1:6,7. At the beginning of his reign Solomon was probably about 20 years old. He felt incapable of leading God's people. In a way this made him more capable, because he cast himself on God who is able to make men capable for anything.

**3:8** "Cannot be numbered" – Gen 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; Ex 19:6; Deut 7:6. Solomon asked for wisdom that he might carry out his duties in governing, not that he might gain a reputation for wisdom or use his wisdom for his own ends.

**3:9** "Understanding heart" – 2 Sam 14:17; Dan 2:21; Heb 5:14.

"Who is able" – 2 Cor 2:16; 3:5,6. Possibly Solomon's desire for wisdom was produced, or at least encouraged, by David's words to him in 1 Chron 22:12.

**3:10** This was a prayer God delighted to answer. It was for the right thing and came out of right motives. Compare Jam 1:5; 4:3.

**3:11** Solomon had not asked for the things so many kings would have asked for. We should all be very careful what we ask God for. Compare Ps 106:15.

**3:12,13** "I have done according to your words" – Matt 7:7-11; 1 John 5:14,15.

"Wise" – 4:29-34; 10:23,27; 1 Chron 29:12. If our lives and requests please God He may give us far more than we asked or thought. Compare Eph 3:20.

**3:14** Verse 6. David was far from perfect and he sinned grievously in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah. But on the whole he was obedient to God's laws.

"Prolong your days" – under the law a long life was a reward for obedience to God. **3:15** "Ark" – note at Ex 25:10-22.

"Offerings" – notes on Leviticus chapters 1 and 3.

**3:16** People in Israel could bring a case directly to the king. In this particular case Solomon began to show the wisdom God

**4** So king Solomon was king over all Israel. **2** And these were the officials he had: Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, **3** Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes, *and* Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. **4** And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the army, and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests. **5** And Azariah the son of Nathan *was* over the officers, and Zabud the son of Nathan was the principal officer, *and* the king's friend, **6** and Ahishar was over the household, and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the labour force.

**7** And Solomon had twelve officials over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household, each one providing *this* in his *appointed* month in a year. **8** And these *were* their names: The son of Hur, in Mount Ephraim; **9** the son of Dekar, in Makaz and in Shaalbim and in Beth Shemesh and Elon-beth-hanan; **10** the son of Hessed, in Aruboth – he *had* Sochoh and all the land of Hephher; **11** the son of Abinadab, *in* all the region of Dor (his wife was Taphath, the daughter of Solomon); **12** Baana the son of Ahilud – he *had* Taanach and Megiddo and all Beth Shean, which is near Zartanah below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah and beyond Jokneam; **13** the son of Geber, in Ramoth Gilead – he *had* the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh which are in Gilead, and his was the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bars of brass; **14** Ahinadab the son of Iddo *had* Mahanaim, **15** Ahimaaz, in Naphtali (also he married Basmath, the daughter of Solomon); **16** Baanah the son of Hushai *was* in Asher and in Aloth; **17** Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar; **18** Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin; **19** Geber the son of Uri *was* in the country of Gilead, the land of Sihon king of the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan, the only

had given him.

**4:4** "Benaiah" – 2:27,35.

**4:6** "Labour force" – 9:15; 2 Sam 20:24. Non-Israelites who had been captured in battle, or some of the original Canaanites who remained in the land, became servants or slaves in Israel. Compare Josh 9:22-27. See Deut 20:17. Note on slavery at Ex 21:2.

**4:7** "Household" – see 1 Sam 8:10-18.

**4:8** "Son of Hur" – or "Ben-Hur." In Hebrew "ben" means "son."

**4:18** This was not the Shimei of 2:8,44.

**4:19** "Bashan" – Deut 3:8-10.

**4:20** "Rejoicing" – they were prosperous (v 25) and at peace (5:4). But before too long some in Israel began to feel the burden of supporting the king's household and royal court – 12:4.

**4:21** "River" – this was the full extent of the land promised to Abraham's descendants (Gen 15:18). Only David and Solomon, of all the kings of Israel, ruled so much territory.

**4:22** Solomon's retinue in his palace must

official who *was* in that land.

**20** In number Judah and Israel *were* as many as the sand which is by the sea, eating and drinking and rejoicing. **21** And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the *Euphrates* River to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of their life. **22** And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and sixty measures of meal, **23** ten fat oxen and twenty oxen from the pastures, and a hundred sheep, besides deer and roebucks and gazelles and fatted fowl. **24** For he had dominion over *all the region* on this side of the River, from Tiphseh to Azzah, over all the kings on this side of the River. And he had peace on all sides around him. **25** And Judah and Israel lived in safety all the days of Solomon, each man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan to Beersheba.

**26** And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. **27** And those officials provided food for king Solomon, and for all who came to king Solomon's table, each man in his month. They lacked nothing. **28** They also brought barley and hay for the horses and steeds where *they* were, each man according to his charge.

**29** And God gave Solomon exceedingly great wisdom and understanding and largeness of heart, as *great* as the sand on the seashore. **30** And Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the East country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. **31** For he was wiser than all men, *wiser* than Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman and Chalcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame was in all nations around *Israel*. **32** And he uttered three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. **33** And he spoke of trees, from

have been very large.

"Measure" – in Hebrew "kor" – about six to ten bushels (depending on the size of the bushel), or 220 liters.

**4:25** Two of the things people want most – peace and prosperity.

**4:26** 10:26. In this Solomon violated the instructions given in Deut 17:16.

"Forty thousand" – some Septuagint manuscripts have "four" (see also 2 Chron 9:25). Hebrew manuscripts available now have "forty."

**4:29** 3:12; 4:20.

**4:30** "The East" – Hebrews generally regarded this as the area east of the Jordan river and Dead Sea extending to Babylonia on the Euphrates river.

**4:31** "Wiser than all men" – wiser than any until the Lord Jesus came (Luke 11:31).

**4:32** Prov 1:1; Eccl 12:9; Song of Songs 1:1.

**4:33** Solomon's wisdom was primarily a knowledge of God, an understanding of

the cedar tree in Lebanon to the hyssop that springs out of the wall. He also spoke of animals and of birds and of creeping things and of fish. 34 And *some* from every people came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

**5** And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the place of his father. For Hiram had always loved David.

2 And Solomon sent *word* to Hiram, saying, 3 "You know that my father David could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the wars which surrounded him on every side, until the LORD put *them* under the soles of *his* feet. 4 But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side, so that *there is* neither adversary nor evil event. 5 And, see, I purpose to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke to my father David, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, will build a house for my name.' 6 Now therefore, give orders for cutting cedar trees for me out of Lebanon. And my servants will be with your servants, and I will pay the wages of your servants in accordance with all you determine. For you know that *there is* no one among us who can skillfully cut timber like the Sidonians."

7 And when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, it came about that he greatly rejoiced, and said, "Blessed *be* the LORD this day, who has given to David a wise son over this great people."

8 And Hiram sent *word* to Solomon, saying, "I have considered the things about which you sent me *word*. I will do everything you want about cedar logs and fir logs. 9 My servants will bring *them* down from Lebanon to the sea, and I will have them sent on by sea in rafts to the place you appoint for me, and I will have them separate them

people, an ability to administer the kingdom, etc, but included such matters as these.

**4:34** 1 Kings 10:1; 2 Chron 9:23.

"Earth" – that is, the civilized world known by the people of Israel in those days. This would have been Egypt, parts of Arabia, and nations of western Asia, and possibly a few well-known countries somewhat more distant.

**5:1** "Hiram" – 2 Sam 5:11.

**5:2-11** 2 Chron 2:3-16.

**5:3** "Under. . .his feet" – for David's desire to build God's temple see 2 Sam 7:1-5. For the reason why he could not do so see 1 Chron 22:8; 28:2,3.

**5:4** 4:24.

**5:5** 2 Sam 7:12,13.

**5:6** Lebanon was famous for its cedar trees.

**5:7** "LORD" – the king of an idolatrous people knew the name "Jehovah" and was

there. Then you can take *them* away. And you shall fulfill my desire of providing food for my household."

10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar and fir logs, as many as he wanted. 11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat as food for his household, and twenty measures of pressed olive oil. Solomon gave this year by year to Hiram.

12 So the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he had promised him. And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty together. 13 Then king Solomon raised up a labour force from all Israel, and the labour force was thirty thousand men. 14 And he sent them to Lebanon in shifts, ten thousand a month. They were one month in Lebanon, *and* two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the labour force. 15 Solomon had seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried *stones* in the mountains, 16 besides thirty-three hundred from among the chief deputies of Solomon who supervised the people who were labouring in the work. 17 And the king gave orders, and they brought great stones, costly stones, cut stones, to lay the foundation of the house. 18 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders, and the men from Gebal, one cut *them*. So they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

**6** And it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. 2 The length of the house which king Solomon built for the LORD *was* sixty cubits, and its width was twenty cubits, and its height was thirty cubits. 3 And the length of the portico before the main room of the house *was* twenty cubits, in accordance with the breadth of

willing to praise Him. Whether he had a mere head knowledge or true faith in Him, we do not know.

**5:12** Solomon's wisdom was seen in part in the way he dealt with neighboring countries.

**5:13** Note at 4:6. Those conscripted were non-Israelites living in the land. Solomon did not conscript any Israelites for labor. See 9:22,23.

**5:15-18** The work was great and required a great number of people.

**5:18** "Men from Gebal" – the KJV has "stonesquarers" here, a very unlikely meaning of the Hebrew.

**6:1-28** 2 Chron 3:1-13.

**6:1** "Fourth year" – 966 B.C. The temple Solomon built remained standing until 586 B.C. when the Babylonians destroyed it.

**6:2** The temple building followed the pattern of the tabernacle, but most dimensions were doubled. It was about



the house, and its width before the house was ten cubits. 4 And he made windows of beveled frames for the house.

5 *Against* the wall of the house he built chambers all around the surrounding walls of the house, both of the main room and the sanctuary. And he made chambers all around. 6 The lowest chamber *was* five cubits wide, and the middle chamber *was* six cubits wide, and the third was seven cubits wide. For he made narrow ledges around the outside so that *the beams* would not be fastened into the walls of the house. 7 And the house, while it was being built, was made of stone prepared before it was brought there, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any other iron tool heard in the house, while it was being built. 8 The door for the middle chamber *was* on the right side of the house, and they went up by winding stairs to the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third.

9 So he built the house and finished it, and covered the house with beams and cedar boards. 10 And then he built chambers against the entire house, five cubits high, and they rested on the house with cedar timber.

11 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, 12 "*Concerning* this house which you are building: If you will walk in my statutes, and administer my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them, then I will perform my word with you, which I spoke to your father David. 13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel."

14 So Solomon built the house and finished it. 15 And he made the inside walls of the house with cedar boards, from the floor of the house to the ceiling, and he paneled them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with fir planks. 16 And at the rear of the house he built a twenty-cubit room, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards. He built it inside as the sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place. 17 And before it the house, that *is*, the temple, was forty cubits *long*. 18 And the cedar of the house was carved inside with buds

and open flowers. Everything *was of* cedar. No stone was seen. 19 And he prepared the sanctuary on the inside of the house, to place there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 20 And the inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long and twenty cubits wide and twenty cubits high. And he overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold, and *likewise* overlaid the altar *made of* cedar. 21 So Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold. And he made a partition with gold chains in front of the sanctuary, and he overlaid *the sanctuary* with gold.

22 And he overlaid the whole house with gold until he finished the entire house. He also overlaid with gold the entire altar which *was* by the sanctuary.

23 And he made two cherubs of olive wood for the inside of the sanctuary, ten cubits high. 24 And one wing of a cherub *was* five cubits, and the other wing of a cherub was five cubits. There were ten cubits from one end of the one wing to the end of the other. 25 The other cherub *was* also ten cubits. Both cherubs were of one measure and one size. 26 The height of the one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was the height of* the other cherub.

27 And he placed the cherubs inside the inner house. And the wings of the cherubs were stretched out, so that the wing of the one touched the *one* wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall, and their wings touched one another in the middle of the house. 28 And he overlaid the cherubs with gold. 29 And he carved all the surrounding walls of the house with carved figures of cherubs and palm trees and open flowers, both inside *the sanctuary* and outside. 30 And he overlaid the floor of the house with gold, both inside *the sanctuary* and outside.

31 And for the entrance of the sanctuary he made doors *of* olive wood. The lintel *and* the side posts *were one-fifth of the wall*. 32 The two doors *were of* olive wood, and he carved on them carvings of cherubs and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold and spread

27 meters long and 9 meters wide. A cubit is about 18 inches.

**6:11** "Word of the LORD came" – 12:22; 13:20; 16:1,7; 17:2; 21:17; Jer 1:4; Ezek 3:16. This means that God sent His message to him, perhaps directly in a vision or dream, perhaps through a prophet.

**6:12** The message revealed that God was more concerned with what Solomon was than with what Solomon built. The character of His people and their attitude toward His Word are of more importance to God than any work they may undertake to do.

"I will perform my word" – 2 Sam 7:5-16.

**6:13** "I will dwell" – note at Ex 25:8. His

continuing presence with them was based on their obedience to the covenant made at Sinai. Note at Ex 19:5,6.

**6:16** "Most Holy Place" – Ex 26:33; Lev 16:2.

**6:17** "House" – the holy place. See Ex 26:35; Heb 9:1-5.

**6:18** 1 Kings 7:24.

**6:19** "Sanctuary" – v 16.

"Ark" – note at Ex 25:10-22.

**6:20** "Cubits" – about 9 meters by 9 meters.

**6:21** "Gold" – a huge amount of gold was used in the temple – vs 22,28,30; 7:48-50.

**6:23** "Cherubs" – notes at Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-20.

gold on the cherubs and on the palm trees. 33 So for the door of the temple he also made posts of olive wood, one-fourth *of the wall*. 34 And the two doors *were of* fir wood. The two leaves of one door *were* folding, and the two leaves of the other door *were* folding. 35 And he carved *on them* cherubs and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid *them* with gold, fitted on the carved work. 36 And he built the inner courtyard with three rows of cut stone, and a row of cedar beams.

37 The foundation of the house of the LORD was laid in the fourth year, in the month Zif, 38 and the house throughout all its parts and according to all its plans was finished in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month. So he was seven years in building it.

**7** But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished his whole house. 2 He also built the house of the Forest of Lebanon. Its length *was* a hundred cubits and its width fifty cubits and its height thirty cubits. *It rested* on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars. 3 And *it was* paneled with cedar above the beams, which *rested* on forty-five pillars, fifteen *in* a row. 4 And *there were* window frames in three rows, and window *was* opposite window *in* three ranks. 5 And all the doors and doorposts *were* square, with the window frames; and window *was* opposite window *in* three ranks.

6 And he made a hall of pillars. Its length *was* fifty cubits and its width thirty cubits. And a porch *was* in front of them, and pillars and a threshold *were in* front of them.

7 Then he made a hall for the throne where he would judge, the Hall of Judgment; and *it was* paneled with cedar from one side of the floor to the other. 8 And his house where he lived *had* another court inward from the hall, *which was* of the same workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken *as his wife*.

9 All these *were of* choice stones, according to the measure of cut stones, sawed with saws, inside and outside, from the foundation to the coping, and so on the outside toward the great

courtyard. 10 And the foundation *was of* choice stones, great stones, stones of ten cubits and stones of eight cubits. 11 And above *were* choice stones, according to the measure of cut stones, and cedars. 12 And the great court all around *was* with three rows of cut stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for the hall of the house.

13 And king Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre. 14 He *was* a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali and his father *was* a man of Tyre, a worker in bronze. And he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill for work in all *kinds* of bronze workmanship. And he came to king Solomon and did all his work.

15 For he cast two pillars of bronze, each eighteen cubits high; and *it took* a *measuring* line of twelve cubits to go around either of them. 16 And he made two capitals *of* molten bronze, to set on the tops of the pillars. The height of the one capital *was* five cubits and the height of the other capital *was* five cubits; 17 *and he made* a filigree of checkered work, and wreaths of chain work, for the capitals which *were* on the top of the pillars, seven for one capital and seven for the other capital. 18 So he made the pillars, and two rows of pomegranates all around on the one filigree, to cover the capitals that *were* on the top, and did the same for the other capital. 19 And the capitals that *were* on the top of the pillars *were* of lily work in the hall, four cubits. 20 And the capitals on the two pillars also *had pomegranates* above, near the rounded part which was by the filigree. And there *were* two hundred pomegranates in rows around on the other capital. 21 And he set up the pillars in the hall of the temple; and he set up the right pillar, and called its name Jachin, and he set up the left pillar, and called its name Boaz. 22 And on the top of the pillars was lily work. So the work of the pillars was finished.

23 And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from one brim to the other. *It was* completely circular, and its height *was* five cubits; and *it took* a *measuring* line of thirty cubits to go around it. 24 And all around under its brim *there were* gourds surrounding it, ten to a cubit, surrounding the sea.

**6:36** There was both an inner and an outer courtyard (7:12). The inner one was for the priests only (2 Chron 4:9).

**6:37** "Fourth year" - 6:1. The month Zif (or Ziv) included parts of what we call April and May; Bul parts of October and November.

**7:1** Solomon's palace was larger than the temple (6:2) and so took longer to build (6:38). See v7.

**7:7** "Judge" - the people could bring difficult cases directly to the king. An example is in 3:16. Solomon's palace was

also the administrative headquarters of the kingdom. Probably for this reason it was made larger than the temple.

**7:13** This takes the narrative back into chapter 6 before Solomon built his own palace. **7:21** "Jachin" - may mean "He (God) establishes."

"Boaz" - may mean "Strength" or "In Him (God) is strength."

**7:23** "Sea" - compare the basin in the courtyard of the tabernacle (Ex 30:17-21). This sea, as well as the oxen it stood on (v

The gourds were cast in two rows, when it was cast.

25 It stood on twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east. And the sea *was set* over them, and all their back parts *were toward the inside*. 26 And it *was* a hand breadth thick, and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It held two thousand baths.

27 And he made ten stands of bronze. Four cubits *was* the length of each stand, and its width four cubits, and its height three cubits. 28 And the work of the stands *was like* this: they had borders, and the borders *were* between the ledges; 29 and on the borders that *were* between the ledges *were* lions, oxen, and cherubs, and on the ledges *there was* an upper support. And below the lions and oxen *were* certain additions made of thin work. 30 And every stand had four bronze wheels and axles of bronze, and its four corners had supports. Under the laver *were* molten supports, at the side of every addition. 31 And its opening inside the crown and above *was* a cubit, but its opening *was round like* the work of the stand, a cubit and an half; and also on its opening *were* engravings with their borders. *They were* square, not round. 32 And under the borders *were* four wheels, and the axle of the wheels *were joined* to the stand, and the height of a wheel *was* a cubit and half a cubit. 33 And the design of the wheels *was like* the design of a chariot wheel. Their axles and their rims and their hubs and their spokes *were* all cast metal.

34 And *there were* four supports at the four corners of one stand, *and* the supports *were one* with the stand itself. 35 And on the top of the stand *there was* a circular shape half a cubit high, and on the top of the stand its ledges and its borders *were one* with it. 36 And on the plates of its ledges, and on its borders, he engraved cherubs, lions and palm trees, in proportion to each one, and additions all around. 37 In this *way* he made the ten stands. All of them had one casting, one measure, *and* one size.

38 Then he made ten lavers of bronze. One laver held forty baths, *and* each laver was four

cubits; *and* one laver *rested* on each of the ten stands. 39 And he put five stands on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house, and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward toward the south. 40 And Hiram made the lavers and the shovels and the basins.

So Hiram finished doing all the work that he made for king Solomon *for* the house of the LORD: 41 The two pillars and the *two* bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the two pillars, and the two filigrees to cover the two bowls of the capitals which *were* on the top of the pillars, 42 and four hundred pomegranates for the two filigrees, two rows of pomegranates for each filigree, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that *were* on the pillars, 43 and the ten stands and ten lavers on the stands, 44 and one sea and twelve oxen under the sea, 45 and the pots and the shovels and the basins. And all these vessels, which Hiram made for king Solomon *for* the house of the LORD, *were of* burnished bronze.

46 The king cast them in the plain of Jordan, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan. 47 And Solomon left all the vessels *unweighed*, because they were so very many, and the weight of the bronze was not found out.

48 And Solomon made all the vessels that *belonged* to the house of the LORD: the altar of gold and the table of gold, on which *was* the Showbread, 49 and the lampstands of pure gold, five on the right *side*, and five on the left, before the inner sanctuary, with the flowers and the lamps and the tongs of gold, 50 and the bowls and the snuffers and the basins and the spoons and the censers *of* pure gold, and the hinges *of* gold, *both* for the doors of the inner house, the Most Holy Place, *and* for the doors of the house, *that is, of* the temple.

51 So all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated. He put the silver and the gold, and the articles among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

**8** Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the

25), was made of bronze.

**7:26** "Two thousand baths" – about 11,500 gallons or 44 kiloliters.

**7:27** On these stands were placed the basins of v 38. These basins contained water for washing parts of the animal sacrifices (Lev 1:9,13; 2 Chron 4:6).

**7:38** "Forty baths" – about 880 liters.

**7:45** For work around the altar. See Ex 27:1-3.

**7:48** "Altar of gold" – Ex 30:1-6.

"Table" – Ex 25:23-30.

**7:49** "Lampstands" – Ex 25:31-38. In the tabernacle there was only one lampstand.

**7:50** "Censers" – all these articles were for the work of the Holy Place.

**7:51** "Dedicated" – 2 Sam 8:9-12; 1 Chron 18:7-11.

"Treasures" – 15:18; 2 Kings 12:18; 1 Chron 9:26; 26:20-26; 28:12.

**8:1** "Ark" – note at Ex 25:10-22. David had brought the ark to Jerusalem. See 2 Samuel chapter 6.

fathers of the children of Israel, to king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the city of David, which *is* Zion. 2 And all the men of Israel assembled in king Solomon's presence at the feast in the month Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month.

3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark, 4 and they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation and all the holy articles that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought these up. 5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, who were assembled in his presence, *were* with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that were so many they could not be counted or numbered.

6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the house, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubs. 7 For the cherubs spread out *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubs covered the ark and the its poles from above. 8 And they drew out the poles, so that the ends of the staves were seen out in the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary, but they were not seen outside. And they are there to this day. 9 *There was* nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt.

10 And it came about, when the priests had come out of the Holy Place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

12 Then Solomon said, "The LORD said that he

would dwell in the thick darkness. 13 I have surely built you a house to dwell in, a settled place for you to stay in forever."

14 And the king turned his face around, and blessed all the congregation of Israel (and all the congregation of Israel stood), 15 and he said,

"Blessed *is* the LORD God of Israel, who spoke with his mouth to my father David, and with his hand has fulfilled *it*, saying, 16 'Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I did not choose any city from all the tribes of Israel to build a house, that my name might be in it; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.'

17 "And it was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 18 And the LORD said to my father David, 'Because it was in your heart to build a house to my name, you did well that it was in your heart. 19 Nevertheless you shall not build the house, but your son who will come from your body will build the house for my name.'

20 "And the LORD has fulfilled his word that he spoke, and I have risen up in the place of my father David and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 21 And I have made there a place for the ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers when he brought them out of the land of Egypt."

22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven, 23 and said,

"LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God like you, in heaven above, or on earth below, who keeps covenant and mercy with your servants who walk before you with all their heart. 24 You have kept

**8:2** "Feast" – the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Chron 7:8-10). Note at Lev 23:33-36.

**8:4** "Tabernacle" – 3:4.

**8:5** All these sacrifices symbolized Christ (Lev 1:2), just as the ark, the tent, and the temple did.

**8:6** Ex 26:33,34.

**8:7** "Cherubs" – Ex 25:18-20.

**8:9** "Tablets" – Ex 25:16; 34:1; 40:20. See Heb 9:4. This reveals that by Solomon's day the pot of manna and Aaron's rod had been lost.

"Horeb" – Sinai.

**8:10,11** "Glory of the LORD" – compare Ex 40:34,35. This cloud was the visible sign of God's presence with His people. Note at Ex 25:8. The temple took the place of the tabernacle, and like the tabernacle, it spoke of the Lord Jesus. Compare John 2:18-21. Jesus who was the "temple" of God contained the glory of God in full measure – John 1:14,18; Heb 1:3. Individual believers are also called the temple of God

(1 Cor 6:19). And the church as a whole is called a holy temple (Eph 2:21). And God's glory is bound up with each believer and the whole church (John 17:10; etc).

**8:12** "Darkness" – compare Ex 20:21; Deut 5:22; 2 Sam 22:12; Ps 97:2.

**8:13** "Forever" – 2 Sam 7:13; Ps 132:13,14.

**8:14** Verse 55; 2 Sam 6:18. Note at Num 6:22-27.

**8:16** 2 Sam 7:4-6,8.

**8:17** 2 Sam 7:2,3; 1 Chron 17:1,2.

**8:19** 5:3-5; 2 Sam 7:5,12,13; 1 Chron 22:8-10.

**8:20** 1 Chron 28:5,6.

**8:21** "Covenant" – Ex 19:5.

**8:22** "Stood" – in prayer the state of the heart is the important thing, not the posture of the body. The prayer which follows is the longest public prayer recorded in the Bible.

**8:23** "Like you" – Ex 15:11; Deut 7:9; 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 7:22; Ps 86:8-10; Isa 44:6,7.

"Covenant and mercy" – other gods are

with your servant David my father what you promised him. You spoke also with your mouth, and have fulfilled *it* with your hand, as *it is* today.

25 "Therefore, now, LORD God of Israel, keep with your servant, my father David, what you promised him, saying, 'You will not lack a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that your children might be careful about their way, so that they walk in my presence as you have walked in my presence.' 26 And now, O God of Israel, I pray you, let your word which you spoke to your servant, my father David, come true.

27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Look, the heavens and heaven of heavens cannot contain you. How much less this house that I have built! 28 Yet have regard for the prayer of your servant and for his supplication, O LORD my God, to listen to the cry and to the prayer which your servant prays before you today, 29 that your eyes may be open toward this house night and day, toward this place of which you have said, 'My name will be there,' that you may listen to the prayer which your servant makes toward this place. 30 And listen to the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place, and hear in heaven, your dwelling place; and when you hear, forgive.

31 "If any man sins against his neighbour, and he is put under oath to cause him to swear, and the oath comes before your altar in this house, 32 then hear in heaven and act and judge your servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his conduct on his own head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

33 "When your people Israel are struck down

before the enemy, because they have sinned against you, and turn back to you and confess your name, and pray and plead with you in this house, 34 then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which you gave to their fathers.

35 "When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place, and confess your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, 36 then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, and of your people Israel. So teach them the good way in which they should walk, and give rain on your land, which you have given to your people as an inheritance.

37 "If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence, blight, mildew, locust, *or* if there is the caterpillar, if their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities, whatever plague, whatever disease *there may be*, 38 whatever prayer and supplication is *made* by any man, *or* by all your people Israel, each one knowing the plague of his own heart, spreading out his hands toward this house, 39 then hear in heaven, your dwelling place, and forgive, and act and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart you know (for you, you alone, know the hearts of all the children of men), 40 so that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land which you gave to our fathers.

41 "Also, as for the foreigner, who *is* not of your people Israel, but comes from a far country for your name's sake 42 (for they will hear of your great name, and of your strong hand and of your stretched out arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, 43 hear in heaven, your dwelling

unable either to make covenants or to keep them, or to show mercy (Ps 115:2-8).

**8:25** 2 Sam 7:12,16.

**8:27** 2 Chron 2:6; Ps 139:7-16; Isa 66:1; Jer 23:24; Acts 7:49; 17:24,25. Solomon and the human authors of the Bible knew something of the grandeur of God. Because the visible sign of God's presence appeared in tabernacle or temple, that did not make them have small views of God, or cause them to think that the whole of God could be contained in space.

**8:29** 9:3.

**8:30** "Dwelling place" – Solomon knew that in relationship to Israel, Jerusalem was God's dwelling place, in relationship to the world Israel was His dwelling place, in relationship to the universe, heaven was His dwelling place.

**8:31** Solomon looks into the future, knows that the people will sin, and begs God for mercy.

**8:32** Deut 25:1; Ezek 18:20.

**8:33,34** "Bring them back" – evidently, Solomon knew from the Word of God that this would happen (Lev 26:17,40-42; Deut 28:25,48).

**8:35** "No rain" – Solomon could know this

too would happen (Lev 26:19; Deut 11:16,17; 28:23).

**8:36** "Teach them" – Ps 25:4,5; 27:11; 94:12.

"Give rain" – it is the true God, the Creator of the universe alone who gives rain, and not some imagined rain god (Lev 26:4; Job 5:10; Ps 68:9; 147:8; Acts 14:17). **8:37** Lev 26:16,25,26; Deut 28:21-23, 38-42; 2 Chron 20:9; Joel 1:1-4.

**8:38** "Plague" – or it could be translated "affliction" or "trouble" or "sickness." Compare Jer 17:9. The Hebrew word has all these meanings.

**8:39** 1 Sam 2:3; 16:7; 1 Chron 28:9; Ps 11:4; Jer 17:10; John 2:24,25.

**8:40** "Fear" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7. In the Bible to fear God is to regard Him with awe, and to honor, believe, and obey Him.

**8:41** Solomon wanted the God of Israel to be known as the God of all people, as indeed, in some sense, He is (Isa 44:6; Jer 32:26,27).

**8:42** "They will hear" – Ex 13:3; Deut 3:24.

**8:43** Josh 4:23,24; 1 Sam 17:46; 2 Kings



place, and do according to all that the stranger calls to you for, so that all peoples of the earth may know your name, to fear you, as your people Israel *do*, and so that they may know that this house, which I have built, is called by your name.

44 "If your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever you send them, and pray to the LORD toward the city which you have chosen, and *toward* the house that I have built for your name, 45 then in heaven hear their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

46 "If they sin against you (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and you are angry with them and hand them over to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives to the land of the enemy, far or near, 47 *and* if they turn their hearts back *to you* in the land where they were carried captives, and repent and plead with you in the land of those who carried them away captives, saying, 'We have sinned and have done wrong; we have committed wickedness,' 48 and so turn back to you with all their heart and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city which you have chosen and the house which I have built for your name, 49 then in heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, 50 and forgive your people who have sinned against you and all their transgressions in which they have transgressed against you, and grant them compassion in the presence of those who carried them away captive, so that they may have compassion on them; 51 for they *are* your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace; 52 that your eyes may be open to the supplication of your servant, and to the supplication of your people Israel, to listen to them in everything about which they call to you.

53 "For you separated them from among all the

people of the earth, *to be* your inheritance, as you spoke through Moses your servant, when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God."

54 And it came about, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. 55 And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,

56 "Blessed *be* the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, in accordance with all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. 57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. Let him not leave us or forsake us. 58 So may he incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. 59 And may these my words, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, so that he maintains the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as each day requires, 60 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God, *and that there is* no one else. 61 Let your heart, therefore, be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day."

62 And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. 63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.

64 The same day the king consecrated the middle of the courtyard that *was* in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings and grain offerings and the fat of the peace offerings,

19:19; Ps 102:15.

**8:44** 2 Chron 14:11,12.

**8:46** "Sin" – Ps 130:3,4; Prov 20:9; Rom 3:23; 1 John 1:8-10.

"Captives" – Lev 26:34-39; Deut 28:36,64; Jer 29:10-14. In his prayer of confession for the people Daniel used almost these exact words (Dan 9:5).

**8:48** Deut 4:29; 1 Sam 7:3,4; Neh 1:9; Jer 29:13,14.

**8:50** 2 Kings 25:28; 2 Chron 30:9; Ps 106:46; Dan 1:9.

**8:51** "Your people" – Ex 19:4; Deut 7:6; 9:29. "Furnace" – Deut 4:20. Compare Ps 66:10-12.

**8:53** "Inheritance" – Ex 34:9; Deut 4:20; 1 Sam 10:1; 2 Kings 21:14; Ps 33:12; 78:71; Eph 1:18. God's choosing of a people for Himself is a theme which runs throughout the Bible and finds its consummation in the church.

**8:54** 2 Chron 6:13.

**8:55** Verse 14.

**8:56** Josh 21:45; 23:14,15; 1 Chron 22:18. No promise of God will ever fail – Titus 1:2.

**8:57** Gen 48:21; Josh 1:5; 1 Sam 12:22.

**8:58** "Our hearts" – Solomon knew that if men are to turn their hearts to God, God must do a work of grace in them. See Ps 119:36. Compare Ps 51:10; 2 Tim 2:25.

**8:59** Solomon wanted his prayer to have a continuing effect.

**8:61** He could know from portions of God's Word such as Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28 that the only way to blessing was obedience, and that disobedience meant disaster.

**8:63** "Peace offerings" – Leviticus chapter 3.

**8:64** Notes on these offerings at Leviticus chapters 1-3.

because the bronze altar that *was* before the LORD was too small to take the burnt offerings and meat offerings and the fat of the peace offerings.

65 And at that time Solomon, and all Israel with him, a great congregation from the entering in of Hamath to the river of Egypt, celebrated a feast before the LORD our God, seven days, then seven days *more*, fourteen days. 66 On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they spoke a blessing on the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

9 And it came about, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and had done all of Solomon's desire that he delighted in, 2 that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.

3 And the LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication, that you have made before me. I have consecrated this house, which you have built, to put my name there forever, and my eyes and my heart will be there perpetually.

4 "And if you will walk before me, as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, *and* will keep my statutes and my judgments, 5 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised to your father David, saying, 'You will not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

6 "But if you at all turn away from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments *and* my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and

worship them, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast from my sight; and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 8 And *as for* this house, *which* is exalted, every one who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and will say, 'Why has the LORD done like this to this land and to this house?' 9 And they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold of other gods and have worshipped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought on them all this evil.'"

10 And it came about at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house 11 (*now* Hiram, the king of Tyre, had provided Solomon with cedar trees and pine trees and with gold, according to all his desire), *that then* king Solomon gave Hiram twenty towns in the land of Galilee. 12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the towns which Solomon had given him, and they did not please him. 13 And he said, "What towns *are* these which you have given me, my brother?" And he called them the "Land of Cabul", *their name* to this day. 14 And Hiram had sent to the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold.

15 And this *is* the reason for the forced labour which king Solomon raised: to build the house of the LORD and his own house, and Millo and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer. 16 For Pharaoh king of Egypt had come up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, and killed the Canaanites who lived in the city, and given it *as* a present to his daughter, Solomon's wife. 17 And

**8:65** "Feast" – v 2.

"Hamath" – this was in the far north of Israel.

"River of Egypt" – or "Wadi of Egypt" – this does not indicate the River Nile, but a stream on the southern border of Israel, between Israel and Egypt.

**8:66** "The eighth day" – after the second period of seven days.

"Joyful" – it is a recognition of the goodness of God which brings joy (Ex 18:9; 2 Chron 6:41; Neh 9:25; 1 Pet 1:3-9).

**9:1** Compare Eccl 2:4-10.

**9:2** 3:5.

**9:3** 8:29; 2 Chron 6:40.

**9:4** 2:4; 3:14; 8:25,61.

**9:5** 2 Sam 7:12,16; 1 Chron 22:10; Luke 1:32,33.

**9:6** 2 Sam 7:14-16; 1 Chron 28:9; 2 Chron 7:19,20.

**9:7** "The land" – Lev 18:24-28; 26:33; Deut 4:26,27; 28:37; 2 Kings 17:23; Jer 7:2-15; 24:9; Ps 44:14. God's people cannot ignore God's desires for them and live as they please and experience God's blessings.

**9:8,9** Deut 29:24-28; Jer 22:8,9.

**9:10** 6:37,38; 7:1; 9:1.

**9:11** "Hiram" – 5:1. He had provided Solomon with wood, labor, and gold (5:6-11; 9:14). That is, Solomon went into debt to finish his great building projects. He paid the debt by giving this territory. In other words, part of the land God had given Israel Solomon handed over to an idolatrous nation. Compare Lev 25:23,24. It is easy to go into debt, not so easy to pay; and it increases the burden of those involved in it. Rom 13:8 is always a good principle to follow. 2 Chron 8:2 tells of the return of these cities, the loan presumably having been repaid.

**9:13** "Cabul" – probably means "good for nothing." It appears that Solomon used his worldly wisdom to get the best of Hiram. If so, in this matter he behaved in a way that brought no honor to either himself or to God. In fact, just the opposite.

**9:14** "A hundred and twenty talents" – about 4 metric tons (4,000 kilograms).

**9:15** "Forced labour" – note at 4:6.

**9:16** "Gezer" – Josh 16:10. "Daughter" – 3:1.

Solomon built Gezer, and lower Beth-Horon 18 and Baalath and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, 19 and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots and cities for his horsemen, and what Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon and in all the land of his dominion.

20 And all the people *who were* left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel, 21 their children who *were* left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel were also not able to destroy completely, these Solomon conscripted as forced slave labourers to this day. 22 But Solomon did not make any slaves of the children of Israel, but they *were* warriors and his servants and his officials and his captains, and those in charge of his chariots and his horsemen. 23 These *were* the chief officials who *were* over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, who supervised the people who did the work.

24 And Pharaoh's daughter came up from the city of David to her house which *Solomon* had built for her. Then he built Millo.

25 And three times in a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he built to the LORD, and he burned incense on the altar that *was* before the LORD. So he finished the house.

26 And king Solomon made a fleet of ships in Ezion-geber, which is near Elath, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. 27 And Hiram sent his servants in the fleet, sailors who had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. 28 And they came to Ophir, and brought gold from there, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought *it* to king Solomon.

**10** And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. 2 And she came to Jerusalem with a

very large retinue, with camels carrying spices, and very much gold and precious stones. And when she had come to Solomon, she spoke with him of all that was in her heart. 3 And Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing hidden from the king, which he did not tell her. 4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all of Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, 5 and the food of his table, and the seating of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

6 And she said to the king, "It was a true report that I heard in my own land of your acts and of your wisdom. 7 However I did not believe the reports, until I came and my eyes saw *it*; and, look, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceeds the fame which I heard. 8 Happy *are* your men, happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you *and* who hear your wisdom. 9 Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, to set you on the throne of Israel. Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he made you king, to maintain judgment and justice."

10 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very large *amount* of spices, and precious stones; such an abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon never again came in.

11 And also the fleet of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir a great quantity of almug trees, and precious stones. 12 And with the almug trees the king made pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, also harps and lyres for singers. No such almug trees came in again, or have been seen to this day.

13 And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon gave her from his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her

**9:19** Verse 1; 10:26.

**9:20,21** Ex 3:8; Deut 7:1; Josh 15:63; 17:12,13; Jud 1:21-29,35; 3:1.

**9:22,23** Lev 25:39. Samuel's predictions now began to be fulfilled - 1 Sam 8:10-18.

**9:25** Ex 23:14-17; Leviticus chapters 1-3; Deut 16:16.

**9:26** "Ezion-Geber" - the most southern spot in Israel, this port enabled Solomon to trade by sea with the countries to the south and east of Israel, including, possibly, India.

**9:27** "Hiram" - v 12. Evidently he recovered from his discontent, or else thought he could get his gold back (v 14), by helping Solomon.

**9:28** The location of Ophir is not known. Probably it was in Arabia, or along the east coast of Africa. It was famous for gold - 2 Chron 8:18; Job 28:16; Ps 45:9; Isa 13:12.

"Four hundred and twenty talents" - about 14.5 metric tons (14,500 kilograms).

**10:1** "Queen" - Matt 12:42.

"Sheba" - a land in southwestern Arabia.

"LORD" - she had heard that Jehovah was the one who had made Solomon wise and blessed him.

**10:3** 3:12; 4:29-31.

**10:9** "Blessed be the LORD" - 2 Chron 2:11. Solomon had expressed a desire that those of other nations might come to know more of the God of Israel (8:41-43). God used Solomon's fame in wisdom to help bring this about. See also v 24.

"Justice" - Ps 11:7; 33:5; 72:2; 99:4; 103:6.

**10:10** "Hundred and twenty talents" - 9:14.

**10:11** 9:27,28.

servants.

14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, 15 beside *what he had* from the merchants, and of the trade of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

16 And king Solomon made two hundred *large* shields of beaten gold; six hundred *shekels* of gold went into one shield. 17 And *he made* three hundred *small* shields of beaten gold. Three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the house of the Forest of Lebanon.

18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. 19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round at the back, and *there were* armrests on each side at the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. 20 And twelve lions stood there on one side and on the other on the six steps. Nothing like it was made in any kingdom. 21 And all king Solomon's drinking vessels *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of the Forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold; none *were of* silver; it was not considered valuable in the days of Solomon. 22 For the king had at sea the ships of Tarshish with the ships of Hiram. Once in three years the ships of Tarshish came in, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

23 So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. 24 And the whole world sought *audience* with Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 25 And each one of them brought his present: vessels of silver and vessels of gold, and garments,

**10:14** This was a violation of Deut 17:17. Six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold is more than 22 metric tons (more than 22,000 kilograms).

**10:16** "shekels" – or "bekas." A beka was about a half shekel.

**10:17** 7:2. "Three minas" – about 1.7 kilograms.

**10:22** 9:26-28.

**10:23** Did all this splendor, wealth, and wisdom make Solomon a happy man? See Eccl 1:2,12-14,18; 2:9-11. Did these things make the people of Israel happy? Not at all. See 12:1-4.

**10:24** Verses 1,9.

**10:26** 4:26; 9:19. A violation of Deut 17:16.

**10:29** Israel became a center for trade between peoples in the south and in the north.

"Six hundred shekels" – about 7 kilograms.

**11:1** "Women" – now begins the sad story of Solomon's decline and terrible sin. His wisdom was no safeguard against the sins of the flesh. The wise also may be carried away by lust, and human wisdom out of touch with God may fall into incredible folly. (Walking in the Spirit of God is the only way

and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year.

26 And Solomon amassed chariots and horsemen, and he had a thousand four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. 27 And the king made silver as *common* as stones in Jerusalem, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamore trees that *are* in the lowlands. 28 And Solomon had horses brought from Egypt, and linen yarn. The king's merchants obtained the linen yarn at a price. 29 And a chariot was imported from Egypt for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty; and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria; they brought *them* out by their means.

**11** But king Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites, 2 of the nations *concerning* which the LORD said to the children of Israel, "You must not go in to them and they must not come in to you, *for* they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to them in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came about, when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned his heart away after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of his father David *had been*. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD,

to holiness of life. Compare Ps 51:10-12; Gal 5:16.) Taking many wives was forbidden to kings in Deut 17:17. And God warned His people repeatedly not to marry those who practiced idolatry. See Ex 34:16; Deut 7:1-4; Josh 23:12,13.

**11:3** Of what value is the greatest wisdom if we are unable to govern our own desires?

"Turned away his heart" – Deut 17:17; Neh 13:26; Prov 31:3.

**11:4** "David" – though David sinned grievously in the matter of Bathsheba (2 Samuel chapter 11), he repented and remained steadfast in his worship of the one true God.

**11:5** "Ashtoreth" – Jud 2:13; 10:6. In 2 Kings 23:13 she is called a "vile goddess." In Canaan she was regarded as the wife of Baal. She was the goddess of war and fertility and was worshipped with sexual rites. She was associated with the evening star. In Babylon she was Ishtar; to the Greeks, Astarte or Aphrodite; to the Romans, Venus.

"Milcom" – another name for the god Molech (also v 33). Here he is called an abomination. Sometimes children were burned in the fire as an offering to him.

and did not fully follow the LORD, as his father David *had done*.

7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And he did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not follow other gods. But he did not observe what the LORD commanded. 11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since you have done this, and have not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you, and give it to your servant. 12 However, I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; *but* I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However, I will not tear away the whole kingdom, *but* will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."

14 And the LORD stirred up an adversary to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. He *was* of the royal house of Edom. 15 For it so happened, when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army had gone up to bury the slain, after he had struck down every male in Edom 16 (for six months Joab remained there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom), 17 that Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites among his father's servants with him, to go to Egypt; Hadad *being* still a little child. 18 And they arose out of Midian and came to Paran, and they took men with them out of Paran and they came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house, and ordered that food be

*provided* for him, and gave him land.

19 And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen, as *his* wife. 20 And the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.

21 And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his ancestors, and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart, so that I may go to my own country."

22 Then Pharaoh said to him, "But what have you lacked with me, that, *lo and* behold, you seek to go to your own country?"

And he answered, "Nothing. But let me go in any case."

23 And God stirred up *another* adversary *against* Solomon, Rezon the son of Eliadah, who fled from his lord Hadadezer, king of Zobah. 24 And he gathered men around him, and became captain over a band, when David killed those *of* Zobah. And they went to Damascus, and lived there and reigned in Damascus. 25 And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, besides the mischief that Hadad *did*. And he hated Israel, and reigned over Syria.

26 And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a widow woman, also lifted up *his* hand against the king.

27 And this was the reason that he lifted up *his* hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, *and* closed the breaches of the city of David his father. 28 And the man Jeroboam *was* a strong and brave man. And Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, put him in charge of the whole

See 2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; Lev 18:21; 20:2-5.

**11:7** "Chemosh" – or better, Kemosh. He, too, was an abomination (2 Kings 23:13). That is, he was detestable to the true God, though worshipped by people. Judging from 2 Kings 3:26,27 this god of Moab was sometimes worshipped with human sacrifices.

**11:8** The gods mentioned above were only a few among many which Solomon allowed to be brought into God's land and God's city. And with them, we have good reason to think, came a whole host of demons. When Solomon lost the fear of God he lost much of his wisdom, at least in spiritual matters – Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**11:9** "Angry" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11. "Appeared" – 3:5; 9:2.

**11:10** 9:6,7; Ex 20:3-6.

**11:11** Verses 29-31; 12:16,20.

**11:12** Because of God's promise to David in 2 Sam 7:14-16.

**11:13** "One tribe" – Judah (12:20).

"Jerusalem" – 9:3.

**11:14-25** God raised up two adversaries against Solomon – Hadad of Edom and Rezon of Syria, one in the southeast, the other in the northeast. Raising up enemies to oppose His people was frequently a way God expressed His anger against them because of their sins (Deut 28:15,49,50; Jud 2:10-23; 2 Sam 12:10; 2 Chron 36:15-17; Isa 10:5,6; Jer 1:15,16). There is reason to think God still acts in a similar way among the nations.

**11:15** 2 Sam 8:14.

**11:21** Note at 2:10.

**11:23** "Zobah" – 2 Sam 8:3. Damascus was, and remains, the capital of Syria.

**11:26** "Jeroboam" – v 40; 12:2,20.

**11:28** "Labour force" – note at 4:6.

"Joseph" – Jeroboam was from the tribe of Ephraim (v 26) descended from Joseph (Gen 41:50-52).



labour force of the house of Joseph.

29 And it came about at that time, as Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite, met him in the road. And he was wearing a new cloak; and the two of them *were* alone in the field. 30 And Ahijah took hold of the new garment he *was* wearing and tore it *in* twelve pieces, 31 and said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Look, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to you 32 (but he will have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), 33 because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that which is* right in my eyes and *to keep* my statutes and my judgments, as his father David *did*."

34 "However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of my servant David, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes. 35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it to you, ten tribes. 36 And I will give one tribe to his son, so that my servant David will always have a light before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for myself to put my name there. 37 And I will take you, and you will reign in all *ways* just as your soul desires and will be king over Israel. 38 And if you will listen to all that I command you, and walk in my ways and do *what is* right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as my servant David did, this will happen: I will be with you and build you an

enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. 39 And I will afflict David's descendants because of this, but not forever."

40 Therefore Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak, king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

41 And the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of The Acts of Solomon? 42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years. 43 And Solomon slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of his father David. And his son Rehoboam reigned in his place.

**12** And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. 2 And it came about when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who was still in Egypt, heard *this* (for Jeroboam had fled from the presence of king Solomon, and he lived in Egypt), 3 that they sent *word* and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4 "Your father made our yoke hard. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you."

5 And he said to them, "Depart *for* three days, then come back to me." And the people departed.

6 And king Rehoboam conferred with the old men who stood before his father Solomon while he was still living, and said, "How do you advise me to answer this people?"

7 And they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and answer them, speaking good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."

**11:29** 12:15; 14:2. There were many prophets in Bible times about whom we know almost nothing. Ahijah was one of these.

**11:30** Compare 1 Sam 15:27,28.

**11:31** Verses 11-13. These ten tribes were the whole of the nation except Judah, Simeon, and Levi. Originally Simeon had no separate territory but had been allotted land inside Judah's boundaries (Josh 19:1-9). Levi had no territory of its own but lived in cities scattered throughout the land (Josh 13:14; 21:41). The division of the northern tribes from Judah had its roots in Solomon's sin. But previously there had been trouble between these two sections of the country. See 2 Samuel chapter 2; 19:40-43; 20:1,2. **11:35** 12:16,17.

**11:36** "Light" - that is, the house of David would continue. God would not put out that lamp.

**11:38** God gave the same promises to Jeroboam that He gave to Solomon (2:3,4; 3:14; 6:12,13). God's covenant applied

to Jeroboam and northern tribes just as it did to the kingdom of Judah and its rulers.

**11:41** "The Acts of Solomon" - no man knows what has become of this book.

**11:43** "Slept" - note at 2:10. Rehoboam means "enlarger of the people", or "the people are enlarged." This must have been Solomon's hope when he named him. But the exact opposite happened. Sin is the great crusher of human hopes.

**12:1-19** 2 Chron 10:1-19.

**12:1** "Shechem" - Gen 12:6; 33:18-20; Josh 8:30-35; Jud 9:6. It was located in the territory of Ephraim. See 11:26.

**12:4** 1 Sam 8:10-18. Solomon's demand for provisions and his huge building projects were a burden evidently felt by many people (4:7,22-25; 6:38; 7:1; 9:15-19).

**12:6** 1 Kings 4:1-7.

**12:7** "Servant" - God appointed kings to serve the people, not to lord it over them. Compare Mark 10:42-45; 1 Pet 5:1-4. The elders gave very good advice.

8 But he rejected the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and conferred with the young men who had grown up with him *and* who stood before him. 9 And he said to them, "What advice do you give to us to answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?'"

10 And the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Speak to this people who spoke to you like this and said 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,' and tell them this: 'My little *finger* will be thicker than my father's waist. 11 And now, though my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke. My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scorpions.'"

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, "Come back to me on the third day." 13 And the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the old men's counsel that they gave him, 14 and spoke to them in accordance with the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. And my father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scorpions." 15 So the king did not listen to the people, for the turn of *events* was from the LORD, that he might fulfil his word which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.

16 So when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying, "What part do we have in David? *We have* no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now see to your own house, David!" So Israel departed to their tents.

17 But *as for* the children of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who *was* over the forced labour, and all Israel pelted him

with stones, and he died. Therefore king Rehoboam hurriedly mounted his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. 19 So Israel is in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

20 And it happened that when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent and called him to the congregation and made him king over all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah followed the house of David, no one else.

21 And when Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom back to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon.

22 But the word of God came to Shemaiah, the man of God, saying, 23 "Speak to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, 24 'Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up, or fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Each man is to go back to his house, for this thing is from me.'" So they listened to the word of the LORD, and turned around and went back, in accordance with the word of the LORD.

25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim and lived in it, and went out from there and built Peniel.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David, 27 if this people go up to offer sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem. Then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah."

28 Then the king took counsel and made two gold calves, and said to *the people*, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. See your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"

**12:8-11** Rehoboam rejected the counsel of experience and wisdom and allowed himself to be led into a ruinous policy. This advice was to make the burdens of the people heavier, and to punish them more if they failed in carrying them. Youth may sometimes be wise (see Job 32:6-9), but in this case they were extremely foolish. But behind their foolishness and Rehoboam's acceptance of their advice, God stood, working out His purpose (v 15). **12:15** God can use even the foolishness and the evil acts of men to accomplish His will. The supreme example of this is the cross. See note at Gen 50:20.

**12:16** "Israel" – the ten northern tribes.

"Part" – 2 Sam 20:1.

**12:17** "In the cities of Judah" – people from the 10 northern tribes who had come to live there. See 2 Chron 11:14-17.

**12:18** Rehoboam, of course, was reluctant to see 10 tribes slip away from his authority. **12:20** 11:13,32,36; 2 Kings 17:21.

**12:21-24** 2 Chron 11:1-4.

**12:22** "Shemaiah" – 2 Chron 12:5-8,15.

**12:24** "Is from me" – v 15.

**12:25** Shechem and Peniel were ancient cities (Gen 32:30,31; Jud 8:8,17; 9:45-49. "Peniel" – or "Peniel."

**12:27** Jeroboam was aware of the unifying force of religion with its central place of worship. He cared nothing about obedience to God's laws; he wanted only to cling to power.

**12:28** Ex 32:4-8; 2 Kings 10:29; 17:16; Hos 8:4-7; Ex 20:3-6,23. Jeroboam gave them a form of worship of their own which would keep them from going to Jerusalem. Now too there are many forms of worship and religions which keep people from worshipping the true God.

29 And he placed one in Bethel and the other he put in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one, to Dan.

31 And he made houses on high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, who were not of the sons of Levi. 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that *is* in Judah, and he made offerings on the altar. He did this in Bethel, offering sacrifices to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he made offerings on the altar in Bethel, which he had made, on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had chosen in his own heart, and ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and he made offerings on the altar and burned incense.

**13** And just then a man of God came to Bethel from Judah by the word of the LORD; and Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense. 2 And *the man* cried out against the altar

**12:29** "Bethel" – this town was about 20 kilometers north of Jerusalem, near the border between Ephraim and Benjamin.

"Dan" – in the far north of Israel.

**12:30** Israel had just complaints against Rehoboam, but they allowed their objections to move them to accept the leadership of an evil man, Jeroboam, who led them to spiritual ruin. A wrong reaction to injustice or troubles of other kinds can lead people into still worse troubles.

**12:31** "High places" – note at 3:2.

"Levi" – Ex 29:9; 40:15; Num 3:9,10; 18:1-7. In his determination to hold power he cared not at all how many of God's laws he violated, or what spiritual damage he did to God's people. What but ruin can be the end of such a course, anytime, anywhere?

**12:32,33** "He had chosen" – compare Lev 23:33,34; Num 29:12. Jeroboam was inventing a substitute religion, complete with places of worship, a priesthood, sacrifices, and festivals. But the whole thing was an abomination to the one true God (14:9-11), because it violated His laws and ignored His desires altogether. Let us learn that not all religions are good, and not all ways lead to God – in fact, some ways lead directly away from Him. Jeroboam's religion was like this. He completely corrupted Israel, and his deeds had a profound effect on all their later history.

Ever after this, Jeroboam is remembered in the Bible for his wickedness in leading Israel into sin – 15:30,34; 16:2,19,26,31; 22:52; 2 Kings 3:3; 10:29; etc. The sins of Jeroboam are mentioned more than 20 times in the Old Testament – surely some sort of record for an individual. Sins in the sphere of religion, sins which keep people

by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Look, a child will be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and he will offer on you the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones will be burned on you.'" 3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This *is* the sign which the LORD has spoken: 'Look, the altar will split apart and the ashes on it will spill out.'"

4 Then this happened: when king Jeroboam heard the words of the man of God who cried out against the altar in Bethel, he put out his hand from the altar, saying, "Seize him!" And his hand, which he stretched out against him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to him. 5 And the altar split apart and the ashes spilled out of the altar, in accordance with the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

6 And the king answered and said to the man of God, "Please plead with the face of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." And the man of God pleaded with

from the true God, are among the most serious and deadly of all sins. Compare Matt 23:13-15.

**13:1** "Man of God" – often, as here, means a prophet. He is not named. Sometimes God commits great and difficult work to those who are comparatively unknown. Compare 1 Cor 1:12-29.

"Judah" – then considered enemy territory by Jeroboam.

"To burn incense" – 12:32. Compare 1 Sam 13:8-14. Jeroboam little knew that his religion made him hateful to God. God now reveals this through His prophet.

**13:2** "Josiah" – a prophecy which was not fulfilled for nearly 300 years. But then it was fulfilled to the letter – 2 Kings 23:15-20. It was unusual for prophecies of the future to give the name of an individual. Besides Josiah only Cyrus (Isa 44:28) and Solomon were so named. In Old Testament prophecy the Lord Jesus was clearly revealed and many titles were given to Him (such as Immanuel and those names in Isa 9:6), but it is not said that His name would be Jesus.

**13:3** God gave evidence to Jeroboam and to the nation that the prophet was declaring the Word of God. It was important for them to know this, for Israel was at a very critical stage in its history. Compare Ex 4:1-9; Deut 18:21,22; Heb 2:4.

**13:4** "Seize him" – Jeroboam did not want messages from God. Political power was his delight.

**13:6** "Pray" – how like Pharaoh in Egypt, and, for that matter, many people today. Many want healing without repenting of their sins, and help from God without obedience to God. But what is more important – healing of the hand or healing of the inner person? Jeroboam should have been crying

the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him and became as *it was* before.

7 And the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."

8 And the man of God said to the king, "Even if you would give me half your house, I would not go in with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water in this place, 9 because this is what the word of the LORD commanded me, saying, 'Eat no bread and drink no water, and do not return by the same way that you go.'" 10 So he went another way, and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel.

11 Now an old prophet lived in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the deeds that the man of God had done that day in Bethel, and they told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. 12 And their father said to them, "What way did he go?" For his sons saw the way the man of God who came from Judah had gone. 13 And he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him, and he rode on it.

14 And went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak. And he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?"

And he said, "I am."

15 Then he said to him, "Come home with me, and eat bread."

16 And he said, "I cannot return with you or go in with you, and I will not eat bread or drink water

with you in this place, 17 because it was said to me by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread or drink water there, or return by the way that you go.'"

18 He said to him, "I *am* also a prophet, just as you *are*;" and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you into your house, so that he can eat bread and drink water.'" But he lied to him.

19 So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house and drank water. 20 And it came about, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who brought him back, 21 and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because you have disobeyed the *word spoken by the* mouth of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, 22 but came back and ate bread and drank water in the place concerning which *the LORD* said to you, 'Eat no bread and drink no water, your dead body will not go to the tomb of your fathers.'"

23 And it came about after he ate bread and after he drank, he saddled the donkey for him, *that is*, for the prophet whom he brought back. 24 And as *the man* was going, a lion met him in the road and killed him. And his dead body was thrown down in the road, and the donkey stood by it, and the lion stood by the body. 25 And men appeared, passing by, and saw the body thrown down in the

out for prayer for his withered heart.

**13:7** "Reward" – possibly an attempt to corrupt this prophet and use him for his own ends.

**13:8-10** The prophet had received his instructions from God, and he was firm in his determination to follow them completely. So far so good.

**13:11** This old prophet sets out to ruin the prophet from Judah (v 18). His motive is not stated. It may have been envy (and envy is deadly). Perhaps he reasoned like this – "I am a prophet and live right here in Bethel. Why did God bring a prophet from Judah to give His message. Why am I passed over?" Or it may have been simply that this old prophet was a backslidden failure and was pleased to see other prophets fail too. Who can say for sure? (Jer 17:9). But we know there are such people in the world and among God's people.

**13:15** Verse 7. The testing of this prophet came a second time. Temptations once overcome may cause us to fall when they come again. Continual vigilance is the price of victory (Eph 6:18; 1 Pet 5:8; etc). Satan knows an individual's weakness and will bring the same temptations again and again throughout a person's life.

**13:16** Verse 9. Sometimes the command of God may seem strange and unreasonable to His servants. Compare Ezek 4:12-14;

Hos 1:2; Acts 10:9-14.

**13:18** "Lied to him" – he was not the last person to tell lies in the name of God. We make a big mistake if we ignore what God has revealed to us and let others get our guidance for us. Observe that temptations and testings may come in God's name. These may be among the most difficult to overcome.

**13:19** How important it is to hold firm in obedience to what God has said.

**13:20** This old man had the true prophetic gift.

**13:21** This man of God should have realized that God would not change His instructions, that his obedience was being tested. Once God has told us to do something we must do it, even though a world of prophets and all our family and friends try to turn us from God's will. If we do not we will experience great loss.

**13:22** Disobedience in what men might regard as a small matter may result in the destruction of our whole ministry, may indeed cost us our lives. No disobedience is small in God's eyes, and little matters may bring great tests. Compare Luke 16:10. For the terrible results of another act of disobedience see Rom 5:12,15,17-19.

**13:24** The donkey did not run away, the lion did not attack the donkey – evidence to those who saw it that this was an act of God.

road, and the lion standing by the body; and they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet lived.

26 And when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard *this*, he said, "*It is* the man of God, who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, in accordance with the word of the LORD, which he spoke to him."

27 And he spoke to his sons, saying, "Saddle the donkey for me." And they saddled *it for him*. 28 And he went and found his body thrown down in the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the body. The lion had not eaten the body, nor torn the donkey. 29 And the prophet took up the body of the man of God, and laid it on the donkey and brought it back, and the old prophet came to the city to mourn and to bury him. 30 And he laid his body in his own grave, and they mourned over him, *saying*, "Alas, my brother!"

31 And it came about, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God *is* buried. Lay my bones beside his bones; 32 for the thing which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, will surely come true."

33 After this incident Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again made priests for the high places from the lowest of the people. He consecrated whoever had the desire *to be a priest*, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. 34 And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from the face of the earth.

**13:26** A man of God died for one act of disobedience, but the lying prophet and wicked Jeroboam lived on. Strange appear the ways of God to men (Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33,34), and none of us will understand all He does on earth. But we should learn not to judge people's character by what happens to them, by the measure of their present punishment or lack of it. Some faithful children of God suffer greatly and die young. Many rascals live on untroubled, and seem to prosper (Ps 73:3-12). But the end is not yet – Rev 22:12. **13:29,30** It seems this strange old man was genuinely sorry. He had ruined his "brother", and his heart was saddened and troubled. Perhaps, when he started out to test him, he did not think it would result in the young man's death.

**13:32** 2 Kings 23:15-18.

**13:33** "Did not turn" – miracles and prophecies do not change the human heart. Jeroboam went ahead as before (12:31-33).

"Desire" – the priesthood was thrown open to those who were looking for such a

**14** At that time Ahijah, the son of Jeroboam, fell sick. 2 And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise and disguise yourself, so that you will not be recognized as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. See, Ahijah the prophet *is* there, who told me that *I would be* king over this people. 3 And take ten loaves and cakes and a jar of honey with you, and go to him. He will tell you what is to become of the child."

4 And Jeroboam's wife did so. She arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. Now Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were set because of his age. 5 And the LORD said to Ahijah, "Now the wife of Jeroboam is coming to ask something of you for her son, for he *is* sick. You are to say such and such to her; for it shall be, when she comes in, that she will pretend *to be* another woman."

6 And *so* it was that when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in the door, he said, "Come in, you wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend *to be* someone else? For I *have been* sent to you *with* bad news. 7 Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over my people Israel, 8 and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, and yet you have not been like my servant David who kept my commandments and who followed me with all his heart to do only *what was* right in my eyes, 9 but have done evil above all who were before you, for you have gone and made other gods and cast metal idols for yourself to provoke me to anger, and have thrust me behind your back, 10 therefore, look, I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off every male person from Jeroboam, *both* bond

position. God's desire had nothing to do with it. So instead of the best men leading the spiritual life of the nation, the worst men pressed forward. So now. If God's call is not the sole criterion, men after money, power, and position will strive for places and leadership in Christian circles. Compare Jud 17:11; 18:20.

**13:34** "Destroy it" – 14:10; 15:29; 2 Kings chapter 9.

**14:1,2** 13:6. Like many people in every generation Jeroboam was ready to seek God for something he wanted, but was not willing to forsake his sins.

"Ahijah" – 11:29-31.

**14:5** Compare 1 Sam 9:15-17; 2 Kings 6:32. **14:7,8** 11:28-38.

**14:9** "Evil" – 12:28-33. "Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

"Have thrust me behind your back" – Neh 9:26; Ps 50:17; Jer 2:27; 32:33; Ezek 23:35. This is how some people dare to treat Almighty God, the Creator of the universe!

**14:10** 15:29.



and free in Israel, and will sweep away the rest of the house of Jeroboam, as a man sweeps away dung, until it is all gone. 11 Those who belong to Jeroboam who die in the city will be eaten by the dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by the birds of the air; for the LORD has spoken *it*.'

12 "So arise. Go to your own house. *And* when your feet enter the city, the child will die. 13 And all Israel will mourn for him and bury him, for he alone of *those who* belong to Jeroboam will come to the grave, because in him there is found *some* good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

14 "Moreover the LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the house of Jeroboam that day. And what now? 15 For the LORD will strike Israel. *It will be* like a reed shaken in the water. And he will root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their *idolatrous* groves, provoking the LORD to anger. 16 And he will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who caused Israel to sin."

17 And Jeroboam's wife arose and left *and* came to Tirzah, and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died. 18 And they buried him, and all Israel mourned for him, in accordance with the word of the LORD which he spoke through his servant Ahijah the prophet.

19 And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war, and how he reigned, see, they *are* written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel. 20 And Jeroboam reigned for twenty-two years. Then he slept with his ancestors, and Nadab his son reigned in his place.

21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned

in Judah. Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD chose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name *was* Naamah. *She was* an Ammonite.

22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, above all that their fathers had done. 23 For they also built for themselves high places and *made* idols and *idolatrous* groves, on every high hill and under every green tree. 24 And there *were* even male shrine prostitutes in the land, *and* they behaved in accordance with all the abominations of the nations which the LORD drove out before the children of Israel.

25 And this occurred in the fifth year of king Rehoboam: Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, 26 and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house. He took them all away, and took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. 27 And in their place king Rehoboam made bronze shields, and committed *them* into the hands of the chief of the guard, who kept the door of the king's house. 28 And *the custom was that* whenever the king went into the house of the LORD, the guard carried them, and *later* brought them back into the guard room.

29 Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 30 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all *their* days. 31 And Rehoboam slept with his ancestors, and was buried among his ancestors in the city of David. And his mother's name *was* Naamah. *She was* an Ammonite. And Abijah his son reigned in his place.

**14:11** God had warned that this was one of the penalties of disobedience to His covenant (Deut 28:26).

**14:12,13** "Some good thing" – see note at 13:26. In this case, considering the destruction to come on the house of Jeroboam, the death of this boy was a merciful act of God. It may be so in a great many cases, as far as we know. Compare Isa 57:1,2.

**14:14** 15:27-29.

**14:15,16** "Strike Israel" – Deut 28:63,64; 29:25-28; 2 Kings 17:21-23.

"The River" – the Euphrates.

"*Idolatrous* groves" – or "Asherah poles" – note at Jud 3:7.

"Sins of Jeroboam" – 12:28-33.

**14:17** "Tirzah" – the first capital of the northern kingdom of Israel.

**14:19** "Annals" – these were not the books of Chronicles, but earlier records. No man knows what has become of them.

**14:20** "Slept" – note at 2:10. "Nadab" – 15:25.

**14:21** "Rehoboam" – 11:32,36,43.

"Ammonite" – Rehoboam was the offspring of a forbidden marriage – 11:1,2.

**14:22** "Evil" – see 2 Chron 12:1,14.

"Jealousy" – Ex 20:3-6.

**14:23** Deut 12:2; 16:22.

**14:24** "Prostitutes" – groups of both male and female prostitutes were kept at various places of worship in the old Canaanite religion. Now Judah adopted this detestable custom and made it a part of their worship. God had warned them about this in Deut 20:18; 23:17.

**14:25-31** This was because God was punishing the people for their sins (2 Chron 12:1,2). See note at 11:14-25.

**14:26** "Solomon had made" – 10:16,17.

**14:29** "Annals" – note at 14:19.

**14:31** "Slept" – note at 2:10. "Abijah" – Abijah.

**15** Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Maachah. *She was* the daughter of Abishalom.

3 And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him, and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, like the heart of David his father. 4 Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem, 5 because David did *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD, and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 Now the rest of the acts of Abijam and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. 8 And Abijam slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his place.

9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. 10 And he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah. *She was* the daughter of Abishalom.

11 And Asa did *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD, like David his father had done. 12 And he took away the male shrine prostitutes from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 13 And he also removed his mother Maachah from *being* queen, because she had made an idol

in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burned *it* by the brook Kidron. 14 But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days. 15 And he brought into the house of the LORD the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated, silver and gold and utensils.

16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel, all their days. 17 And Baasha, king of Israel, went up against Judah, and built Ramah, not allowing anyone to go out or come in to Asa, king of Judah.

18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold *that were* left in the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and entrusted them into the hands of his servants; and king Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who lived at Damascus, saying, 19 "*There is* a treaty between me and you, *and* between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasha, king of Israel, so that he will leave me."

20 So Ben-Hadad listened to king Asa, and sent the commanders of the armies which he had against the cities of Israel and attacked Ijon and Dan and Abel-Beth-Maachah, and all Kinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. 21 And it came about, when Baasha heard *this*, that he stopped the building of Ramah, and lived in Tirzah. 22 Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah. No one *was* exempt; and they took away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had built, and with them king Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.

**15:2** "Three years" – many of the kings of Israel and Judah were insignificant and their reigns brief.

"Abishalom" – a different way of spelling "Absalom."

**15:3** "Father" – 14:21-24; 2 Chron 12:1.

"His heart" – this was the root reason for his many sins.

**15:4** "Lamp" – 11:36.

**15:5** "Hittite" – 2 Sam 11:2-4, 14-17; 12:9,10; 1 Kings 9:4; 14:8. Does this mean that David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah were his only sins? Obviously not. His numbering of Israel, for example, was sin and brought punishment (2 Sam 24:1,10). But David was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14), and he earnestly sought God and tried to do God's will all his life. When he failed he repented and confessed and forsook his sin. Only in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba did he fail to do so. Many months went by without repentance and God had to send Nathan the prophet to rebuke him (2 Sam 12:1,7).

**15:6** 14:30.

**15:7** "Annals" – note at 14:19. More about

Abijah is recorded in 2 Chron 13:2-22.

**15:8** "Slept" – note at 2:10.

**15:11** "Asa" – among the kings of Judah he was rated a good king. It may surprise us that evil men sometimes have good sons, and good men evil sons. More about Asa at 2 Chronicles chapters 15 and 16.

**15:12,13** Asa dealt with the sin in his own home also. This is where obedience to the Lord and our witness must always begin. Compare Jud 6:24-27; Josh 24:15; Gen 35:1-4. And this is often where failure is most evident – 1 Sam 8:1-5; 2 Sam 13:21,39; 1 Kings 1:6.

"Idol in a grove" – probably a wooden idol or pole representing the goddess Asherah.

**15:16** The division of Israel into two parts was a source of continual trouble to both of them.

**15:17** "Ramah" – a town only about eight kilometers north of Jerusalem.

**15:18,19** "Treaty" – surely it was a mistake on Asa's part to look to an idolatrous nation for security against his enemies. It reveals a weakness in his faith. See 2 Chron 16:7. Note also at Isa 31:1.

**15:21** "Tirzah" – 15:17.

23 All the rest of the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? Nevertheless, in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. 24 And Asa slept with his ancestors, and was buried among his ancestors in the city of his father David. And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.

25 And Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa, king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. 26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in his sin with which he made Israel to sin.

27 And Baasha, the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him and Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 And in the third year of Asa, king of Judah, Baasha killed him and reigned in his place.

29 And this happened when he became king: he struck down all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam any who breathed, until he had destroyed him, in accordance with the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite, 30 because of the sins of Jeroboam which he committed, and which he caused Israel to commit, because of his provocation with which he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel, all their days.

33 In the third year of Asa, king of Judah, Baasha, the son of Ahijah, began to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, *and he reigned* twenty-four years. 34 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin with which he caused Israel to sin.

**16** Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu, the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying, 2 "Because I exalted you from the dust and made you ruler over my people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam and have

caused my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins, 3 look, I will consume Baasha and his house, and will make your house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. 4 Those who belong to Baasha who die in the city will be eaten by the dogs, and those of his who die in the fields will be eaten by the birds of the air."

5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 6 So Baasha slept with his ancestors and was buried in Tirzah, and Elah his son reigned in his place.

7 And also the word of the LORD had come through the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, against Baasha and against his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed him.

8 In the twenty-sixth year of Asa, king of Judah, Elah, the son of Baasha, began to reign over Israel in Tirzah, *and he reigned* two years.

9 And his servant Zimri, commander of half *his* chariots, conspired against him while he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, the steward of *his* house in Tirzah. 10 And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa, king of Judah, and reigned in his place.

11 And it happened when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he killed all the house of Baasha. He did not leave him a single male person, none of his relatives or of his friends. 12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, in accordance with the word of the LORD, which he spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, 13 because of all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of his son Elah, which they committed and which they made Israel commit, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their worthless *idols*.

14 Now the rest of the acts of Elah and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel?

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Asa, king of Judah, Zimri reigned seven days in Tirzah. And the people *were* camped against Gibbethon, which

**15:23** "Annals" - 14:19.  
"Diseased" - 2 Chron 16:12-14.

**15:24** "Slept" - note at 2:10.

**15:26** 12:28-33; 13:33,34.

**15:27-29** 14:9,10.

**15:30** 12:28-33.

**15:31** "Annals" - 14:19.

**16:1** "Jehu" - this was a prophet about whom we know very little, and not, of course, the Jehu of 2 Kings chapter 9 who later became king of Israel.

**16:2** 12:25-33; 14:7; 15:34.

**16:3,4** 14:10,11.

**16:5** "Annals" - 14:19.

**16:6** "Slept" - note at 2:10.

**16:7** Baasha was the instrument of God's judgment on Jeroboam's house, but was guilty of sin in what he did.

**16:13** "Anger" - Num 25:3.

"Worthless idols" - 12:28,29; Ps 115:4-8.

**16:15-23** Factions split the kingdom and caused havoc. Zimri, Omri and Tibni were all rivals for the throne. It all came about because of sin, disobedience, and lust for

*belonged* to the Philistines. 16 And the people *who were* camped heard *this* said: "Zimri has conspired, and has also killed the king." Therefore that day all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel in the camp. 17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. 18 And it happened that when Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king's house, and burned down the king's house over himself with fire, and died, 19 because of his sins which he committed in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he committed, to cause Israel to sin. 20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his plot which he carried out, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel?

21 Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts. Half of the people followed Tibni, the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. 22 But the people who followed Omri prevailed against the people who followed Tibni, the son of Ginath. So Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

23 In the thirty-first year of Asa, king of Judah, Omri began to reign over Israel, *and he reigned* twelve years. He reigned six years in Tirzah. 24 And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill.

25 But Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, doing more evil than all who *were* before him.

26 For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and in his sin with which he caused Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their worthless *idols*.

27 Now the rest of the deeds of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 28 So Omri slept with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria, and his son Ahab reigned in his place.

29 And in the thirty-eighth year of Asa, king of Judah, Ahab, the son of Omri, began to reign over Israel, and Ahab, the son of Omri, reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. 30 And Ahab, the son of Omri, did more evil in the sight of the LORD than all who *were* before him. 31 And it came about, as if it were a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that he took Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, as *his* wife, and went and served Baal and worshipped him. 32 And he set up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 And Ahab made an *idolatrous* grove, and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

34 In his days Hiel, the Bethelite, built Jericho. He laid its foundation *at the cost of* his firstborn Abiram, and set up its gates *at the cost of* his youngest *son* Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun.

power. Selfish struggles for position and power in Christian circles can be just as disastrous. Wise men will avoid them.

**16:19** 12:28-33; 14:16; 15:26,34.

**16:20** "Annals" - 14:19.

**16:23** "Tirzah" - 14:17.

**16:24** Omri built Samaria and established it as the new capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. The northern kingdom was even called "Samaria" at times (21:1; Isa 10:10; Amos 6:1).

"Two talents" - about 70 kilograms.

**16:25-28** From a secular point of view Omri was one of the northern kingdom's most successful kings. But the writer dismisses him with a few verses. God's standards are different from man's. Omri denied God's covenant and followed Jeroboam. In God's sight he was an evil failure. Compare Luke 16:15.

**16:25** To say he was worse than Jeroboam was to condemn him utterly.

**16:26** 12:28-33.

**16:30** Jeroboam was bad, Omri was worse, Ahab the worst of all. Why did God permit such kings to rule His people? He was justly giving them the rulers they deserved because of their own evil

behavior. Is there not here a principle in God's dealings with the nations of earth? Usually does He not let come to power the kind of leaders and rulers that the people as a whole deserve? Sometimes, in mercy, He may give them better ones than they deserve, but never worse ones.

**16:31** Jezebel was one of the most wicked women recorded in history (18:4,13,19; 19:2,3; 21:5-15,25). This marriage of Ahab was in contempt of God's law - Deut 7:1-5.

"Baal" - note at Jud 2:11.

**16:32** 2 Kings 10:21-27. We read of no temple he built for Jehovah the one true God.

**16:33** "Grove" - or "Asherah pole" - note at Jud 3:7.

"Anger" - Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11. Ahab made Baal worship the predominant religion of the northern kingdom.

**16:34** Josh 6:26. Jericho had continued in existence as a village without walls and gates (Josh 18:21; Jud 1:16; 3:13; 2 Sam 10:5). Hiel decided to rebuild it as a city with walls and gates.

**17** And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there will be no dew or rain these years, except by my word."

2 And the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 "Go from here, and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Kerith, that is east of the Jordan. 4 And it is to be *like this*: you will drink from the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the brook Kerith, that *is* east of the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.

7 And after a while it happened that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. 8 And the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which *belongs* to Sidon, and stay there. See, I have commanded a widow woman there to provide for you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, just then the widow woman *was* there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a jar, so

that I can drink." 11 And as she was going to bring *it*, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand."

12 And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have a loaf, but *only* a handful of flour in a barrel, and a little oil in a jug. And, look, I *am* gathering two sticks, so that I can go in and prepare it for myself and my son, so that we can eat it, and die."

13 And Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid. Go *and* do as you have said, but with it make for me a little cake first, and bring *it* to me, and afterwards make for yourself and for your son. 14 For thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'The barrel of flour will not be exhausted, and the jug of oil will not fail, until the day *that* the LORD sends rain on the earth.'"

15 And she went and did according to the word of Elijah. And she, and he, and her household, ate for *many* days. 16 *And* the barrel of flour was not exhausted, and the jug of oil did not fail, in accordance with the word of the LORD which he spoke by Elijah.

17 And it came about after these things, *that* the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick, and his sickness was so severe, that there was no breath left in him. 18 And she said to Elijah,

**17:1** Deut 28:23,24; 1 Kings 18:1; Luke 4:25,26; Jam 5:17; Rev 11:6. Elijah was one of the greatest figures of the Old Testament. Moses and Elijah, representing the law and the prophets, appeared with the Lord Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (Matt 17:3; Luke 9:31). John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, came in the spirit of Elijah (Matt 11:13,14; 17:11-13; Mark 9:11-13; Luke 1:17). And it seems that Elijah will appear again before the second coming of Christ (Mal 4:6). His name means "Jehovah is my God." His home was east of the Jordan river.

"Before whom I stand" – servants stood in the presence of a ruler to obey his orders. So Elijah remained in the presence of the heavenly King waiting for His word. He lived consciously in God's presence with an attitude of obedience, as ever believer today should do.

"No dew or rain" – because of the false worship of the people God was sending them drought and famine in judgment. Compare Lev 26:3,4,18,19; Deut 28:15,22-24; 2 Sam 21:1; 2 Kings 6:24,25. Baal, the god Israel was worshiping in the place of Jehovah, was thought to be the god who gave fertile fields and rain from heaven. The true God was proving to the people through Elijah that He Himself, Jehovah, had control of rain and fields and that Baal was powerless. Compare Ex 12:12.

**17:3** "Hide" – his life was in danger from the murderous pair of Ahab and Jezebel.

**17:4** "Ravens" – God supplied Elijah's needs

in a supernatural way but used natural means. Observe God's sovereignty over creation, and how He may use any means He pleases to meet His peoples' needs. Compare Ex 16:4,13-18; 17:1-7. See 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19.

**17:7** "Dried up" – surely this tested Elijah's faith. We should learn, as he did, that if one source of supply dries up God will provide another for His servants (Ps 23:1). We should learn to trust God Himself and not the means God may use to help us.

**17:9** "Zarephath" – a town between Tyre and Sidon on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. God sent Elijah far from his home, far from the ravens, and out of the territory ruled by Ahab, to a poor non-Israelite. See Luke 4:25,26.

"Commanded" – v. 4. God can move on human hearts also to fulfill His will and to meet the needs of His people, even without their knowing it.

**17:10,11** Elijah recognized her as the one God had appointed to meet his needs.

**17:12** To meet the needs of His servants God often passes by the rich and uses the poor. Compare 2 Cor 8:1-4.

**17:13** Here was an opportunity for her to learn of the power of the miracle-working God of Israel, and she believed and experienced it (v 15). We all may have such opportunities. See Luke 6:38.

**17:18** She thought, perhaps, that Elijah had discovered her past sin and had spoken of them to God. And she believed that the death of her son was a punishment for her



"What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to call my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?"

19 And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her bosom, and carried him up into the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. 20 And he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have you also brought disaster on the widow with whom I am staying, by killing her son?" 21 And he stretched himself on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray you, let this child's soul come back into him."

22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came back into him, and he revived. 23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down from the room into the house and handed him to his mother, and Elijah said, "See, your son is living."

24 And the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you *are* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in your mouth *is* truth."

**18** And it came about *after* many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, "Go, appear to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth." 2 And Elijah went to appear to Ahab.

And *there was* a severe famine in Samaria. 3 And Ahab called Obadiah, who *was* over *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly; 4 for it happened, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) 5 And Ahab said to Obadiah, "Go throughout the land, to all the springs of water and to all the streams. Perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so

sin. This was not true, as we can see from what follows.

**17:20** Elijah was as puzzled as the widow. God's servants often find themselves in puzzling circumstances. Compare 2 Cor 4:8.

**17:22** This is the first recorded raising of the dead in the Bible. And it happened, not in Israel, not among believers in Judah, but to the son of a poor widow of another nation. Such is God's grace.

**17:24** In faith this woman leaped ahead of the people of Israel who had rejected both Elijah and God who spoke through him.

**18:1** "I will send rain" – there had been no repentance in Israel, but God in sovereign grace, decided to send rain anyway, so that the land and the nation would not be totally destroyed.

**18:2** Observe Elijah's unquestioning obedience in everything (17:5,10; 18:36; 19:15,19). A possibility of danger in meeting Ahab did not deter him. Truly he stood as a servant in the presence of God (17:1).

that we do not lose all the animals." 6 So they divided the land between them to survey it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7 And as Obadiah was on the way, suddenly Elijah met him, and *Obadiah* knew him and prostrated himself and said, "*Are* you my master Elijah?"

8 And he answered him, "*I am*. Go, tell your master, 'Look, Elijah *is here*.'"

9 And he said, "What sin have I done, that you would deliver your servant into the hands of Ahab to kill me? 10 *As* the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to seek you; and when they said, '*He is not there*', he made that kingdom and nation swear that they could not find you. 11 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, Look, Elijah *is here*.' 12 And it will happen, *as soon as* I have gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you I don't know where; and so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. 13 Was it not told my master what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid a hundred of the LORD's prophets by fifties in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 14 And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, Look, Elijah *is here*'; and he will kill me."

15 And Elijah said, "*As* the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely appear to him today."

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17 And it came about, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "*Are* you the one who is troubling Israel?"

18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you, and your father's house, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD,

**18:3** "Obadiah" – not the prophet of the same name, but a steward in Ahab's house.

**18:4** "Jezebel" – 16:31.

"Hide them" – God sometimes may make use of individuals in high positions to preserve His people. Compare Est 4:14.

**18:12** 2 Kings 2:16; Ezek 3:12,14; Acts 8:39.

**18:13** "Hundred" – there were groups of prophets then as in Samuel's day (1 Sam 10:5,10). See 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:7,15.

**18:15** "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**18:17** "One who is troubling Israel" – it was Ahab who was the real troubler of Israel. God sent Elijah to help preserve Israel in spite of men like Ahab. The great troublemakers of mankind are sinful men, sinful leaders, not those who rebuke sin and demand repentance. Compare Josh 7:24-26; Acts 17:6; 24:5. Compare Ahab's attitude, when faced with famine, with David's attitude (2 Sam 21:1).

**18:18** "Baals" – 16:30-33. Note on Baal at Jud 2:11.

and have followed the Baals. 19 Now therefore send *and* gather in my presence at Mount Carmel all Israel, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of the groves who eat at Jezebel's table."

20 So Ahab sent to all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together at mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you limp between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow him, but if Baal, *then* follow him."

And the people did not answer him a word.

22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I, I alone, remain a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. 23 Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under it*. And I will prepare the other bull and lay it on wood, and put no fire *under it*. 24 And you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, let him be God."

And all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

25 And Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You choose one bull for yourselves, and prepare *it* first, for *there are* many of you; and call on the name of your gods. But do not put any fire *under it*."

**18:19** "Carmel"—a long flat-topped range of high hills running to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. "Of the groves"—Asherah. Note at Jud 3:7.

"Table"—Jezebel was using part of the wealth of Israel, the people of God to provide for these false prophets of a false god. Note on false prophets at Gen 20:11; Deut 13:1; 18:20; Jer 14:14.

**18:20** Ahab was willing to accept the challenge. After all, it seemed that the odds were 850 to 1 against Elijah. For a similar contest see note at Ex 7:11.

**18:21** Ex 32:26; Josh 24:15; 2 Kings 17:41; Matt 6:24. Men must decide what is true and what they will follow. Many people consider it broad-minded and tolerant to try to accept every outlook on life as legitimate or good. And some like to think that all religions are good, and that all gods are one. Elijah and the God of the Bible, the only true and living God, will have no part in such thinking. They knew that to worship Baal was to reject the true God, to follow the true God meant to reject Baal. Israel could not succeed in its attempt to have both. So it is now. Those who want to worship and serve the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ must reject all other gods. See also Josh 24:14,15; 2 Kings 17:32,33; Isa 42:8. **18:22** 19:10,14. Elijah felt how alone he was. Compare Ps 12:1. His meaning is that he was the only one to make a public stand to fight against false religion.

**18:24** "The God who answers by fire" in other

26 And they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning to noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But *there was* no voice or anyone who answered. And they leaped on the altar which was made.

27 And at noon it came about that Elijah mocked them and said, "Call with a loud voice, for he *is* a god! Either he is conversing, or is pursuing *someone*, or is on a journey. Or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened!" 28 And they called out with a loud voice, and cut themselves according to their custom with knives and lances until the blood gushed out on them. 29 And it came about, when noon was past, and they had prophesied until *the time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that *there was* no voice, or anyone to answer, or anyone who paid attention.

30 And Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that had been* torn down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD came, saying, "Your name will be Israel." 32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed. 33 And he put the

words, let the true God reveal Himself by a miracle. Elijah knew that the LORD (Jehovah) could do this (Lev 9:24), and that Baal could not. The people could see that the challenge was a perfectly fair test. Note on fire as a symbol for God at Ex 3:2.

**18:26** "Answered"—Baal did not answer because he could not. He was like all the gods of men (Ps 96:5; 115:4-7; Isa 41:22-24; 44:6,15-26; Hab 2:18-20).

"Leaped"—trying to arouse their deity to action.

**18:27** "Mocked"—how bold, how confident in God was Elijah!

**18:28** "Blood gushed"—a desperate attempt to get their god to respond.

**18:29** "Prophesied"—here means shouting words under the influence of evil spirits or in the heat of their own spirits. See notes at Num 11:25; Gen 20:7; etc.

"Evening sacrifice"—Ex 29:38-41.

"Attention"—it is tragic and pathetic in the extreme that men will make such efforts to get the attention of gods who can never hear them, when they could call to the true God, the Creator, who answers prayer (Ps 65:2).

**18:30** "That had been torn down"—people had expressed contempt for the worship of the true God.

**18:31** Gen 32:28; 35:10.

**18:32** "Altar"—he wanted everyone to know that his life and ministry was related to Jehovah the God of Israel.

**18:33** This was to show the undeniable

wood in order, and cut the bull in pieces and laid *it* on the wood, and said, "Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood."

34 And he said, "Do *it* a second time." And they did *it* a second time. And he said, "Do *it* a third time." And they did *it* a third time. 35 And the water ran around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

36 And it came about at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, "LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known today that you *are* God in Israel, and *that I am* your servant, and *that I have* done all these things at your word. 37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so that this people may know that you *are* the LORD God, and *that* you have turned their heart back again."

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces, and said, "The LORD, he *is* the God! The LORD, he *is* the God!"

40 And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Don't let one of them escape!" And they seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and killed them there.

41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain."

genuineness of the miracle which followed. **18:36** Contrast Elijah's brief believing prayer with the long frantic praying of the false prophets. See Matt 6:7,8.

"LORD God of Abraham" – Ex 4:5; etc, the covenant God of Israel.

**18:37** Observe the object Elijah had in mind – he did not want to put on a spectacular show, or call attention to himself, or gain any kind of personal benefit. His desire was that people might know who the true God is. This most important matter is everywhere emphasized in the Bible – Ex 9:16; Josh 4:24; etc. **18:38** Verse 24. Observe the willingness of God to reveal Himself when there is obedience and believing prayer. Compare John 14:21,23.

"Fire" – note at 3:2.

**18:39** Verses 21,24,37. The object of this contest (v 37) was achieved. But the results were not permanent. Before long the people and their rulers forsook God again. See 2 Kings 17:7-17.

**18:40** "Killed them" – this was in accordance with God's law for the nation (Deut 13:5, 13-18; 18:20). It was a just punishment on men who led God's people into the wickedness of false worship.

**18:41** "Sound of abundance of rain" – there was as yet no cloud. This was the language of faith (17:1).

**18:42** "Ahab went up" – the king did nothing

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and threw himself down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, 43 and said to his servant, "Go up now. Look toward the sea." And he went up and looked, and said, "*There is* nothing." And seven times he said, "Go back."

44 And it came about at the seventh time that he said, "Look, a little cloud is rising from the sea, like a man's hand."

And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare *your chariot*, and go down, so that the rain does not stop you.'"

45 And in the meantime it came about that the sky was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. 46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he tucked up his *robe* and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

**19** And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and the whole *account of* how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do *harm to me*, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

3 And when he saw *that*, he arose and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which *belonged to* Judah, and left his servant there. 4 But he himself

to prevent the slaughter of Baal's prophets. Now he departs at Elijah's word. It seems he was temporarily overwhelmed by the events he had seen. Overwhelmed, but not repentant, as we know from what follows. Miracles by themselves do not produce repentance, do not change man's sinful heart. This is abundantly clear from the ministry of the Lord Jesus on earth. See notes at Matt 8:1-4; Luke 16:31; John 2:11.

**18:43** "Seven times" – see Elijah's perseverance in prayer. Compare Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8.

**18:45** See Jam 5:16-18; Mark 11:22-25.

**18:46** "Hand of the LORD" – Elijah was given strength beyond his own and was able to outrun the chariot of the king. Compare Isa 40:29-31; Col 1:29.

**19:1** "Jezebel" – 16:31. "Killed" – 18:40.

**19:3** "Went for his life" – Elijah at times revealed great courage, as we know from chapter 18. Now he is probably suffering a complete emotional letdown (as often happens after a great victory). Anyone may experience fear in certain circumstances, and Elijah was a man with the same emotions as other men (Jam 3:17). God's servants may be bold and fearless in God, weak and fearful in themselves (for example, compare Matt 26:69-74; Acts 4:8-13).

**19:4** Num 11:15; Jonah 4:3,8. See notes on depression at psalm 42.

went a day's journey into the desert, and came to a juniper tree and sat down under *it*, and requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough. Now, O LORD, take away my life, for I *am* not better than my fathers."

5 And as he lay down and slept under the juniper tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise *and* eat."

6 And he looked, and *there appeared* a cake baked on the coals, and a jar of water at his head. And he ate and drank and lay down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him, and said, "Arise *and* eat, because the journey is too great for you."

8 And he arose and ate and drank, and in the strength of that food travelled forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 And he came there to a cave, and spent the night there. And suddenly the word of the LORD *came* to him and said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 And he said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. And I, I alone, am left; and they seek to take my life."

11 And he said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And suddenly the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind split the mountains, and broke the rocks in pieces before

the LORD. *But* the LORD *was* not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake *came*, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake. 12 And after the earthquake a fire *appeared*, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire. And after the fire *came* a still small voice. 13 And it came about, when Elijah heard *it*, that he covered his face in his cloak and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave.

And then a voice *came* to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 And he said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts, because the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. And I, I alone, am left; and they seek to take my life."

15 And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you arrive, anoint Hazael *to be* king over Syria. 16 And you shall anoint Jehu, the son of Nimshi, *to be* king over Israel, and you shall anoint Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel-Meholah *to be* prophet in your place. 17 And it will come about *that* the one who escapes the sword of Hazael Jehu will kill, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu Elisha will kill. 18 Yet I have left seven thousand *for myself* in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which has not kissed him."

19 So he left there and found Elisha, the son of

"Not better" – perhaps God permitted this experience that Elijah might learn this. Had he been thinking he *was* better than others? This temptation may come to God's servants. They may begin to think that God has used them in a great way because they are better than other men. They should not give in to this temptation. See Rom 3:9,10; Luke 18:9; Phil 2:3.

**19:5** "Angel" – note at Gen 16:7; etc.

**19:6** This shows God's tender care for His servant. Compare 17:4,9. See Ps 23:1.

**19:7** "Angel of the LORD" – Gen 16:7. The Son of God came to Elijah.

"Journey" – God knew the journey Elijah planned, but He had not told him to make it. Elijah, even while running away from danger, without God's orders, is still under God's gracious care. This is grace. Jonah's history gives a similar (but not exact) case. **19:8** "Horeb" – Mount Sinai (Ex 3:1,12; 19:1-3). It is about 400 kilometers south of Beersheba.

**19:9** "What are you doing here" – in other words, what are you seeking, Elijah? Are you merely running away from trouble and danger?

**19:10** Elijah is still in the pit of depression. He feels his ministry has come to nothing, and that only death awaits him.

"I alone" – 18:22.

**19:11,12** Sometimes God did come to His

people in spectacular ways, in windstorm, quake and fire (18:38; Ex 19:16-19; Job 38:1; Ps 18:6-15; Isa 29:6). But Elijah had already seen enough of the spectacular. He needed to find calm and peace. Perhaps he needed to understand better that God can accomplish His purposes in quiet and gentle ways also. Compare Isa 42:1-4. God does not need to speak to people in a voice of thunder, with the power of miraculous activity.

**19:14** Apparently Elijah did not understand what God was trying to teach him. Do we?

**19:15,16** Elijah did not carry out these commands as far as we know. Elisha went to Hazael (2 Kings 8:8-15), and sent another to anoint Jehu (2 Kings 9:1-10). Elijah did seek out Elisha but did not, it seems, literally anoint him. The mention of Elisha here indicates that Elijah's ministry was coming to an end. He had been given his work and had almost finished it. Now he must appoint his successor. Compare Moses and Joshua (Deut 31:1,2,7,8).

**19:17** God was going to send judgment on Israel.

**19:18** "Seven thousand" – Elijah was not as alone as he thought (v 14). God always has a few people who remain faithful to Him, however evil the state of society may be (Isa 1:9; Rom 11:4,5; Matt 16:18). This is one of the great lessons of church history.

**19:19** "Plowing" – often God calls His servants

Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he with the twelfth; and Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow you."

And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"

21 And he went back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them, and boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave *it* to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah, and ministered to him.

**20** And Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, gathered all his army together, and *there were* thirty-two kings with him, and horses and chariots; and he went up and besieged Samaria and made war against it. 2 And he sent messengers to Ahab, king of Israel, into the city, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-hadad: 3 Your silver and your gold *are* mine. Also your most beautiful wives and children *are* mine."

4 And the king of Israel answered and said, "My lord, O king, in accordance with your word, I *am* yours, and all that I have."

5 And the messengers came again and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, I have sent *men* to you, saying, 'You must hand over to me your silver and your gold and your wives and your children.' 6 So I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they will search your house, and the houses of your servants; and it shall be *that* whatever is desirable in your eyes, they will lay hands on it and take *it* away."

7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Please observe and see how this *man* is looking for trouble; for he sent *men* to me for my wives and for my children, and for my silver and for my gold; and I did not refuse him."

8 And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen *to him* or agree."

9 Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, All that you sent

for to your servant at first I will do, but this thing I am not able to do." And the messengers departed and brought word back to him.

10 And Ben-Hadad sent to him, and said, "The gods do *harm* to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria is enough for handfuls for all the people who follow me."

11 And the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell *him*, 'The one who puts on *his armour* should not boast like the one who takes it off.'"

12 And it came about, when *Ben-Hadad* heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the tents, that he said to his servants, "Set *yourselves in array*." And they set *themselves in array* against the city.

13 And then a prophet came to Ahab, king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Look, I will deliver it into your hands today, and you will know that I *am* the LORD.'"

14 And Ahab said, "By whom?"

And he said, "Thus says the LORD, 'By the young men of the rulers of the provinces.'"

Then he said, "Who should begin the battle?"

And he answered, "You."

15 Then he counted the young men of the rulers of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two. And after them he counted all the people, all the children of Israel. *There were* seven thousand. 16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-Hadad was drinking himself drunk in the tents, he and the kings, the thirty-two kings who were helping him. 17 And the young men of the rulers of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Hadad sent out *observers*, and they told him, saying, "Men have come out of Samaria."

18 And he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; or if they have come out for war, take them alive."

19 So these young men of the rulers of the provinces came out of the city, with the army which followed them. 20 And each one of them killed his man; and the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, escaped on a

when they are engaged in the simple, common tasks of life (Matt 4:8; 9:9).

"Mantle" – a mantle is a long, loose, sleeveless cloak. Throwing his mantle on Elisha was possibly Elijah's way of anointing him.

**19:20** "Go back" – Elijah had not asked Elisha to come with him.

**19:21** Elisha was eager for God's service, even lowly service (2 Kings 3:11). He burned his bridges behind him – destroyed his means of livelihood, and went forth for God. Compare Mark 1:16-20.

**20:1** "Ben-Hadad" – 15:9, 10, 18-20, 33.

**20:4** Ahab saw no hope of victory.

**20:6** A further demand which would have meant a complete surrender of the city.

**20:11** Prov 27:1.

**20:13** "Thus says the LORD" – we see here the greatness of God's grace in sending a prophet with a message of victory to an evil ruler like Ahab. This does not mean that God approved of Ahab's life and conduct. It indicates that the time for the destruction of Samaria had not yet come.

"You will know" – 18:37.

**20:15** Ahab was willing to follow God's instructions if it meant victory in battle, but not if it required him to repent and change his way of living.



horse with the horsemen. 21 And the king of Israel went out, and attacked the horses and chariots and killed the Syrians in a great slaughter.

22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself, and observe and watch what you do; for at the turn of the year the king of Syria will come up against you."

23 And the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods *are* gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we. But let us fight against them on the plain, and surely we will be stronger than they. 24 And do this thing: remove each one of the kings from his position, and put captains in their place, 25 and recruit an army for yourself, like the army that you lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot; and we will fight against them in the plain, *and* surely we will be stronger than they." And he listened to their voice and did so.

26 And this occurred at the turn of the year: Ben-Hadad recruited the Syrians, and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. 27 And the children of Israel were counted, and were all present, and went against them, and the children of Israel camped before them like two little flocks of young goats; but the Syrians filled the countryside.

28 And a man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because the Syrians have said, The LORD *is* God of the hills, but he *is* not God of the valleys, therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hands, and you will know that I *am* the LORD.'"

29 And they camped opposite one another seven days. And it happened that on the seventh day the battle was joined, and the children of Israel killed a hundred thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians in one day. 30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city, and *there* a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men *who were* left. And Ben-Hadad fled and came into the city, into an inner room.

31 And his servants said to him, "Look now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel

*are* merciful kings. Please let us wrap sackcloth around our waists, and ropes on our heads, and go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will save your life."

32 So they wrapped sackcloth around their waists, and *put* ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let me live.'"

And he said, "*Is* he still alive? He *is* my brother."

33 Now the men were watching carefully whether *any sign would come* from him, and quickly caught *it*, and they said, "Your brother Ben-Hadad."

Then he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-Hadad came out to him; and he had him come up into the chariot.

34 And *Ben-Hadad* said to him, "I will give back the cities which my father took from your father. And you can make *market* streets for yourself in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria."

Then *Ahab said*, "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him, and sent him away.

35 And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his neighbour at the word of the LORD, "Please strike me." And the man refused to strike him.

36 Then he said to him, "Because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, look, as soon as you have gone away from me, a lion will kill you." And as soon as he went away from him, a lion found him and killed him.

37 Then he found another man and said, "Please strike me." And the man struck him, striking and wounding *him*. 38 So the prophet left and waited for the king by the road, and disguised himself with ashes on his face. 39 And when the king passed by, he called out to the king and said, "Your servant went out into the middle of the battle, and, see, a man turned aside and brought a man to me and said, 'Guard this man. If for any reason he is missing, then it will be your life for his life, or else you must pay a talent of silver.' 40 And as your

**20:22** Ahab was given a year to prepare, also to repent and seek God if he would. Alas, he did not.

**20:23** "Hills" – this was a superstitious idea that various gods had control of various areas of land. Little did they know that Israel's God was the possessor of heaven and earth.

**20:27** Compare Josh 11:1-5; Jud 6:3-5; 1 Sam 13:5.

**20:28** "Man of God" – vs 13,23.

"You will know" – one of God's purposes revealed in His acts is that men might know who He is. This is seen throughout the Bible—Ex 6:7; 9:16; etc.

**20:31** "Sackcloth" – a sign of mourning, a symbol of disaster.

**20:32** "Your servant" – words indicating

submission, surrender.

**20:34** Ahab had no understanding of God's Word, or the reason why God had given him victory. For his own ends he entered into a covenant with the evil Ben-Hadad, an alliance which was to cause the people of Israel further suffering.

**20:35** "Sons of the prophets" – means a community of prophets (2 Kings 2:3,5,7,15; 4:1; etc.).

**20:36** Presumably it was clear to both men that God was speaking and that the one was consciously disobedient. Compare 13:23,24.

**20:39** "Talent" – about 34 kilograms.

"Or else" – an ordinary soldier could not pay 34 kilograms of silver, and so must suf-

servant was busy here and there, the *prisoner* disappeared."

And the king of Israel said to him, "So *shall* your judgment *be*. You yourself have decided *it*."

41 And he quickly took the ashes from his face, and the king of Israel recognized him, that he *was one* of the prophets. 42 And he said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because you have let a man whom I had appointed to utter destruction go out of *your* hand, your life will go for his life, and your people for his people.'" 43 And the king of Israel went to his house sullen and angry, and came to Samaria.

**21** And this occurred after these things: Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which *was* in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria. 2 And for it I will give to you a better vineyard than it.

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you."

4 And Ahab came into his house sullen and angry because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him, because he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed and turned his face away, and would not eat food.

5 But his wife Jezebel came to him and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sad that you aren't eating any food?"

6 And he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money. Or, if it pleases you, I will give you *another* vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"

for the sentence of death. In giving this verdict Ahab condemned himself. Compare 2 Sam 12:5-7.

**20:42** God had delivered Ben-Hadad to Ahab, not that he might make a treaty with him, but that he might destroy an enemy of Israel. Ahab's act appears kind and merciful, but actually was merely weakness, and an attempt to gain personal advantage. And he did not seek God about it. God knows when to show mercy, and when to severely punish.

**21:1** The capital of the northern kingdom was the city of Samaria, but Ahab also maintained a residence at Jezreel, about forty kilometers from Samaria.

**21:3** Lev 25:23; Num 36:7.

**21:4** By coveting Naboth's vineyard Ahab was breaking one of the most important of God's commandments - Ex 20:17. His coveting led on to murder. Compare Jam 4:1,2. On coveting see Ps 119:36; Isa 57:17; Jer 6:13; Mark 7:22,23; Luke 12:15; Rom 1:29; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 2:5; 1 Tim 6:6,7; Heb 13:5; 2 Pet 2:3.

"Would not eat" - Ahab was like a spoiled

7 And his wife Jezebel said to him, "Do you now rule over Israel? Get up *and* eat food, and let your heart be merry. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and to the nobles who *lived* in Naboth's city with him. 9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, "Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth at the front of the people, 10 And set two men, scoundrels, before him, to testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king.' And *then* take him out and stone him, so that he dies."

11 And the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who were residents of his city, did as Jezebel had sent *orders* to them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent to them. 12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth at the front of the people. 13 And two men came in, scoundrels, and sat in front of him, and the scoundrels testified against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." Then they took him out of the city, and pelted him with stones; and he died. 14 Then they sent *word* to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned, and is dead."

15 And it came about, when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." 16 And this happened when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead: Ahab got up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

child who cannot get what he wants.

**21:7** "Jezebel" - note at 16:31. Compared to Jezebel Ahab, evil as he was, appears almost righteous.

**21:9** "Proclaim a fast" - days of fasting were called in times of disaster to seek God's face for its cause and to plead for His mercy. Compare Jud 20:26,27; 2 Chron 20:2-4. Jezebel was using religion to put a man to death and gain her own ends. She was not the last to do such things.

**21:10** "Scoundrels" - there are always some willing to lie to destroy others. See Matt 26:59-61.

"So that he dies" - the penalty for cursing God (Lev 24:15,16). Evidently, Naboth's sons were killed at the same time (2 Kings 9:26). They wished to be sure no heir was left to claim the property. See the awful destructive power of covetousness, of the love of property, of the desire for forbidden things. What murders it has been guilty of! What disasters it has caused in the world! What multitudes it has led to everlasting punishment!

17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 "Arise, go down to meet Ahab, king of Israel, who *is* in Samaria. See, *he* is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to possess it. 19 And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, Have you killed, and also taken possession?' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth dogs will lick your blood, even yours.'"

20 And Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?"

And he answered, "I have found *you*, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD. 21 Look, I will bring disaster on you, and will sweep away your descendants, and will cut off from Ahab *every* male, both slave and free in Israel, 22 and will make your house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked *me* to anger, and caused Israel to sin.

23 "And the LORD has spoken about Jezebel also, saying, 'The dogs will eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. 24 The one belonging to Ahab who dies in the city the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of the air will eat.'"

25 But there was no one like Ahab, who sold himself to commit wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom his wife Jezebel stirred up. 26 And he

acted very abominably in following idols, in all *things* just like the Amorites did, whom the LORD drove out before the children of Israel.

27 And it came about, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his body and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and walked around slowly.

28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 "Do you see how Ahab is humbling himself before me? Because he is humbling himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days, *but* in his son's days I will bring the disaster on his house."

**22** And they continued for three years without war between Syria and Israel. 2 And it came about in the third year that Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, came down to the king of Israel. 3 And the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that Ramoth in Gilead *is* ours, and we *are* quiet *and* not taking it out of the hand of the king of Syria?"

4 And he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?"

And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I *am* as you *are*, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 5 And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please consult the word of the LORD today."

6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets

**21:17** Ps 9:12; Num 31:3; Deut 32:41,42. Naboth was dead, but God was not.

**21:18** Heb 4:13.

**21:19** Ahab did not kill Naboth with his own hand, but he was, nevertheless, guilty of murder. Compare 2 Sam 12:9. If we go along with what others do we share their guilt.

**21:20** "O my enemy" – Ahab counted as enemies those who told him the truth. See 22:8. Compare 2 Sam 12:13.

"Sold yourself" – when men rush after the things of this world they may think they are receiving some gain, but actually they are selling themselves. And to buy themselves back will be beyond their power. So Mark 8:36,37.

**21:21,22** 14:10,11; 16:3,4. None of these kings learned proper lessons from the history of their predecessors.

**21:23** 2 Kings 9:10,30-37.

**21:24** 14:11; 16:4.

**21:25** 16:30-33; 21:20. Bad as Ahab was, Jezebel was worse.

**21:26** "Amorites" – Gen 15:16; Lev 18:25-30; Josh 24:15.

**21:27** Ahab displayed the outward signs of mourning and repentance.

**21:29** Ahab's repentance was shallow, as can be seen from events which follow, yet God took notice of it. He is a God of great grace, and would much rather show mercy than punish (Ex 34:6,7; Ps 86:15; Isa 30:18; 55:7; Ezek 18:31,32). In this case He delayed the

punishment but could not, in justice, cancel it. **22:1-35** 2 Chron 18:1-34.

**22:2** Jehoshaphat was allied with Ahab king of Israel by marriage (2 Chron 18:1). Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, married Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat. The results of this were very grave for the whole nation of Judah. The wicked influence of the house of Ahab permeated Judah through Athaliah. See 2 Kings 8:16-18; 2 Chron 22:1-3,10. So because of the foolishness of a good man (Jehoshaphat – v 43), great evil came to God's people. Wrong marriage alliances can bring much harm to the people of God. So God has given us 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**22:3** "Ramoth" – Deut 4:43; Josh 21:38.

**22:4** Jehoshaphat was a godly man (v 43), but he made a very bad mistake in allying himself with the evil Ahab, and God's anger came on him because of it. See 2 Chron 19:1-3.

**22:5** "Word of the LORD" – v 43. But he did not seek God's counsel when he married off his son to Ahab's daughter. And he did not pay any attention to the counsel that God sent through Micaiah in the following verses. What use is there in asking for God's counsel if there is no determination to follow it?

**22:6** "Prophets" – in that apostate system of religion (see 12:28-33) there were those who professed to speak in God's name. These called by Ahab were men-pleasers who

together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Should I go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or should I refrain?"

And they said, "Go up, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the hands of the king."

7 And Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might consult him?"

8 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "*There is* yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom we can consult the LORD. But I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but disaster."

And Jehoshaphat said, "May the king not say so."

9 Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Bring *here* Micaiah the son of Imlah, quickly."

10 And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on their robes, each sat on his throne at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets prophesied before them. 11 And Zedekiah, the son of Kenaanah, had made iron horns for himself, and he said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you will gore the Syrians, until you make an end of them.'"

12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the king's hands."

13 And the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Look now, the messages of the prophets with one accord *declare* good to the king. Please let your message be like one of their messages, and speak *what is* good."

14 And Micaiah said, "*As* the LORD lives, I will speak just what the LORD says to me."

spoke what they thought Ahab wanted to hear. There are many such people in the world today. Compare Gal 1:10; 2 Tim 4:1-3; Isa 30:10. On false prophets see Deut 18:10; Jer 14:14.

**22:7** Jehoshaphat was uneasy about these prophets (and he did well to be), and wanted a more sure word.

**22:8** "I hate him" – see 18:17; 21:20. Ahab did not want the truth; he wanted messages which pleased him. This is the way men in general fall into great spiritual deception and perish in their sins. Compare 2 Thess 2:9-12.

**22:9** "Micaiah" – except for this one incident (which is repeated in 2 Chron 18:7-27) nothing else is recorded about this remarkable man. There are many great servants of God in history about whom we now know nothing.

**22:11,12** These were all lies spoken in the name of God. Let us beware of such. This is how Satan ensnares men, keeps them in bondage and destroys them (John 8:44).

**22:13** Did they think God's true prophets could invent their own messages? How little are God's true servants understood!

15 So he came to the king. And the king said to him, "Micaiah, should we go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or should we refrain?"

And he answered him, "Go, and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the hands of the king."

16 And the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear to tell me nothing but *what is* true in the name of the LORD?"

17 And he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills, like sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each one of them return to his house in peace.'"

18 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but disaster?"

19 And *Micaiah* said, "Hear, therefore, the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him at his right hand and at his left. 20 And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab, so that he goes up and falls at Ramoth-Gilead?' And one said this, and another said that. 21 And a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.' 22 And the LORD said to him, 'How?' And he said, 'I will go out and I will be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.' And he said, 'You will entice *him*, and also succeed. Go and do so.'

23 "Now therefore, look, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these your prophets, and the LORD has spoken disaster concerning you."

24 But Zedekiah, the son of Kenaanah, went near, and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the Spirit of the LORD go from me to speak to you?"

**22:14** This is the only business of a true prophet.

**22:15** Micaiah spoke in a mocking way which Ahab immediately saw (v 16).

**22:16** Verse 8. Ahab spoke so because of the presence of Jehoshaphat.

**22:17** Ahab said he wanted the truth, though he did not (see another example of this in Jeremiah chapters 42 and 43. Men frequently deceive themselves in a similar manner). In this case Micaiah gave the truth to him straight.

**22:19-23** God is sovereign and even evil spirits can operate only within the bounds of His will and wise purposes (1 Chron 21:1; Job 1:6; Matt 8:28-32; etc). God had decided to bring disaster on Ahab and this was the method He chose. When individuals love to hear lies and reject the truth, God will permit others to tell them the lies they want to hear. This is God acting in perfect justice. See Ps 18:25,26. Compare Jud 9:23; 1 Sam 16:14; Ezek 14:9; 2 Thess 2:11.

**22:24** "From me" – no doubt many people think they have the Spirit of God when they do not.

25 And Micaiah said, "Look, you will see in that day, when you go into an inner room to hide yourself."

26 And the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son, 27 and say, 'Thus says the king: put this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.'"

28 And Micaiah said, "If you return at all in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Listen, O people, every one of you."

29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-Gilead. 30 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and enter the battle, but you put on your robes." And the king of Israel disguised himself and went into the battle.

31 But the king of Syria commanded his thirty-two captains who had charge of his chariots, saying, "Do not fight with either small or great, but only with the king of Israel." 32 And it happened that when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "Surely it *is* the king of Israel"; and they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out. 33 And it came about, when the captains of the chariots saw that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.

34 And a *certain* man drew a bow at random, and hit the king of Israel between the joints of the armour. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." 35 And the battle increased that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Syrians, and at evening he died. And the blood ran out of the wound into the middle of the chariot. 36 And about sunset a cry went throughout the army, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country."

37 So the king died and was brought to Samaria,

**22:25** Micaiah indicates that Zedekiah will try to hide from the danger that would come to him.

**22:27** "Prison" – this is Micaiah's reward for telling the truth. This is a not uncommon suffering of God's true servants (2 Chron 16:10; Jer 20:2; 37:15; Matt 14:3; Acts 12:3,4; 16:22-24; Heb 11:35-38). **22:28** Deut 18:21,22.

**22:29** Verses 3,4.

**22:30** Ahab, it appears, was worried by Micaiah's prophecy. But did he not realize that God can see through all disguises? See Heb 4:13. How great is the folly of men in the games they try to play with God!

**22:33** God showed mercy to His foolish servant.

**22:34-38** Ahab could not escape the judgment of God. He chose what pleased

and they buried the king in Samaria. 38 And *someone* washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria. And the dogs licked up his blood, and they washed his armour, in accordance with the word of the LORD which he had spoken.

39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 40 So Ahab slept with his ancestors, and his son Ahaziah reigned in his place.

41 And Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab, king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat *was* thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah. *She was* the daughter of Shilhi. 43 And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father. He did not turn aside from it, doing *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD. However the high places were not taken away, *for* the people still offered and burnt incense on the high places. 44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he made war, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 46 And he removed from the land the rest of the male temple prostitutes who had remained in the days of his father Asa. 47 *There was* then no king in Edom. A deputy *was* king.

48 Jehoshaphat had ships of Tarshish go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go; for the ships were broken at Ezion-Geber. 49 Then Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat would not.

50 And Jehoshaphat slept with his ancestors, and was buried among his ancestors in the city of David his father, and his son Jehoram reigned in his place.

him rather than the message God sent, and he had to suffer the consequences. The "random" shot was not mere accident. God is sovereign over all circumstances, and can guide the flight of an arrow as easily as He can do anything else.

**22:38** 21:17-19.

**22:39** Ahab was a great builder in the material realm, a great destroyer in the spiritual realm.

"Annals" – 14:19.

**22:40** "Slept" – note at 2:10.

**22:41-43** 2 Chron 20:31-33.

**22:43** "Asa" – 15:11-14.

"High places" – note at 3:2.

**22:46** Note at 14:24.

**22:48,49** This was God's judgment for his alliance with the evil Ahab – 2 Chron 20:35-37.



51 Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. 53 For he served Baal and worshipped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, as his father had done in everything.

<b>22:52,53</b> 12:28-33; 16:30-32; 21:25,26.	"Anger"--notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.
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# 2 KINGS

## Author and date:

See the introduction to 1 Kings.

## Themes:

Events in the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah until the destruction of both, the remarkable ministry of the prophet Elisha, times of revival in Judah, the exile of Israel to Assyria, the fall of Jerusalem. The events recorded in 2 Kings took place over a period of 266 years.

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**1** Moab rebelled against Israel, after the death of Ahab. **2** And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper room that *was* in Samaria and was injured. And he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go, inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, whether I will recover from this injury."

**3** But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, '*Is it* because *you think there is* no God in Israel, *that* you go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?' **4** Now therefore thus says the LORD, You will not come down from that bed on which you have gone up, but will surely die.'" And Elijah departed.

**5** And when the messengers returned to *Ahaziah*, he said to them, "Why have you now returned?"

**6** And they said to him, "A man came up to meet us, and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you and say to him, Thus says the Lord, *Is it* because *you think there is* no God in Israel, that you send to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from that bed on which you have gone up, but will surely die.'"

**7** And he said to them, "What kind of man *was he* who came up to meet you, and told you these words?"

**8** And they answered him, "*He was* a hairy man, and had a leather belt fastened around his waist."

And he said, "It *is* Elijah the Tishbite."

**9** Then the king sent a captain of fifty with his fifty *men* to *Elijah*. And he went up to him; and he appeared sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke

to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'"

**10** And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I *am* a man of God, then may fire come down from heaven, and consume you and your fifty." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

**11** And he also sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down quickly.'"

**12** And Elijah answered and said to them, "If I *am* a man of God, may fire come down from heaven, and consume you and your fifty." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

**13** And again he sent a captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pled with him and said to him, "Man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty of your servants, be precious in your sight. **14** See, fire came down from heaven, and burned up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties; therefore let my life now be precious in your sight."

**15** And the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him. Do not be afraid of him." And he arose and went down with him to the king.

**16** And he said to *the king*, "Thus says the LORD: 'You have sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron. *Is it* because *you think there is* no God in Israel to inquire of his word? Therefore you will not come down from that bed on which you have gone up, but will surely die.'" **17** So he died

**1:1** "Moab" – Gen 19:37; Num 22:1-7; 2 Sam 8:2.

"Death of Ahab" – 1 Kings 22:40.

**1:2** "Ahaziah" – Ahab's son who became king.

"Baalzebub" – the name means "Lord of the flies." One of the gods of the Philistines (Ekron was a Philistine city) was named Baal-Zebul, which means "Baal the prince." Apparently Jewish writers changed his name in ridicule. Later the Jews applied the name to Satan. See Mark 3:22.

**1:3** "Angel of the LORD" – note at Gen 16:7.

"Elijah" – 1 Kings 17:1. The king sent his messengers, God sent His. Ahaziah's sin in trying to consult a false god was very great. Obviously he wanted nothing to do with the God of Israel, the one true God. God calls for an exclusive allegiance from His people (Ex 20:1-6; Josh 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21; Matt 6:24; 2 Cor 6:14-18). Is it not because people think there is no true God that they rush after false gods and idols?

**1:4** Ezek 18:10-13.

**1:8** Compare Matt 3:4. John came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17).

**1:9** The king wanted to show authority over

God's prophet. He wanted either to kill him or force him to change his prophecy, hoping thereby to escape the force of the prophecy already uttered. The superstitious idea that this was possible was not uncommon in those days.

**1:10** This was a contest between the true God and His spokesman and an unbelieving king who looked to false gods. In the circumstances it was important for God to demonstrate His reality and power. Compare the contest between Moses and Pharaoh. Notes at Ex 7:11-17; 12:12.

"Fire" – Num 16:35; 1 Kings 18:36-38; Rev 11:5; 20:9. God does not always choose the way of fiery judgment (compare Luke 9:54,55), but He does so when it is necessary and wise to do so.

**1:12** Since Ahaziah would not stop the contest, neither would Elijah.

**1:13** The third captain had more sense than the king – he could see who the winner of the contest was.

**1:16** Because of Ahaziah's senseless stubbornness 102 men of Israel died, but the message remained the same.

**1:17** Every word of God will be fulfilled –

according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And because he had no son, Jehoram became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel?

**2** And it happened, when the LORD would take Elijah up into heaven in a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. **2** And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please wait here, for the LORD has sent me to Bethel."

And Elisha said *to him*, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

**3** And the sons of the prophets who *were* at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?"

And he said, "Yes, I know *it*. Be silent."

**4** And Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please wait here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho."

And he said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho.

**5** And the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?"

And he answered, "Yes, I know *it*. Be silent."

1 Sam 15:29; Isa 44:26; 46:11; Matt 5:18. "Jehoram" – or "Joram." He was Ahaziah's younger brother.

**1:18** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**2:1** "Up into heaven" – apparently God had revealed this to Elijah, Elisha, and others (vs 3,5).

**2:2** "Wait here" – said possibly to test Elisha. If so, Elisha was equal to the test. See 1 Kings 19:20,21. Compare Matt 4:20,22; 19:27; Luke 9:62; 24:28,29; John 6:67-69.

**2:3** "Prophets" – see 1 Sam 10:5; 19:10; 1 Kings 18:4; 20:35.

**2:8** Compare Ex 14:16,21,22; Josh 3:7-17. God demonstrated publicly once again that He was the true God and that Elijah was His prophet. See 1 Kings 18:36,37; 2 Kings 1:10. This is what Elijah's ministry was all about.

**2:9** "Ask what I should do for you" – three times, it seems, Elijah had tested Elisha. Three times Elisha had declared his determination to stay with Elijah to the end, regardless of what might happen. His faith and devotion now have the promise of reward. Compare Mark 10:28-30. Deut 21:17 reveals that a "double portion" was the share of the heir. Elisha was the spiritual heir of Elijah. He was not asking to be twice as spiritual as Elijah, but that he should be his successor as prophet. Perhaps he felt a

**6** And Elijah said to him, "Please wait here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan."

And he said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you." And the two of them went on.

**7** And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood at a distance to watch. And the two of them stood by the Jordan. **8** And Elijah took his cloak and folded *it*, and struck the waters, and they were divided left and right, so that the two of them went over on dry ground.

**9** And it happened, when they had crossed, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I should do for you, before I am taken away from you."

And Elisha said, "Please, may a double portion of your spirit be on me."

**10** And he said, "You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless*, if you see me *when I am* taken from you, it will be so to you; but if not, it will not be so."

**11** And it came about as they still walked on and talked, that, suddenly, a chariot of fire and horses of fire *appeared* and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up in a whirlwind into heaven. **12** And Elisha saw *it* and cried out, "My father, my father! The chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more; and he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

**13** He also took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. **14** And he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the

double portion of Elijah's spirit was needed for him to serve as a prophet, that he was twice as weak and needy as Elijah. Or perhaps he was inspired by God to utter this request without understanding himself the reason for it. On desiring gifts from God see 1 Kings 3:5,9-12; 1 Cor 12:31.

**2:10** Elijah recognizes that Elisha's request is not his to grant, and leaves it to God. But Elisha must be with him to the very end (v 3).

**2:11** "Fire" – 6:17; Ps 68:17. Elijah had always been under God's protection. Here was the visible sign of that.

"Went up" – only two persons in the whole Bible were taken to heaven without dying, Elijah and Enoch (Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5). In this they are a picture of a great many in the future – 1 Cor 15:51,52; 1 Thess 4:16-18.

**2:12** 13:14. "Tore" – Gen 37:29; Job 1:20. Elijah's departure was a grief to Elisha. He was not glad to see him gone so that he himself might be in the limelight.

**2:13** Verse 8. The cloak was a symbol that Elisha was Elijah's successor. See 1 Kings 19:19.

**2:14** Elisha acted in faith and was willing to act in the sight of those who may have been watching. He believed that according to Elijah's word (v 10), he now had a double



waters and said, "Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided left and right, and Elisha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets who were watching at Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed down to the ground before him. 16 And they said to him, "See now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up, and thrown him on some mountain or into some valley."

And he said, "You must not send."

17 And when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, "Send." So they sent fifty men, and they looked for three days, but did not find him. 18 And when they came back to him (for he waited at Jericho) he said to them, "Did I not tell you not to go?"

19 And the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please look, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord sees. But the water *is* bad, and the ground is barren."

20 And he said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." And they brought *it* to him.

21 And he went out to the spring of water, and threw the salt in there, and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I have healed this water. From it there will be no more death or barren *land*.'" 22 So the water has been healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

23 And he went up from there to Bethel, and as he was going up on the road, youths came out of

the city, and mocked him and said to him, "Go up, you bald head! Go up, you bald head!" 24 And he turned back and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods, and tore forty-two of the youths. 25 And he went from there to mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

**3** Now Jehoram, the son of Ahab, began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and he reigned twelve years. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and like his mother; for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. 3 Nevertheless he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin; he did not depart from them.

4 And Mesha, king of Moab, was a sheep owner, and paid tribute of a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool, to the king of Israel. 5 But it happened when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. 6 And king Jehoram went out of Samaria at that same time, and counted all Israel. 7 And he went and sent *word* to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, saying, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me against Moab to fight?"

And he said, "I will go up. I *am* as you *are*, my people as your people, *and* my horses as your horses."

8 And he said, "Which way should we go up?"

portion of Elijah's spirit. Now God publicly reveals by this miracle that Elisha was His chosen prophet. It has been estimated that Elisha's ministry was twice as long as Elijah's, and the number of his recorded miracles is double that of Elijah's.

**2:15** "Bowed down" – an open recognition that Elisha was Elijah's successor.

**2:16** Compare 18:12. It seems they did not believe that a man in the body could be taken completely out of the world.

**2:19** "The city" – Jericho.

**2:21** "Healed" – compare Ex 15:25,26. Notice it was the Lord who healed the waters, not the salt. Salt was but a symbol of God's covenant with Israel (Lev 2:13; Num 18:19).

**2:23** "Youths" – these were not children. The same Hebrew word is used of Joseph at the age of 17 (Gen 37:2), and Absalom after he was grown to full manhood (2 Sam 18:5). Another Hebrew word is translated "youths" in v 24. This word is used of Daniel and his friends in Dan 1:4,10,13,15,17. The insults of these young people expressed their scornful rejection of God and all that Elijah and Elisha stood for. Bethel (where this happened) was the center of the wicked

apostate religion introduced by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:32,33; Amos 7:13).

**2:24** "A curse" – God Himself had already pronounced a curse against such. See Deut 28:15,45. Elisha was anointed by the Spirit of God and his response to the ridicule of these young men was in complete harmony with the Law of God.

"Bears came" – a fulfillment of Lev 26:21,22. Sometimes God has to judge harshly in order to emphasize how serious it is to show contempt for His Word and His servants. It can never be a light matter to belittle the things of God. See what the book of Proverbs has to say on the subject – 1:22-27; 3:33,34; 9:12; 19:29; 21:11; 29:8; 30:17.

**3:2** "Like his father" – his father was Ahab who had been the worst of Israel's kings (1 Kings 16:30-34; 21:25,26), and his mother was Jezebel, one of the worst women in history.

**3:3** 1 Kings 12:28-33; 14:9,16.

**3:7** "Jehoshaphat" – note at 1 Kings 22:2,4. Apparently Jehoshaphat had learned nothing from his experience with Ahab and the rebuke of the prophets (2 Chron 18:1; 19:1,2; 20:35-37). The marriage alliance

And he answered, "The way through the wilderness of Edom."

9 So the king of Israel and the king of Judah and the king of Edom went and circled around on a seven days' march; and there was no water for the army and for the livestock that followed them.

10 And the king of Israel said, "Alas, that the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hands of Moab!"

11 But Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, so that we can inquire of the LORD through him?"

And one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah, *is* here."

12 And Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

13 And Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with you? You go to the prophets of your father and to the prophets of your mother." And the king of Israel said to him, "No, for the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hands of Moab."

14 And Elisha said, "*As* the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, if it were not that I respect the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not even look at you or see you. 15 But now bring me a musician." And it happened when the musician played, that the hand of the LORD came on him. 16 And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Make this valley full of ditches.' 17 For thus says the LORD: 'You will not see wind, nor will you see rain, yet that valley will be filled with water, so that you may drink, both you, and your livestock and your animals.' 18 And this is *but* a small thing in the sight of the LORD. He will also deliver the Moabites into your hands. 19 And you shall defeat every fortified city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop up all the wells of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones."

20 And it came about in the morning, when the grain offering was offered, that water appeared coming by the way from Edom, and the region was filled with water.

21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, they gathered all who were able to put on armour, and older, and stood at the border. 22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water, and the water on the other side appeared to the Moabites as red as blood. 23 And they said, "This *is* blood! The kings have surely been killed, and have struck one another down. Now therefore, Moab, to the plunder!"

24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them. And they advanced, striking down the Moabites, even into *their* country. 25 And they broke down the cities, and each man threw his stone on every good piece of land and filled it up, and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees. Only in Kir-Haraseth did they leave its stones. However the slingers went around *it* and attacked it.

26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. 27 Then he took his oldest son, who would have reigned in his place, and offered him *as* a burnt offering on the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel; and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.

**4** Now a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead. And you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor has come to take my two sons to be slaves for himself."

2 And Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?"

he had made with the house of Ahab continued to pervert his judgment and lead him into evil compromise.

**3:9** "King of Edom" – Edom was controlled by Judah and this king had been appointed by the king of Judah.

**3:11** "Inquire of the LORD" – 1 Kings 22:7. "Elisha" – 1 Kings 19:21.

"Who poured water on the hands of Elijah" – this indicates that he acted as Elijah's personal servant.

**3:13** 1 Kings 22:6. Elisha knew that the king of Israel had no love for the true God, and was only consulting him because he was in trouble.

**3:14** "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3. "Jehoshaphat" – 2 Chron 17:1-6.

**3:15** 1 Sam 16:23. "Musician played" – note at 1 Chron 25:1.

**3:18** "Small" – Gen 18:14; Jer 32:17,27; Mark 10:27. Doing miracles is easier for God than digging ditches is for men.

**3:20** "Offering" – Ex 29:38-40.

**3:27** "Sacrifice" – the god of Moab was Chemosh. Note at 1 Kings 11:7. By this sacrifice Moab's king lost his son and gained nothing. Men can get no profit by abominable worship of detestable gods, only loss. **4:1** "Prophets" – 2:3,5. "Feared the LORD" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**4:2** "What shall I do for you" – a desire to help others is one of the marks of a true servant of God. Compare Matt 24:45-51;

And she said, "Your maidservant does not have anything in the house, except a pot of oil."

3 Then he said, "Go outside, borrow utensils from all your neighbours, empty utensils. Do not borrow a few. 4 And when you have come in, you must shut the door behind you and behind your sons, and pour out *the oil* into all those utensils, and put aside what is full."

5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and behind her sons, who had brought *the utensils* to her, and she poured out *the oil*. 6 And it came about, when the utensils were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another utensil."

And he said to her, "*There is* not another utensil." And the oil stopped.

7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt, and you and your children live off the rest."

8 And one day it came about that Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there *was* a great woman; and she urged him to eat bread. And *so* it was, *that* whenever he passed by, he turned in there to eat bread. 9 And she said to her husband, "Look now, I perceive that this *is* a holy man of God, who is always passing by us. 10 Please let us make a little room on the wall, and let us place there a bed and a table and a stool and a candlestick for him. And it shall be that whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

11 And one day it happened that he came there, and went into the room and lay there, 12 and said to Gehazi, his servant, "Call this Shunammite." And when he had called her, she stood before him. 13 And he said to him, "Now tell her, 'Look, you have taken all this care to look after us, what *is* to

be done for you? Would you be spoken for to the king, or to the commander of the army?'"

And she answered, "I live among my own people."

14 And he said, "What then *is* to be done for her?"

And Gehazi answered, "She has no child at all, and her husband is old."

15 And he said, "Call her." And when he called her, she stood in the door. 16 And he said, "About this season next year you will embrace a son."

And she said, "No, my lord, *you* man of God, do not lie to your maid servant."

17 And the woman conceived, and bore a son at that season the next year as Elisha had said to her.

18 And the child grew; and it happened one day that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19 And he said to his father, "My head! My head!"

And he said to a lad, "Carry him to his mother."

20 And when he had picked him up and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees until noon and *then* died. 21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* behind him and went out.

22 And she called to her husband and said, "Please send one of the young men to me, and one of the donkeys, so that I may hurry to the man of God, and come back."

23 And he said, "Why will you go to him today? *It is* neither new moon nor Sabbath."

And she said, "*It is* well."

24 Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward. Do not slow the pace for me, unless I tell you." 25 So she went and

25:34-36; Acts 3:6; 20:33-35; Jam 1:27.

**4:3-6** God was ready to perform a miracle for this poor widow. She experienced the miracle only by her obedience and faith. Unbelief or disobedience would have robbed her of God's miraculous provision. Notice that she was to shut the door while pouring the oil. This was not a public miracle to prove to Israel that Jehovah was God. It was a private miracle demonstrating God's compassion and faithfulness to His servant. Many are the miracles of provision God has shown in secret to His believers. God's people have a shepherd who provides for them (Ps 23:1; 37:25; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19).

**4:8** "Great woman" – the Hebrew word translated "great" can mean great in any sense – in age, size, position, wealth, family background. It may mean wealthy here, but the greatness of this woman's character is revealed in the following verses. She wanted to help the servants of God (vs 8-10); she was a woman of spiritual perception (v 9); she was humble and undemanding (v 13); she had a large faith (vs 22-37). Let us seek greatness in these

things that are truly great.

**4:9** "I perceive" – Matt 7:15-20; 1 John 4:1.

"Holy man of God" – see the splendid name Elisha had earned. Man of God was a usual way of designating a prophet.

**4:12** "Gehazi" – vs 29-31; 5:20-27; 8:4,5.

**4:13** "What" – v 2. The woman was content and was not looking for favors from the mighty. Compare 1 Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5.

**4:16** Gen 18:10-14.

**4:20** Here was a severe test of this great woman's faith. The verses which follow show her faith was equal to the test.

**4:21,22** She did not reason that when a person is dead he is dead, and nothing can be done about it. She believed God could work a miracle through Elisha. Compare Heb 11:35.

**4:23** "Why" – the husband was a different sort of person from his wife. It was her suggestion, not his, to help Elisha (vs 8-10). He seemed to care little for his son (v 19), and after the boy's death he could not imagine why his wife wanted to go to Elisha.

"New moon, Sabbath" – Num 10:10; 28:9,11; 2 Chron 23:31.

came to the man of God at mount Carmel. And it came about, when the man of God saw her at a distance, that he said to Gehazi his servant,

"Look, *there is* that Shunammite. 26 Please run now to meet her, and say to her, '*Is it* well with you? *Is it* well with your husband? *Is it* well with the child?'"

And she answered, "*It is* well."

27 And when she came to the man of God on the hill, she took hold of his feet, but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, "Let her alone, for her soul *is* troubled in her, and the LORD has hidden *it* from me and has not told me."

28 Then she said, "Did I ask a son from my lord? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'"

29 Then he said to Gehazi, "Tuck up your robe in your belt, and take my staff in your hand, and go your way. If you meet anyone do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply; and lay my staff on the face of the child."

30 And the mother of the child said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you." And he arose and followed her.

31 And Gehazi passed on before them and laid the staff on the face of the child, but *there was* neither sound nor response. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, "The child did not wake up."

32 And when he came into the house, Elisha saw that the child was dead, *and* had been laid on his bed. 33 Therefore he went in and shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. 34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on the child. And the flesh of the child became warm. 35 Then he got off and walked to and fro in the house, and went up and stretched himself on him. And the child sneezed seven times,

"She said" – evidently her husband was not the kind of person she could share her thoughts with.

**4:26** Being a woman of discernment, she would not share her thoughts with Gehazi either, and she had no confidence he could do anything (vs 29,30).

**4:27** "Her soul is troubled" – God's good gifts can lead us into trial and grief. But the end was not yet.

"The LORD has hidden it" – God does not tell His servants everything, only what they need to know.

**4:30** This was language Elisha could well understand. See 2:2,4,6.

**4:33** 1 Kings 17:19-22; Matt 6:6; 9:25; Luke 8:51; Acts 9:40.

**4:37** 1 Kings 17:23; Heb 11:35. Great faith receives great rewards.

**4:38** "Famine" – famine was an evidence of

and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she had come in to him, he said, "Take up your son." 37 Then she went in and prostrated herself at his feet, bowing down to the ground, and took up her son and went out.

38 And Elisha went back to Gilgal. And *there was* a famine in the land. And the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him, and he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot, and cook stew for the sons of the prophets."

39 And someone went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered his lap full of wild gourds from it, and came and shredded *them* into the pot of stew, for they did not know *what they were*. 40 So they poured out *the stew* for the men to eat. And it came about, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, "O man of God, *there is* death in the pot!" And they could not eat *it*.

41 But he said, "Then bring flour." And he threw *it* into the pot and said, "Pour *it* out for the people, so they may eat." And there was no harm in the pot.

42 And a man came from Baal Shalisha, and brought the man of God bread from the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full heads of grain in its husk. And he said, "Give it to the people, so that they may eat."

43 And his servant said, "What, should I set this before a hundred men?"

He said again, "Give *it to* the people, so that they may eat. For thus says the LORD: 'They will eat, and leave *some of it*.'" 44 So he set *it* before them, and they ate, and left *some of it*, according to the word of the LORD.

**5** Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and highly respected

God's anger on His people's sins (Lev 26:18-20; Deut 28:15,23,24; 2 Sam 21:1; 1 Kings 8:35-39).

**4:39,40** "Death in the pot" – because of a poisonous plant put in the stew. In times of famine people search for anything that might be eaten whether they know what it is or not.

**4:41** Compare 2:21. God will provide for His servants even if He has to perform a miracle to do so. Ps 33:18,19; 37:18,19.

**4:42** Another way which God uses to provide for His servants. God can provide their necessities in famine as easily as in years of plenty.

**4:43,44** A miracle of the same kind as that of Matt 14:13-21.

**5:1** "Namaan" – Luke 4:27.

"Victory" – Syria was not God's chosen nation as Israel was. It was an idolatrous

man with his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a valiant warrior, *but he was* a leper.

2 And the Syrians had gone out in *raiding* bands, and had brought a little girl captive from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 And she said to her mistress, "Would God my lord *were* with the prophet who *is* in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy."

4 And he went in and told his lord, saying, "Thus and thus *is what* the girl who *is* from the land of Israel said." 5 And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand *pieces* of gold and ten changes of clothing. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said: "Now when this letter comes to you, see, *with it* I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy."

7 And it came about, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "*Am* I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends *word* to me to heal a man of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he is seeking *grounds* for a quarrel against me."

8 And it came about when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent *word* to the king, saying, "Why did you tear your clothes? Let him come now to me, and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." 9 So

Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you, and you will be clean."

11 But Naaman was angry and went away, and said, "Look, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and heal the leprosy. 12 *Are* not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 And his servants came near, and spoke to him and said, "My father, *if* the prophet had told you *to do some* great thing, would you not have done *it*? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash and be clean?'" 14 Then he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, in accordance with the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him, and said, "Look, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, except in Israel. Therefore now please accept a gift from your servant."

16 But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will not accept any." And he urged him to take *it*, but he refused.

nation usually hostile to Israel. They would have attributed their victories to the power of their gods. But observe it was the LORD (Jehovah) who gave them victory. God is sovereign over the world and works His will among all nations (Dan 4:35).

"Leper" – see note at Lev 13:2.

**5:3** "Prophet" – Elisha.

**5:5** "Silver" – ten talents equals about 340 kilograms.

"Gold" – 6000 shekels equals about 70 kilograms. Obviously this was an extremely valuable gift. It indicates how serious Namaan's disease was and how much he longed to be rid of it. King Omri had purchased the whole hill of Samaria for two talents of silver (1 Kings 16:24).

**5:7** "Tore his clothes" – 2 Sam 13:31; 1 Kings 21:27; Est 4:1,3; Job 1:20; 2:8. The captive girl (vs 2,3) knew more than the king of Israel about Elisha and God's power working through him. It is often true that the meek and lowly know important things about God that the high and mighty are ignorant of. The king could think only that the Syrians had some sinister plot in mind.

**5:8** "Why" – this was a rebuke to the unbelief and ignorance of the king.

**5:10** Elisha did not even come out to see or meet this "great" man (v 1).

"Jordan" – the waters of the Jordan had no power to heal the body, cleanse from sin,

or do any spiritual good whatever. In this it was like all other rivers in the world. None of them anywhere have any spiritual power. God is the healer (Ex 15:26; Deut 32:39). When Namaan was healed it was faith and obedience to God's word given through His prophet that brought the healing.

**5:11,12** Namaan had pre-conceived ideas of how the prophet should heal him. He was not ready yet for childlike obedience. It seems also that his pride was offended. He thought surely Elisha would come out to him – after all, he was a great man in Syria. Pride can rob men of God's blessings (Jam 4:6,10; Mark 10:15).

**5:14** Faith and humble obedience gain from God what nothing else ever can.

**5:15** This foreign idolater learned what Israel as a nation had not learned (1 Kings 18:21, etc). They were rushing after other gods, he was about to abandon his. This knowledge Namaan gained was a far greater gift of God than the healing of his body. Compare John 17:3.

**5:16** Elisha did not serve God for the gifts he might get. This one gift from Namaan would have made him a rich man (v 5), but Elisha was not interested in obtaining wealth, even by gifts others wanted to give him. How unlike Balaam and many others since (2 Pet 2:15. See Paul's warning to Timothy in 1 Tim 6:6-11).



17 And Naaman said, "Then, please, shall not two mules' load of earth be given to your servant? For from now on your servant will offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. 18 In this thing the LORD pardon your servant, *that* when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow in the house of Rimmon. When I bow down in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this thing."

19 And he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a little distance.

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Look, my master has let this Syrian Naaman off lightly, by not accepting from his hands what he brought. But, *as* the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him."

21 So Gehazi went after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, "*Is* all well?"

22 And he said, "All *is* well. My master has sent me, saying, 'Look, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from Mount Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.'"

23 And Naaman said, "Be pleased to take two talents." And he urged him, and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and placed *them* on two of his servants, and they carried *them* in front of him. 24 And when he came to the tower, he took *them* from their hand and stored *them* in the house, and he let the men

go, and they departed. 25 But he went in and stood before his master.

And Elisha said to him, "Where *are you coming* from, Gehazi?"

And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

26 And he said to him, "Did not my heart go *with you*, when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? *Is it* a time to accept money and to accept clothes, and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen, and male and female servants? 27 Therefore the leprosy of Naaman will cling to you and to your offspring forever." And he went out from his presence a leper *as white* as snow.

**6** And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "Now look, the place where we are living with you is too small for us. 2 Please let us go to the Jordan, and each man take a beam from there, and let us make a place for ourselves there, where we can live."

And he answered, "Go."

3 And one *of them* said, "Please be willing to go with your servants."

And he answered, "I will go."

4 So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. 5 But as one *of them* was felling a tree, the axe head fell into the water, and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was borrowed."

6 And the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick and threw *it* in there, and the iron floated up.

**5:17** "Earth" – to make an altar in Damascus. It seems he did not understand that the earth of Israel was no more sacred for this purpose than earth anywhere else.

**5:18** Naaman knew that bowing to another god would not be right, but did not see how he could escape when the king with him bowed.

**5:19** Elisha did not try to be Naaman's conscience, but left it to him to work out his own problem.

**5:20** Gehazi is typical of all those who seek personal gain through the service of God. He was eager for money. The mind of Gehazi is often seen in Christian circles today. It leads to God's judgment (Matt 6:24; Luke 12:15; 1 Tim 6:5,9). Man of God, flee these things! Beware of greed, of trying to make gain from your position, of taking gifts God does not want you to have. Those things can ruin your ministry and your life.

**5:22** Getting what he wanted involved Gehazi in lying and misrepresenting his master. One sin, as often happens, led to another. He loved money more than truth, like so many today. When they who say they are servants of Christ are greedy for money and twist the facts to get it, they are misrepresenting Christ, bringing harm to His work on earth, and eventually great harm

to themselves.

**5:24** The cover-up begins. Compare Achan (Josh 7:1,11,12,21).

**5:25** The attempt to cover up wrongdoing usually leads to more lying, all of which is hateful to God (Prov 6:16-19. See also Prov 28:13).

**5:26** "Did not my heart go" – God enabled Elisha to know what Gehazi had been doing. He had an ability to see things others could not see. Compare 6:17. Of course, it may be possible for men to hide their sins from other men. But God sees what is going on and in His time and way will expose and punish it (Ps 90:8; 139:1-7; Heb 4:13).

**5:27** It is as though Elisha was saying "You wanted something belonging to Naaman, did you? Take, then, his leprosy!"

**6:1** "Prophets" – 2:3,5; 4:1,38. Evidently, part of Elisha's ministry was training these prophets for God's service.

**6:5** "It was borrowed" – here is a problem that can always arise with borrowed things – they can be lost or ruined. And this can produce hard feelings in the lender. One should be just as careful with borrowed things as with one's own – or even more so. And any loss should be paid for by the borrower. See Ex 22:14.

**6:6,7** Through the prophet God showed His

7 So he said, "Lift *it* out for yourself." And he stretched out his hand and took it.

8 Then the king of Syria was at war against Israel, and he took counsel with his servants, saying, "My camp *will be* in such and such a place."

9 And the man of God sent *word* to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass that place, for the Syrians have come down there." 10 And the king of Israel sent *men* to the place about which the man of God had told him and warned him, and saved himself there, not once or twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled about this thing, and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not tell me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?"

12 And one of his servants said, "No one, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who *is* in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."

13 And he said, "Go and find out where he *is*, so that I can send *men* and bring him." And it was told him as follows: "See, *he is* in Dothan." 14 Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a large army there, and they came at night and surrounded the city.

15 And when the servant of the man of God rose early and went out, he saw an army surrounding the city with both horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

16 And he answered, "Do not be afraid, for those who *are* with us are more than those who *are* with them."

17 And Elisha prayed and said, "LORD, I pray you, open his eyes, so that he can see." And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he looked and saw that the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, "I pray you, strike

this people with blindness." And he struck them with blindness in accordance with the word of Elisha.

19 And Elisha said to them, "This *is* not the way, nor *is* this the city. Follow me, and I will take you to the man you are looking for." But he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came about, when they came into Samaria, that Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, so that they can see." And the LORD opened their eyes, and they looked and saw that *they were* in the middle of Samaria.

21 And when he saw them, the king of Israel said to Elisha, "My father, shall I strike *them* down? Shall I strike *them* down?"

22 And he answered, "You shall not strike *them* down. Would you strike down those whom you take captive with your sword and with your bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." 23 And he prepared a great feast for them. And when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria no longer came into the land of Israel.

24 But after this it happened that Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. 25 And there was a great famine in Samaria, and, see, they besieged it until an ass's head was *sold* for eighty *pieces* of silver, and the fourth of a kab of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver.

26 And as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king."

27 And he said, "If the Lord does not help you, from where shall I help you? From the barn floor or from the winepress?" 28 And the king said to her, "What is troubling you?"

And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son so that we can eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' 29 So we boiled my

concern for even small matters which affected His servants. Compare Matt 10:30. **6:9** "There" – 5:26. God revealed to Elisha the movements of the Syrian army.

**6:11** The king thought there was a traitor in their midst sending information to Israel.

**6:16** "With us are more" – see 2 Chron 32:7,8; Ps 18:16-18; 34:7; 55:16-19; 68:17; 91:11; Matt 26:53; Rom 8:31; Heb 1:14.

**6:17** See 5:26. "Fire" – 2:11,12. God guards all of His servants. He has all the angels of heaven available for this purpose. It is not possible for anyone to capture any servant of God or do any physical harm to him without God's permission and wise purpose.

**6:18** "Blindness" – Gen 19:11; Acts 13:10,11. God may use such means to protect His people and to further His work.

**6:22,23** The purpose of Elisha's actions was

not to destroy these men, but to prove to them that God was defending Israel. For the time being they learned their lesson.

**6:24** "After this" – often kings do not grasp the lessons of history. See 1 Kings chapter 20.

**6:25** Eighty shekels equals about one kilogram. In times of famine there are usually those who make profit from the suffering of others and in this way show the baseness of their character.

"A kab" – probably about 0.3 liter.

"Of dove's dung" – or this could be translated "of seed pods." There may have been a plant or its fruit called "dove's dung", strange as the name might seem to us.

"Five shekels" – about 55 grams.

**6:28,29** God told them such things would happen if they did not obey Him. See Lev 26:27-29; Deut 28:52-57.

son and ate him. And the next day I said to her, 'Give your son so that we can eat him.' And she has hidden her son."

30 And when the king heard the words of the woman, it came about that he tore his clothes, and he passed by on the wall, and the people looked and there inside *he had* sackcloth on his body. 31 Then he said, "May God do *harm* to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today."

32 But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. And *the king* sent a man from his presence, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent *someone* to take off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door and hold him fast at the door. *Is* not the sound of his master's feet behind him?"

33 And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger coming down to him. And *the king* said, "Look, this disaster *is* from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

**7** Then Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the LORD: Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour *will be sold* for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria."

2 Then an officer on whose hand the king was leaning answered the man of God and said, "Look, *even if* the LORD made windows in heaven, could this thing be?"

And he said, "Look, you will see *it* with your eyes, but will not eat of it."

3 And there were four men with leprosy at the entrance of the gate, and they said to one another, "Why should we sit here until we die? 4 If we say, We will go into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we will die there. And if we still sit here, we will die also. Therefore, come now and let's go over to the camp of the Syrians. If they

save us alive, we will live; and if they kill us, we will but die."

5 And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians, and when they arrived at the outskirts of the Syrian camp, *there was* no one there. 6 For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear a sound of chariots and a sound of horses, the sound of a large army. And they said to one another,

"Look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians, to attack us." 7 Therefore they arose and fled at twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their donkeys, the camp just as it *was*, and fled for their life.

8 And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent, and ate and drank, and carried silver and gold and clothes from there and went and hid *it*, and came back, and entered another tent, and carried *things* from there *also*, and went and hid *them*.

9 Then they said to one another, "We are not behaving well. Today *is* a day of good news, and we are keeping silent. If we wait till morning light, some punishment will come on us. Therefore come now, let's go and tell the king's household."

10 So they came and called to the gatekeepers of the city and told them, saying, "We went to the camp of the Syrians, and, see, *there was* no one there, not a human sound, but horses tied up and donkeys tied up, and the tents as they *were*."

11 And the gatekeeper called out, and they reported *it* inside the king's house.

12 And the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "I will now tell you what the Syrians are doing to us. They know that we *are* hungry, so they have gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we will capture them alive, and get into the city.'"

13 And one of his servants answered and said,

**6:30** "Sackcloth" – Gen 37:34; 1 Kings 21:27; Est 4:1,2; Job 16:15.

**6:31** Compare 1 Kings 18:10,16; 21:20. Elisha by his prayers, walk with God, and counsel to the king (6:9,10) was the greatest human protector of the kingdom. It was madness for the king to blame him for something that resulted from the unbelief and disobedience of himself and the people. Such is fallen human nature. And such has been and still is the experience of many of God's servants.

**6:33** "Why should I wait. . . any longer" – Jehoram was an evil man (3:1-3), and was seeking to kill the greatest man in Israel. He had not been waiting for the Lord in repentance and faith.

**7:1** "Measure" – this measure was about

7.3 liters.

"A shekel" – about 11 grams. Compare 6:25. Elisha is predicting an end, at least a temporary end, of the famine.

**7:2** "Not eat" – v 17. Possibly his death was God's judgment for his unbelief.

**7:3** "Leprosy" – note at Lev 13:2.

"Gate" – excluded from the city (Lev 13:46; Num 5:2,3).

**7:6** "The LORD had caused" – God has many ways of protecting His people and working His sovereign will.

"A sound of chariots" – 6:17.

**7:9** "Not behaving well" – it is never right to keep good news from those who might benefit from it. Compare Mark 16:15; Acts 20:20.

**7:12** The king did not believe Elisha's word in v 1.

"Please let *some men* take five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city. Look, they *may become* like all the multitude of Israel who are left in it; yes, *I say*, they *may become* just like the whole multitude of the Israelites who have perished. But let us send *them* and see."

14 So they took two chariot horses, and the king sent *them* after the army of the Syrians, saying, "Go and see." 15 And they went after them to the Jordan, and saw the whole road *was* full of clothes and articles which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. And the messengers returned and told the king. 16 And the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in accordance with the word of the LORD.

17 And the king appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate; and the people trampled on him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. 18 And it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, "There will be two measures of barley for a shekel and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria." 19 And that officer had answered the man of God and said, "Now, look, *even if* the LORD made windows in heaven, might such a thing be?" And he had said, "Look, you will see it with your eyes, but will not eat of it." 20 And so it happened to him; for the people trampled on him in the gate, and he died.

**8** Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise, and go with your household, and stay for a time wherever you can stay, for the LORD has called for a famine; and also it will come on the land for seven years." 2 And the woman arose and acted in accordance with the word of the man of God, and she went

with her household and stayed in the land of the Philistines for seven years.

3 And it came about at the end of the seven years that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines, and she went to cry out to the king for her house and for her land. 4 And the king was talking with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, "Please tell me all the great things that Elisha has done." 5 And it *so* happened that as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that suddenly the woman whose son he had restored to life, cried out to the king for her house and for her land.

And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son whom Elisha restored to life." 6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed an officer for her, saying, "Restore all that *was* hers, and all the produce of the field from the day that she left the land until now."

7 And Elisha came to Damascus. And Ben-Hadad the king of Syria was sick, and it was told him, saying, "The man of God has come here. 8 And the king said to Hazael, "Take a present in your hand, and go, meet the man of God and ask the LORD through him, saying, "Will I recover from this disease?"

9 So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, *some* of every good thing in Damascus, forty camels' loads, and came and stood before him and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, has sent me to you, saying, "Will I recover from this disease?"

10 And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You may certainly recover,' however the LORD has revealed to me that he will surely die." 11 And he fixed his gaze steadily, until he was ashamed. And the man of God wept.

12 And Hazael said, "Why is my lord weeping?" And he answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel. You will set

**7:16** Verse 1. To fulfill His word God put a strong army to flight. God would move heaven and earth, if He needed to, to do what He has said.

**7:17-19** Verse 2; Isa 44:26.

**8:1** "Restored to life" – the son of the woman of Shunem (4:18-35).

"Famine" – 2 Sam 21:1; 1 Kings 8:37; 17:1; 2 Kings 6:25; Ps 105:16; Haggai 1:11. God has often sent famine because of the disobedience and wickedness of people.

**8:4** "King" – which king is not stated. Jehoram was familiar with many of Elisha's great works. This king may have been Jehu who succeeded Jehoram.

**8:7** In this foreign capital Elisha was famous for his miraculous deeds.

**8:8** Interesting that this idolatrous king wanted to consult Jehovah the God of Israel. The story of Namaan, the commander of his army, perhaps had a profound effect on him.

**8:9** "A present" – it is unlikely that Elisha accepted any part of this. See 5:16.

**8:10** "Recover" – Elisha's meaning seems to be that Ben Hadad's illness was not to death. If left alone he would recover. But Elisha knew what Hazael would do (vs 14,15). Possibly the Hebrew may also be translated "Go and say, 'You will certainly not recover,' for the LORD", etc.

**8:12** 10:32,33; 12:17; 13:3,7; Amos 1:3,4. Hazael is a terrible warning of the depths to which a man can sink when he refuses the control of God (Jer 17:9).

their strongholds on fire, and you will kill their young men with the sword, and will dash their children down, and rip open their pregnant women."

13 And Hazael said, "But what! *Is* your servant a dog that he would do this great thing?"

And Elisha answered, "The Lord has revealed to me that you *will be* king over Syria."

14 So he left Elisha and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me *that* you would surely recover." 15 And it came about the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* on his face, so that he died, and Hazael reigned in his place.

16 And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. 17 He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for his wife was Ahab's daughter. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 19 Yet, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD would not destroy Judah, since he promised him to give to him, *and* to his descendants, a perpetual light.

20 In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. 21 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots *went* with him; and he rose at night and attacked the Edomites who surrounded him, and the captains of the chariots; and the people fled to their tents. 22 Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah to this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

23 And the rest of the acts of Joram and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the

Annals of the Kings of Judah? 24 And Joram slept with his ancestors and was buried among his ancestors in the city of David, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

25 In the twelfth year of Joram, the son of Ahab king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign. 26 Ahaziah *was* twenty-two years old when he began to reign and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel. 27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as the house of Ahab *had done*; for he was a son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

28 And he went with Joram, the son of Ahab, to the war against Hazael, king of Syria, in Ramoth-Gilead, and the Syrians wounded Joram. 29 And king Joram went back to Jezreel to be healed of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram, the son of Ahab, in Jezreel, because he was sick.

**9** And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Tuck up your robe in your belt, and take this flask of oil in your hand and go to Ramoth-Gilead. 2 And when you arrive there, look for Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and have him stand up among his brethren, and take him to an inner room. 3 Then take the flask of oil, and pour *the oil* on his head, and say, Thus says the LORD, 'I have anointed you king over Israel.' Then open the door and flee, and do not wait."

4 So the young man, the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-Gilead. 5 And when he

**8:13** 1 Kings 19:15. God would use Hazael's elevation to the throne to punish His disobedient people.

**8:16-24** 2 Chron 21:1-20.

**8:16** "Joram" - 1:17; 3:1. Jehoram shared the throne with his father for some five years before he became the sole king of Judah.

**8:18** "Kings of Israel" - 1 Kings 12:28-33; 21:25,26.

"Ahab's daughter" - 2 Chron 18:1. The marriage of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat to Athaliah daughter of Ahab was a tragedy for Judah. Those who arranged it probably meant to encourage peace and cooperation between Israel and Judah, but it led to the corruption and degradation of Judah. Failure to live according to God's standards always has serious consequences. Every believer should be very careful about marriage alliances. See 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**8:19** 2 Sam 7:12-15; 1 Kings 11:36; 15:4; Ps 132:17.

**8:20** "Edom" - Gen 25:30; 27:40; 1 Kings

22:47. For some time Judah had controlled Edom and appointed their rulers. When God's people went astray from Him it always resulted in trouble. Compare Jud 2:11-23.

**8:21** "Joram" - Jehoram.

**8:24-29** 2 Chron 22:1-7.

**8:24** "Slept" - note at 1 Kings 2:10.

"City of David" - 2 Sam 5:6,7.

**8:26** "Omri" - 1 Kings 16:23-26.

**8:27** Verse 18; 2 Chron 18:1.

**8:28** "Hazael" - v 15.

**8:29** 9:15,16. "Ramah" - or "Ramoth."

**9:1-10** 2 Chron 22:7-9.

**9:1** "Prophets" - 1 Sam 10:5; 2 Kings 2:3,5; 6:1.

"Oil" - oil was used to anoint leaders (1 Sam 10:1; 16:1; 1 Kings 1:39).

**9:2** 1 Kings 19:16,17. This Jehu was not the prophet who had the same name (1 Kings 16:1); and this Jehoshaphat was not the same as the king of Judah (8:16).

**9:4** "Gilead" - Ramoth Gilead was east of the Jordan river, nearly 100 kilometers from



arrived, there were the commanders of the army *sitting*, and he said, "I have a message for you, O commander!"

And Jehu said, "To which one of all of us?"

And he said, "To you, O commander."

6 And he arose and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, over Israel. 7 And you shall strike the house of Ahab your master, so that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. 8 For the whole house of Ahab will perish; and I will cut off from Ahab every male person, both bond and free in Israel. 9 And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. 10 And the dogs will eat Jezebel in the plot of ground in Jezreel, and *there will be* no one to bury her.'" And he opened the door and fled.

11 Then Jehu came out to the servants of his lord; and *one of them* said to him, "Is all well? Why did this mad *fellow* come to you?"

And he said to them, "You know the man and his talk."

12 And they said, "That is not true! Tell us now."

And he said, "Thus and thus he told me, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: I have anointed you king over Israel.'"

13 Then each one of them hurriedly took his cloak, and put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"

14 So Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had been guarding Ramoth-Gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria. 15 But king Joram had returned to Jezreel to be healed of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, "If you are so minded, *then* let no one go out or escape

from the city to go to tell *it* in Jezreel. 16 So Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram.

17 And a watchman stood on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the troop of Jehu as he was coming, and said, "I see a troop."

And Joram said, "Take a horseman and send *him* to meet them, and have him say, '*Is it* peace?'"

18 So someone went on horseback to meet him, and said, "Thus says the king, '*Is it* peace?'"

And Jehu said, "What have you to do with peace? Turn in behind me." And the watchman reported *this*, saying, "The messenger went to them, but he is not coming back."

19 Then he sent out a second man on horseback, who went to them and said, "Thus says the king, '*Is it* peace?'"

And Jehu answered, "What have you to do with peace? Turn in behind me."

20 And the watchman reported *this*, saying, "He also went to them, and is not coming back. And the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he drives furiously."

21 And Joram said, "Make ready." And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah set out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the plot of ground of Naboth the Jezreelite. 22 And it came about when Joram saw Jehu that he said, "Is *it* peace, Jehu?" And he answered, "What peace, as long as the acts of prostitution of your mother Jezebel and her *acts of* witchcraft *are so* many?"

23 And Joram turned his hands and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "There is treachery, Ahaziah!"

24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and hit Jehoram between his shoulders, and the arrow went out through his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. 25 Then *Jehu* said to Bidkar his captain, "Take *him* up and throw him in the plot of ground of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember

Samaria.

**9:7** "Ahab" – Jehu knew what Ahab had done and that God's vengeance would come on Ahab's house. See vs 25,26.

"Avenge" – note at Num 31:2,3.

**9:8** 10:17; 1 Kings 14:10; 21:21. There was not one of Ahab's descendants who was righteous and God-fearing, who deserved to be spared.

"Every male person" – in Hebrew, "him who urinates against the wall."

**9:9** 1 Kings 14:10,11; 15:29; 16:3,4,11,12.

**9:10** "Jezebel" – note at 1 Kings 16:31.

**9:11** "Mad fellow" – God's prophets (and even His Son) were sometimes regarded as crazy by sinful, worldly people – Jer 29:26,27; Hos 9:7; Mark 3:21; John 10:20; Acts 26:24.

**9:13** "Trumpets" – 2 Sam 15:10; 1 Kings 1:34.

**9:15** "Joram" – or "Jehoram."

"Jezreel" – 8:29. This was nearly 75 kilometers from Ramoth.

**9:21** "Naboth" – 1 Kings 21:1-7, 15-21; 2 Chron 22:7.

**9:22** "Jezebel" – 1 Kings 16:30-33; 18:19; 21:25. All idolatry and all witchcraft are detestable to God, and He will see to it that no individual, no nation practicing them will know permanent peace – Ex 22:18; Deuteronomy chapter 13; 18:10-13; 1 Sam 15:23; Gal 5:20; Isa 48:22; 57:21.

**9:23** 11:14. They who are traitors toward God, should not be surprised when men rise against them. Compare Ps 18:25,26.

**9:25** 1 Kings 21:1,19-22.

when you and I were riding together behind his father Ahab that the LORD laid this burden on him: 26 'I have certainly seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, says the LORD, and I will repay you in this plot, says the LORD.' Now, therefore, take *him* and throw him into that plot *of ground*, in accordance with the word of the LORD."

27 But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed him, and said, "Strike him down too, in the chariot." *And they did so* at the ascent to Gur, which is at Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there. 28 And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his ancestors in the city of David. 29 And in the eleventh year of Joram, the son of Ahab, Ahaziah began to reign over Judah.

30 And when Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it*, and she painted her eyes and adorned her head, and looked out at a window. 31 And as Jehu came in at the gate, she said, "Did Zimri, who killed his master, *have* peace?"

32 And he raised his face to the window, and said, "Who *is* on my side? Who?" And two *or* three eunuchs looked out at him. 33 And he said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down; and *some* of her blood splattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her under foot.

34 And when he had come in, he ate and drank, and said, "Go, see now to that cursed *woman*, and bury her, for she *is* a king's daughter." 35 And they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of *her* hands. 36 Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, "This *is* the word of the LORD, which he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'In the plot *of ground* at Jezreel dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel. 37 And the corpse of Jezebel will be like dung on the surface of the ground in the plot at Jezreel, *so* that they will not say, This *is* Jezebel.'"

**10** And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters and sent *them* to

Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders and to those who brought up Ahab's *children*, saying, 2 "Now as soon as this letter reaches you, since your master's sons *are* with you, and *there are* with you chariots and horses, also a fortified city and weapons, 3 choose the best and most worthy of your master's sons, and set *him* on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house."

4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, "Look, two kings did not stand before him. How then shall we stand?"

5 And the one who was in charge of the house, and the one who *was* over the city and the elders, and those who brought up *the children*, sent *word* to Jehu, saying, "We *are* your servants and will do all that you tell us. We will not make any king. You do *what is* good in your eyes."

6 Then a second time he wrote a letter to them, saying, "If you *are* mine, and *if* you will listen to my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by this time tomorrow." Now the king's sons, seventy persons, *were* with the chief men of the city who brought them up. 7 And it came about, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and killed the seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets and sent *them* to him at Jezreel. 8 And a messenger came and told him, saying, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons."

And he said, "Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning."

9 And in the morning it came about that he went out and stood, and said to all the people, "You *are* righteous. See, I conspired against my master, and killed him. But who killed all these? 10 Know now that not a word of the LORD, which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab, will fall to the earth; for the LORD has done what he said through his servant Elijah." 11 So Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his chief men and his relatives and his priests, until he left no one remaining to him.

12 And he arose and departed and came to Samaria. *And* when he *was* at the shearing house on the way, 13 Jehu met with the relatives of

**9:26** 1 Kings 21:13; Gal 6:7,8.

**9:27** 2 Chron 22:7-9. "By way of the garden house" – or "up the road to Beth-Haggan."

**9:30** Jer 4:30; Ezek 23:36-40. Paint and well-arranged hair cannot keep God's judgment away from women of depraved heart. Compare Isa 3:16-24.

**9:31** Zimri had murdered king Elah – 1 Kings 16:9,10.

**9:34** 1 Kings 16:31.

**9:36** 1 Kings 21:23. Every word of God will be fulfilled – Isa 44:26.

**9:37** In this way God showed His hatred of all Jezebel delighted in. Compare Ps 83:9,10;

Isa 5:25; Jer 8:2; 9:22; 16:4; 25:33; Luke 16:15.

**10:1** "Samaria" – this was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Jehu had to control this city to be sure of controlling the kingdom.

**10:3** The meaning was "Submit, if you are not willing to fight."

**10:4** 9:24,27.

**10:7** 9:8,9; 1 Kings 21:21.

**10:9** He put the responsibility for these murders on the leading men of Samaria.

**10:10** 1 Kings 21:19-29.

**10:13** 8:24,29.

Ahaziah, king of Judah, and said, "Who *are* you?"

And they answered, "We *are* Ahaziah's relatives, and we are going down to greet the children of the king and the children of the queen."

14 And he said, "Take them alive!" And they took them alive, forty-two men, then killed them at the pit of the shearing house. He did not leave any of them.

15 And when he left there, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab *coming* to meet him, and he greeted him and said to him, "Is your heart right, as my heart *is* with your heart?"

And Jehonadab answered, "It is."

*Jehu said*, "If it is, give *me* your hand." And he gave *him* his hand, and *Jehu* took him up to him into the chariot. 16 And he said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD." So they had him ride in his chariot.

17 And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who were left of Ahab's *family* in Samaria, until he had destroyed him, in accordance with the saying of the LORD which he spoke to Elijah.

18 And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little, *but* Jehu will serve him much. 19 Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. Do not let one be missing. For I have a great sacrifice *to make* to Baal. Whoever is missing will not live." But Jehu did *this* deceptively, for the purpose of destroying the worshippers of Baal.

20 And Jehu said, "Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal." And they proclaimed *it*. 21 And Jehu sent *word* through all Israel. And all the ministers of Baal came, so that there was not a man who did not come. And they came into the house of Baal, and the house of Baal was filled from one end to the other. 22 And he said to the one in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out robes for all the worshippers of Baal." And he brought out robes for them.

23 And Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab

went into the house of Baal, and said to the worshippers of Baal, "Search and see that there are none of the servants of the LORD with you here, but only the worshippers of Baal." 24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed eighty men outside, and said, "If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escapes, the life of *the one who lets him go* will be required for his life."

25 And it came about, as soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, that Jehu *said* to the guard and to the captains, "Go in, *and* kill them! Do not let anyone get out." And they struck them with the edge of the sword, and the guard and the captains threw *them* out, and went into the inner shrine of the house of Baal. 26 And they brought the images out of the house of Baal and burned them. 27 And they broke down the image of Baal, and tore down the house of Baal and made it a latrine, *as it is* to this day.

28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. 29 However Jehu did not depart *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin, *that is*, the golden calves at Bethel and at Dan.

30 And the LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in carrying out *what is* right in my eyes, *and* have done to the house of Ahab in accordance with all that was in my heart, your offspring will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth *generation*." 31 But Jehu was not careful to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart, for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who caused Israel to sin.

32 In those days the LORD began to cut away *parts of* Israel, and Hazael defeated them in all the territories of Israel, 33 from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites and the Reubenites and the Manassites from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, Gilead and Bashan.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that

**10:15** "Rechab" – Jer 35:6-19.

**10:16** 1 Kings 19:10 – it would seem from Jehu's later actions that his "zeal for the LORD", which he apparently so much wanted others to see, was more for his own advancement than for God's glory. Let us be careful against using the service of God for selfish ends.

**10:17** Verse 10.

**10:18** "Baal" – 1 Kings 16:30-33. Note at Jud 2:11.

**10:19** Men often think (mistakenly) that they must use deceitful means to accomplish God's purposes. Compare Gen 27:18-26; Josh 2:4-6; 1 Sam 21:2,13; etc.

**10:28** The worship of this false god was a disgrace to the people of Israel, and Jehu did well to root it out. But the people did not turn back to the Lord. A work of destruction is not the same as a work of creation.

**10:29** 1 Kings 12:26-32; 13:33,34. Jehu himself, though professing great zeal for Jehovah, was guilty of false worship and of following the evil Jeroboam.

**10:30** "To the fourth generation" – the four were Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II, Zechariah.

**10:31** Jehu showed great energy in destroying evil, but was not equally concerned in building up what was good. There is an important principle here. God's servants are called not only to condemn error, but to follow and encourage what is true and edifying. A mainly negative ministry is of little lasting value.

**10:32,33** "Hazael" – 8:12; Amos 1:3-5. When His people are unbelieving and disobedient, God knows how to cut them down to size.

**10:34** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

he did and all his might, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel?

35 And Jehu slept with his ancestors; and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place. 36 And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

**11** And when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal offspring. 2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons *who were* killed. And they hid him from Athaliah, him and his nurse, in a bedroom, so that he was not killed. 3 And he was with her hidden at the house of the LORD for six years. And Athaliah reigned over the land.

4 And the seventh year Jehoiada sent men and brought the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath from them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son. 5 And he commanded them, saying, "This *is* what you must do: a third of you who come *on duty* on the Sabbath shall keep watch over the king's house, 6 and a third *will be* at the Sur gate, and a third at the gate behind the guard. So you must keep watch over the house, that it be not broken into. 7 And two-thirds of all of you who go off *duty* on the Sabbath, shall keep watch over the house of the LORD, around the king. 8 And you shall surround the king, each man with his weapons in his hand. And whoever comes near *your* ranks must be killed. And you shall be with the king as he goes out and as he comes in."

9 And the captains over the hundreds acted in accordance with everything that Jehoiada the priest commanded, and each one took his men who were to come on *duty* on the Sabbath, with those who

would go off *duty* on the Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. 10 And the priest gave to the captains over hundreds king David's spears and shields, that *were* in the temple of the LORD. 11 And the guards stood, each man with his weapons in his hand, all around the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, *along* by the altar and the temple.

12 And he brought out the king's son, and put the crown on him and *gave him* the Testimony; and they made him king and anointed him, and clapped their hands and said, "God save the king!"

13 And when Athaliah heard the voice of the guards *and* of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD. 14 And when she looked, there stood the king by a pillar, as the custom *was*, and the leaders and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing with trumpets. And Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, "Treason! Treason!"

15 But Jehoiada the priest gave a command to the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the army, saying to them, "Take her out of the area, and kill with the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not let her be killed in the house of the LORD." 16 And they seized her; and she arrived at the path by which the horses came to the king's house, and she was killed there.

17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they would be the LORD's people; also between the king and the people. 18 And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal and broke it down. They completely smashed his altars and his images and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, before the altars. And *Jehoiada* the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD. 19 And he took the rulers over hundreds and the captains and the guard, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD,

**10:35** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**11:1-20** 2 Chron 22:10-23:21.

**11:1** "Athaliah" – 8:18,26; 9:27.

"The royal offspring" – this was the royal house of David. See God's promise to David in 2 Sam 7:11,16; 2 Kings 8:19. Satan used this evil woman in an attempt to destroy David's family line and leave God's word unfulfilled. Athaliah's attack was principally on her own grandchildren, and was for the sole purpose of seizing power for herself. She was not the last person to side with Satan for power's sake. And many wicked persons since Athaliah have tried to destroy the purposes of God. But none have succeeded, and none ever will.

**11:2** "Jehosheba" – God always has instruments to accomplish His will. Compare Ex 1:22-2:10; Matt 2:13-16. Joash was only a year old at this time. Compare v 3 with v 21.

**11:4** "Jehoiada" – this man was Jehosheba's husband and a priest (2 Chron 22:11).

"Son" – Joash.

**11:10** 2 Sam 8:7; 1 Chron 18:7.

**11:12** "Testimony" – Deut 17:18-20.

"Anointed" – 1 Sam 9:16; 16:1; 1 Kings 1:34,39.

**11:14** See note at 9:23.

**11:17** Josh 24:25; 1 Sam 10:25; 2 Chron 15:12-15; 24:15,16. Jehoiada was a godly man who had the best interests of the people in his heart (2 Chron 24:15,16). And he knew there could be no lasting good for the people if they forsook the true God.

**11:18** Deut 12:2,3; 1 Kings 18:40; 2 Kings 10:11,26,27. Baal worship had been introduced into Judah probably by king Jehoram and his wife Athaliah (8:16-18).

**11:19** 2 Kings 11:4-6.

and came by the road of the Gate of the Guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. 20 And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet, for they had killed Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house.

21 Jehoash *was* seven years old when he began to reign.

**12** Jehoash began to reign in the seventh year of Jehu, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah. *She was* from Beersheba. 2 And Jehoash did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 3 But the high places were not taken away. The people still sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places.

4 And Jehoash said to the priests, "All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, each man's census money, the money from each man's assessment, *and* all the money any man's heart prompts him to bring into the house of the LORD, 5 let the priests themselves take it, each one from his acquaintances, and let them repair the damaged places of the house, wherever any damage may be found."

6 But it so happened *that* by the twenty-third year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the damaged places in the house. 7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest and the *other* priests, and said to them, "Why are you not repairing the damaged places of the house? Now therefore accept no *more* money from your acquaintances, but deliver it for the damaged places in the house." 8 And the priests agreed to receive

no *more* money from the people, and not to repair the damaged places in the house *themselves*.

9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest and bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the LORD; and the priests who were doorkeepers put in it all the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD. 10 And *so* it was that whenever they saw *there was* much money in the chest, the king's scribe and the high priest came up and put it in bags, and counted the money that was found in the house of the LORD. 11 And they gave the counted money into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they paid it out to the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the LORD, 12 and to masons and stone cutters, and to buy timber and cut stone to repair the damaged places in the house of the LORD, and for all that was paid out for the house to repair *it*.

13 However, no silver bowls, snuffers, basins, trumpets, no gold or silver articles were made for the house of the LORD, from the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD, 14 but they gave it to the workmen, and made repairs to the house of the LORD with it. 15 Moreover, they did not demand an account with the men into whose hands they delivered the money to be given to workmen, for they dealt faithfully. 16 The money for trespass *offerings* and money for sin *offerings* was not brought into the house of the LORD. It belonged to the priests.

17 Then Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath and took it; and Hazael set his face to

**11:20** "Rejoiced" - Prov 11:10; 28:12; 29:2.

**11:21** "Jehoash" (also vs 2,4,6,7,18) - Joash.

**12:1-14** 2 Chron 24:1-14.

**12:2** 2 Kings 11:4. Joash did right as long as he was under the instruction of Jehoiada, but later forsook the truth he knew (2 Chron 24:17-27). Blessed are they who faithfully serve God to the end of their lives - 2 Tim 4:6,7; Heb 3:14; 6:11,12; Rev 2:10,26.

**12:3** 1 Kings 3:2; 15:14; 22:43. At this time on these high places they worshiped Jehovah and not false gods. Even so, this was not according to God's instructions for worship - Ex 20:24; Num 33:52; Deut 7:5; 12:3,5,8,13,14.

**12:4** "Census money" - Ex 30:11-16; 38:25,26; Num 2:32.

"Man's heart prompts him" - Lev 22:18-23; Deut 16:10.

**12:6** The temple had been finished in 959 B.C. The 23rd year of Joash was 835. The date when Joash spoke the words of v 4 is not known, but evidently a considerable length of time had gone by and no repairs had been made. The question arises, what

had happened to the money the priests had been receiving for the work? And where was their zeal for God's service? How vital it is that Christian workers, and all of God's people, should be completely honest in money matters. To misuse money given for the work of God is to steal from God. And to be lacking in zeal for God and His work is to show the smallness of our love for Him.

**12:9** "Chest" - Mark 12:41; Luke 21:1.

**12:11-14** With proper supervision the work went ahead and funds collected were used in a proper way. The money for repair work was not spent on something else.

**12:15** "Faithfully" - 22:7; 1 Cor 4:2. How important this is in the work of God. It cannot be overemphasized. God is a God of truth and demands truth in our hearts (Ps 31:5; 51:6). If we lack honesty we have no right to expect blessing or reward from God, and we might well wonder if we know God at all.

**12:16** Lev 4:24,29; 5:15-18; 7:7; Num 4:9,19.

**12:17-21** 2 Chron 24:23-26 reveals that these events occurred after Joash murdered the son of Jehoiada.

**12:17** "Hazael" - 8:9-13; 10:32,33.



go up to Jerusalem. 18 And Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred things that Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, his forefathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold *that was* found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and in the king's house, and sent *it* to Hazael king of Syria; and he went away from Jerusalem.

19 And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 20 And his servants arose and made a conspiracy, and killed Joash in the house of Millo, on the way down to Silla. 21 For Jozachar the son of Shimeath and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, struck him, and he died; and they buried him with his ancestors in the city of David. And his son Amaziah reigned in his place.

**13** In the twenty-third year of Joash, the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and he reigned for seventeen years.* 2 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. He did not depart from them. 3 And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hands of Ben Hadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days.

4 And Jehoahaz pleaded with the LORD, and the LORD listened to him, for he saw the oppression of Israel; because the king of Syria oppressed them. 5 And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel lived in their tents as before. 6 Nevertheless they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam,

who caused Israel to sin, *but* walked in them; and also the *idolatrous* grove in Samaria remained.

7 For he left of the people of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen and ten chariots and ten thousand foot soldiers; for the king of Syria had destroyed them and had made them like the dust of threshing.

8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did and his might, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 9 And Jehoahaz slept with his ancestors; and they buried him in Samaria. And his son Joash reigned in his place.

10 In the thirty-seventh year of Joash, king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and he reigned for sixteen years.* 11 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin, *but* he walked in them.

12 And the rest of the acts of Joash and all that he did, and his might, with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 13 And Joash slept with his ancestors; and Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

14 Now Elisha had fallen sick with his sickness, of which he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face and said, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen."

15 And Elisha said to him, "Take bow and arrows." And he took bow and arrows. 16 And he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." And he put his hand *on it*, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

17 And he said, "Open the east window." And

**12:18** 1 Kings 15:18; 2 Kings 16:8; 18:15,16. Using God's property to bribe God's enemies was surely both wrong and unnecessary. It showed a lack of faith in God's protection. What Joash needed to do was repent and turn to God with all his heart.

**12:19** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**12:20** "Killed Joash" – the reason for this is seen in 2 Chron 24:25.

**12:21** "City of David" – 2 Sam 5:6,7.

**13:2** 1 Kings 12:26-33.

**13:3** "Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

"Hazael" – 8:11,12; 10:32,33.

"Ben-Hadad" – v 24.

**13:4** Verse 26,27; Ex 3:7,9; Jud 2:14-18; 2 Chron 33:10-13; Ps 78:38,39; 103:13,14; Isa 55:6,7.

**13:5** "Saviour" – possibly Jehoahaz's son Jehoash (v 25).

**13:6** God's goodness did not lead them to

repentance. Compare Joel 2:18,19; Rom 2:4. "Grove" – or "Asherah pole" – note at Judges 3:7.

**13:7** Verse 22; 8:12; 10:32; Amos 1:3.

**13:8** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**13:9** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**13:11** 1 Kings 12:26-33.

**13:14** "Sickness" – Elisha was a great prophet, a faithful man of God. He did miracles for others (4:32-37; etc.), but there was no miracle for him when he fell ill. Compare 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20. Jehoash, king of Israel, like many godless men, had respect for God's prophet. But though he used the same words to Elisha that Elisha had used to Elijah (2:10), he did not have their faith. Many today can use the language of Bible-believing Christians without believing the Bible.

**13:17** "East window" – facing the area controlled by Syria beyond the Jordan river.

"Aphek" – 1 Kings 20:26.

he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, "Shoot." And he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the LORD's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria. For you shall strike down the Syrians in Aphek until you have destroyed *them*."

18 And he said, "Take the arrows." And he took *them*. And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground." And he struck three times and stopped. 19 And the man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck five or six times. Then you would have struck Syria until you had destroyed *it*, but now you will strike Syria *only* three times."

20 And Elisha died; and they buried him.

And the *raiding* bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the beginning of the year. 21 And it so happened when they were burying a man, that suddenly they saw a band *of men*, and they threw the man into the tomb of Elisha; and when the man dropped down and touched the bones of Elisha, he came to life and stood up on his feet.

22 But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 23 And the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and showed regard for them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them or cast them from his presence as yet.

24 So Hazael king of Syria died, and Ben Hadad his son reigned in his place. 25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took back out of the hands of Ben Hadad the son of Hazael the cities which he had taken by war out of the hands of Jehoahaz his father. Three times Joash defeated him and recovered the cities of Israel.

**14** In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash became king of Judah. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. And his

mother's name *was* Jehoaddan. *She was* from Jerusalem. 3 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, but not like David his father. He did everything as his father Joash had done. 4 However the high places were not taken away. The people still sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places.

5 And it came about, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hands, that he killed his servants who had killed his father the king. 6 But he did not kill the children of the murderers, in accordance with what is written in the book of the law of Moses, in which the LORD gave a command, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but each man shall be put to death for his own sin."

7 He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Selah in a battle and called its name Joktheel, *as it is* to this day.

8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face."

9 And Jehoash the king of Israel sent *word* to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent word to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter in marriage to my son.' And a wild beast that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thistle. 10 You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Glory *in this*, but stay at home, for why should you meddle with trouble so that you fall, you, and Judah with you?"

11 But Amaziah would not listen. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up, and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Beth-Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. 12 And Judah was defeated by Israel, and they all fled to their tents. 13 And Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son

**13:19** Verse 25.

**13:21** Elisha's bones had no power in themselves to raise the dead or to do anything else. They were dead and death cannot give life. The power to raise the dead was, and is, in the God Elisha served. God was reminding the people of this. Compare 1 Sam 2:6; John 5:21.

**13:22** 8:12,13; 10:32,33.

**13:23** "Compassion" – Ex 34:6; Deut 32:36; Jud 2:18; Ps 86:15; Isa 49:15; Matt 9:36. "Covenant" – Gen 13:16,17; 17:2-7; Ex 2:24,25.

**13:25** 10:32,33; 12:17; 13:18,19; 14:25. God gave these victories and a further period of prosperity to Israel to give the nation the opportunity to repent, but Israel did not learn its lesson. Later God punished them and removed them from the land altogether – 17:1-23.

**14:1-6** 2 Chron 25:1-4.

**14:1** "Joash" – or "Jehoash."

**14:3** David worshiped Jehovah, the only true God, and had nothing to do with gods. Amaziah did not follow that example. See 2 Chron 25:14-16.

**14:4** "High places" – 12:3.

**14:5** 12:20.

**14:6** Deut 24:16; Jer 31:29,30; Ezek 18:1-32.

**14:7** 2 Sam 8:13; 1 Chron 18:12; Ps 60.

**14:8-14** 2 Chron 25:17-24.

**14:8** "Face" – he meant face to face in battle.

**14:9** Jehoash thinks of himself as a mighty cedar, Amaziah as a tiny thistle.

**14:10** Prov 16:18.

**14:11** "Beth-Shemesh" – a town about 25 kilometers west of Jerusalem.

**14:12** Amaziah's defeat was a punishment from God for his idolatry. See 2 Chron 25:14-16,20.

of Ahaziah, at Beth-Shemesh, and came to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate, four hundred cubits. 14 He took all the gold and silver, and all the articles that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

15 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 16 And Jehoash slept with his ancestors, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel, and his son Jeroboam reigned in his place.

17 And Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 18 And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah?

19 Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish, but they sent *men* after him to Lachish and killed him there. 20 And they brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his ancestors in the city of David.

21 And all the people of Judah took Azariah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. 22 He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his ancestors.

23 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, *and* he *reigned* forty-one years. 24 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,

who caused Israel to sin. 25 He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Plain, in accordance with the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spoke through his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-Hepher.

26 For the LORD saw that the suffering of Israel was very bitter; for *there was* no one either slave or free *to come* to the help of Israel. 27 And the LORD did not say that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, but he saved them by the hands of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

28 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did and his might, how he made war and how he recovered Damascus and Hamath, *which had belonged* to Judah, for Israel, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 29 And Jeroboam slept with his ancestors, with the kings of Israel, and his son Zachariah reigned in his place.

**15** In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, Azariah son of Amaziah, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah; *she was* from Jerusalem. 3 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, in accordance with all that his father Amaziah had done, 4 except that the high places were not removed. The people still sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places.

5 And the LORD struck the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death and lived in a house apart. And Jotham, the king's son, was over the house, judging the people of the land.

**14:15** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**14:16** "Slept" – 1 Kings 2:10.

**14:17-20** 2 Chron 25:25-28.

**14:19** 2 Chron 25:27.

**14:21** 2 Chron 26:1,2. Azariah is known also as Uzziah.

**14:22** "Elath" – a seaport in the south on the Gulf of Aquaba.

**14:23** 1 Kings 12:26-33.

**14:25** 10:32; 13:25. Hamath was in the extreme north of the land of Israel. The Sea of the Plain is the Dead Sea.

"Jonah" – this was the prophet of the book of Jonah.

**14:26** "Saw" – 13:23.

"Suffering" – because of the Syrians (8:12; 10:32,33; 13:3,4).

**14:27** 13:5,23. The fact that God used Jeroboam does not mean he was a good man. It means God had mercy on the people and used their leader to help them even though he was a wicked man – v 24.

**14:28** From the military and secular point

of view Jeroboam II was a mighty king who brought victory and prosperity to Israel. But from a spiritual point of view he was a disaster, even as the first Jeroboam had been. Both Hosea and Amos prophesied during his reign, and a reading of their books makes clear the sad spiritual condition of the people during his rule.

**14:29** "Slept" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**15:1** 14:17,21. Azariah is called Uzziah in v 13, 2 Chron 26:1-4, and some other places.

**15:3** 14:3.

**15:4** 12:3; 14:4.

**15:5** "Leper" – the reason why God afflicted him like this is seen in 2 Chron 26:16-23. Observe that God at times may send disease as punishment. But because this is so, we should not think that every person who gets a disease is being punished by God. Note on leprosy at Lev 13:2.

"House apart" – Lev 13:46. Here this may indicate a house where he was relieved of responsibility.

6 And the rest of the acts of Azariah and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 7 So Azariah slept with his ancestors; and they buried him with his ancestors in the city of David; and his son Jotham reigned in his place.

8 In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah, king of Judah, Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months. 9 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin.

10 And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and struck him in front of the people and killed him, and reigned in his place. 11 And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, see, they *are* written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel. 12 This *was* the word of the LORD which he spoke to Jehu, saying, "Your sons will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth *generation*." And so it happened.

13 Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah, and he reigned a full month in Samaria. 14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah and came to Samaria, and struck down Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him, and reigned in his place.

15 And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he made, see, they *are* written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel.

16 Then from Tirzah Menahem attacked Tiphshah, and all who *were* in it, and its territories. He attacked *it* because they did not open *to him*, and *he* ripped open all the pregnant women in it.

17 In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah, king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi began to reign over Israel, *and he reigned* ten years in Samaria.

18 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD. All his days he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin.

19 And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, so that he might join hands with him to establish the kingdom in his hand. 20 And Menahem exacted the money from Israel, from all the wealthy men, fifty shekels of silver from each man, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back and did not stay there in the land.

21 And the rest of the acts of Menahem and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel? 22 And Menahem slept with his ancestors, and his son Pekahiah reigned in his place.

23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah, king of Judah, Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and* he reigned two years. 24 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. 25 But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him and struck him down in Samaria, in the citadel of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah; and with him were fifty Gileadite men. And he killed him, and reigned in his place.

26 And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah and all that he did, see, they *are* written in the book of The Annals the Kings of Israel.

27 In the fifty-second year of Azariah, king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and he reigned* twenty years. 28 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin.

**15:6** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**15:7** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**15:8** 2 Kings 14:29; 5:1.

**15:8-31** These verses present a picture of national confusion, of plots and murder, of swift succession of evil leaders. All this resulted from the fact that the nation would not honor God and walk in His ways. The repeated refrain in these verses is "the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (vs 9,18,24,28).

**15:9** 1 Kings 12:28-33.

**15:10** Amos 7:9.

**15:12** 10:30. Zechariah was the last of Jehu's descendants to occupy the throne. Once more the Word of God was fulfilled to the letter.

**15:13** Uzziah is Azariah (v 1).

**15:16** "Women" – here was a man from Israel, God's people, behaving as the cruel and idolatrous king of Syria had behaved (8:12).

**15:18** 1 Kings 12:28-33.

**15:19** Pul is another name for Tiglath-Pileser

(1 Chron 5:26).

"Assyria" – an ancient kingdom that lay to the northeast of Israel and controlled the area which is now occupied by Iraq, Syria, and parts of Iran and Turkey. Its name was derived from Asshur its national god and also the name of one of its principal cities. Its capital became Nineveh, a city founded by Nimrod (Gen 10:11), and one of the largest and most famous cities of ancient times (see Jonah 1:2). Assyria reached its greatest power and extent between 700-650 B.C. Nineveh was destroyed in 612 B.C. and Assyria lost its power to the Babylonians.

"Thousand talents" – about 34,000 kilograms.

**15:20** "Fifty Shekels" – about 0.6 kilogram. Because of their sin the people of God had to send bribes to a heathen king to keep him away.

**15:24** 1 Kings 12:28-33.

**15:27** Isa 7:1.

**15:28** Verses 9,18,24.

29 In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, came and took Ijon and Abel Beth Maachah and Janoah and Kedesh and Hazor and Gilead and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. 30 And Hoshea the son of Elah conspired against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck him down and killed him and reigned in his place, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

31 And the rest of the acts of Pekah and all that he did, see, they *are* written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Israel.

32 In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. 33 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jerusha. *She was* the daughter of Zadok. 34 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD. He did everything just as his father Uzziah had done. 35 However the high places were not removed. The people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. He built the upper gate of the house of the LORD.

36 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 37 In those days the LORD began to send Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, against Judah. 38 And Jotham slept with his ancestors, and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David his father. And his son Ahaz reigned in his place.

**16** In the seventeenth year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned

sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do *what was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like his forefather David, 3 but he walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He even made his son pass through the fire, in accordance with the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out from before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places and on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 Then Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to fight, and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome *him*. 6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath for Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath; and the Syrians came to Elath, and have lived there to this day.

7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, saying, "I *am* your servant and your son. Come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, who have risen up against me." 8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent *it as* a present to the king of Assyria. 9 And the king of Assyria listened to him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, and carried its *people* captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.

10 And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus, and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, in accordance with all its workmanship. 11 And Urijah the priest built an altar in accordance with all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made *it* before king Ahaz returned from Damascus. 12 And when the king returned from

**15:29** This was the beginning of the end of the northern kingdom of Israel.

**15:32-38** 2 Chron 26:23 – 27:9.

**15:33** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**15:34** 15:3,4; 2 Chron 26:4,5.

**15:35** Verse 3; 12:3; 14:4.

**15:37** 16:5; Isa 7:1.

**16:1-4** 2 Chron 28:1-4.

**16:1** Isa 1:1; 7:1.

**16:2** 14:3.

**16:3** "Pass through the fire" – this probably means burning them in the fire as a sacrifice – Lev 18:21; Deut 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6,11; Ps 106:37,38. Two nations near Israel who made such abominable sacrifices were Moab and Ammon. The gods to whom they sacrificed were Chemosh and Molech.

**16:4** "High places" – 12:3; 1 Kings 3:2.

"Tree" – 17:10; 1 Kings 14:23; Deut 12:12; Jer 2:20; 3:6; 17:2.

**16:5** 15:37; 2 Chron 28:5,6; Isa 7:1-17.

**16:6** 14:22.

**16:7-16** 2 Chron 28:16-25.

**16:7** "Assyria" – note at 15:19. Tiglath Pileser is the same as Pul in 15:19,29.

"Save me" – king Ahaz had religion (vs 3,4), but did not have God. Those without God have to look elsewhere for help. They have to try to find their security in some worldly power rather than in the Almighty. Compare Ahaz with Hezekiah (chapter 19). Because of Ahaz Judah fell under the power of Assyria until Hezekiah rebelled (18:7).

**16:8** 12:17,18. Because there was no faith and obedience in the leader of God's people, once again God's money was spent to bribe a heathen power.

**16:9** Isa 7:16; Amos 1:3-5.

**16:10-14** By this action Ahaz openly departs even further from the true God and His worship. The altar built according to God's instructions (Ex 27:1-8) was put in a secondary position, an altar designed for idolatrous worship in a foreign country is given the first place, and Ahaz made his



Damascus, the king saw the altar, and the king approached the altar and made an offering on it. 13 And on the altar he burned his burnt offering and his grain offering, and poured out his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings. 14 And also he took the bronze altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the front of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar.

15 And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "On the great altar burn the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land and their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar will be for me to make inquiry." 16 Urijah the priest did so, in accordance with all that king Ahaz commanded.

17 And king Ahaz cut off the panels from the stands, and removed the lavers from them, and took the sea down from the bronze oxen that *were* under it, and put it on a pavement of stones. 18 And he removed the pavilion for the Sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's outer entrance from the house of the LORD, on account of the king of Assyria.

19 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 20 And Ahaz slept with his ancestors, and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David, and Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

**17** In the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, Hoshea the son of Elah began to reign in

offerings on the new altar. So little did he have room in his religion for the true God.

**16:13** "Burnt offering", etc - Leviticus chapters 1-3.

**16:15** Ahaz tried to shove God aside and worship as he pleased. But in time of need he wanted to get guidance from God's altar (but not by seeking God Himself). Actually nothing is said anywhere in the Bible about the altar being able to give guidance. Ahab was showing superstition, not faith. And should anyone expect to get guidance from God in time of need when they ignore God at all other times?

**16:16** "Commanded" - all too often those who should stand for truth and oppose error, weakly give in to a strong corrupt leader.

**16:17** 1 Kings 7:23-28,38. Ahaz began to destroy the work of Solomon.

**16:19** "Annals" - 1 Kings 14:19.

**16:20** "Slept" - 1 Kings 2:10.

"City of David" - 2 Sam 5:6,7.

**17:1** 15:30.

**17:3** 18:9-12. Shalmaneser succeeded

Samaria over Israel. *He reigned* nine years. 2 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like the kings of Israel who were before him.

3 Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him, and Hoshea became his servant and paid him tribute. 4 And the king of Assyria found out a conspiracy by Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up and bound him in prison. 5 Then the king of Assyria came up throughout the whole land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and took Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan and in the cities of the Medes.

7 Now this occurred because the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God who had brought them up from the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and they had feared other gods, 8 and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out from before the children of Israel, and *those* of the kings of Israel which they had introduced. 9 And the children of Israel secretly did *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD their God, and they built high places for themselves in all their cities, from the watchman's tower to the fortified city. 10 And they set up images and groves for themselves on every high hill and under every green tree, 11 and there they burnt incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD took away before them, and did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger; 12 for they served idols, about which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this thing." 13 Though the LORD testified against Israel

Tiglath-Pileser (15:19,29).

**17:4** When God has given up an individual or a people to punishment, there will be no help from human beings in trying to avert it.

"To So, king" - or "to Sais, to the king."

**17:6** Israel's captivity was the inevitable punishment for their sin, as the following verses make clear. See also Lev 26:33; Deut 28:63,64. All the curses God pronounced on a disobedient people in Deuteronomy chapter 28 came upon them. God always does exactly as He says He will do.

**17:7,8** Ex 20:1-5; Josh 23:16; Jud 6:10; 1 Kings 12:28-33; 16:31-33; 2 Kings 16:3.

**17:9** 16:3,4; 1 Kings 3:2; 15:14.

**17:10** Ex 34:12,13; 1 Kings 14:15,23.

**17:11** "Incense" - a symbol of prayer and worship (Ex 30:7,34-38). If they follow the depravity of their hearts men will misuse and pervert all the holy things of God.

**17:12** Ex 20:3-5; 23:13; Lev 26:1.

**17:13** "All the seers" - during the time of

and against Judah, through all the prophets *and through* all the seers, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, in accordance with all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets."

14 However, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like the necks of their fathers who did not believe in the LORD their God. 15 And they rejected his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them. And they followed vanity and became vain, and went after the nations that *were* around them, *concerning* whom the LORD had commanded them not to do like them.

16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made cast metal images for themselves, two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the *starry* host of heaven, and served Baal. 17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and sorcery, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight. None was left except the tribe of Judah alone. 19 Judah also did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the customs of Israel which they made. 20 And the LORD rejected all the

offspring of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hands of plunderers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

21 For he tore Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. And Jeroboam drove Israel away from following the LORD, and caused them to commit a great sin. 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did. They did not depart from them, 23 until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So Israel was taken away out of their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.

24 And the king of Assyria brought *people* from Babylon and from Cuthah and from Ava and from Hamath and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria in place of the children of Israel. And they possessed Samaria, and lived in its cities. 25 And it *so* happened, when they began to live there, *that* they did not fear the LORD, so the LORD sent lions among them, which killed *some* of them. 26 Therefore they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations which you have removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, do not know the ways of the God of the land. Therefore he has sent lions among them, and, *lo and behold*, they are killing them, because they do know not the ways of the God of the land."

27 Then the king of Assyria commanded,

Israel's apostasy God raised up some of the greatest men of God who ever lived: the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and others not so well known. He spoke through them repeatedly to warn and exhort the people, but all to no avail. Nothing – no promises, no threats, no punishment, no rewards – nothing at all would keep them from following the desires of their depraved hearts. In other words, they were ordinary sinful people like all other people in the world.

**17:14** Ex 32:9; 33:3; Deut 9:23,24; Ps 78:22; 106:24; Prov 29:1; Acts 7:51.

**17:15** "Covenant" – Ex 19:5,6; 24:6-8.

"Vain" – see Ps 115:8.

"Nations that were around" – Deut 12:29-32. They did the exact opposite of all God laid down in His Word as right behavior.

**17:16** Deut 4:15-19; 1 Kings 12:28; 14:15-23; 16:31.

"A grove" – or "Asherah pole" – note at Jud 3:7.

"Starry host" – a sin God said was worthy of death. See Deut 17:2-5.

"Baal" – note at Jud 2:11.

**17:17** Lev 19:26; Deut 18:10-12; 1 Kings 21:22.

"Through the fire" – note at 16:3.

**17:18** "Angry" – notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

"His sight" – away from God's land into exile.

"Judah" – 1 Kings 11:31,32.

**17:19** 16:3; 1 Kings 14:22,23. The fall of the northern kingdom of Israel should have been a warning to Judah. But they did not learn from that and became even worse than Israel (Jer 3:6-11; Ezek 16:51,52). Eventually they went the same way of punishment and captivity. Do we learn from Bible history? See Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:1-12.

We would make a big mistake if we thought we were, by nature, better than those sinful, stubborn and rebellious people of Israel and Judah. See Rom 3:9. Verses 7-17 reveal what the heart of man is like. In words of the New Testament the people whose actions are described here walked "after the flesh", followed their sinful natures (Gal 5:16-21). Now, as then, the only way to a life of victory over the sinful nature is knowing God, loving God, and walking in the power of God's Spirit (Rom 8:3,4; Gal 5:16).

**17:20** 10:32,33; 13:3,20; 15:29; 24:2; Jud 2:14.

**17:21** 1 Kings 11:11,31; 12:20,28-33.

**17:23** Verse 13; 1 Kings 14:14-16; Hos 10:1-7; 11:5; Amos 5:27. This is the origin of the Samaritans who appear in the New Testament (Luke 9:52; 10:33; John 4:9,39; Acts 8:5-9).

**17:25** The land belonged to Jehovah God and He had given it to His people Israel. These foreign idolaters had no right to live

saying, "Take there one of the priests whom you brought from there; and let him go and live there, and let him teach them the ways of the God of the land." 28 Then one of the priests whom they had taken away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

29 However each nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the shrines of the high places which the Samaritans had made, each nation in the cities where they lived. 30 And the men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31 and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. 32 So they feared the LORD, but made priests of the high places for themselves from the lowest of them, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. 33 They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods, in accordance with the custom of the nations whom they took away from there.

34 To this day they practice the former customs. They do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandments which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel, 35 with whom the LORD made a covenant, and charged them, saying, "You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them. 36 But you shall fear the LORD

who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, and him you shall worship, and to him you shall sacrifice. 37 And you shall be careful to do the statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which he wrote for you, forever. And you shall not fear other gods. 38 And you shall not forget the covenant that I have made with you, nor shall you fear other gods. 39 But you shall fear the LORD your God. Then he will deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies."

40 However they did not listen, but did according to their former custom. 41 So these nations feared the LORD, and served their carved images, together with their children and their children's children. As their fathers did, so they have done to this day.

**18** Now it came about in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Abi. *She was* the daughter of Zachariah. 3 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, in everything just as his father David had done. 4 He removed the high places and smashed the images and cut down the groves, and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel had burned incense to it, and

there. When they did not even so much as acknowledge Jehovah, they paid the penalty for it.

**17:28** "Bethel" – 1 Kings 12:29,32. Bethel had been a center of the apostate religion founded by Jeroboam.

**17:29** "High places" – 1 Kings 12:31; 13:33.

**17:32,33** Verse 41. It seems they believed that all gods and all religions were good. They did not want to ignore Jehovah – they had found that to be dangerous (v 25). But they did not want to worship Him exclusively, and in their blindness did not see the necessity of doing so. Compare 1 Kings 18:21; Matt 6:24. The true God does not accept the worship of those who try to worship other gods with Him (v 35-39). See Ex 20:1-6; Jer 7:1-11; 2 Cor 6:14-18. But men are very slow to understand this truth. The very dangerous lie of syncretism is widely accepted by men in every era, including ours. **17:35-38** Ex 20:2-6,23; Deut 4:23; 5:32,33; 6:12,13; 10:20; 22:20.

**17:39** Ex 23:22; Deut 20:1-4; 23:14.

**18:1-3** 2 Chron 29:1,2.

**18:1** Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, was one of the worst of Judah's kings (16:1-4), yet Hezekiah was one of the very best. Not one of us needs to remain captive to ancestry and background. God's grace can triumph

over everything.

**18:2** "Twenty-nine years" – part of this time he shared the throne with Ahaz. Some events in his reign are recorded in 2 Chronicles chapters 29-32 and Isaiah chapters 36-39.

"Abi" – or "Abijah." Abijah means "Jehovah is father" or "Jehovah is my father." Perhaps Hezekiah's godliness and good character resulted from his mother's example and training. Many men of God owe a great deal to their godly mothers.

**18:3** No king in Israel and only a few in Judah are compared favorably in the Bible with David – only Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah, and, to some extent, Jehoshaphat.

**18:4** "High places" – 1 Kings 3:2.

"The groves" – or "Asherah poles" – 1 Kings 16:23.

"Bronze serpent" – see Num 21:8,9. That which once had been a means of blessing had become an idol. This is a tendency in human nature and we must learn to resist it. No means which God uses for our blessing is to be worshiped, but only God who gives the blessing. We must never idolize any form, pattern, thing, or man.

"Nehushtan" – this sounds like the Hebrew for bronze and snake and unclean thing.

he called it Nehushtan.

5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, nor were there *any* before him. 6 For he clung to the LORD, *and* did not turn away from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. 7 And the LORD was with him, *and* he was successful wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and did not serve him. 8 He defeated the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territories, from the watchman's tower to the fortified city.

9 And it came about in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against Samaria and besieged it. 10 And at the end of three years they took it. Samaria was taken in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel. 11 And the king of Assyria took Israel away to Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 12 *This occurred* because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear or do *them*.

13 Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 14 And Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent *word* to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me. I will pay whatever you impose on me." And the king of Assyria demanded from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15 And Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house

of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house.

16 At that time Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

17 And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsharis and Rabshakeh from Lachish with a great army to king Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they had come up, they came and stood by the aqueduct of the upper pool, which *is* on the road to the Fuller's Field. 18 And when they had called out for the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, came out to them.

19 And Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: what *is* this hope you are trusting in? 20 You say (but *they are only* vain words), '*I have* counsel and strength for the war.' Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 21 Now, see, you are trusting in the staff of that bruised reed, in Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. 22 But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is* not he the one whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and has said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?'

23 'Now therefore, please give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver two thousand horses to you, if you on your part are able to set riders on them. 24 How then will you turn away the face of one of the least of the captains of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? 25 Have I

**18:5** A similar thing is said about Hezekiah's great-grandson Josiah. See 23:25. Faith is the quality in which Hezekiah excelled. Compare 19:14-19.

**18:6** "Clung" – Deut 6:18; 10:20; 11:22; 13:4.

**18:7** "Successful" – Gen 39:2,3; Josh 1:7; 1 Sam 18:14.

"Rebelled" – Judah had fallen under the power of Assyria during the reign of Hezekiah's father (16:7-10).

**18:8** Compare 2 Chron 28:18. When God works with His people, sad and evil conditions can be reversed.

**18:9-11** 17:3-6.

**18:12** 17:7-20.

**18:13** 2 Chron 32:1; Isa 36:1.

**18:14** "Wrong" – Hezekiah refers to his rebellion against Assyria (v 7). But he may have been wrong in calling it wrong, since it was a result of God's working with him. Hezekiah had a temporary failure of faith. Do not we all have to confess sometimes

as the man in Mark 9:24 did?

"Talent" – one talent is about 34 kilograms.

**18:15,16** 12:18; 16:8; 1 Kings 15:18,19. Giving God's possessions to a foreign, idolatrous king could not have been right, and it did not stop the king of Assyria.

**18:17** "Jerusalem" – there are two other accounts of what follows in the rest of this chapter and the following two chapters – 2 Chronicles chapter 32 and Isaiah chapters 36-39.

"Fuller's Field" – Isa 7:3.

**18:19** Little did he know that Hezekiah's trust was in the Creator of the universe – one who could send one angel and crush the whole army of Assyria (v 5; 19:35).

**18:20-25** The object of this speech, begun with much sarcasm, was to destroy the people's confidence so they would surrender Jerusalem without a fight. He says they should have no confidence in their army (vs 20,23,24), in any agreement they may have

now come up against this place to destroy it, without the LORD? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.'"

26 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah and Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in the Syrian language, for we understand *it*; and do not talk with us in the Jews' language in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

27 But Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me *only* to your master and to you, to speak these words? *Has he* not *sent me* to the men who are sitting on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own urine with you?"

28 Then Rabshakeh stood and shouted with a loud voice in the Jews' language and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. 29 Thus says the king: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of his hand. 30 And do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, 'The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria.'"

31 "Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me through a gift and come out to me, and *then* each man of you eat from his own vine and each one from his fig tree, and each one drink the water from his cistern, 32 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive oil and of honey, so that you may live and not die. And do not listen to Hezekiah, when he persuades you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." 33 Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? 34 Where *are* the gods of Hamath and of Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hands? 35 Among all the gods of the countries, who are those who have delivered

their country out of my hands, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

36 But the people kept silent and did not answer him a word, for the king's command was as follows: "Do not answer him."

37 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

**19** And it came about, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the LORD. 2 And he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3 And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of trouble and of rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to the *point of birth* and *there is* no strength to deliver *them*. 4 It may be the LORD your God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6 And Isaiah said to them, "Thus shall you say to your master: Thus says the LORD, 'Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7 Look, I will put a spirit in him, and he will hear a report and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'"

8 So Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he had departed from Lachish.

9 And when *the king* heard *a report* about

made with Egypt (vs 21,24), or in God (v 22). And he tried to convince them it was God's will for them to surrender (v 25).

**18:27-35** The commander continued his attempt to destroy the people's confidence in both God and Hezekiah. He knew that if they surrendered their confidence they would surrender the city. This was what is known in our day as psychological warfare. He put the choice before them – complete famine (v 27) or plenty (v 31), death or life (v 32). He tried to convince them that Jehovah was as weak and useless as the gods of other nations Assyria had trampled on. And he emphasized the might of the Assyrians (the most powerful nation in the world at that time).

**18:36** The people did not forsake their confidence.

**18:37** "Clothes torn" – a symbol of great

agitation (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 13:3; Job 2:12).

**19:1-35** 2 Chron 21:1-21; Isa 37:1-38.

**19:1** 6:30; Gen 37:34; 1 Kings 21:27; Est 4:1.

**19:2** "Isaiah" – the first mention in the Bible of one of the greatest of all the prophets and the author of the book which bears his name.

**19:3** "No strength to deliver them" – words which indicate pain, weakness, and crisis.

**19:4** "Reproach" – 1 Sam 17:26,36,45.

"Living God" – Deut 5:26; Josh 3:10; 1 Sam 17:26; Ps 42:2; Jer 10:10.

"Remnant" – Isa 1:9; 10:20; 11:11.

**19:6** "Afraid" – Gen 15:1; Ex 14:13,14; Josh 1:9. If men fear God they need not fear men (Matt 10:26-31).

**19:7** Prov 21:1; 19:21.

**19:9** Verse 7.



Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "Look, he has come out to fight against you," he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 "Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Do not let your God, in whom you trust, deceive you, saying, 'Jerusalem will not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria.' 11 Look, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, utterly destroying them. And will you be delivered? 12 Have the gods of the nations delivered those which my fathers destroyed, Gozan, and Haran and Rezeph, and the children of Eden who *were* in Thelasar? 13 Where *is* the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivah?"

14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hands of the messengers and read it, and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. 15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, "O LORD God of Israel, who dwells *between* the cherubim, you are God of all the kingdoms of the earth, you alone. You have made heaven and earth. 16 LORD, incline your ear, and hear. LORD, open your eyes and see, and hear the words Sennacherib has sent him to reproach the living God.

17 "It is true, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, 18 and have thrown their gods into the fire. For they *were* not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. 19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beg you, save us out of his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you *are* the LORD God, you only."

20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent *word* to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'I have heard what you have prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria.' 21 This *is* the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him:

'The virgin daughter of Zion despises you,

*and* laughs you to scorn.

The daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head at you.

22 Whom have you reproached and blasphemed?

And against whom have you raised *your* voice,

and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy *One* of Israel.

23 Through your messengers you have reproached the Lord, and have said,

"With my many chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon,

and I cut down its tall cedar trees *and* its choice fir trees,

and I entered its most distant lodgings, *and* its finest forest.

24 I have dug and drunk foreign water, and with the soles of my feet I have dried up all the rivers of besieged places."

25 'The LORD says,

Did you not heard long ago *how* I have done it,

*and* in ancient times that I have formed *this plan*?

Now I have carried it out, so that you would be for turning fortified cities *into* heaps of ruins.

26 Therefore their inhabitants had little power.

They were dismayed and disgraced.

They were *like* the grass of the field, and *like* the green plant,

*like* the grass on the housetops, and *like grain* blasted before it has grown up.

27 But I know your dwelling place, and your going out and your coming in, and your rage against me.

**19:10-13** 18:30-35.

**19:15** "Cherubim" - Ex 25:22; Ps 80:1; 99:1.

"You alone" - Isa 43:10; 44:6; 45:5,21. Jehovah God was sovereign over Assyria also, though the Assyrians did not know it.

**19:16** "Reproach" - v 4.

**19:18** Ps 115:4; Isa 44:9-20; Jer 10:3-5; Acts 17:29.

**19:19** Ex 9:16; Josh 4:24; 1 Sam 17:46; 1 Kings 8:42,43; Ps 83:18.

**19:20** "I have heard" - 20:5. Hezekiah was the kind of man God listened to, and his prayers were of the kind God could answer. If we want God to hear our prayers we must live in a way that is pleasing to God.

**19:21** "Virgin daughter" - Isa 47:1; Jer

14:17; 18:13; 46:11; Lam 2:13.

**19:22** "Reproached" - vs 4-6.

"Holy One of Israel" - a phrase very common in Isaiah. See Isa 1:4.

**19:23,24** Here is the pride and arrogance so common in worldly rulers and so hateful to God - Prov 3:34; 6:16,17; Isa 2:10-18. Concerning the pride of Assyria see Isa 10:12.

**19:25** "I have carried it out" - the Assyrians thought they had accomplished their victories by their own military power and skill. Actually they were like a mere rod in God's hand to accomplish His purposes (Isa 10:5,6,13-15). Compare Isa 45:1; Jer 51:20-23.

**19:26** Ps 37:2; 129:6.

**19:27** Ps 139:2,3; Heb 4:13.

28 Because your rage against me and your arrogance have come up into my ears,  
I will put my hook in your nose, and my bridle in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the road by which you came.'

29 "And this *will be* a sign to you,  
*Hezekiah:*

This year you will eat what grows by itself,  
and in the second year what springs from it,  
and in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards and eat its fruits.

30 And the remnant of the house of Judah that has escaped will once again take root downward,  
and bear fruit upward.

31 For out of Jerusalem a remnant will go out,  
and those who escape *will go* out of Mount Zion.  
The zeal of the LORD *of hosts* will do this.

32 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:

'He will not come into this city,  
or shoot an arrow there,  
or come before it with shield,  
or throw up an embankment against it.

33 He will return by the way that he came,  
and will not come into this city,  
says the LORD.

34 For I will defend this city to save it,  
for my own sake,  
and for my servant David's sake.'"

35 And it came about that night, that the angel of the LORD went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. And when the *people* arose early in the morning, *there were* all the dead bodies! 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed. He set out and returned, and lived at Nineveh.

37 And it happened that as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword, and escaped into the land of Armenia. And his son Esarhaddon reigned in his place.

**20** In those days Hezekiah became sick and was near death. And the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you are going to die and not live.'"

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, 3 "I beg you, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before you in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *what is* good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 And it so happened that before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5 "Turn back and tell Hezekiah the leader of my people: 'Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. Now I will heal you. On the third day you will go up to the house of the LORD. 6 And I will add fifteen years to your days. And I will deliver you and this city

**19:28** 19:33,36; Ezek 19:9; 29:4; 38:4. God can do just as He pleases with any nation or army on earth (Dan 4:34,35).

**19:29** Evidently the Assyrians had taken the harvest from the fields of Judah or destroyed it. The promise to Hezekiah is that in the third year both the Assyrians and the effects of their invasion would be gone.

**19:30** "Remnant" – v 4. Even in the most perilous of times, even in the most apostate of conditions, God always keeps some people for Himself.

**19:31** "Zeal of the LORD" – Isa 9:7; 26:11; 42:13; 59:17; 63:15.

**19:32-34** God Himself, in His zeal for His people, would defend Jerusalem. This is what preserved the city, not Hezekiah's acts of 18:13-15.

**19:34** "Defend" – if God is our defense what is there to fear (Rom 8:31; Heb 13:6)?

"David's sake" – 1 Kings 11:13,36; 15:4. David was the kind of man whom God wanted to do things for, even after his death. Hezekiah was the kind of man whose prayers

God answered (v 20; 20:5). Let us strive to be like them in faith and in faithfulness.

**19:35** "Angel of the LORD" – note at Gen 16:7. To punish one nation for its sins God may use the armies of another nation, but He does not need to use that means. See Isa 31:8. Compare Ex 12:29; 2 Sam 24:16; Rev 19:15,19-21.

**19:36** "Departed" – vs 7,28. Once again God's Word was completely fulfilled.

"Nineveh" – the capital of Assyria.

**19:37** "His sons" – this was the end of the mighty monarch who dared to insult and blaspheme the true God (vs 22,23).

**20:1-21** 2 Chron 32:24-33; Isa 38:1-39:8.

**20:3** 18:3-6. Compare Neh 5:19; 13:14,22; Ps 18:23-26.

**20:4** "Word of the LORD came" – Jer 1:2; Ezek 1:3; Jonah 1:1; Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1; etc.

**20:5** "I have heard" – 19:20; Ps 39:12; 56:8; 65:2.

"Heal" – Ex 15:26; 1 Sam 2:6; Ps 103:3.

**20:6** "I will deliver" – these words seem to

from the hands of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

7 And Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs." And they took *it* and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What *is* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I will go up to the house of the LORD on the third day?"

9 And Isaiah said, "This is the sign you have from the LORD, that the LORD will do what he has spoken: Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go backward ten degrees?"

10 And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees. No, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees."

11 And Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, from which it had gone down in the sundial of Ahaz.

12 At that time Berodach Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13 And Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold and the spices and the valuable oil, and his armoury, and all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house, or in all his dominion, that Hezekiah did not show them.

14 Then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah and said to him, "What did these men say? And where did they come from to you?"

indicate that Hezekiah's illness and recovery preceded the events of the previous chapter. It appears that if Hezekiah's life had not been lengthened, he would not have been alive when Sennacherib's army came against Jerusalem. Also Manasseh, Judah's worst king, would never have been born (20:1). When God acts in answer to man's prayers it can have a profound effect on later events. **20:7** "Lump of figs" – God said He would heal Hezekiah. But God's prophet did not think that this excluded the use of human means of healing. God may use human remedies and medicines in His work of healing, though He is in no way dependent on them, and He may heal directly and altogether miraculously when He wishes.

**20:8** "Sign" – note on signs at Isa 7:10,11. God did not rebuke Hezekiah for asking for a sign, but gave him one. See also Judges 6:17,36-40.

**20:10** Isa 38:8. This "sundial" was probably the stairway of Ahaz, constructed in such a way that it revealed the time of day. As the sun's position in the sky moves to the west, shadows cast by things on earth naturally lengthen toward the east. For the shadows to shorten would have been contrary to nature, and, so, miraculous. God, who made the heavens and the earth, has no difficulty

And Hezekiah said, "They came from a far country, from Babylon."

15 And he said, "What did they see in your house?"

And Hezekiah answered, "They saw everything that *is* in my house. There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them."

16 And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD. 17 'See, the days are coming that all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have stored up to this day, will be carried into Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. 18 And some of your sons, your *own* offspring who will be born to you, will be taken away by them, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"

19 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good." And he said, "*Is it* not *good*, if there are peace and truth in my days?"

20 And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he made a pool and a channel and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 21 And Hezekiah slept with his ancestors, and his son Manasseh reigned in his stead.

**21** Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hephzibah. 2 And he did *what was* evil in the sight

influencing any part He wishes at any time. See Josh 10:12-14.

**20:13** "Treasure" – see 18:15. This indicates that the visit of the messengers from Babylon took place before the army of Assyria invaded Judah in 18:13. When the Babylonians came there was still great wealth in Jerusalem, and pride had entered the heart of Hezekiah (2 Chron 32:25-27). **20:17,18** 24:12-15; 25:7,13-15; 2 Chron 33:11.

"Eunuchs" – this word was sometimes used to mean those who served in a king's palace whether they were literal eunuchs or not.

**20:19** 1 Sam 3:18.

**20:20** "Annals" – note at 1 Kings 14:19.

**20:21** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**21:1-9** 2 Chron 33:1-9. Manasseh reigned longer than any other king of Judah, and during the first part of his reign he was the worst of all Judah's kings. At that time evil came to its dreadful climax in that kingdom. He finally repented (2 Chron 33:10-16), but his repentance could not undo all the evil he had done.

**21:1** "Twelve" – if God had not added 15 years to Hezekiah's life (20:6), Manasseh would not have been born.

**21:2** Instead of following his father, he

of the LORD, following the abominations of the nations whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the high places which his father Hezekiah had destroyed, and he raised up altars for Baal, and made a grove, like Ahab king of Israel did, and he worshipped all the *starry* host of heaven and served them. 4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, "In Jerusalem I will put my name." 5 And he built altars for all the *starry* host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and practiced witchcraft, and used divination, and had dealings with spiritists and mediums. He did much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, provoking *him* to anger.

7 And a carved image of Asherah that he had made, he set up in the temple of which the LORD said to David and to his son Solomon, "I will put my name forever in this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel. 8 Nor will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers, if only they will be careful to do all that I have commanded them, and in accordance with all the law that my servant Moses commanded them." 9 But they did not listen, and Manasseh led them astray to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the LORD spoke by his servants the prophets, saying, 11 "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, *and* has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also caused Judah to sin with his idols, 12 thus says the LORD God of Israel: See, I *am going to* bring *such* a disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that both ears of whoever hears of it will tingle. 13 And I will stretch over

Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria, and the plumb line of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem like a *man* wipes a dish, wiping *it* and turning *it* upside down. 14 And I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance, and deliver them into the hands of their enemies; and they will become a prey and plunder to all their enemies, 15 because they have done *what is* evil in my sight and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came out of Egypt to this day."

16 Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he filled Jerusalem from one end to the other, besides his sin with which he caused Judah to sin, doing *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD.

17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh and all that he did, and his sin that he committed, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 18 And Manasseh slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza; and his son Amon reigned in his stead.

19 Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Meshullemeth; *she was* the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 21 And he walked in all the way in which his father walked, and served the idols that his father served and worshipped them, 22 and he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD.

23 And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. 24 And the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against king Amon, and the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he

followed his grandfather (16:3).

**21:3** "High places" – 18:4; note at 1 Kings 3:2.

"Baal" – note at Jud 2:11. "A grove" – or "Asherah pole" – Jud 3:7.

"Ahab" – 1 Kings 16:30-33.

"Host" – Deut 17:2-5; 1 Kings 17:16.

**21:4** "Name" – 2 Sam 7:13; 1 Kings 8:29; 9:3.

**21:5** 23:4,5,12. Compare Ezek 8:5-18.

**21:6** He seemed determined to do everything that God hated and commanded not to be done – Lev 18:21; 19:26,31; 20:2; Deut 18:10-14.

"Through the fire" – note at 16:3.

"Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**21:7** Deut 16:21.

**21:8** 2 Sam 7:10.

**21:9** "Nations. . . destroyed" – Deut 12:29-31; 31:3; Josh 21:43-45; 24:15.

**21:11** "Amorites" – Gen 15:16; 1 Kings 21:26.

**21:12** Jer 15:4; 19:3; Hab 1:5.

**21:13** 22:16-19; Isa 34:11; Amos 7:7-9,17.

"Measuring line" – here this means preparing them for destruction.

**21:14** "I will forsake" – that is, He would not defend them from punishment (Jer 6:9). He did not, and will never, forsake the remnant of His people permanently (Isa 54:6-8).

**21:15** "Egypt" – see Deut 9:24; Jud 2:10-23; 2 Kings 17:7-17.

**21:16** 24:3,4. After all that, was it possible for Manasseh to repent, turn to the Lord and be saved? See 2 Chron 33:11-16.

**21:17** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**21:18** "Slept" – 1 Kings 2:10.

**21:19-24** 2 Chron 23:21-25.

**21:22** He followed his father's evil ways, but not his good ways which Manasseh displayed after his repentance.

did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 26 And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza, and his son Josiah reigned in his stead.

**22** Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah. *She was* the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. 2 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of his father David, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left.

3 And it came about in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, 4 "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people; 5 and let them deliver it into the hands of the workers who have the oversight of the house of the LORD, and let them give it to those who are doing the work which *is going on* in the house of the LORD, repairing the damaged places in the house, 6 to the carpenters and builders and masons, and to buy timber and cut stone to repair the house. 7 However, no accounting needs to be made with them about the money that was delivered into their hands, because they have dealt faithfully."

8 And Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, bringing word back to the king, and said, "Your servants have collected the money

that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hands of the workers who have the oversight of the house of the LORD." 10 And Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has delivered a book to me." And Shaphan read it in the king's presence.

11 And it came about that when the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. 12 And the king gave an order to Hilkiah the priest and Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Achbor, the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah, a servant of the king, saying, 13 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that burns against us, because our fathers did not listen to the words of this book, to do according to all that which is written concerning us."

14 So Hilkiah the priest and Ahikam and Achbor and Shaphan and Asahiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the second district), and they spoke with her.

15 And she said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Tell the man who sent you to me, 16 thus says the LORD: See, I will bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants, according to all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read, 17 because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods, provoking me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore my wrath will burn against this place, and will not be quenched.' 18 But you shall say this to the king

**22:1-20** 2 Chron 34:1-28.

**22:1** "Josiah" - 1 Kings 13:2. Josiah was one of the best of all Judah's kings, his father, Amon, one of the worst. Compare 18:1,2. Perhaps Josiah's mother made all the difference. Her name means "beloved."

**22:2** "David" - 18:3.

"Or to the left" - Deut 5:32; Josh 1:7.

**22:4** 12:4,9,10. The repairs in the reign of Joash had been undertaken about 190 years before.

**22:7** 12:15. Having honest and faithful men is a great blessing in any work of God, but often it seems that such men are very hard to find.

**22:8** "Book of the law" - this phrase usually meant either the entire Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), or the book of Deuteronomy (Deut 31:24-26; 2 Chron 34:14).

**22:11-13** The contents of the book of the law seem to have been new to Josiah. This is an indication of the degraded state into which the nation had sunk and how God's law was disregarded during the long reign of Manasseh. Josiah, reading the book, is

appalled at the extent of their disobedience. One reason many in Christian circles are not disturbed at their own condition and the condition of the people is ignorance of the Word of God, a lack of spiritual understanding of it. Compare Rom 7:7; etc. When we are enlightened to understand God's Word, and when we take it seriously, we will see at once how far short of its standards we come.

**22:11** "Tore" - 19:1; Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 13:31.

**22:12** "Ahikam" - 25:22.

**22:13** Lev 26:27,28; Deut 28:20,45-57. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**22:14** Other women in the Bible who had the gift of prophecy were Miriam the sister of Moses (Ex 15:20), Deborah (Jud 4:4), Anna (Luke 2:36), and Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9). Both the prophets Jeremiah and Zephaniah lived during the reign of Josiah. But for some undisclosed reason Hilkiah and the others did not go to either of them.

**22:16** See the references given in v 13.

**22:17** Deut 29:24-28.



of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD: 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel *concerning* the words which you have heard, 19 because your heart was tender, and you have humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I have also heard *you*, says the LORD. 20 Therefore, I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the disaster which I will bring on this place.'" And they brought back word to the king.

**23** And the king sent *word*, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. 2 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and with him *went* all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And in their hearing he read all the words of the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD. 3 And the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took their stand for the covenant.

4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal and for Asherah and for all the *starry* host of heaven. And he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron and took their ashes to Bethel. 5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of

Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places around Jerusalem, also those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the planets, and to all the *starry* host of heaven. 6 And he brought the Asherah pole from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground *it* to powder and threw its ashes on the graves of the children of the people. 7 And he tore down the houses of the male shrine prostitutes that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for Asherah.

8 And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and broke down the high places at the gates that *were* at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua, the governor of the city, which *were* on a person's left at the city gate. 9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they ate of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

10 And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, so that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech. 11 And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance of the house of the LORD, by the room of Nathan-Melech, an official, which *was* in the court, and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

12 And the king broke down the altars that *were* on the roof of the upper room of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD. And he smashed *them* there and threw their dust into the brook Kidron. 13 And the king defiled the high places that *were* before

**22:19** A very important spiritual concept is here – 1 Kings 21:29; 2 Chron 7:14; 33:12,13; Ps 51:17; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Matt 18:2,3; Jam 4:6. If we want God to hear us we must humble ourselves and be responsive to His Word – John 15:7.

**22:20** 20:19; 23:30.

**23:2** 22:8.

**23:3** "Stood by a pillar" – 11:14.

"Covenant" – the covenant God made with Israel through Moses – Ex 19:5; 24:3-8; Deut 4:1-6; 5:1-22.

"Took their stand" – they had done so at other times in their history (Ex 19:8; 24:3,7; Deut 5:27; Josh 24:16-18,21,24; 2 Chron 15:12; 23:16,17. Compare Jer 42:5,6).

**23:4** These must have been put there by Josiah's father Amon (21:21,22). Notes on Baal and Ashtoreth at Jud 2:11; 1 Kings 11:5; 16:31.

**23:5** "Idolatrous priests" – compare 1 Kings 12:31; 13:33,34; Hos 10:5; Zeph 1:4.

"High places" – 1 Kings 3:22.

"Hosts" – 17:16; 21:3,5; Deut 17:2-5; Ezek 8:15,16.

**23:6** "Asherah" – note at Jud 3:7.

**23:7** Note at 1 Kings 14:24.

**23:8** "High places" – 18:4; 21:3.

**23:10** Lev 18:21; Deut 18:10; 1 Kings 11:5,7; Isa 30:33; Jer 7:31,32; 19:5,6; Ezek 23:37-39.

"Fire" – note at 16:3.

**23:11** Sun worship was absolutely forbidden – Deut 4:19. It is called detestable (Deut 17:2-5), which means that the true God hates and despises it. See Rom 1:25. We must worship the Creator, not the things the Creator has made.

**23:12** 21:5. Though Manasseh repented toward the end of his reign and destroyed some of the places where idolatry had been, it would seem from this that he did not destroy them all. Or else his son Amon restored them.

**23:13** See 1 Kings 11:5,7. These had

Jerusalem, which were on the right of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 14 And he broke the images in pieces and cut down the groves and filled their places with the bones of men.

15 Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down, and burned the high place *and* crushed *it* to powder, and burned the grove. 16 And as Josiah turned around, he saw the tombs that *were* there in the mountain, and sent *men* and removed the bones from the tombs, and burned *them* on the altar and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

17 Then he said, "What *is* that tombstone that I see?" And the men of the city told him, "*It is* the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things that you have done against the altar of Bethel."

18 And he said, "Let him alone. Do not let anyone move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came out of Samaria.

19 And also all the shrines of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made, provoking the LORD to anger, Josiah took away and did to them just as he had done everything in Bethel. 20 And he killed all the

priests of the high places who *were* there on the altars, and burned men's bones on them, and returned to Jerusalem.

21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, "Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant." 22 Surely no such Passover was kept from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, this Passover was held before the LORD in Jerusalem.

24 Moreover Josiah put away the spiritists and the mediums and the images and the idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might carry out the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest had found in the house of the LORD. 25 And there was no king like him before him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did *any* like him arise after him.

26 Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath, his anger which burned against Judah because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him. 27 And the LORD said, "I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, 'My name will be there.'"

28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah?

29 In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went

remained there for three hundred years, through the reigns of even the best of Judah's kings.

"Milcom" – Molech.

**23:14** "Bones" – these would defile those sites.

**23:15,16** 1 Kings 12:28-33. Josiah thus fulfilled a prophecy uttered nearly three hundred years before – 1 Kings 13:2.

**23:17,18** 1 Kings 13:1,30-32.

**23:20** 17:27,28,33,34. These were priests of the apostate religious system that came into existence after the northern kingdom Israel had gone into captivity.

**23:21** "Passover" – Ex 12:3; Lev 23:5; Deut 16:2-8; 2 Chron 35:1-19.

**23:24** "Spiritists" – Ex 22:18; Lev 19:31; 20:6; Deut 18:10-12; 2 Kings 21:6; Isa 8:19.

"Images and idols" – notice that these also are called "abominations."

**23:25** Hezekiah and Josiah are the only two kings of Judah who receive unqualified commendation in the Bible. Hezekiah was highly praised particularly for his faith (18:5). Josiah for his turning to God and for his zeal for the law of Moses. Of course,

this does not mean that either of these men was sinless and perfect.

**23:26** "Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

"Manasseh" – 21:11-13,15; Jer 15:4. Manasseh repented and was forgiven, but there were consequences of his sins and the sins of the people which they had to bear. Compare 2 Sam 12:10-14. For all the thoroughness of Josiah's reformation, Judah did not escape the judgment of God. The people outwardly submitted to Josiah's work of reformation, but they did not take to heart his principles. This is clear from the book of Jeremiah which was written in the days of Josiah and his sons (see Jer 3:6-10). Jehoahaz and Eliakim, Josiah's sons, both "did evil in the eyes of the Lord" (vs 32,37).

**23:27** "Israel" – 17:18-23; 18:11.

"Cast off" – but only for a time, not forever (Jer 30:18; 31:38-40).

"My Name" – 1 Kings 8:29; 2 Kings 21:4,7.

**23:28** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**23:29** 2 Chron 35:20-27. Assyria was being attacked by Babylon. Egypt went to help Assyria because it feared the rising power

up to the river Euphrates against the king of Assyria, and king Josiah went against him. And when *Neco* saw him he killed him at Megiddo. 30 And his servants took his dead body in a chariot from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, and anointed him and made him king in his father's place.

31 Jehoahaz *was* twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal; *she was* the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, in everything just as his ancestors had done. 33 And Pharaoh Neco put him in chains at Riblah in the land of Hamath, so that he might not reign in Jerusalem, and he imposed on the land a fine of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 34 And Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and changed his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away and went to Egypt, where he died. 35 And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh, but he taxed the land to give the money in accordance with the command of Pharaoh. He exacted the silver and the gold from the people of the land, from each one according to his assessment, to give *it* to Pharaoh Neco.

36 Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zebudah; *she was* the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. 37 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, in everything just as his ancestors had done.

**24** In his days Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up, and Jehoiakim became

of Babylon. Josiah wanted Babylon to prevail. Babylon did, but this eventually resulted in disaster to Judah.

**23:30-34** 2 Chron 36:1-4.

**23:32** "Ancestors" – not Josiah, but Amon and Manasseh (21:2-7,20-22).

**23:33** "Riblah", "Hamath" – north of Israel in present-day Syria.

"A hundred talents" – one talent was about 34 kilograms.

**23:34** Jehoahaz was also called Shallum – Jer 22:11,12; Ezek 19:3,4.

**23:36** 24:6; 2 Chron 36:5-8.

**24:1-20** 2 Chron 36:6-16.

**24:1** "Nebuchadnezzar" – he was one of the most powerful and famous kings in ancient times. He made Babylon the strongest kingdom in the world of his day, and ruled it for 43 years (605 – 562 B.C.).

**24:2** "The LORD sent" – Jer 25:9; 51:20. Compare 2:14; 6:1; 13:1; 1 Kings 11:9,14; 2 Chron 12:1,2; Isa 10:5,6; Hab 1:5,6. Throughout Israel's history

his servant *for* three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 And the LORD sent against him *raiding* bands of the Chaldeans and bands of the Syrians and bands of the Moabites and bands of the children of Ammon; and he sent them against Judah to destroy it, in accordance with the word of the LORD which he spoke through his servants the prophets. 3 Surely *this* came on Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove *them* out of his sight, because of the sins of Manasseh, for all that he did, 4 and also for the innocent blood that he shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.

5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of The Annals of the Kings of Judah? 6 So Jehoiakim slept with his ancestors, and his son Jehoiachin reigned in his place.

7 And the king of Egypt no longer came again out of his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that had been in the possession of the king of Egypt from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates.

8 Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name *was* Nehushta. *She was* the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, in everything just as his father had done.

10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came against the city, and his servants besieged it. 12 And Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother and his servants and his officials and his officers; and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. 13 And he carried out

God often raised up enemies to punish Israel for its sin.

"Chaldeans" – they were Babylonians (see 25:4).

"Prophets" – Isa 39:5-7; Jer 12:7-9; Ezek 23:23-27.

**24:3** "Manasseh" – 21:1-16; 23:26,27; Jer 15:3,4.

**24:4** 21:16. The blood of those godly people cried from the ground for vengeance (compare Gen 4:10), and God could not ignore it. God is merciful and ready, yes, eager, to forgive when men repent and seek Him (Ex 34:6,7; Isa 55:7,8). But the people of Judah did not repent.

**24:5** "Annals" – 1 Kings 14:19.

**24:6** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

"Jehoiachin" – Jer 22:18,19.

**24:7** The territory mentioned here was not in Egypt itself but was controlled by Egypt.

**24:12** "Eighth year" – 597 B.C.; Jer 24:1; 29:1,2.

**24:13** 20:17.

from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. 14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the officials and all the valiant warriors, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. No one remained except the poorest people of the land.

15 And he carried Jehoiachin away to Babylon, and he took into captivity the king's mother and the king's wives and his officers and the mighty men of the land, from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 And the king of Babylon took captive to Babylon all the mighty men, seven thousand *in number*, and a thousand craftsmen and smiths, all *who were strong and fit for war*. 17 And the king of Babylon made *Jehoiachin's* uncle Mattaniah king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

18 Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal. *She was* the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, in everything just as Jehoiaikim had done. 20 For through the anger of the LORD it came about that until he had cast them out of his presence, in Jerusalem and Judah Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

**25** And it came about in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it. And they built a siege wall against it all around. 2 And the city was besieged until the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. 3 And on the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. 4 And the city was broken through, and all the men of war *fled* at night by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by

the king's garden, though the Chaldeans *were* all around the city. And *the king* went on the way toward the plain. 5 And the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and caught up with him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army scattered from him. 6 So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. 7 And they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with bronze fetters and carried him away to Babylon.

8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh of the month, which was *in* the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9 And he burned the house of the LORD and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem. He burned with fire every great *man's* house. 10 And the whole army of the Chaldeans, that *was with* the commander of the guard, broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around. 11 Now Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guard, took away the rest of the people *who were* left in the city, and the fugitives who had defected to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the population. 12 But the commander of the guard left some of the poor of the land *to be* vineyard workers and farmers.

13 And the Chaldeans broke in pieces the bronze pillars that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that *was* at the house of the LORD, and carried their bronze away to Babylon. 14 And they took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the spoons and all the bronze articles with which *the priests* ministered. 15 And the commander of the guard took away the firepans and the bowls, *and* the gold and silver of those things *which had* gold or silver.

16 As for the two pillars, one sea, and the stands which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the weight of the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. 17 The height of one pillar *was*

**24:14** 25:12; Jer 24:1; 40:7; 52:28.

**24:15** Jer 22:24-28.

**24:17** Jer 37:1.

**24:18** 597-586 B.C.

**24:19** 23:37.

**24:20** "Anger" - 22:13,17; 23:26; 2 Chron 36:16; Jer 21:5. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**25:1-21** 2 Chron 36:14-20; Jer 39:1-12. January 588 B.C.

**25:1** Jer 34:1,2; Ezek 24:2.

**25:2** 586 B.C.

**25:3** "Famine" - Jer 38:2-9; Lam 1:11; 2:20; 4:9,10; 5:10. This is one of the curses God said would come on them if they broke His covenant - Lev 26:26; Deut 28:53-57. **25:4** "Chaldeans" - they were Babylonians.

Chaldea was one of the main areas of the kingdom of Babylon and sometimes the whole kingdom was called by that name.

"The plain" - here means the Jordan valley, called the Arabah in Hebrew.

**25:6** 23:33; Jer 39:5; 52:9.

**25:7** Jer 32:4,5; 34:2,3; 38:18; Ezek 12:13; 17:16.

**25:8,9** Jer 17:27; 52:12,13. This was God's temple, the place He had chosen for His name and presence. But because the people misused it and defiled it He Himself sent the Babylonians to destroy it.

**25:10** Neh 1:3.

**25:12** 24:14; Jer 40:7.

**25:13** "Pillars" - 1 Kings 7:15-22. These pillars had stood for 350 years.

eighteen cubits, and the capital on it *was* of bronze; and the height of the capital was three cubits; and the woven work and pomegranates all around on the capital *were* all of bronze. And the second pillar was the same, with woven work.

18 And the commander of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers.

19 And he took from the city an officer who had been appointed over the men of war, and five men of those who had been in the king's presence, who were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the army, who conscripted the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land *who were* found in the city; 20 and Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 21 And the king of Babylon struck them down and killed them at Riblah in the land of Hamath.

So Judah was carried away out of their land.

22 And *as for* the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler over them. 23 And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah and Johanan, the son of Careah, and

Seraiah, the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah, the son of a Maachathite, they and their men, came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. 24 And Gedaliah took an oath before them and before their men, and said to them, "Do not be afraid to be the servants of the Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will be well with you."

25 But it came about in the seventh month, that Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal line, and ten men with him, came and struck down Gedaliah, killing him and the Jews and the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. 26 And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt, for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

27 And it came about in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh *day* of the month, *that* Evil Merodach, king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison 28 and spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat more prominent than the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon, 29 and changed his prison garments. And *Jehoiachin* ate food regularly in his presence all the days of his life. 30 And as for his allowance, a regular allowance *was* given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

"Sea" – 1 Kings 7:23-26.

**25:18-21** Jer 52:24-27.

**25:18** "Seraiah" – Ezra 7:1.

"Zephaniah" – Jer 21:1; 29:25; 37:3. He was not the prophet of the same name. **25:21** 23:27; Lev 26:33; Deut 28:36; Jer 25:8-11. God's people had been in the land for about 800 years, from the time of Joshua. God removed them from the land because they repeatedly broke His covenant and would not listen to His messengers (2 Chron 36:15-17; Jer 11:1-13). Their history showed that they were a sinful and rebellious people (as, indeed, all men are by nature. See notes at 17:13,19). But this was not the end of their story. Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther record some of the events which took place during their exile from the

land. Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi (and, of course, the four Gospels and part of Acts) record some of their history when the exile was over.

**25:22** Jer 39:14; 40:7.

**25:25** Jer 40:13 – 41:15.

**25:26** "Egypt" – this happened in spite of Jeremiah's severe warnings and attempts to prevent it (Jer 41:16 – 43:7).

**25:27** "Thirty-seventh year" – about 561 B.C.

**25:30** Though God's people went into exile, they were not completely destroyed, and David's royal house survived, as God had promised it would (2 Sam 7:14-16). For a reason why Jehoiachin (and other exiles from Judah) found some kindness in Babylon see 1 Kings 8:50; Ps 106:46.



# 1 CHRONICLES

## Title:

In the Hebrew Bible 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles were a single book. Jewish scholars divided them into two when they translated the Old Testament into Greek.

## Author and date:

According to ancient Jewish tradition Ezra wrote both books of Chronicles, as well as Ezra and Nehemiah. These books were written probably between 450 and 430 BC.

## Themes:

Genealogies tracing the origins of the people of Israel back to Abraham, Noah, and Adam. Most of this book gives events in the life of king David. In this way it can be compared with 2 Samuel. But this book emphasizes the greatness of David and has little to say about his sins and the punishment that came to him because of them. The story of his sin with Bathsheba is omitted; also the account of Absalom's rebellion. This book teaches that the true glory of the Jewish nation could be found only in its relationship with Jehovah God. Obeying the one true God is the key to success and blessing.

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**1** Adam, Seth, Enosh, 2 Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered, 3 Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, 4 Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth.

5 The sons of Japheth: Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. 6 And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. 7 And the sons of Javan: Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim.

8 The sons of Ham: Cush and Mizraim, Put and Canaan. 9 And the sons of Cush: Seba and Havilah and Sabta and Raamah and Sabtecha. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. 10 And Cush begot Nimrod. He began to be mighty on the earth. 11 And Mizraim begot Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim 12 and Pathrusim and Casluhim (of whom came the Philistines) and Caphtorim. 13 And Canaan begot Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth, 14 and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite, 15 and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite 16 and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite.

7 The sons of Shem: Elam and Asshur and Arphaxad and Lud and Aram and Uz and Hul and Gether and Meshech. 18 And Arphaxad begot Shelah, and Shelah begot Eber. 19 And to Eber were born two sons; the name of one *was* Peleg, because in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan. 20 And Joktan begot Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah 21 and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah 22 and Ebal and Abimael and Sheba 23 and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan.

24 Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, 25 Eber, Peleg, Reu, 26 Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27 Abram (he *is* Abraham).

28 The sons of Abraham: Isaac and Ishmael. 29 These *are* their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar and Abdeel and Mibsam, 30 Mishma and Dumah, Massa, Hadad and Tema, 31 Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These

are the sons of Ishmael. 32 Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bore Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan: Sheba and Dedan. 33 And the sons of Midian: Ephah and Ephraim and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these *are* the sons of Keturah.

34 And Abraham begot Isaac. The sons of Isaac: Esau and Israel. 35 The sons of Esau: Eliphaz, Reuel and Jeush and Jaalam and Korah. 36 The sons of Eliphaz: Teman and Omar, Zephi and Gatam, Kenaz and Timna and Amalek. 37 The sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

38 And the sons of Seir: Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah and Dishon and Ezar and Dishan. 39 And the sons of Lotan: Hori and Homam; and Timna *was* Lotan's sister. 40 The sons of Shobal: Alian and Manahath and Ebal, Shephi and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. 41 The sons of Anah: Dishon. And the sons of Dishon: Amram and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran. 42 The sons of Ezer: Bilhan and Zavan *and* Jakan. The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

43 Now these *are* the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before *any* king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela, the son of Beor (and the name of his city was Dinhabah); 44 and when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. 45 And when Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. 46 And when Husham died, Hadad, the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place; and the name of his city *was* Avith. 47 And when Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. 48 And when Samlah died, Shaul of Rehoboth by the River reigned in his place. 49 And when Shaul died, Baal-Hanan, the son of Achbor, reigned in his place. 50 And when Baal-Hanan died, Hadad reigned in his place; and the name of his city *was* Pai; and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel. *She*

**1:1** Chapters 1-9 contain the most extensive genealogical records in the Bible. They show that the individuals of the Bible were rooted in history, were not characters of myths and legends, or born only in the brains of poets. They gave the people of God, returned from captivity in Babylon (9:1,2), a link with their past. They could see, almost at a glance, an outline of history from the first man on earth to the captivity, and God's continuing purpose with them, His chosen people.

**1:1-53** These genealogies are based on those in the book of Genesis – Gen 5:1-32; 10:1-32; 11:10-32; 25:1-26; 36:1-43.

**1:1** Cain and Abel are not mentioned. The author traces the descendants of Seth only, because the nation Israel came from that line.

**1:5** "Sons" – in Hebrew usage sons may

mean literal sons, or grandsons, or descendants, or successors, or even peoples.

**1:8** "Mizraim" – Egypt.

**1:10** "Begot" – in Hebrew usage this may not always mean "became the father of", but can mean "became the grandfather of" or "became the ancestor of", etc.

**1:19** "Peleg" – the name means "division."

**1:27** Gen 11:26. From here on only the genealogies of the descendants of Abraham are given.

**1:32** Gen 25:1.

**1:34** "Israel" – Gen 25:24-26; 32:27,28.

**1:43** "Edom" – Gen 25:30; Edom became the name of the land settled by Esau's descendants. Often in their history they showed their hostility to the nation of Israel.

**1:48** "The River" – the Euphrates.

*was* the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. 51 Hadad also died.

And the dukes of Edom were duke Timnah, duke Aliah, duke Jetheth, 52 duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, 53 duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, 54 duke Magdiel, duke Iram. These *are* the dukes of Edom.

**2** These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, 2 Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

3 The sons of Judah: Er and Onan and Shelah. These three were born to him of the daughter of Shua the Canaanitess. And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of the LORD; and he put him to death. 4 And Tamar, his daughter-in-law bore him Pharez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah *were* five.

5 The sons of Pharez: Hezron and Hamul. 6 And the sons of Zerah: Zimri and Ethan and Heman and Calcol and Dara; five of them in all. 7 And the sons of Carmi: Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the accursed thing. 8 And the son of Ethan: Azariah.

9 And the sons of Hezron, who were born to him: Jerahmeel and Ram and Chelubai. 10 And Ram begot Amminadab; and Amminadab begot Nahshon, leader of the children of Judah; 11 and Nahshon begot Salma, and Salma begot Boaz, 12 and Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse. 13 And Jesse begot his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimma the third, 14 Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, 15 Ozem the sixth, David the seventh; 16 their sisters *were* Zeruiah and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah: Abishai and Joab and Asahel, three. 17 And Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa *was* Jether the Ishmaelite.

18 And Caleb the son of Hezron begot *children* of Azubah *his* wife, and of Jerioth; her sons *are* these: Jeshes and Shobab and Ardon. 19 And when Azubah died, Caleb took Ephrath for himself, who bore him Hur. 20 And Hur begot Uri, and Uri begot Bezaleel.

21 And afterwards Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir, the father of Gilead, whom he married when he *was* sixty years old; and she bore

him Segub. 22 And Segub begot Jair, who had twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. 23 And he took Geshur and Aram, with the towns of Jair, from them, with Kenath, and its towns, sixty cities. All these *belonged* to the sons of Machir, the father of Gilead. 24 And after Hezron died in Caleb-Ephratah, Abiah, Hezron's wife, bore him Ashur, the father of Tekoa.

25 And the sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron, were Ram the firstborn, and Bunah and Oren and Ozem *and* Ahijah. 26 Jerahmeel also had another wife, whose name *was* Atarah; she *was* the mother of Onam. 27 And the sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel, were Maaz and Jamin and Eker. 28 And the sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. And the sons of Shammai: Nadab and Abishur. 29 And the name of the wife of Abishur *was* Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. 30 And the sons of Nadab: Seled and Appaim. But Seled died without children. 31 And the son of Appaim: Ishi. And the sons of Ishi: Sheshan, and the child of Sheshan, Ahlai. 32 And the sons of Jada, the brother of Shammai: Jether and Jonathan; and Jether died without children. 33 And the sons of Jonathan: Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel. 34 Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters. And Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name *was* Jarha. 35 And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant as *his* wife, and she bore him Attai. 36 And Attai begot Nathan, and Nathan begot Zabad, 37 and Zabad begot Ephlal, and Ephlal begot Obed, 38 and Obed begot Jehu, and Jehu begot Azariah, 39 and Azariah begot Helez, and Helez begot Eleasah, 40 and Eleasah begot Sisamai, and Sisamai begot Shallum, 41 and Shallum begot Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begot Elishama.

42 Now the sons of Caleb, the brother of Jerahmeel, *were* Mesha his firstborn, who *was* the father of Ziph, and the sons of Mareshah, the father of Hebron. 43 And the sons of Hebron: Korah and Tappuah and Rekem and Shema. 44 And Shema begot Raham, the father of Jorkoam; and Rekem begot Shammai. 45 And the son of Shammai *was* Maon; and Maon *was* the father of Beth-zur. 46 And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran and

**2:1-2** Gen 35:23-26. In the following genealogies Zebulun and Dan are omitted. Judah is put first though he was the fourth son of Israel.

**2:3-4** Gen 38:3-7; 29:30; Num 26:19-20.

**2:5** Gen 46:12; Num 26:21.

**2:6-8** Josh 7:1; 1 Kings 4:31.

"Achar" (v 7) – the word means "disaster." Achar is called Achan in Joshua 7:1, etc. **2:9** "Chelubai" – the same person as Caleb. **2:10** "Ram" – of course this name has no connection with any in India. It is from a

Hebrew word meaning "high" or "exalted."

**2:11,12** Ruth 4:19-22.

"Salma" – a variant of Salmon.

**2:16** 2 Sam 2:18.

**2:17** 2 Sam 17:25.

**2:20** "Bezalel" – Ex 31:2-11.

**2:23** Num 32:41; Deut 3:14. "The towns of Jair" – in Hebrew "Havvoth-Jair."

**2:24** "Father" – here may mean political, civic, or military leader (also in vs 42,45, 49-52 and possibly elsewhere).

**2:33** "Jerahmeel" – 1 Sam 27:10; 30:27-29.

Moza and Gazez; and Haran begot Gazez. 47 And the sons of Jahdai: Regem and Jotham and Gesham and Pelet and Ephah and Shaaph. 48 Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. 49 She also bore Shaaph, the father of Madmannah, Sheva, the father of Machbenah, and the father of Gibeaz; and the daughter of Caleb *was* Achsa.

50 These were the sons of Caleb, the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah: Shobal, the father of Kirjath Jearim, 51 Salma, the father of Bethlehem, Hareph, the father of Beth-Gader. 52 And Shobal, the father of Kirjath Jearim, had sons: Haroeh, *and* half of the Manahethites. 53 And the families of Kirjath Jearim: the Ithrites and the Puhites and the Shumathites and the Mishraitites. From them came the Zareathites and the Eshtaulites. 54 The sons of Salma: Bethlehem, and the Netophathites, Ataroth, the house of Joab, and half of the Manahethites, the Zorites. 55 And the families of the scribes who lived at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, *and* Suchathites. These *are* the Kenites who came from Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.

**3** Now these were the sons of David, who were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess; 2 the third, Absalom, the son of Maachah, the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah, the son of Haggith; 3 the fifth, Shephatiah by Abital; the sixth, Ithrean by his wife Eglah. 4 *These* six were born to him in Hebron; and there he reigned seven years and six months. And he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years. 5 And these were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea and Shobab and Nathan and Solomon, four, by Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel; 6 and Ithar and Elishama and Eliphelet 7 and Nogah and Nepheg and Japhia 8 and Elishama and Eliada and

Eliphelet, nine. 9 *These were* all the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar *was* their sister.

10 And Solomon's son *was* Rehoboam, Abia his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, 11 Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, 12 Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, 13 Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, 14 Amon his son, Josiah his son.

15 And the sons of Josiah *were* the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum.

16 And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. 17 And the sons of Jeconiah: Assir, Salathiel his son, 18 and Malchiram and Pedaiiah and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 19 And the sons of Pedaiiah *were* Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister; 20 And Hashubah and Ohel and Berechiah and Hasadiah, Jushab-Hesed, five. 21 And the sons of Hananiah: Pelatiah and Jesaiiah; the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shechaniah. 22 And the sons of Shechaniah: Shemaiah; and the sons of Shemaiah: Hattush and Igeal and Bariah and Neariah and Shaphat, six. 23 And the sons of Neariah: Elioenai and Hezekiah and Azrikam, three. 24 And the sons of Elioenai *were* Hodaiah and Eliashib and Pelaiah and Akkub and Johanan and Dalaiah and Anani, seven.

**4** The sons of Judah: Pharez, Hezron, and Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal. 2 And Reaiah, the son of Shobal, begot Jahath; and Jahath begot Ahumai and Lahad. *These are* the families of the Zorathites. 3 And *these were* of the father of Etam: Jezreel and Ishma and Idbash; and the name of their sister *was* Hazeleponi; 4 and Penuel, the father of Gedor,

**2:55** "Of the scribes" – or "of the Sopherites" (the Hebrew word which means scribes here could be a proper name).

"Kenites" – Num 10:29-32; Jud 1:16; 4:11.

"Father of the house of Rechab" – or "father of Beth Rechab" ("beth" means "house" in Hebrew).

**3:1-9** 2 Sam 3:2-5; 5:13-16; 1 Chron 14:3-7.

**3:1** "Daniel" – called Kileab in 2 Sam 3:3. Evidently this second son of David had two names. Daniel means "God is my judge." It is likely that he died young. There is no mention of him apart from his birth, and later on Absalom, the third son, apparently thought he *was* next in line for the throne of David.

"Abigail" – 1 Sam 25:42.

**3:2** "Absalom" – 2 Samuel chapters 13-18. "Adonijah" – 1 Kings 1:5-10; 2:13-25.

**3:4** 2 Sam 2:11; 4:4-5.

**3:5** "Shimea" – a variant of Shammua.

"Bathshua" = "Bathsheba" – 2 Sam 11:1-5, 26, 27; 12:24, 25.

**3:9** "Tamar" – 2 Sam 13:1.

**3:11** "Jehoram" – or "Joram."

**3:15** Three sons of Josiah occupied the throne of Judah – Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Shallum. Shallum *was* also called Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:30-35; Jer 22:11).

**3:16** "Jeconiah" – a variant of Jehoiachin (also v 17).

"Zedekiah" – evidently a different Zedekiah from the one in v 15.

**3:17** Of Jehoiachin's seven sons none became king of Judah. Compare Jer 22:30.

**3:19** Ezra 3:2; Neh 12:1; Hag 1:12 say that Zerubbabel's father *was* Shealtiel. Possibly Shealtiel died young and Pedaiiah married his widow. See Deut 25:5, 6. Or possibly Shealtiel had two names.

**4:4** "Father" – here may mean either civic,



and Ezer, the father of Hushah. These are the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah, the father of Bethlehem. 5 And Ashur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. 6 And Naarah bore him Ahuzam and Hephher and Temeni and Haahashtari. These *were* the sons of Naarah. 7 And the sons of Helah *were* Zereth and Jezoar and Ethnan. 8 And Coz begot Anub and Zobebah and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum.

9 And Jabez was more honourable than his brothers; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." 10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh, that you would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep *me* from evil so that it does not grieve me!" And God granted him what he requested.

11 And Chelub, the brother of Shuah, begot Mehir, who *was* the father of Eshton. 12 And Eshton begot Beth-Rapha and Paseah and Tehinnah, the father of Irnahash. These *are* the men of Rechah.

13 And the sons of Kenaz: Othniel and Seraiah; and the sons of Othniel: Hathath. 14 and Meonothai who begot Ophrah; and Seraiah begot Joab, the father of *those in* the valley of Harashim; and they were craftsmen. 15 And the sons of Caleb, the son of Jephunneh: Iru, Elah, and Naam. And the son of Elah: Kenaz. 16 And the sons of Jehaleleel: Ziph and Ziphah, Tiria and Asareel. 17 And the sons of Ezra *were* Jether and Mered and Ephraim and Jalon; and she bore Miriam and Shammai and Ishbah, the father of Eshtemoa. 18 And his wife Jehudijah bore Jered, the father of Gedor, and Heber, the father of Socho, and Jekuthiel, the father of Zanoah. And these *are* the sons of Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. 19 And the sons of his wife Hodiah the sister of Naham, were the father of Keilah the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Maachathite. 20 And the sons of Shimon *were* Amnon and Rinnah, Benhanan and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi *were* Zoheth and Benzoheth. 21 The sons of Shelah the son of Judah were Er, the father of Lecah, and Laadah, the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of those who made fine linen, of the house of Ashbea, 22 and Jokim, and the men of

Hozea, and Joash, and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And *these are* ancient records. 23 These *were* the potters, and those who lived among plants and hedges; they stayed there near the king for his work.

24 The sons of Simeon *were* Nemuel and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah and Shaul; 25 Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. 26 And the sons of Mishma: Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, Shimei his son. 27 And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers did not have many children, nor did all their family increase in number like the children of Judah. 28 And they lived at Beersheba and Moladah and Hazarshual, 29 and at Bilhah and at Ezem and at Tolad, 30 and at Bethuel and at Hormah and at Ziklag, 31 and at Beth-Marcaboth and Hazar-Susim and at Beth-Birei and at Shaaraim. These *were* their cities until the reign of David.

32 And their villages *were* Etam and Ain, Rimmon and Tochen and Ashan, five towns, 33 and all their villages that *were* around the same towns as far as Baal. These *were* their habitations, and their genealogy. 34 And Meshobab and Jamlech and Joshah, the son of Amaziah, 35 and Joel and Jehu, the son of Josibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, 36 and Elioenai and Jaakobah and Jeshohaiah and Asaiah and Adiel and Jesimiel and Benaiah, 37 and Ziza, the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah.

38 These mentioned by *their* names *were* leaders in their families; and the house of their fathers increased greatly. 39 And they went to the entrance of Gedor, to the east side of the valley, to look for pasture for their flocks. 40 And they found rich and good pasture, and the land *was* spacious and quiet and peaceable; for *descendants* of Ham had lived there in olden times.

41 And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and attacked their tents and the habitations that were found there, and utterly destroyed them, *as it is* to this day, and lived in their places, because *there was* pasture there for their flocks. 42 And *some* of them, *some* of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to Mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah and

political, or military leader (also in vs 12,14, 17,18, and possibly elsewhere).

**4:9** "Jabez" – the name means "he makes sorrowful" or "he gives pain."

**4:10** At birth he gave pain to his mother, but in life he gave joy to God. He asked for four things and received them all. The things he asked evidently pleased God and they testify to the fact that he was more honorable than his brothers. We would do well to ask for the four things he asked for:

1. That God would bless us indeed

2. That God would enlarge our territories of influence, our ministries and opportunities

3. That God's hand would be with us

4. That God would keep us from evil so that it causes no pain

**4:12** "Ir-Nahash" – or "the city of Nahash" (the Hebrew word "ir" can mean town or city, but here may be a proper name).

**4:13** "Othniel"– Josh 15:17; Jud 1:13; 3:9-11.

**4:15** "Caleb"– Num 13:30; 14:30; Josh 14:6-15.

**4:24** Gen 46:10; Ex 6:15; Num 26:12,13.

**4:27-33** Josh 19:1-8.

Neariah and Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. 43 And they struck down the rest of the Amalekites who had escaped, and they live there to this day.

**5** Now the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but, since he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel; and the genealogy is not to be counted according to the birthright. 2 For Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him *came* the chief ruler; but the birthright *was* Joseph's), 3 the sons, *I say*, of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, *were* Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. 4 The sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, 5 Micah his son, Reaia his son, Baal his son, 6 Beerah his son, whom Tilgath-Pilneser, king of Assyria, took away *captive*; *he was* the leader of the Reubenites. 7 And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was listed, *were* Jeiel the chief, and Zechariah, 8 and Bela, the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who lived in Aroer, as far as Nebo and Baal-Meon: 9 and on the east he lived up to the entrance of the wilderness from the river Euphrates; because their cattle had increased in the land of Gilead. 10 And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand; and they lived in their tents throughout all the eastern *region* of Gilead.

11 And the children of Gad lived opposite them, in the land of Bashan up to Salcah. 12 Joel *was* their chief, and Shapham the next, and Jaanai, and Shaphat in Bashan. 13 And their brethren of the house of their fathers *were* Michael and Meshullam and Sheba and Jorai and Jachan and Zia and Heber, seven. 14 These *are* the children of Abihail, the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; 15 Ahi, the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, *was* chief of the house of their fathers. 16 And they lived in Gilead in Bashan and in her towns and in all the areas of

Sharon, on their borders. 17 All these were listed by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

18 The sons of Reuben and the Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to carry shield and sword and to shoot with the bow and skillful in war, *were* forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty who went out to the war. 19 And they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur and Nephish and Nodab. 20 And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hands, and all who *were* with them; for they cried out to God in the battle, and he answered them, because they put their trust in him. 21 And they took away their livestock, fifty thousand of their camels, and two hundred and fifty thousand of their sheep, and two thousand donkeys, and a hundred thousand men. 22 For many fell slain, because the war *was* from God. And they lived in their places until the captivity.

23 And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh lived in the region. They became numerous from Bashan to Baal-Hermon and Senir and to Mount Hermon. 24 And these *were* the heads of the house of their fathers: Ephraim and Ishi and Eliel and Azriel and Jeremiah and Hodaviah and Jahdiel, mighty men of valour, famous men *and* heads of the house of their fathers.

25 And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and prostituted themselves to the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them. 26 And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath Pilneser, king of Assyria, and he took the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh away, and brought them to Halah and Habor and Hara and to the river Gozan, as it is to this day.

**6** The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. 2 And the sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel. 3 And the children of Amram:

**4:43** "Amalekites" - Ex 17:8-16; 1 Sam 15:7-8; 30:1-18.

**5:1** "Reuben" - Gen 35:22; 49:4.

"Joseph" - 48:15,16; 49:22-26; 25:31. The rights of the first born included a double portion of the father's inheritance - Deut 21:16,17. Joseph received a double portion in the land through his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim.

**5:2** "Judah" - Gen 49:8-10. The descendants of Joseph occupied the most territory in the land, but God's appointed king, David, came from Judah.

**5:3** Gen 46:9; Num 26:5-6.

**5:6** "Tilgath-Pilneser" - v 26; 2 Kings 15:19,29.

**5:10** 18:21; Ps 83:6. The Hagrites were probably descended from Hagar (Genesis

chapter 16).

**5:17** 2 Kings 14:16,28; 15:5,32.

**5:20** They succeeded in this battle not because of arms and skill, but because they cried to God in faith. Compare 2 Chron 6:34-39; 13:13-16; 14:9-15; 18:31; 20:1-30; 32:1-23; Ps 18:3; 20:7,8; 22:4,5; 107:6; Zech 4:6; Eph 6:10,16,18.

**5:22** Deut 3:22; 20:4; Josh 23:10,11; 2 Chron 32:8.

**5:23** "Manasseh" - Num 32:19; Josh 22:7.

**5:25** "Prostituted themselves" - Ex 34:14-15; Isa 1:21; Jer 2:20; Ezek 16:15,23; 23:3; Hos 1:2; 5:3.

**5:26** 2 Kings 15:19,29; 17:6-23; 18:11.

**6:1** 23:6; Gen 46:11; Ex 6:16; Num 26:57.

**6:3** "Nadab, Abihu" - Lev 10:1,2.

Aaron and Moses and Miriam. The sons also of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 4 Eleazar begot Phinehas; Phinehas begot Abishua, 5 and Abishua begot Bukki, and Bukki begot Uzzi, 6 and Uzzi begot Zerariah, and Zerariah begot Meraioth, 7 Meraioth begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub, 8 and Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Ahimaaz, 9 and Ahimaaz begot Azariah, and Azariah begot Johanan, 10 and Johanan begot Azariah (he it is who served as priest in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem), 11 and Azariah begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub, 12 and Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot Shallum, 13 and Shallum begot Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begot Azariah, 14 and Azariah begot Seraiah, and Seraiah begot Jehozadak; 15 and Jehozadak went *into captivity*, when the LORD carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

16 The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. 17 And these are the names of the sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei. 18 And the sons of Kohath *were* Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel. 19 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. And these *are* the families of the Levites according to their fathers. 20 Of Gershon: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, 21 Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeaterai his son. 22 The sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, 23 Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son, 24 Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziab his son, and Shaul his son. 25 and the sons of Elkanah: Amasai and Ahimoth. 26 *As* for Elkanah, the sons of Elkanah *were* Zophai his son and Nahath his son, 27 Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. 28 And the sons of Samuel: the firstborn Vashni, and Abiah. 29 The sons of Merari: Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzza his son, 30 Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

31 And these *are the ones* whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark had rest. 32 And they served before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem; and *then* they served in their office according to their order. 33 And these are the ones who served with their children: of the sons of the Kohathites, Heman a

singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel, 34 the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, 35 the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, 36 the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, 37 the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, 38 the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; 39 and his brother Asaph, who stood at his right hand, Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea, 40 the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchiah, 41 the son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, 42 the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, 43 the son of Jahath, the son of Gershon, the son of Levi. 44 And their brethren, the sons of Merari, *stood* at the left hand: Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, 45 the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah, 46 the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer, 47 the son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi. 48 Their brethren also, the Levites, *were* appointed to all kinds of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

49 But Aaron and his sons made offerings on the altar of burnt offering, and on the altar of incense, *and were appointed* for all the work of the Most Holy *Place*, and to make an atonement for Israel, in accordance with all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. 50 And these *are* the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, 51 Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerariah his son, 52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, 53 Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.

54 Now these *are* their dwelling places, throughout their camps, within their territories, of the sons of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites, according to their allotment. 55 And they gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, and its pasture lands around it. 56 But the fields of the city and its villages, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. 57 And to the sons of Aaron they gave these cities of Judah: Hebron, *the city* of refuge, and Libnah with its pasture lands, and Jattir and Eshtemoa, with their pasture lands, 58 and Hilen with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands, 59 and

"Eleazer" – the first high priest after Aaron. The list up to v 16 gives the names of the high priests until the Babylonian captivity.

**6:16-50** Ex 6:16-24.

**6:31** "Service of song" – 15:16,27; 25:1-31; 2 Chron 29:25,26.

"Ark" – 2 Sam 6:17.

**6:32** "House of the LORD" – 1 Kings chapter 6.

**6:33** "Heman" – 25:1. "Samuel" – 1 Sam 1:20.

**6:34** "Elkanah" – 1 Sam 1:1.

**6:39** 25:1; psalms 50,73-83.

**6:44** "Ethan" – 15:19.

**6:48** "House of God" – 23:32; Num 3:5-8.

**6:54-81** Josh 21:1-42.

**6:56** Josh 14:13; 15:13.

**6:57** "City of refuge" – Num 35:6-28.

Ashan with its pasture lands, and Beth Shemesh with its pasture lands; 60 and from the tribe of Benjamin *they gave* Geba with its pasture lands, and Alemeth with its pasture lands, and Anathoth with its pasture lands. All their cities throughout their families *were* thirteen cities.

61 And to the sons of Kohath, *who were* left of the family of that tribe, *cities were given* from the half tribe, *from* the half *tribe* of Manasseh, by lot, ten cities. 62 And to the sons of Gershom throughout their families from the tribe of Issachar and from the tribe of Asher and from the tribe of Naphtali and from the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. 63 To the sons of Merari *were given* by lot, throughout their families, from the tribe of Reuben and from the tribe of Gad and from the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. 64 And the children of Israel gave to the Levites *these* cities with their pasture lands. 65 And they gave by lot from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon and from the tribe of the children of Benjamin, these cities, which are called by *their* names.

66 And *the rest* of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities for their of their territory from the tribe of Ephraim. 67 And they gave to them, as cities of refuge, Shechem, in the hill country of Ephraim, with its pasture lands; they also gave Gezer with its pasture lands, 68 and Jokmeam with its pasture lands and Beth-Horon with its pasture lands, 69 and Aijalon with its pasture lands, and Gath Rimmon with its pasture lands. 70 And from the half tribe of Manasseh *they gave* Aner with its pasture lands, and Bileam with its pasture lands, for the family of the rest of the sons of Kohath.

71 To the sons of Gershom *these were given* from the family of the half tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan with its pasture lands and Ashtaroth with its pasture lands; 72 and from the tribe of Issachar, Kedesh with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands, 73 and Ramoth with its pasture lands and Anem with its pasture lands; 74 and from the tribe of Asher, Mashal with its pasture lands and Abdon with its pasture lands, 75 and Hukok with its pasture lands and Rehob with its pasture lands; 76 and from the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands and Hammon with its pasture lands and Kirjathaim with its pasture lands.

77 To the rest of the children of Merari *were given* from the tribe of Zebulun, Rimmon with its pasture lands, Tabor with its pasture lands; 78 and on the other side of the Jordan near Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, *were given to them* from the tribe of Reuben, Bezer in the wilderness with its pasture lands and Jahzah with its pasture lands, 79 Kedemoth also with its pasture lands and Mephaath with its pasture lands; 80 and from the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands and Mahanaim with its pasture lands, 81 and Heshbon with its pasture lands and Jazer with its pasture lands.

**7** Now the sons of Issachar *were* Tola and Puah, Jashub and Shimrom, four. 2 And the sons of Tola: Uzzi and Rephaiah and Jeriel and Jahmai and Jibsam and Shemuel, heads of their father's house, *that is*, of Tola. *They were* strong valiant men in their generations. Their number in the days of David was twenty-two thousand six hundred. 3 And the sons of Uzzi: Izrahiah, and the sons of Izrahiah: Michael and Obadiah and Joel, Ishiah, five; all of them chief men. 4 And with them, by their generations, according to the house of their fathers, *were* bands of soldiers for war, thirty-six thousand *men*; for they had many wives and sons. 5 And their brethren among all the families of Issachar were strong valiant men, listed by their genealogies, in all eighty-seven thousand.

6 *The sons* of Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Jediahel, three. 7 And the sons of Bela: Ezbon and Uzzi and Uzziel and Jerimoth and Iri, five. *They were* heads of the house of *their* fathers, mighty men of valour; and were listed by their genealogies twenty-two thousand and thirty-four. 8 And the sons of Becher: Zemira and Joash and Eliezer and Elioenai and Omri and Jerimoth and Abiah and Anathoth and Alameth. All these *are* the sons of Becher. 9 and their number according to their genealogy by their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valour, *was* twenty thousand two hundred. 10 And the sons of Jediahel: Bilhan and the sons of Bilhan: Jeush and Benjamin and Ehud and Chenaanah and Zethan and Tarshish and Ahishahar. 11 All these, the sons of Jediahel, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valour, *were* seventeen thousand two hundred *soldiers*,

**7:1** "Issachar" – Gen 46:13; Num 1:28; 26:23-25.

**7:6** 1 Chron 8:1-40. Some think that Benjamin here is a copying mistake for Zebulun, because otherwise the genealogy of Zebulun is missing, and because it is difficult to reconcile the genealogy here with that of chapter 8. This could be the genealogy of Zebulun if he also had a son named

Bela, which is not at all impossible, even though Bela is listed elsewhere as the son of Benjamin, but never of Zebulun. See Num 26:26,27,38-41. If the genealogy of Zebulun is missing, it would be the same case as that of Dan which is missing. However that may be, the emphasis in the two books of the Chronicles is not on the northern tribes but on those which comprised the

prepared to go out for war *and* battle. 12 Shuppmim also and Huppmim, the children of Ir, *and* Hushim, the sons of Aher.

13 The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel and Guni and Jezer and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.

14 The sons of Manasseh: Ashriel, whom she bore (*but* his concubine, the Aramitess, bore Machir the father of Gilead. 15 And Machir took as wife *the sister* of Huppmim and Shuppmim, whose sister's name *was* Maachah), and the name of the second *was* Zelophehad. And Zelophehad had daughters. 16 And Maachah, the wife of Machir, bore a son and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother *was* Sheresh; and his sons *were* Ulam and Rakem. 17 And the son of Ulam: Bedan. These *were* the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. 18 And his sister Hammoleketh bore Ishod and Abiezer and Mahalah. 19 And the sons of Shemidah were Ahian and Shechem and Likhi and Aniam.

20 And the sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah his son, and Tahath his son, 21 and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath *who were* born in *that* land killed, because they came down to take away their livestock. 22 And their father Ephraim mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. 23 And when he went in to his wife, she conceived, and bore a son, and he called his name Beriah, because things were going bad with his household. 24 And his daughter *was* Sherah, who built Lower and Upper Beth Horon, and Uzzen Sherah. 25 And Rephah *was* his son, also Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son, 26 Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, 27 Non his son, Jehoshuah his son.

28 And their possessions and habitations *were* Bethel and its towns, and Naaran on the east, and Gezer on the west, with its towns; Shechem also and its towns, as far as Gaza and its towns; 29 and by the borders of the children of Manasseh, Bethshean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these the children of Joseph, the son of Israel, lived.

30 The sons of Asher: Imnah and Isuah and Ishuai and Beriah and Serah, their sister. 31 And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel, who *is* the

father of Birzavith. 32 And Heber begot Japhlet and Shomer and Hotham and Shua, their sister. 33 And the sons of Japhlet: Pasach and Bimhal and Ashvath. These *are* the children of Japhlet. 34 And the sons of Shamer: Ahi and Rohgah, Jehubbah and Aram. 35 And the sons of his brother Helem: Zophah and Imna and Shelesh and Amal. 36 The sons of Zophah: Suah and Harnepher and Shual and Beri and Imrah, 37 Bezer and Hod and Shamma and Shilshah and Ithran and Beera. 38 And the sons of Jether: Jephunneh and Pispah and Ara. 39 And the sons of Ulla: Arah and Haniel and Rezia. 40 All these *were* the children of Asher, heads of *their* father's house, choice *and* mighty men of valour, chief of the leaders. And the number throughout the genealogy of those who were prepared for war *and* for battle *was* twenty-six thousand men.

**8** Now Benjamin begot Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, and Aharah the third, 2 Nohah the fourth and Rapha the fifth. 3 And the sons of Bela were Addar and Gera and Abihud 4 and Abishua and Naaman and Ahoah 5 and Gera and Shephuphan and Huram.

6 And these *are* the sons of Ehud: these are the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Geba, and they were exiled to Manahath: 7 and Naaman and Ahiah and Gera; he exiled them, and begot Uzza, and Ahihud.

8 And Shaharaim begot *children* in the country of Moab, after he had sent away Hushim and Baara, his wives. 9 And he begot of Hodesh his wife, Jobab and Zibia and Mesha and Malcham 10 and Jeuz and Shachia and Mirra. These *were* his sons, heads of the fathers' *households*. 11 And by Hushim he begot Abitub and Elpaal.

12 The sons of Elpaal: Eber and Misham and Shamed, who built Ono and Lod, with its towns; 13 Beriah also and Shema, who *were* heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who drove away the inhabitants of Gath; 14 and Ahio, Shashak and Jeremoth 15 and Zebadiah and Arad and Ader 16 and Michael and Ispah and Joha, the sons of Beriah; 17 and Zebadiah and Meshullam and Hezeki and Heber, 18 Ishmerai also, and Jezliah and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal, 19 and Jakim and Zichri and Zabdi, 20 and Elienai and Zilthai and Eliel,

southern kingdom of Judah - 8:1.

**7:20** Num 26:35-36.

**7:23** "Beriah" - this name sounds like the Hebrew word for "misfortune."

**7:24** Josh 16:3,5.

**7:30** Gen 46:17; Num 26:44-46.

**8:1** 7:6-12; Gen 46:21. More space is given to the genealogy of Benjamin, Judah and Levi than all the other tribes put together. The author's purpose, guided by

the Holy Spirit, was to focus attention on the southern kingdom of Judah. Levi was important because the priesthood and temple service in Jerusalem were in the hands of this tribe. Benjamin was important because Saul, the first king of Israel, was a Benjamite, and part of the territory of Benjamin was later taken into the southern kingdom of Judah.

**8:6** "Ehud" - Jud 3:12-30.



21 and Adaiah and Beraiah and Shimrath, the sons of Shimhi, 22 and Ishpan and Heber and Eliel 23 and Abdon and Zichri and Hanan 24 and Hananiah and Elam and Antothijah 25 and Iphedeah and Penuel, the sons of Shashak 26 and Shamsheraï and Shehariah and Athaliah 27 and Jaresiah and Eliah and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham.

28 These were heads of the fathers' households, by their generations, chief men. These lived in Jerusalem.

29 And the father of Gibeon lived at Gibeon. His wife's name was Maachah; 30 and his firstborn son Abdon, and Zur and Kish and Baal and Nadab 31 and Gedor and Ahio and Zacher. 32 And Mikloth begot Shimeah. And these also lived with their brethren in Jerusalem, opposite them. 33 And Ner begot Kish, and Kish begot Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan and Malchishua and Abinadab and Eshbaal. 34 And the son of Jonathan was Meribbaal; and Meribbaal begot Micah. 35 And the sons of Micah were Pithon and Melech and Tarea and Ahaz. 36 And Ahaz begot Jehoadah; and Jehoadah begot Alemeth and Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza, 37 and Moza begot Binea. Rapha was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 38 And Azel had six sons, whose names are these: Azrikam, Bocheru and Ishmael and Sheariah and Obadiah and Hanan. All these were the sons of Azel. 39 And the sons of Eshek his brother were Ulam his firstborn, Jehush the second, and Eliphelet the third. 40 And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valour, archers, and had many sons and grandsons, a hundred and fifty. All these are descendants of Benjamin.

**9** So all Israel was listed by genealogies, and these were written down in the book of The Kings of Israel and Judah (who was taken away to Babylon because of their transgression).

2 Now the first who lived in their possessions in their cities were some Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinim. 3 And in Jerusalem lived some of the children of Judah and the children of Benjamin and the children of Ephraim and Manasseh: 4 Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the children of Pharez the son of Judah; 5 and of the

Shilonites, Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons; 6 and of the sons of Zerach, Jeuel, and their brethren, six hundred and ninety; 7 and of the sons of Benjamin, Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hasenuah, 8 and Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephathiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah, 9 and their brethren, according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty-six. All these men were chief of the fathers in the house of their ancestors.

10 And of the priests, Jedaiah and Jehoiairib and Jachin 11 and Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the ruler of the house of God, 12 and Adaiah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasiah, the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer, 13 and their brethren, heads of the house of their fathers, a thousand seven hundred and sixty, very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

14 And of the Levites, Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari, 15 and Bakbakkar, Heresh and Galal and Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph, 16 and Obadiah, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah, the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

17 And the gatekeepers were Shallum and Akkub and Talmon and Ahiman and their brethren, Shallum being the chief. 18 Before this they served at the eastern gate of the king. They were gatekeepers in the companies of the children of Levi. 19 And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, of the house of his father, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, gatekeepers of the tabernacle, as their fathers had been over the camp of the LORD, guarding the entrance. 20 And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, had the supervision over them in time past, and the LORD was with him. 21 And Zechariah, the son of Meshelemiah, was the doorkeeper of the tabernacle of the congregation.

**8:29** 9:35-38.

"Father" – here the word may mean political or civic or military leader.

**8:33** "Saul" – 9:39-44; 1 Sam 9:1,2; 10:1; 14:49; 31:2.

"Eshbaal" – also known as Ish-Bosheth.

**8:34** "Jonathan" – 1 Sam 14:1-15; 18:1.

"Meribbaal" – another name for Mephibosheth (2 Sam 4:4).

**9:1** "Babylon" – 36:15-20; Jer 52:1-27.

**9:2** "First who lived in" – after the return from

exile in Babylon – 2:70; Neh 7:73; 11:3,4.

**9:3** "Manasseh" – among those who returned from exile were members of the northern tribes as well as some from Judah, Benjamin and Levi. God preserved all Israel.

**9:19** "Tabernacle" – here simply means God's dwelling place (the temple) with His people, and not the literal tabernacle, which was no longer standing. Also in vs 21,23.

**9:20** "Phinehas" – Num 25:6-13.

22 All these *who were* chosen to be gatekeepers *were* two hundred and twelve. These were listed by their genealogy in their villages. David and Samuel the seer ordained them in their set office. 23 So they and their children *had* the oversight of the gates of the house of the LORD, the house of the tabernacle, as guards. 24 The gatekeepers were in four quarters, toward the east, west, north, and south. 25 And their brethren, *who were* in their villages, *were* to come in after seven days from time to time *to be* with them. 26 For these Levites, the four chief gatekeepers, were in *their* set office and were over the rooms and treasures of the house of God. 27 And they stayed at night around the house of God, because the watch *was* committed to them, and opening *up the house of God* every morning *was* in their *care*.

28 And *some* of them had charge of the articles for the service to bring them in and out by count. 29 *Some* of them also *were* appointed to oversee the articles and all the furniture of the sanctuary, and the fine flour and the wine and the oil and the frankincense and the spices. 30 And *some* of the sons of the priests made the ointment from the spices. 31 And Mattithiah, *one* of the Levites, who *was* the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, had the oversight of the things that were made in pans. 32 And *others* of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, *were* over the Showbread, to prepare *it* every Sabbath.

33 And these *were* the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, *who stayed* in the rooms *and were free from other service*; for they were employed in *that* work day and night. 34 These chief fathers of the Levites *were* chief throughout their generations. They lived at Jerusalem.

35 And in Gibeon the father of Gibeon, Jehiel, lived. His wife's name *was* Maachah, 36 and his firstborn son *was* Abdon, then Zur and Kish and Baal and Ner and Nadab, 37 and Gedor and Ahio and Zechariah and Mikloth. 38 And Mikloth begot Shimeam. And they also lived with their brethren at Jerusalem, opposite their brethren. 39 And Ner begot Kish; and Kish begot Saul; and Saul begot Jonathan and Malchishua and Abinadab and Eshbaal. 40 And the son of Jonathan *was*

Merib-baal. And Merib-baal begot Micah. 41 And the sons of Micah *were* Pithon and Melech and Tahrea *and Ahaz*. 42 And Ahaz begot Jarah; and Jarah begot Alemeth and Azmaveth and Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza; 43 and Moza begot Binea; and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. 44 And Azel had six sons, whose names *are* these: Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael and Sheariah and Obadiah and Hanan. These *were* the sons of Azel.

**10** Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines followed closely after Saul and after his sons, and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. 3 And the battle grew heavy against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded by the archers. 4 Then Saul said to his armour bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me with it; or else these uncircumcised will come and abuse me." But his armour bearer would not, for he was very afraid. So Saul took a sword and fell on it. 5 And when his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on a sword and died. 6 So Saul died and his three sons; and all his household died together.

7 And when all the men of Israel who *were* in the valley saw that *the army* was fleeing, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and lived in them. 8 And it came to pass on the next day, when the Philistines came to strip those who had been killed, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 And when they had stripped him, they took his head and his armour and sent *them* into the surrounding countryside of the Philistines, to take the news to their idols and to the people. 10 And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. 11 And when all Jabesh Gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the valiant men arose, and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

13 So Saul died for his transgression which he

**9:22** "Gatekeepers" – 26:1.

"Seer" – 1 Sam 9:9.

**9:27** "Watch" – there were valuable articles of gold and silver in the temple (Ezra 1:11), and enemies of Israel in the neighborhood (Neh 4:7-9). More importantly, all persons who had no right to enter the temple had to be kept out so that the temple be not defiled.

**9:29** 23:29.

**9:30** "Spices" – Ex 30:23-25.

**9:31,32** "Showbread" – Ex 30:30; Lev 24:5-8.

**9:33** "Singers" – 6:31-45; 25:1; Ps 134:1.

**9:35-44** 8:29-38.

"Eshbaal" (v 39) – also known as Ish-Bosheth.

"Marib-baal" (v 40) – also known as Mephibosheth.

**10:1-12** 1 Sam 31:1-13.

**10:13,14** 1 Sam 13:13-14; 15:23; 28:7-19. Here the sin of consulting a medium is emphasized. Consulting such persons is condemned in the law of God (Deut 18:9-14), and Saul himself knew it was wrong when he did it (1 Sam 28:3).

committed against the LORD, against the word of the LORD, which he did not keep, and also for consulting *someone who was* a medium, to inquire of her; 14 and did not inquire of the LORD; therefore he killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

**11** Then all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron, saying, "See, *we are* your bone and your flesh. 2 Also in time past, even when Saul was king, you *were* the one who led Israel out and brought *them* in; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will be ruler over my people Israel.'" 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, in accordance with the word of the LORD by Samuel.

4 And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which *is* Jebus, where the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, *were*. 5 And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You will not get in here!" Nevertheless David took the fortress of Zion, which *is* the city of David. 6 And David said, "Whoever strikes the Jebusites first will be chief and commander." So Joab, the son of Zeruiah, went up first up, and became chief. 7 And David lived in the fortress; therefore they called it the city of David. 8 And he built up the city around *it*, from Millo all around; and Joab repaired the rest of the city. 9 So David became greater and greater, for the LORD of hosts *was* with him.

10 And these *are* the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who used their strength with him for his kingdom *and* with all Israel, to make him king, in accordance with the word of the LORD concerning Israel. 11 And this *is* the list of David's mighty men: Jashobeam, a Hachmonite, the chief of the thirty; he raised his spear against three hundred *who* were killed *by him* at one time. 12 And after him *was* Eleazar, the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who *was one* of the three mighty ones. 13 He was with David at Pasdammim; and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where there was a plot of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines. 14 And they took their stand in the middle of *that* plot and defended it and struck down the Philistines; and the Lord saved *them* with a great deliverance.

15 Now three of the thirty chiefs went down to

the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the army of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim. 16 And David was then in the stronghold, and a garrison of the Philistines *was* then at Bethlehem. 17 And David felt a longing and said, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, that *is* by the gate!" 18 And the three broke through the army of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it* and brought *it* to David. But David would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD, 19 and said, "My God forbid this to me, that I should do this thing! Should I drink the blood of these men who have put their lives in jeopardy? For in *peril of* their lives they brought this." Therefore he would not drink it. The three mighty men did these things.

20 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, was chief of the three; for raising his spear against three hundred, he killed *them*, and had a name among the three. 21 He was more honoured than two of the three; for he was their captain. However, he did not attain to the *first* three.

22 Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who had done many deeds, killed two lion-like men of Moab. Also he went down and killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day. 23 And he killed an Egyptian, a man of *great* stature, five cubits tall; and *there was* a spear like a weaver's beam in the Egyptian's hand; and he went down to him with a staff, and tore the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 24 Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, did these *things*, and had a name among the three mighty men. 25 See, he was honoured among the thirty, but did not attain to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard.

26 Also the mighty men in the armies *were* Asahel, the brother of Joab, Elhanan, the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 27 Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite, 28 Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Antothite, 29 Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, 30 Maharai the Netophathite, Heled, the son of Baanah the Netophathite, 31 Ithai, the son of Ribai of Gibeah, *who belonged* to the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, 32 Hurai from the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, 33 Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, 34 the sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan, the son of Shage the Hararite, 35 Ahiam, the son of Sacar the Hararite,

**11:1-3** 2 Sam 5:1-3. See notes there.

**11:4-9** 2 Sam 5:6-10. See notes there.

**11:10-41** 2 Sam 23:8-39. See notes there.

**11:11** "Jashobeam" - a shortened form of the name Josheb-Basshebeth in 2 Sam 23:8. "Tahkemonite" is the word there,

"Hacmonite" here. There it speaks of eight hundred men being killed, here of only three hundred. It is in the realm of possibility that these two references record two different occasions, and two different persons among David's mighty men.

Eliphal, the son of Ur, 36 Hephher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, 37 Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai, the son of Ezbai, 38 Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Haggeri, 39 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armour bearer of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, 40 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, 41 Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, 42 Adina, the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, 43 Hanan, the son of Maachah, Joshaphat the Mithnite, 44 Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jehiel, the sons of Hothan the Aroerite, 45 Jediel, the son of Shimri, and his brother Joha, the Tizite, 46 Eliel and Mahavite, and Jeribai and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, 47 Eliel and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaite.

**12** Now these *are the* ones who came to David at Ziklag, while he was still kept away from Saul the son of Kish; and they *were* among the mighty men, helpers in the war. 2 They *were* armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in *slinging* stones and *shooting* arrows from a bow. They *were* Saul's relatives from Benjamin. 3 The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth, and Berachah and Jehu the Antiothite 4 and Ismaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; and Jeremiah and Jahaziel and Johanan and Josabab the Gederathite 5 Eluzai and Jerimoth and Bealiah and Shemariah and Shephatiah the Haruphite 6 Elkanah and Jesiah and Azareel and Joezer and Jashobeam, the Korhites 7 and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

8 And from the Gadites *some* came away to David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men and warriors *prepared* for the battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces *were like* the faces of lions, and who *were* as swift as the gazelles on the mountains; 9 Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, 10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, 11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, 12 Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, 13 Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh. 14 These descendants of Gad *were*

captains in the army; one of the least *was* over a hundred, and the greatest over a thousand. 15 These *are the* ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it had flooded all of its banks, and put to flight all *those living* in valleys, *both* toward the east and toward the west.

16 And *some* of the children of Benjamin and Judah came to the stronghold to David. 17 And David went out to meet them, and responded and said to them, "If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be knit to you. But if *you have come* to betray me to my enemies, since my hands *have done* no wrong, the God of our fathers look on this, and rebuke *it*." 18 Then the Spirit came on Amasai, *who was* chief of the captains, *and he said*, "*We are yours*, David, and on your side, son of Jesse. Peace, peace *be* to you, and peace *be* to those who help you; for your God is helping you." Then David received them, and made them captains in *his raiding* band.

19 And *some* from *the tribe of* Manasseh defected to David, when he was coming with *the Philistines* to fight against Saul; but they did not help the Philistines, because the lords of the Philistines, after conferring, sent him away, saying, "He will defect to his master Saul to *the jeopardy of* our heads." 20 When he went to Ziklag, from Manasseh *these* defected to him: Adnah and Jozabad and Jediel and Michael and Jozabad and Elihu and Zilthai, captains of the thousands who *were* from Manasseh. 21 And they helped David against the band of *raiders*; for they *were* all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the army. 22 For at *that* time, day by day, *others* came to David to help him, until *it became* a great army, like the army of God.

23 And these *are* the numbers of the bands *that were* equipped for war, *who* came to David at Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, in accordance with the word of the LORD: 24 the children of Judah who bore shield and spear *were* six thousand eight hundred, equipped for war; 25 of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valour for the war, seven thousand one hundred; 26 of the children of Levi four thousand six hundred; 27 and Jehoiada *was* the leader of the Aaronites,

**11:41-47** Uriah is last on the list in 2 Samuel chapter 23. Here several additional names are given. As days passed, the number grew.

**12:1** 1 Samuel chapter 27.

**12:2** This chapter shows the general support for David not merely in Judah, his own tribe, but in the other tribes of Israel. Even some of Saul's kinsmen deserted to David before Saul's death.

**12:8** "Gadites" – from the tribe of Gad which had settled east of the Jordan river (Num 32:1-5,33).

**12:15** "First month" – Nisan, which included parts of which we call March and April. Rain and melting snow from northern mountains then caused the Jordan to flood. See Josh 3:15.

**12:16** "Stronghold" – 1 Sam 22:4; 23:29; 24:22.

**12:18** "Spirit" – the allegiance of these men to David was the work of God.

**12:19** 1 Sam 29:2-9.

**12:20** 1 Samuel chapter 27.

**12:23** "Hebron" – 2 Sam 5:1-3.

"Word of the LORD" – 1 Sam 16:1,11-13.

and with him *were* three thousand seven hundred; 28 and Zadok, a valiant young warrior, and twenty-two captains from his father's house; 29 and three thousand of the children of Benjamin, the kinsmen of Saul; for until then the greatest part of them had kept *their* allegiance to the house of Saul; 30 and twenty thousand eight hundred of the children of Ephraim, valiant fighters, famous throughout the house of their fathers; 31 and eighteen thousand of the half tribe of Manasseh, who were designated by name to come and make David king; 32 and *some* of the children of Issachar, *men* who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; their chiefs *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their command; 33 fifty thousand of Zebulun, who went forth to battle, expert in war, with all the weapons of war, who could keep rank; *they were* not of double heart; 34 and a thousand captains of Naphtali, and thirty-seven thousand with them with shield and spear; 35 and twenty-eight thousand six hundred of the Danites, expert in war; 36 and forty thousand of Asher, who went forth to battle, expert in war; 37 and on the other side of the Jordan, a hundred and twenty thousand of the Reubenites and the Gadites and of the half tribe of Manasseh, with all kinds of weapons for the battle.

38 All these warriors who could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron to make David king over all Israel; and also all the rest of Israel *were* of one heart to make David king. 39 And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking; for their brethren had prepared for them. 40 Moreover, their neighbors, even as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on donkeys and on camels and on mules and on oxen, *and* meat, flour, cakes of figs and bunches of raisins and wine and oil and oxen and sheep in abundance; for *there was* joy in Israel.

**13** And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, *and* with each leader. 2 And David said to all the congregation of Israel, "If *it seems* good to you, and *if it is* from the LORD our God, let us send *word* out to our

brethren everywhere, *those* remaining in the whole land of Israel, and *along* with them to the priests and Levites *who are* in their cities *and* pasture lands, so that they may gather here with us. 3 And let us bring back the ark of our God to us; for we did not consult *God* by it in the days of Saul."

4 And all the congregation said that they would do so, for in the eyes of all the people it was the right thing *to do*. 5 So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt to the entrance of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim. 6 And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, *that is*, to Kirjath Jearim, which *belonged* to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, who dwells *between* the cherubim, which is called *by his* name. 7 And they carried the ark of God in a new cart from the house of Abinadab; and Uzza and Ahio were driving the cart. 8 And David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all *their* might, and with singing and with harps and with lyres and with tambourines and with cymbals and with trumpets.

9 And when they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, Uzza put out his hand to take hold of the ark, for the oxen stumbled. 10 And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzza and he struck him down, because he put his hand on the ark; and there he died before God. 11 And David was displeased, because the LORD's *anger* had broken out against Uzza. Therefore that place is called Perez-Uzza to this day. 12 And David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How shall I bring the ark of God to me?" 13 So David did not bring the ark to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed Edom the Gittite. 14 And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed Edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed Edom, and all that he had.

**14** Now Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar timber, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house. 2 And David perceived that the LORD had confirmed him as king over Israel, for his kingdom was greatly exalted, because of his people Israel.

**12:32** "Understanding of the times" – the ability to understand the times and to know what a people should do is a great gift from God, and one much needed in every generation.

**12:38** Verse 2.

**12:40** These tribes were in Galilee in the north of the land.

"Joy" – the troubles Saul brought on the country were over, the people were united behind a strong and godly leader, God was with them, the future was bright.

**13:3** The ark had been captured by the Philistines (1 Sam 4:10,11). The story of

what they did with it is found in 1 Samuel chapter 6. The ark was the place where God met with Moses and gave him commands for Israel (Ex 25:22). Perhaps previous to this, at some periods in their history Israel's leaders sought God's will in the presence of the ark, but there is no record of this.

**13:5-14** 2 Sam 6:1-11. See notes there.

**13:5** "Shihor of Egypt to the entrance of Hamath" – an expression meaning from one end of the country to the other. Hamath was in the far north of the land.

**14:1-16** 2 Sam 5:11-25. See notes there.



3 And David took more wives at Jerusalem, and David begot more sons and daughters. 4 Now these *are* the names of *the* children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, and Shobab, Nathan and Solomon, 5 and Ibhar and Elishua and Elpalet 6 and Nogah and Nepheg and Japhia 7 and Elishama and Beeliada and Eliphalet.

8 And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to look for David. And David heard *of it*, and went out against them. 9 And the Philistines came and spread out in the valley of Rephaim. 10 And David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? And will you deliver them into my hand?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up; for I will deliver them into your hands." 11 So they came up to Baal-Perazim, and David struck them there. Then David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand like the breaking out of waters." So they called the name of that place Baal Perazim. 12 And the *Philistines* left their gods behind there, and David gave an order, and they were burned with fire.

13 And once more the Philistines spread out in the valley. 14 Therefore David again inquired of God; and God said to him, "Do not go up after them. Turn away from them and attack them opposite the mulberry trees. 15 And it is to be *like this*: when you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you must go out to battle; for God has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines."

16 Therefore David did as God commanded him; and they struck down the army of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gazer. 17 And the fame of David went out to all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him on all nations.

**15** And *David* made houses for himself in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. 2 Then David said, "No one but the Levites should carry the ark of God, for the LORD has chosen them to carry the ark of God, and to minister to him forever."

3 And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its

place, which he had prepared for it. 4 And David assembled the children of Aaron and the Levites; 5 of the sons of Kohath: Uriel the chief, and a hundred and twenty of his brethren; 6 of the sons of Merari: Asaiah the chief, and two hundred and twenty of his brethren; 7 of the sons of Gershon: Joel the chief, and a hundred and thirty of his brethren; 8 of the sons of Elizaphan: Shemaiah the chief, and two hundred of his brethren; 9 of the sons of Hebron: Eliel the chief, and eighty of his brethren; 10 of the sons of Uzziel: Amminadab the chief, and a hundred and twelve of his brethren.

11 And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah and Joel, Shemaiah and Eliel and Amminadab. 12 And he said to them, "*You are* the chief of the fathers' *households* of the Levites. Sanctify yourselves, *both* you and your brethren, so that you can bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel *to the place that* I have prepared for it. 13 For because you *did not do it* in the beginning, the LORD our God broke out against us, for we did not seek him in the proper way."

14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. 15 And the children of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles on it, as Moses commanded in accordance with the word of the LORD.

16 And David spoke to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren *as* singers with musical instruments, lyres and harps and sounding cymbals, to raise the sound of joy. 17 So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel, and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; 18 and with them their brethren of the second *rank*, Zechariah, Ben and Jaaziel and Shemiramoth and Jehiel and Unni, Eliab and Benaiah and Maaseiah and Mattithiah and Eliphele and Mikneiah and Obed Edom and Jeiel, the doorkeepers. 19 So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, *were appointed* to sound with bronze cymbals; 20 and Zechariah and Aziel and Shemiramoth and Jehiel and Unni and Eliab and Maaseiah and Benaiah, with lyres according to Alamoth; 21 and Mattithiah and

**14:11** "Baal Perazim" – the name means "The Lord who breaks out."

**14:17** Ex 15:14-16; Deut 2:25; Josh 6:27; 2 Chron 14:14; 17:10; 20:29.

**15:1-24** These preparations for bringing the ark to Jerusalem are not recorded anywhere else.

**15:1** "City of David" – 2 Sam 5:6,7.

"Tent" – 16:1; 2 Sam 6:17. This tent was not the tabernacle but a special tent David had made. The tabernacle was in Gibeon (16:39).

**15:2** "Levites" – Num 3:5-10; Deut 10:8.

**15:5-7** Kohath, Merari, and Gershon were sons of Levi – 6:1.

**15:11** 1 Sam 22:20-23; 1 Kings 2:26,35; 1 Chron 12:28.

**15:12** "Sanctify" – Ex 19:14-15; Lev 11:44; 2 Chron 35:6.

**15:13** 13:7,10-11.

**15:15** Ex 25:14.

**15:16** 13:8; 25:1.

**15:17** 6:33,39,44.

**15:20-21** Alamoth and Sheminith were probably musical terms. See the titles of

Eliphele and Mikneiah and Obed Edom and Jeiel and Azariah, with harps *tuned to* the higher notes of Sheminith. 22 And Kenaniah, chief of the Levites, *was in charge* of singing; because of his skill he gave instruction in singing. 23 And Berechiah and Elkanah *were* doorkeepers for the ark. 24 And Shebaniah and Jehoshaphat and Nethaneel and Amasai and Zechariah and Benaiah and Eliezer, the priests, blew with the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed Edom and Jehiah *were* doorkeepers for the ark.

25 So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed Edom with joy. 26 And it came about, when God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams. 27 And David *was* clothed with a robe of fine linen, and *so were* all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Kenaniah the leader of the singing with the singers. David *was* also wearing a linen ephod. 28 So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the cornet and with trumpets and with cymbals, sounding out with lyres and harps.

29 And it so happened that *as* the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out of a window and saw king David dancing and celebrating; and she despised him in her heart.

**16** So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the middle of the tent that David had pitched for it; and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God. 2 And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. 3 And he distributed to each one of Israel, both man and woman, to each one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of meat, and a raisin cake.

4 And he appointed *some* of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to call to remembrance, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel: 5 Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel and Shemiramoth and Jehiel and Mattithiah and Eliab and Benaiah and Obed Edom;

psalms 6 and 46.

**15:24** "Trumpets" – 16:6; Num 10:1-10.

**15:25-29** 2 Sam 6:12-16. See notes there.

**16:1-3** 2 Sam 6:17-19.

**16:1** "Offerings" – notes on first three chapters of Leviticus.

**16:4** These duties and privileges of the Levites are now the duties and privileges of all believers (1 Tim 2:1; Heb 13:15; etc).

"To thank" – notes at Lev 7:12,13;

and Jeiel *played* on lyres and on harps, and Asaph sounded the cymbals, 6 and the priests Benaiah and Jahaziel *blew* the trumpet regularly before the ark of the covenant of God.

7 Then on that day David first committed *this psalm* into the hands of Asaph and his brethren, for thanking the LORD:

8 "Give thanks to the LORD.

Call on his name.

Make known his deeds among the people.

9 Sing to him; sing psalms to him.

Talk of all his wondrous works.

10 Glory in his holy name.

Let the heart of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

11 Seek the LORD and his strength.

Seek his face continually.

12 Remember his marvellous works that he has done, his wonders,

and the judgments of his mouth,

13 O you seed of Israel his servant, you children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

14 He *is* the LORD our God.

His judgments *are* in all the earth.

15 Always remember his covenant,

the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations,

16 *the covenant* which he made with Abraham, his oath to Isaac.

17 For he confirmed it to Jacob as a law, to Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,

18 Saying, 'To you I will give the land of Canaan,

the allotment of your inheritance';

19 When you were but few, very few, and strangers in it;

20 *when* they went from nation to nation, and from *one* kingdom to another people.

21 He allowed no man to do them wrong; yes, he reproved kings for their sakes,

22 *Saying*, 'Do not touch my anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'

23 Sing to the LORD, all the earth.

Show forth his salvation from day to day.

Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; etc.

**16:5** "Asaph" – Psalms 50,73-83.

**16:7** Many of the psalms were intended for worship services and were sung accompanied by music. This whole psalm appears in the book of Psalms, with slight variations, but divided into three parts – Ps 105:1-15; 96:1-13; 106:1,47,48. See notes on those psalms.

**16:8-22** Ps 105:1-15.

**16:23-33** Ps 96:1-13.

- 24 Declare his glory among the peoples,  
his marvellous works among all nations.
- 25 For great *is* the LORD,  
and greatly to be praised.  
Also he *is* to be feared above all gods.
- 26 For all the gods of the peoples *are*  
idols,  
but the LORD made the heavens.
- 27 Glory and honour *are* in his presence;  
strength and gladness *are* in his  
place.
- 28 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of  
the nations,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- 29 Ascribe to the LORD the glory *due*  
to his name.  
Bring an offering and come before him.  
Worship the LORD in the beauty of  
holiness.
- 30 Tremble before him, all the earth;  
for the world will be stable,  
so that it is not moved.
- 31 Let the heavens be glad,  
and let the earth rejoice,  
and let *people* say among the nations,  
'The LORD reigns.'
- 32 Let the sea roar, and its fulness.  
Let the fields rejoice, and all that  
is in them.
- 33 Then shall the trees of the forest  
sing out at the presence of the LORD,  
because he comes to judge the earth.
- 34 O give thanks to the LORD;  
for *he is* good;  
for his mercy *continues on* forever.
- 35 And say, 'Save us, O God of our  
salvation, and gather us together,  
and deliver us from the nations,  
so that we may give thanks to your  
holy name,  
*and* glory in your praise.'
- 36 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel  
forever and ever."
- And all the people said, "Amen," and praised  
the LORD.
- 37 So he left Asaph and his brethren there

before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work required. 38 And Obed Edom with their brethren, sixty-eight; also Obed Edom, the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah *to be* gatekeepers; 39 and Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place that *was* at Gibeon, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering continually morning and evening, and *to do* all that is written in the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel; 41 and with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because his mercy *continues on* forever; 42 and with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those who should sound *them*, and with musical instruments of God. And the sons of Jeduthun *were* gatekeepers. 43 And each one of all the people departed to his house; and David returned to bless his house.

**17** Now it came about, as David was sitting in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "Look, I live in a cedar house, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD *remains* under curtains."

2 Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you."

3 And the same night it came about that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4 "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: You shall not build a house for me to dwell in, 5 because I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought Israel up *from Egypt* to this day but have gone from tent to tent, from *one* dwelling place *to another*. 6 Wherever I travelled with all Israel, did I speak a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, saying, 'Why have you not built a cedar house for me?'

7 "Now therefore this *is what* you shall say to my servant David: 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people Israel; 8 and I was with you wherever you travelled, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have

**16:34-36** Ps 106:1,47,48.

**16:37** Verse 4; 2 Chron 8:14. Worship was not confined to a special day. It was part of every day life.

**16:39** It seems that there were two sanctuaries at this time, one in Jerusalem with the ark (v 1), and the other at Gibeon with the tabernacle (21:29). The tabernacle remained at Gibeon until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

**16:40** Ex 29:38-42; Num 28:3-4.

**16:41** "His mercy. . . forever" – a favorite theme of the poets and musicians in Israel – v 34; 2 Chron 5:13; 7:3,6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Ps 106:1; 107:1; 118:29; 136:1-26; 138:8.

**16:42** Verse 7; 25:7; 2 Chron 7:6; 29:27.

**17:1-27** 2 Sam 7:1-29.

**17:4** 28:2-3.

**17:6** "Judges" – or "leaders" (the Hebrew

made a name for you like the name of the great men who *are* in the earth. 9 Also I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, and they will live in their place and will not be moved any more; nor will the children of wickedness destroy them any more, as at the beginning, 10 and since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel. And I will subdue all your enemies. Moreover I tell you that the LORD will build a house for you.

11 "And it shall come about, when your days are ended and you must go *to be* with your ancestors, that I will raise up your offspring after you, who will be of your sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father and he will be my son, and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took *it* away from *the one* who was before you, 14 but I will set him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne will be established for ever."

15 So Nathan spoke to David in accordance with all these words, and in accordance with this whole vision.

16 And David the king came and sat before the LORD, and said, "Who *am* I, O LORD God, and what *is* my house, that you have brought me to this point? 17 And *yet* this was a small thing in your eyes, O God, for you have *also* spoken of your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the standard of a man of high degree, O LORD God. 18 What more can David *say* to you for honouring your servant? For you know your servant. 19 O LORD, you have done all this great thing for your servant's sake, and in accordance with your own heart, in making known all *these* great things. 20 O LORD, *there is* no one like you, nor *is there any* God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21 And what one nation in the earth *is* like your people Israel, whom God went to redeem *to be* his own people, to make for yourself a great and awesome name, by driving out nations from before your people, whom you have redeemed out of Egypt? 22 For you have made your people Israel your own people forever, and you, LORD, have become their God.

23 "Therefore now, LORD, let what you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house be established forever, and do as you have said. 24 Let it be established, so that your name may be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, *is* the God for Israel.' And let the house of your servant David *be*

word means both).

**17:12-14** Mark 1:11; Luke 1:32,33; Heb 1:5.

established in your presence. 25 For you, O my God, have told your servant that you will build a house for him. Therefore your servant has found *in his heart* to pray in your presence. 26 And now, LORD, you are God, and have promised this goodness to your servant. 27 Now therefore let it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may be before you forever. For you have blessed, O LORD, and *it will be* blessed forever."

**18** Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and its towns out of the hands of the Philistines. 2 And he defeated Moab; and the Moabites became David's subjects, *and* brought tribute. 3 And David defeated Hadarezer, king of Zobah at Hamath, as he went to establish his dominion by the river Euphrates. 4 And David took a thousand chariots from him, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. David also hamstrung all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them *enough* for a hundred chariots.

5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadarezer, king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. 6 Then David put *garrisons* in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's subjects, *and* brought tribute. Thus the LORD preserved David wherever he went. 7 And David took the shields of gold that were carried by the servants of Hadarezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 Likewise David brought a great amount of bronze from Tibhath and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, with which Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the bronze articles.

9 Now when Tou, king of Hamath, heard how David had defeated all the army of Hadarezer king of Zobah, 10 he sent his son Hadoram to king David, to ask about his welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer and defeated him (for Hadarezer had made war against Tou), and *sent with him* all kinds of articles of gold and silver and bronze.

11 And king David dedicated them to the LORD, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all *these* nations: from Edom and from Moab and from the children of Ammon and from the Philistines and from Amalek.

12 Moreover Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, killed eighteen thousand of the Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 13 And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's subjects. Thus the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

14 So David reigned over all Israel, and

**18:1-17** 2 Sam 8:1-18.

**18:8** "Bronze"—2 Chron 4:2-5,18.

**18:12** Abishai served under David in this

executed judgment and justice among all his people. 15 And Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was over the army; and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, *was* the recorder; 16 and Zadok, the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech, the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and Shavsha was the scribe; 17 and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, *was* over the Kerethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David *were* chiefs at the king's side.

**19** Now it happened after this that Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, died, and his son reigned in his place. 2 And David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun, the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. So the servants of David came to the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun, to comfort him.

3 But the leaders of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, "Do you think that David is honouring your father, by sending comforters to you? Have not his servants come to you to explore and to overthrow and to spy out the land?" 4 Therefore Hanun took David's servants and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the middle at the hips, and sent them away.

5 Then *someone* went and told David how the men had been treated. And he sent *men* to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Stay at Jericho until your beards are grown, and *then* return."

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire chariots and horsemen for themselves from Mesopotamia and from Syria Maachah and from Zobah. 7 So they hired thirty-two thousand chariots, and the king of Maachah and his people. They came and camped before Medeba. And the children of Ammon gathered together from their cities and came to battle.

8 And when David heard *of it*, he sent Joab and the whole army of the mighty men. 9 And the children of Ammon came out and drew up battle lines before the gate of the city, and the kings who had come *were* by themselves in the field.

10 Now when Joab saw that the battle was set

against him in front and in the rear, he selected *men* from all the choice *soldiers* of Israel, and set *them* in array against the Syrians. 11 And the rest of the people he entrusted into the hands of his brother Abishai, and they set *themselves* in array against the children of Ammon. 12 And he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you help me; but if the children of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. 13 Be courageous, and let us conduct ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God. And let the LORD do *what is* good in his sight."

14 So Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near in front of the Syrians to the battle; and they fled before him. 15 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians had fled, they likewise fled before his brother Abishai, and entered the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem.

16 And when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought out the Syrians who *were* beyond the River; and Shophach, the commander of the army of Hadarezer, *marched* before them.

17 And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel and crossed the Jordan, and came on them and drew up *the battle* lines against them. So when David drew up the battle lines against the Syrians, they fought with him. 18 But the Syrians fled before Israel, and David killed seven thousand of the Syrians *who fought in* chariots, and forty thousand foot soldiers, and killed Shophach, the commander of the army.

19 And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became his subjects; nor would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.

**20** And it came about at the end of the year, at the time when kings go out *to battle*, that Joab led out the strength of the army, and laid waste the country of the children of Ammon and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. And Joab attacked Rabbah and destroyed it. 2 And David took the crown of their king from his head, and found it weighed a talent of gold, and *there were* precious stones in it; and it was set on David's head. And *Joab* also brought

battle - 2 Sam 8:13.

**19:1-19** 2 Sam 10:1-19. See notes there. One foolish act can (and in this case did) result in much bloodshed.

**19:6** Chariots and charioteers came from those places. Foot soldiers came from Beth Rehob and Tob (2 Sam 10:6). All the places mentioned were in the same region north of Israel.

"Thousand talents" - about 34,000

kilograms.

**19:16** "The River" - Euphrates.

**20:1** 2 Sam 11:1. The writer of Chronicles was not led by the Spirit of God to record what happened while David remained in Jerusalem (2 Sam 11:2 - 12:25). It would seem that in God's eyes one account of that sad event was enough.

**20:2,3** 2 Sam 12:30,31.

"A talent" - about 34 kilograms.



out a very large amount of plunder from the city. 3 And he brought out the people who *were* in it, and made *them* cut with saws and *labour* with iron implements and with axes. David did this with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

4 And after this it came about that war began at Gezer with the Philistines. At that time Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Sippai, *who was* of the children of a giant; and they were subdued. 5 And again there was war with the Philistines; and Elhanan, the son of Jair, killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear shaft was like a weaver's beam.

6 And once more there was war at Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, who *had* twenty-four fingers and toes, six *on each hand*, and six *on each foot*; and he also was the son of a giant. 7 But when he defied Israel, Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimea, killed him.

8 These were born to a giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

**21** And Satan stood up against Israel, and stirred David up to number Israel. 2 And

**20:4-8** 2 Sam 21:15-22.

**21:1-27** 2 Sam 24:1-25. See notes there.

**21:1** "Satan" – compare this verse with 2 Sam 24:1. God was angry with Israel and permitted Satan to tempt David. The name Satan comes from the Hebrew and means "opponent", "adversary", or, as some think, "accuser." He is the great enemy of both God and man. His origin is obscure, but it is clear that he was at first a holy and powerful angel who later sinned and became devilish. God never made anything evil, or any being wicked. Some commentators teach that Satan's fall is described in Isa 14:12-15 and Ezek 28:12-17, and it is very likely so. See notes there.

The Bible calls Satan by other names as well – the devil (Matt 4:1), Beelzebub, the prince or ruler of demons (Matt 12:24), the evil one (John 17:15), the ruler of this world (John 12:31), the god of this age or world (2 Cor 4:4), the ruler of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), the dragon and the old serpent (Rev 12:9).

He is out to destroy anyone he can and afflicts and torments men (Job 1:12-19; 2:6,7; Luke 13:16; 1 Pet 5:8). He wants others to worship him (Matt 4:9). He tempts men to sin (1 Thess 3:5). He is full of plots to hinder the work of God (2 Cor 2:11). He is exceedingly deceptive (2 Cor 11:14; Rev 12:9). He can do nothing among men unless they obey him, or unless God, for some wise purpose, permits him to act – he (this is true also of all evil spirits or demons) is under the sovereign control of God.

God has given believers in Christ the

David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, and bring their number to me, so that I may know *it*!"

3 And Joab answered, "May the LORD make his people a hundred times more numerous than they *are*! But, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of guilt to Israel?"

4 However, the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. 5 And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to David. And all of Israel who could draw sword were one million one hundred thousand men; and *of* Judah *all who* could draw sword *were* four hundred and seventy thousand.

6 But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them; for the king's command had been abhorrent to Joab. 7 And God was displeased with this matter; therefore he struck Israel.

8 And David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this thing. But now, I beg you, put away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

9 And the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying, 10 "Go and tell David, saying, 'Thus says

means to defeat Satan at every step (Eph 6:10-18; Jam 4:7). His end is clear (Rev 20:10).

Since he is God's and man's enemy why doesn't God immediately destroy him? God has not told us the full answer to this question but His Word the Bible is not without clues to the answer. God uses him for the testing and proving of His people, and in judgment on those who chose the path of sin and unbelief. But it is enough for us now to know that we can defeat the devil through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that God's permitting Satan now to work in the world is in accordance with His perfect wisdom, justice and righteousness. And we should not fret because God does not tell us everything – He tells us all we need to know (Deut 29:29).

**21:2** 27:23,24.

**21:4** Joab's work on the census took nearly 10 months (2 Sam 24:8).

**21:5** These figures differ from 2 Sam 24:9. The census was incomplete (27:23,24), and Joab may have given two different estimates on two separate occasions to David. Of course, we can't be sure of this.

**21:6** Verse 3; 2 Sam 24:3.

**21:7** "Struck" – God had already been angry with Israel because of other sin (2 Sam 24:1). This taking of a census gave God further cause for anger against them. The sequence of events was this: anger, permitting a temptation, David's fall and sin, more anger, punishment. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; Rom 1:18.

**21:9** "Seer" – 1 Sam 9:9.

the LORD, I offer you three *things*. Choose one of them for me to do to you.”

11 So Gad came to David, and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Take your choice: 12 Either three years of famine, or three months to be destroyed before your foes while the sword of your enemies reaches *you*, or else three days of the sword of the LORD, *that is*, the plague, in the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout the whole territory of Israel.’ Now therefore consider what answer I should take back to him who sent me.”

13 And David said to Gad, “I am in great distress; let me now fall into the hands of the LORD; for his mercies *are* very great. But do not let me fall into the hands of men.”

14 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel; and seventy thousand men of Israel fell *dead*. 15 And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was destroying, the LORD looked and was grieved about the disaster, and said to the destroying angel, “It is enough. Hold back your hand.” And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

16 And David raised his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, with a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, clothed in sackcloth, prostrated themselves.

17 And David said to God, “*Is it* not I *who* commanded the people to be numbered? Indeed I am the one who sinned and did evil; but *as for* these sheep, what have they done? Let your hand, I beg you, O LORD my God, be on me and on my father’s house, but not on your people, that they should be plagued.”

18 Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to tell David that David should go up and erect an altar to the LORD in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19 And David went up in accordance with the word of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD.

20 And Ornan turned back and saw the angel;

and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. 21 And as David was coming to Ornan, Ornan looked up and saw David, and went out of the threshing floor, and bowed down to David with *his* face to the ground.

22 Then David said to Ornan, “Let me have the place of *this* threshing floor, so I may build an altar in it for the LORD. You are to let me have it at the full price, so that the plague may be held back from the people.”

23 And Ornan said to David, “Take *it* for your self, and may my lord the king do *what is* good in his eyes. See, I will *also* give *you* the oxen for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I give it all.”

24 And king David said to Ornan, “No, but I will certainly buy it at the full price; for I will not take *what is* yours for the LORD, or offer burnt offerings without cost.”

25 So David gave six hundred shekels of gold by weight to Ornan for the place. 26 And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.

27 And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword back into its scabbard. 28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. 29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, at that time *were* in the high place at Gibeon. 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

**22** Then David said, “This *is* the house of the LORD God, and this *is* the altar of burnt offering for Israel.”

2 And David gave a command to assemble the

**21:15** “Ornan” – a variant of Araunah.

**21:16** “The angel of the LORD” – this verse gives a very vivid picture not found in 2 Samuel chapter 24. Note on the angel of LORD at Gen 16:7.

**21:18** “Commanded” – observe that the angel did not speak directly to the guilty David but used Gad the prophet as his spokesman.

**21:20** “Saw the angel” – angels can make, and sometimes have made, themselves visible to men.

**21:25** “Six hundred shekels” – about seven kilograms.

**21:26** “Offerings” – Leviticus chapters 1 and 3.

“Fire” – Lev 9:24; Jud 6:21; 1 Kings 18:38,39. The fire revealed to David that

God had accepted his repentance, altar, and offerings.

**21:27** David’s repentance and offerings turned away God’s wrath from the people. Compare Num 16:42-48.

**21:29** 16:39.

**22:1-19** David had already conceived the idea of building a temple to God in Jerusalem. He was told that he was not the man for that work but that one of his sons would do it (2 Sam 7:1-17). But David did all he could to make preparations for the building of the temple (v 5). This chapter records these preparations. A site was chosen (v 1), workmen were appointed (vs 2,15,16), materials were provided (vs 3,4,14), encouragement was given (vs 11-13), and helpers were

foreigners who *were* in the land of Israel, and he appointed stone cutters to cut stones to build the house of God. 3 And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the fittings, and more bronze than could be weighed, 4 also cedar trees in abundance. For the Sidonians and Tyrians brought much cedar wood to David.

5 And David said, "My son Solomon *is* young and inexperienced, and the house *that is* to be built for the LORD *must be* exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all countries. *Therefore* I will now make preparations for it." So David prepared abundantly before his death.

6 Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. 7 And David said to Solomon, "My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God, 8 but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house for my name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight. 9 Look, a son will be born to you, who will be a quiet man; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on all sides; for his name will be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. 10 He will build a house for my name; and he will be my son, and *I will be* his father, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.'

11 "Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the LORD your God, as he has said about you. 12 Only may the LORD give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, so that

you may keep the law of the LORD your God. 13 Then you will prosper, if you are careful to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed.

14 "Now, look, taking *much* trouble for the house of the LORD, I have prepared a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weighing, because of its abundance. I have also made ready timber and stone; and you may add to it.

15 "Moreover, *there are* many workmen with you, cutters and workers in stone and timber, and all kinds of skillful men for every kind of work, 16 in gold, silver and brass and iron, without number. Arise *therefore*, and work, and may the LORD be with you."

17 David also commanded all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon, *saying*, 18 "*Is* not the LORD your God with you? And has he *not* given you rest on every side? For he has given the inhabitants of the land into my hands, and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before his people. 19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God. Arise therefore, and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, *so that you can* bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and God's holy articles, into the house that is to be built for the name of the LORD."

**23** So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.

2 And he assembled all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. 3 Now the Levites were counted from the age of thirty years and

appointed and encouraged (vs 17-19). David was not the sort of man to refuse to have anything to do with the building project because he had been rejected as the builder. He did not let any temptation to pride or resentment keep him from helping in any way he could. In this he is a much needed example to us all.

**22:5** "Young" - 1 Kings 3:7.

"Glory" - 2 Chron 2:5. Compare Eph 2:20-22; 1 Pet 2:4-9.

**22:7** 2 Sam 7:2-3.

**22:8** 28:2,3; 1 Kings 5:3.

**22:9** 2 Sam 12:24-25; 1 Kings 4:20-25.

**22:10** 2 Sam 7:13-14.

**22:12** 1 Kings 3:9-12; 2 Chron 1:10. Perhaps a desire for wisdom was produced in Solomon's heart by these words of his father.

**22:13** "Dismayed" - compare Josh 1:6-9. Attempting a great work of God is no easy matter and there may well be fear and discouragement in even the greatest of men.

**22:14** "Taking *much* trouble" - David considered that this was a great work for God (v 5), and he gave it his best efforts, even when he was busy ruling the kingdom, etc. He

did not let other matters distract him from this work. May all God's workmen learn from his example. Compare 1 Cor 3:10-15.

"A hundred thousand talents"- one talent equals 34 kilograms. The amounts of gold and silver here mentioned seem so large that some scholars assume there must be a copying mistake, but there is no evidence of any kind for this. And 2 Chron 1:12-15 speaks of Solomon's immense wealth.

**22:17** 28:1-16.

**22:18** 23:25; 2 Sam 7:1; 23:25.

**22:19** "Seek"- David well knew that the work would not proceed as it should and could unless God was at the center of their desires and efforts. On seeking God see 2 Chron 15:2; Ps 27:8; 34:10; 69:32; Jer 29:13.

**23:1** 28:5; 1 Kings 1:33-40.

**23:2** 28:1.

**23:3** Compare Num 4:1-4. David was concerned for more than mere materials and builders for the temple. He wanted prepared men for the work of the temple after it was built. He was a man of much foresight and careful planning.

over; and their number in the census, man by man, was thirty-eight thousand. 4 Of these twenty-four thousand *were* to supervise the work of the house of the LORD, and six thousand *were* officials and judges, 5 and four thousand *were* doorkeepers, and four thousand praised the LORD with "the instruments which I made," *said David*, "to praise *with*."

6 And David divided them into sections according to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

7 Of the Gershonites *were* Laadan and Shimei.

8 The sons of Laadan: the chief *was* Jehiel, and Zetham and Joel, three. 9 The sons of Shimei: Shelomith and Haziel and Haran, three. These *were* the chiefs of the fathers' *households* of Laadan. 10 And the sons of Shimei *were* Jahath, Zina and Jeush and Beriah. These four *were* the sons of Shimei. 11 And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second: but Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons; therefore they were reckoned as one household of *their* fathers.

12 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four. 13 The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was permanently set apart, he and his sons, to consecrate the most holy things, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to him, and to bless in his name forever. 14 Now *as for* Moses, the man of God, his sons were named among the tribe of Levi.

15 The sons of Moses *were* Gershom and Eliezer.

16 Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel *was* the chief. 17 And the sons of Eliezer *were* Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had no other sons, but there were very many sons of Rehabiah. 18 Of the sons of Izhar, Shelomith *was* the chief. 19 Of the sons of Hebron, Jeriah *was* the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. 20 Of the sons of Uzziel *was* Micah the first, and Jesiah the second.

21 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. 22 And Eleazar died, and had no sons, only daughters; and their kinsmen, the sons of Kish, took them. 23 The sons of Mushi: Mahli and Eder and Jeremoth, three.

24 These *were* the sons of Levi in accordance with the house of their fathers, the chief of the

fathers' *households*, as they were counted by the number of names in their census, who did the work of the service for the house of the LORD, from the age of twenty years and above. 25 For David said, "The LORD God of Israel has given rest to his people, so that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever, 26 and also to the Levites. They will no *longer* carry the tabernacle, or any of its articles for its service."

27 For according to the last words of David the Levites *were* numbered from twenty years old and over; 28 because their responsibility *was* to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courtyards and in the rooms, and in purifying all the holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God; 29 for the Showbread, and for the fine flour for the grain offering, and for the cakes made without yeast, and for *what is baked in* a pan, and for what is fried, and for all *measurements* of quantity and size; 30 and to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and also at evening; 31 and to offer all the burnt sacrifices to the LORD on the Sabbaths, in the new moons and on the appointed festivals, in the *proper* number, in accordance with the ordinance commanded them, regularly, before the LORD; 32 and to keep charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and *to have* charge of the Holy *Place*, and *to have* charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

**24** Now *these are* the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests. 3 And David, with Zadok, of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech, of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to their duties in their service. 4 And there were more chief men found among the sons of Eleazar than among the sons of Ithamar; and *thus* they were divided. Among the sons of Eleazar *were* sixteen chief men of the households of *their* fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the households of their fathers.

**23:4** Judges 26:29; Deut 17:8-13.

**23:6-23** 6:1-48.

**23:24** At first only those 30 years and over were counted (v 30). This was changed to 20 years and over (v 27), possibly because there were not enough men 30 and above for all the various works of the temple, or because David thought it a good thing to introduce young men to the work.

**23:28-32** 9:28-34. The Levites were assistants to the priests and under their authority.

**23:30** "Morning," "evening" – Ex 29:38-41; Num 28:3-8. Praises were to be offered at the times of the daily sacrifices.

"To thank" – note at Lev 7:12,13.

**23:31** "Appointed festivals" – see Leviticus chapter 23.

**23:32** Num 1:53; 3:6-9,38.

**24:1** Ex 6:33.

**24:2** "Died" – Lev 10:1-2; Num 3:4.

**24:3** "Zadok" – Zadok was high priest, along with Ahimelech (2 Sam 8:17). Ahimelech was Abiathar's son (v 6).

5 Thus they were divided by lot, both of these *families*; for the officials of the sanctuary, and officials of the house of God, were from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar.

6 And Shemaiah, the son of Nethaneel, the scribe, *one* of the Levites, wrote their *names* before the king and the leaders and Zadok the priest and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and *before* the heads of the families of the fathers of the priests and Levites, one principal household being taken for Eleazar, and *one* taken for Ithamar.

7 Now the first lot came out for Jehoiarib, the second for Jedaiah, 8 the third for Harim, the fourth for Seorim, 9 the fifth for Malchijah, the sixth for Mijamin, 10 the seventh for Hakkoz, the eighth for Abijah, 11 the ninth for Jeshuah, the tenth for Shecaniah, 12 the eleventh for Eliashib, the twelfth for Jakim, 13 the thirteenth for Huppah, the fourteenth for Jeshebeab, 14 the fifteenth for Bilgah, the sixteenth for Immer, 15 the seventeenth for Hezir, the eighteenth for Aphses, 16 the nineteenth for Pethahiah, the twentieth for Jehezkel, 17 the twenty-first for Jachim, the twenty-second for Gamul, 18 the twenty-third for Delaiah, the twenty-fourth for Maaziah.

19 This *was* the appointed order for them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, in accordance with their rule *handed on* by Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

20 And *these were* the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. 21 Concerning Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, the first *was* Isshiah. 22 Of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. 23 And the sons of Hebron: Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. 24 Of the sons of Uzziel, Michah; of the sons of Michah, Shamir. 25 The brother of Michah *was* Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. 26 The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi; the son of Jaaziah, Beno. 27 The sons of Merari by Jaaziah, Beno and Shoham and Zaccur and Itri. 28 Of Mahli *came* Eleazar, who

had no sons.

29 Concerning Kish: the son of Kish *was* Jerahmeel. 30 And the sons of Mushi, Mahli and Eder and Jerimoth. These *were* the sons of the Levites in accordance with the households of their fathers. 31 These also cast lots just as their brethren, the sons of Aaron, did, in the presence of David the king and Zadok and Ahimelech and the heads of the families of the fathers of the priests and Levites, the heads of the fathers' households just as their younger brothers.

**25** Moreover, David and the commanders of the army set apart *some* of the sons of Asaph and of Heman and of Jeduthun for the service, to prophesy with harps, with lyres, and with cymbals. And the number of those who performed this service *was this*:

2 Of the sons of Asaph, Zaccur and Joseph and Nethaniah and Asarelah; the sons of Asaph *were* under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied under the direction of the king; 3 of Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun, Gedaliah and Zeri and Jeshaiiah Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six; *they were* under the direction of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD; 4 of Heman, the sons of Heman, Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamtiezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth.

5 All these *were* the sons of Heman, the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. 6 All these *were* under the direction of their father for singing *in* the house of the LORD with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman. 7 So their number, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, was two hundred and eighty-eight. 8 And they cast lots for their duties, all alike, the small as well as the great, the teacher as well as the scholar.

9 Now the first lot came out for Asaph to prophecy. They are called seers which meant prophets (v 5; 2 Chron 29:30; 35:15; 1 Sam 9:9).

"To prophesy with" - compare 2 Kings 3:15.

**25:3** "To praise" - 16:41-42.

**25:6** 15:16,19.

**25:7** "Songs of the LORD" - music and singing were regarded as important elements in God's worship. They can be at any time if they are for the Lord, and not for self-promotion and self-glorification.

**25:8** "Learners" - 26:13. Those who had the greatest talent and the most learning and experience were not allowed to

**24:5** "By lot" - v 31; 25:8; 26:13; Josh 13:6; 14:2. Evidently they trusted God to reveal His will by this method. See Prov 16:33.

**24:19** These 24 divisions served one after the other, probably for two weeks at a time. Zechariah the father of John the Baptist was in the eighth division (Luke 1:5,8,9), being descended from Abijah.

**24:23** "Jeriah the first" - or "the sons of Jeriah."

**24:31** "Lot" - v 5.

"Younger" - note that responsibilities were not allotted on the basis of seniority, but in accord with God's choice, regardless of age.

**25:1** All three of these men had the gift of



Joseph; the second to Gedaliah, who with his brothers and sons *were* twelve; 10 the third to Zaccur; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 11 the fourth to Izri; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 12 the fifth to Nethaniah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 13 the sixth to Bukkiah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 14 the seventh to Jesharelah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 15 the eighth to Jeshaiiah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 16 the ninth to Mattaniah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 17 the tenth to Shimei; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 18 the eleventh to Azareel; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 19 the twelfth to Hashabiah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 20 the thirteenth to Shubael; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 21 the fourteenth to Mattithiah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 22 the fifteenth to Jeremoth; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 23 the sixteenth to Hananiah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 24 the seventeenth to Joshbekashah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 25 the eighteenth to Hanani; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 26 the nineteenth to Mallothi; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 27 the twentieth to Eliathah; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 28 the twenty-first to Hothir; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 29 the twenty-second to Giddalti; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 30 the twenty-third to Mahazioth; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve; 31 the twenty-fourth to Romamtiezer; *he*, his sons and his brothers, *were* twelve.

**26** Concerning the divisions of the gatekeepers: of the Korhites *was* Meshelemiah the son of Korah, of the sons of Asaph.

2 And the sons of Meshelemiah *were* Zechariah the firstborn, Jediel the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, 3 Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Elieonai the seventh. 4 And the sons of Obed Edom *were* Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Nethaneel the fifth, 5 Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth; for God had blessed him.

6 Also sons *were* born to his son Shemaiah, who ruled throughout the house of their father, for they *were* mighty men of valour. 7 The sons of Shemaiah: Othni and Rephael and Obed, Elzabad, whose

brothers *were* strong men, Elihu and Semachiah. 8 All these of the sons of Obed Edom. They and their sons and their brothers, able men with strength for the service, *were* sixty-two of Obed Edom.

9 And Meshelemiah had eighteen sons and brothers, strong men.

10 Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Simri the chief (for *though* he was not the firstborn, his father made him chief), 11 Hilkiyah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth. All the sons and brothers of Hosah *were* thirteen.

12 Among these *were* the divisions of the gatekeepers, among the chief men, *having* duties like their relatives to minister in the house of the LORD. 13 And they cast lots, the small as well as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for each gate.

14 And the lot for the east *gate* fell to Shelemiah. Then they cast lots for his son Zechariah, a wise counsellor; and his lot came out for the north *gate*; 15 to Obed Edom for the south gate; and to his sons *the lot fell* for the storehouse. 16 To Shuppim and Hosah *the lot came out* for the west *gate*, with the Shallecheth gate, on the highway which ascends *there*, watch corresponded to watch.

17 Six Levites *were* on the east, four a day on the north, four a day on the south, and two *by* two at the storehouse. 18 At Parbar on the west, four *were* at the highway, *and* two at Parbar.

19 These *are* the divisions of the gatekeepers among the sons of Korah, and among the sons of Merari.

20 And of the Levites, Ahijah *was* over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things.

21 *As concerning* the sons of Laadan, the sons of Laadan the Gershonite, chief fathers of Laadan the Gershonite, *were* Jehieli, 22 *and* the sons of Jehieli: Zetham and his brother Joel, *who were* over the treasures of the house of the LORD.

23 *As for* the Amramites *and* the Izharites the Hebronites *and* the Uzzielites:

24 Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was in charge of the treasures. 25 And his brethren by Eliezer *were* Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son. 26 This Shelomith and his brethren *were* over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the army, had

monopolize this service.

**26:1** "Gatekeepers" – 9:17-27; 16:37,38; Ps 84:10.

**26:4** "Obed-Edom" – 13:13; 2 Sam 6:10.

**26:13** 24:5,31; 25:8.

**26:14** "Shelemiah" – a variant of Meshelemiah.

**26:20** "Dedicated things" – v 26,28; 28:12. Compare Josh 6:17-19. Great wealth was kept in the temple.

**26:26** 2 Sam 8:11.

dedicated. 27 They dedicated *these things* from the plunder won in battles, to maintain the house of the LORD. 28 And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, had dedicated (*and whoever had dedicated anything*), *it was* under the hand of Shelomith and of his brethren.

29 Of the Izharites, Kenaniah and his sons *were* for outside responsibilities over Israel, as officials and judges.

30 *And* of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, a thousand seven hundred strong men, *were* officials among the Israelites on this, the west, side of the Jordan in all the LORD's *appointed* duties, and in the service of the king. 31 Among the Hebronites Jerijah *was* the chief, according to the genealogies of his fathers *households* among the Hebronites. In the fortieth year of the reign of David these *records* were sought out, and there were found among them mighty men of valour at Jazer in Gilead. 32 And his brethren *were* two thousand seven hundred strong men, chief fathers, whom king David made rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, for every duty relating to God and the affairs of the king.

**27** Now the number of the children of Israel *who were* the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officials, *and those* who served the king in any duty of the *military* divisions which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year: Each division *had* twenty-four thousand.

2 Over the first division for the first month *was* Jashobeam, the son of Zabdiel; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 3 *He was* of the children of Perez *and was* the chief of all the captains of the army for the first month.

4 And over the division for the second month *was* Dodai an Ahohite, and Mikloth *was* the chief of his division; in his division also *there were* twenty-four thousand.

5 The third captain of the army for the third month *was* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 6 *This is the* Benaiah *who was* mighty among the thirty, and over the thirty; and in his division *was* his son Ammizabad.

7 The fourth *captain* for the fourth month *was*

Asahel, the brother of Joab, and after him his son Zebadiah; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

8 The fifth captain for the fifth month *was* Shamhuth the Izrahite; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

9 The sixth *captain* for the sixth month *was* Ira, the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

10 The seventh *captain* for the seventh month *was* Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

11 The eighth *captain* for the eighth month *was* Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zarhites; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

12 The ninth *captain* for the ninth month *was* Abiezer the Anetothite, of the Benjamites; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

13 The tenth *captain* for the tenth month *was* Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarhites; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

14 The eleventh *captain* for the eleventh month *was* Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

15 The twelfth *captain* for the twelfth month *was* Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel; and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

16 Furthermore, *these were* over the tribes of Israel: the chief *officer* of the Reubenites *was* Eliezer the son of Zichri; of the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah; 17 of the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; of the Aaronites, Zadok; 18 of Judah, Elihu, *one* of David's brothers; of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; 19 of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; of Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel; 20 of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; of the half tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiiah; 21 of the half *tribe* of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; 22 of Dan, Azareel the son of Jeroham. *These were* the officers over the tribes of Israel.

23 But David did not take the number of those twenty years old and under, because the LORD had said he would make Israel as numerous as the stars of the heavens. 24 Joab, the son of Zeruiah, began to count *them*, but he did not finish, because *God's* wrath fell on Israel for it; nor was the number put in the

**26:29** Judges 23:4.

**27:1-15** All these commanders were chosen from David's greatest warriors - 11:10-31.

**27:16-22** For some reason or other the tribes of Gad and Asher are omitted, the family of Aaron is listed with the tribes, and both halves of the one tribe of Manasseh

had officers appointed to them.

**27:21** "Abner" - 1 Sam 14:50,51; 17:55-58; 26:5-16.

**27:23** "Under" - 21:5 gives the number of those over 20 years of age.

"Stars" - Gen 15:5.

**27:24** "Finish" - 21:6.

account of the chronicles of king David.

25 And over the king's treasures *was* Azmaveth, the son of Adiel; and Jehonathan, the son of Uziah *was* over the storehouses in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles; 26 and Ezri, the son of Kelub, *was* over those who were the farm workers tilling the ground; 27 and over the vineyards *was* Shimei the Ramathite; over the increase of the vineyards for the wine cellars *was* Zabdi the Shiphmite; 28 and over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that *were* in the low-lying plains *was* Baal Hanan the Gederite; and Joash *was* over the stores of oil; 29 and Shitrai the Sharonite *was* over the herds that pastured in Sharon; and Shaphat, the son of Adlai, *was* over the herds *that were* in the valleys; 30 And over the camels *was* Obil the Ishmaelite; and over the donkeys *was* Jehdeiah the Meronothite; 31 and over the flocks *was* Jaziz the Hagerite. All these *were* the officers over king David's property.

32 Also Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counsellor, a wise man, and a scribe; and Jehiel, the son of Hachmoni, *was* with the king's sons; 33 And Ahithophel *was* the king's counsellor; and Hushai the Archite was the king's companion; 34 and after Ahithophel *was* Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar; and Joab was the general of the king's army.

**28** And David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by division, and the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and the stewards over all the property and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers and with the mighty men and with all the valiant men.

2 Then David the king rose to his feet, and said, "Hear me, my brethren, and my people. *As for me*, I *had* in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the

footstool of our God, and had made *things* ready for the building. 3 But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for my name, because you *have been* a man of war, and have shed blood.'

4 "However the LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever; for he chose Judah *to be* the leader, and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he was pleased to make me king over all Israel. 5 And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6 And he said to me, 'Your son Solomon is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him *to be* my son, and I will be his father. 7 Moreover, I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is steadfast in doing my commandments and my judgments, as at this day.'

8 "Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, keep and seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, so that you may possess this good land, and leave *it* as an inheritance for your children after you forever.

9 "And you, Solomon, my son, know the God of your father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever. 10 Be careful now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong, and do it."

11 Then David gave his son Solomon the plan of the portico *of the temple*, and of its buildings and of its treasuries and of its upper rooms and of its inner rooms and of the place of the mercy seat, 12 and the plan of all that he had through the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the rooms around *it*, of the treasuries of the

**27:25-31** These men had charge of the properties and income of the royal court.

**27:32** "Jonathan" – a different Jonathan, of course, from Saul's son and David's friend.

**27:33** 2 Sam 15:12,32,37.

**27:34** "Joab" – 11:6.

**28:1** 22:17. This chapter makes it clear that before the attempt of Adonijah to seize power (1 Kings 1:5-11), all the leaders of Israel knew that David had chosen Solomon to be king in his place.

**28:2** "In my heart" – 17:1,2; 2 Sam 7:2.

"Footstool" – Ps 99:5; 132:7; Isa 60:13.

**28:3** 22:8; 2 Sam 7:5,13.

**28:4** 17:23,27; 2 Sam 7:11-13.

"Judah" – 5:2; Gen 49:10.

**28:5** "Solomon" – 22:9-10.

**28:6,7** 2 Sam 7:12-14.

**28:8** Compare Josh 1:6-9. The land could be kept in possession only in the same way it was originally taken – by following God's commands and obeying His word.

**28:9** "Heart" – 29:17; 1 Sam 16:7; Heb 4:13.

"Seek him" – note at 22:19.

"Forsake. . . forever" – this goes beyond what God Himself had said in 2 Sam 7:14,15.

**28:10** "Sanctuary" – note at Ex 25:8.

**28:12** "Spirit" – v 19. God gave the plans for the temple just as He had for the tabernacle (Ex 25:9,40). It is not surprising then, that the same elements seen in the tabernacle appear again in the temple – most holy place, holy place, ark, altar of incense, table for bread, lampstands, brazen altar, etc.

house of God and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; 13 also for the divisions of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD. 14 *He designated* the gold by weight for *the things to be made* of gold, for all the articles for all kinds of service; *and the silver* by weight for all the articles of silver; for all articles for every kind of service; 15 the weight for the gold candlesticks and for their gold lamps, by weight for each candlestick and for their lamps; and for the silver candlesticks, by weight, *both* for the candlesticks and *also* for its lamps, according to the use of every candlestick. 16 And *he designated* the gold by weight for the tables of Showbread, for each table; and *like-wise* the silver for the silver tables; 17 also pure gold for the forks and the bowls and the cups; and for the golden basins *he designated gold* by weight for each basin; and likewise silver by weight for each silver basin; 18 and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the plan of the chariot of the cherubim, that spread out *their wings*, and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

19 "All *this*," David said, "the LORD caused me to understand in writing by *his* hand on me, all the details of this plan."

20 And David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and do *it*. Do not be afraid or dismayed; for the LORD God, my God, *will be* with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. 21 And, see, the divisions of the priests and the Levites; *they are there* for all the service of the house of God. With you also, for all kinds of workmanship, *will be* every skillful man who is willing, for any kind of service. Also the

officials and all the people *will be* wholly at your command."

**29** Furthermore, David the king said to all the congregation, "My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, *is still* young and inexperienced, and the work is great, for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God. 2 Now for the house of my God, with all my strength, I have made ready the gold for *things to be made* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and the bronze for *things* of bronze, the iron for *things* of iron, and wood for *things* of wood; onyx stones, and *stones* to be set, inlaid *stones*, and stones of various colours, and all kinds of precious stones, and marble in abundance. 3 Moreover, because of my delight in the house of my God, I give the treasure I have of gold and silver for the house of my God, over and above all that I have made ready for the holy house, 4 *namely*, three thousand talents of gold, the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of *its* buildings; 5 the gold for *things* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and for all kinds of work *to be done* by the hands of artisans. And who *now* is willing to consecrate his service today to the LORD?"

6 Then the chief of the fathers and leaders of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officials over the king's work, offered willingly, 7 and gave for the service of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, and ten thousand talents of silver, and eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. 8 And those with whom *precious* stones were found gave *them* into the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9 Then the people rejoiced, because of their willing offering,

**28:13** 23:6; 24:1-3.

**28:19** David, inspired by God's Spirit (v 12) wrote down exactly what God wanted the plans and specifications of the temple to be. Solomon followed them completely (1 Kings 6:38). If Solomon had always followed all the instructions David gave him (v 9), it would have been well. But 1 Kings 11:4 reveals that he did not.

**28:20** 22:13. Compare Josh 1:5-7.

**28:21** "Skillful" – compare Ex 35:25-35; 36:1,2. Whenever there is a special work of God to be done, God will raise up men and give them the various skills needed to do it. Compare Rom 12:5-8; 1 Cor 12:4-6; Eph 4:7-13.

**29:1** "Young" – 22:5; 1 Kings 3:7. Solomon was probably about 21 years of age.

"God" – 22:5; 2 Chron 2:5.

**29:2** 22:3-5,14.

**29:3** "The treasure I have" – David was not

content to provide plunder captured in battles and other possessions belonging to the nation's treasuries; he wanted to give from his personal possessions. See also 21:24,25; 2 Sam 24:24. Alas, that so many now in Christian circles not only are reluctant to give to God's work, they enrich themselves by filling their pockets from what others have given. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

**29:4-7** "Talents" – one talent was about 34 kilograms.

**29:5** "Consecrate his service" – David knew that if they first gave themselves to God they would also give to the work of God. Compare 2 Cor 8:1-5.

**29:7** "Ten thousand darics" – about 84 kilograms.

**29:9** "Willingly" – they followed David's example. The result was joy to them and an abundance for God's work. Compare

for they offered willingly to the LORD with a whole heart. And David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

10 Therefore David praised the LORD before all the congregation, and David said,

"Blessed *are* you, LORD God of Israel,  
our Father, for ever and ever.

11 Yours, O LORD, *is* the greatness,  
and the power, and the glory,  
and the victory, and the majesty;  
for all *that is* in heaven and on earth *is yours*;  
yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you  
are exalted as head over all.

12 Both riches and honour *come* from you,  
and you reign over all,  
and power and might *are* in your hands,  
and *it is* in your hands to make great  
and to give strength to all.

13 Now therefore, our God, we thank you  
and praise your glorious name.

14 "But who *am* I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly in this way? For all things *come* from you, and we have give to you *some* of your own. 15 For we *are* foreigners and settlers before you, as *were* all our fathers. Our days on earth *are* like a shadow, and no one abides. 16 O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have made ready to build you a house for your holy name *comes* from your hand, and is all your own. 17 I also know, my God, that you test the heart, and take pleasure in integrity. As for me, in the integrity of my heart I have willingly offered all these things. And now I have seen with joy your people who are present here making willing offerings to you. 18 O LORD God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this forever in the intentions *and* thoughts of the hearts of your people, and prepare their hearts for yourself. 19 And give my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep your commandments, your testimonies and

your statutes, and to do all *these things*, and to build *your* palace *for* which I have made provision."

20 And David said to all the congregation, "Now praise the LORD your God." And all the congregation praised the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads, and prostrated themselves in the presence of the LORD and the king.

21 And on the following day they offered sacrifices to the LORD, and made burnt offerings to the LORD, a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. 22 And on that day they ate and drank in the LORD's presence with great gladness. And for the second time they made David's son Solomon king and anointed *him* for the LORD *to be* the chief ruler, and Zadok *to be* priest. 23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in the place of his father David, and prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. 24 And all the leaders and the mighty men, and also all the sons of king David, submitted themselves to Solomon the king.

25 And the LORD exalted Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed on him *more* royal majesty than had been on any king in Israel before him.

26 Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27 And the time that he reigned over Israel *was* forty years. He reigned seven years in Hebron, and he reigned thirty-three *years* he in Jerusalem. 28 And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honour, and his son Solomon reigned in his place.

29 Now the acts of David the king, first and last, see, they *are* written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, 30 his whole reign and his might, and the circumstances that came on him and on Israel, and on all the kingdoms of the *other* countries.

Ex 35:4-9,20-29; 36:4-7. See 2 Cor 9:7-11.

**29:11** Ps 62:11; 89:11; 1 Tim 1:17; Rev 5:12,13.

**29:12** 2 Chron 1:12; 20:6; Isa 40:26-31.

**29:14** All we have comes from God. We can give to Him only what He has given to us, and we are but stewards even of that which remains with us (Luke 12:42,43; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 4:1,2; 1 Pet 4:10). David did not grumble that he had to give something to God - he counted it a great privilege.

**29:15** "Foreigners" - Lev 25:23; Ps 39:12; Heb 11:13; 1 Pet 2:11.

"Shadow" - Ps 102:11; 144:4; Eccl 6:12.

**29:17** "Integrity" - Ps 15:1,2; 51:6; Prov 11:20.

"Willingly" - vs 6,9.

**29:18** Faithfulness to God is a very great virtue, and all of us may well pray as David did. See Matt 24:45; 25:23,28-30; Luke 19:17; 1 Cor 4:2.

**29:19** 22:14; 28:9; 29:1,2; Ps 72:1.

**29:22** Compare 12:38-40; 1 Kings 1:33-40.

"Second time" - both Saul and David also had been anointed on two separate occasions - privately, then publicly.

**29:25** 1 Kings 3:13; 2 Chron 1:1,12.

**29:27** 2 Sam 5:4,5; 1 Kings 2:11.

**29:29** "Nathan", "Gad" - no man knows what happened to these two books which, it seems, the writer of Chronicles consulted. About half of the two books of Chronicles is based on the books of Samuel and Kings.

**29:30** "Other countries" - such as Syria, Moab and Edom.



# 2 CHRONICLES

## Author and date:

See the introduction to 1 Chronicles.

## Theme:

Events in the histories of the kings of Judah from Solomon to the fall of Jerusalem. This book covers the same time period as the two books of Kings together – 384 years. This book may be compared with those. However, 2 Chronicles contains the history of the kingdom of Judah and ignores the northern kingdom of Israel, except as it relates to Judah. It seems the writer's purpose (and the Holy Spirit's purpose) was to show God's faithfulness to the covenant He made with David concerning David's dynasty (1 Chron 17:11-14). About half of the contents of 2 Chronicles is not found in the two books of Kings.

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**1** And Solomon, the son of David, was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God *was* with him and exalted him exceedingly.

2 Then Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds and to the judges and to every leader in all Israel, the chief of the fathers. 3 So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon, for the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness, was there. 4 But David had brought the ark of God from Kirjath-Jearim to *the place which* David had prepared for it; for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. 5 Moreover, the bronze altar that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD. And Solomon and the congregation sought it out. 6 And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

7 In that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask. What shall I give you?"

8 And Solomon said to God, "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have caused me to reign in his place. 9 Now, O LORD God, let your promise to my father David be established, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, so that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of yours?"

11 And God said to Solomon, "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked for riches, wealth, or honour, or for the life of your enemies, or even asked for a long life, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself, so that you can judge my people, over whom I have made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honour, such as none of the kings before you had,

and such as those who come after you will not have."

13 Then Solomon returned from the high place that *was* at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of the congregation, to Jerusalem, and reigned over Israel.

14 And Solomon amassed chariots and horsemen, and he had a thousand four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. 15 And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem *as plentiful* as stones, and made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamore trees that *are* in the lowlands. 16 And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt, and linen yarn. The king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. 17 And they imported *each* chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. And by the same means they imported *horses* for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria.

**2** And Solomon determined to build a house for the name of the LORD, and a house for his kingdom. 2 And Solomon assigned seventy thousand men to carry loads, and eighty thousand to cut *stones* in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.

3 And Solomon sent *word* to Hiram, the king of Tyre, saying, "*Deal with me* as you dealt with my father David, when you sent him cedars to build a house for himself to live in. 4 See, I will build a house for the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to him, *and* to burn fragrant incense before him and for the continual Showbread and for the burnt offerings, morning and evening, on the Sabbaths and on the new moons and at the solemn festivals of the LORD our God. This *is an ordinance* forever for Israel.

5 "And the house which I will build *will be* great, for our God *is* greater than all gods. 6 But who is

**1:1** 1 Kings 2:12; 1 Chron 29:23-25.

**1:2-13** 1 Kings 3:4-15. See notes there.

**1:3** "Tabernacle of the congregation" – called this because it was there that God met with man – Ex 25:22; etc.

**1:4** 2 Sam 6:2,17; 1 Chron 15:25-28.

**1:5** Ex 38:1-7.

**1:6** "Burnt offerings" – note at Leviticus chapter 1.

**1:7** "God appeared" – 7:12; Gen 12:7; 16:7; 18:1,2.

"Give you" – 1 Kings 3:5.

**1:9** "Dust of the earth" – Gen 13:16; 22:17; 28:14.

**1:12** 1 Chron 29:25.

**1:14-17** 1 Kings 10:26-29.

**1:15,16** 9:27,28.

**1:17** "Six hundred shekels" – about 7 kilograms.

**2:1** "Name of the LORD" – Solomon did not build the temple for the sake of his own name and fame.

"House for his kingdom" – 1 Kings 7:1-8; Eccl 2:4.

**2:2** Verses 17,18; 1 Kings 5:15-16.

**2:3-16** 1 Kings 5:2-9; 7:13,14. See notes there.

"Hiram" (v 3) is a variant of Hiram.

**2:3** 1 Chron 14:1.

**2:4** "Incense" – Ex 30:1-9.

"Showbread" – Ex 25:30.

"Burnt offerings" – Leviticus chapter 1.

"Festivals" – Leviticus chapter 23. Solomon is explaining to a foreign king something of the worship in Israel.

**2:5** Ex 15:11; 1 Chron 16:25; Ps 135:5; Isa 40:25; 43:10; 44:6; 45:5.

**2:6** 6:18; 1 Kings 8:27.

able to build a house for him, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? Who *am* I then, that I should build a house for him, except only to burn sacrifice before him?

7 "Therefore now send me a man skillful in working with gold and with silver and with bronze and with iron and with purple and crimson and blue, and who is skillful in engraving *to work* with the skillful men who *are* with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom my father David provided.

8 "Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, from Lebanon; for I know that your servants know how to cut timber in Lebanon. And, see, my servants *will be* with your servants, 9 to prepare timber for me in abundance. For the house which I am about to build *will be* great and wonderful. 10 And, see, I will give to your servants, to those who cut timber, twenty thousand measures of crushed wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil."

11 Then Hiram, the king of Tyre, answered in writing, and sent *it* to Solomon, "Because the LORD loves his people, he has made you king over them."

12 Hiram also said, "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given to king David a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, so that he might build a house for the LORD and a house for his kingdom.

13 "And now I have sent a skillful man, endued with understanding, of my father Hiram. 14 He *is* the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father *was* a man of Tyre, skillful in working with gold and with silver, with bronze, with iron, with stone and with timber, with purple, with blue and with fine linen and with crimson and with any kind of engraving, and to execute any design that may be suggested to him. *He can work* with your skillful men, and with the skillful men of my lord David, your father.

15 "Now therefore let my lord send to his servants the wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine, which he has spoken of, 16 and we will cut as

much wood as you need from Lebanon, and we will bring it to you on rafts by sea to Joppa. And you can transport it up to Jerusalem."

17 And Solomon took a count of all the foreigners who *were* in the land of Israel, following the census his father David had taken, and they *were* found *to be* a hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred. 18 And he appointed seventy thousand of them *to be* carriers of loads, and eighty thousand *to be* stone cutters in the mountain, and three thousand six hundred overseers to make the people work.

**3** Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where *the LORD* appeared to his father David, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 2 And he began to build on the second *day* of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.

3 Now these *are the foundations which* Solomon laid for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits, in accordance with the old standard, *was* sixty cubits and the width twenty cubits. 4 And the length *of* the portico that *was* at the front *of the house*, was according to the width of the house, twenty cubits, *and its* height was a hundred and twenty. And inside he overlaid it with pure gold. 5 And the great hall he paneled with fir wood, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set palm trees and chain *designs* in it. 6 And he adorned the house with precious stones; and the gold *was* gold from Parvaim. 7 He also overlaid the house, its beams, posts and walls and its doors, with gold, and engraved cherubim on the walls.

8 And he made the Most Holy *Place of the* house. Its length *was* according to the width of the house, twenty cubits, and its width twenty cubits. And he overlaid it with fine gold, *amounting* to six hundred talents. 9 And the weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper rooms with gold.

10 And in the Most Holy *Place of the* house he

**2:7** Compare Ex 31:3-5; 1 Chron 22:15.

**2:9** "Wonderful" - v 5; 1 Chron 22:5; 29:19.

**2:10** "Twenty thousand measures" - in Hebrew "kors" - probably about 125,000 bushels.

"Twenty thousand baths" - probably about 440 kiloliters.

**2:11** Compare 1 Kings 10:9.

**2:12** Hiram had learned that Jehovah the God of Israel was no mere national God, but the creator of heaven and earth.

**2:13-14** 1 Kings 7:13-14.

**2:17** "David had taken" - 1 Chron 21:1.

**3:1-13** Notes at 1 Kings 6:1-28.

**3:1** 1 Chron 21:18; 22:1. Mount Moriah

is the place where Abraham took Isaac to offer him to God (Gen 22:2,14). On one end of it the Lord Jesus, God's temple (John 2:18-21), was brought down and made whole again.

"Ornan" - a variant of Araunah.

**3:3** "Cubits" - the temple was about 27 meters long and 9 wide.

**3:7** "Cherubim" - Gen 3:24; Ezek 1:5. Cherubim is the Hebrew plural of cherub.

**3:8** "Most Holy Place" - Ex 26:33; Lev 16:1,2. The place was a cube about 9 meters each dimension.

"Talents" - one talent equaled about 34 kilograms.

**3:9** "Fifty shekels" - about 0.6 kilogram.

made two sculptured cherubim, and overlaid them with gold. 11 And the wings of the cherubim *were* twenty cubits long. One wing of *one cherub was* five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house, and the other wing *was also* five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub. 12 And one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing was also five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub. 13 The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits; and they stood on their feet, and their faces *were* inward.

14 And he made the veil *of* blue and purple and crimson and fine linen, and worked cherubim on it.

15 Also at the front of the house he made two pillars thirty-five cubits high, and the capital that *was* on the top of each of them *was* five cubits. 16 And he made chain work, as in the sanctuary, and put *them* on the tops of the pillars; and he made a hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the chain work. 17 And he set up the pillars at the front of the temple, one on the right, and the other on the left, and called the name of the one on the right Jachin, and the name of the one on the left Boaz.

**4** Moreover, he made a bronze altar, twenty cubits in length and twenty cubits in width and ten cubits in height. 2 Also he made a cast metal sea ten cubits from brim to brim, circular in form; and its height was five cubits, and *it took* a cord of thirty cubits to go around it. 3 And below *the rim were* figures of oxen, which completely encircled the sea, ten in a cubit. When *the sea* was cast two rows of oxen *were also* cast.

4 It stood on twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; and the sea was set on top of them, and all their back parts *were* toward the inside. 5 And the thickness of *the sea was* a hand breadth, and its brim like the work of the rim of a cup, like a lily flower; *and* it received and held three thousand baths.

6 He also made ten lavers, and put five on the

right and five on the left, to wash in them. They washed in them the things they offered for the burnt offering, but the sea *was* for the priests to wash in.

7 And he made ten lampstands of gold according to their specification, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left.

8 He made also ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. And he made a hundred basins of gold.

9 And he made the courtyard of the priests, and the great courtyard, and doors for the courtyard, and overlaid their doors with bronze. 10 And he set the sea at the right side of the east end, opposite the south.

11 And Hiram made the pots and the shovels and the basins.

And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God: 12 the two pillars, and the bowl-shaped tops, and the capitals *which were* on the top of the two pillars, and the two woven networks to cover the two bowl-shaped tops of the capitals *which were* on top of the pillars, 13 and four hundred pomegranates on the two woven networks, two rows of pomegranates on each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped tops of the capitals *which were* on the pillars. 14 He also made the stands and made the lavers on the stands, 15 one sea, and twelve oxen under it. 16 Also Hiram *Abi used* burnished bronze to make the pots and the shovels and the forks, and all their articles, for king Solomon for the house of the LORD. 17 The king cast them in the plain of the Jordan, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredathah.

18 And Solomon made all these articles in great abundance, so that the weight of the bronze could not be found out.

19 And Solomon made all the articles that *were* for the house of God, including the golden altar, and the tables on which the Showbread *was placed*, 20 and the lampstands with their lamps with pure gold, to burn before the sanctuary as specified; 21 and *made* the flowers and the lamps and the tongs, *with* gold, solid gold; 22 and the snuffers

**3:14** Ex 26:31-35; Heb 9:3. The veil symbolized the separation of man from the immediate presence of God. At the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus the veil of the temple was torn in two, demonstrating that through His sacrifice every believer now has free access to God (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; Heb 10:19-22).

**3:15-17** 1 Kings 7:15-21. 1 Kings 7:15 and 2 Kings 25:17 say the height of each pillar was 18 cubits. The author's meaning may be that the combined height of the two pillars was roughly 35 cubits.

"Jachin" - probably means "He

establishes", and "Boaz" probably means "in Him is strength."

**4:1** Ex 27:1-2; 43:13-17.

**4:2-5** 1 Kings 7:23-26. "Three thousand baths" (v 5) - about 66 kiloliters (about 17,500 gallons).

**4:6** 1 Kings 7:38,39.

**4:7** Ex 35:31,40; 1 Kings 7:49. There was only one lampstand in the tabernacle.

**4:8** "Tables" - to keep bread on (1 Kings 7:48).

**4:9** "Courtyard" - 1 Kings 6:36; Ex 27:9.

**4:11-16** 1 Kings 7:40-45.

**4:17-22** 1 Kings 7:46-50.



and the basins and the spoons and the censers, *with* pure gold. And the entrance of the house, its inner doors for the Most Holy Place, and the doors of the house of the temple, *were of* gold.

**5** Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished, and Solomon brought in *all* the things that his father David had dedicated, and he put the silver and the gold and all the articles among the treasures of the house of God.

**2** Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. **3** Therefore all the men of Israel assembled around the king in the feast which *was* in the seventh month.

**4** And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark. **5** And they brought up the ark and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy articles that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought these up. **6** And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled with him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, so numerous that they could not be counted or told.

**7** And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, to the sanctuary of the house, into the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim: **8** for the cherubim spread out *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim were a covering over the ark and its poles. **9** And they drew out the poles *of the ark*, so that the ends of the poles of the ark were seen before the sanctuary; but they were not seen outside. And there it is to this day. **10** *There was* nothing in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put *in it* at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

**11** And this happened after the priests had come out of the Holy Place (for all the priests *who were* present were sanctified, *and did not regard their divisions*; **12** also all the Levites *who were* singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and lyres and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests

sounding with trumpets), **13** as the trumpeters and singers in unison were making *themselves* heard with one voice praising and thanking the LORD, and as they raised *their* voice with the trumpets and cymbals and musical instruments, and praised the LORD, *saying*, "For *he is* good; for his mercy *continues on* forever," that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, **14** so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

**6** Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. **2** But I have built a lofty house for you, a place for your dwelling forever."

**3** And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel; and all the congregation of Israel stood.

**4** And he said, "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who has fulfilled with his hands what he spoke with his mouth to my father David, *saying*, **5** 'Since the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there; nor did I chose any man to be a ruler over my people Israel. **6** But I have chosen Jerusalem, so that my name might be there, and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.'

**7** "Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. **8** But the LORD said to my father David, 'Because it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well to have it in your heart. **9** However you shall not build the house, but your son who will be born to you shall build the house for my name.'

**10** "So the LORD has fulfilled his word that he spoke, for I have risen up in the place of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. **11** And I have put the ark in it, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel."

**12** And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread out his hands. **13** For Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long and five cubits wide and three cubits high, and had placed it in the middle

**5:1** "Dedicated" – 1 Chron 22:14; 26:26; 29:3.

**5:2-14** 1 Kings 8:1-11. See notes there.

**5:3** "Feast" – the feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:33-36).

**5:12** 1 Chron 15:16,17,24; 25:1-4.

**5:13** 1 Chron 16:4,34,41; Lev 7:12,13.

**5:14** Compare Ex 40:34,35. This cloud

revealed that the God who had been with Israel when they came out of Egypt, when they worshiped God in the desert, was still with them. The purpose of the temple was the same as that of the tabernacle. See Ex 25:8.

**6:1-40** Notes at 1 Kings 8:12-53.

**6:13** This verse is not in 1 Kings 8.

of the courtyard; and he stood on it, and knelt on his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven, 14 and said,

"O LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God like you in the heavens, or on the earth, who keeps covenant and *shows* mercy to your servants who walk before you with all their hearts. 15 You have kept what you promised to your servant David, my father, and have fulfilled with your hand what you spoke with your mouth, as *it is* today.

16 "Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep what you have promised to your servant David, my father, saying, 'You will not lack a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your children are careful about their way to walk in my law, as you have walked before me.' 17 Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let your word, which you spoke to your servant David, come true.

18 "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? See, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain you; how much less this house which I have built! 19 So have regard for the prayer of your servant, and for his supplication, O LORD my God, to hear the cry and the prayer which your servant is praying before you, 20 that your eyes may be open on this house day and night, on the place of which you have said that you would put your name there, to listen to the prayer which your servant prays toward this place. 21 So hear the supplications of your servant, and of your people Israel, which they will make toward this place. Hear from your dwelling place, from heaven; and when you hear, forgive.

22 "If a man sins against his neighbour, and is made to take an oath, and the oath comes before your altar in this house, 23 then hear from heaven, and act and judge your servants, punishing the wicked by bringing his way on his own head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.

24 "And if your people Israel are defeated by the enemy, because they have sinned against you, and return and confess your name and pray and make supplication before you in this house, 25 then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them again to the land which you gave to them and to their fathers.

26 "When the heavens are shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against you, if they pray toward this place, and confess your name and turn from their sin, when you afflict them, 27 then hear from heaven, and forgive the sin of your servants and of your people Israel, when you have taught them the good way in which they should walk, and send rain on your land, which you

have given to your people as an inheritance.

28 "If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence, if there is blight, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars, if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land, whatever plague or whatever sickness *there may be*, 29 *then* whatever prayer or supplication made by anyone, or by all your people Israel, when each one knows his own plague and his own grief, and spreads out his hands in this house, 30 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and forgive, and render to each man according to all his ways. You know their heart, for you alone know the hearts of the children of men. 31 *Do this* that they may fear you, and walk in your ways as long as they live in the land which you gave to our fathers.

32 "Moreover, concerning the foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, but has come from a far country because of your great name and your mighty hand and your stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house, 33 then hear from heaven, from your dwelling place, and act in accordance with all that the foreigner calls to you for, so that all people of the earth may know your name, and fear you, as your people Israel *do*, and may know that this house which I have built is called by your name.

34 "If your people go out to war against their enemies by the way that you send them, and they pray to you toward this city which you have chosen, and the house which I have built for your name, 35 then from heaven hear their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

36 "If they sin against you (for *there is* no one who does not sin) and you are angry with them, and deliver them up to *their* enemies, and they carry them away captives to a land far off or near, 37 if they take thought in the land where they are carried captive, and turn and pray to you in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong and have acted wickedly'; 38 if they turn back to you with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land which you gave to their fathers, and *toward* the city which you have chosen, and toward the house which I have built for your name, 39 then hear from heaven, from your dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you.

40 "Now, my God, I beseech you, let your eyes be open, and *let* your ears be attentive to the prayer *that is made* in this place.

41 "Now therefore arise, O LORD God,

into your resting place,  
 you, and the ark of your strength.  
 Let your priests, O LORD God,  
 be clothed with salvation,  
 and let your saints rejoice in goodness.  
 42 O LORD God, do not turn away the face  
 of your anointed.  
 Remember *your* mercies to your servant David."

**7** Now when Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the house. 2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. 3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the house, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshipped and praised the LORD, *saying*, "For *he is* good; for his mercy *continues on* forever."

4 Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. 5 And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. 6 And the priests were standing in their places; the Levites also with the LORD's musical instruments, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy *continues on* forever, which were used when David praised. And the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

7 Then Solomon consecrated the middle of the courtyard that was before the house of the LORD, for there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar which Solomon had made was not able to hold the burnt offerings and the grain offerings and the fat.

8 Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great

congregation, from the entrance of Hamath to the river of Egypt. 9 And in the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days and the feast seven days. 10 And on the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had showed to David and to Solomon and to his people Israel.

11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house; and Solomon successfully completed all that came into his heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house. 12 And the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him,

"I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice.

13 "If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send plague among my people, 14 if my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 15 Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer *that is made* in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, so that my name may be there forever, and my eyes and my heart will be there continually.

17 "And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and observe my statutes and my judgments, 18 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, just as I covenanted with your father David, *saying*, "You will not lack a man *to be* ruler in Israel."

19 "But if you turn away and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, 20 then I will pluck them up by the

**7:1** "Fire" – compare Lev 9:23,24; 1 Chron 21:26. In the Bible fire was sometimes a symbol of God's presence (Ex 3:2; 13:21; 19:18; 1 Kings 18:38; Heb 12:29).

**7:2** 5:14.

**7:3** Verse 6; 5:13; 1 Chron 16:34,43.

**7:4-10** 1 Kings 8:62-66.

**7:6** 5:12; 1 Chron 15:16-21.

**7:7** "Offerings" – notes on Leviticus chapters 1 and 3.

**7:8** "Feast" – 5:3; 1 Kings 8:2.

"Hamath", "Egypt" – from the far north of Israel to the far south – the whole land.

**7:11-22** 1 Kings 9:1-9.

**7:12** "Appeared" – 1:7.

"Chosen" – Deut 12:5,11.

**7:13-15** These verses are not in the account in 1 Kings.

**7:13** Observe that the things mentioned here are completely in the control of Jehovah God

(compare Deut 11:17; 28:22-24,38,39).

**7:14** 6:37-39. This is a promise made to Israel as a nation concerning their land. However, there are spiritual principles here which apply to anyone anywhere, to us as individuals or as groups of believers. To experience answered prayer, forgiveness of sins, and revival of spiritual life three things are required – humbling ourselves (Ps 51:17; Isa 66:2; Jam 4:6), seeking God's face (15:2; 1 Chron 22:19; Ps 27:8; 34:10; 69:32; Jer 29:13), and true repentance (Lev 26:40-42; Isa 55:6,7; Ezek 18:30-32; 1 John 1:9). For healing of a whole land, national humility and repentance and seeking God were required.

**7:15** 6:20,40.

**7:17,18** 1 Kings 9:4,5.

**7:19-22** 1 Kings 9:6-9; Lev 26:14,33; Deut 28:15,36,37; 29:24,25,28.

roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, I will hurl from my sight, and cause it *to be* a proverb and a byword among all nations. 21 And *as for* this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land, and to this house?' 22 And the answer will be, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and adopted other gods and worshipped them and served them. Therefore he has brought all this disaster on them.'"

**8** And at the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own house, it came about 2 that Solomon built the cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon and caused the children of Israel to live there. 3 And Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and seized it. 4 And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath. 5 Also he built Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon, fortified cities, with walls, gates and bars, 6 and Baalath and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities and the cities for the horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem and in Lebanon and throughout all the land of his dominion.

7 *As for* all the people *who were* left of the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, who *were* not of Israel 8 *but* the descendants of those *people* who remained after them in the land, whom the children of Israel had not destroyed, Solomon made them forced labourers until this day. 9 But among the children of Israel Solomon did not make any servants for his work; but they *were* warriors and chiefs of his captains and captains of his chariots and horsemen. 10 And these *were* king Solomon's chief officials, two hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people.

11 And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh from the city of David to the house that he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not live in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places* to which the ark of the LORD has come *are* holy."

12 Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built in front of the portico, 13 according to the daily rule, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, *namely*, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Tabernacles. 14 And in accordance with the order of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, and the Levites for their duties, to praise and minister before the priests, according to the daily rule; also the gatekeepers by their divisions at every gate, for so had David the man of God commanded. 15 And they did not depart from the command of the king to the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures.

16 Now all the work of Solomon was carried out from the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD until it was finished. *So* the house of the LORD was completed.

17 Then Solomon went to Ezion-Geber and to Elath, at the sea shore in the land of Edom. 18 And Hiram sent to him ships by the hands of his servants, and servants who knew the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir and brought from there four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and delivered *them* to king Solomon.

**9** And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions, with a very great company and camels that carried spices and gold in abundance and precious stones. And when she had come to Solomon, she talked with him of all that was in her heart. 2 And Solomon answered all her questions; and nothing was hidden from Solomon which he did not tell her. 3 And when the queen of Sheba saw the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, 4 and the food of his table, and the seating of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel, and his cupbearers and their apparel, and his stairway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, no more spirit was left in her.

5 And she said to the king, "*It was* a true report

**8:1-18** Notes at 1 Kings 9:10-28.

**8:2** Apparently these were the villages Solomon first gave Hiram in payment for supplies of materials and workmen. When Solomon paid in money Hiram returned these villages to Solomon.

"Hiram" – a variant of Hiram (also v 18).

**8:7** Gen 15:18-21.

**8:8** "Not destroyed" – Jud 1:21-36.

"Forced labourers" – 2:17,18; 1 Kings 4:6; 9:21,22.

**8:11** "The daughter of Pharaoh" – 1 Kings 3:1; 7:8.

"Holy" – note at Lev 20:7.

**8:12** 4:1.

**8:13** Ex 23:14-17; 29:38-42; Leviticus chapter 23; Num 28:3.

**8:14** 1 Chron 24:1; 25:1; 26:1.

**8:18** "Talents" – one talent equals about 34 kilograms.

**9:1-28** Notes at 1 Kings 10:1-29. God had promised Solomon great wisdom, wealth,

which I heard in my own land about your deeds and your wisdom. 6 However I did not believe their words, until I came and saw *it* with my eyes. And, see, the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me; *for* you surpass the fame that I heard. 7 Happy *are* your men, and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom. 8 Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you to set you on his throne, *to be* king for the LORD your God. Because your God loved Israel he made you king over them to establish them forever, to administer judgment and justice."

9 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold and spices in great abundance and precious stones; nor had there ever been any such spices as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon.

10 And also Hiram's servants and Solomon's servants, who brought gold from Ophir, brought alghum trees and precious stones. 11 And *from* the alghum trees the king made steps for the house of the LORD and for the king's palace, and harps and lyres for the singers; and such had never been seen before in the land of Judah.

12 And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides *gifts in return for* what she had brought to the king. So she turned and went away to her own land, she and her servants.

13 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, 14 besides *that which* traders and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and leaders of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.

15 And king Solomon made two hundred shields *of* hammered gold; six hundred *shekels* of hammered gold went for each shield. 16 And *he made* three hundred *small* shields *of* hammered gold; three hundred *shekels* of gold went for each shield. And the king put them in the house of The Forest of Lebanon.

17 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. 18 And *there were* six steps to the throne with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened to the throne, and arms on each side of the seat, and two lions standing by the arms. 19 And twelve lions stood there on this

side and that side of the six steps. Nothing like it had been made in any kingdom. 20 And all the drinking vessels of king Solomon *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of The Forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold; none *were of* silver. *Silver* was *not* something taken into account in the days of Solomon. 21 For the king's ships went to Tarshish with Hiram's servants; once every three years the ships of Tarshish came bringing gold and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks.

22 And king Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. 23 And all the kings of the earth sought out the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart. 24 And each man brought his present, articles of silver and articles of gold and garments, weapons and spices, horses and mules, so much year by year.

25 And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. 26 And he reigned over all the kings from the *Euphrates* river to the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. 27 And the king made silver in Jerusalem as *common as* stones, and made cedar trees as plentiful as the sycamore trees that *are* in the lowlands. 28 And they brought to Solomon horses out of Egypt and out of all lands.

29 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat? 30 And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 31 And Solomon slept with his ancestors, and he was buried in the city of his father David. And his son Rehoboam reigned in his place.

**10** And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. 2 And it came about when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who *was* in Egypt where he had fled from the presence of king Solomon, heard *it*, that Jeroboam returned from Egypt. 3 And they sent *word* and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4 "Your

riches, and honor (1:11,12). This chapter shows in some measure the fulfillment of that promise.

**9:8** 2:11. "Throne" – observe that she called the throne of Israel the throne of God and speaks of Solomon as being God's representative.

**9:9** "Talents" – one talent equals about 34 kilograms.

**9:21** "Hiram" – a variant of Hiram.

**9:22** 1 Kings 3:13; Eccl 1:16; 2:7-9.

**9:25** Deut 17:16; 1 Kings 4:26.

**9:26** 1 Kings 4:21,24.

**9:27** 2 Chron 1:15-17.

**9:28** 2 Chron 1:16.

**9:29-31** 1 Kings 11:41-43. The author does not record the sad story of Solomon's great sin toward the end of his life (1 Kings 11:1-10).

**9:29** Notes at 1 Chron 29:29.

**9:31** "Slept" – 1 Kings 2:10.

**10:1-19** Notes at 1 Kings 12:1-19.

**10:2** "Jeroboam" – 1 Kings 11:26-40.



father made our yoke hard. Now therefore lighten the hard labour from your father, and his hard yoke that he put on us, and we will serve you."

5 And he said to them, "Come back to me after three days." And the people departed.

6 And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men who had stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "What counsel do you give *me* to give back an answer to this people?"

7 And they spoke to him, saying, "If you are kind to this people and please them and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever."

8 But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men who were brought up with him, who stood in his presence. 9 And he said to them, "What advice do you give so that we can give back an answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke that your father put on us?'"

10 And the young men who were brought up with him spoke to him, saying, "This is how you should answer the people who spoke to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter for us': say to them, 'My little *finger* will be thicker than my father's waist. 11 For whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will put more on your yoke. My father punished you with whips, but I *will punish you* with scorpions.'"

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me on the third day." 13 And the king answered them roughly; and king Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men, 14 and answered them in accordance with the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it. My father punished you with whips, but I *will punish you* with scorpions."

15 So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from God, that the LORD might fulfil his word which he spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel *saw* that the king would

not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying, "What part do we have in David? And *we have* no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel! And now, David, see to your own house." So all Israel went to their tents.

17 But *as for* the children of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram who *was* over the forced labour; and the children of Israel pelted him with stones, so that he died. But king Rehoboam hurriedly got up into *his* chariot to flee to Jerusalem. 19 And Israel rebelled against the house of David, *as it is* to this day.

**11** And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he gathered a hundred and eighty thousand chosen *warriors* who were from the house of Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel, so that he might bring the kingdom back to Rehoboam.

2 But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, the man of God, saying, 3 "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 4 'Thus says the LORD, You must not go up, or fight against your brethren. Each man must return to his house, for this thing is done by me.'"

And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and turned back from going against Jeroboam.

5 And Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6 He built up Bethlehem and Etam and Tekoa 7 and Beth-Zur and Shoco and Adullam 8 and Gath and Mareshah and Ziph 9 and Adoraim and Lachish and Azekah 10 and Zorah and Aijalon and Hebron, which *are* in Judah and in Benjamin, fortified cities. 11 And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil and wine. 12 And *he put* shields and spears in every city, and greatly strengthened them, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

13 And the priests and the Levites who *were* in all Israel from all their territories stood with him. 14 For the Levites left their pasture lands and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem;

of Babylon. Of Judah's kings, several were godly men.

**11:2** "Shemiah" - 12:15.

**11:4** 10:15.

**11:5-23** Most of this material is not found anywhere else in the Bible.

**11:13-14** Probably there were priests who put their material welfare first and stayed as ministers of Jeroboam's idolatrous system of worship (1 Kings 12:28-33). Most of them, however, left their possessions and came to Judah rather than be unfaithful to the Lord. They considered God a greater inheritance than land and property (Num 18:20; Deut 10:9). Compare Luke 14:33; Heb 10:34; 1 Pet 1:4,5.

**11:14** "Their possessions" - Lev 15:32-34;

**10:15** "Ahijah" - 1 Kings 11:29; 12:15.

**10:16** 2 Sam 20:1.

**10:18** "Hadoram" - a variant of Adoniram.

**11:1-4** 1 Kings 12:21-24. Rehoboam's folly was responsible for the division of the kingdom. Israel, the northern kingdom, was governed by a succession of evil monarchs. The nation did not have one good king. There is considerable material about them in 1 and 2 Kings, but very little in the books of Chronicles. The author of these books concentrated on a history of the kings of Judah. After about two hundred years Israel was destroyed by Assyria and the people taken into captivity. Judah, the southern kingdom, lasted for another 130 years when destruction and captivity came at the hand

for Jeroboam and his sons had removed them from acting as priests for the LORD, 15 and he had ordained priests for himself for the high places, and for the demons, and for the calves which he had made. 16 And those out of all the tribes of Israel who had set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, following the *Levites*, to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers. 17 So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong three years; for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.

18 And Rehoboam took for himself Mahalath, the daughter of Jerimoth, the son of David, as *his* wife, *and* Abihail, the daughter of Eliab, the son of Jesse. 19 These bore him children: Jeush and Shamariah and Zaham. 20 And after her he took Maachah, the daughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah and Attai and Ziza and Shelomith. 21 And Rehoboam loved Maachah, the daughter of Absalom, above all his wives and his concubines (for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and begot twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters).

22 And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief *and* leader among his brethren, to make him king. 23 And he acted wisely, and dispersed all his children throughout all the regions of Judah and Benjamin, to every fortified city; and he gave them food in abundance. And he sought many wives *for them*.

**12** And it so happened, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him. 2 And it came about in the fifth

year of king Rehoboam, because they had sinned against the LORD, *that* Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem, 3 with twelve hundred chariots, and sixty thousand horsemen; and the people who came with him from Egypt *were* innumerable: the Lubim, the Sukkiim, and the Ethiopians. 4 And he took the fortified cities which *belonged* to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.

5 Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and *to* the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the LORD, 'You have forsaken me, and therefore I have also left you in the hands of Shishak.'"

6 So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves, and said, "The LORD *is* righteous."

7 And when the LORD saw that they had humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves, *therefore* I will not destroy them, but will grant them some deliverance. And my wrath will not be poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak. 8 Nevertheless they shall become his servants, so that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of *other* lands."

9 So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house. He took everything, and also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made. 10 In their place king Rehoboam made bronze shields, and entrusted *them* into the hands of the chief of the guard, who guarded the entrance of the king's house. 11 And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guard came and carried

Num 35:2-5; Josh 21:1-3.

**11:15** 1 Kings 12:31; 13:33.

"Demons" – see Deut 32:17; 1 Cor 10:20.

**11:16** God had a remnant of people in the northern kingdom who rejected Jeroboam's apostate religious system, and came to God's appointed place of worship.

**11:17** After 3 years they could see that spiritual conditions in the southern kingdom were deteriorating as they had in the northern kingdom (12:1,2; 1 Kings 14:22-24).

**11:21** Deut 17:17; Gen 30:1; 2 Sam 3:2-5; 1 Kings 11:1.

**11:23** He sent them away and gave them opportunities to enjoy themselves. He thus avoided a struggle for succession to the throne.

**12:1-16** 1 Kings 14:25-31.

**12:1** "Forsook" – 1 Kings 14:22-24 describes their sin. After becoming strong did Rehoboam think he no longer needed God? Prosperity and security may be welcomed as the gifts of God, but it is at such times that many people forsake Him.

"All Israel" – here and often throughout

2 Chronicles (but not always – 10:16) this means the southern kingdom of Judah.

**12:2** 1 Kings does not give the reason for this attack by Shishak. More than once God sent enemy armies against His people to punish them for their sins (Lev 26:25; Deut 28:49; Jud 2:11-15; 1 Kings 11:14; 2 Kings 17:5-7; Isa 10:5,6; Jer 1:14-16). See also 14:6.

**12:4** "Cities" – Rehoboam's preparations for defense (11:5-12) came to nothing when God decided to punish Judah. Compare Ps 127:1.

**12:5** "Shemaiah" – 11:2.

"Therefore" – 15:2; Deut 28:15; Ps 18:25,26.

**12:6,7** God loves to see proud man humbling himself and the arrogance of sinful man vanishing away – 1 Kings 21:29; Isa 2:11-18; 66:2; Jam 4:6.

**12:8** "Know" – God wants His people to learn important truth through any disasters that may come on them. Observe that God indicates that He, and not Rehoboam, is the real king of Judah.

them, and *then* brought them back to the guardroom.

12 And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so that he did not completely destroy *him*; and also in Judah things went well.

13 So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned. Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah; *she was* an Ammonite. 14 And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.

15 Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and the *book* of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And *there were* continual wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 16 And Rehoboam slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David; and his son Abijah reigned in his place.

**13** Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam, Abijah began to reign over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Michaiah; *she was* the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there *was* battles between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3 And Abijah drew up the battle lines with an army of valiant warriors, four hundred thousand chosen men. Jeroboam also drew up the battle lines against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, strong and brave men.

4 And Abijah stood up on Mount Zemaraim, which *is* in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, "Hear

me, Jeroboam, and all Israel! 5 Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? 6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. 7 And vain men gathered around him, wicked men, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them.

8 "And now you think to oppose the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and you *are* a great multitude, and *there are* with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made as gods for you. 9 Have you not expelled the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made priests for yourselves according to the custom of the nations of *other* lands? So that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams, *he* can become a priest for *those which are* not gods.

10 "But as for us, the LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, who serve the LORD, *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *attend to their* work; 11 and each morning and each evening they burn sacrifices and fragrant incense to the LORD. *Also they arrange* the Showbread on the pure table, and the gold lampstands with their lamps, to burn every evening. For we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but you have forsaken him. 12 And, see, God himself *is* with us as *our* commander, and his priests with signal trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers; for you will not succeed."

13 But Jeroboam had placed an ambush to come from their rear, so that they were in front of Judah

**12:12** "Humbled himself" – vs 6,7.

"Well" – 19:3. In the midst of great evil God does not overlook the good, small as it may be. And He does not bring final and complete judgment and punishment until a people's iniquity is full. Compare Gen 6:5-8; 15:16; Ps 10:1.

**12:13** "To put his name" – 6:6.

"Ammonite" – 1 Kings 14:21,31.

**12:14** Here is given one of the principal reasons for the evil in the world. Compare Ps 14:2,3; etc.

**12:15** 9:29.

**12:16** "Slept" – 1 Kings 2:10.

**13:1-2** 1 Kings 15:1,2,6.

"Daughter" – in Hebrew the word may also indicate "granddaughter."

**13:4-12** Abijah was far from practicing what he preached (1 Kings 15:3,4). Like many, it seems he thought the form of religion was all that God required. His victory was more a sign of God's disapproval of

Jeroboam, than of His approval of Abijah.

**13:4** "All Israel" – here means the northern kingdom. See 12:1.

**13:5** "David" – 7:17,18; 1 Chron 17:13,14.

"Salt" – Lev 2:13 (note); Num 18:19; 2 Kings 2:20.

**13:6** 1 Kings 11:26.

**13:7** "Young" – actually Rehoboam was 41 years old when Jeroboam rebelled against him (12:13).

**13:8** "LORD" – he is saying that the northern kingdom was not the kingdom of Jehovah, only Judah was.

"Golden calves" – 1 Kings 12:28.

**13:9** "Priests" – 11:14; 1 Kings 12:31.

"Not gods" – Ps 115:2-8; Is 37:19; Jer 2:11; 16:20; Gal 4:8.

**13:10** This was not altogether true – see 1 Kings 15:3.

**13:11** Ex 25:30-39; 29:38; Lev 24:5-9. They kept up the outward forms of worship.

**13:12** Num 10:8-9.

and the ambush *was* behind them. 14 And when Judah looked back, they saw the battle *was* in front and in the rear; and they cried out to the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. 15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout, and when the men of Judah shouted, it came about that God struck down Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hands. 17 And Abijah and his people killed them in a great slaughter, so five hundred thousand chosen men of Israel fell dead. 18 Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.

19 And Abijah pursued Jeroboam, and took cities from him: Bethel with its towns, and Jeshanah with its towns, and Ephraim with its towns. 20 And Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah, and the LORD struck him, and he died.

21 But Abijah became powerful. And he married fourteen wives, and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. 22 And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways and his words, *are* recorded in the writings of the prophet Iddo.

**14** So Abijah slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David; and his son Asa reigned in his place. In his days the land was quiet for ten years.

2 And Asa did *what was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God; 3 for he took away the altars of the foreign *gods*, and the high places, and broke down the images and cut down the *idolatrous* groves, 4 and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to obey the law and the commandments. 5 Also he took away the high places and the images out of all the cities of Judah; and the kingdom was peaceful under him. 6 And he built fortified cities in Judah; for the land had rest, and he had no war in those

years, because the LORD had given him rest.

7 Therefore he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities, and make walls around *them*, and towers, gates, and bars, *while* the land *is* still before us; because we have sought the LORD our God. We have sought *him*, and he has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered.

8 And Asa had an army *of men* who carried shields and spears, three hundred thousand from Judah, two hundred and eighty thousand from Benjamin who carried shields and drew bows. All these *were* strong and brave men.

9 Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million, and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. 10 Then Asa went out against him, and they drew up the battle lines in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

11 And Asa cried out to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, *it is* nothing for you to help, whether with many or with the powerless. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on you, and in your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, you *are* our God. Let not man prevail against you."

12 So the LORD struck down the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13 And Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them to Gerar. And the Ethiopians were overthrown, so that they could not recover; for they were destroyed before the LORD and before his army. And *Judah* carried away a very large amount of plunder. 14 And they struck all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD came on them. And they plundered all the cities, for there was a very large amount of plunder in them. 15 They also struck the livestock camps, and carried away large quantities of sheep and camels, and returned to Jerusalem.

**15** And the Spirit of God came on Azariah, the son of Oded, 2 and he went out to meet Asa, and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you when you are

**13:14** "Cried out" – 14:11; 1 Chron 5:20.

**13:18** 14:11; 16:7; 1 Chron 5:20; Ps 18:47; 22:5; Eph 6:10.

**13:20** 1 Kings 14:10,20.

**13:22** 9:29; 12:15. No man knows what became of these writings.

**14:1** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**14:2,3** Notes at 1 Kings 15:11-14.

**14:4** "Seek" – Asa was concerned with far more than the outward symbols of religion.

**14:5** "High places" – note at 1 Kings 3:2.

**14:6** "Rest" – throughout the historical books, after the land was conquered, we see that peace was a gift of God for righteous behavior, war was a punishment for national sin. See note at 12:2.

**14:9** "Army of a million" – in Hebrew "an

army of a thousand thousands", or "an army of thousands upon thousands."

"Mareshah" – this happened after the 10 years of peace (v 1). Mareshah was a town on the plains to the southwest of Jerusalem. **14:11** 13:14,15,18; 1 Sam 14:6; 17:45; Ps 44:5-8; 60:11,12; 108:12,13; 1 Cor 15:57.

**14:14** "Fear" – 17:10; Gen 35:35; Deut 2:25; 11:25; 1 Chron 14:17.

**15:1** "Spirit of God" – 20:14; 24:20; Num 11:25,26; Jud 15:14; 24:2; 1 Sam 10:10; 16:13; 1 Chron 12:18.

**15:2** "With you when" – in other words God would not aid them in battle or give them peace and prosperity if they broke His covenant, despised His word, and turned

with him; and if you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. 3 Now for a long time Israel *was* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without the law. 4 But when they in their trouble turned to the LORD God of Israel and sought him, he was found by them. 5 And in those times *there was* no peace to anyone who went out, or to anyone who came in, but *there were* great troubles to all the inhabitants of the countries. 6 And nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city; for God troubled them with every kind of distress. 7 Be strong therefore, and do not let your hands be weak; for your work will be rewarded."

8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from the hill country of Ephraim, and repaired the altar of the LORD that was before the portico of the LORD.

9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim and Manasseh and from Simeon who had settled among them; for many defected to him out of Israel when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him.

10 So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11 And at that time they offered to the LORD seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep from the plunder *which* they had brought. 12 And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul, 13 that whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14 And they swore to the LORD with a loud voice,

their backs on Him.

"Found by you" – a wonderful promise valid in all times to all people – 7:14; Ps 9:10; Isa 45:19; 55:6,7; Jer 29:13; Matt 7:7,8; Jam 4:8.

**15:3** The priests had failed in their duties to teach the Word of God (Lev 10:10,11). For a considerable portion of Judah's history there was a dearth of the word of God, written or spoken. Compare 1 Sam 3:1; Amos 8:11,12.

**15:4** Deut 4:29.

**15:5** Jud 5:6.

**15:6** "Distress" – conditions that will prevail again before this age ends – Matt 24:7.

**15:7** Josh 1:7,9; Ps 18:20; 58:11; Prov 14:14; Jer 31:16.

**15:8** 2 Chron 4:1; 8:12.

"Idols" – apparently, the work begun in 14:3-5 had not been finished.

"Altar" – 4:1; 8:12. While altars to other gods (14:3) were being used, the altar of the true God was allowed to fall into

and with shouting and with trumpets and with cornets. 15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.

16 And he also removed Maachah, the mother of Asa the king, from *being* queen, because she had made an idol in a grove. And Asa cut down her idol, and crushed *it* and burned *it* at the brook Kidron. 17 But the high places were not taken away out of Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was blameless all his days. 18 And he brought the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels into the house of God.

19 And there was no *more* war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.

**16** In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to prevent anyone going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah.

2 Then Asa brought silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and sent *it* to Ben-Hadad king of Syria, who lived at Damascus, saying, 3 "*There is* a treaty between me and you, as *there was* between my father and your father. See, I have sent you silver and gold. Go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will depart from me."

4 And Ben-Hadad listened to king Asa, and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they attacked Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. 5 And it came about, when Baasha heard *it*, that he stopped the building of Ramah, and let his work cease. 6 Then Asa the king took along all Judah,

disrepair. Compare 1 Kings 18:30.

**15:9** 11:13-17.

**15:11** 14:13-15.

**15:12** "Covenant" – Ex 19:5; Josh 8:30-35; 24:25; 1 Sam 11:14; 2 Chron 23:16; 29:10; 34:31. The nation Israel was a people in covenant relationship with God and their whole history depended on whether they obeyed the covenant.

**15:13** "Put to death" – if the people would not seek Jehovah the true God, this would show their intention to follow other gods. According to the laws of God's covenant with them the penalty for going after other gods was death – Ex 22:20; Deut 13:5-9.

**15:16-18** 1 Kings 15:13-15.

**15:16** 14:2-5; Ex 34:13; 14:2-5.

**15:17** "Blameless" – in Hebrew "shalem", meaning complete, full, whole, at peace, peaceful, perfect in covenant relationship, etc.

**16:1-6** Notes at 1 Kings 15:16-22.

"Abel-maim" (v 4) – also known as "Abel-Beth-Maachah."



and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber which Baasha was using in building, and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.

7 And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him, "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hands. 8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a huge army, with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hands. 9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* perfect toward him. You have acted foolishly in this; therefore from now on you will have wars."

10 Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in a prison; for *he* was enraged at him because of this *thing*. And at that same time Asa oppressed *some* of the people.

11 And, see, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they *are* written in the book of The Kings of Judah and Israel. 12 And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. Though his disease *was* very *severe*, yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians. 13 And Asa slept with his ancestors, dying in the forty-first year of his reign. 14 And they buried him in his own tomb, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him on the couch which was filled with perfumes and various kinds of *spices* prepared by the perfumer's art; and they made a very great fire for him.

**17** And his son Jehoshaphat reigned in his place, and strengthened himself against Israel. 2 And he placed forces in all the fortified

**16:7-8** Asa had every reason to trust in the Lord (v 8), but he now put more confidence in human means than in God. The result was his spiritual downfall. In his death he was honored for his faithfulness (v 14), but he had to pay for his unfaithfulness. It comes naturally to all men to trust in what they can see rather than in the unseen God. Let us rather follow the example of Paul in 2 Cor 4:18.

**16:9** A great promise for us all. Compare Ps 33:13-19; Prov 15:3; Zech 4:10.

**16:10** "Angry" – it is a terrible thing to be angry with those who tell us the truth. And it is not at all uncommon. See 1 Kings 18:16,17; 22:8; John 8:40; Acts 7:57,58; Gal 4:16. Let us rather be angry with those faults in us that makes the truth hard to bear.

**16:11-14** 1 Kings 15:23-24.

**16:12** "Physicians" – Asa was not condemned for seeking help from physicians but for ignoring the Lord. It is sad that many Christians follow his bad example and, when

cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken.

3 And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David, and did not seek out the Baals, 4 but sought the *LORD* God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not according to the deeds of Israel. 5 Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hands. And all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honour in abundance. 6 And his heart felt exalted in the ways of the LORD, and he removed the high places and *idolatrous* groves from Judah.

7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent his officials Ben-Hail and Obadiah and Zechariah and Nethaneel and Michaiah to teach in the cities of Judah. 8 And with them *he sent* the Levites Shemaiah and Nethaniah and Zebadiah and Asahel and Shemiramoth and Jehonathan and Adonijah and Tobijah and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them the priests Elishama and Jehoram. 9 And they taught in Judah, and *had* the book of the law of the LORD with them, and they travelled about among all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

10 And the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat. 11 Also *some* of the Philistines brought presents and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat, and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred male goats.

12 And Jehoshaphat became very great, and he built forts and store cities in Judah. 13 And he had large supplies in the cities of Judah; and the warriors, strong *and* brave men, *were* in

sick, do not think of God but only of medicines and doctors. Note on human remedies at 2 Kings 20:7.

**16:13** "Slept" – 1 Kings 2:10.

**16:14** "Fire" – Jer 34:5.

**17:1** 1 Kings 15:24; 22:41.

**17:2** 15:8.

**17:3** 2 Kings 18:3.

"Baals" – note at Jud 2:11.

**17:4** 1 Kings 12:28-33.

**17:6** "Idolatrous groves" – or "Asherah poles." His father Asa had done the same thing – 14:3; 15:17. This suggests that after the good kings of Judah destroyed such things the people began to make them again. It required a constant effort to keep people from idolatry.

**17:7-9** 19:4-10; Lev 10:11. The teaching of the law was basic to the reform of Jehoshaphat, as it was under Josiah (34:14-32), and Ezra (Neh 8:1-9). There can be no true spiritual awakening and progress without the teaching of God's Word.

**17:10** 14:14; 1 Chron 14:17.

Jerusalem. 14 These *are* their numbers according to the houses of their fathers: from Judah, the commanders of thousands *were* Adnah the chief, and with him three hundred thousand strong and brave men; 15 and next to him *was* commander Jehohanan, and with him two hundred and eighty thousand; 16 and next to him *was* Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself to the LORD, and with him two hundred thousand strong and brave men; 17 and from Benjamin, Eliada a strong, brave man, and with him two hundred thousand men armed with bow and shield; 18 and next to him *was* Jehozabad, and with him a hundred and eighty thousand equipped for war.

19 These waited on the king, besides *those* whom the king put in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

**18** Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and he allied himself by marriage to Ahab. 2 And after *some* years he went down to Ahab at Samaria. And Ahab slaughtered a great many sheep and oxen for him, and for the people who *were* with him, and persuaded him to go up *with him* to Ramoth-Gilead.

3 And Ahab, king of Israel, said to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, "Will you go with me to Ramoth-Gilead?"

And he answered him, "I *am* as you *are*, and my people as your people, and *we will be* with you in the war."

4 And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."

5 Therefore the king of Israel gathered together four hundred of the prophets and said to them, "Shall we go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?"

And they said, "Go up, for God will deliver *it* into the king's hands."

6 But Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not here also a prophet of the LORD so that we might consult him?"

7 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "*There is* still one man through whom we may consult the LORD, but I hate him, because he has never prophesied good about me, but always disaster. He *is* Micaiah, the son of Imla."

And Jehoshaphat said, "May the king not say so."

8 And the king of Israel called for one *of his*

officers, and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah the son of Imla."

9 And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, each of them, sat on his throne, clothed in *his royal* robes, and they sat in an open place near the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets prophesied before them. 10 And Zedekiah, the son of Kenaanah, had made iron horns for himself, and he said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you will push Syria until they are destroyed.'"

11 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper. For the LORD will deliver *it* into the hands of the king."

12 And the messenger who went to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Look, with one accord the words of the prophets are favorable for the king, so please let your word be like one of theirs, and speak favorably."

13 And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, I will speak just what my God says."

14 And when he was come to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?"

And he said, "Go up, and prosper; for they will be delivered into your hands."

15 And the king said to him, "How many times shall I adjure you in the name of the LORD to tell me nothing but the truth?"

16 Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master; so let each one of them return to his house in peace.'"

17 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you *that* he would not prophesy good about me, but disaster?"

18 Again *Micaiah* said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing at his right hand and *at* his left. 19 And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab king of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?' And one spoke saying this, and another saying that. 20 Then a spirit came and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.' And the LORD said to him, 'How?' 21 And he said, 'I will go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And *the LORD* said, 'You will entice *him*, and also prevail. Go and do so.'

22 "Now therefore, see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours,

**17:19** Verse 2; 11:5-12.

**18:1-34** Notes at 1 Kings 22:1-35.

**18:1** "Marriage" – throughout their history there had been frequent battles between Judah and Israel (13:2; 16:1; 1 Kings 15:6,16). Perhaps Jehoshaphat hoped to end this trouble by a marriage alliance with

the king of Israel. But because Ahab was an evil man this was an error which later had very sad results in Judah. See note at 1 Kings 22:2. God's people should never do a wrong thing hoping that good may result from it.

**18:4** 1 Sam 23:2,4,9; 2 Sam 2:1.

and the LORD has spoken disaster against you."

23 Then Zedekiah, the son of Kenaanah, came near, and struck Micaiah on the cheek and said, "Which way did the Spirit of the LORD go from me to speak to you?"

24 And Micaiah said, "Look, you will see on that day when you go into an inner room to hide yourself."

25 Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son, 26 and say, 'Thus says the king, Put this *fellow* in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace.'"

27 And Micaiah said, "If you at all return in peace, *then* the LORD has not spoken through me." And he said, "Listen, all you people."

28 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-Gilead. 29 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself, and go into the battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into the battle.

30 Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who *were* with him, saying, "Do not fight with small or great, but only with the king of Israel."

31 And it happened, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It *is* the king of Israel." Therefore they turned about to fight against him. But Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God drew them away from him. 32 For it happened, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 33 And *some* man drew a bow at random, and hit the king of Israel in a joint of the armour; therefore he said to his charioteer, "Turn around, and take me away from the army lines; for I am wounded."

34 And the battle increased that day. However the king of Israel propped *himself* up in *his* chariot opposite the Syrians until evening; and at sunset he died.

**19** And Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, returned to his house at Jerusalem in peace. 2 And Jehu, the son of Hanani, the seer, went out to meet him and said to king Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the ungodly, and love those who hate the LORD, and so bring wrath on you from the LORD's presence? 3 Nevertheless, there are good things found in you, for you took away the *idolatrous* groves from the land, and prepared your heart to seek God."

4 And Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers. 5 And he appointed judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, 6 and said to the judges, "Watch what you do, for you judge not for man but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment. 7 Therefore now let the fear of the LORD be on you. Be careful what *you* do, for the LORD our God *will have* no *part in* evil or favoritism or taking bribes."

8 Moreover, in Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed *some* of the Levites and *of* the priests and of the chiefs of the fathers' *households* of Israel, to *pronounce* the judgments of the LORD, and for controversies. They lived in Jerusalem. 9 And he charged them, saying, "You shall do so in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. 10 And whatever case comes to you from your brethren who live in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, you must warn them not to trespass against the LORD, and *so bring* wrath on you and on your brethren. Do this, and you will not trespass.

11 "And, see, Amariah, the chief priest, *is* over you in all the LORD's matters; and Zebadiah, the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all the king's matters. Also the Levites *will be* your officials. Act courageously, and the LORD will be with the good."

**19:2** "Jehu" – 1 Kings 16:1. Jehu's father had suffered at the hands of Jehoshaphat's father because he rebuked him and told him the truth (16:7-10). This knowledge did not prevent Jehu from doing his duty. In every generation God needs men who will stand against wrong regardless of the consequences.

"Hate" – Ps 139:21. Compare 2 Cor 6:14-18.

"Wrath" – Ps 90:7-11.

**19:3** "Good" – 12:12; 1 Kings 14:13. God is a just judge who rebukes what should be rebuked, and commends what is good. His servants should follow Him in this.

"Idolatrous groves" – or "Asherah poles"

– 12:12,14; 17:6. Note at Jud 3:7.

**19:4** "Ephraim" – 15:8. The king was not content merely to send others (17:7-9).

**19:6** Deut 1:16,17; 16:18-20; Ps 82.

**19:7** "Fear of the LORD" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14.

"Iniquity. . .bribes" – Gen 18:25; Deut 10:17-18; 32:4; Rom 2:11; Col 3:25.

**19:8** 17:8-9.

**19:9** 2 Sam 23:3-4.

**19:10** "Cities" – Deut 17:8.

"Against the LORD" – Deut 9:16; 1 Sam 2:25; 12:23; Ps 51:4.

**19:11** "The good" – a surprising number of people think God will be with them even if they do evil.

**20** And it happened after this *that* the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, and with them *others* besides the Ammonites, came to war against Jehoshaphat.

2 Then someone came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A huge horde is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and, see, they *are* in Hazazon Tamar, that is, Engedi." 3 And Jehoshaphat was afraid, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 And Judah gathered together to ask the LORD *for help*. They came out of all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD.

5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new courtyard, 6 and said,

"O LORD God of our fathers, *are* you not God in heaven? And do you *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? And *are not* power and might in your hands, so that no one is able to withstand you? 7 *Are* you not our God, *who* drove out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of your friend Abraham forever? 8 And they have lived in it, and have built you a sanctuary in it for your name, saying, 9 'When disaster comes on us, *like* the sword, judgment, or plague, or famine, if we stand before this house, and in your presence (for your name *is* in this house) and cry out to you in our trouble, then you will hear and help.'

10 "And now, see, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt (but they turned from them and did not destroy them), 11 see, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. 12 O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power against this huge horde that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do. But our eyes *are* on you."

**20:2** "Sea" – the Dead Sea.

**20:3** "Seek" – 18:4; 19:3.

**20:5-12** This prayer is a good example of how a godly leader should look to God in time of danger and need, and rely on God alone.

**20:6** 25:8; Deut 4:39; 1 Chron 29:11,12; Dan 4:34,35.

**20:7** "Drove out" – Josh 21:43-45.

"Your friend Abraham" – Isa 41:8; Jam 2:23.

**20:8** "Sanctuary" – 5:1; note at Ex 25:8.

**20:9** 6:20,28-30.

**20:10** Num 20:21; Deut 2:4,9,19.

**20:11** Compare with psalm 83.

**20:12** "Judge them" – Jud 11:27.

"Our eyes are on you" – Ps 25:15; 121:1-2; 123:2; Micah 7:7; Heb 12:2. Often God's servants do not know what to do. But there is one who does know and who

13 And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives and their children.

14 Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the middle of the congregation, 15 and he said,

"Listen, all Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you king Jehoshaphat. Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid or dismayed because of this large horde; for the battle *is* not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. Look, they will come up by the cliff of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You will not *need* to fight in this *battle*. Take up your position, stand *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or dismayed. Tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *will be* with you.'"

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed *his* head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem prostrated themselves before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. 19 And the Levites of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a very loud voice.

20 And they got up early in the morning, and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they were going out, Jehoshaphat stood and said,

"Hear me, O Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established. Believe his prophets, and you will succeed."

21 And when he had conferred with the people, he appointed singers for the LORD to praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say,

"Praise the LORD; for his mercy *continues on* forever."

will instruct and help those who look to Him. **20:14** 15:1; 24:20.

**20:15-17** 32:7,8; Ex 14:13,14; 1 Sam 17:47. There were times when God's servants had to fight. At other times they watched God fight for them.

**20:18** 7:3; Gen 24:26; Ex 4:31.

**20:20** "Believe" – Ps 4:5; 115:9; Isa 7:9; John 14:1.

"Prophets" – it is not possible to have faith in the one true God without believing the revelation He has given through His true prophets. We have this full revelation in the Bible.

**20:21** "Praise" – he could praise, and cause others to praise, because he really believed the word God had spoken through the prophet in vs 15-17.

"Beauty of holiness" – Ps 29:2. Note on holiness at Lev 20:7.

22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set an ambush against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah, and they were struck down. 23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, to kill and destroy *them* completely. And when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, each one helped to destroy another.

24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked toward the horde, and saw that they *were* dead bodies fallen to the earth; and no one escaped. 25 And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their plunder, they found among them a great quantity of riches and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and it was so much they spent three days gathering the plunder. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the valley of Berachah, for there they praised the LORD. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Berachah to this day.

27 Then they returned, each man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in front of them, to enter Jerusalem again with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice over their enemies. 28 And they came into Jerusalem with lyres and harps and trumpets to the house of the LORD.

29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries, when they heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel. 30 So the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God gave him rest all around.

31 And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. *He was* thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah. *She was* the

daughter of Shilhi. 32 And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not depart from it, doing what *was* right in the sight of the LORD. 33 However the high places were not taken away, for the people still had not prepared their hearts for the God of their fathers.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, see, they *are* written in the book of Jehu, the son of Hanani, who *is* mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

35 And after this Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. 36 And he allied himself with him to have ships go to Tarshish. And they made the ships in Ezion Geber. 37 Then Eliezer, the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your work." And the ships were destroyed, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

**21** Now Jehoshaphat slept with his ancestors, and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his place. 2 And he had brothers, Jehoshaphat's sons Azaryahu and Jehiel and Zechariah and Azariah and Michael and Shephatiah. All these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. 3 And their father gave them great gifts of silver and of gold and of precious things, with fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he *was* the firstborn.

4 Now when Jehoram took over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also *some* of the leaders of Israel. 5 Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6 And he walked in the way of

**20:22-25** Here we see something of the results of faith expressed in songs of praise.

**20:23** God caused this confusion in the ranks of Judah's enemies. Compare Jud 7:22; 1 Sam 14:20.

**20:26** "Berachah" – this is a Hebrew word meaning "praise." They did not praise themselves or their skill in battle. They praised the only One who is ever fully worthy of it.

**20:29** 14:14; 17:10.

**20:30** 14:5-7; 15:15; 1 Chron 22:8,9,18.

**20:33** "High places" – 17:6. He removed them early in his reign but when the people rebuilt them he let them remain.

**20:35-37** 1 Kings 22:48-49. Jehoshaphat had married his son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter of Ahab (21:4-6; 2 Kings 8:17-18, 25-26). Although he had already been warned against an association with the house of Ahab and had accepted the warning (19:2-4), he now establishes a business association with Ahab's wicked son Ahaziah. A tendency to bad alliances was

a weakness in Jehoshaphat's character, as it has been in many people since. We should be on our guard against it (2 Cor 6:14-18). It can result in spiritual disaster. If we want God's blessing on our projects they should be undertaken and carried forward in God's way.

**21:1** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**21:2** "Israel" – as often in 2 Chronicles this means the kingdom of Judah.

**21:3** Here is another mistake of Jehoshaphat – Jehoram was the worst of his sons (v 13), but he chose Jehoram as his successor simply because he was his firstborn. In this he did not follow his great ancestor David, and because he did not he brought great trouble on Judah.

**21:4-6** Here we see part of the sad fruit of Jehoshaphat's blunder in arranging for his son to marry the daughter of Ahab. The son rejected all his father stood for and followed all his father hated.

**21:6** "Ahab" – 1 Kings 16:30-33; 2 Kings 8:18.



the kings of Israel, like the house of Ahab did, for he had Ahab's daughter as *his* wife, and he did *what was* evil in the eyes of the LORD. 7 However the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and since he promised to give a light to him and to his sons forever.

8 In his days the Edomites revolted against the rule of Judah, and made a king for themselves. 9 Then Jehoram went out with his princes, and all his chariots with him, and he got up at night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots. 10 So the Edomites have revolted against the rule of Judah to this day. At the same time Libnah *also* revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.

11 Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves, and led Judah astray. 12 And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying,

"Thus says the LORD God of your father David: 'Because you have not walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13 but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem prostitute themselves, just as the house of Ahab prostituted itself, and also have killed your brothers, of your *own* father's house, *who were* better than yourself, 14 look, the LORD will strike your people and your children and your wives and all your possessions with a great plague. 15 And you *will have* a severe illness through a disease of your bowels, day by day, until your bowels fall out because of the illness.'"

16 Moreover, the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and of the Arabians, who *were* near the Ethiopians, 17 and they came up to Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the

king's house, and his sons and his wives also, so that there was no son left to him, except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

18 And after all this the LORD struck him in his bowels with an incurable disease. 19 And it came about in process of time, at the end of two years, that his bowels fell out because of his sickness; so he died of severe diseases. And his people lit no fire for him, like the fire for his fathers.

20 He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and passed away to no one's regret. However they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

**22** And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made his youngest son Ahaziah king in his place, for the band of men who came with the Arabians to the camp had killed all the older *ones*. So Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned.

2 Ahaziah *was* forty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah. *She was* the daughter of Omri.

3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his advisor to behave wickedly. 4 Therefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab, for after the death of his father they became his counsellors to his destruction. 5 And he walked according to their counsel, and went with Jehoram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-Gilead. And the Syrians struck Joram, 6 and he returned to Jezreel to be healed of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael, king of Syria. And Azariah, the son of Jehoram, king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick.

7 And by coming to Joram, the destruction of Ahaziah was from God. For when he had come, he

**21:7** "House of David" – 2 Sam 7:12-17.

"Light" – 2 Sam 21:17; 1 Kings 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; Ps 132:17.

**21:8-10** Part of the penalty for Jehoram's wickedness.

**21:11** "Prostitute themselves" – Ex 34:15; Lev 20:5; Jer 2:20.

**21:12** "Elijah" – 1 Kings chapters 17-20.

"Father David" – in Hebrew the word "father" sometimes means ancestor.

**21:13** 1 Kings 16:30-33.

**21:14** "Strike" – Deut 32:39-42; Ps 9:12; Gal 6:7,8.

**21:16,17** War was often the penalty for disobedience to God's covenant – note at 12:2.

"Jehoahaz" – a variant of Ahaziah. In Hebrew the two names have the same

meaning – "Jehovah holds", or "Jehovah possesses."

**21:19** "Fire" – 16:14.

**21:20** "To no one's regret" – it is a tragic thing to live so that no one is sad to see you die. Compare 35:24; Gen 50:3,10; 1 Kings 14:18.

**22:1-6** 2 Kings 8:24-29.

**22:1** 2 Chron 21:16-17.

**22:2** "Omri" – 1 Kings 16:23-26.

**22:3** "Wickedly" – there is little hope of a son turning out well when his own mother encourages him to sin (though all things are possible through the grace of God).

**22:5** "Jehoram" – a variant of Joram (also vs 6,7).

**22:6** "Ramah" – a variant of Ramoth.

**22:7-9** The record of how Jehu destroyed

went out with Jehoram against Jehu, the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. 8 And it came about when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, and found the leaders of Judah, and the sons of the brothers of Ahaziah, who ministered to Ahaziah, that he killed them. 9 And he looked for Ahaziah, and they caught him (for he was hidden in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu. And when they had killed him, they buried him, saying "Because he *is* the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." So there was no one of the house of Ahaziah who had power to retain the kingdom.

10 But when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal offspring of the house of Judah. 11 But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were killed, and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah, so that she did not kill him. 12 And he was with them, hidden in the house of God, for six years, and Athaliah reigned over the land.

**23** And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with himself. 2 And they went about in Judah and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. 3 And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God.

And he said to them, "See, the king's son will reign, as the LORD has said about the sons of David. 4 This *is* what you are to do: a third of you, of the priests and of the Levites who come in on the Sabbath, *will be* the doorkeepers, 5 and a third part *will be* at the king's house, and a third part at the Foundation Gate, and all the people *will be* in the courtyards of the house of the LORD, 6 and let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites who minister. They shall go in, for they *are* holy, but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. 7 And the Levites are to surround the king, each

man with his weapons in his hand, and anyone *else* coming into the house shall be put to death. And you are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."

8 So the Levites and all Judah acted in accordance with everything that Jehoiada the priest commanded, and each one took his men who were to come in on the Sabbath, with those who were to go *out* on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss the divisions. 9 Moreover, Jehoiada the priest handed over to the captains of hundreds the spears and large shields and small shields that *had belonged to* king David which *were* in the house of God. 10 And he placed all the people, each man having his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, around the king.

11 Then they brought out the king's son, and put the crown on him, and *gave him* the Testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, "God save the king!"

12 Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came into the house of the LORD to the people, 13 and she looked, and, *lo and* behold, the king stood by his pillar at the entrance, and the leaders and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and sounding on trumpets, and the singers with musical instruments were leading the praise. Then Athaliah tore her clothes, and said, "Treason! Treason!"

14 Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were appointed over the army, and said to them, "Bring her out through the ranks, and put to death with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest said, "Do not kill her in the house of the LORD." 15 So they seized her, and when she had come to the entrance of the Horse Gate at the king's house, they killed her there.

16 And Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king, that they would be the LORD's people. 17 Then all the people went to the house of Baal and broke it down, and broke his altars and his idols in pieces, and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, before the altars.

18 Also Jehoiada placed the supervision of the house of the LORD under the authority of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned over the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was*

the house of Ahab is in 2 Kings chapters 9 and 10, Ahaziah's death is in 9:21-28.

**22:9** "They" – Ahaziah's servants. 2 Kings 9:28.

**22:10-12** Notes at 2 Kings 11:1-3.

"Jehoshabeath" – also called Jehosheba.

**23:1-21** Notes at 2 Kings 11:4-20.

**23:1** "Jehoiada" – 22:11; 24:6.

**23:3** 7:18; 21:7; 2 Sam 7:12.

**23:18** 1 Chron 23:6,25-31; 25:1,2,6.

**23:11** "Testimony" – a copy of the covenant, or the ten commandments.

*ordained* by David. 19 And he placed the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one *who was* unclean in any way could enter.

20 And he took the captains of hundreds and the leaders and the rulers of the people and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and they came through the upper gate into the king's house, and placed the king on the throne of the kingdom. 21 And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet, after they had killed Athaliah with the sword.

**24** Joash *was* seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zibiah. *She was* from Beersheba. 2 And Joash did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. 3 And Jehoiada took two wives for him, and he became the father of sons and daughters.

4 And after this it came about *that* Joash decided to repair the house of the LORD. 5 And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather money from all Israel to make annual repairs of the house of your God. And you are to do this matter quickly." However the Levites did not do *it* quickly.

6 And the king called for Jehoiada the chief *priest*, and said to him, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring in the collection out of Judah and out of Jerusalem, *in accordance with the command* of Moses the servant of the LORD and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?"

7 For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and also they had used the dedicated things of the house of the LORD for the Baals.

8 And at the king's command they made a chest and set it outside at the gate of the house of the LORD. 9 And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection *that* Moses the servant of God *had levied* on Israel in the wilderness. 10 And all the leaders

and all the people rejoiced, and brought *the money* in and deposited it in the chest, until they had finished. 11 Now it came about when the chest was brought to the king's office by the hands of the Levites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's official came and emptied the chest, and took it and carried it back to its place. They did this day by day, and gathered a large quantity of money. 12 And the king and Jehoiada gave it to those who were doing the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also to those who worked in iron and bronze to repair the house of the LORD.

13 So the workmen worked and the work was finished by them, and they restored the house of God to its *original* state, and strengthened it. 14 And when they had finished *it*, they brought the rest of the money into the presence of the king and Jehoiada, and with it articles were made for the house of the LORD, articles to use in the service, and to offer *with*, and spoons, and articles of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings at the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

15 But Jehoiada became old, and was full of days when he died. *He was* a hundred and thirty years old when he died. 16 And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.

17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king, and the king listened to them. 18 And they abandoned the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served *idolatrous* groves and idols, and wrath came on Judah and Jerusalem because of this trespass of theirs. 19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD, and they testified against them. But they would not listen.

20 And the Spirit of God came on Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why are you breaking the commandments of the LORD,

**23:19** 1 Chron 9:22.

**24:1-14** Notes at 2 Kings 11:21-12:16.

**24:2** 26:5.

**24:6** Ex 30:12-16; 38:26; Matt 17:24.

**24:7** "Athaliah" - 21:6,17; 22:2,3. She was Joash's grandmother.

"Baals" - note at Jud 2:11.

**24:10** "Rejoiced" - 1 Chron 29:3,6,9,17; 2 Cor 9:7.

**24:16** Joash was only 7 years old when he became king (v 1). He was the only one left alive in the royal house of David. Jehoiada was his instructor (see 2 Kings 12:2), and probably was the chief power

behind the throne of Judah for years. So at his death the people treated him like a king.

**24:17** "Listened to them" - it seems that Joash was the sort of person easily influenced by others, whether the influence was good or bad.

**24:18** "Idols" - Ex 34:12-14; Jud 2:10-13; 1 Kings 14:22,23.

"Wrath" - notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11. **24:19** 36:15,16; Jer 7:13,25; 25:3,4; 44:4-6.

**24:20** "Spirit of God" - 15:1; 20:14; Gen 1:2; 1 Chron 12:18; 28:12.

and so not prospering? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has also forsaken you.”

21 And they conspired against him, and pelted him with stones at the command of the king in the courtyard of the house of the LORD. 22 So Joash the king did not remember the kindness which *Zechariah's* father Jehoiada had done him, but killed his son. And as he was dying, he said, “May the LORD see and take vengeance.”

23 And it happened at the end of the year, *that* the army of Syria came up against him, and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people among the people, and sent all their plunder to the king of Damascus. 24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great army into their hands, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash. 25 And when they had left him (for they left him very sick), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed, and he died. And they buried him in the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.

26 And these are the ones who conspired against him: Zabad, the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad, the son of Shimrith a Moabite. 27 Now *concerning* his sons, and the many prophecies *against* him, and the repairing of the house of God, see, they *are* written in the annals of the book of the kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

**25** Amaziah *was* twenty-five years old *when* he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jehoaddan. *She was* from Jerusalem.

“Zechariah” – Matt 23:35. This was not the author of the book of Zechariah.

**24:21** Neh 9:26; Matt 23:34-35; Acts 7:58; Heb 11:36-38. In this world the best people often receive the worst treatment.

**24:22** “Take vengeance” – Gen 9:5; Ex 21:23-25; Deut 19:21. Zechariah, under the law, cried out for justice. Stephen, under grace, cried out for mercy for his persecutors – Acts 7:60. Both were correct in their attitudes according to the times in which they suffered and died. Notes at Ps 35:8; 109:1. **24:23-26** 2 Kings 12:17-21. The prayer of the dying prophet was answered in these severe and just ways.

**24:24** Lev 26:25; Deut 28:25.

**24:26** “Zabad” – a variant of Jozabad.

“Shimrith” – a variant of Shomer.

**25:1** “Began to reign” – an account of Amaziah's reign is given also in 2 Kings 14:1-20.

**25:2** “Not with a perfect heart” – this

2 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart. 3 Now it came about, when the kingdom was firmly in his power, that he killed his servants who had killed his father the king. 4 But he did not kill their children, but *did as it is* written in the law in the book of Moses, where the Lord commanded, saying, “The fathers shall not die for the children, nor shall the children die for the fathers, but each man shall die for his own sin.”

5 Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made for them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of *their* fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin, and he counted them from twenty years old and over, and found them *to be* three hundred thousand choice *men, able* to go out to war, who could handle spear and shield. 6 He also hired a hundred thousand strong and brave men out of Israel for a hundred talents of silver.

7 But a man of God came to him, saying, “O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD *is* not with Israel, *that is, with* all the children of Ephraim. 8 But if you do *that and go*, be strong for the battle, for God will make you fall before the enemy. For God has power to help or to throw down.”

9 And Amaziah said to the man of God, “But what shall we do about the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?”

And the man of God answered, “The LORD is able to give you much more than this.”

10 Then Amaziah separated them, *that is*, the army that had come to him out of Ephraim, to go back home. Therefore their anger burned hotly against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

11 And Amaziah strengthened himself and led

accounts for the sinful failure of his later years (v 14). See 1 Kings 8:61; Ps 86:11; 119:113; Jam 1:8; 4:8. Amaziah was like his father Joash (2 Kings 14:3).

**25:4** Deut 24:16.

**25:6** One talent equals about 34 kilograms.

**25:7** “Man of God” – term meaning a prophet.

“Israel” – Amaziah was wrong to hire soldiers from Israel. It showed a lack of trust in God. Compare 16:2-9. The name Ephraim is used in this verse to mean the whole northern kingdom of Israel.

**25:8** 2 Chron 14:11; 20:6. Courageous fighting alone would not bring victory. They had to fight in God's way. Compare 1 Cor 9:24-26; 1 Tim 6:12; 2:5.

**25:9** “Given to the army” – Amaziah was afraid that he would suffer material loss by obeying God. Many there are who care more for money than for doing the will of God.

“More than this” – Deut 8:18; Prov 10:22.

**25:11** 2 Kings 14:7.

out his people, and went to the Valley of Salt, and struck down ten thousand of the children of Seir. 12 And the children of Judah carried away captive the ten thousand *who were left* alive, and brought them to the top of a rock, and threw them down from the top of the rock, so that they were all broken in pieces.

13 But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, so that they would not go with him to battle, attacked the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, and struck down three thousand *people* in them, and took away much plunder.

14 Now it so happened, when Amaziah had come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir and set them up *to be* his gods, and prostrated himself before them, and burned incense to them. 15 Therefore the anger of the LORD burned against Amaziah, and he sent a prophet to him, who said to him, "Why have you sought after the gods of the nation which could not deliver their own people out of your hands?"

16 And it came about, as he talked with him, that *the king* said to him, "Have we appointed you a counsellor for the king? Stop! Why should you be struck down?"

Then the prophet stopped and said, "I know that God has decided to destroy you, because you have done this, and have not listened to my counsel."

17 Then Amaziah, king of Judah, took advice and sent *word* to Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face."

18 And Joash, king of Israel, sent *word* to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage,' and a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thistle. 19 You say, 'Look,' *for* you have defeated the Edomites, and your heart lifts you up to boast. Now stay at home. Why should you stir up trouble to *your* harm, that you should fall, you, and Judah with you?"

20 But Amaziah would not listen, for it *came about* from God, so that he might deliver them into

the hands *of their enemies*, because they sought after the gods of Edom. 21 So Joash, the king of Israel, went up, and they looked one another in the face, he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. 22 And Judah was defeated before Israel, and each man of them fled to his tent. 23 And Joash, the king of Israel, took Amaziah, king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth Shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits. 24 And *he took* all the gold and the silver and all the articles that were found in the house of God with Obed Edom, and the treasures of the king's house, hostages also, and returned to Samaria.

25 And Amaziah, the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 26 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, look, *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27 Now after the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD they conspired against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent *men* to Lachish after him, and they killed him there. 28 And they brought him on horses and buried him with his ancestors in the city of Judah.

**26** Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. 2 He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after the king had slept with his ancestors.

3 Uzziah *was* sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jecoliah. She *was* from Jerusalem. 4 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, in accordance with all that his father Amaziah did. 5 And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God caused him to prosper.

6 And he went out and fought against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, and

**25:13** Verses 6,10. Part of the sad results of Amaziah's error in hiring them in the first place.

**25:14** Ex 20:1-5.

**25:15** "Deliver" – Deut 32:37-39; see notes at 2 Kings 14:8-14.

**25:16** "Stop" – see 16:10; 18:7; 24:21; 1 Kings 13:4; Jer 36:21-23; Matt 21:45,46; Luke 4:28,29; John 8:40; Acts 4:18; 7:57,58; 17:13. Wicked men are always trying to get God's servants to stop declaring the word of God. They don't seem to understand that by shutting the mouths of preachers they are not

destroying the truth. The truth of God will go on and they will be judged according to it.

**25:17-24** Notes at 2 Kings 14:8-14.

**25:20** Compare 22:7; 1 Kings 12:15.

**25:25-28** 2 Kings 14:17-20.

**26:1-4** 2 Kings 14:21-22; 15:1-3. Uzziah was also called Azariah (2 Kings 14:21; 15:1).

**26:5** "Sought" – 15:2; Deut 4:29. Zechariah was put to death before Uzziah became king at the age of 16. So we see that Uzziah sought God while still a boy.

**26:6** "Philistines" – notes at Gen 10:14; Jud 1:18.



the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities around Ashdod, and among the Philistines. 7 And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gurbaal, and the Mehunim. 8 And the Ammonites gave tribute to Uzziah. And his fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly.

9 Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate, and at the *place where the wall* turns, and fortified them. 10 Also he built towers in the desert, and dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains, *and also* farmers, and vine dressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved farming.

11 Moreover, Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war in bands, according to the number of their enrollment at the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. 12 The complete number of the heads of the fathers' *households*, of the brave fighters *was* two thousand six hundred. 13 And under their authority *there was* an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, who waged war with great power, to help the king against the enemy. 14 And Uzziah prepared shields and spears and helmets and armour and bows and slings *for hurling* stones for them, throughout the whole army. 15 And in Jerusalem he made engines, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and on the bulwarks, with which to shoot arrows and large stones. And his fame spread far around, for he was marvellously helped, until he became strong.

16 But when he became strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him eighty of the LORD's priests, *who*

*were* valiant men, 18 and they opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, "*It does not belong* to you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed; and *you will not have* honour from the LORD God."

19 Then Uzziah was angry. And he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense, and while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah, the chief priest, and all the priests, looked at him, and, see, he *had* leprosy on his forehead, and they hurried him out of there. Indeed, he himself hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him.

21 And Uzziah the king *was* a leper to the day of his death, and lived in a separate house, *being* a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And his son Jotham *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, wrote down.

23 So Uzziah slept with his ancestors, and they buried him with his ancestors in the burial ground which *belonged* to the kings, for they said, "*He is a leper*"; and Jotham his son reigned in his place.

**27** Jotham *was* twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jerushah. *She was* the daughter of Zadok. 2 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did. However he did not enter the temple of the LORD. But the people still acted corruptly. 3 He built the upper gate of the house of the LORD, and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. 4 Moreover, he

**26:16** "Lifted up" – with pride – Deut 32:15; Prov 16:18; 29:23; James 4:6.

"Altar of incense" – this was in the Holy Place in the temple and only the priests were permitted to enter there (Num 3:38; 18:1-7). Pride is often the reason why men are unfaithful to God and are determined to do things they have no business doing (Ps 10:4; etc.). A frequent temptation of those in places of authority now is to think mistakenly that their position gives them special rights and privileges with God.

**26:17** It took courage to rebuke a very powerful and determined king. God's servants should have the boldness to stand against any leader who does wrong.

**26:18** Ex 30:7-8; Num 16:40.

"Incense" – only the priests were appointed to burn incense – Ex 30:7,8; Num 16:40.

**26:19** "Angry" – 16:10; 24:20,21; 25:16.

To be angry when justly rebuked is a mark of pride.

"Leprosy" – note at Lev 13:1. God sometimes sent this disease in punishment to show His great displeasure. See Num 12:1-10; 2 Kings 5:25-27.

**26:20-23** 2 Kings 15:5-7.

**26:21** "Separate house" – Lev 13:46; Num 5:2. This could mean in a house where he was relieved of responsibilities.

**26:22** "Isaiah" – these events were not recorded in the book of Isaiah, but in some other writing of the same prophet. No man knows what has become of this writing.

**26:23** "Slept" – note at 2 Kings 2:10.

**27:1-9** 2 Kings 15:32-38.

**27:2** "Temple" – 26:16.

"But the people" – several of the kings of Judah fought against false worship and removed idols from the land. But they could

built cities in the mountains of Judah, and he built forts and towers in the forests.

5 He also fought with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And that same year the children of Ammon gave him a hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. The children of Ammon paid him the same amount both the second and third years.

6 So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways in the presence of the LORD his God.

7 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, see, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9 And Jotham slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David, and his son Ahaz reigned in his place.

**28** Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, but he did not do *what was right* in the sight of the LORD, as his father David *had done*. 2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and also made cast metal idols for the Baals. 3 Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had driven out before the children of Israel. 4 He also sacrificed and burned incense on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

5 Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hands of the king of Syria, and they defeated him, and carried away a large number of them captive and brought *them* to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hands of the king of Israel, who defeated him in a great slaughter. 6 For Pekah, the son of Remaliah, killed a hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, *who were* all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 7 And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah, the king's son, and Azrikam, the governor of the house, and

not remove idolatry from the hearts of the people. They worked for reformation, but could not change sinful natures.

**27:5** "A hundred talents" – one talent was about 34 kilograms.

"Measures" – in Hebrew "kors" – one cor was about 6 bushels.

**27:6** 26:5.

**27:9** "Slept" – 2 Kings 2:10.

**28:1-27** 2 Kings chapter 16 also gives an account of Ahaz's reign. See notes there.

**28:3** Note at 2 Kings 16:3.

"Hinnom" – a valley just outside the southern wall of Jerusalem.

Elkanah, *who was* next to the king. 8 And the children of Israel carried away captive two hundred thousand of their brethren, women, sons, and daughters, and also took away much plunder from them, and brought the plunder to Samaria.

9 But a prophet of the LORD was there whose name *was* Oded, and he went out before the army that came to Samaria and said to them, "Look, because the LORD God of your fathers was angry with Judah, he delivered them into your hands, and you have slaughtered them in a rage *that* reaches up to heaven. 10 And now you intend to keep the children of Judah and Jerusalem for male slaves and female slaves for yourselves. *But are* you not also guilty of sins against the LORD your God? 11 Therefore now listen to me, and send back the captives whom you have taken captive of your brethren. For the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* on you."

12 Then some of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came from the war, 13 and said to them, "You shall not bring the captives in here, for we have *already* offended against the LORD, and you intend to add to our sins and to our guilt; for our guilt is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel."

14 So the armed men left the captives and the plunder before the leaders and all the congregation. 15 And the men who were named rose up and took the captives, and clothed all those who were naked among them with the plunder, and gave them clothes and footwear, and gave them *things* to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble among them on donkeys, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren. Then they returned to Samaria.

16 At that time king Ahaz send *word* to the kings of Assyria to help him, 17 for the Edomites had come again and defeated Judah, and carried away captives. 18 The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowlands and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-Shemesh, and Aijalon, and

**28:5** "Defeated" – one of the ways in which God often punished His people when they were unfaithful to Him.

**28:6** "Pekah" – 2 Kings 15:27-31. Evidently this happened before Pekah and the king of Aram unsuccessfully besieged Jerusalem – see 2 Kings 16:5; Isa 7:1-9.

**28:10** "Slaves" – Lev 25:42-43.

"Sins" – 2 Kings 15:27,28; 1 Kings 12:28-33.

**28:15** Prov 25:21-22; Luke 10:25-37.

**28:16** 2 Kings 16:7.

**28:17-19** God was teaching them part of the penalty for their sins.

Gederoth, and Shocho with its villages, and Timnah with its villages, also Gimzo and its villages; and they lived there. 19 For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz, king of Israel, for he promoted loose living in Judah, and trespassed greatly against the LORD. 20 And Tiglath-Pilneser, king of Assyria, came to him and troubled him, but did not strengthen him. 21 For Ahaz took away a part of the treasures from the house of the LORD and from the king's house and from the leaders, and gave it to the king of Assyria. But he did not help him.

22 And in the time of his trouble this *same* king Ahaz trespassed even more against the LORD. 23 For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, which had defeated him, and he said, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them, so that they will help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.

24 And Ahaz gathered together the articles of the house of God, and cut the articles of the house of God into pieces, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and made altars for himself in every corner of Jerusalem. 25 And in every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked the LORD God of his fathers to anger.

26 Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, first and last, look, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27 And Ahaz slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem, but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. And his son Hezekiah reigned in his place.

**29** Hezekiah began to reign *when he was* twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Abijah. *She was* the daughter of Zechariah. 2 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

3 In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. 4 And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together in the square on the east, 5 and said to them, "Hear me, you Levites. Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry the filthiness out of the Holy Place. 6 For our fathers have trespassed and done *what was* evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him and have turned away their faces from the dwelling place of the LORD and turned *their* backs. 7 Also they have shut up the doors of the portico, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings at the holy place to the God of Israel. 8 Therefore the wrath of the LORD has been on Judah and Jerusalem, and he has handed them over to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as you see with your eyes. 9 For, see, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this. 10 Now *it is* in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, so that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. 11 My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and to minister to

**28:19** "King of Israel" – Ahaz was the king of Judah but the author of Chronicles by calling him the king of Israel is probably indicating his view that the people living in the kingdom of Judah (which included some people from the ten northern tribes) should be called Israel, not the northern kingdom. And we should not forget that the author was writing by inspiration of God's Spirit.

**28:20** "Tiglath-Pilneser" – 2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chron 5:26. The help the king of Assyria gave (2 Kings 16:9) was only temporary, and through this attempted alliance Judah became subject to Assyria.

**28:21** 2 Kings 16:8-9.

**28:22** "Trouble" – trouble makes some people worse (Jer 5:3), but causes others to seek God (Ps 18:4-6; 116:3,4). What men do in times of trouble is an indication of their spiritual condition and character.

**28:23** "He said" – it seems he forgot the whole history of the nation. Wickedness blinds men to the truth and causes them to put hope in the very things that will bring them to destruction. Compare Isa 28:15-19; 2 Thess 2:10-12.

**28:25** See also 2 Kings 16:10-18.

"Anger" – Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc. Not one good thing is said about Ahaz anywhere in the Bible, yet he could sound very pious – Isa 7:12.

**28:27** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**29:1-2** 2 Kings 18:1-3. Except for these opening verses none of the material in this chapter and the next is found in Kings.

**29:5** "Consecrate" – 29:15,34; 36:6; Ex 19:14,15; 1 Chron 29:5. This meant separating themselves from all uncleanness and preparing themselves for God's presence. Only such would be fit for the work of God.

**29:6,7** 28:24,25; 24:18,19; Isa 1:4.

**29:8** "Wrath" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; Deut 28:25; etc.

"Hissing" – Isa 1:5-9.

**29:9** 28:5,17.

**29:10** 15:12; 23:16. God's anger could be turned away only by repentance and renewal of the covenant to be His faithful people. Without this they could rightly expect only the curses of the broken covenant to come on them (Deut 28:15-18).

**29:11** Num 3:6; 8:6,14.

him, and burn incense."

12 Then the Levites rose up, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel; and of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah; 13 and of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri, and Jeiel; and of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah, and Mattaniah; 14 and of the sons of Heman, Jehiel, and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah, and Uzziel.

15 And in accordance with the command of the king, by the words of the LORD, they gathered their brethren, and consecrated themselves, and came to cleanse the house of the LORD. 16 And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse *it*, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the courtyard of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it* and carried *it* out to the brook Kidron. 17 Now they began the consecration on the first *day* of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the portico of the LORD's *temple*. So in eight days they consecrated the house of the LORD, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

18 Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, "We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of burnt offering, with all its articles, and the table of Showbread, with all its articles. 19 Moreover, we have made ready and consecrated all the articles which king Ahaz threw away during his reign, in his transgression, and, see, they *are* before the altar of the LORD."

20 Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. 21 And they brought seven bulls and seven rams and seven lambs and seven male goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD. 22 So they killed the bull, and the priests took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the altar. In the same way, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood on the altar. They also killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar. 23 And they brought out the

male goats *for* the sin offering before the king and the congregation, and they laid their hands on them, 24 and the priests killed them, and they made a sin-offering with their blood on the altar, to make atonement for all Israel. For the king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *should be made* for all Israel.

25 And he placed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with lyres and with harps, according to the command of David and of Gad, the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for *such was* the command of the LORD through his prophets. 26 And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.

27 And Hezekiah commanded that the burnt offering be offered on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD *also* began with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David, king of Israel. 28 And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded, *and all this continued* until the burnt offering was finished.

29 And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed down and worshipped. 30 Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

31 Then Hezekiah responded and said, "Now you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD. Come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD." And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and whoever had a willing heart *brought* burnt offerings.

32 And the number of the burnt offerings which the congregation brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs. All these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD. 33 And the consecrated things *were* six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep. 34 But the priests were too few, so that they could not skin all the burnt offerings. Therefore their brethren, the Levites, helped them until the work was finished, and until the *other* priests had consecrated themselves; for the Levites *had been* more conscientious in

**29:15** Verse 5.

**29:17** Careless, sinful leaders had allowed such filth to collect in the temple that it took 16 days to get rid of it. Sometimes Christians are as careless and sinful about the New Testament temples of God – their bodies and hearts (1 Cor 3:16,17; 6:18-20). **29:19** 28:24.

**29:21** "Sin offering" – notes at Lev 1:2.

**29:22** "Blood" – Lev 4:18; 8:14. God's New

Testament temple is purged by the blood of a far greater offering (Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7).

**29:23** "Laid their hands on them" – Lev 4:15.

**29:24** Notes on atonement at Ex 29:33.

**29:25,26** 1 Chron 15:16; 23:5; 25:6.

**29:27** "Burnt offering" – notes at Leviticus chapter 1.

**29:29** "Worshipped" – 20:18.

**29:30** "Asaph" – psalms 50,70-83.

**29:31** "Thank offerings" – notes at Lev

consecrating themselves than the priests. 35 And also there *was* an abundance of burnt offerings, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings for *every* burnt offering.

So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. 36 And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people; for the thing was *done* suddenly.

**30** And Hezekiah sent *word* to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. 2 For the king and his officials, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. 3 For they had not been able to keep it at that time, because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people gathered together to Jerusalem. 4 And the arrangement pleased the king and all the congregation. 5 So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, for they had not done *so* for a long *time in the way* in which it was written.

6 So the couriers went with the letters from the king and his officials throughout all Israel and Judah, in accordance with the command of the king, saying,

"You children of Israel, turn back to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to those of you who remain, who have escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria. 7 And do not be like your fathers and like your brethren who trespassed against the LORD God of

their fathers, *who* therefore made them an object of horror, as you see. 8 Now do not be stiffnecked, as your fathers *were*, *but* yield yourselves to the LORD and come to his sanctuary, which he has sanctified forever, and serve the LORD your God, so that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. 9 For if you turn back to the LORD, your brethren and your children *will find* compassion before those who have taken them away captive, so that they may return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away *his* face from you, if you turn back to him."

10 So the couriers travelled from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh to Zebulun, but the *people* laughed them to scorn and mocked them. 11 Nevertheless, some from Asher and Manasseh and from Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. 12 The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the officials commanded, by the word of the LORD.

13 And many people, a very great congregation, assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. 14 And they rose up and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and they took away all the altars of incense, and threw *them* into the brook Kidron.

15 Then they killed the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the second month, and the priests and the Levites became ashamed *of themselves* and consecrated themselves, and brought the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. 16 And they stood in their place according to their custom, according to the law of Moses the man of God. The priests sprinkled the blood, *which they received* from the hands of the Levites. 17 For *there were* many in the congregation who were

7:12,13; Ps 50:14,15.

**29:35** "Peace offerings" – notes at Leviticus chapter 3.

**29:36** "Suddenly" – when there are willing and dedicated people the work of God can move forward very rapidly.

**30:1** "To Ephraim and Manasseh" – this shows that there were still Israelites left in the north after the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom and took some of the people into captivity. That event had occurred several years before the death of Ahaz.

"Passover" – see Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:5.

**30:2** "Second month" – see Lev 23:5; Num 9:10,11.

**30:3** Ex 12:6,18; 2 Chron 29:17,34.

**30:5** "Beersheba to Dan" – from the far north to the far south of the land originally occupied in the days of Joshua, including the territories of all the tribes of Israel.

**30:6** "He will return" – 7:14; Jer 3:12-13; Hos 14:1-4; Jam 4:8.

"Assyria" – 2 Kings 17:3-23.

**30:7** Deut 28:25 had been fulfilled before their eyes only a few years before.

**30:8** "Stiffnecked" – Ex 32:9; Deut 9:24; Acts 7:51.

"Wrath" – notes on Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**30:9** Ex 34:6,7; Deut 30:2,3; 1 Kings 8:50; Ps 106:46; Isa 55:7; Micah 7:18.

**30:10** "Laughed them to scorn" – 36:16; Isa 28:22; Matt 27:39-43; 2 Pet 3:3,4. All too many men still consider God's great truth and solemn appeals something to laugh at.

**30:11** God always has His remnant of faithful people. Compare 1 Kings 19:18.

**30:12** "One heart" – Ps 133; Jer 32:39; Ezek 11:19; Eph 4:3.

**30:13** "Feast of Unleavened Bread" – Lev 23:6-8.

**30:14** "Altars" – these were altars to false gods (28:24,25).

**30:15** "Killed the Passover" – Ex 12:3.

**30:16** 35:10,15.

**30:17** Ex 12:6; Deut 16:6.



not consecrated, therefore the Levites were in charge of killing the Passovers for every one *who was* not clean, to sanctify *them* to the LORD. 18 For a large number of the people, many from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover, contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "The good LORD pardon every one 19 *who* prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, even though *he is* not *cleansed* in accordance with the purification of the sanctuary."

20 And the LORD listened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

21 And the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great gladness, and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* with loud instruments to the LORD.

22 And Hezekiah spoke *words of* encouragement to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the LORD, and they ate throughout the feast for seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

23 And the whole assembly agreed to keep *the feast* for seven *more* days, and they kept it for seven *more* days with gladness. 24 For Hezekiah king of Judah gave a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep to the congregation, and the officials gave a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep to the congregation, and a great number of priests consecrated themselves. 25 And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the foreigners who came out of the land of Israel and who lived in Judah, rejoiced. 26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, *there had been* nothing like this in Jerusalem. 27 Then the priests, the Levites, rose up and blessed the people, and their voice was heard and their prayer came *up* to his holy dwelling place, to heaven.

**31** Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the idols in pieces and cut down the *idolatrous* groves and threw down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, also in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, each man to his possession, to their own cities.

2 And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their divisions, each man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD. 3 Also *he appointed* the king's portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and for the new moons and for the appointed feasts, as *it is* written in the law of the LORD. 4 Moreover, he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, so that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD. 5 And as soon as the command went out, the children of Israel brought in an abundance of the firstfruits of grain, wine and oil and honey and of all the produce of the field, and they brought in the tithe of all *things* in abundance. 6 And *as for* the children of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed *them* in heaps. 7 In the third month they began making the heaps, and finished *them* in the seventh month. 8 And when Hezekiah and the officials came and saw the heaps, they praised the LORD and his people Israel.

9 Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. 10 And Azariah, the chief priest, of the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since *the people* began to bring the offerings to the house of the LORD we have had enough to eat, and have plenty left over, for the

**30:18** Ex 12:43-49; Num 9:10; 2 Chron 30:11.

**30:19** They had faced the ridicule of fellow Israelites in the north (v 10), and came to Jerusalem for the first time in many years. They were not "clean" (for possible cause of uncleanness see Lev 5:2,3; 11:24; etc), but Hezekiah did not want to refuse them the privilege of taking part in the Passover. He reasoned rightly that seeking God and trying to have their hearts right with God was more important than perfectly following the prescribed ritual. Compare Isa 1:11-17; Matt 23:25-28.

**30:22** "Peace offerings" – notes at Leviticus

chapter 3.

**30:23** 7:8,9.

**30:27** "Blessed" – notes at Num 6:22-27. See also Gen 12:3; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1,2.

**31:1** 2 Kings 18:4; Ex 23:24; 34:13.

**31:2** "Divisions" – 1 Chron 23:28 – 24:1.

**31:3** "Offerings" – Numbers chapters 28,29.

**31:4** Num 18:8-13. Compare Neh 13:10.

**31:5,6** Deut 12:5-19; 14:22-29.

**31:7** Both the third and seventh months were festival months. See Leviticus chapter 23.

**31:8** Such acts of obedience to God's Word and love shown for His servants always result in praise and blessing. Compare 2 Cor 9:6-15.

**31:10** Mal 3:8-12; Luke 6:38.

LORD has blessed his people. And this great store is what is left over."

11 Then Hezekiah commanded that rooms be prepared in the house of the LORD, and they prepared *them*, 12 and brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated *things* faithfully. Cononiah the Levite *was* in charge of this, and Shimei his brother was next. 13 And Jehiel and Azariah and Nahath and Asahel and Jerimoth and Jozabad and Eliel and Ismachiah and Mahath and Benaiah *were* overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the command of Hezekiah the king; and Azariah was in charge of the house of God.

14 And Korah, the son of Imnah the Levite, the gatekeeper at the east *gate*, *was* over the freewill offerings of God, to distribute the offerings of the LORD, and the most holy things. 15 And next to him *were* Eden and Miniamin and Jeshua and Shemaiah, Amariah and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, in *their* appointed office, to give to their brethren by divisions, to the great as well as to the small.

16 *They distributed* without regard to their genealogy, to males three years old and above, to every one who entered the house of the LORD, his daily portion for their service in their duties according to their divisions, 17 as well as to priests *who were in* the genealogy, by the house of their fathers, and the Levites twenty years old and above, in their duties by their divisions. 18 And in the genealogy *were* all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, throughout the whole congregation; for in their appointed office they consecrated themselves in holiness.

19 And as for the sons of Aaron, the priests, *who were* in the fields of the pasture lands of their cities, in each city, the men who were named, portions were given to all the males among the priests, and to all who were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.

20 And Hezekiah did this throughout all Judah, and did *what was* good and right and true before the LORD his God.

21 And whatever work he began in the service

of the house of God, and in the law and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.

**32** After these things and this faithful *conduct*, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came and invaded Judah, and camped against the fortified cities, and planned to take them over for himself. 2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that he intended to fight against Jerusalem, 3 he took counsel with his officials and his mighty men to stop the waters of the springs which *were* outside the city, and they helped him. 4 So many people gathered together, who stopped up all the springs, and the brook that ran through the middle of the land, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?" 5 Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that had been broken down and raised *it* up to the towers and *built* another wall outside, and repaired Millo *in* the city of David, and made a great many weapons and shields.

6 And he appointed military officers over the people, and gathered them together to him in the square at the city gate, and spoke *words* of encouragement to them, saying, 7 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed because of the king of Assyria, or because of all the horde that *is* with him. For *there is* a greater *power* with us than with him. 8 With him *is* an arm of flesh, but with us *is* the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

9 After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (but he *himself besieged* Lachish, and all his forces with him) to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all Judah who *were* at Jerusalem, saying,

10 "Thus says Sennacherib, king of Assyria, 'What are you trusting in, that you stay in the siege in Jerusalem? 11 Is not Hezekiah persuading you to give yourselves up to die by famine and by thirst, saying, "The LORD our God will deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?" 12 Has not this same Hezekiah taken away his high places and

**31:12** "Faithfully" – vs 15,18,20. How good it is in any time to have people who will be honest when put in charge of such things – men who will consider that to take for oneself what has been given to God is to steal from God, hinder the work of God, and to bring on oneself the anger of God.

**31:19** Num 35:2-5; Josh 21:1-3.

**31:21** "Prospered" – Deut 29:9. True devotion to God always seeks to obey Him, and to work for His glory. And such devotion will have its reward – Heb 6:10-12; Jam 2:14.

**32:1** "Sennacherib" – this invasion took place

in the 14th year of Hezekiah's reign – 701 B.C. (2 Kings 18:13; Isa 36:1). God permitted this invasion, not to punish Hezekiah (for he had not turned away from God), but to show Himself mighty on his behalf (v 22). The marvelous account of the deliverance of Jerusalem is told in more detail in 2 Kings 18:13 – 19:36, and Isa 36:1 – 37:37.

**32:7** Josh 1:7,9; 1 Sam 14:6; 2 Kings 6:16; 1 Chron 22:13; 1 John 4:4.

**32:8** Josh 10:42; 13:12; 20:17; Ps 20:7; Rom 8:31,37.

**32:9-21** Notes at 2 Kings 18:17 – 19:37.

his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, "You shall worship before one altar, and burn incense on it?"

13 "Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the people of *other* lands? Were the gods of the peoples of those lands in any way able to deliver their lands out of my hands? 14 Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of my hands, that your God should be able to deliver you out of my hands? 15 Now therefore do not let Hezekiah deceive you, or persuade you in this manner. And do not believe him. For no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of my hands and out of the hands of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you out of my hand!"

16 And his servants spoke still *more* against the LORD God, and against his servant Hezekiah. 17 He also wrote letters to rail against the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, "Just as the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people out of my hands, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver his people out of my hands." 18 Then they called out with a loud voice in the Jews' language to the people of Jerusalem who *were* on the wall, to frighten them and to trouble them, so that they could take the city. 19 And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the world, *which were* the work of the hands of man.

20 And for this *reason* Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven. 21 And the LORD sent an angel, who destroyed all the mighty men of valour and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned in shame to his own land. And when he went into the house of his god, those who came from his own body killed him there with the sword.

22 Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hands of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, and from the

hands of all *others*, and took care of them on every side. 23 And many brought gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, king of Judah, so that from then on he was exalted in the sight of all nations.

24 In those days Hezekiah became sick to the point of death, and prayed to the LORD, and *the LORD* spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25 But Hezekiah did not give a return for the benefit *done* to him, for his heart became proud. Therefore *God's* wrath was on him, and on Judah and Jerusalem. 26 However, Hezekiah humbled the pride of his heart, *both* he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah.

27 And Hezekiah had riches and honour in great abundance, and he made for himself treasuries for silver and for gold and for precious stones and for spices and for shields and for all kinds of desirable articles, 28 and storehouses for the produce of grain and wine and oil, and stalls for all kinds of animals, and sheepfolds for flocks. 29 Moreover, he made towns for himself, and had flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him very many possessions.

30 This same Hezekiah also stopped up the upper watercourse of the Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. 31 However, *in the matter of* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, those sent to him to inquire about the wonder that had been *done* in the land, God left him to test him, so that he might know all *that was* in his heart.

32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, look, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, *and* in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 33 And Hezekiah slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the uppermost of the tombs of the sons of David, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honoured him at his death. And his son Manasseh reigned in his place.

**32:19** Ps 115:2-8. Those who think that the God of Jerusalem, the God of Israel is the same as other gods are making a terrible mistake. See 1 Kings 18:21. If the God of Israel is the true God (and he has proved this again and again), then all other gods are false and worthless (Isa 44:6-9).

**32:20** "Prayed" – 2 Kings 19:15-19.

**32:21** The mistake Sennacherib made in v 19 cost him his army, his reputation, and his life. The total number killed by this one angel was 1,85,000 (Isa 37:36).

**32:24** "A sign" – notes at 2 Kings 20:1-11.

**32:25-30** These verses are not in the account in Kings and Isaiah.

**32:25** "Became proud" – there were four

temptations to pride for Hezekiah – God showing such power on his behalf (v 22), the high regard other nations showed him (v 23), the miraculous sign God gave him (vs 24,31), and his great riches (vs 27-29). Even one of these is enough to make some men proud. Before them all even the good and faithful Hezekiah fell.

"God's wrath" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11. Pride is one of the sins which anger God most – Prov 6:6-19; Isa 2:10-19.

**32:26** "Humbled the pride" – Jer 26:18-19. Compare 34:27,28; Joel 2:13.

**32:31** "To test him" – Gen 22:1; Ex 20:20; Deut 8:2,16; Ps 66:10-12; Jam 1:13,14.

**32:33** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**33** Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 But he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD, like the detestable deeds of the peoples whom the LORD had driven out before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he erected altars for the Baals, and made *idolatrous* groves, and worshipped all the *starry* host of the heavens and served them. 4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem my name will be forever." 5 And he built altars for all the *starry* host of the heavens in the two courtyards of the house of the LORD. 6 And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom. Also he practiced sorcery and divination and used witchcraft, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

7 And he placed a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen above all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever. 8 And I will not again remove the foot of Israel out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers, so that they will be careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." 9 So Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray to do worse than the peoples whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they would not listen. 11 Therefore the LORD brought on them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria. They took Manasseh

with hooks and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. 12 And when he was in distress, he sought the face of the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to him, and *the LORD* heard his entreaty and listened to his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD *was* God.

14 Now after this he built a wall outside the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate, and encircled Ophel and greatly increased its height, and put military officers in all the fortified cities of Judah.

15 And he took away the foreign gods and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and threw *them* out of the city. 16 And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17 Nevertheless, the people still sacrificed on the high places, *but* only to the LORD their God.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, look, they *are written* in the book of the kings of Israel. 19 His prayer also, and *how God* listened to his entreaty, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the places where he built high places, and set up *idolatrous* groves and cast metal idols, before he was humbled, see, they are written in the words of the seers. 20 So Manasseh slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in his own house. And Amon his son reigned in his place.

21 Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22 But he did *what was* evil in the sight

**33:1-10** 2 Kings 21:1-10. See notes there.

**33:6** "Through the fire" – note at 2 Kings 16:3.

**33:11** "Hooks" – he treated him as God saw he should be treated for his wickedness. Compare 2 Kings 19:28; Ezek 29:4; 38:4; Amos 4:2.

**33:12-17** Here is one of the most wonderful records of repentance in the whole Bible. Manasseh was the worst of all of Judah's kings, perhaps among the very worst persons who ever lived. His repentance teaches that there is hope for any individual, no matter how far he or she may have gone into sin. See Isa 55:7; Ezek 18:21,22; Matt 21:31; 1 Tim 1:15,16. No one conscious of his (or her) sinful past and the evil and depravity of his nature should despair, but turn to God for grace and forgiveness. Manassah's repentance, though it was of great benefit to him personally, was too late to bring lasting benefit to the nation. It took place at the end of his reign. He was able to make only a start at reformation before he

died, and Amon his son, brought up during his father's godless years, restored all the idol worship his father had abandoned.

**33:12** "Humbled himself greatly" – God loves to see humility in men as much as He hates to see pride (32:26; 7:14; 12:6,7,12; Ps 51:17; Isa 66:2).

**33:13** Ps 86:15; 103:8; Isa 55:7,8; Micah 7:18,19; 1 Tim 1:15,16.

**33:15,16** He proved by his deeds that his repentance was genuine. Prayer and tears are not enough to show that repentance is real. There must be an attempt to undo any evil done before repentance. See Matt 3:8; Luke 19:8; Acts 26:20; Jer 18:11.

"Thank offerings" – note at Lev 7:12,13.

**33:18** "Book" – note at 1 Kings 14:19.

**33:19** No man knows what has become of these records.

**33:20** "Slept" – note at 1 Kings 2:10.

**33:21-25** 2 Kings 21:19-24. Oh, the folly of those who follow all the evil their fathers did and none of the good.

of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. For Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them, 23 and did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself, but Amon trespassed more and more.

24 And his servants conspired against him and killed him in his own house. 25 But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against king Amon, and the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

**34** Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. 2 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David, and declined *neither* to the right hand, nor to the left.

3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places and the groves and the carved images and the cast metal images. 4 And they broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and he cut down the images that *were* high over them, and he destroyed the groves and the carved images and the cast metal images, and made dust *of them* and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 5 And he burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6 And *he did this* in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around them. 7 And when he had destroyed the altars and the groves, and had crushed the carved images into powder, and demolished all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem. 8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, after he had purged the land and the house, he sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah, the governor of the city, and Joah, the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

9 And when they came to Hilkiyah the high priest, they delivered the money that had been brought into the house of God, which the Levites who were the gatekeepers had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant

of Israel, and from all Judah and Benjamin, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 And they put *it* in the hands of the workers who had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workers who were working in the house of the LORD, to repair and restore the house. 11 They gave *it* to the artisans and builders to buy cut stone and timber for joists, and for beams for the buildings which the kings of Judah had let fall into ruin.

12 And the men did the work faithfully. And their overseers *were* Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to supervise the *work*; and of the Levites, all who were skillful with musical instruments. 13 *They were* also over the carriers of loads, and oversaw all the workers in any kind of work; and among the Levites *there were* scribes and officials, and gatekeepers.

14 And when they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiyah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD *given* through Moses. 15 And Hilkiyah responded and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiyah handed the book over to Shaphan.

16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing word back to the king, saying, "Your servants are doing all that was committed to them. 17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hands of the overseers and into the hands of the workers." 18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it in the king's presence.

19 And it came about, when the king heard the words of the law, that he tore his clothes. 20 And the king commanded Hilkiyah and Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Abdon, the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah, a servant of the king, saying, 21 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found, for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do all that is written in this book."

**34:1-2** 2 Kings 22:1-2.

**34:3-7** Notes at 2 Kings 23:4-20.

**34:3** "Young" – 16 years old.

**34:6** "Naphtali" – territory in the far north of Israel, west and north of the lake of Galilee. Josiah tried to bring reforms not only to Judah but to the whole land previously ruled by the northern kingdom of Israel.

**34:7** 2 Chron 31:1.

**34:8-28** Notes at 2 Kings 22:3-20.

**34:9** "Remnant of Israel" – 30:1. The Assyrians did not take the entire population into captivity when they conquered it in 722 B.C. Josiah ruled 640 – 609 B.C.

**34:12** "Faithfully" – 31:12.

**34:19** Rom 7:7.

**34:20** "Abdon son of Micah" – also called Abdon son of Micaiah.

**34:21** "Wrath" – Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.



22 And Hilkiah, and *those* who *had been appointed* by the king, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the second quarter), and they spoke to her about this.

23 And she answered them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man who sent you to me, 24 thus says the LORD, 'See, I will bring disaster on this place, and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which they have read in the presence of the king of Judah, 25 because they have forsaken me and have burned incense to other gods, provoking me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore my wrath will be poured out on this place, and will not be quenched. 26 And as for the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD, say this to him: Thus says the LORD God of Israel *concerning* the words which you have heard, 27 because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and against its inhabitants, and humbled yourself before me and tore your clothes and wept before me, I have certainly heard *you*, says the LORD. 28 See, I will gather you to your fathers and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place and on its inhabitants.'" So they brought word back to the king.

29 Then the king sent *men* and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem together. 30 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and the Levites and all the people, great and small, and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. 31 And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes, with all his heart and with all his soul, to act in accordance with the words of the covenant which are written in this book.

32 And he caused all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *with him*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the

covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

33 And Josiah took away all the abominations from the countries, that belonged to the children of Israel, and made all those who were present in Israel to serve the LORD their God. *And* all his days they did not turn away from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

**35** Moreover, Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they killed the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month. 2 And he appointed the priests to their duties and encouraged them in the service of the house of the LORD, 3 and said to the Levites who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD, "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, built. *It is not to be* carried on *your* shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel, 4 and prepare *yourselves* according to the houses of your fathers, according to your divisions, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of his son Solomon.

5 "And stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren, the people, and *according* to the divisions of the families of the Levites. 6 So kill the Passover, and consecrate yourselves, and prepare your brethren, so that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD through Moses."

7 And Josiah gave lambs and young goats from the flock to the people, all for the Passover offerings, for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bulls. These *were* from the king's possessions.

8 And his officials willingly gave to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests two thousand six hundred *lambs and young goats*, and three hundred oxen for the Passover offerings. 9 And Conaniah and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, heads of the Levites, gave to the Levites five thousand *lambs and young goats*, and five hundred oxen for the Passover offerings.

10 So the service was made ready, and the priests stood in their place and the Levites in their

**34:24** "Curses" – Deut 28:15-68.

**34:27** "Humbled yourself" – 33:12.

**34:29-32** 2 Kings 23:1-3.

**34:31** Compare 23:3,16; 29:10.

**34:33** "Abominations" – the meaning is idols. They are detestable to God – 15:8; Jer 16:18; Ezek 5:11; 7:20.

"Children of Israel" – vs 6,9.

"Fathers" – the reformation under Josiah was wide-spread and dealt well with the outward forms of false worship. But the books of Jeremiah (Jer 1:2), and Zephaniah

(Zeph 1:1) reveal that it was not deep or long lasting. Compare 27:2.

**35:1-19** 2 Kings 23:21-23.

**35:1** Ex 12:6; Lev 23:5; Num 9:2.

**35:2** 29:11.

**35:3** "Who taught" – 17:7-9; Neh 8:7; Mal 2:7.

"Ark" – evidently at some previous time the ark had been removed, probably during the reign of either Manasseh or Amon, Joshua's predecessors.

**35:4** 8:14; 1 Chron 23:1-6.

**35:6** Ex 12:3; 1 Cor 5:7.

divisions, according to the king's command. 11 And they killed the Passover, and the priests sprinkled *the blood* handed to them, and the Levites skinned *the animals*. 12 And they put the burnt offerings aside, so that they might give them in accordance with the divisions of the families of the people, to offer to the LORD, as *it is* written in the book of Moses. *They did* this also with the oxen. 13 And they roasted the Passover with fire in accordance with the ordinance, but the *other* holy offerings they boiled in pots and in cauldrons and in pans, and quickly divided *them* among all the people. 14 And afterwards *they* prepared for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, *were busy* offering the burnt offerings and the fat until night. Therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests, the sons of Aaron.

15 And the singers, the sons of Asaph, *were* in their place, in accordance with the instruction of David and Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun the king's seer. And the gatekeepers *remained* at each gate, not needing to leave their work, for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

16 So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover, and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, in accordance with the command of king Josiah. 17 And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days. 18 And no Passover like that had been kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; nor did any of the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as that kept by Josiah and the priests and the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were present and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 19 This Passover was kept in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah.

20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho, king of Egypt came up to fight

against Carchemish at the Euphrates, and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? *I have* not *come* against you today, but against the house with which I am at war, for God commanded me to hurry. Stop yourself from *opposing* God, who is with me, so that he does not destroy you."

22 Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself, so that he might fight with him, and did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight on the plain of Megiddo.

23 And the archers shot at king Josiah, and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am severely wounded." 24 So his servants took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and brought him to Jerusalem. And he died, and was buried in one *of* the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

25 And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah. And all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations to this day. And they made them as an ordinance in Israel, and, see, they *are* written in the lamentations.

26 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness, according to *what is* written in the law of the LORD, 27 and his deeds, first and last, see, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

**36** Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem.

2 Jehoahaz *was* twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3 And the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem, and levied a fine on the land of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

**35:11** "Sprinkled" – Lev 1:5,11; 3:2,8,13; Heb 12:24.

**35:13** Ex 12:8-9.

**35:14** "Fat" – Ex 29:13; Lev 3:3-5,16.

**35:15** 1 Chron 25:1; 26:12-19.

**35:17** Ex 12:15; Lev 23:6-8.

**35:18** 30:5. The Passover celebration in Josiah's reign exceeded even that which took place under Hezekiah's leadership.

**35:20** "Carchemish" – one of the most decisive battles of ancient times took place there in 605 B.C., four years after Josiah's death (Jer 46:2). Necho was on his way to help the Assyrians against the Babylonians. **35:21** "The house with which I am at war" – Babylon.

"God" – we are not told how Necho came to know God's will in this matter.

**35:22** Josiah did not believe the heathen king spoke a message from the true God, and may

have had no good reason to believe it. He may have reasoned that if God had anything to say to him God would use a prophet in Judah.

**35:23,24** 2 Kings 23:29,30.

**35:25** Jeremiah's high regard for Josiah is seen in Jer 22:15,16. No man knows what became of the laments he composed for him. The book of Lamentations is about the fall of Jerusalem several years later, and not about the death of Josiah.

**36:1-21** Notes at 2 Kings 23:30 - 25:30; Jeremiah chapter 52.

**36:1** Jer 22:11. Jehoahaz was also called Shallum. Three sons of Josiah – Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah – succeeded Josiah. They were all evil men. Compare 1 Sam 8:1-3; 2 Sam 13:21.

**36:3** "Egypt" – was the most powerful country in the area until the king of Egypt was defeated by the Babylonians four years later at

4 And the king of Egypt made his brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took his brother Jehoahaz and carried him away to Egypt.

5 Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem, and he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God. 6 Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against him and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon. 7 Nebuchadnezzar also took away articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon.

8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and what was found in him, see, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. And his son Jehoiachin reigned in his place.

9 Jehoiachin *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD. 10 And at the turn of the year, king Nebuchadnezzar sent *men* and brought him to Babylon, with the valuable articles of the house of the LORD, and made his brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

11 Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12 And he did *what was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet *speaking words* from the mouth of the LORD. 13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear *allegiance* by God, but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel. 14 Moreover, all the chief of the priests and the people committed many transgressions, following all the abominations of the nations, and polluted the house of the LORD which he had sanctified in Jerusalem.

Carchemish.

"Talents" – one talent was about 34 kilograms.

**36:4** Jer 22:10-12.

**36:5-8** For more about Jehoiachin see Jeremiah chapters 25,26,36.

**36:6** "Nebuchadnezzar" – this happened after the battle of Carchemish (35:20; Jer 46:1,2). From that time, 605 B.C., Judah was subject to Babylon.

**36:7** Dan 1:1,2.

**36:10** Jer 37:1. "Brother" – actually his uncle. In Hebrew the words for "father", "son", "brother", etc., were used for a variety of relationships.

**36:11-16** 2 Kings 24:18-20; Jer 52:1-3.

**36:12** "Did not humble himself" – compare 33:12.

"Jeremiah" – Jer 21:3-7.

**36:13** "Swear" – Ezek 17:13.

"Stiffened his neck" – Ex 32:9; Neh 9:29;

15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent *word* to them by his messengers, rising early and sending, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked the messengers of God and despised his words and abused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose up against his people, until *there was* no remedy. 17 Therefore he brought on them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or maiden, old man, or anyone stooped with age. He gave *them* all into his hands, 18 and all the articles of the house of God, large and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officials. He brought all *these* to Babylon. 19 And they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all of its palaces with fire, and destroyed all their valuable articles.

20 And he carried away to Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, where they became servants to him and to his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia. 21 *This was* to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. *For* as long as it lay desolate it kept the Sabbath, to fulfil seventy years.

22 Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that the word of the LORD *spoken* by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying,

23 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has ordered me to build a house for him in Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. Whoever *there is* among you of all his people, may the LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up."

Jer 7:26.

**36:15** "Rising early and sending" – 24:19; Jer 7:13; 25:3-4; 35:15; 44:4.

"Compassion" – Ex 34:6,7; Jud 2:18; Ps 103:8.

**36:16** "Mocked" – note at 13:10.

"Wrath" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

"Until there was no remedy" – compare Prov 1:20-27; 29:1.

**36:17** "He brought on them" – Jer 1:15; 5:15; 51:20; Hab 1:6. The movement of armies on the earth are not accidents of history, or events completely under the control of men.

"Chaldeans" – the Babylonians.

**36:18,19** 2 Kings 25:8-17; Jer 52:12-23.

**36:20** "Servants" – Jer 27:6,7.

"Persia" – Dan 5:25-31; Isa 44:28 – 45:4.

**36:21** "Sabbaths" – Lev 25:4-7; 26:33-35; Jer 25:11-14; 29:10.

**36:22-23** Ezra 1:1-3. See note there.

# EZRA

**Author:**

According to ancient Jewish tradition Ezra wrote this book, Nehemiah, and both books of Chronicles. Ezra was a descendant of Phineas who was a grandson of Aaron (Ezra 7:1-5).

**Date:**

About 440 BC.

**Theme:**

The return of the Jews to Jerusalem and Judah; the rebuilding of the temple; the opposition faced by the Jews, their victory; the leadership of Zerubbabel and Ezra.

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**1** Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that the word of the LORD *spoken* by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to make a proclamation throughout his whole kingdom, and also to *put it* in writing, saying:

2 "Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia: The LORD God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has ordered me to build a house for him at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. 3 Whoever *there is* among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and may he go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (he *is* God), which *is* in Jerusalem. 4 And the men of any place where any survivor is living are to help him with silver and with gold and with goods and with livestock, besides the freewill offering for the house of God in Jerusalem."

5 Then the heads of the fathers' *households* of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, all *those* whose spirit God had moved, rose up to go up to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem. 6 And all those who *were* about them assisted them with articles of silver, with gold, with goods, and with livestock, and with valuable things, besides all *that* was given as a freewill offering. 7 Also king Cyrus brought out the articles of the house of the LORD which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem and had put in the house of his gods, 8 and Cyrus, king of Persia, brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

9 And this *was* the number of them: thirty gold dishes, a thousand silver dishes, twenty-nine

knives, 10 thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a second *kind*, and a thousand other articles.

11 All the articles of gold and silver *were* five thousand four hundred. Sheshbazzar brought all *of these* up with the exiles who were brought up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

**2** Now these *are* the people of the province who went up from the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who came back to Jerusalem and Judah, each one to his city. 2 These came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mizpar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

3 The children of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; 4 the children of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; 5 the children of Arah, seven hundred and seventy-five; 6 the children of Pahath-Moab, of the children of Jeshua *and* Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve; 7 the children of Elam, a thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 8 the children of Zattu, nine hundred and forty-five; 9 the children of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; 10 the children of Bani, six hundred and forty-two; 11 the children of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-three; 12 the children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred and twenty-two; 13 the children of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-six; 14 the children of Bigvai, two thousand and fifty-six; 15 the children of Adin, four hundred and fifty-four; 16 the children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; 17 the children of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-three; 18 the

**1:1** "First year" - 5:13,14; 6:3; 2 Chron 26:22,23; Jer 33:7-13. Cyrus was king of Persia (Iran) from 559 B.C., but in this verse the first year means the year beginning with his conquest of Babylon in 538 B.C.

"Jeremiah" - Jer 25:11,12; 29:10.

"Spirit of Cyrus" - God will always fulfill His word, and to do so will use the kings of the earth or any other instrument He pleases (v 5; Prov 21:1; Gen 50:20; etc). In the case of Cyrus, at least 150 years previously the Lord had foretold that He would use him to deliver His people (Isa 44:28 - 45:4).

**1:2** "God of heaven" - note at Dan 2:18.

"Given me" - this was true (Isa 45:1. Compare Dan 4:31,32).

**1:4** "Survivor" - Jews scattered throughout the empire of Cyrus, principally in Babylonia.

**1:5** "Levites" - Judah, Benjamin, and Levi composed the chief part of those carried away into exile by the Babylonians. Note on Levites at Num 1:47-51; 8:19.

"God had moved" - v 1; Ex 35:20-22; Haggai 1:14. Many of the Jews had settled down into the alien society of Babylon. They were not eager to face the difficulties of a

four month journey (7:9; 8:21-23) of more than one thousand kilometers to Jerusalem, or the prospect of starting life again in a ruined city, or the insecurity of the unknown. It required a special work of God in their hearts to make them willing to go.

**1:6** Many other Jews helped those willing to return to Jerusalem, even though they did not wish to go themselves.

**1:7** 5:14; 6:5; 2 Kings 24:13; 2 Chron 36:7,10; Jer 52:17-19.

**1:8** "Sheshbazzar" - v 11; 5:14,16. Scholars dispute whether he was the same as Zerubbabel (2:2; 3:2,8; 4:2,3; 5:2). Zerubbabel was the civil leader of the people.

**1:11** "Five thousand four hundred" - not all the gold and silver articles are listed in vs 9,10.

**2:1-70** Neh 7:6-73.

**2:1** 2 Kings 24:14-16; 25:11; 2 Chron 36:20.

**2:2** "Jeshua" - the same person as the Joshua of Hag 1:1 and Zech 3:1.

"Nehemiah" - not the Nehemiah of Neh 1:1 who came to Jerusalem later.

"Mordecai" - not the same person who



children of Jorah, a hundred and twelve; 19 the children of Hashum, two hundred and twenty-three; 20 the children of Gibbar, ninety-five; 21 the children of Bethlehem, an hundred and twenty-three; 22 the men of Netophah, fifty-six; 23 the men of Anathoth, a hundred and twenty-eight; 24 the children of Azmaveth, forty-two; 25 the children of Kirjath-Arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; 26 the children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred and twenty-one; 27 the men of Michmas, a hundred and twenty-two; 28 the men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred and twenty-three; 29 the children of Nebo, fifty-two; 30 the children of Magbish, a hundred and fifty-six; 31 the children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 32 the children of Harim, three hundred and twenty; 33 the children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-five; 34 the children of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five; 35 the children of Senaah, three thousand six hundred and thirty.

36 The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three; 37 the children of Immer, a thousand and fifty-two; 38 the children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred and forty-seven; 39 the children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

40 The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy-four.

41 The singers: the children of Asaph, a hundred and twenty-eight.

42 The children of the gatekeepers: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, *in* all a hundred and thirty-nine.

43 The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth, 44 the children of Keros, the children of Siaha, the children of Padon, 45 the children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub, 46 the children of Hagab, the children of Shalmal, the children of Hanan, 47 the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah, 48 the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam, 49 the children of Uzza, the

appears in the book of Esther.

**2:40** Many priests but few Levites returned. The Levites had to do the more menial work of the temple. Note on priests at Ex 28:1.

**2:41** "Asaph" – 1 Chron 25:1; 2 Chron 5:12; 35:15; Psalms 50, 73-83.

**2:42** "Gatekeepers" – 1 Chron 9:26; 2 Chron 23:4; 35:15; Neh 12:25.

**2:43** "Nethinims" – temple servants.

**2:61** "Gileadite" – 2 Sam 17:27-29; 19:31-39.

**2:62** "Unclean" – that is, not fit for the priesthood because their descent from Aaron was

children of Paseah, the children of Besai, 50 the children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim, 51 the children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, 52 the children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, 53 the children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Thamah, 54 the children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

55 The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda, 56 the children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, 57 the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Ami.

58 All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred and ninety-two.

59 And these *were* those who went up from Telmelah, Telharsa, Cherub, Addan, *and* Immer, but they could not show *evidence* of their father's house, and their descendants, whether they *were* of Israel: 60 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred and fifty-two; 61 and of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai (who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name).

62 These searched *in the* registers of their ancestors *for their names*, but they were not found, so they were removed from the priesthood as if unclean. 63 And the governor told them that they should not eat *any* of the most holy things until a priest stood up with Urim and Thummim.

64 The whole congregation together was forty-two thousand three hundred *and* sixty, 65 besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven. And among them *were* two hundred men and women singers.

66 Their horses *were* seven hundred and thirty-six; their mules, two hundred and forty-five; 67 their camels, four hundred and thirty-five; *their* donkeys, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68 And *some* of the heads of the fathers' not proved. See Num 3:10; 16:40. Now, in this New Testament era, priesthood has nothing to do with ancestors and genealogies, but only with a living relationship with the Lord Jesus by faith (Heb 10:19-22; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6).

**2:63** "Thummin" – Ex 28:30.

**2:64** A higher figure than the total of all the figures listed in vs 3-60. The difference of 12,542 may be the number of wives who came, or perhaps men of tribes other than Judah, Benjamin and Levi (1:5).

**2:68** "Offered freely" – compare Ex 25:1,2;

*households*, when they came to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in its place. 69 According to their ability, for the work they gave into the treasury sixty-one thousand gold drachmas, and five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priestly garments.

70 So the priests, and the Levites, and *some* of the people, and the singers, and the gatekeepers, and the Nethinims, lived in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

**3** And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. 2 Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as *it is* written in the law of Moses the man of God. 3 And they set up the altar on its foundation, despite the fear *that came* on them because of the people of those countries; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both morning and evening burnt offerings. 4 They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as *it is* written, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings in the required number for each day, according to the ordinance. 5 And afterwards *they offered* the continual burnt offering, also *offerings at* the new moons and all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and *those* of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD. 6 From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD. But the foundation of

the temple of the LORD had not yet been laid.

7 They also gave money to the masons and to the carpenters, and food and drink and oil to the *men* of Sidon and Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon on the sea to Joppa, in accordance with the permission they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

8 Now in the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak and the rest of their brethren, the priests and the Levites and all those who had come from the captivity to Jerusalem, began *the work*, and appointed the Levites, twenty years old and over, to oversee the work of the house of the LORD. 9 Then Jeshua, *with* his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, arose together to supervise the workers in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their apparel *stood* with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph stood with cymbals, to praise the LORD, in accordance with the ordinance of David king of Israel. 11 And they sang together by turns, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, because *he is* good, for his mercy *continues on* forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout as they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD had been laid. 12 But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers' *households were* old men who had seen the first house. When the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, they wept with a loud voice. But many shouted aloud for joy,

35:5,20; 1 Chron 29:3-6,9.

**2:69** "Drachmas" – the total comes to about 500 kilograms.

"Minas" – the total of this was about 2.9 metric tons.

**3:2** "Shealtiel" – see 1 Chron 3:19.

"Altar" – they began with the altar as being the first essential for offering the sacrifices prescribed under the law – Ex 20:24; Deut 12:5,6. Notes on burnt offerings at Leviticus chapter 1.

**3:3** "Fear" – 4:4. They did not let the fear of man prevent them from doing what they knew was right. Compare 1 Sam 15:24; Ps 56:3,11; Prov 29:25; Isa 51:12; John 12:42,43; Acts 4:18-20; 5:29.

"Offerings" – Ex 29:39; Num 28:1-8.

**3:4** "Feast of Tabernacles" – Ex 23:16; Lev 23:33-43.

**3:5** "New moons" – Num 10:10; 28:11; 1 Sam 20:5,24.

**3:6** The re-establishing of the offerings and the worship of God, came before the building of the temple. They had their priorities right. In Bible history the altar and offerings appear long before tabernacle or

temple – Gen 8:20. The devotion of His people is far more important to God than any building.

**3:7** "Trees" – 1 Kings 5:6,10; 2 Chron 2:3,8,16.

**3:8** "Second year" – probably 536 B.C.

"House of God" – the place where the house of God, the temple, had stood. The new temple was built in the same place.

"Twenty years" – 1 Chron 23:24; 2 Chron 31:17.

**3:10** 1 Chron 6:31,32; 16:4-6,42.

**3:11** 1 Chron 16:34; 2 Chron 5:13; 7:3; Ps 47:1; 95:1; 136:1-26.

**3:12** "First house" – the temple built by Solomon was very magnificent; the temple built after the Babylonian captivity was plain and ordinary – Haggai 2:3. The Jews wept to think of the former splendor gone and God's judgment which had fallen on His people; they rejoiced that God had brought them back to the land and given them a chance to make a new beginning. In any time it is better to be among the rejoicers, and to look forward rather than backward – Phil 3:1,13; 4:4.

13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard far off.

**4** Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the *returned* exiles were building the temple to the LORD God of Israel, 2 they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the fathers' households, and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God, just as you *do*, and we have been sacrificing to him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us up here."

3 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, said to them, "You can have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God, but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us."

4 Then the people of the land attempted to discourage the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, 5 and hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

6 And in the reign of Ahasuerus, at the beginning of his reign, they wrote *to him* an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

7 And in the days of Artaxerxes Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia, and the text of the letter *was* written in the Syrian script, and translated into the Syrian language.

8 Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the

king, of the following kind. 9 Then Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions, the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, *and* the Elamites, 10 and the rest of the nations whom the great and honourable Osnapper brought over and placed in the cities of Samaria, and the rest *who are* at this time on this side of the river, *wrote*.

11 This is a copy of the letter that they sent to him, to Artaxerxes the king:

"*We are* your servants, men who are at this time on this side of the River. 12 Be it known to the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have come to Jerusalem, and are building that rebellious and evil city, and are restoring *its* walls and repairing the foundations.

13 "Be it known now to the king that if this city is built and the walls restored, *then* they will not pay tax, tribute, and duty, and so the kings' revenue will be damaged. 14 Now because we are receiving support from *the king's* palace, and it is not right for us to see the king's dishonour, we have sent and informed the king, 15 that search may be made in the record books of your fathers so you can discover in the record books and know that this city *is* a rebellious city, and harmful to kings and provinces, and that within it in former times they have incited rebellion. For this reason this city was destroyed. 16 We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt, and its walls restored, through this you will have no portion on this side of the River."

17 *Then* the king sent an answer to Rehum the chancellor and to Shimshai the scribe and *to* the

**4:1,2** "Adversaries" – these people were originally foreigners, not Israelites. Their offer to help did not come out of good motives, as was soon evident (vs 4,5). Sometimes the method Satan uses to hinder or ruin a work of God is to bring false "helpers" into it. Compare Matt 13:24-30, 37-39; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Pet 2:1,2. Believers do not need any such helpers and should be on their guard against them.

They professed to seek the God of Israel but they had many gods of their own. See 2 Kings 17:25-34.

**4:3** The leaders of the Jews wanted no help from those who worshiped other gods and did not follow the instructions God gave in the law of Moses. Believers now should have the same concern to be a holy, separate people – 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**4:4,5** If the enemies of a work of God do not succeed in hindering it in one way they will try another. Cyrus reigned 559-530 B.C. Darius began his reign in 522.

**4:6-23** This section deals with opposition to the Jews' plan for rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Chronologically it belongs

between chapters 6 and 7 and is like a parenthesis in the narrative here. Verse 24 takes up the story from v 5.

**4:6** "Ahasuerus" – Esther 1:1 – better known as Xerxes. He reigned 486-465 B.C.

**4:7** "Artaxerxes" – 7:1,7,21. He ruled Persia 465-424 B.C.

"Syrian language" – Aramaic, the language spoken by Syrians and others (including the Jews after the Babylonian captivity). In the Hebrew Old Testament Ezra 4:8 – 6:18 is in Aramaic.

**4:8** "Chancellor" – here means an official appointed by the Persian king to represent him.

**4:10** "Osnapper" – also known as Ashurbanipal. He was the last powerful Assyrian king, ruling 669-627 B.C. From this verse together with v 2 and 2 Kings 17:24 we learn that outsiders were sent by three different Assyrian kings at three different times to live in the region of Samaria.

**4:13-16** These enemies of the Jews tried to get the king to support them by using this economic argument. What ruler wants to suffer financial loss?

rest of their companions who live in Samaria, and to the rest *living* beyond the River,

"Peace at this time.

18 "The letter which you sent to us has been clearly read in my presence. 19 And I gave a command, and a search has been made, and it has been found that in former times this city made insurrection against kings, and *that* rebellion and revolt were made in it. 20 There have also been mighty kings over Jerusalem who have ruled over all *the countries* beyond the River, and tax, tribute, and duty were paid to them. 21 Now give an order to stop these men, that this city not be built, until *another* command is given by me. 22 Now take heed that you do not fail to do this. Why should the damage increase to the harm of the kings?"

23 Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter *was* read in the presence of Rehum and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they quickly went up to Jerusalem to the Jews, and made them stop *work* by force of arms.

24 Then the work of the house of God at Jerusalem stopped. So it stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

**5** Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who *were* in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, *who was* over them. 2 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, rose up and began to build the house of God in Jerusalem, and the prophets of God *were* with them helping them.

3 At the same time Tatnai, governor on this side of the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and their companions, came to them and said this to them: "Who has commanded you to build this house and to restore this wall?" 4 Accordingly we then told them what the names of the men who were

constructing this building were. 5 But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them stop *the work* until the matter came before Darius, and then a written reply was returned concerning this *matter*.

6 *This is* a copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side of the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, who *were* on this side the River, sent to Darius the king. 7 They sent a letter to him, in which this was written:

"To Darius the king, all peace.

8 "Be it known to the king that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is being built with large stones, with timber being placed in the walls; and this work is going ahead quickly, and prospering in their hands.

9 "Then we questioned those elders, *and* said this to them: 'Who commanded you to build this house, and to restore these walls?' 10 We also asked their names, to inform you, that we might write the names of their chief men.

11 "And they replied to us, saying, 'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and rebuild the house that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built and finished. 12 But after our fathers had provoked the God of heaven to wrath, he gave them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. 13 But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this house of God. 14 And also the articles of gold and silver *belonging to* the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple that *was* in Jerusalem and brought into the temple of Babylon, these Cyrus the king took from the temple of Babylon, and they were handed over to a *man* whose name *was* Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor. 15 And he said to him, "Take

**4:20** 1 Kings 4:21; 1 Chron 18:3-6.

**4:22** The economic argument (vs 13-16) was successful, as it usually is in the world's affairs. The world always cares more for money than for truth and justice. See 1 John 2:16.

**4:23** "Made them stop" - that is, stop trying to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

**4:24** The author returns to events of vs 4,5 which took place prior to the reign of Artaxerxes.

**5:1** "Haggai" - Hag 1:1.

"Zechariah" - Zech 1:1. In the year 520 these two prophets began their ministry to the Jews in Judah.

**5:2** "Zerubbabel" - this man was the grandson of king Jehoiachin (1 Chron 3:17), and an ancestor of the Lord Jesus (Matt 1:12,13).

"Jeshua" - 2:2.

"Began to build" - the ministry of Haggai

and Zechariah had this success (Hag 1:13,14).

**5:3** 4:4,5. Tatnai was the Persian governor.

**5:5** "Eye" - 2 Chron 16:9. God would not encourage them through His prophets and stir them to do the work only to let their enemies stop them.

**5:8** "Great God" - it is interesting that they should say this and then try to stop His work.

**5:11** "God of heaven" - 1:2; 6:9; Neh 1:5; 2:4; Dan 2:19; Rev 11:13.

"King of Israel" - Solomon.

**5:12** "Provoked. . . to wrath" - 2 Chron 34:25; 36:16-20. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**5:13** "Cyrus" - 1:1. Notice that Cyrus, king of Persia, is here called "king of Babylon." This is because he conquered Babylon and ruled over it.

**5:14** 1:7,8.

these articles *and* go. Carry them to the temple in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be built in its place." 16 Then this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation of the house of God in Jerusalem, and from that time until now it is being built, but it is *still* not finished.'

17 "Now, therefore, if it *seems* good to the king, let there be a search made in the king's treasure house there in Babylon, *and see* whether it is *true* that a decree was made by king Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his wish to us concerning this matter."

**6** Then Darius the king issued an order, and a search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. 2 And a scroll was found at Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of the Medes, and in it a record *was* written as follows:

3 "In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem, 'Let the house be built, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let its foundations be firmly laid. Its height *is to be* sixty cubits, *and* its width sixty cubits, 4 *with* three rows of large stones, and a row of new timber. And let the expenses be paid from the king's house. 5 And also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple at Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and brought back to the temple at Jerusalem, *each one* to its place, and put *them* in the house of God.'

6 "Now *therefore*, Tatnai, governor beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, who *are* beyond the River, stay at a distance from there. 7 Let the work of

**5:16** 3:8-10.

**6:2** "Achmetha" – also called Ecbatana. The Persian empire had four capital cities. This was one.

"Medes" – Isa 13:17; Jer 25:25; Dan 5:28,31; Acts 2:9.

**6:3** "Sixty cubits" – this dimension is far greater than that of Solomon's temple which was only 9 meters wide. The Persians authorized a temple of this size, but the one the Jews built was surely much smaller (Hag 2:3).

**6:5** 1:7-11.

**6:6-12** This portion gives the letter King Darius wrote to the governor.

**6:6** 5:3.

**6:7** Once again God moved on the heart of a foreign ruler to accomplish His purposes (1:1; Prov 21:1).

**6:8,9** God so worked that the plot of enemies to stop the work was turned to a means of actually helping the work go forward. Such is God's great and wise sovereignty over the affairs of men. Compare Gen 50:20.

**6:10** The Persian rulers usually had a tolerant

this house of God alone. Let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in its place.

8 "Moreover, I issue this decree *concerning* what you must do for the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: expenses from the king's goods, from the taxes beyond the River, are immediately to be given to these men, so that they are not hindered. 9 And let what they need, both young bulls and rams and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, in accordance with the appointment of the priests who *are* at Jerusalem, be given them day by day without fail, 10 so that they can offer fragrant sacrifices to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and of his sons.

11 "Also I have issued a decree, that whoever alters this word, let timber be pulled down from his house and set up, *and* let him be hanged on it, and let his house be made a refuse heap for this. 12 And the God who has caused his name to dwell there, destroy all kings and people who take in hand to change *and* destroy this house of God at Jerusalem.

"I Darius have issued a decree. Let it be done with speed."

13 Then Tatnai, governor on this side the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions, quickly acted in accordance with *the message* Darius the king had sent. 14 And the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built, and finished *it*, in accordance with the commandment of the God of Israel, and in accordance with the command of Cyrus and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar,

attitude toward religion. They encouraged the building or restoration of temples in other lands as well as Judah. They were not devoted to the God of Israel, but merely thought that all nations should have the religion and the gods they chose and be able to worship without hindrance. Their object was the well being of themselves and the empire.

**6:11** 7:26; Dan 2:5; 3:4-6,29; 6:7,8. Emperors in ancient times usually did not take a tolerant view of disobedience to their commands.

**6:13** "Tatnai" – 5:3; 6:6.

**6:14** "Zechariah" – 5:1,2. The Persian rulers and the Jewish elders supported the rebuilding of the temple, but the mainstay of the work was the ministry of God's Word.

"Artaxerxes" – this man became king half a century after the rebuilding of the temple. He is mentioned here probably because he later contributed to the maintenance of the temple (7:21-26).

**6:15** "Darius" – the temple was completed in 516 or 515 B.C.



which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, observed the dedication of this house of God with joy, 17 and offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and, as a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, in accordance with the number of the tribes of Israel. 18 And they appointed the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God at Jerusalem, as it is written in the book of Moses.

19 And the children of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month. 20 For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them *were* clean, and they killed the Passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21 And the children of Israel who had come back from captivity, and all those who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, ate *it* with them, 22 and joyfully kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days. For the Lord had made them joyful, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

**7** Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of

Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, 2 the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, 3 the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, 4 the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, 5 the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest, 6 this Ezra came up from Babylon. And he *was* a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given. And the king granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God *was* on him. 7 And *some* of the children of Israel and of the priests and the Levites and the singers and the gatekeepers and the Nethinims came up to Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

8 And he arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month, in the seventh year of the king. 9 For on the first *day* of the first month he started his journey up from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month he arrived in Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God *was* on him. 10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to search out the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach *its* statutes and judgments in Israel.

11 Now this *is* a copy of the letter that king Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, a scribe learned in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes *given* to Israel:

12 "Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, and perfect *peace be with you now*.

**6:17** "Sin offering" – notes at Leviticus chapters 4 and 5.

**6:19** Notes at Ex 12:1-13; Lev 23:5.

**6:20** "Clean" – note at Neh 12:30.

**6:21** "Separated themselves" – 9:11,12; Ex 19:5,6; Deut 7:6; 14:2; Neh 9:2; 10:28; 2 Cor 6:14-18; 1 Pet 2:9.

**6:22** "Unleavened Bread" – Ex 12:15; 13:6,7; Lev 23:6.

"Assyria" – the king of Persia is here called also the king of Assyria because Assyria had been conquered and was ruled by Persian kings. Compare 5:13.

**7:1-9** "After these things" – more than fifty years elapsed between the events of chapters 6 and 7. The temple was finished by 515 B.C. Ezra came to Jerusalem probably in 458. During this interval the events of the book of Esther took place.

**7:1** "Ezra" – Ezra was a priest in the family line of Aaron who was the first high priest of Israel after the building of the tabernacle (Ex 28:1).

"Son of" – in Hebrew these words, and "children of", frequently mean merely "descendant(s) of", and many generations may have lived between the times of the two persons named. Here Ezra, giving his own genealogy, omits names of his own ancestors given in 1 Chron 6:3-15. This is further evidence that in Hebrew "son of" can mean grandson or other descendant further

down the line.

**7:6** Ezra was born and grew to manhood in Babylon among the exiles taken there by king Nebuchadnezzar.

"Skilled" – vs 10,11. Ezra's knowledge of the law of Moses and his godly character indicate that among the Jews in Babylon at that time there was some vigorous spiritual life and study.

"On him" – the hand of the Lord on him suggests almighty power and guidance working with Ezra – vs 9,28; 8:18,22,31; Neh 2:8,18.

**7:9** God's almighty and gracious hand protected Ezra through the trials and dangers of a four month journey.

**7:10** "Ezra" – vs 6,11. Notice the three aspects of Ezra's life and ministry. He learned; he practiced; he taught. All three are very important, and their order is also important. We have all seen far too many who tried to teach without learning much themselves, and without practicing what they taught. Compare Rom 2:17-24; 1 Tim 1:5-7. To be and do what Ezra was and did one must devote oneself to them as he did.

**7:12** The text of Ezra 7:12-26 is in Aramaic in the Hebrew Old Testament.

"King of kings" – he called himself this because he had conquered other kings and ruled over them. But there is only One who

13 "I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and of their priests and Levites in my realm who are willing to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. 14 For you are sent by the king, and by his seven counsellors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in accordance with the law of your God which *is* in your hand, 15 and to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counsellors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling place *is* in Jerusalem, 16 and all the silver and gold that you can find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God in Jerusalem, 17 so that you can quickly buy with this money bulls, rams, lambs, with their food offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them on the altar of the house of your God which *is* in Jerusalem.

18 "And whatever seems good to you, and to your brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do that, according to the will of your God. 19 Also the articles that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver *them* into the presence of the God of Jerusalem. 20 And whatever more is needed for the house of your God, which you may have occasion to supply, supply *it* out of the king's treasure house.

21 "And I, I Artaxerxes the king, issue a decree to all the treasurers who *are* beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, requires from you, let it be done speedily, 22 up to a hundred talents of silver, and a hundred measures of wheat, and a hundred baths of wine and a hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing *how much*. 23 Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done diligently for the house of the God of heaven. For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? 24 Also we inform you, concerning all of the priests and Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Nethinims, and ministers of this house of God, it will not be lawful to impose tax, tribute, or duty on them.

25 "And you, Ezra, in accordance with the *is* ruler of all the kings of earth (1 Tim 6:15; Rev 1:5; 17:14; 19:16).

"God of heaven" - 1:2. These kings used such language, but how much they understood the real meaning of their own words, we cannot say.

**7:14** "Seven counsellors" - Esther 1:14.

**7:20** "Treasure house" - 6:4. It is probably that the favor shown to the Jews by the kings of Persia can be traced partly to the influence on them by people like Daniel, Esther, Mordecai, Ezra and Nehemiah.

**7:22** "A hundred talents" - one talent equals about 34 kilograms.

"Measures" - in Hebrew "kors" - one kor

wisdom of your God, which *is* in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who can judge all the people who *are* beyond the River, all those who know the laws of your God. And teach those who do not know *them*. 26 And whoever will not do the law of your God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether *it be* for death, or for banishment, or for confiscation of goods, or for imprisonment."

27 Blessed *be* the LORD God of our fathers who put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem, 28 and *who* has extended mercy to me in the presence of the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened because the hand of the LORD my God *was* on me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to come up with me.

**8** These *are* now the heads of their fathers' households, and *this is* the genealogy of those who came up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king: 2 of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David, Hattush; 3 of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh, Zechariah, and with him were registered a hundred and fifty males; 4 of the sons of Pahath-Moab, Elihoenai the son of Zerariah, and with him two hundred males; 5 of the sons of Shechaniah, the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males; 6 and of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males; 7 and of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males; 8 and of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males; 9 of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males; 10 and of the sons of Shelomith, the son of Josiphiah, and with him a hundred and sixty males; 11 and of the sons of Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight males; 12 and of the sons of Azgad, Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him a hundred and ten males; 13 and of the last sons

equals about 6 bushels or 220 dry liters.

"Bath" - one bath equals about 22 liters.

**7:23** 6:10; 8:22. This generosity had a motive of self-interest. This is all too often the case even in Christian circles.

**7:25** The king gave considerable authority to Ezra in both religious and secular matters.

**7:27** "Blessed be the LORD" - Ezra gave praise to God for the way He worked in the king's heart. Compare 1:1; 6:22; Prov 21:1.

**7:28** "Mercy to me" - for the first time in this book Ezra speaks directly of himself.

"Hand of the LORD" - vs 6,9.

**8:1** 7:7.

of Adonikam, whose names *are* these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them sixty males; 14 and of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai, and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

15 And I gathered them together at the river that flows toward Ahava, and for three days we stayed there in tents. And I looked among the people and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi. 16 Then I sent for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah and for Elnathan and for Jarib and for Elnathan and for Nathan and for Zechariah and for Meshullam, chief men, and for Joiarib and for Elnathan, men of understanding. 17 And I sent them with an order to Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say to Iddo, *and* to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring to us ministers for the house of our God. 18 And by the good hand of our God on us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen *men*; 19 and Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty *men*; 20 also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims. All of them were designated by name.

21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. 22 For I was ashamed to ask the king for a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken to the king, saying, "The hand of our God is on all those who seek him, *bringing* good, but his power and his wrath *are* against all those who forsake him." 23 So we fasted and prayed to our God for this, and he heard our prayer.

24 Then I separated twelve of the leading priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, 25 and weighed out to them

the silver and the gold and the articles, the offering for the house of our God, which the king and his counsellors and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered. 26 I weighed out into their hands six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver articles *weighing* a hundred talents, *and* one hundred talents of gold, 27 and twenty gold basins worth a thousand drachmas, and two articles of fine bronze, precious as gold.

28 And I said to them, "You *are* holy to the LORD. The articles *are* also holy, and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers. 29 Watch and keep *them*, until you weigh *them* in the presence of the chief priests and the Levites, and heads of the fathers' *households* of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD." 30 So the priests and the Levites took the weighed silver and the gold and the articles to bring *them* to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

31 Then we set out from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go to Jerusalem, and the hand of our God was on us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and of those who lie in wait along the way. 32 And we came to Jerusalem, and stayed there three days.

33 Now on the fourth day the silver and the gold and the articles were weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth, the son of Uriah the priest; and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them *were* Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites. 34 Everything *was accounted for* by number *and* by weight, and the whole weight was written down at that time.

35 *Also* the offspring of those who had been carried away, who had come from the captivity, offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, twelve he-goats as a sin offering. All *this was* a burnt offering to the LORD. 36 And they delivered the king's orders to the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side of

**8:15** "Ahava" – a place in Babylonia. "River" here may mean a canal that was connected with either the Euphrates or Tigris river.

**8:21** "Fast" – Jud 20:26; 1 Sam 7:6; 2 Chron 20:3; Neh 9:1; Esther 4:3; Ps 69:10; Joel 1:14; 2:15.

**8:22** There are possible dangers lurking every time a child of God makes a journey. It is a wise thing to commit every journey to God and pray for His protection. Compare Ps 20:7; 33:17-19; 34:15,22; 118:6,7; Rom 8:31. Ezra's life matched the principles he preached. He was concerned that he should have a consistent testimony before others. He saw that asking the king for protectors for the journey would be an

expression of doubt that God would protect them.

**8:23** Ps 65:2.

**8:29** "Watch and keep them" – anyone entrusted with anything belonging to God should be more careful to guard it than to guard things belonging to himself. Alas, that often in Christian circles things and money offered to God are misused, neglected, or even stolen by those who have the oversight of them.

**8:31** "Hand of our God" – 7:6,9,28.

**8:33** 8:26,30.

**8:35** Notes on offerings at Leviticus chapters 1-4.

**8:36** 7:21-24.

the River. And they gave assistance to the people and to the house of God.

**9** Now when these things had been done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, *behaving* according to their abominations, *those* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. 2 For they have taken some of their daughters *as wives* for themselves, and for their sons, so that the holy race has mingled with the people of *those* lands. Yes, the leaders and rulers have been foremost in putting their hand to this trespass."

3 And when I heard this matter, I tore my garment and my cloak, and plucked out the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down appalled. 4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me, because of the transgression of those who had been exiled, and I sat appalled until the evening sacrifice.

5 And at the evening sacrifice I got up from my humiliation, with my clothes and my cloak torn, *and* I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God, 6 and said,

"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to raise my face to you, my God, for our evil deeds have risen over *our* head, and our trespass has grown up to the heavens. 7 From the days of our fathers to

this day our guilt *has been* great, and for our evil deeds we, our kings *and* our priests, have been handed over to the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to be like plunder, and to confusion of face, *as it is* this day.

8 "And now for a little while grace has been *showed* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may give light to our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. 9 For we *were* slaves, yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage, but has extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to raise up the house of our God and to repair its desolations, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10 "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments, 11 which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are going to possess is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations. They have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. 12 Now, therefore, do not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons, or seek their peace or their wealth at any time, so that you may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave *it* as an inheritance to your children forever.'

13 "And after all that has come on us for our evil deeds and for our great trespass, since you,

**9:1** "Not separated" – Ex 19:5,6; Lev 18:24-30; 20:7,23.

**9:2** "Wives" – Ex 34:15,16; Deut 7:3-6. Israel was called to be a distinct, separate people, a "holy race", whose holiness of life would be in marked contrast to the sinful life style of the world around. The same is true of believers now (2 Cor 6:14-18; 1 Pet 2:9). The tragedy is that so often those who profess to know the Lord want to be the same as everyone else, to fit into godless society instead of being a witness for God and His holy character. This compromise with the fallen world is seen not only in Ezra's time but in many places in Scripture, and is only too evident in the churches today.

**9:3** Gen 37:34; Josh 7:6; Jud 11:35; 2 Sam 13:19. The depth of Ezra's love for God and His people is seen here. Those who are closest to God will be most alarmed by sin. Compare Ps 119:136. Ezra knew that a continued refusal to be a separate people and to follow God's laws would mean punishment for the people and dishonor to God's name.

**9:4** "Trembled" – Ps 119:120; Isa 66:2. In all times God has His remnant through whom His purposes are worked out. See v 8; 1 Kings 19:30; Isa 1:9; etc.

**9:5** "Sacrifice" – Ex 29:41.

**9:6-15** Although guiltless in the matter that so appalled him, Ezra identified himself

with the people in their sin. Compare Neh 9:6-38; Isa 64:5-7; Jer 3:25. He did not stand aloof and condemn them. We can learn something of true intercession from this prayer.

**9:6** "Ashamed" – Jer 3:25; 31:19; Dan 9:7. Contrast Jer 3:3; 6:15; Zeph 3:5; 1 Cor 5:2. See Ps 51:17.

**9:7** "Fathers" – 2 Chron 29:6; Ps 106:6-43; Jer 2:27; Ezek 23:35.

"Handed over to" – 2 Chron 36:15-20. Ezra was afraid the same thing might happen again if the people were not willing to obey God.

**9:8** "Grace" – Ex 34:6,7. "Remnant" – v 4.

"Light" – Ps 4:6; 13:3; 19:8; 36:9.

**9:9** "Slaves" – Neh 9:36. They were not slaves put to hard labor, but they were under the kings of Persia and unable to have their own king or to handle their own affairs without supervision from them.

"Kings of Persia" – all of them from Cyrus to Artaxerxes showed favor to the Jews.

**9:10-12** Lev 18:24-27; Deut 7:3,4; 9:4; 11:8,9.

**9:13** "Deserve" – they had been punished with famine and sword, and great destruction of their land and cities and people, and with bondage in a foreign country. Yet in Ezra's eyes this was less than they deserved. This is a truth the spiritually wise among

our God, have punished us less than our evil deeds *deserve*, and have given us *such* deliverance as this, 14 should we again break your commandments, and join in marriage with the people of these abominations? Would you not be angry with us till you had consumed us, so that *there would be* no remnant or survivor? 15 O LORD God of Israel, you *are* righteous, for we remain as a remnant, as *it is* this day. See, we *are* before you in our trespasses, for we cannot stand before you because of this."

**10** Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a very great congregation out of Israel, of men and women and children, gathered around him, for the people wept bitterly. 2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, answered and said to Ezra, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken foreign wives of the people of the land. Yet now, in spite of this, there is hope for Israel. 3 Now, therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and those who have been born to them, according to the counsel of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God, and let it be done according to the law. 4 Arise! For *this* matter *is* your *responsibility*. We also *will be* with you. Be courageous, and do *it*."

5 Then Ezra got up, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, swear that they would do according to this word. And they swore. 6 Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the room of Johanan the son of Eliashib. And *when* he went there, he neither ate

men will understand (Ps 103:10). Those who are spiritually blind will put the blame for man's sufferings on God and think God is unjust to punish men for their sins.

**9:14** "Marriage" – Neh 13:23-27. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is contrary to God's Word and is a very serious matter indeed.

"Angry" – Deut 7:4; 11:16,17; 29:26-28; Josh 23:16; Jud 2:20. Notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**9:15** "Righteous" – a truth taught everywhere in the Bible – Gen 18:25; Deut 4:8; 1 Sam 12:7; 2 Chron 12:6; Ps 4:1; 51:4; 129:4; 145:17; Isa 24:16; Jer 12:1; Rom 3:25; Rev 15:3,4; 16:7.

"We cannot stand before you because of this" – compare Ps 51:1-6; Isa 6:5; Jer 3:25. Contrast this attitude with the one seen in Luke 18:9-12.

**10:1** Ezra felt deeply the sin of the people and the danger that could come to them because of it. And he wanted them to understand the seriousness of the situation.

**10:2** Ezra waited for repentance to have its

food nor drank water, for he was grieving because of the transgression of the exiles.

7 And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the children of the captivity, that they should assemble at Jerusalem, 8 and that whoever would not come within three days, in accordance with the counsel of the leaders and the elders, all his property would be forfeited, and he would be separated from the congregation of the exiles.

9 Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered together at Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, on the twentieth *day* of the month, and all the people were sitting in the square before the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter, and because of a heavy rain. 10 And Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have transgressed, and have taken foreign wives, increasing the trespass of Israel. 11 Now, therefore, make confession to the LORD God of your fathers, and do what pleases him, and separate yourselves from the people of the land and from the foreign wives."

12 Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, "We must do as you have said. 13 But the people *are* many, and *it is* the rainy season, and we are not able to stand outside. And *this is* not the work of a day or two, for there are many of us who have transgressed in this matter. 14 Let now our rulers, of the whole congregation, stand, and let all those in our cities who have married foreign wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders of each city and its judges, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter is turned away from us." 15 Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah opposed

work in the people's hearts and for them to say what was in their minds. He knew that nothing of spiritual value could be done unless the people were with him.

"Hope" – there is always hope for those who will repent and turn to God with their whole heart – 2 Chron 7:14; Isa 55:7.

**10:5** "Swear" – 2 Chron 15:12-15; Neh 5:12; 13:25.

**10:6** "Water" – Deut 9:18; Ps 42:3; Jonah 3:7.

**10:7,8** Because of the influence of Ezra's teaching, example, and prayers, the leaders of the Jews acted as they should have to put away that evil from the people. Ezra's method accomplished more than a show of authority on his part would have done.

**10:9** "Rain" – perhaps it was also cold, since the Jewish ninth month (includes parts of November and December) is the beginning of the cold season in Israel.

**10:10,11** Ezra came to the point immediately. Compare Isa 58:1. Such teachers and preachers are needed in every generation.

**10:12-14** When leaders take an open stand



this, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite supported them.

16 And the exiles did as *agreed*. And Ezra the priest, *with* some heads of the fathers' households, for each of their fathers' households, and all of them by *their* names, were separated and sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. 17 And they finished *dealing* with all the men who had taken foreign wives by the first day of the first month.

18 And among the sons of the priests there were found those who had married foreign wives; *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozabad and his brothers Maaseiah, and Eliezer and Jarib and Gedaliah.

19 And they gave their hands *in pledge* that they would put away their wives, and since *they were* guilty, *they offered* a ram from the flock for their trespass.

20 And of the sons of Immer, Hanani and Zebadiah; 21 and of the sons of Harim, Maaseiah and Elijah and Shemaiah and Jehiel and Uziah; 22 and of the sons of Pashur, Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad and Elasa; 23 also of the Levites: Jozabad and Shimei and Kelaiah (he *is* the same *as* Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer;

24 Of the singers also: Eliashib. And of the gatekeepers: Shallum and Telem and Uri.

25 And others of Israel: of the sons of Parosh, Ramiah and Jeziah and Malchiah and Miamin and Eleazar and Malchijah and Benaiah; 26 and of the sons of Elam, Mattaniah, Zechariah and Jehiel and Abdi and Jeremoth and Eliah; 27 and of the sons of Zattu, Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah and Jeremoth and Zabad and Aziza; 28 of the sons also of Bebai, Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai *and* Athlai; 29 and of the sons of Bani, Meshullam, Malluch and Adaiah, Jashub and Sheal and Ramoth; 30 and of the sons of Pahath-Moab, Adna and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel and Binnui and Manasseh; 31 and *of* the sons of Harim, Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, 32 Benjamin, Malluch *and* Shemariah; 33 of the sons of Hashum, Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh *and* Shimei; 34 of the sons of Bani, Maadai, Amram and Uel, 35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh, 36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, 37 Mattaniah, Mattenai and Jaasau, 38 and Bani and Binnui, Shimei, 39 and Shelemiah and Nathan and Adaiah, 40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, 41 Azareel and Shelemiah, Shemariah, 42 Shallum, Amariah *and* Joseph; 43 of the sons of Nebo, Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau and Joel, Benaiah.

44 All of these had married foreign wives, and *some* of them had wives by whom they had children.

against evil the results are often good.

**10:19** "Trespass" – notes at Leviticus chapter 5.

# NEHEMIAH

**Author:**

According to ancient Jewish tradition Ezra wrote this book, but the first verse has “the words of Nehemiah”. If Ezra wrote down this book in its present form, it is clear that he used information that came from Nehemiah.

**Date:**

About 430 BC.

**Themes:**

The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem; the opposition faced by the Jews and how they overcome it; the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra and their efforts to teach the people and train them in true godliness.

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**1** The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came about in the month Kislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and *some* men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity there in the province *are* in great distress and reproach. Also the wall of Jerusalem *is* broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."

4 And it happened when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for some* days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, 5 and said,

"I beg you, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and mercy for those who love him and observe his commandments, 6 let your ear now be attentive, and your eyes open, that you may hear the prayer of your servant, which I pray before you now, day and night, for your servants the children of Israel, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have committed against you. Both I and my father's household have sinned. 7 We have dealt very corruptly against you, and have not kept the commandments or the statutes or the judgments which you commanded your servant Moses.

8 "Remember, I beg you, the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, 'If you

transgress, I will scatter you among the nations, 9 but *if* you turn to me, and keep my commandments, and do them, even though some of you were driven to the uttermost part of the heavens, *yet* I would gather them from there and bring them to the place that I have chosen to cause my name to dwell.'

10 "Now these *are* your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. 11 O Lord, I beg you, now let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who desire to fear your name, and make, I pray you, your servant successful this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

For I was the king's cupbearer.

**2** And it happened in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that* wine *was* before him, and I took up the wine and gave *it* to the king. Now *before this* I had not been sad in his presence.

2 Therefore the king said to me, "Why *is* your face sad, since you *are* not sick? This *is* nothing *but* sorrow of heart."

Then I was very much afraid, 3 and said to the king, "May the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of the tombs of my fathers, *lies* waste and its gates have been consumed by fire?"

4 Then the king said to me, "What do

**1:1** "Nehemiah" - this name means "Jehovah comforts."

"Twentieth year" - the twentieth year of Artaxerxes king of Persia - 445 B.C. Kislev in the Jewish calendar included parts of November and December.

"Shushan" - the principal city of the province of Elam in southwest Persia (Iran).

"The palace" - or it could be translated "the capital."

**1:3** 2 Kings 25:8-10; Ezra 4:12-23. This meant the people in Jerusalem were exposed to attack from their enemies on all sides.

**1:4** Ezra 9:3; 10:1,6; Jer 9:1; 13:17; 14:17; Luke 19:41; Acts 20:19. Often they will weep most who care most for the Word of God.

**1:5** "Awesome" - 4:14; Deut 7:21; 10:17; Ps 47:2. The KJV has "terrible" here - a word that conveys the wrong meaning to many readers today.

"Love" - Ex 34:6,7; Deut 7:9; Dan 9:4. **1:6** "Day and night" - as v 4, this verse shows the intensity of his concern. Compare Ps 42:3; 88:1; Luke 2:37; 1 Thess 3:10; 1 Tim 5:5; 2 Tim 1:3.

"Confess" - Ezra 9:6,7; Jer 3:25; Dan 9:4-6.

**1:7** "Corruptly" - Ps 106:6.

"You commanded" - Ex 20:1; etc.

**1:8** Lev 26:33; Deut 28:63-67.

**1:9** "Uttermost part of the heavens" - this is a proper translation of the Hebrew. Compare Matt 24:31. The phrase does not mean "somewhere up in the sky", but has to do with the far places of the earth.

"Gather" - Deut 30:1-5; Jer 23:3; Ezek 20:34,41.

"My name" - 1 Kings 8:48.

**1:10** Ex 32:11; Deut 9:29; 32:9. Even though God's people fail, they are still His people.

**1:11** "Fear your name" - notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"This man" - he means the emperor whom he served. God can and does work in the minds and hearts of others in answer to prayer.

"Cupbearer" - the monarchs of the ancient world were often in danger of being poisoned. The cupbearer had to be a man who was completely trustworthy. Perhaps one of Nehemiah's duties was to taste any drink before it was handed to the king to see whether it was safe to drink.

**2:2** "Afraid" - handing wine to the king with a sad face could have been misunderstood (1:11).

**2:3** "City" - 1:2,3.

**2:4** "Prayed" - Nehemiah was a man of prayer (1:4; 4:4,9; 5:19; 6:9,14; 13:14,22,29,31). Even in conversation with

you request?"

So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favour in your sight, that you would send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may build it."

6 And the king said to me (the queen also was sitting by him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me. And I set him a time.

7 Moreover, I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, 8 and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which *is* by the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I will occupy." And the king granted me *my requests*, in accordance with the good hand of my God on me. 9 Then I went to the governors beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

10 When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite, a servant *of the king*, heard *of it*, it grieved them exceedingly that a man had come to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. 12 And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor *was there any* animal with me, except

the animal that I rode on.

13 And I went out at night by the Gate of the Valley, toward the Dragon Well and to the Refuse Gate, and inspected the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down, and its gates *which* were consumed by fire. 14 Then I went on to the Gate of the Fountain and to the King's Pool, but *there was* no room for the animal under me to get through. 15 Then I went up at night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back and entered by the Gate of the Valley, and *so* returned. 16 And the rulers did not know where I went, or what I did; nor had I as yet told *it* to the Jews or to the priests or to the nobles or to the rulers or to the rest who did the work.

17 Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lies* waste, and its gates burned by fire. Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, so that we are no longer an *object of reproach*." 18 Then I told them of the hand of my God who had been gracious to me, and also the king's words that he had spoken to me.

And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they put their hands to *this good work*.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite, a servant *of the king*, and Geshem the Arabian, heard *it*, they laughed at us and scorned us and despised us, and said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"

20 Then I answered them and said to them, "The God of heaven will give us success. Therefore

others he spoke in his heart to God – an example we all would be wise to follow.

**2:5** "Build" – the temple had been completed seventy years before (Ezra 6:15). But the walls and the city of Jerusalem remained in a ruined condition.

**2:7,8** Nehemiah was a man of foresight, and careful planning. He had obviously considered beforehand what was involved in the project and he was ready to see it through to the end. Compare Luke 14:28,29.

**2:7** "Beyond the River" – in the area between the Euphrates river and the Mediterranean Sea.

**2:8** "The house" – the temple.

"King" – Prov 21:1. At this time the king appointed Nehemiah governor of the Jews in Jerusalem and Judah – 5:14.

"Good hand of my God" – v 18; Ezra 7:6; 8:22.

**2:9** Compare Ezra 8:22. This does not mean Nehemiah had no faith in God's protection. Nehemiah had not spoken as Ezra had, and he was traveling as an official of the king.

**2:10** "Sanballat" – there is evidence apart from the Bible that Sanballat was the governor of Samaria at that time. Tobiah was "a servant of the king", that is, an official, probably the governor of an area east of the Jordan river. They did not want

the Jews in Judah to become strong and weaken their own influence and authority.

**2:12-16** Nehemiah wanted to see what needed to be done before attempting to speak or start the work – compare vs 7,8.

"Dragon" (v 13) – the Hebrew word here seems to have several meanings, and could be translated "Jackal" or "Serpent" or "Fig" or "Sea monster."

**2:17** "Lies waste" – most of Jerusalem had remained in ruins since its destruction in 586 B.C., 140 years previously. The Jews after their return from Babylon had been there for more than ninety years, but had been unable to rebuild the walls and the city. Perhaps they despaired of ever being able to do so until Nehemiah came with authority from the Persian king and encouraged them.

**2:18** Verse 8.

**2:19** "Geshem" – probably an official of the strong Arab power east and south of Jerusalem.

"Laughed", "scorned" – a weapon the ungodly often use against God's servants (2 Kings 2:23; 2 Chron 30:10; 36:16; Ps 22:7; 44:13; Matt 27:29; Luke 23:36; 2 Pet 3:3; Jude 18).

**2:20** "Success" – Rom 8:31.

"You have no portion" – the land of Canaan, with all its cities, was given to the

we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

**3** Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set up its doors. *They built* and dedicated *the wall* to the Tower of Meah, to the Tower of Hananeel. 2 And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

3 But the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They *also* laid its beams and set up its doors, its locks, and its bars. 4 And next to them Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, made repairs. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel made repairs. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana made repairs. 5 And next to them the Tekoites made repairs, but their nobles did not put their necks to the work of their Lord.

6 Moreover, Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate. They laid its beams, and set up its doors and its locks and its bars. 7 And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, made repairs to the *place of the throne* of the governor on this side of the River. 8 Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths, made repairs. And next to him Hananiah, the son of *one of the* perfumers, made repairs, and they fortified Jerusalem to the Broad Wall. 9 And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of half of the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. 10 And next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, made repairs opposite his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabniah made repairs. 11 Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab, repaired another section and the Tower of the Furnaces. 12 And next to him Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of half of the district of Jerusalem, made repairs, he and his daughters.

13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it, and set up its doors, its locks, and its bars, and *repaired* a thousand cubits on the wall as far as the Refuse Gate.

Jews by God as a permanent possession (Gen 17:8; Josh 1:2-6). Because of sin they had lost possession temporarily, but it was still theirs.

**3:1** All classes of people had a part in the work – priests (v 1), goldsmiths and perfume-makers (v 8), rulers and women (v 12), Levites (v 17), merchants (v 32). So among believers now there is a place for each one in the work of God – 1 Cor 12:7-11.

**3:2** "Jericho" – much of the work was done by those from towns other than Jerusalem – vs 5,7,13,17,18.

14 But Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-Hakkerem, repaired the Refuse Gate. He built it and set up its doors, its locks, and its bars.

15 But Shallun the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of a district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He built it and covered it and set up its doors, its locks, and its bars. And *he repaired* the wall of the Pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and the steps that go down from the City of David. 16 Beyond him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of half of the district of Beth-Zur, made repairs to *the place* opposite the Tombs of David, and to the artificial pool, and to the House of the Mighty.

17 Beyond him the Levite Rehum the son of Bani made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, the ruler of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. 18 Beyond him their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of half the district of Keilah, made repairs. 19 And next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite the ascent to the armoury where *the wall* turns. 20 Beyond him Baruch the son of Zabbai carefully repaired the other section, from where *the wall* turns to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. 21 Beyond him Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz repaired another section, from the door of the house of Eliashib to the far side of the house of Eliashib.

22 And beyond him the priests, the men of the plain, made repairs. 23 Beyond him Benjamin and Hashub made repairs opposite their house. Beyond him Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah made repairs by his house. 24 Beyond him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the place where *the wall* turns, as far as the corner. 25 Palal the son of Uzai *made repairs* opposite the place where *the wall* turns, and on to the tower which projects out from the king's upper house that *was* by the court of the prison. Beyond him Pedaiah the son of Parosh *made repairs*. 26 Moreover, the Nethinims who lived in Ophel *made repairs* to *the place* opposite the water gate toward the east, and on to the tower that projects out. 27 Beyond them the Tekoites repaired another section, *opposite the great tower*

**3:5** "Nobles" – evidently they thought that manual labor was beneath their dignity. Their pride cost them the privilege of taking part in a humble but important work of God. If we are too proud to perform the lowliest task for God we are too proud to be of much use in any work of God (though we may think otherwise and see what we call success). See the example of the Lord Jesus in John 13:3-5. See also Acts 18:3; 20:34,35.

**3:15** "Siloah" – Siloam.

**3:27** The men of Tekoa repaired two sections of the wall while their "nobles"



that projects out, on to the Wall of Ophel.

28 The priests made repairs from above the Horse Gate, each opposite his house. 29 Beyond them Zadok the son of Immer made repairs opposite his house. And beyond him Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the guard at the east gate, made repairs. 30 Beyond him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section. Beyond him Meshullam the son of Berechiah made repairs opposite his chamber. 31 Beyond him Malchiah, the goldsmith's son, made repairs to the Place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, opposite the Miphkad Gate, and as far as the upper room at the corner. 32 And between the upper room at the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.

**4** But it happened that when Sanballat heard we were building the wall, he was angry and enraged, and mocked the Jews. 2 And he spoke in the presence of his brothers and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Will they restore the stones from the burned heaps of rubble?"

3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* with him, and he said, "Even if a fox goes up on what they are building, it would break down their stone wall."

4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised; and turn their reproach back on their own head, and give them as prey in the land of captivity, 5 and do not cover their wickedness and do not let their sin be blotted out from your presence. For they have provoked *you* to anger in the presence of the builders.

6 So we built the wall, and the whole wall was

joined together up to half its *height*, for the people had a mind to work.

7 But it happened *that* when Sanballat and Tobiah, and the Arabians and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored *and* that the gaps were beginning to be closed, they were very angry, 8 and all of them together made a plot to come *and* fight against Jerusalem and to disturb it. 9 Nevertheless, we made our prayer to our God, and because of them, set a guard against them day and night.

10 And Judah said, "The strength of the labourers is failing, and *there is* much rubble, so that we are not able to build the wall."

11 And our adversaries said, "They will not know or see till we come into the midst of them and kill them and stop the work."

12 And it happened when the Jews who lived near them came, that they told us ten times, "*They will attack you* every place where you may turn."

13 Therefore I placed *men* in the low places behind the wall *and* on the high places. I placed the people according to their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked *around* and got up and said to the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, *who is* great and awe-inspiring, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses."

15 And it came about, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and *that* God had brought their counsel to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work.

16 And from that time on, it happened that half of my servants worked on the job, and the other half of them held the spears, the shields, the bows, and armour. And the rulers *stood* behind the whole

refused to do anything (v 5).

**3:32** "Sheep Gate" – this completed the wall (v 1). Altogether there were ten gates.

**4:1** "Sanballat" – 2:10. "Mocked" – 2:19.

**4:4,5** For note and references on similar prayers against enemies see Ps 35:8. Opposing a work of God is a very serious matter. But observe that Nehemiah himself did not act against his enemies, but left the matter in God's hands.

**4:5** Jer 18:23.

**4:7** Ashdod was one of the old cities of the Philistines which had come under the rule of the Persians. Opposition to the Jews increased on all sides.

**4:8** Ps 2:1,2; 83:1-8.

**4:9** They did not pray without posting a guard, or post a guard without praying. They did their part and looked to God to do His part – an example to us all.

**4:10-12** Growing opposition from without, growing weakness and discouragement

within. Compare 2 Cor 7:5.

**4:14** "Do not be afraid" – Ex 14:13; Num 14:9; Josh 1:9; John 14:1; Heb 13:6.

"Remember the Lord" – Deut 7:18; Ps 105:5-7; 2 Tim 2:8. Remembering God and His grace and power is a great aid to faith and hope.

**4:15** "Brought. . .to nothing" – the faith and action of Nehemiah is what God used to frustrate the plans of the enemy. Very often the faith of one leader is enough to turn the tide of discouragement and lead on to victory.

**4:16-18** The picture here suggests two aspects of the Christian's life on earth – work and spiritual warfare (1 Cor 3:10; 15:58; Eph 6:10-12; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7). These go on simultaneously. We would gladly work without the warfare, but our enemies will not let us alone, just as the Jews' enemies would not let them alone. Compare Ps 120:7.

house of Judah. 17 Those who were building on the wall and those who carried burdens, *each took* the load with one of his hands *and* did the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon. 18 For each one of the builders wore his sword at his side as *he* built. And the trumpeter *was* with me.

19 And I said to the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, "The work *is* great and spread out, and we are separated on the wall, one far from another. 20 *Therefore* wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

21 So we laboured in the work. And half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. 22 At the same time I also said to the people, "Let everyone with his servant stay inside Jerusalem, so that they can be a guard to us by night, and work by day." 23 So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me, none of us, removed our clothes, *except that* everyone removed them for washing.

**5** And there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brethren. 2 For there were those who said, "We, our sons and our daughters, *are* many; therefore let us get grain *for them*, so that we can eat and live."

3 *Some* also there were who said, "Because of the famine, we have mortgaged our lands, vineyards and houses that we might buy grain."

**4:20** "Our God will fight for us" – Deut 20:4; Josh 10:14,42; 1 Sam 14:6; 2 Sam 5:24. God fighting for His people does not mean that they will not have to fight, except on those rare occasions when their fighting is unnecessary (Ex 14:14).

**4:23** God's work always demands earnestness and willingness to suffer and travail. Compare 2 Cor 6:4-10; etc.

**5:1-5** The rebuilding program going on in Jerusalem prevented people from earning their normal income. Also there were other problems of long standing. The result was the complaints of vs 1-5. The disunity revealed here was a further threat to God's work, as indeed it always is.

**5:2** "Grain" – it was the duty of those in Israel who had a surplus to help their poor countrymen – Lev 25:35; Deut 15:7,8. For the duty of believers now see Acts 24:17; Rom 12:8,13; 2 Cor 8:13,14; 9:12,13; Matt 25:31-46.

**5:3** "Famine" – those who had grain, instead of freely sharing as they should have, were making a profit from the poor – an injustice and hardness of heart which God will always judge and punish.

**5:4** "Kings's tax" – the Jews were ruled by Persian kings who levied taxes on them. This increased the economic burden of the poor.

4 There were also those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax *on* our lands and vineyards. 5 Yet now our flesh *is* as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children, and, look, we are bringing our sons and our daughters into bondage to become servants; and *some* of our daughters are brought into bondage *already*. Nor *is it* in our power to *redeem them*, for other men have our lands and vineyards."

6 And I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. 7 Then I controlled my inner feelings, and I rebuked the nobles and rulers and said to them, "Every one of you is exacting usury from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them. 8 And I said to them, "According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations, and will you even sell your brethren so that they have to be sold *back* to us?" Then they kept silent, and found no *answer*.

9 I also said, "What you are doing *is* not good. Because of the reproach of our enemy nations should you not walk in the fear of our God? 10 I too, *and* my brethren and my servants, are lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this usury! 11 This very day please restore to them their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also the hundredth *part* of the money and of the grain, the wine and the oil, that you exacted from them."

12 Then they said, "We will restore *them*, and

**5:5** Lev 25:39-43; Deut 15:12-18.

"Nor is it in our power" – the true complaint of the poor in all generations.

**5:6** "Angry" – those in tune with God will be angry when injustice and hardness of heart prevail, and when the poor and helpless are ground under foot. Compare Ex 22:22-24; Ps 12:5; Isa 1:17; 3:14,15; Amos 2:6,7; 4:1; etc.

**5:7** "I controlled my inner feelings" – the Hebrew word translated "controlled" means to reign as king. The word translated "feelings" is literally "heart."

"Usury" – Ex 22:25; Lev 25:36-38.

**5:8** Lev 25:39-42,48.

"The nations" – Ex 21:8.

"Silent" – they were guilty and knew it. Compare Rom 3:19.

**5:9** "Reproach" – 2 Sam 12:14; Rom 2:23,24.

"Fear of our God" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**5:11** It was not enough for them to admit their guilt. They had to act in a way that proved the genuineness of their repentance. God always requires men to give back what they have unjustly taken. See Matt 3:8; Luke 19:8; Ex 22:1; Lev 6:4,5; 24:18,21; 1 Sam 12:3; 2 Sam 12:6.

**5:12** "Oath" – 2 Chron 28:15; Ezra 10:5.

will require nothing from them. We will do just as you say."

Then I called the priests, and took an oath from them, that they would do according to this promise. 13 Also I shook out the front of my robe and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from his work, who does not act according to this promise. Just like this may he be shaken out and emptied."

And all the congregation said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

14 Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the food of the governor. 15 But the former governors who *had been* before me laid burdens on the people, and took food and wine from them, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants ruled the people. But I did not, because of the fear of God. 16 Yes, I also continued in the work of this wall, and we did not buy any land. And all my servants gathered there for the work.

17 Moreover, *there were* at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those visiting us from among the nations that *are* around us. 18 Now what was prepared *for me* daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep. Also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days an abundant supply of all sorts of wine. Yet in spite of all this I did not demand the governor's food allowance, because the servitude was heavy on this people.

19 Think of me, my God, for good, *in accordance* with all that I have done for this people.

**5:13** The threat was that if they would not help the poor, God would make them poor. Compare Ps 18:25,26.

**5:14-18** See Nehemiah's spirit of service. He set an example to all, not claiming what was his rights as governor. He was there to serve, not to be a burden to others, or to use his position to enrich himself. See also Paul's way - 1 Cor 9:1-23; 2 Thess 3:8,9. Let us be eager to follow their example.

"Forty shekels" (v 15) - about 0.5 kilogram.

**5:16** "Land" - Nehemiah's eyes were on spiritual benefits, not material (v 19).

**5:18** As governor he had to show hospitality, but even in that he refused the provisions he was entitled to. He was concerned for the people, not for how he could stuff his own pockets.

**5:19** "Think" - 13:14,22,31; 2 Kings 20:3; Heb 6:10.

"Good" - good to Nehemiah did not mean material rewards, but grace and strength to finish his work and to honor God and enjoy the light of His face.

**6:1** 2:10,19; 4:1,7.

**6** Now it so happened that when Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had built the wall, and *that* there was no gap left in it (though at that time I had not set up the doors of the gates), 2 Sanballat and Geshem sent *word* to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together in *one of* the villages on the plain of Ono." But they were planning to harm me.

3 And I sent messengers to them, saying, "I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" 4 Yet they sent me this same message four times; and I answered them in the same way.

5 Then, in the same way, Sanballat sent his servant to me the fifth time with an open letter in his hand, 6 in which *was* written,

"It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu says *it*, *that* you and the Jews are planning to rebel. For this reason, according to these words, you are building the wall, that you may be their king. 7 And also you have appointed prophets to make proclamations about you at Jerusalem, saying, 'There is a king in Judah!' And now it will be reported to the king according to these words. So come now, and let us take counsel together."

8 Then I sent *word* to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you are making them up in your own heart."

9 For they were all *trying* to frighten us, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, so that it will not be done." Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands.

10 Afterwards I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who *was* shut in, and he said, "Let us meet together in the

**6:2** "Ono" - this area was near the Mediterranean coast, far from Jerusalem. Nehemiah understood that Sanballat and friends were not planning any good.

**6:3** Nehemiah could not be diverted from the work God had given him to do. To him God's work was noble and sacred, and demanded all his strength, time, and best efforts.

**6:4** Enemies of God's work do not usually give up easily; neither should God's servants.

**6:5** "Open" - it is probable that Sanballat deliberately left the letter unsealed so the messenger or anyone else who saw it could read it and spread the lie.

**6:6** "Gashmu" - a variant of Geshem.

**6:9** "Trying to frighten" - if the lie of Sanballat had reached the ears of the king of Persia and he had believed it, he would doubtless have taken strong measures against Nehemiah and the Jews.

**6:10** "Temple" - Nehemiah was not a priest, and entering the inner court of the temple was not permitted anyone except priests. Perhaps Shemaiah meant the outer court of the temple. (Num 18:7.

house of God, in the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. Yes, at night they are coming to kill you."

11 And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who *is there such* as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in." 12 And then I perceived that God had not sent him, but that he pronounced this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 13 The reason he *was* hired *is* that I might be afraid, and do so and sin, so *that* they might have *material* for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

14 My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat according to these works of theirs, and the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets who tried to frighten me.

15 So the wall was finished in the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days. 16 And it came about when all our enemies heard of *this*, and all the nations that were around us saw *these things*, that they were much deflated in their own eyes, for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

17 Moreover, in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and *letters* from Tobiah were coming to them. 18 For many in Judah *were* under an oath to him, because he *was* the son-in-law of Shechaniah, the son of Arah, and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19 Also they reported his good deeds in my presence, and reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

**7** Now it came about, when the wall was built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers and the singers and the Levites had been appointed, 2 that I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the commander of the citadel, charge over Jerusalem, for he *was* a faithful man, and feared God more than many *do*. 3 And I said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened

until the sun is hot. And while the *gatekeepers* are standing by, let them shut the doors and bar *them*. And appoint guards from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, each at his post, and each in front of his house."

4 Now the city *was* large and spacious, but the people in it *were* few, and the houses *were* not built. 5 And my God put into my heart to assemble the nobles and the rulers and the people, so that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who first came up, and found *this* written in it:

6 These *are* the children of the province who came up out of the captivity, among the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had taken away, and who returned to Jerusalem and to Judah, each one to his city, 7 coming with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number of men of the people of Israel *was this*:

8 The children of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two.

9 The children of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two.

10 The children of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two.

11 The children of Pahath-Moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen.

12 The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred and fifty-four.

13 The children of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five.

14 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty.

15 The children of Binnui, six hundred and forty-eight.

16 The children of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-eight.

17 The children of Azgad, two thousand three

Compare 2 Chron 26:16-21).

"Kill you" – still another attempt to frighten and discredit Nehemiah – v 13.

**6:11** "Flee" – compare Acts 20:24; 21:13.

**6:12** Evidently Shemiah was a false prophet who was after money. Compare 2 Pet 2:16.

**6:14** False prophets were a problem in other days too. See Jer 5:31; 14:13-15; 23:9-17; Ezek 13:1-7. There will be false prophets in the future also – Matt 24:11,24; 2 Pet 2:1.

**6:15** "Fifty-two days" – a remarkable feat. The walls had lain in ruins for nearly 150 years, and only piles of rubble had remained.

**6:16** "God" – it was obvious to all that God had given exceptional strength, courage, and determination to the Jews.

**6:17-19** Tobiah, a great enemy of God's

work, had supporters among God's people. Do such things ever go on in the churches today? Alas, yes.

**7:1** 1 Chron 9:27; 26:12-19; chapters 23-25.

**7:2** Nehemiah's choice of his brother was not nepotism – not the choice of a relative regardless of whether he had the proper qualifications. That sort of thing Nehemiah would rightly have rejected with disgust. Hananiah had two essential qualities for anyone in a responsible position in God's work – integrity and the fear of God, and for this reason he was chosen.

**7:5** "Put into my heart" – Nehemiah was always ready to give God the credit for the wisdom he had. He did not take the credit to himself.

**7:6-73** Ezra 2:1-70.

hundred and twenty-two.

18 The children of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-seven.

19 The children of Bigvai, two thousand and sixty-seven.

20 The children of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five.

21 The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight.

22 The children of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight.

23 The children of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-four.

24 The children of Hariph, a hundred and twelve.

25 The children of Gibeon, ninety-five.

26 The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, a hundred eighty-eight.

27 The men of Anathoth, a hundred and twenty-eight.

28 The men of Beth-Azmaveth, forty-two.

29 The men of Kirjath-Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three.

30 The men of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred and twenty-one.

31 The men of Michmas, a hundred and twenty-two.

32 The men of Bethel and Ai, a hundred and twenty-three.

33 The men of the other Nebo, fifty-two.

34 The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred and fifty-four.

35 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.

36 The children of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five.

37 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one.

38 The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

39 The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three.

40 The children of Immer, a thousand and fifty-two.

41 The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred and forty-seven.

42 The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

43 The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, *and* of the children of Hodevah, seventy-four.

44 The singers: the children of Asaph, a hundred and forty-eight.

45 The gatekeepers: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the

children of Shobai, a hundred and thirty-eight.

46 The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of Tabbaoth, 47 the children of Keros, the children of Sia, the children of Padon, 48 the children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of Shalmal, 49 the children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, 50 the children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, 51 the children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah, 52 the children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of Nephishesim, 53 the children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, 54 the children of Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, 55 the children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah, 56 the children of Nezhiah, the children of Hatipha.

57 The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida, 58 the children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, 59 the children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Amon.

60 All the Nethinims, *including* the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred and ninety-two.

61 And these *were* those who *also* came up from Tel-Melah, Tel-Haresha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not show their father's household, or their descendants, whether they *were* of Israel: 62 the children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred and forty-two.

63 And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, who married *one* of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name.

64 These sought their records *among* those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found. Therefore they were expelled from the priesthood, as unclean. 65 And the governor told them not to eat of the most holy things, until a priest stood *up* with Urim and Thummim.

66 The whole congregation together *was* forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, 67 besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven. And they had two hundred and forty-five men and women singers.

68 Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six. Their mules were two hundred and forty-five. 69 *Their* camels were four hundred and thirty-five. *They had* six thousand seven hundred



and twenty donkeys.

70 And some of the heads of the fathers' *households* gave for the work. The governor gave into the treasury a thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, *and* five hundred and thirty priestly garments. 71 And *some* of the heads of the fathers' *households* gave into the treasury for the work twenty thousand gold drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas. 72 And what the rest of the people gave *was* twenty thousand gold drachmas and two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments.

73 So the priests and the Levites and the gatekeepers and the singers, and *some* of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, lived in their cities. And when the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

**8** And all the people gathered together as one man in the square that *was* in front of the Water Gate, and they spoke to Ezra the scribe about bringing the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2 And on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation of both men and women, and all who could hear with understanding. 3 And from morning to midday he read from it facing the square that *was* in front of the Water Gate in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand, and the ears of all the people *listened attentively* to the book of the law.

4 And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform which they had made for the purpose,

**7:70** "A thousand gold drachmas" – about 8.5 kilograms.

**7:71** "Minas" – one mina equals about 600 grams.

**7:73** "Nethinims" – servants who performed menial tasks around the temple.

**8:1** "Ezra" – Ezra 7:6.

"The book of the law of Moses" – here means at least part, and probably all, of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). The leaders knew it was essential that the faith and behavior of the Jews be solidly based on the Word of God.

**8:3** "He read" – Ex 24:7. The people would not have had copies of their own. Ezra chose the best way to bring God's Word to bear on their minds and consciences.

"Midday" – six hours, and the people were attentive. This showed the work of God in their hearts.

**8:4** "Scribe" – the work of the scribes was to preserve the law, teach it, and interpret it, applying it to every day life. No doubt the order of the scribes began under the guidance of God, but over the years it degenerated until, in the time of the Lord Jesus, the scribes for the most part were hard

and beside him, on his right, stood Mattithiah and Shema and Anaiah and Urijah and Hilkiah and Maaseiah, and on his left, Pedaiah and Mishael and Malchiah and Hashum and Hashbadana, Zechariah *and* Meshullam.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was *standing* above all the people), and when he opened it all the people stood up. 6 And Ezra praised the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces toward the ground.

7 Also Jeshua and Bani and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, explained the law to the people, and the people *stood* in their places. 8 So they read distinctly from the book of the law of God and gave the sense, so that *they* understood what was read.

9 And Nehemiah, who *was* the governor, and Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who were teaching the people, said to all the people, "This day *is* holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat rich food and drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared, for *this* day *is* holy to our Lord. Do not be sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

11 So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day *is* holy. Do not be grieved."

12 And all the people went their way to eat and

legalists and hypocrites (Matthew chapter 23).

**8:6** "Praised" – note at Ps 33:1-3.

**8:8** "Gave the sense, so that they understood" – this is the most important work of a teacher – to make sure that people really understand the Word of God. Ezra, and those helping him, evidently gave a running commentary as they read the Scriptures.

**8:9** "Weep" – when we hear God's law there is reason to weep as we think of how we have broken it. But that day was designed to be a day of rejoicing – the wall of Jerusalem was finished, the people were responsive to God and were worshiping Him, and it was a feast day, a day for rejoicing (Deut 12:7,12; 16:14,15). Mourning was to come later – 9:1,2.

**8:10** "For whom nothing is prepared" – it is always the duty of God's people to help the needy – note at 5:2.

"Joy" – God wants His people to have joy – John 17:13; Rom 14:17. The person who has God's joy will be much stronger for God than the person without it. On joy see Ps 16:11; 21:1; 32:11; 43:4; 51:8.

**8:12** "They understood" – notice the connection between understanding and joy.

drink, and to send portions *to others*, and to rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that had been proclaimed to them.

13 And on the second day the heads of the fathers' *households* of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, gathered together around Ezra the scribe to understand the words of the law. 14 And they found written in the law which the LORD commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month, 15 and that they should announce *it* and proclaim *it* in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches and pine branches and myrtle branches and palm branches and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as *it is* written."

16 So the people went out and brought *them*, and they made booths for themselves, each one on the roof of his house, or in their compounds, or in the courtyards of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. 17 And the whole congregation of those who had come back from the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths. For since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And the rejoicing was very great.

18 Also day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast for seven days, and on the eighth day there *was* a solemn assembly, according to the regulation.

**9** Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, with dust on their *heads*. 2 And the descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their

sins, and the evil deeds of their fathers. 3 And they stood in their places, and read from the book of the law of the LORD their God *for* a fourth of the day, and *during another* fourth they made *their* confession, and worshipped the LORD their God. 4 Then standing on the stairs of the Levites, Jeshua and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani *and* Kenani cried out to the LORD their God with a loud voice. 5 Then the Levites Jeshua and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah *and* Pethahiah said, "Stand up *and* praise the LORD, your God forever and ever." And *they said*,

"Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. 6 You, you alone, *are* the LORD. You made the heavens, the heaven of heavens, with all their *starry* host, the earth, and everything in it, the seas, and everything in them. And you preserve them all, and the host of heaven worships you.

7 "You *are* the LORD God, who chose Abram, and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gave him the name of Abraham. 8 And you found his heart faithful toward you, and made a covenant with him to give *him* the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it* to his offspring, and you acted in accordance with your words, for you *are* righteous.

9 "And you saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heard their cry by the Red Sea, 10 and showed signs and wonders against Pharaoh and against all his servants and against all the people of his land, for you knew that they treated them with arrogance. So you got a name for yourself, as *it is* this day. 11 And you divided the sea in front of them, so that they went through the middle of the sea on dry ground, and you hurled their pursuers

**8:14,15** Lev 23:34-43 – the Feast of Tabernacles.

**8:16** "Courtyards" – the outer courtyards of the temple where the people were permitted to go.

**8:17** "Had not done so" – at times there had been some observance of the Feast of Tabernacles since Joshua's day (1 Kings 8:2; 2 Chron 8:13; Ezra 3:4), but not with such understanding of its real significance, and not with such joy. How easy it is for a mode of gathering which once meant blessing to descend into a merely formal rite. Compare Isa 1:10-16; Mal 1:6-9; 1 Cor 11:17-34.

**8:18** Lev 23:36; Num 29:35; Deut 31:11. These days resulted in a time of revival in many hearts (9:1-3; 10:28-39) – a revival not based on man's techniques, or personalities, but on the hearing of the Word of God.

**9:1** Gen 37:34; Ezra 8:23; 10:6; Job 2:12; Ps 35:13; Joel 1:13,14.

**9:2** "Foreigners" – Ezra 10:11; Deut 7:3-6.

"Confessed" – Lev 26:40; Ps 32:5; 106:6; Prov 28:13; Dan 9:20; 1 John 1:9.

**9:3** "Read" – 8:4-8.

**9:5** "The LORD" – Jehovah – see note at Ex 3:14,15. The people were urged to praise the one true and eternal God, the Creator of the universe; no other is worthy of praise. The great prayer which follows is similar to psalms 78, 105, and 106.

**9:6** "You alone" – Isa 43:10,11; 44:6-8; 45:5,22.

"Them" – Gen 1:1-31; Ps 95:5; 115:15; Isa 40:26; 45:12; Acts 14:15; Rev 4:10,11; 10:6.

"Worships you" – Ps 89:5-7; 103:20-22.

**9:7** Gen 11:31; 12:1-3; 17:5.

"Chaldees" – that is, Babylonia.

**9:8** "Faithful" – Gen 15:6; 22:15-18; Rom 4:18-21.

"To give him" – Gen 15:18-21; 17:7,8.

**9:9** Ex 3:7; 14:10-12.

**9:10** Ex 5:2; 7:1 - 14:31; 9:16.

**9:11** Ex 14:20-28; 15:1,5,10.

into the deep, like a stone into the mighty waters. 12 Moreover you led them in the day by a pillar of cloud, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light on the road they were to travel.

13 "And you came down upon Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven and gave them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments, 14 and made known to them your holy Sabbath, and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws, through your servant Moses. 15 And you gave them bread from heaven for their hunger, and brought water out of the rock for them for their thirst, and promised them that they would go in to possess the land which you had sworn to give them.

16 "But they and our fathers acted arrogantly and hardened their necks, and did not listen to your commandments, 17 and refused to obey. They did not keep in mind your wonders which you did among them, but they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a leader to return to *the place of* their bondage. But you *are* a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to get angry, and *have* great kindness, so you did not forsake them. 18 Even when they made a calf of cast metal and said, 'This *is* your God who brought you up out of Egypt,' and committed acts *showing* great contempt, 19 because of your abundant mercy you still did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud, leading them in the way, did not leave them in the daylight, nor *did* the pillar of fire, showing them light on the way in which they should go, *leave them* at night.

20 "You also gave your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold your manna from their mouth, and you gave them water for their thirst. 21 Yes, for forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, *so that* they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out, and their feet did not

swell.

22 "Moreover you gave them kingdoms and nations, and allotted to them *even* remote areas. So they possessed the land of Sihon, *that is*, the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. 23 You also increased the number of their children like the stars of heaven, and brought them into the land which you had promised to their fathers, so that they could go in to possess *it*. 24 So the children went in and possessed the land, and in front of them you subdued the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gave them into their hands, with their kings and the people of the land, so that they might do with them as they wished. 25 And they took strong cities and a rich land, and took possession of houses full of all *kinds of* good things, wells already dug, vineyards and olive gardens and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate and were filled and became fat, and delighted in your great goodness.

26 "Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you, and threw your law behind their backs and killed your prophets, who admonished them to turn them to you, and they committed acts *showing* great contempt. 27 Therefore you delivered them into the hands of their enemies, who oppressed them. And in the time of their trouble, when they cried out to you, you heard *them* from heaven, and in accordance with your great mercies you gave them saviours, who saved them out of the hands of their enemies.

28 "But when they were at rest, they again did evil in your presence. Therefore you left them in the hands of their enemies, so that they ruled over them. Yet when they returned to you and cried out, you heard *them* from heaven, and many times you delivered them according to your mercies, 29 and admonished them, so that you might bring them back to your law. Yet they behaved

**9:12** Ex 13:21,22; 40:36-38; Deut 1:33.

**9:13** Ex 9:11,18-20; 20:1; Ps 19:7-9; Rom 7:12.

**9:14** Gen 2:3; Ex 16:23; 20:8-11; Heb 4:4-11. Note on Ex 20:8.

**9:15** "Out of the rock" - Ex 16:4,14-17; 17:6; 1 Cor 10:4.

"Possess the land" - Gen 22:15-17; Deut 1:8; Josh 1:1-5.

**9:16** Ex 32:9; Deut 9:24; 31:27; Ps 78:40,56; Jer 7:26; 17:23; Acts 7:51.

**9:17** "Did not keep in mind" - Ps 78:11,42; 106:13.

"Bondage" - Num 14:1-4.

"Kindness" - Ex 34:6,7; Micah 7:18.

**9:18** "Calf" - Ex 32:1-14,31.

"Great contempt" - people show contempt for the true God by the things they say and do, often without realizing it.

**9:19** "Mercy" - Ps 103:8-10,13,14; Micah 7:18,19.

**9:20** "Spirit" - Ex 31:3; Num 11:17; Isa 63:11,14.

"Manna" - Ex 16:14-16.

**9:21** Deut 2:7; 8:4; 29:5.

**9:22** Num 21:21-35. "Even remote areas" - the Hebrew here is unclear.

**9:23** "Stars of heaven" - Gen 15:5; 22:17. "Brought" - Josh 4:1,23.

**9:24** Josh 11:23; chapter 12; 21:43-45.

**9:25** Deut 6:10-12; Josh 24:13.

"Goodness" - Ps 23:6; 25:8; 31:19; 33:5; 52:1; 107:8,9,15,21,31.

**9:26** Jud 2:11; 1 Kings 14:9; 19:10; 2 Chron 36:16; Jer 44:10; Matt 23:37; Acts 7:52.

**9:27,28** Jud 2:14-18; Ps 106:40-43.

**9:29** "Admonished" - v 30; Jer 7:25; 11:7,8.

"Arrogantly" - knowingly breaking God's commands often has its roots in arrogance. It is men putting their will above God's will, a mute declaration of independence from

arrogantly, and did not listen to your commandments, but sinned against your judgments (by which a man will live if he does them), and *stubbornly* turned their shoulder and hardened their neck and would not listen. 30 Yet for many years you showed them forbearance, and admonished them by your Spirit in your prophets. Yet they would not give ear, so you gave them into the hands of the people of the lands. 31 Nevertheless, for the sake of your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you *are* a gracious and merciful God.

32 "Now therefore, our God, the great, mighty, and awesome God, who maintains covenant and mercy, do not let all *this* trouble seem a small thing in your presence, *this trouble* that has come on us, on our kings, on our princes, on our priests, on our prophets, on our fathers, and on all your people, from the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. 33 However you *are* just in all that has happened to us, for you dealt faithfully. But we have acted wickedly. 34 Nor have our kings, our princes, our priests, or our fathers, kept your law or listened to your commandments and your testimonies which you gave them. 35 For they did not serve you in their kingdom, or in the many good things that you gave them, or in the large and rich land which you set before them; nor did they turn away from their wicked deeds.

36 "See, we *are* servants today. In the land that you gave to our fathers to eat its fruit and its good things, see, we *are* servants. 37 And its great produce it yields for the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins; and they have the rule over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure. And we *are* in great distress.

38 "And because of all this, we make a sure *covenant* and write *it down*, and our leaders, Levites and priests put *their seals on it*."

the Supreme Ruler of the universe, a way of saying that they know what is better for them than God does and that they will do what they please whether God likes it or not. **9:30** Verses 20,26,29; 2 Kings 17:13; 2 Chron 36:16-20; Zech 7:12.

**9:31** "End of them" - Isa 48:9; Jer 4:27; 5:18; 30:11.

"Merciful" - Deut 4:31; Ps 103:8; 116:5; Micah 7:18.

**9:32** "Our God" - Deut 7:9,21; 1 Kings 8:23; Ps 24:8; 89:8; 93:4; Dan 9:4.

"Trouble" - after the reign of Solomon both Israel and Judah struggled constantly either against each other or against one or another of the surrounding nations, suffered the sad consequences of warfare, and at last were conquered by Assyria and Babylon.

"Assyria" - six kings of Assyria are named in the Old Testament (2 Kings 18:9,13; 1 Chron 5:26; Ezra 4:2,10; Isa 20:1).

**10** Now those who sealed *it were* Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hachaliah, and Zedekiah, 2 Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, 3 Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah, 4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, 5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, 6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, 7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, 8 Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah. These *were* the priests.

9 And the Levites: Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel, 10 And their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pellaiah, Hanan, 11 Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, 12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, 13 Hodijah, Bani, Beninu.

14 The chief of the people: Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, 15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, 16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, 17 Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur, 18 Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, 19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, 20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, 21 Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua, 22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, 23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub, 24 Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek, 25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, 26 and Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, 27 Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

28 And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding, 29 joined their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given through Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes, 30 and *stated*:

"We will not give our daughters to the people of the land, or take their daughters for our sons.

31 "And *if* the people of the land bring goods or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy it from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day.

**9:33** Dan 9:6-8,14.

**9:34** 2 Kings 23:11; Jer 2:8,26,27; 32:32.

**9:35** "From their wicked deeds" - Judges 2:10-19; 2 Chron 36:15-17.

**9:36** "Servants" - Ezra 9:9.

**9:37** "Kings whom you have set over us" - kings of Persia who controlled the land of Israel, did so only because God permitted them to do so.

**9:38** "Covenant" - 10:29-39.

**10:2** "Jeremiah" - not the prophet of the same name, long dead.

**10:28** "Separated themselves" - 9:2.

**10:29** Into a curse and oath means they promised in God's name to obey God's law and pronounced a curse on those who broke their oath. See Deut 27:14-26; 28:15; 2 Chron 15:12-15.

**10:30** Ex 34:15,16; Deut 7:3.

**10:31** "Sabbath" - Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15; Jer 17:19-27.

And in the seventh year we will refrain *from farming* and from demanding *payment* for any debt.

32 "Also we will undertake the duty of contributing yearly a third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God, 33 for the Showbread and for the regular grain offering, and for the regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the new moons and the appointed feasts and for the holy *things*, and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and *for* all the work of the house of our God.

34 "And we will cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for bringing an offering of wood to the house of our God, according to our fathers' households, at appointed times year after year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as *it is* written in the law.

35 "And *we will all* bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all the fruit of all the trees, year after year, to the house of the LORD, 36 and bring the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as *it is* written in the law, and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks, to the house of our God, to the priests who serve in the house of our God.

37 "And we will bring the first of our dough and our offerings, and the fruit of all kinds of trees, of wine and of oil, to the priests, to the rooms of the house of our God. And *we will bring* the tithes from our land to the Levites, so that the Levites might have the tithes in all our farming communities. 38 And the priest, the son of Aaron, will be with the Levites, when the Levites receive the tithes, and the Levites will bring a tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the rooms of the storehouse. 39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi will bring the offering of grain, of new wine, and of oil, to the rooms where the articles for the

sanctuary *are*, and *where* the priests who serve, and the gatekeepers, and the singers *stay*. And we will not forsake the house of our God."

**11** And the rulers of the people lived at Jerusalem, and the rest of the people cast lots, to bring one in ten to live in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine *were to live* in *other* cities. 2 And the people pronounced a blessing on all the men who volunteered to live at Jerusalem.

3 Now the *following are* the heads of the province who lived in Jerusalem. (But *some* Israelites, Levites, temple servants, the descendants of Solomon's servants, lived in their cities, each one on his *own* property, 4 while *some* of the children of Judah and the children of Benjamin lived at Jerusalem.)

Of the children of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez, 5 and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Colhozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni. 6 All the sons of Perez who lived at Jerusalem *numbered* four hundred and sixty-eight valiant men.

7 And these *are* the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah. 8 And after him Gabbai, Sallai, *altogether* nine hundred and twenty-eight. 9 And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer, and Judah the son of Senuah *was* second *in command* over the city.

10 Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin. 11 Seraiah the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, was in charge of the house of

"Seventh year" – Ex 23:10,11; Lev 25:4; Deut 15:1,2.

**10:32** "Shekel" – one shekel equals about 11.5 grams. The law spoke of giving a half shekel (Ex 30:13,14). Nehemiah made it one third, probably because of the great poverty of the people – 5:1-5. But he did not cancel this offering because the people were poor. For the work of the temple to go on it was essential that the people give. It was also necessary for their own spiritual benefit. For giving in time of poverty see also 2 Cor 8:1-4.

**10:33** "Showbread" – Lev 24:8.

"Offerings" – Leviticus chapters 1-4.

"New moons" – Num 10:10.

**10:34** "Cast lots" – 11:1; Josh 18:6,8; 1 Sam 14:42; 1 Chron 24:31.

**10:35** Ex 23:19; 34:26; Deut 26:1-3.

**10:36** Ex 13:1,2,11-16; Lev 27:26,27; Num 18:15,16.

**10:37** "Tithes" – Gen 14:20; Lev 27:30; Mal 3:8-10. The workers in the temple were

supported by tithes and offerings. For the work of God to go on the people had to accept that it was their responsibility and privilege to give.

**10:38** Num 18:26. The Levites who received tithes for their support also had to give tithes.

"Son" – here obviously means descendant, as often in the Bible. Aaron had been dead for hundreds of years before the priest referred to here performed his service. This is an example showing that the Hebrew word for son cannot always be taken literally. It indicates a wide range of relationships.

**11:1** "Cast lots" – 10:34.

"Holy city" – Isa 48:2; 52:1; Dan 9:24; Matt 4:5; Rev 11:2.

**11:2** The people naturally preferred to stay in their own home towns. But Jerusalem was underpopulated. Hence the arrangement of casting lots. Others volunteered to move to Jerusalem even though the lot had not fallen on them.

**11:3-22** 1 Chron 9:2-34.



God. 12 And their brethren who did the work of the house *numbered* eight hundred and twenty-two; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah, 13 and his brethren, heads of the fathers' households, *numbered* two hundred and forty-two; and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, 14 and their brethren, mighty men of valour, *numbered* a hundred and twenty-eight; and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, the son of *one of the great men*.

15 And of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni, 16 and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the heads of the Levites, supervised the outside work of the house of God. 17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the leader who began the thanksgiving in prayer; and Bakbukiah, second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. 18 All the Levites in the holy city *numbered* two hundred and eighty-four.

19 Moreover, the gatekeepers Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren who guarded the gates, *numbered* a hundred and seventy-two.

20 And the rest of Israel, of the priests *and* the Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, each one in his inheritance.

21 But the temple servants lived in Ophel, and Ziha and Gispah *were* over the temple servants.

22 And the overseer of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers *were* over the work of the house of God. 23 For the king's command concerning them *was* that a certain portion should be for the singers, day by day.

24 And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, *was* at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

25 And as for the villages, with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah lived at Kirjath-Arba and *in* its villages, and at Dibon and *in* its villages, and at Jakabzeel and *in* its villages, 26 and at Jeshua and at Moladah and at Beth-Phelet 27 and at Hazarshual and at Beersheba and *in* its villages, 28 and at Ziklag and at Mekonah and *in* its villages, 29 and at Enrimmon and at Zareah and at Jarmuth,

30 Zanoah, Adullam, and in their villages, at Lachish and its fields, at Azekah and *in* its villages. And they lived from Beersheba to the valley of Hinnom.

31 And the children of Benjamin from Geba *lived* at Michmash and Aija and Bethel, and *in* their villages, 32 *and* at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, 33 Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, 34 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, 35 Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen.

36 And of the Levites *some* divisions *belonging* to Judah *lived* in Benjamin.

**12** Now these *are* the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, 2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, 3 Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, 4 Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah, 5 Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, 6 Shemaiah and Joiarib, Jedaiah, 7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiah. These *were* the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua.

8 And the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and* Mattaniah, *who was* in charge of the *songs* of thanksgiving, he and his brethren. 9 Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *stood* opposite them in the services.

10 And Jeshua begot Joiakim, Joiakim also begot Eliashib, and Eliashib begot Joiada, 11 and Joiada begot Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jaddua.

12 And in the days of Joiakim the priests, the heads of the fathers' households *were these*: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; 13 of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; 14 of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; 15 of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; 16 of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; 17 of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; 18 of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; 19 of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; 20 of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; 21 of Hilkiyah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel.

22 The Levites *who were* the heads of the fathers' households in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, and the priests, were recorded in the reign of Darius the Persian. 23 The sons of Levi, the heads of the fathers' households, *were* written in the book of the Chronicles, until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. 24 And

**11:22** "Asaph" – 1 Chron 15:17,19; 16:5; 25:1; Psalms 50,73-83.

**11:23** 1 Chron 25:1; Ezra 6:8; 7:20.

**11:24** "King's" – king of Persia.

**11:30** Beersheba was in the desert in the southern part of the land. The valley of Hinnom was just outside the walls of Jerusalem on the south and west.

**11:31-35** Places to the north and northwest

of Jerusalem.  
**12:1** "Zerubbabel" – Ezra 3:2,8; 5:2.

"Jeshua" – Ezra 2:2; Hag 1:1; Zech 3:1.

**12:9** "Opposite" – see v 24; 2 Chron 7:6; 8:14.

**12:22** Darius II reigned over the Persian empire 423 - 404 B.C.

**12:23** "Annals" – no man knows what has become of this book.

the heads of the Levites *were* Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren *who stood* opposite them, to praise *and* to give thanks, in accordance with the command of David the man of God, one group *responding* to the group opposite.

25 Mattaniah and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, *and* Akkub *were* gatekeepers keeping guard at the storerooms of the gates. 26 These *were* in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

27 And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with joy, with thanksgiving and with singing, *with* cymbals, lyres and harps. 28 And the sons of the singers gathered together from the countryside around Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi, 29 and from Beth-Gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem. 30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves and purified the people, and the gates and the wall.

31 Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving *choirs*, *one of which* went to the right on the wall toward the Refuse Gate, 32 and after them went Hoshaiiah, and half of the leaders of Judah, 33 and Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam, 34 Judah and Benjamin and Shemaiah and Jeremiah, 35 and *some of* the priests' sons with trumpets, *namely*, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, 36 and his brethren, Shemaiah and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe *leading* them. 37 And at the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the steps of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, beyond the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east.

38 And the other thanksgiving *choir* went the

opposite way, and I and half of the people on the wall *followed* them, past the Tower of the Ovens to the broad wall, 39 and over the Gate of Ephraim and over the Old Gate and over the Fish Gate and *passed* the Tower of Hananeel and the Tower of Meah to the Sheep Gate; and they stopped by the Gate of the Guardhouse.

40 So the two thanksgiving *choirs* stood in the house of God, and I, and half of the rulers with me, 41 and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah *and* Hananiah, with trumpets, 42 and Maaseiah and Shemaiah and Eleazar and Uzzi and Jehohanan and Malchijah and Elam and Ezer. And the singers sang loudly, with Jezrahiah *their* director. 43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced, for God caused them to rejoice with great joy. The wives and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

44 And at that time some were appointed over the storehouse rooms for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions *commanded* by the law for the priests and Levites. For Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites who served. 45 And both the singers and the gatekeepers performed the service of their God, and the rite of purification, in accordance with the command of David *and* his son Solomon. 46 For in olden times, in the days of David and Asaph, *there were* leaders of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. 47 And in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion for each day. They also set apart *portions* for the Levites, and the Levites set apart *portions* for the children of Aaron.

**13** On that day they read from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and it was found written that the Ammonite and the Moabite should never come into the congregation of God, 2 because they did not meet the children of Israel with food and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. However our God

**12:27** "Dedication" – compare 2 Chron 7:1-6; Ezra 6:16,17.

**12:30** 13:22. Uncleanness could result from various causes. See Lev 5:2; 7:21; 10:10; 12:2; 13:3. Note at Lev 11:1. Purification was made by various sacrifices or washing.

**12:31** "Thanksgiving" – Lev 7:12,13 (note); 2 Sam 22:50; 1 Chron 16:8,34; Ezra 3:11; Ps 18:49; 30:12; 75:1.

**12:35** "Trumpets" – Num 10:2,8; Ezra 3:10.

**12:36** 1 Chron 23:5; 2 Chron 29:26,27.

**12:43** 2 Chron 7:10; 29:36. True joy is a gift of God, not something men find by their

own efforts. It is related to a realization of God's goodness, a recognition of His gracious acts, and obedience to God's revealed will, and His Spirit in our hearts.

**13:1** "Moabite" – Deut 23:3-6.

**13:2** "Water" – observe that Moab and Ammon were penalized because of something they did not do as well as for something they did do. Compare Num 32:23; Jud 5:23; 1 Sam 12:23; Matt 25:24-27,41-46.

"Blessing" – Num 23:11,12; 24:10. Note at Gen 50:20.

turned the curse into a blessing. 3 Now it came about when they heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

4 And before this, Eliashib the priest, who was in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God, *was closely* associated with Tobiah. 5 And he had provided for him a large room, where previously they had put the grain offerings, the frankincense and the vessels and the tithes of grain, the new wine and the oil, which was commanded *to be given* to the Levites and the singers and the gatekeepers, and the offerings of the priests.

6 But during this whole *time* I was not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I went to the king. But after some days I obtained leave from the king, 7 and came to Jerusalem, and came to know of the evil thing Eliashib was doing for Tobiah, in providing a room for him in the courts of the house of God. 8 And I was very grieved, so I threw all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the room. 9 Then I commanded that the rooms be purified, and they purified the rooms. And I brought back there the vessels of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

10 And I learned that the portions for the Levites had not been given *to them*, for each one of the Levites and the singers, who had been doing the work, had gone off to his field. 11 So I reprimanded the leaders, and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together, and set them in their places.

12 Then all Judah brought the tithe of grain and

new wine and oil to the storerooms. 13 And I appointed Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah among the Levites, to be in charge of the storerooms, and next to them Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were considered faithful, and their duty was to distribute *portions* to their brethren.

14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds which I have done for the house of my God, and for its services.

15 In those days I saw in Judah *some* treading the wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys, also wine, grapes, and figs, and all *kinds of* loads, which they were bringing into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned *them* about selling provisions on that day. 16 Also living there were people from Tyre who brought fish and all kinds of goods and sold *them* on the Sabbath to the children of Judah in Jerusalem.

17 Then I reprimanded the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What *is* this evil thing you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day? 18 Did not your fathers act so, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you are bringing more wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

19 And it came about *just* before the Sabbath, when it grew dark at the gates of Jerusalem, I gave a command that the gates be shut, and ordered that they should not be opened until after the Sabbath. And I placed *some* of my servants at the gates, *so that* no load would be brought in on

**13:3** Verse 23; 9:2; Ex 19:5,6; 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**13:4,5** Here was a man in a very responsible position who acted as a traitor to his people and to God. Tobiah was a fierce enemy of the Jews and fought God's work tooth and nail - 2:10; 4:3; 6:1,17,18. We are not told what was behind Eliashib's action. Perhaps there was a marriage alliance with Tobiah's family. Perhaps money was involved. Whatever the reason it is a warning of how low the most respected and trusted people can sometimes sink. He gave a place on God's temple compound to one of the greatest enemies of the Jews! And in a room formerly used for the things of God! This is what betrayal of Bible truth and principles will bring. Compare 2 Thess 2:3,4. An essential principle for every believer is found in Eph 4:27.

**13:6** 5:14-16. "Babylon" - see Ezra 5:13. Artaxerxes was the king of Persia and of all other lands Persia had conquered.

**13:8** Nehemiah was a man of action - v 25. He could not see God's enemies having a place in the courtyard of God's temple and do nothing about it. He believed in fighting sin and evil instead of passively accepting it. Every

generation needs a host of such men. Compare Matt 21:12,13; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:1-5.

**13:9** The presence of the Ammonite Tobiah defiled the rooms he had been in. All parts of the temple and its compound were to be used only for holy purposes. This is true also of God's spiritual temple - 1 Cor 3:16,17; 6:13,19,20; 2 Cor 7:1.

**13:10,11** They were breaking their oath - 10:37-39. It is much easier to make vows than to keep them.

**13:12** People often respond when leaders take a firm stand.

**13:13** "Faithful" - 2 Kings 12:15; 22:7.

**13:14** 5:19.

**13:15,16** "Sabbath" - Ex 20:8-10; 34:21. They were breaking another vow - 10:31.

**13:17** "Reprimanded" - if sin goes unrebuked it will spread and destroy any spiritual work. Rebuking those who sin is part of the ministry of God-appointed leaders - Isa 58:1; 2 Tim 3:16; 4:2; 1 Tim 5:20.

**13:18** "Wrath" - notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**13:19** "When it grew dark" - the Israelites reckoned a day as being from sunset to sunset (Lev 23:32).

the Sabbath day. 20 So once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem.

21 Then I reprimanded them and said to them, "Why are you spending the night around the wall? If you do *so* again, I will seize you." From that time on they no *longer* came on the Sabbath. 22 And I commanded the Levites to purify themselves, and to go *and* guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of your mercy.

23 In those days I also saw Jews *who* had married women from Ashdod, from Ammon, *and* from Moab. 24 And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, or the language of one or the other people, and could not speak the Jews' language. 25 And I reprimanded them and pronounced a curse against them, and struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them take an oath in God's *name*, *saying*, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their

daughters for your sons, or for yourselves. 26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin in these things? Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, who was loved by his God, and whom God made king over all Israel. Nevertheless foreign women caused even him to sin. 27 Shall we then hear about you that you are doing all this great evil, being unfaithful to our God by marrying strange wives?"

28 And *one* of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite. Therefore I drove him away from me.

29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.

30 Thus I cleansed them from all foreigners, and appointed the duties of the priests and the Levites, each one in his service, 31 and for *bringing* the wood offering and the firstfruits at the appointed times.

Remember me, O my God, for good.

"I gave a command" – Nehemiah was not content merely to rebuke sin. He took steps to avoid it.

**13:22** "Purify" – note at 12:30.

"Remember" – 5:19.

**13:23** Ex 34:16; Deut 7:3,4; Ezra 9:1,2.

**13:24** Now when believers marry unbelievers (a thing forbidden to Christians – 2 Cor 6:14-18; etc), the children will not know whether to speak the language of faith or the language of unbelief. This is one of the tragedies of mixed marriages.

**13:25** Deut 10:29,30; 25:2. Sometimes strong measures must be taken to root out evil. But the measures Christians now take must not be violent ones, but spiritual and practical ones. **13:26** 2 Sam 12:24; 1 Kings 3:13; 11:1-8; 2 Chron 1:12.

**13:27** What some people think of as hardly a sin at all was in the eyes of this man of God "great evil." This is one difference between those who live close to God and those who do not.

**13:28** Here is another example of evil compromise. A grandson of the high priest married to a daughter of Sanballat (2:10; 4:1,7,8)! Compare 2 Chron 18:1; etc.

**13:29** God commanded that His priests marry women from the people of Israel only (Lev 21:14). By breaking God's law they defiled their office. Compare Mal 2:1-9.

**13:30** Ezra and Nehemiah in enforcing the principles of God's law in the face of the sinful compromise of men such as Eliashib were instruments in God's hands to preserve the faith in the land of Israel.

**13:31** Neh 10:34; 13:14,22.

"O my God" – from this book of Nehemiah we can learn some of the things which come against God's work in general and how to combat them. The source of these things may be either the fallen heart of men, or Satan and his angels (2 Cor 2:11). Nehemiah and

his helpers had to face the following:

Ridicule (2:19; 4:1-3)

Violence (4:7,8)

Threats (4:11; 6:9)

Discouragement because of injustice (5:1-5)

Deceitful plots (6:1-4; Ezra 4:1,2)

The spreading of lies (6:5-7)

Temptations to act in fear, ignoring God's Word (6:10-13)

Sin among the people (5:6-9; 13:15-18,23-27)

False prophets (6:14)

A traitor within (13:4,5,28)

Attempts to ruin the reputation of God's servant (6:6,7,13).

The book of Ezra adds two more –

The attempt to ruin God's work by the deceitful offer to help do it,

And the use of the power of the state to stop the work (Ezra 4:1-24).

Also we can see in Nehemiah the qualities needed to overcome the devices of Satan and men, and to do a work of God well and to complete it. These are:

A burden for the work (1:4; 2:3)

Full commitment to it (2:4,5)

A life of prayer and acknowledgement of God in everything (1:4; 2:4; 4:4,9; 6:9; 13:14,22,29)

Faith (2:20; 4:14)

Practical planning (2:11-18; 4:13-23)

Encouraging others in the work (4:14; 8:10)

Determination to stand for God (4:14-23)

Consistency in godly living (5:14-19)

Willingness to deal with sin (5:6-13; 13:8-11,25-30)

Discernment (6:1-13)

Emphasis on God's Word (8:1-18).

# ESTHER

**Title:**

The name “Esther” comes from a Persian word meaning “star”.

**Author:**

Unknown to men. See the introduction to Judges concerning the authorship of the books of the Bible.

**Date:**

Probably sometime between 465 and 400 BC.

**Themes:**

The danger that came to the Jewish exiles in Persia; the deliverance God gave through Mordecai and Esther; the destruction of those who plotted to destroy the Jews. A remarkable fact about this book is that there is no mention of God anywhere in it. However, it is clear that the author recognized God behind events working out His purposes. For example, see 4:12-17. The rise and fall of Haman is a striking illustration of how God sometimes deals on earth with the wicked enemies of His people. See Deut 32:35; Ps 7:15-17; 9:16; 18:25-27; 37:34-36.

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Mordecai’s greatness .....	10:1-3



**1** Now it happened in the days of Ahasuerus (this *is the* Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia, *over* a hundred and twenty-seven provinces), 2 in those days when king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in Shushan the palace, 3 in the third year of his reign, that he made a feast for all his princes and those who served him. The military *officers* of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces *were* in his presence.

4 *At that time* he displayed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty for many days, *a total of* a hundred and eighty days. 5 And when these days were over, the king made a feast for seven days for all the people who were present in Shushan the palace, for both great and small, in the garden courtyard of the king's palace, 6 *where there were* white, green and blue *hangings*, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and marble pillars. The couches *were of* gold and silver, on a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble. 7 And they gave *them* drinks in golden cups (the cups were each different from one another), and royal wine in abundance, in accordance with the king's bounty. 8 And the drinking was according to *their* law. There was no compulsion, for the king had ordered all the officials of his house that they should do according to each one's wish.

9 Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women *in* the royal house which *belonged* to king Ahasuerus.

10 On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha and Abagtha, Zethar and Carcas, the seven eunuchs who served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, 11 to bring Vashti the queen into the king's presence, with *her* royal crown, to display her beauty to the people and the princes, for she *was* beautiful in appearance. 12 But queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command through *his* officials. Therefore the king was enraged, and his anger burned in him.

13 Then the king said to the wise men, who understood the times (for this *was* the king's custom toward all who knew law and justice; 14 those next to him *were* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media who saw the king's face *and* who were highest in the kingdom),

15 "What *shall we* do to queen Vashti, according to law, because she has not obeyed the command of King Ahasuerus through the officials?"

16 And Memucan answered in the presence of the king and the princes, "Vashti the queen has done wrong not only to the king, but also to all the princes, and to all the people who *are* in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus. 17 For *this* action of the queen will become known to all women, so that their husbands will be despised in their eyes, when it is reported *that* king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she did not come. 18 This *very* day the ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's princes that they have heard of the action of the queen. So *there will be* much contempt and anger.

19 "If it pleases the king, let a royal command proceed from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti can no longer come into the presence of king Ahasuerus, and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. 20 And when this decree of the king which he makes is published throughout his whole empire (for it is great), all the wives will honour their husbands, both great and small."

21 And this word pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan, 22 for he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in accordance with its script, and to each people in their language, that every man should rule his own house, and he published *it* in the language of each people.

**2** After these things, when the anger of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered

**1:1** "Ahasuerus" – better known as Xerxes. He was king of Persia (Iran) 486-465 B.C. "Ethiopia" – note at Isa 18:1,2.

**1:2** "Shushan" – Neh 1:1; Dan 8:2. This city was the winter capital of the Persian kings, and the Hebrew word translated "palace" can mean capital.

**1:3** "Media" – Ezra 6:2; Isa 13:17.

**1:10** "Eunuchs" – in Hebrew this word sometimes indicated officials appointed by a king, whether literal eunuchs or not.

**1:12** No reason is given for Vashti's refusal to obey the king. It was done at a public function and was a great and deliberate insult to the king. Certainly the king considered it an arrogant blow at the

traditional order of things existing between husband and wife in his empire.

**1:13** Vashti's disobedience involved matters of law and justice in the Persian empire (v 15).

**1:18** Their fear was that Vashti's example would be followed by many women in the empire, resulting in social upheaval.

**1:20** "Decree" – this shows how serious the problem was in their eyes. It was far easier to make this decree than to enforce it.

**2:1** "After these things" – the events of this chapter up to v 19 took place about five years after those of chapter 1. Vashti was removed from her position as queen in 484 or 483 B.C. Esther became queen in 479 or 478. In between these two events Xerxes

Vashti and what she had done and what had been decreed against her. 2 Then the king's servants who ministered to him said, "Let there be beautiful young virgins sought for the king. 3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the beautiful young virgins to Shushan the palace, to the women's quarters, into the custody of Hege, the king's official, custodian of the women. And let cosmetics be given *them*. 4 And let the young lady who pleases the king be queen in the place of Vashti." And this word pleased the king, and he did so.

5 Now in Shushan the palace there was a Jew whose name was Mordecai. He was the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite. 6 He had been taken away from Jerusalem in the captivity which had been taken away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had taken away. 7 And Mordecai had brought up Hadassah, that *is*, Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother, and the girl was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

8 So it came about when the king's command and his decree were heard, and when many young ladies were gathered together to Shushan the palace, into the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was brought to the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, custodian of the women. 9 And the young lady pleased him, and she won his favour, and he quickly provided her cosmetics, with such things as pertained to her, and provided her with seven choice maids from the king's house. And he moved her and her maids to the best place in the women's quarters.

10 Esther had not revealed her people or her kindred, for Mordecai had ordered her not to reveal *it*. 11 And every day Mordecai walked in front of the courtyard of the women's quarters, to

was occupied with a war with Greece (which he lost).

**2:2-4** In those times kings had both harems and dictatorial powers.

**2:6** "Judah" - 2 Kings 24:8-17; 2 Chron 36:9,10.

"Babylon" - some of those Jews who either voluntarily moved or had been taken to Susa and other places in Media and Persia.

**2:7** "Esther" - a name probably derived from the Persian word for star. Her Jewish name - Hadassah - means "myrtle", a kind of flowering shrub.

**2:8** Neither Mordecai nor Esther would have had any say in this matter. The king was a dictator who did as he pleased.

**2:9** "Favour" - Gen 39:21; Dan 1:9. God was going to use Esther to save the Jews in

find out how Esther was doing and what would become of her.

12 Now when each girl's turn came to go in to king Ahasuerus, after she had finished twelve months' preparation, according to the custom for the women (for the days of their beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and other cosmetics for women), 13 then *each* girl would go to the king like this: whatever she wanted was given her to go with her from the women's quarters to the king's house. 14 She would go in the evening, and return in the morning to the second house of the women, into the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's official, who was the custodian of the concubines. She would not again go in to the king, unless the king delighted in her, and unless she was called by name.

15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, came to go in to the king, she requested nothing except what Hegai the king's official, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther found favour in the eyes of all who saw her. 16 So Esther was taken to king Ahasuerus into his royal house in the tenth month, which *is* the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

17 And the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found grace and favour in his eyes more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head, and made her queen in the place of Vashti. 18 Then the king made a great feast for all his princes and his servants, Esther's feast. And he made a holiday for the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the king's bounty.

19 And when the virgins were assembled a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate. 20 Esther had not yet revealed her kindred or her people, as Mordecai had ordered her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai, just like when she was brought up by him.

the Persian empire from extermination. It was God who made her beautiful so that she would be chosen as queen.

**2:11** Mordecai would not, of course, have been allowed inside the harem. But he showed his concern for Esther by daily coming as near as possible in hope of getting news of her.

**2:19** Verse 2. Though a new queen was chosen the search for other girls for the king's harem went on.

"King's gate" - the main gate of the citadel in the city where business was transacted and courts of justice were held. Mordecai sitting there suggests he may have been an official in the kingdom.

**2:20** Verse 10. She did not get proud and arrogant because of her high position, as many do.

21 In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, two of the king's officials, Bigthan and Teresh, of those who guarded the door, became angry and sought to seize king Ahasuerus. 22 And the matter became known to Mordecai, who told *it* to Esther the queen, and Esther informed the king *of it*, in Mordecai's name. 23 And when the matter was investigated, it was found *to be so*. Therefore both of them were hanged on a tree, and it was written in the book of the chronicles in the king's presence.

**3** After these things king Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and gave him a higher seat than all the princes who *were* with him. 2 And all the king's servants, who were at the king's gate, bowed and paid honour to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow or show *him* honour.

3 Then the king's servants, who *were* at the king's gate, said to Mordecai, "Why are you breaking the king's command?" 4 Now it so happened after they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he *was* a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not

bow or pay him honour, Haman was filled with rage. 6 And he scorned seizing Mordecai alone, for they had told him *who* the people of Mordecai *were*; therefore Haman sought to destroy all the people of Mordecai, the Jews throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

7 In the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, *to* the twelfth month, that *is*, the month Adar.

8 And Haman said to king Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom, and their laws *are* different from *those of* all *other* people and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it *is* not for the king's benefit to tolerate them. 9 If it pleases the king, let it be written that they be destroyed. And I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who will have charge of the business, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries."

10 And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. 11 And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people *are* given to you to do with them as it seems good to you."

12 Then the king's scribes were called on the

**2:22** Here again we can see the unseen hand of God.

**2:23** "It was written" – this became very important later on – 6:1,2.

**3:1** "After these things" – more than four years had passed since Esther became queen. Compare v 7 with 2:16.

"Agagite" – this very likely means that Haman was a descendant of king Agag the Amalekite (1 Sam 15:8). This view is in accordance with Jewish tradition and seems to throw light on what follows. The Amalekites were enemies of Israel from the time Israel came out of Egypt (Ex 17:8-16; 1 Sam 15:2,3; Ps 83:2-6). It would be no surprising thing if Amalekites as well as Jews should be found in one of the capital cities of the Persian empire, and there continued to express their ancient enmity.

**3:2** Abraham and his descendants at other times showed respect to others in this way (Gen 23:7; 33:3; 44:14; 1 Sam 24:8; 2 Sam 14:4; 1 Kings 1:16), why not to Haman? If Mordecai knew Haman was an Amalekite, this would account for it. He would refuse to honor anyone of a people who were enemies of the Jews and with whom God Himself had continual warfare (Ex 17:16).

**3:4** "Reason" – one of the many possible meanings of the Hebrew word.

"Jew" – apparently this was the only reason Mordecai gave them – as if to say it was unthinkable that a Jew would show honor to an Amalekite. Observe that he did not conceal his national origins as he ordered

Esther to do.

**3:5** 5:9. This was wounded pride, the kind of foolish anger some people in power will have against those who refuse to give them the respect they think they deserve.

**3:6** "Who the people of Mordecai were" – this also is evidence that Haman was an Amalekite – his hatred of the whole Jewish nation is revealed.

"The Jews" – compare Ps 83:2-6.

"The whole kingdom" – this would have been the vast majority of all the Jews then living. Xerxes ruled from India to Cush (see 8:9).

**3:7** "Pur" – 9:24-26. They cast lots to fix a date to destroy the Jews. The fact that the day turned out to be eleven months from the time of casting lots gave Mordecai time to avert the calamity. Was not God in this also? See Prov 16:33.

**3:8** Apparently Haman does not tell Xerxes the name of the people he wanted to destroy.

**3:9** "Talents" – one talent equals about 34 kilograms. Haman was willing to spend a huge sum to fulfill his evil plan.

**3:10** The signet ring was an official seal, equivalent to a signature. Once Haman had the king's signet ring he could authorize any course of action he pleased.

**3:11** "As it seems good to you" – apparently the king agreed with Haman's proposal without further inquiry. This shows the complete trust he had in Haman, but also how little he cared what happened to minorities in his kingdom.

thirteenth day of the first month, and *a decree* was written according to all that Haman had commanded the king's officers and the governors who *were* over every province and the rulers of every people of every province, according to its script, and *to* every people in their language. It was written in the name of king Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's ring. 13 And the letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth *month*, which is the month Adar, and to plunder their possessions. 14 A copy of the writing as a command to be given in every province was published to all people, that they should be ready on that day.

15 The couriers set out quickly because of the king's command, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city Shushan was perplexed.

**4** When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the middle of the city, crying out with a loud and bitter cry, 2 and came only up to the king's gate, for no one wearing sackcloth *might* enter the king's gate. 3 And in every province, wherever the king's command and his decree came, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, and fasting and weeping and wailing, and many lay down in sackcloth and ashes.

4 So Esther's maids and her officials came and told it to her. Then the queen was exceedingly grieved, and she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him. But he did not accept *them*. 5 Then Esther called for Hatach, *one* of the king's officials, whom he had appointed to attend on her, and commanded him concerning Mordecai, to find out what *the matter was*, and

why.

6 So Hatach went out to Mordecai into the street of the city, which *was* in front of the king's gate. 7 And Mordecai told him about everything that had happened to him, and about the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. 8 He also gave him a copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, that he might show *it* to Esther and explain *it* to her, and to charge her to go to the king, to make supplication to him and to make request before him for her people.

9 And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. 10 Again Esther spoke to Hatach, and ordered him to *tell* Mordecai: 11 "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, know that any man or woman who goes to the king into the inner court, who has not been called, *there is* only one law of his: to put *the person* to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden sceptre, that he may live. And I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

12 And they told Esther's words to Mordecai. 13 Then Mordecai commanded *them* to answer Esther: "Do not imagine that being in the king's house you will escape any more than all the Jews. 14 For if you keep altogether silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's house will be destroyed. And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?"

15 Then Esther ordered *them* to take *this answer* back to Mordecai: 16 "Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me, not eating or drinking for three days, night or day. I also and my maids will also fast, and so I will go in to the king, which is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

**3:13** Haman may have been thinking of the event set in motion by the words of 1 Sam 15:2,3. He would show his defiance of the God of Israel.

**4:1** "Ashes" – Gen 37:34; Num 14:6; 2 Sam 13:19; 2 Kings 19:1; Neh 9:1; Job 2:12; Ezek 27:30,31; Dan 9:3; Jonah 3:5,6.

**4:5** Esther was isolated in the king's palace and was not free to come and go.

**4:11** This reveals the power and cruelty of those ancient despots, and how highly they regarded their royal presence. Compare the behavior of the King of the universe – Matt 11:28; Heb 4:16.

**4:14** "From another place" – Mordecai was sure that God would preserve the Jewish people in some way or other. He was doubtless familiar with God's promises to do so (such as Lev 26:44,45; Deut 4:30,31; Jer 31:35,36; 33:25,26). But he also realized his and Esther's responsibility to do

what they could to save the Jews. He did not passively leave everything to God's sovereignty. We should all understand that God will work out His sovereign purposes on earth, but also that He will hold each person responsible for what he or she does or does not do.

"Such a time as this" – note at 2:9. When he said this Mordecai did not know how things would turn out. He did know that those in a high position should use that position for good.

**4:16** "Fast" – prayer is not mentioned but is surely implied. God's people naturally fasted unto God (Jud 20:26; 1 Sam 7:6; 2 Sam 12:16; Ezra 8:21,22; Neh 9:1-3; Isa 58:3; Jer 14:12).

"If I perish I perish" – Esther realized (as we all should) that there are more important things than personal survival on this earth. Compare Dan 3:16-18;

17 So Mordecai went and acted in accordance with all that Esther had commanded him.

**5** Now on the third day it came about that Esther put on *her royal robes*, and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, opposite the king's hall, and the king was sitting on his royal throne in the royal hall, opposite the door of the hall. 2 And it happened that when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favour in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that *was* in his hand. So Esther drew near and touched the tip of the sceptre.

3 Then the king said to her, "What do you want, queen Esther? And what *is* your request? It will be granted to you, even up to half of the kingdom."

4 And Esther answered, "If *it seems* good to the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

5 Then the king said, "Have Haman hurry, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6 And the king said to Esther at the banquet of wine, "What *is* your petition? It will be granted you. And what *is* your request? Even up to half of the kingdom, it will be done.

7 Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and my request *is this*: 8 If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition, and to act on my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

9 Then Haman went out that day happy and with a glad heart, but at the king's gate when Haman saw that Mordecai did not stand up, or move for him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless Haman restrained himself. And when he came home, he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh his wife.

11 And Haman told them of the glory of his

riches, and of his many children, and all *the things* in which the king had promoted him, and how he had placed him above the princes and servants of the king. 12 Moreover, Haman said, "Yes, Esther the queen did not let anyone but myself come in with the king to the banquet that she had prepared. And tomorrow also I am invited to her with the king. 13 Yet all does not satisfy me, as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

14 Then Zeresh his wife and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows made, fifty cubits high, and tomorrow ask the king that Mordecai may be hanged on it. Then go happily with the king to the banquet." And the thing pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

**6** On that night the king could not sleep, and he gave orders to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read in the king's presence. 2 And it was found written that Mordecai made a report about Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officials, the doorkeepers who sought *a way* to seize king Ahasuerus.

3 And the king said, "What honour and dignity was bestowed on Mordecai for this?"

Then the king's servants that ministered to him said, "Nothing was done for him."

4 And the king said, "Who *is* in the court?" Now Haman had come into the outward court of the king's house, to ask the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 And the king's servants said to him, "Look, Haman is standing in the court." And the king said, "Have him come in."

6 So Haman came in. And the king said to him, "What is to be done to the man whom the king delights to honour?" Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honour more than myself?"

7 And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honour, 8 let a royal robe which the king has worn be brought, and the

Acts 20:24; 21:13.

**5:2** 2:9; 4:11; Prov 21:1.

**5:3** 7:2; Mark 6:23.

**5:4-8** We are not told why Esther delayed to reveal her real burden to the king. Perhaps her courage momentarily failed. Perhaps she was testing the genuineness of his favor before making her request.

**5:9** 3:5.

**5:10** "Restrained himself" – he thought his day of revenge was soon coming.

**5:11** "Told" – see 1 Sam 2:3; Ps 49:5-20; 52:1-7; 94:4-7. Compare Ps 34:2; 44:8. A person's character is revealed to some extent by what he boasts about. See Gal 6:14.

**5:13** Hatred can outweigh any other emotion in man's fallen sinful heart and

completely overcome his reason.

**5:14** "The thing pleased Haman" – he delighted in thoughts of murder and revenge. What a person delights in also reveals his character and the course of his life. Compare Ps 37:4.

**6:1** "Sleep" – compare Dan 2:1. God oversees all events and can use even the most trivial to work out His purposes.

"Chronicles" – 2:23.

**6:2** 2:21,22.

**6:3** "The king said" – Prov 21:1.

**6:4** God's timing of events is perfect. Always He not only does the best possible thing, He does it at the best possible moment.

**6:6** Prov 16:18; 18:12.



horse that the king rides on, and the royal crown which is placed on his head, 9 and let this robe and horse be put in the hands of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may clothe the man whom the king delights to honour with it, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, "Thus it is done to the man whom the king delights to honour."

10 Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry *and* take the robe and the horse, as you have said, and do this to Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Let nothing fail of all that you have spoken."

11 Then Haman took the robe and the horse, and clothed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, "Thus it is done to the man whom the king delights to honour."

12 And Mordecai came back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house grieving, with his head covered. 13 And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, *is* of Jewish descent, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him." 14 And while they *were* still talking with him, the king's officials came, in a hurry to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

**7** So the king and Haman came to the banquet with Esther the queen. 2 And again the king said to Esther, on the second day at the banquet of wine, "What *is* your petition, queen Esther? It will be granted you. And what *is* your request? Even up to half of the kingdom, it will be done."

3 Then Esther the queen answered and said, "If I have found favour in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4 For I and my people are sold to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. And if we had been sold as

male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the compensation the enemy offers could not make up for the king's loss."

5 Then king Ahasuerus answered and said to Esther the queen, "Who is he, and where is he, who dares to presume in his heart to do so?"

6 And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman." Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. 7 And the king, getting up from the banquet of wine, in his rage *went* into the palace garden, and Haman stood up to ask Esther the queen for his life, for he saw that the king was determined to harm him.

8 Then the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the wine banquet, and Haman had fallen on the couch where Esther *was*. Then the king said, "Will he even force the queen in my presence, in the house?" As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

9 And Harbonah, one of the officials, said to the king, "Look, the fifty cubits high gallows, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who spoke good on the king's behalf, is standing at Haman's house."

Then the king said, "Hang him on it."

10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's rage subsided.

**8** On that day king Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman the Jews' enemy to Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told how he *was related* to her. 2 And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3 And Esther spoke again to the king, and fell down at his feet and begged him with tears to put an end to the evil *conspiracy* of Haman the Agagite, and his scheme which he had devised against the Jews. 4 Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before

**6:9** Compare Gen 41:41-43. In those days this was regarded as a mark of great favor and honor. Spiritually speaking, believers in Christ have the high honor of being clothed with the robe of the heavenly king – Isa 61:10; Zech 3:3-5; Phil 3:9.

**6:10** "Mordecai" – what must have been the utter dismay in the heart of Haman when he heard this name (v 12)!

"King's gate" – 2:19.

**6:13** Compare Ps 7:15; 57:6; Prov 26:27; 28:18.

**6:14** "Banquet" – 5:8. The custom was to send an escort to bring honored guests to feasts. Compare Matt 22:1-4.

**7:2** The third time the king had asked this (5:3,6).

**7:3** At last Esther is persuaded of the king's

sincerity and tells him what is in her mind.

**7:4** 3:9,10,13.

**7:6** "Terrified" – he who sets out to terrify others will one day be terrified himself.

**7:7** Prov 16:14; 19:12.

**7:9** Once before an Amalekite begged an Israelite for his life – 1 Sam 15:32,33. It seems some of them were better at boasting than dying.

**7:10** God's justice is not always revealed so quickly or so dramatically. But it is always at work and will inevitably prevail – Ps 7:11; 9:16; 18:25-27; 37:35-38; 94:23; 96:13; Prov 11:5,6; Dan 6:24; Acts 17:31; Gal 6:7.

**8:1** "Gave the house of Haman" – 5:11; Job 27:13,15-17; Prov 13:22; 22:23; 23:10.

**8:2** 3:10.

**8:4** 4:11.

the king, 5 and said,

"If it pleases the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing *seems* right to the king, and I *am* pleasing in his eyes, let a *command* be written to overrule the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who *are* in all the king's provinces. 6 For how can I bear to see the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred?"

7 Then king Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, "Look, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows, because he stretched out his hand against the Jews. 8 Write also a *decree* for the Jews, as it pleases you, in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's ring. For no one can overrule a letter which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring."

9 Then the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, that *is*, the month Sivan, on the twenty-third *day* of *that month*, and they wrote down all the commands that Mordecai gave to the Jews, and to the officials, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which *are* from India to Ethiopia, a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, to each province in its script, and to each people in their language, and to the Jews in their script and in their language. 10 And he wrote in the name of king Ahasuerus, and sealed *it* with the king's ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, *and* riders on mules, camels, and swift horses.

11 In them the king gave *permission* to the Jews who *were* in every city to gather together, and to stand up for their life, to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the forces of any people and province who assaulted them, *both* little ones and women, and *to* plunder their possessions, 12 on one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, *namely*, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. 13 A copy of the writing

as a command to be given in every province was published to all people, so that the Jews could be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

14 *So* the couriers, riding on royal horses, went out, going swiftly, impelled by the king's command. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

15 And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal robes of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple. And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. 16 The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honour. 17 And in every province, and in every city where the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. And many of the people of the land became Jews, for the fear of the Jews fell on them.

**9** Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day, when the king's command and decree were about to be carried out, on the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, the reverse happened; the Jews gained the ascendancy over those who hated them. 2 The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, to seize those who sought to harm them. And no man could withstand them, for the fear of them fell on all people. 3 And all the rulers of the provinces and the officials and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell on them. 4 For Mordecai *was* great in the king's house, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces, for this man Mordecai became greater and greater.

5 Thus the Jews struck down all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they wished to those who hated them. 6 And in Shushan the palace the

**8:5** 3:13,14.

**8:8** "Overrule" – 1:19; Dan 6:8,12,15. The king could not cancel a former decree, but he could issue another which would counteract the former one.

**8:9** 3:6,12. "India" – Xerxes did not rule India but his kingdom extended to its borders.

**8:10** 3:12,13.

**8:11,12** 3:7,13. A just decree which saved the Jews. Prov 21:1.

**8:15** "Rejoiced and was glad" – compare the bewilderment of 3:15. Injustice produces dismay, justice is cause for joy.

**8:17** "Fear of the Jews" – compare Gen 35:5; Ex 15:16; 23:27; Deut 2:25; 11:25; Josh 2:11. Their motive in adopting the religion of the Jews was mere fear of the rising power of the Jews in the kingdom.

This was, of course, an unworthy motive. In these days no one should convert to Christianity because of fear or self-interest or possible material gain. True Christianity does not need, does not want such converts. Conversion from such motives will bring no spiritual benefits, and spiritual benefits are by far the most important benefits (Matt 16:26).

**9:1** "Adar" – 8:12.

"The ascendancy" – God is the sovereign ruler of the universe, and can turn upside down any condition or circumstance among men. See 1 Sam 2:4-10.

**9:2** Compare Ps 71:13,24.

**9:4** "Greater" – compare Gen 41:41-44; Dan 2:48; 6:1,2. See Ps 75:6,7. Among God's people there are never many who are wise and

Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. 7 And they killed Parshandatha and Dalphon and Aspatha 8 and Poratha and Adalia and Aridatha 9 and Parmashta and Arisai and Aridai and Vajezatha, 10 the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, but did not lay their hands on the plunder.

11 On that day the number of those who were killed in Shushan the citadel was brought before the king. 12 And the king said to Esther the queen, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in the citadel of Shushan, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what *is* your petition? It will be granted you. Or what further request *do* you *have*? It will be done."

13 Then said Esther, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who *are* in Shushan to act tomorrow also in accordance with today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows."

14 And the king commanded this to be done, and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. 15 For the Jews who *were* in Shushan gathered together also on the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and killed three hundred men at Shushan, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

16 But the other Jews who *were* in the king's provinces gathered together, and stood up for their lives and to get relief from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder. 17 *This occurred on* the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and on the fourteenth day of the *month* they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

18 But the Jews who were at Shushan had assembled on the thirteenth and on the fourteenth *day* of the *month*, and on the fifteenth day of the *month* they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

19 Therefore the Jews in the villages, who lived in the unwallied towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar *a day of* gladness and

feasting and a holiday, and of sending portions to one another.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who *were* in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, *both* near and far, 21 to establish among them that annually they should keep the fourteenth day and the fifteenth day of the month Adar, 22 as the days in which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and the month when sorrow was turned to joy for them, and mourning to a holiday, that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 And the Jews continued to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written to them, 24 because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised *a scheme* against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, to consume them and to destroy them; 25 but when *Esther* came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked scheme, which he devised against the Jews, should return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. 26 So they called these days Purim from the name of Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, and what they had seen concerning this matter and what had happened to them, 27 the Jews established and imposed it on themselves and on their descendants, and on all those who joined them, that without fail they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their *appointed* time every year, 28 and that these days *should be* remembered and kept in every generation, every family, every province, and every city, and *that* these days of Purim should not cease among the Jews, nor the memory of them perish from their descendants.

29 Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter of Purim. 30 And he sent the letters to all the Jews, to the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and

influential (1 Cor 1:26-29). But to fulfill His purposes God raises some to high positions. **9:7-10** This was the final blow at all Haman had boasted in (5:11).

**9:10** "Plunder" – compare Gen 14:23; 1 Sam 15:3,18,19.

**9:12** 5:3,6; 7:2.

**9:13** "Hanged" – this was to display their dead bodies (vs 7-10). In other words, a public display of justice at work, and a warning to all who would attack the Jews.

**9:18,19** Verses 26-28.

**9:22** "Gifts to the poor" – Deut 15:7-11; etc. In all our feasts and celebrations let us, as they, remember the poor and needy.

**9:24** 3:6,7. Haman had cast lots to determine an auspicious day for his attack on the Jews, but to no avail. Actually there is no such thing as "auspicious" days. The whole idea is a superstition which should have no place in the lives of God's people. Every day we trust and obey the true God is good, every day we fail to do so is bad.

**9:25** 7:4-10.

**9:26-28** In these modern times the Jews around the world still observe this festival of Purim. Those in Jerusalem celebrate it on the 15th of the month, but everyone else on the 14th (vs 18,19). The festival is in remembrance of this great deliverance from

truth, 31 to confirm these days of Purim in their *appointed* times, just as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had established for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their descendants, concerning their fasting and lamentation. 32 And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

**10** And king Ahasuerus imposed a tax on the land and *on* the islands of the sea.

Haman which was one of the greatest deliverances of the Jews in history.

**9:31** "Fasting" – see 4:3,16. In modern times the Jews observe the day before Purim as a day of fasting – a remembrance of the great danger they faced from Haman.

**10:1,2** Xerxes was a very powerful and wealthy king whose exploits are recorded in secular history.

**10:3** "Great" – note at 9:4.

"Good of his people" – as far as we can

2 And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? 3 For Mordecai the Jew *was* second to king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and accepted by the multitude of his brethren, *and* sought the good of his people and spoke up for the peace of all his race.

see, Mordecai's actions all through this story were for the same reason. It does not appear that he was selfishly seeking power for either himself or for Esther. And when by God's grace he came into power, he did not use it for his own ends or for material gain. See notes also at Neh 5:14-18; 2 Sam 8:15; etc. In the whole of Israel's long history was there any person who was able to do any more than Mordecai and Esther for the preservation of that people?

# JOB

## Author:

Unknown. See the note in the introduction to Judges concerning the authorship of the books of the Bible.

## Date:

This book may have been written any time between the time of Moses and the time of Ezra, but many scholars think a date sometime close to the reign of king Solomon (970-930 BC) is most likely. The time when Job lived also cannot be stated with certainty. But most of the evidence available to us indicates a time shortly after the lifetime of Abraham. In any case, knowing who the author was and the dates could not help us to understand the spiritual lessons of this book, and this should be our main purpose in the study of it.

## Themes:

Job deals with the very difficult problem of why God permits His own children who live righteous lives to suffer. What is the purpose of the troubles, pains, and disasters which come to them? Why do evil men often seem to escape these things? Is God's justice not at work among the people of the world? These are the thoughts that form the basis of the discussion that took place between Job and his friends. See the notes at 3:1,20; 4:7-9; 8:3; 18:5-21; 21:4-34; 34:10-12. We also see another significant element in this book: how Satan challenges God and attacks Job, and how God successfully repulses such a challenge and attack.

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**1** There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. **2** And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters. **3** And his possessions were seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

**4** And his sons used to go and have a feast *in the house of each one* on his day, and they would send and call for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. **5** And it came about when *their* days of feasting had completed its cycle, that Job would send and sanctify them, and rise up early in the morning and offer burnt

offerings *according* to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

**6** Now a day came when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

**7** And the LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?"

Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

**8** And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that *there is* no one like him on the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

**9** Then Satan answered the LORD and said,

**1:1** "Uz" – this land was situated somewhere east of the land of Canaan (v 3). In Jeremiah's day it was distinguished from Edom (Jer 25:20,21), but Edomites lived there or possibly controlled it (Lam 4:21). So Uz was probably close to the borders of Edom. Teman, the region where Job's friend Eliphaz lived, was a part of Edom.

"Blameless" – the Hebrew word is translated "perfect" in the KJV, but no man is perfect in the sense in which we use this word today. The word also means "complete", "not lacking in any virtue", "having integrity", "ethically pure" (see note at Gen 17:1). This does not mean that Job was sinless. He had a sinful nature as all men have. But it does mean that he was a man who, by God's grace and power, was full of virtues, completely equipped in every way for a righteous and holy life. God had given him victory over the sin in his nature. On our sinful nature see notes at Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Rom 3:9-19; 7:5,18; 8:3,4; Gal 5:16,17; Eph 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8.

On "blameless" (or "perfect") see Gen 6:9; 17:1; Matt 5:48; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:13; Phil 3:12; Col 1:28; 4:12; James 1:4.

"Upright" – this means that he was straight in all his dealings, sincere, honest, without crookedness or guile (compare Ps 7:10; 11:2,7; 25:8; 112:2,4; 140:13; Prov 15:8; 16:17).

"Feared God" – notes at 28:28; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; 130:3,4; Prov 1:7.

"Shunned evil" – turning from evil is one sure mark of anyone who truly has the fear of God (28:28; Prov 3:7; 8:13; 16:6; 2 Cor 7:1). The character of Job seen here is an example to us all of what a man can and should be. His character was of far more value than all of his material possessions.

**1:3** East here means the area lying east of Canaan, extending, perhaps, to the Euphrates river.

**1:5** These words reveal the love Job had for God and for his own children, his knowledge of the sinfulness of the human heart, and

his activity as priest as head of the family. Note on priest at Ex 28:1; on burnt offering at Lev 1:2,3.

**1:6** "A day came" – here we are given a glimpse into the unseen spiritual realm. What happened later to Job had its source there.

"Sons of God" – 2:1; 38:7. Compare Gen 6:2. Here the words indicate angels. Evidently they came to stand in God's presence to give an account of their activities and to receive further orders.

"Satan" – see note at 1 Chron 21:1. He too must come to stand before God. In some sense his activities are restricted by God's supreme will. He is not free to do as he would like or all that he would wish to do. When God sees it is wise and just, He allows Satan (or other evil spirits or demons) to bring troubles on men and to test and try God's people.

**1:7** God knew where Satan had been. This verse suggests that Satan also is required to give an account of his activities. Satan had been roaming the earth looking for opportunities to do evil (1 Pet 5:8). He is not, like God, able to be everywhere at once.

**1:8** "Job" – God is not calling attention to a person Satan has not considered. The next two verses seem to make it clear that Satan had been watching Job.

"No one like him" – according to God Himself Job was the best man on earth in his generation. We should keep this fact in mind all through our study of this book. Otherwise we will not understand it as well as we should.

**1:9** This is Satan's evaluation of the piety of the best man on earth, and so of all religious people. He is saying that men will serve and worship God only for what they can get out of it, that among the whole of mankind there is no such thing as genuine love for God or reverence for Him, that the basis of all religion is selfishness.

Unfortunately, Satan's evaluation is correct to a large extent. Sinful men indeed think only of themselves and what they can

"Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have you not made a hedge around him and around his house and around all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But now stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face."

12 And the LORD said to Satan, "See, all that he has *is* in your power; only do not stretch out your hand to *the man* himself." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; 14 and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing, and the donkeys were feeding beside them, 15 and the Sabeans attacked and took them away. Yes, they killed the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

get from God rather than how they can love, please, and serve God. But God can and does work in the hearts of individuals to change them, give them a new nature, and pour his love into their inner being. Such people serve God truly and are willing to suffer the loss of all things for His sake (Mark 10:28; Luke 5:11,27,28; 14:33; Rom 5:5; Phil 3:8; Heb 10:32-34; 11:36-38).

Judging from the information we have in the Bible we can say that Satan does not want to admit this and goes on accusing and opposing God's people (Rev 12:10), and that his aim is to get people to turn against God, reject Him, and even curse Him. They who do so are siding with Satan, though they may not even be aware of Satan's existence. Satan hates God and wants all men to hate Him. He also hates men and wants God to hate them and judge, punish, and destroy them.

**1:10,11** Satan makes his view of Job (and so of all pious people) quite clear. Job, he is saying, served and worshiped God only because of God's material blessings and protection; take away these and Job's piety will go with them. In the case of Job we can see that this was not true. But is it true of us? Will we lose our devotion to God if He allows disaster to come on our possessions and on our children?

"Hedge" – nothing can touch God's people without God's permission. He is a shield to them, a hedge around them – 2:6; Gen 15:1; Ps 18:2; 28:7; etc.

**1:12** God accepted Satan's challenge concerning Job. He Himself would not raise His hand against Job, but would allow Satan to put his theory to the test. God often tries His people and allows them to be tested by circumstances (notes at Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12; etc). The result of such trials is glory to God and great honor and spiritual good to those who come through them. In other words, God uses all the accusations, opposition, and activities of Satan against Him and His people to bring

16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and attacked the camels and carried them away; yes, and they killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you."

18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said, "Your sons and your daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; 19 and, see, a great wind came from the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young men, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

20 Then Job arose and tore his cloak and shaved his head, and prostrated himself on the ground

good (notes at Gen 50:20; Num 24:25; Rom 8:28). Job was God's masterpiece of spiritual workmanship in that generation (compare Eph 2:10). God would not shield him from testing.

**1:13-19** Satan now reveals what happens to possessions and persons when he is given the opportunity to injure them. He is a destroyer and a murderer (John 8:44). We have reason to believe that he would, if permitted by God, do similar things to every one of God's people. If he does not, it is only because God still keeps His protective "fence" about them (Ps 3:3; 5:12; 32:7; Deut 33:27; John 17:15; 1 Pet 1:5). Satan, of course, may actually increase the wealth and position of those on his side, or of those who yield to his temptations for these things. But this too, as he well knows, will result in their eventual destruction.

**1:14,15** The Sabeans were a nomadic tribe ranging here and there in northern Arabia.

**1:16** Some scholars think the words "the fire of God" means lightning flashes. But it may have been fire that Satan caused to fall from the sky (compare Rev 13:13). In any case, the man who reported it to Job was mistaken if he thought God Himself had sent the fire.

**1:17** "Still speaking" – no time was given Job to recover from one shock until news of another disaster was brought to him. Satan tried to overwhelm and crush him with calamities swiftly following one after the other.

"Chaldeans" – a people living to the east or northeast of the land of Uz.

**1:18,19** "A great wind" – evidently Satan can cause destructive winds. Now the greatest blow of all falls on Job's loving heart and stunned mind. What is the loss of all the 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys, and 7000 sheep, and 3000 camels compared with the loss of all of his ten children?

**1:20** In this verse and the next we have one of the great moments in the whole Bible, in the whole of human history. It should fill us

and worshipped, 21 and said, "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked I shall return. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

22 In all this Job did not sin, or charge God foolishly.

**2** There was another day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?"

And Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."

3 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that *there is* no one

with admiration. Job's faith rises superior to all his loss and sorrow. Satan is proved a liar. And God's work of grace in human hearts is shown to be powerful and real. Instead of uttering the curse Satan had predicted, Job praises God. Notice that Job does not blame the Sabeans or Chaldeans or wind or fire or even Satan for his losses. He did not think these losses were the result of accidents or men's cruelty or the powers of nature. He says *God gave, God took away*. He recognizes God's sovereignty in everything. He knows the things which have happened could not happen unless God permitted them.

"Tore. . .shaved" – expressions of deep grief.

**1:21** "Naked" – Ps 49:17; Eccl 5:15; 1 Tim 6:7.

"Taken away" – we have all sinned against God and so deserve nothing good from His hand. If we have anything it is because of God's free grace. If He takes away what He lets us have for a while, there is no injustice at all in that. And Job here accepts this, even though he can see no reason why such misfortunes should come to him.

"Blessed be the name of the LORD" – Job revealed the truth of verses 1 and 8 by being able to praise God even in circumstances like these. Ps 33:1 (note); 50:23; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**1:22** Many there are in this world who foolishly charge God with injustice toward them when they experience losses much less than Job's.

**2:3** Job's calamities have not changed his character in the slightest. God says he is just as good a man as he was before (1:1,8).

**2:4,5** Satan's meaning is that although Job did not curse God because of the loss of all things, this was not because he was truly devoted to God, but because he was afraid that if he cursed God, God would take his life. He is saying that every person is so selfishly concerned with his own physical well-being that he will do anything to preserve it, including making a show of

like him on the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without cause."

4 And Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But now stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face."

6 And the LORD said to Satan, "See, he *is* in your hands; but spare his life."

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself with, and sat down among the ashes.

9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold on

devotion and piety. He means that when a person's health is gone, if he thinks God is responsible for it, he will turn against God and show that all his religion and piety was rooted only in selfishness and sin.

Satan's estimate of man's character in his sinful state is true. But he was wrong about Job (vs 13-15), and about other true believers. When God does His work of saving and transforming individuals He makes them willing to suffer and give up even their lives for Him (John 11:16; Acts 20:24; 21:13; Heb 11:36-38; Rev 12:11; Luke 14:26; Matt 10:38,39). It is a great glory to God to have children who will love Him in spite of personal disasters and who will endure everything for Him, even great pain and death.

**2:6** Satan can do nothing to God's people without God's permission (1:12). Why should God give him permission? Because He knows it is better to give permission than to refuse it. This matter we may not fully understand on this earth (Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33,34). We must simply trust God and believe that He knows better than we do what should and should not be done or permitted.

**2:7** When Satan is permitted he will do what he can to torment men. One boil on the body can be very painful. Imagine what severe and constant pains would result from burning, itching, festering sores over the whole body. Later in the book several verses reveal the intense suffering that Job experienced because of this (2:8; 3:24; 6:10; 7:4,5; 13:28; 16:8,17; 17:1; 19:20; 30:17,30).

**2:8** A sign of deep mourning (42:6; Jer 6:26; Jonah 3:6). Job felt that his whole life was in ashes.

**2:9** Satan now uses Job's wife as a tool to bring his message to Job and to increase his sorrow. She wonders what use there can be in integrity and devotion to God if they do not prevent such terrible loss and sufferings as those which came to Job. When she says "curse God and die" she is

to your integrity? Curse God, and die!”

10 But he said to her, “You are speaking like one of the foolish women speaks. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive trouble?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

11 Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this trouble that had come on him, each of them came from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to

expressing the hope of Satan. It is not likely that she is suggesting suicide. Possibly she supposes that if Job cursed God, God would kill him and put him out of his misery.

**2:10** The Hebrew word translated “foolish” means both foolish and lacking in righteous character. Job does not call his wife a foolish woman but only says she is talking like one. He knew, and we should remember, that she too had lost ten children in one day, and had been watching her husband’s intense suffering. The sudden loss of even one child sometimes makes a mother almost insane with grief.

“Trouble” – the Hebrew word used here has many meanings – trouble, evil, or something disagreeable, unpleasant, sad, miserable or hurtful.

“Sin” – Job by refusing to sin against God with his words once again proved Satan a liar and shut his mouth. Satan is defeated and appears no more in the story of Job. Job also shows that he was indeed the best human being on earth in his generation. No doubt then, as now, most people blamed God for every disaster and did not praise Him for any good they enjoyed.

**2:11** As far as we can see these three men from neighboring regions came in a spirit of true friendship and with the best of motives. But they turned out to be poor comforters and only added to Job’s sorrows (16:2). We do not know how long a period of time elapsed between the onset of Job’s bodily sufferings and the visit of his friends, but in 7:3 Job speaks of months of suffering.

**2:12** Could these friends have expected that the greatest man in the East (1:3) would be covered with loathsome sores and be sitting in ashes? They were stunned and overcome with grief (Josh 7:16; Neh 9:1; Lam 2:10; Ezek 27:30). Seven days was not an unusual time of mourning in ancient times (Gen 50:10; 1 Sam 31:13).

**2:13** During these seven days it is likely that Job’s friends began to doubt whether he was a good and righteous man. This comes out later in their speeches. They could not understand why God would permit such disasters and suffering to come on him if he had not sinned very grievously.

**3:1** From here to the end of chapter 31 we have the words of Job and his three friends concerning Job’s sufferings. They have spent seven days together, each one trying to think through the problem of why such terrible

come to sympathize with him and to comfort him. 12 And when they lifted up their eyes at a distance and did not recognize him, they raised their voices and wept, and each of them tore his cloak and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. 13 So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

**3** After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*.

troubles have come upon him. Job speaks first. For a long time he has been in constant pain, thinking about his sufferings and losses. Why has God treated me like this? What evil have I done? What hope remains for me? Is not death better than such a life? And is not being born at all not the best of all? Questions like these have troubled his mind and pressed like a great weight on his spirit. He understands nothing of what has happened and he has no answers for any of his problems.

He has, of course, no knowledge of the words spoken by Satan and by God in heaven. His friends have brought him no light, no comfort. He has lost the fellowship with God which he had long enjoyed. He prays, he cries out in his anguish of body and heart, but God is silent toward him. He is in a state of deep depression.

And remember that Job had no such promises as John 16:33; Rom 8:17,18,28; 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Pet 3:12,13; Rev 7:17; 21:3,4. These verses had not yet been written. Job did not know of the wonderful display of God’s love through the cross of Christ. That had not yet taken place. God progressively, here a little, there a little, revealed His truth in human history and Job lived toward the dawn of God’s written revelation. He had no promise of God that gave enlightenment and encouragement in his situation. He could only use his human reason to try to understand what had happened. But his reason failed to bring him any comfort. For what had happened seemed contrary to reason and all he knew about God.

Suddenly like the bursting of a dam his heart and mouth open and all his pent-up emotions, his tortured thoughts pour forth. No one should think to judge harshly what he said. The words he spoke in this chapter are the words of a man who in both body and mind is wounded almost beyond endurance. (See Job’s own comments about this in 6:2-4,11-13; 7:11.) Remember that he was the best man on earth according to God’s own word (2:3). Not one of us in his situation and in his time would have behaved or spoken better than he. Indeed would any of us have spoken as well?

Of course, a believer now with God’s full revelation of truth in the Bible, if he meets suffering and disaster, should never allow himself to use such language as Job here



- 2 And Job spoke and said,  
 3 "May the day I was born perish,  
 and the night *in which* it was said,  
 'A male child is conceived.'  
 4 May that day be darkness.  
 May God not regard it from above,  
 and may the light not shine on it.  
 5 May darkness and the shadow of death claim it.  
 May a cloud settle on it.  
 May the blackness of the day terrify it.  
 6 *As for* that night, may darkness seize it.  
 May it not be joined to the days of the year.  
 May it not come into the number of the months.  
 7 Oh, may that night be barren.  
 May no joyful voice come into it.  
 8 May those who curse days curse it,  
*those* who are ready to rouse Leviathan.  
 9 May the stars of its twilight be dark.  
 May it look for light, but *have* none,  
*and* may it not see the dawning of the day,  
 10 Because it did not shut up the doors  
 of my *mother's* womb,  
 or hide sorrow from my eyes.  
 11 "Why did I not die at birth?  
*Why* did I *not* expire when I came out  
 of the womb?  
 12 Why did the knees receive me?

used. But let us keep in mind how little he had of God's revelation.

**3:3** See Jeremiah's words (Jer 20:14-18).

**3:8** Note on Leviathan at 41:1.

**3:11** 10:18,19.

**3:13-19** More than anything else Job longs for rest and quietness for body and mind. So death seemed to him sweeter than life.

**3:20** Job's question here has troubled men from the beginning of recorded history. The question is, what is the point in living when life is full of suffering and seems without hope and purpose? To Job life had become absurd and practically impossible. It was not given him to see any of the reasons for the sufferings of God's people, as revealed in other places in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament (Deut 8:2,16; Ps 66:10-12; Prov 17:3; Rom 5:3,4; 2 Cor 4:17; 12:7-10; Heb 2:10; 12:5-11; Jam 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6,7; etc).

None of us fully understands God's dealings with men, or the reasons for all the misery and suffering that come on God's people. In the book of Job itself no reason is given. God at the end merely reveals Himself as the all-wise and all-powerful ruler of the universe. But in the light of the teachings of the Bible as a whole several reasons may be given to the question that arises about the sufferings and trials of the righteous.

These come to prove the reality of a believer's faith and to strengthen and purify it.

They develop the great virtue of patience.

They awaken believers out of lethargy

Or why the breasts that I should suck?

13 For now I would have been lying still and quiet;  
 I would have been sleeping.

Then I would have been at rest,

14 With kings and counsellors of the earth,  
 who built up the ruins for themselves,

15 Or with princes who had gold,  
 who filled their houses *with* silver.

16 Or *why* was I not hidden like a still-born child,  
 like infants *who* never saw light?

17 There the wicked cease *from* troubling,  
 and there the weary are at rest.

18 *There* the prisoners rest together.

They do not hear the voice of the oppressor.

19 The small and great are there,  
 and the servant *is* freed from his master.

20 "Why is light given to him who is in misery,  
 and life to the bitter *in* soul,

21 Who long for death, but it *does* not *come*,  
 and dig for it more than for hidden treasures,

22 Who rejoice exceedingly *and* are glad  
 when they can find the grave?

23 *Why is light given* to a man whose way  
 is hidden,  
 and whom God has hedged in?

24 For my sighing comes before I eat,  
 and my groans pour out like water.

and ease and stir them up to thought, self examination, and prayer.

They aim a blow at any remaining self-righteousness and boasting or self-indulgence in believers.

They help to break believers away from the bonds of earth and make them seek their all in God.

They help them to appreciate more fully Christ's sufferings for them.

Patiently endured they shut Satan's mouth and greatly glorify God.

They help to reveal and perfect the believer's character and to make it more Christlike.

And they work for believers an eternal weight of glory (2 Cor 4:17).

**3:21,22** Job had no fear of what might lay beyond death. His conscience did not accuse him about anything. He was not afraid to stand before God and give an account of his life. Longings for death are not uncommon even among the best of God's people (see Num 11:15; 1 Kings 19:4; Jer 20:14-18; Jonah 4:8; Phil 1:23). See notes on fear of death at Ps 55:4,5 and 116:15. But suicide was a sin not even to be considered. Suicide is the same as murder.

**3:23** "Hedged in" - in Hebrew the same expression used in 1:10 appears with an entirely different meaning. Job means that he can see no way out of his difficulties and sorrows. He feels utterly bewildered, shut in a narrow place and in the dark (19:8; Lam 3:5).

25 For the thing which I greatly feared  
has come on me,  
and what I was afraid of has come to me.  
26 I am not at ease; I have no rest;  
I am not quiet, for turmoil has come."

**4** Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered  
and said,

- 2 "If one attempts a word with you,  
will you be grieved?  
But who can keep himself from speaking?
- 3 Look, you have instructed many,  
and have strengthened weak hands.
- 4 Your words have held up him who was falling,  
and you have strengthened feeble knees.
- 5 But now it has come on you, and you faint.  
It touches you, and you are troubled.
- 6 Is not your fear of God your confidence,  
your hope,  
and the uprightness of your ways?
- 7 "Please remember, who *ever* perished,  
being innocent?

**3:25** Job is probably not referring to the sudden loss of children, property, and health – see 29:18-20. The fear he had may have come after those calamities, and may have been the fear of completely losing God's fellowship and the light of God's countenance. To a man like Job in those circumstances this would have been a great fear indeed, and he thought this fear was being fulfilled.

**3:25** "Turmoil" – the Hebrew word indicates inner trouble, mental agitation, restlessness of heart, not outward turmoil.

**4:1** Apparently Eliphaz was the leading spokesman for the three friends of Job. He speaks first, and he uses "we" in 5:27, indicating that the other two shared his opinions. Also he has far more to say than the other two combined. Eliphaz came from Teman, a place later renowned for wisdom (Jer 49:7; Obadiah 8,9). According to Elihu, who appears toward the end of the book, these three friends are old and wise (32:6; 34:2). Certainly much of what they say is true and good, and some of their remarks and words of advice would no doubt have fit the case of many people. But, for the most part, their words were not appropriate for Job's case. Actually they misjudged Job altogether and could bring no answer to his problem and no comfort to his heart. It will take some wisdom on our part to discern what is true and good in the speeches of these friends, and what is mistaken.

**4:2-6** Eliphaz begins very politely. He sees Job's great suffering and does not wish to add to it. But he feels some things must be said even though they may cause Job more pain. Eliphaz soon reveals that he has strong doubts about Job's character and piety. Job, he says, taught others but could not teach himself. And if Job's piety is real why has

Or where were the righteous *ever* cut off?

- 8 As I have seen, those who plow iniquity,  
and sow wickedness, reap the same.
- 9 By the blast of God they perish,  
and by the breath of his nostrils  
they are consumed.
- 10 The roaring of the lion and the voice  
of the fierce lion,  
and the teeth of the young lions are broken.
- 11 The old lion perishes for lack of prey,  
and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.
- 12 "Now a word was secretly brought to me,  
and my ear received a whisper of it.
- 13 In thoughts from the visions of the night,  
when deep sleep falls on men,
- 14 Fear and trembling came on me,  
which made all my bones shake.
- 15 Then a spirit passed before my face.  
The hair of my body stood up.
- 16 It stood still, but I could not discern its shape.  
An image *was* before my eyes.  
*There was* silence; and I heard a voice, *saying*,

he abandoned all hope and confidence? He does not yet say that Job's piety is not real (as he does later – 15:4-6; 22:4-6). But plainly he doubts it.

**4:7-9** Eliphaz reveals here what he believes is God's principle of governing the world – if God sends great calamities it is because of great guilt on the part of those who suffer them. Job's ten children were not innocent and upright, Eliphaz thinks, and that is why they were destroyed. He is willing for the time to give Job the benefit of the doubt – since Job hasn't perished yet he may not have sinned so greatly as to be worthy of destruction.

Are Eliphaz's views on the matter completely correct? They are not. It is true that God sometimes sends calamities on the wicked and destroys them (Gen 6:5-7; 19:24,25; 2 Chron 36:15,16; etc). But in natural disasters such as cyclones and earthquakes, and in times of war, the innocent and righteous sometimes die together with the guilty and wicked. And troubles, losses, and difficulties come to both good people and bad. Indeed sometimes the wicked have less trouble on this earth than the righteous and die at ease in ripe old age (see Job's remarks at 21:7-13).

**4:8** Prov 22:8; Hos 10:13; Gal 6:7.

**4:9** Isa 11:4; 30:33; 2 Thess 2:8.

**4:10,11** God knows how to deal with those who are cruel and bloodthirsty as lions. Eliphaz does not yet apply this directly to Job and still may be doubting whether Job is like that. He becomes more clear in his charges against Job in his second and third speeches (chapters 15 and 22).

**4:12-16** In this frightening and mysterious experience that came to him Eliphaz believes God sent him a message and that

- 17 'Can a mortal be more just than God?  
Can a man be more pure than his Maker?  
18 Consider, he puts no trust in his servants,  
and he charges his angels with error.  
19 How much more those who dwell in  
houses of clay,  
whose foundation is in the dust,  
*who* are crushed before the moth?  
20 They are destroyed from morning to evening;  
they perish forever without anyone  
regarding *it*.  
21 Does not their abundance *which is*  
among them go away?  
They die, still without wisdom.'

- 5** "Call out now; is there anyone who  
will answer you?  
And to which of the holy ones will you turn?  
2 For anger kills the foolish man,  
and envy slays the simple one.  
3 I have seen a fool taking root;  
but suddenly I cursed his habitation.  
4 His children are far from safety,  
and they are crushed in the gate;  
nor *is there* anyone to rescue *them*.  
5 The hungry eat up their harvest,  
taking it even out of the thorns;  
and the robber swallows up their possessions.

this message fits Job's case exactly. But it did not. Just because a man thinks he has been inspired by God does not make it so. **4:17-21** The message Eliphaz gives Job is this: all are weak and sinful, including Job, and when punishment comes because of wrongdoing no one should be surprised or try to defend himself (5:1). He implies that all that has happened to Job and his family was because of some sins or other they had committed. Eliphaz believes that Job in his opening remarks (chapter 3) should have confessed his sin and begged God for mercy, instead of raging against his fate and complaining about God's dealings with him. Eliphaz is right when he says all men are sinners and that God punishes the wicked. Many verses of the Bible teach the same thing. But he is wrong in thinking that what has happened to Job was God's punishment for his sins.

**4:17** 9:2; 25:4; Gen 15:6; Rom 3:21-26; 4:5-8; Eph 1:14. (Through the Lord Jesus Christ God has made a way for men to be righteous and pure before Him).

**4:19** 10:9; 33:6. Words like these indicate that Job and his friends were familiar with the account of man's creation in Gen 2:7.

**5:1** The meaning seems to be this: Eliphaz thinks the truth he has stated is so plain that no one should think of disputing it, and that if Job rejects it and tries to find support for his position among either men or angels, not a single one would speak on his behalf.

**5:2** Eliphaz means that if Job burns with

- 6 Although affliction does not come out  
of the dust,  
or trouble spring out of the ground,  
7 Yet man is born to trouble,  
as the sparks fly upward.  
8 "As for me I would seek God,  
and I would commit my case to God,  
9 Who does great and unsearchable things,  
marvellous things without number,  
10 Who gives rain on the earth,  
and sends water on the fields,  
11 To set on high those who are lowly,  
so that those who mourn are lifted to safety.  
12 He disappoints the schemes of the crafty,  
so that their hands cannot carry out *their* plans.  
13 He takes the wise in their own craftiness,  
and the counsel of the cunning is swept away.  
14 They meet with darkness in the daytime,  
and grope in the noonday as in the night.  
15 But he saves the poor from the sword,  
from their mouth,  
and from the hand of the mighty.  
16 So the poor have hope,  
and iniquity shuts its mouth.  
17 "See, happy *is* the man whom God corrects.  
Therefore do not despise the discipline  
of the Almighty,

anger because of his troubles and sufferings and is envious of those not afflicted, the result will be his own destruction.

**5:3-5** He describes calamities which are very much like those which came on Job, and evidently thinks Job's case may be similar to the wicked fool he refers to in v 3. Why else would he use an illustration like this? He has no idea that Job is a better man than he himself (1:8). It is remarkable that Job listened to this with patience.

**5:6,7** Eliphaz means that calamities are not mere acts of nature, not accidents; they are the result of a spiritual law; troubles come because of man's birth in sin and man's sinful acts. God has linked sin and suffering together and no one can escape this law.

**5:8** He states what he would do if he were in Job's situation. He evidently thinks that Job has not done so.

**5:9-16** He now gives a description of God's ways with men that he thinks will make Job want to turn to God for mercy. Considering the time and place in which he lived he displays a very high view of God – He is a God who does wonders (and so could wonderfully restore the prosperity of Job – v 9); He is the God who is a kind sovereign over His creation (v 10); He rules justly in the affairs of men to bring punishment to clever evildoers and to rescue their victims (vs 11-16). Part of verse 13 is quoted by Paul in 1 Cor 3:19.

**5:17,18** The truth of these verses is found in Prov 3:11,12 and Heb 12:5,6. It is a beautiful truth but it was not the truth Job

- 18 For he injures, but binds up;  
he wounds, but his hands bring healing.
- 19 He will rescue you in six troubles;  
yes, in seven no evil will touch you.
- 20 In famine he will redeem you from death,  
and in war from the power of the sword.
- 21 You will be hidden from the lash of the tongue;  
nor will you be afraid of destruction  
when it comes.
- 22 You will laugh at destruction and famine;  
nor will you be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
- 23 For you will have a covenant with the  
stones of the field,  
and the beasts of the field will be  
at peace with you.
- 24 And you will know that your tent *is* in peace,  
and you will visit your dwelling place,  
and will not miss anything.
- 25 And you will know that your children *are* many,  
and your offspring like the grass of the earth.
- 26 You will reach *your* grave in a full age,  
like a sheaf of grain comes in, in its season.
- 27 "Consider this. We have searched it out;  
it *is* true.  
Hear it, and know *it is* for your good."

needed in his situation. Job's sufferings were not a result of God's chastisement for sin. God's primary purpose in them was to prove Job's faith and integrity and shut Satan's mouth. In general, what use is it for preachers to have fine messages if they do not suit the condition of those who hear them?

"Almighty" (v 17) – in Hebrew "Shaddai" – Gen 17:1.

**5:19-26** He is saying that if Job will submit to God and meekly accept His chastisements God will rescue him from trouble (vs 19,20), restore his prosperity (vs 22-24), will give him many children in place of those he lost (vs 26), and restore him to good health (vs 18,26).

**5:27** Eliphaz speaks for Bildad and Zophar also. He is very sure that he is giving Job the truth he needs to hear and apply.

**6:1-3** In this answer to Eliphaz Job explains why he spoke as he did in chapter 3. He confesses that he spoke rashly. His sufferings were so great that his words were "wild", or "impetuous", or "incoherent" (as some other versions translate the Hebrew word in v 3). His friends should have understood this and not judged him harshly (v 26).

**6:4** His sorrows, calamities, and sickness seem to him like poison-tipped arrows shot into him by God Himself. These arrows were still sticking in his wounded body and spirit. He had thought he was at peace with God and enjoyed His favor. Now it seemed quite suddenly and without reason God was at war with him. There is no indication here or anywhere in the words of Job or his friends that they thought Satan could be the one who

- 6 But Job answered and said,  
2 "Oh, that my grief were fully weighed,  
and my calamity laid with it in the balances!
- 3 For now it would be heavier than the  
sand of the sea;  
therefore my words have been wild.
- 4 For the arrows of the Almighty *are* in me,  
my spirit drinks in their poison.  
The terrors of God set themselves  
in array against me.
- 5 Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass?  
Or does an ox bellow over its fodder?
- 6 Can what is unsavoury be eaten without salt?  
Or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?
- 7 My soul refuses to touch them;  
*they are* like disgusting food to me.
- 8 Oh, that I might have my request, and that  
God would grant *me* the thing that  
I long for!
- 9 *Oh*, that it would please God to crush me!  
That he would let loose his hand and cut me off!
- 10 Then I would still have comfort;  
yes, I would exult in unrelenting pain, for  
I have not denied the words of  
the Holy One.
- 11 "What *is* my strength, that I should hope?

brought those disasters on Job. Both Job and his friends believe God is punishing him. The difference between them is this: Job's friends believe he is being punished for some specific sins, Job believes he is being punished for no good reason at all.

Sometimes people add to their sorrows when bad things happen to them by mistakenly thinking God has turned against them. They mistake the raging of Satan for God's anger. God loved Job very much, views him with great favor, and plans to bless him abundantly. But Job does not know this.

**6:5-7** In other words, Job would not cry out and lament if there were not good reasons for it. What a wild donkey or an ox wants is food; what Job wanted was an explanation of his sufferings, some comfort for his mind and heart. But he could find nowhere a single tasty morsel of truth that could meet his need and satisfy him. How Job would have delighted to have the whole Bible! Yet many troubled Christians neglect its treasures of wisdom and understanding.

"Taste in the white of an egg?" – the meaning of the Hebrew words here is uncertain.

**6:8-10** Since Job cannot get any answer to his problem his great desire is for one thing – death. Even in the clutches of his pain, even in death, he would have one great consolation – he had remained true to God and to all the revelation of God's truth he had; he had openly confessed his loyalty to the Lord (1:21; 2:10).

**6:11-13** Job speaks of his utter helplessness and hopelessness. Could his friends imagine he had a body that felt no

- And what *is* my end, that I should  
prolong my life?
- 12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones?  
Or *is* my flesh bronze?
- 13 *Is* it that my help is not in me?  
And *that* success has been driven from me?
- 14 "To him who is afflicted kindness  
*should be shown* by his friend,  
or he may forsake the fear of the Almighty.
- 15 My brethren have acted deceitfully,  
like a brook, *and* like the stream  
of brooks that pass away,
- 16 Which are dark because of the ice,  
*and* in which snow is hidden.
- 17 When it becomes warm, they cease to flow;  
when it is hot, they vanish from their place.
- 18 The paths of their course turn aside;  
they go nowhere, and perish.
- 19 The caravans of Tema look,  
the travellers of Sheba hope for them.
- 20 They are disappointed because they  
were confident.  
They arrive there and are confused.
- 21 For now you are no *help*.  
You see a fearful thing and are afraid.
- 22 Did I say, 'Bring *something* to me?'  
Or, 'Give a reward for me from your wealth?'
- 23 Or, 'Deliver me from the enemy's hand?'  
Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?'
- 24 "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue;  
and make me understand where I have  
gone wrong.
- 25 How forceful are right words!  
But what does your arguing prove?
- 26 Do you intend to rebuke the words and  
speeches of one who is desperate,  
*which are* like wind?

- 27 Yes, you would overwhelm the fatherless,  
and dig *a pit* for your friend.
- 28 "Now therefore be pleased to look at me,  
for *it will be* evident to you if I am lying.
- 29 Please relent; let there be no  
injustice; yes, relent.  
My righteousness *is* in *question*.
- 30 Is there iniquity in my tongue?  
Cannot my taste discern wrong things?
- 7** "*Is there* not a hard struggle for man on earth?  
And *are* his days *not* like the days  
of a hired man?
- 2 As a servant earnestly desires the shade,  
and as a hired man looks for  
*the reward* of his work,
- 3 So I have been allotted months of futility,  
and nights of weariness have been  
appointed to me.
- 4 When I lie down, I say,  
'When shall I arise, and the night be gone?'  
And I have my fill of tossing  
to and fro until dawn.
- 5 My body is clothed with worms and dirty scabs.  
My skin is broken open, and has become  
loathsome.
- 6 "My days are swifter than a weaver's  
shuttle, and are spent without hope.
- 7 Oh, remember that my life *is* a breath.  
My eyes will never again see *what is* good.
- 8 The eyes of him who has seen me will  
see me no *more*;  
your eyes *will turn* toward me, and  
I *will not be*.
- 9 As the cloud is consumed and vanishes away,  
so he who goes down to the grave will  
not come up *again*.

pain? A mind that could hope when all grounds of hope seemed gone?

**6:14-21** Now he criticizes his friends for their failure to help him. He has revealed to them his despair, but it seems to him that this has only made them turn against him. They have become accusers instead of comforters. His thirsty soul longed for refreshing, restoring truth. When his friends came he hoped for wise counsel from them. Now they appear to him like dried-up streams. Sad and desperate people could not quench their thirst from their words. He is bitterly disappointed and plainly tells them so.

**6:22-24** He had not asked them to come or to give him any physical or financial help (for all we know, with the loss of all his property and health he might have needed such help, but it does not seem that they offered any). He asked them for only one thing – clear counsel that would meet his needs. He is willing to admit his sins and errors if they would point them out to him.

**6:25-27** He knew the power of words spoken to meet the needs of a person. He is saying they have failed to speak such words, and because they have misunderstood his words (in chapter 3), they are behaving very harshly toward him.

**6:28-30** He appeals to them very earnestly to consider his righteous life and his integrity, and to stop unjustly accusing him.

**7:1-6** This description of Job's condition can be summed up in two words: misery and hopelessness. According to v 3 Job has been suffering not merely a few days but for a few months.

**7:7-11** The words from v 7 to the end of this chapter Job speaks to God. He tells God plainly that he has no further hope of happiness. Only death awaits him. He knows nothing of the doctrine of the resurrection (see note on 14:7-12). He feels he has nothing to lose, so he will give full expression to his grief.

**7:9** "Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at



- 10 He will return no more to his house,  
nor will his place know him any more.
- 11 "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth.  
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.  
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
- 12 *Am* I the sea, or a sea monster,  
that you set a guard over me?
- 13 When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,  
my couch will ease my complaint,'
- 14 Then you frighten me with dreams,  
and terrify me through visions,
- 15 So that my soul chooses strangling  
*and* death rather than my life.
- 16 I loathe *it*. I would not live always.  
Let me alone, for my days *are* empty.
- 17 "What *is* man that you should make much  
of him,  
and that you should set your heart on him?
- 18 And *that* you should visit him every morning,  
*and* test him every moment?
- 19 Will you never turn away from me,  
or let me alone until I swallow down my spittle?

Gen 37:35.

**7:12** Job means that he is not some turbulent ocean or wild sea monster that needs restraining.

**7:13-15** Nights instead of giving rest from suffering added to it, for when he would sleep, dreams or terrifying visions troubled him so that he again longed for death.

**7:16** Job 9:21; 10:1; Eccl 2:17; 4:2,3.

**7:17-19** Job's question is not, why does God have such a loving concern for man (as in Ps 8:4), but, why does God continually want to inflict pain on feeble men? Why does He examine every action and take such care to send punishment and affliction? Job felt that God's attitude toward him was hostile and wanted God to leave him alone for a while. Actually in the last part of v 18 Job comes near to the reason why calamities have come upon him – testing (compare Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12). But he does not pursue this truth. Perhaps at that time in history and without God's revelation on the subject, and in his condition, he could not have.

**7:20** Job does not know of any sins he may have committed that should have brought God's judgment on him. But he asks that even if he had sinned how could that have injured God so much that he became the target for God's anger.

**7:21** Job does not deny that he has sinned at times. But he wonders that there is no forgiveness. He knows he is not hardhearted and unrepentant. He believes the end of his life is near and wants assurance of forgiveness for any sins he has committed. What Job spoke about with longing we can now know that we have – Luke 24:46,47; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9.

**8:1,2** Bildad thinks Job is very reckless and impious in his words. In the speech which

- 20 I have sinned;  
what have I done to you, O watcher of men?  
Why have you set me up as your target,  
so that I am a burden to myself?
- 21 And why do you not pardon my transgression,  
and take away my iniquity?  
For now I will sleep in the dust,  
and you will look for me in the morning,  
but I *will* not *be*."

**8** Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,  
2 "How long will you speak these *things*?

And *how long* will the words of your  
mouth *be like* a strong wind?

- 3 Does God pervert judgment?  
Or does the Almighty pervert justice?
- 4 If your children sinned against him  
and he cast them away for their  
transgression,
- 5 If you would seek God and make your  
supplication to the Almighty,
- 6 If you *have been* pure and upright,  
surely now he will awake for you,

follows he shows he is in full agreement with Eliphaz.

**8:3** He believes that Job is accusing God of injustice. This verse is the basis of all Bildad has to say – God is always working out justice in this world, rewarding the good, punishing the wicked. If disasters and suffering come to a man it is because he deserves them. For God would not punish a person unjustly. Bildad seems to think calamities and sufferings such as Job experienced could only be *punishment* for wrong doing. He does not understand that God may justly permit afflictions to come to a person to try him, to prove his faith and good character, and that he may allow the wicked to prosper all through life and judge and punish him after death. It is very true, of course, that God does not pervert justice. But it is impossible for men on earth, especially without the full revelation of the Bible, to understand how justice is being worked out.

All three friends of Job had very narrow, rigid, and simplistic views on the outworking of God's justice. Therefore they were sometimes harsh and lacking in sympathy. In these days if we hold the view that everyone on earth is getting just what he deserves, or that if anyone suffers it is his karma being worked out, such a view might tend to make us somewhat unfeeling toward those in misery and suffering.

**8:4** With Bildad's views of justice being what they were, no doubt he believed that Job's children had sinned terribly and been destroyed because of it.

**8:5** Job 5:8. Bildad apparently assumes with Eliphaz that Job had not done so.

**8:6,7** Since Job was not destroyed with his children it is barely possible, Bildad thinks, that Job may not be unrighteous. In such

- and restore your righteous dwelling place.  
 7 Though your beginning was small,  
 yet in the end you will increase greatly.  
 8 "For please ask the former age, and consider  
 what was searched out by their fathers;  
 9 For we *are but of* yesterday,  
 and know nothing,  
 because our days on earth *are* a shadow.  
 10 Will they not teach you, *and* tell you,  
 and utter words from their heart?  
 11 Can papyrus grow up without marsh?  
 Can the reed grow without water?  
 12 While it *is* still green *and* not cut down,  
 it withers before any *other* plant.  
 13 So *are* the paths of all who forget God,  
 and the hypocrite's hope will perish.  
 14 His hope will be cut off,  
 and his trust *will be* a spider's web.  
 15 He leans against his house,  
 but it does not stand.  
 He holds fast to it, but it does not endure.  
 16 He *is* green in the sunlight,  
 and his branch spreads out in his garden.  
 17 His roots wrap around the *rock* heap,  
*and* sees the place of stones.  
 18 If he is destroyed from his place,  
 then *it* will deny him, *saying*,  
 'I have not seen you.'

case God will restore him to blessing and prosperity. This actually happened in the case of Job (42:10-13). But in general it is not a principle that is valid in this world. Righteousness does not always result in prosperity and sinfulness does not always bring poverty. Prosperity is not necessarily a sign of God's blessing and poverty is not necessarily a sign of God's displeasure (see Ps 73:3,12; Luke 6:20-26; 12:33,34; 16:19-31; 18:22; 1 Tim 6:6-9,18,19; Heb 10:32-37; James 5:1-6; 1 Peter 4:12-16).

**8:8-10** Eliphaz claimed some kind of mystical inspiration for his remarks (4:12-16). Bildad bases his remarks on tradition. He means that the views he and his friends express are not new and not merely their opinions; ancient wisdom taught the same thing. However, that which is called ancient wisdom is not necessarily wisdom, and sometimes is the opposite of wisdom.

**8:11-19** The essence of what he says here is this: the wicked may be very prosperous for a little while but they will fall like withered plants. Bildad does not say Job is like the wicked people he describes, but he obviously suspects it. Why else would he use such illustrations? He meant them as a warning to Job.

**8:13** "Hypocrite" – the Hebrew indicates a profane or godless person.

**8:19** This could possibly be translated "See, all the joy it has is that from the soil other plants grow."

**8:20** Verse 3.

- 19 See, this *is* the joy of his way,  
 and out of the earth others will grow.  
 20 Consider, God will not cast away a blameless  
 man, nor will he help evildoers.  
 21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughter,  
 and your lips with rejoicing.  
 22 Those who hate you will be clothed with shame,  
 and the dwelling place of the wicked  
 will come to nothing."

- 9 Then Job answered and said,  
 2 "Indeed I know *this is* true.  
 But how can a man be righteous before God?  
 3 If he would dispute with him,  
 he could not answer him one in a thousand.  
 4 *He is* wise in heart, and mighty in strength.  
 Who has hardened *himself* against him,  
 and prospered?  
 5 He removes the mountains,  
 and they do not know.  
 He overturns them in his anger.  
 6 He shakes the earth out of its place,  
 and its pillars tremble.  
 7 He commands the sun, and it does not rise,  
 and he seals off the stars.  
 8 He alone spreads out the heavens,  
 and treads on the waves of the sea.  
 9 He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,

**8:21,22** He is saying that God will do this if Job is truly righteous and will plead with God (vs 5,6).

**9:2** "True" – it is not clear what part of Bildad's speech Job agrees with. He may be referring to its closing words, or to the words of 8:3 which gives the essence of the speech.

"How can a man be righteous before God?" – this question is an extremely important one, one that is at the heart of man's need and of God's revelation in the Bible. But there is no answer to it in Job. It may be that Job did not expect any answer. He is simply admitting man's general sinfulness and ignorance. He probably means something like this: "All men, including myself, are sinners. I know it well. It is impossible for anyone to stand before God and argue that he is perfectly righteous, and I am certainly not able to do so." But there is a way for man to be perfectly righteous before God. See Gen 15:6; Rom 3:21-26; Phil 3:9.  
**9:3-20** If it comes to an argument with God, Job knows he has no hope of winning it. He knows himself to be too weak, too foolish, too reckless in speech, too unskilled in debate (vs 3,14-16,20). And he knows that God is the wise and powerful Creator of the universe, and can do what He pleases with His creation (vs 4-10). Job had learned some great truth about God. He looks at the earth, the sun, moon, and stars, and knows that creation is only the work of God's hands. He knows too that there is only one true God. God, Job says in v 11, is in the

and the chambers of the south.  
10 He does great things past finding out,  
yes, and wonders without number.  
11 Lo *and behold*, he goes by me,  
and I do not see *him*; and he passes on,  
but I do not perceive him.  
12 See, if he takes away, who can hinder him?  
Who will say to him, 'What are you doing?'  
13 If God does not withdraw his anger,  
the allies of the proud cower beneath him.  
14 How much less shall I answer him,  
*and* choose out my words *to reason* with him?  
15 Even if I were righteous,  
*yet* I would not answer him,  
*but* I would make supplication to my judge.  
16 If I called, and he had answered me,  
*yet* I would not believe that he would  
listen to my voice.  
17 For he breaks me with a tempest,  
and increases my wounds without cause.  
18 He will not allow me to take my breath,  
but fills me with bitterness.  
19 If *I speak* of strength, see, *he is* strong;  
and if *I speak* of judgment, who will  
set a time for me *to plead*?  
20 If I justified myself, my own mouth  
would condemn me.  
*If I say, 'I am blameless',*

it would prove me perverse.  
21 "Even *if* I *were* blameless,  
*yet* I would not know myself;  
I despise my life.  
22 *It is all* one. Therefore I said,  
'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.  
23 If the scourge suddenly kills,  
he laughs at the trial of the innocent.  
24 The earth has been given into the hand  
of the wicked.  
He covers the faces of its judges.  
If not *he*, *then* who *is* it?'  
25 Now my days are swifter than a runner.  
They flee away, they see no good.  
26 They pass away like swift ships,  
like the eagle hurrying to the prey.  
27 If I say, 'I will forget my complaint;  
I will put off my sad face, and comfort *myself*,'  
28 I am afraid of all my pains.  
I know that you will not hold me innocent.  
29 *If* I am wicked, then why should I labour  
in vain?  
30 *Even* if I wash myself with snow water,  
and cleanse my hands with soap,  
31 Yet you will plunge me in the ditch,  
and my own clothes will abhor me.  
32 For *he is* not a man like me *that*  
I should answer him,

universe as an invisible Spirit. Job knows also that in the affairs of men God is all-powerful (vs 12,13). Here Job probably means by this that God has taken away his children and there is nothing he or anyone else could do about it.

"Bear", etc – constellations.  
**9:13** "The proud" – in Hebrew "Rahab" – note at 26:12.

**9:21-24** The words of Job in these verses (and in 19:6) are the hardest he ever spoke about God. He reaches here the lowest point of his despair, his misunderstanding of God's dealings with him. He pictures God as a cruel despot, a tyrant who acts in an arbitrary way without compassion, a God who makes no distinction between the righteous and the wicked.

But these words do not prove that Job was a wicked man. They show what unceasing pain and sorrow and the pressure of tormenting questions can do to even the best man on earth. A desperate man, in agony of body and mind, does not speak like an unfallen angel or an untroubled saint. But notice that even now Job does not deny God, does not fall into the folly and wickedness of atheism. Satan tempts people to atheism by arguments like these: the world is full of unjust suffering and disasters coming on the innocent; if there were a God He would not permit it. Satan's way of reasoning with men is this:

(a) If God existed the innocent would not

suffer.  
(b) The fact is the innocent do suffer.  
(c) Therefore God does not exist.

Satan himself does not believe this, but he persuades some people to believe it, and convinces them that this reasoning is sound. Job does not fall into that trap, but v 24 shows how puzzled he is by the problem of evil in the world. He asks why God doesn't prevent it instead of seeming to side with it. Without the full revelation of God's truth given in the Bible neither Job nor anyone else could understand much of God's ways with men. Even those of us who know the whole Bible are sometimes much perplexed at what is going on in the world (but should never be in despair). We too, like Job, must walk by faith (2 Cor 5:7). We must look at unseen things, not things which are seen (2 Cor 4:18).

**9:25,26** Job 7:6; Ps 39:5; Isa 38:12.

**9:27-31** He felt God condemned him without cause and accused him though he has led a clean life. He sees no way to forget his sufferings, clear himself from condemnation and be happy.

**9:32-35** Job felt a need for someone to bring him and God together, to settle the dispute, to cause God to take away His punishing rod. In a far greater measure than Job could imagine the Lord Jesus Christ meets this need. He is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5). He is the believer's advocate in

*and* we should come together in judgment.  
 33 Nor is there anyone to arbitrate between us,  
*that he* might lay his hand on both of us.  
 34 Let him remove his rod from me,  
 and let not his fear terrify me.  
 35 *Then* I would speak, and not fear him.  
 But *it is* not so with me.

**10** "My soul is weary of my life.  
 I will give full rein to my complaint;  
 I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.  
 2 I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me.  
 Show me why you contend with me.  
 3 *Is it* good for you to oppress,  
 to despise the work of your hands,  
 and shine on the counsel of the wicked?  
 4 Have you eyes of flesh?  
 Or do you see as man sees?  
 5 Are your days like the days of man?  
*Are* your years like man's days,  
 6 That you inquire about my iniquity,  
 and search for my sin?  
 7 You know that I am not wicked;  
 and *there is* no one who can rescue  
 from your hand.  
 8 "Your hands have made me and formed me  
 altogether;  
 yet you destroy me.  
 9 Remember, I beg you, that you have  
 made me like clay;  
 and will you bring me into dust again?  
 10 Have you not poured me out like milk,  
 and curdled me like cheese?  
 11 You have clothed me with skin and flesh,

heaven (1 John 2:1). Through Him reconciliation has been made between God and man and direct access to God provided (2 Cor 5:18,19; Eph 2:17,18; Heb 10:19-22).  
**10:1** 7:11. He has decided to hide absolutely nothing of his thoughts and feelings. He gives free expression to what many people conceal in their hearts because they are afraid to bring them out into the open. Job is not concerned with what people might think of his words. He wants only the truth.  
**10:2** His conscience accuses him of nothing and he wants to know what God has against him (6:24; 13:23). He does not know that God has nothing against him, but loves him and views him with favor and satisfaction.  
 Notice how Job in the middle of a discussion with his friends suddenly begins to speak directly to God (7:7-21; 10:2-22; 13:20-14:22; 16:7,8; 17:3,4; 30:20-23). Job's friends never do this. Obviously Job was a man of prayer. He had the habit of speaking to God (12:4). He pours out all his thoughts and desires at the feet of the great Creator of the universe. God would have all of us do this (Ps 62:8). He knows how some of our thoughts and questions

and knit me together with bones  
 and sinews.  
 12 You have granted me life and favour,  
 and your care has preserved my spirit.  
 13 And these *things* you have hidden in your heart.  
 I know that this *is* with you:  
 14 If I sin, then you take note of me,  
 and you will not acquit me from my iniquity.  
 15 If I am wicked, woe to me!  
 And *if* I am righteous, I will *still*  
 not lift up my head.  
 I am full of shame.  
 Therefore see my affliction,  
 16 For it is increasing.  
 You hunt me like a fierce lion,  
 and again show your marvellous power  
 against me.  
 17 You renew your witnesses against me,  
 and increase your indignation toward me.  
 Changes and miserable struggle *are* my lot.  
 18 "Why then did you bring me out of the womb?  
 Oh, that I had expired, and no eye  
 had seen me!  
 19 I would have been as though I had not been.  
 I would have been carried from  
 the womb to the grave.  
 20 *Are* not my days few?  
 Cease *then*, and leave me alone,  
 that I may have a little comfort,  
 21 Before I go *to the place from which*  
 I will not return,  
 to the land of darkness and the shadow  
 of death,  
 22 A land of darkness, like darkness *itself*;

are foolish and tainted with sin. But He understands our longings for Him and our desire for the truth, and He approves honesty of expression.  
**10:3** 9:23,24. Job thinks that if God is so keen to punish why does He not punish the wicked who deserve it instead of people like himself who do not, in Job's view, deserve it (compare Ps 73:3-5,12-14).  
**10:4-7** Job's friends have been searching for some sin in Job that will account for the disasters which have come on him. Why, Job asks, should God seek for his sin as they did? He is aware that God knows all things. If God sees some sin in Job that merits punishment Job wants God to reveal plainly what it is.  
**10:8-11** Ps 119:73; 139:13-16.  
**10:12-17** Though God has given him life and showed him kindness it seems to Job now that all the time God was like a harsh judge looking for some excuse to punish him, like a lion pursuing him to destruction.  
**10:18,19** 3:3,11,16.  
**10:20** 7:16,19.  
**10:21,22** Job had no hopes of heaven to cheer him, no verses like John 14:2,3, no

and of the shadow of death, without  
any order,  
and *where even* the light *is* like darkness.”

- 11** Then answered Zophar the Naamathite and said,  
2 “Should not so many words be answered?  
And should a man full of talk be justified?  
3 Should your empty words make men keep silent?  
And when you mock, should no man make you ashamed?  
4 For you have said,  
‘My doctrine *is* pure, and I am clean in your eyes.’  
5 But oh, that God would speak,  
and open his lips against you,  
6 And show you the secrets of wisdom,  
that *they are* double what seems to be!  
Know therefore that God exacts from you *less* than your iniquity *deserves*.  
7 “Can you search out the deep things of God?  
Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?  
8 *They are* as high as heaven; what can you do?  
Deeper than hell; what can you know?  
9 Their measure *is* longer than the earth,  
and broader than the sea.

descriptions like Rev 21:10-23 (what a privilege it is to live now with the whole of God’s revelation in our hands!). In the time in which Job lived not much was known about the condition of men’s spirits after death. God had revealed very little about it. Job’s view that they went to a place of utter darkness was not an uncommon one (Ps 88:10-12). Only in the New Testament do we have God’s full revelation concerning this subject (2 Tim 1:10). There we see that true believers will forever live in a place where there is no darkness at all (Rev 22:5).

**11:1-3** Zophar is in full agreement with Eliphaz and Bildad. He believes that Job has grievously sinned, and that his words are vain and irrelevant.

**11:4** Job had not said this. Zophar thinks this is the meaning of some of the things Job had said, but to get such a meaning he had to twist Job’s words. Job had confessed his ignorance (9:2,3), and humbly revealed his desire for understanding (6:24; 10:2). He knew that at times in his life he had sinned (7:21).

**11:5** Zophar’s wish is fulfilled in 38:1.

**11:6** Zophar thinks that God has been merciful to Job and punished him less than he deserved.

**11:7-10** He can teach Job nothing about this. Job himself has said similar things (9:4-12).

**11:8** “Than hell” – in Hebrew “than Sheol” – note at Gen 37:35.

**11:12** Zophar thinks it is practically impossible for a foolish man (as he thinks Job is) to become wise. He is quite sure

- 10 “If he cuts off, or shuts up, or gathers together,  
then who can hinder him?  
11 For he knows vain men.  
He also sees wickedness.  
Will he not then consider it?  
12 For an idiot can no more become wise  
than a wild donkey’s colt can be born a man!  
13 “If you prepare your heart,  
and stretch out your hands toward him,  
14 Putting iniquity far away, if it *is* in your hand,  
and not letting wickedness dwell in your tents,  
15 Then you would be able to lift up your  
face without spot;  
yes, you would be steadfast, and not fear,  
16 Because you would forget *your* misery,  
and remember *it* like waters *that* pass away.  
17 And *your* life would be brighter than noonday;  
you would shine forth like the morning.  
18 And you would be secure, because  
there is hope;  
yes, you would look around and you  
would rest securely.  
19 Also you would lie down,  
without anyone making you afraid.  
Yes, many would beg your favour.  
20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail,  
and they will not escape,

that a wild donkey can never become a man. The writers of the Bible all knew that men are men and animals are animals and that the one would never become the other. There is no kind of reincarnation taught in the Bible. There is never the slightest suggestion by anyone in the book of Job (or in the rest of Bible) that Job (or anyone) was possibly being punished for sins done in a former life.

The Bible is God’s revelation to men. It contains all the truth they need now to know. The Bible completely ignores the Hindu and Buddhist teaching of reincarnation. By ignoring it the Bible shows that the idea of reincarnation does not contain any truth that men need, does not explain a single thing we should know. The Bible teaches resurrection, not reincarnation. According to the Bible a person lives but once on this earth and dies but once. At the end there will be the resurrection of the dead and God’s judgment (John 5:28,29; Acts 17:31; Heb 9:27). See also notes on John 3:3 and 9:3.

**11:13** He, like his friends, assumes that Job has not done so. It was a false assumption.

**11:13-19** He says if only Job would repent and turn to God for mercy he would be restored. He and his friends probably thought they were being very compassionate and sympathetic when they held out such hope to Job. Actually much of what they say about repentance and restoration is good. But it does not suit Job’s case (5:17,18).

**11:20** Zophar closes with a warning he



and their hope *will be like* giving up  
one's last breath."

- 12** And Job answered and said,  
2 "No doubt you *are* the people,  
and wisdom will die with you!  
3 But I have understanding as well as you.  
I *am* not inferior to you;  
yes, who does not know such things as these?  
4 "I am like someone mocked by his neighbours,  
*one* who called on God, and he answered him.  
The just upright man *is* laughed to scorn.  
5 Someone at ease regards a lamp with contempt,  
as made ready for one whose feet slip.  
6 The tents of robbers prosper,  
and those who provoke God are secure  
*in* what God brings into their hands.  
7 "But now ask the beasts, and they will  
teach you;  
and the birds of the air, and they will tell you;  
8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,  
and the fish of the sea will declare it to you.  
9 Who among all these does not know that  
the hand of the LORD has done this?  
10 In his hand *is* the soul of every living thing,  
and the breath of all mankind.  
11 Does not the ear test words,  
and the mouth taste its food?  
12 With the aged *is* wisdom,  
and in length of days is understanding.  
13 "With him *is* wisdom and strength;  
he has counsel and understanding.  
14 See, he breaks down, and it cannot be rebuilt.  
He imprisons a man, and there can be  
no release.  
15 See, he withholds water,

- and the *streams* dry up;  
and he sends them out,  
and they overwhelm the earth.  
16 With him *are* strength and wisdom.  
The deceived and the deceiver *are* his.  
17 He leads counsellors away plundered,  
and makes fools of judges.  
18 He loosens the bonds of kings,  
and ties up their waist with a belt.  
19 He leads princes away plundered,  
and overthrows the mighty.  
20 He deprives the trusted ones of speech,  
and takes away the understanding  
of the aged.  
21 He pours contempt on princes,  
and weakens the strength of the mighty.  
22 He reveals the deep things of darkness,  
and brings the shadow of death to the light.  
23 He increases the nations, and destroys them.  
He enlarges nations, and guides them.  
24 He takes away the heart of the chief  
of the people of the earth,  
and causes them to wander in a  
wilderness *where there is* no way.  
25 They grope in the dark without light,  
and he makes them stagger like a drunkard.

- 13** "Look, my eyes have seen all *this*,  
my ears have heard and understood it.  
2 What you know, I also know.  
I *am* not inferior to you.  
3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty,  
and I desire to reason with God.  
4 But you *are* forgers of lies.  
You *are* all physicians of no value.  
5 Oh, that you would altogether keep silent!  
That would be your wisdom.

mistakenly thinks Job much needs.

**12:2,3** Now Job has heard each of his three friends speak and this is the way things seem to him: his friends are professing a great wisdom but what they say is very ordinary; they try to advise him from a superior position but are unable to say a single thing he doesn't already know, and they cannot get to the root of his problem. So he speaks these words in a very sarcastic manner. If we counsel others let us do it in such a way that we will not provoke a similar response.

**12:4** Job means that it has been his custom to pray and that God has sent answers to his prayers (though God is silent now).

**12:5** Job's friends are not suffering, have experienced no calamities. It is easy, he says, for them to look with contempt on him. No one who has not been through something of what Job suffered can possibly understand him. Compare 2 Cor 1:3-7.

**12:6** This has been Job's view all along –

God does not deal with men in this world according to their character (9:22,24; 10:3). Job's friends believe just the opposite.

**12:7-12** Job returns to the thoughts of vs 2,3. He thinks his friends, though they are old, have still much to learn and that nature could teach them. Compare Ps 19:1-4.

**12:13-25** He now shows them that he knows as much about God's wisdom and power as they do. He believes, even as they do, that God is supremely wise, is the absolute sovereign ruler in all the affairs of men. (Compare Ps 33:10,11; 47:2; 115:3; 135:6; Dan 4:34,35.)

**13:1-5** Job did not speak like this because he was proud and boastful. His meaning is this: "My friends, what you and I know very well is not enough to solve the problem of why awful disasters have come upon me. Stop pretending that your wisdom can give all the answers. You are like worthless doctors bringing false remedies. If you can't say something more sensible than you have

- 6 Listen now to my reasoning,  
and hear the pleas of my lips.
- 7 Will you speak wickedly for God,  
and talk deceitfully for him?
- 8 Will you show partiality toward his person?  
Will you argue for God?
- 9 Would it be good if he searched you out?  
Or will you mock him like one man  
mocks another?
- 10 He will surely rebuke you,  
if you secretly show partiality.
- 11 Will his excellence not make you afraid?  
And his dread fall on you?
- 12 Your old sayings *are* proverbs of ashes;  
your defenses are defenses of clay.
- 13 "Keep silent! Leave me alone,  
so that I can speak,  
and let come on me what *may*!
- 14 Why do I take my flesh in my teeth,  
and put my life in my hand?
- 15 Though he slay me, yet I will trust in him;  
but I will defend my ways before him.
- 16 And he *will be* my salvation;  
for a hypocrite does not come before him.
- 17 Listen carefully to my speech,  
and *hear* my declaration with your ears.
- 18 See now, I have prepared *my* case.  
I know that I will be vindicated.

- 19 Who *is the* one *who* will argue *the case*  
with me?  
For now, if I hold my tongue, I will die.

- 20 "Only do not do two *things* to me,  
then I will not hide myself from you:
- 21 Withdraw your hand far from me, and let not  
the dread of you make me afraid.
- 22 Then call, and I will answer;  
or let me speak, and you answer me.
- 23 How many *are* my iniquities and sins?  
Cause me to know my transgression  
and my sin.
- 24 Why do you hide your face,  
and count me as your enemy?
- 25 Will you terrify a leaf driven to and fro?  
And will you pursue dry stubble?
- 26 For you write bitter things against me,  
and make me inherit the iniquities  
of my youth.
- 27 You also put my feet in the stocks,  
and closely watch all my paths.  
You put a mark on the heels of my feet.
- 28 "And *man* is consumed like a rotten thing,  
like a garment that is moth eaten.

**14** "Man *who is* born of woman *is* of  
few days, and full of trouble.

so far, then please keep quiet. I will try to get an answer from God alone." The lies they made up (v 4) were the accusation of wickedness they made against him.

**13:6-12** The friends seem to think they were God's advocates to speak for Him. If this is true, Job asks, why is it necessary for them to bring false accusations against him? They are examining Job to find any faults he may have. What if God examined them in the same way? Have they no fear of the God they have been speaking so easily about? The fact is, Job could see they thought themselves better than he was. Their inmost conviction may have been something like this: "God has punished Job terribly for his sins; God has not punished us like that – indeed we are experiencing His blessings. Job must be a bad man, and we are good men, or at least not nearly as bad as he is."

Self-righteousness is very hard to discover in one's self, and it is very hard for others to deal with. It is one of the most difficult of sins to tear from the human heart.

**13:13-19** Job is determined to speak out even if God should kill him for it. He still has hope in God that he will eventually be proved innocent. He is eager to defend himself before God and says that this very desire shows he is not a hypocrite or an evil man.

**13:16** "Hypocrite" – the Hebrew indicates a profane or godless person.

**13:20-22** Again Job stops speaking to his friends and addresses God (see 10:2). He wants very much to meet face to face with God. He is sure he can prove his innocence. But he is filled with pain, perplexity, grief, and fear. Because of this he feels that even if he got the chance to defend himself, he would not be able to do it well. So he makes these requests.

**13:22,23** In Job's eyes he has been condemned without knowing what the charges against him are. He thinks God has become his enemy and has punished him severely (vs 26-28), and is looking for further reasons to afflict him. He wants his day in God's court to hear all the accusations against him.

**13:26** Job is sure that he has done nothing as an adult to deserve the awful disasters which have come. Searching for a reason for them he thinks it must be some sins or other he had done as a young man. But, as we know from the first two chapters of this book, in this he was mistaken. His sufferings had no connection whatever with punishment for any of his sins. However, it was right for him to review his life to see if there was any reason in him for his troubles. We should do the same thing when troubles come to us. Possibly they have come because of some sin we have committed, and if so we should know it and confess it and get forgiveness for it (Ps 77:5,6; 119:59; 139:23,24; Lam 3:4; 1 Cor 11:31).

**14:1-3** Job wonders why God bothers with a

- 2 He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down.  
And he flees like a shadow, and does not stay.
- 3 And do you open your eyes at such a one,  
and bring me into judgment with yourself?
- 4 Who can bring a clean *thing* out of  
an unclean? No one.
- 5 Since his days *are* determined,  
the number of his months *being* with you,  
you have set limits that he cannot pass.
- 6 Turn away from him, so that he may rest,  
until he has finished his day, like a hired man.
- 7 "For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down,  
that it will sprout again, and that  
its tender shoots will not cease.
- 8 Even though its root becomes old in the earth,  
and its stump dies in the ground,  
9 *yet* at the scent of water it will bud,  
and bring forth branches like a plant.
- 10 But man dies, and is laid away;  
yes, man breathes his last, and where *is* he?
- 11 *As* water disappears from the sea,  
and a stream becomes parched and dried up,
- 12 So man lies down, and does not rise.  
They will not awake, or be roused out  
of their sleep,  
until the heavens *are* no more.
- 13 Oh, that you would hide me in the grave!  
That you would conceal me until your  
wrath is past!  
That you would appoint a set time

creature so frail and insignificant as man.

**14:4** Man is the subject here. A holy nature cannot come from sinful humanity. Job knows very well that because he is a human being he has a sinful nature. He does not claim to be free from all that is unholy. Compare Ps 51:5; Eph 2:1-3.

**14:5-6** Since man's life is vain and empty, Job reasons, why doesn't God leave him alone to live it the best he can without afflictions and disasters coming on him?

**14:7-12** Neither Job nor his friends nor anyone else in the Bible believed in the idea of reincarnation. Note at Job 11:12. Also at that time, as far as we know, God had not yet revealed the doctrine of the resurrection of man's body. Job thought that death was a sleep in a dark place from which there is no awakening. He had no word from God to enable him to believe otherwise.

**14:13** "Grave" - in Hebrew "Sheol" - note at Gen 37:35.

**14:13-15** As Job considers what he thinks is man's sad fate, it seems a thought begins to form in his mind, a faint hope stirs in his heart - what if man should rise again? What if there is life after death where the innocent are vindicated, all questions answered, all problems solved? How good it would be! How much more easily he could bear the pains and sorrows of this life! The question Job asks in v 14 is answered by

- for me, and remember me!
- 14 If a man dies, will he live *again*?  
All the days of my appointed time  
I will wait, until my change comes.
- 15 You will call, and I will answer you.  
You will long for the work of your hands.
- 16 For now you will count my steps.  
Will you watch over my sin?
- 17 My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag,  
and you cover my iniquity.
- 18 But surely the falling mountain crumbles away,  
and the rock is moved from its place;
- 19 Water wears away the stones,  
and torrents wash away the soil of the earth;  
so you destroy the hope of man.
- 20 You overpower him permanently,  
and he passes on;  
you change his countenance,  
and send him away.
- 21 His sons come to honour,  
and he does not know *it*;  
and they are brought low,  
but he does not perceive *it*.
- 22 But his body will be in pain,  
and his soul will mourn for himself."

**15** Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:  
2 "Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge,

the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Man will live again after he has died. The Lord Jesus rose from the dead and the time is coming when all men shall rise (Matt 16:21; 28:1-7; John 5:28,29; 11:25; 1 Cor 15:20-25; 1 Thess 4:13-18). But Job did not have this blessed truth to cheer him.

**14:16-22** Job's thoughts of resurrection and the hope it stirred pass away for the moment. They are crushed beneath the weight of his painful circumstances and dark depression. But, it seems, the idea continues to work deep in his mind and comes out later with more force and assurance (19:25-27). Notice in vs 16,17 that Job admits there has been sin in his life. He does not deny it. He only denies that he has been guilty of such sin as to merit his awful calamities.

**15:1** The first round of speeches has ended. The three friends have set forth their doctrine that disasters and sufferings come from God because of sin. They have called Job to repentance. But Job has maintained his innocence and insisted he has nothing to repent of. He has accused his friends of a lack of wisdom and compassion. In his second speech Eliphaz's language is much harsher than in his first. His accusations are much more open and bold, and there is no exhortation to repentance at the end.

**15:2,3** He has abandoned the polite

- filling his belly with the east wind?  
 3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk?  
 Or with speeches which have no value?  
 4 Yes, you are rejecting the fear *of God*,  
 and are restraining prayer before God.  
 5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth,  
 and you choose the tongue of the crafty.  
 6 Your own mouth condemns you and not I.  
 Yes, your own lips testify against you.  
 7 "Are you the first man *ever* born?  
 Or were you made before the hills?  
 8 Have you heard the secret counsel of God?  
 And do you limit wisdom to yourself?  
 9 What do you know that we do not know?  
*What* understanding do you have that  
*is* not in us?  
 10 Both the gray-haired and aged *are*  
 with us, even older than your father.  
 11 *Are* the consolations of God too small  
 for you, words *spoken* gently to you?  
 12 Why does your heart carry you away?  
 And why do your eyes flash,  
 13 that you should turn your spirit against God,  
 and let *such* words go out of your mouth?  
 14 "What *is* man, that he can be clean?  
 And *he who is* born of woman that he  
 can be righteous?  
 15 Look, he puts no trust in his holy ones;  
 indeed, the heavens are not pure in his sight.  
 16 How much more abominable and filthy *is* man,  
 who drinks up iniquity like water!  
 17 "I will tell you *something*.  
 Listen to me, and I will declare to  
 you what I have seen,  
 18 what wise men have told and not

- concealed from their fathers,  
 19 to whom alone the land was given,  
 when no foreigner passed among them:  
 20 The wicked man writhes in pain all *his* days;  
 the number of *his* years is hidden  
 from the oppressor.  
 21 Terrifying sounds *ring* in his ears.  
 In prosperity the destroyer comes on him.  
 22 He does not believe that he will  
 return from darkness,  
 as the sword waits for him.  
 23 He wanders around for food, *saying*  
 "Where *is it*?"  
 He knows that his day of darkness  
 is already at hand.  
 24 Trouble and anguish make him afraid.  
 They overwhelm him like a king ready  
 for battle.  
 25 For he stretches out his hand against God  
 and strengthens himself against the Almighty,  
 26 running at him headlong with his  
 thick embossed shield.  
 27 "Though his fat covers his face,  
 and *his* waist bulges with fat,  
 28 he will live in desolate cities,  
 in houses where no man lives,  
 which are about to become heaps *of rubble*.  
 29 He will not become rich;  
 nor will his wealth continue;  
 nor will his possessions spread in the land.  
 30 He will not depart from darkness.  
 The flame will dry up his branches;  
 and by the breath of *God's* mouth  
 he will pass away.  
 31 Let him not deceive himself,  
 trusting in emptiness.

manner he used in his first speech (4:2-6). He now says plainly that Job's words are nothing but hot air.

**15:4** He thought Job's questioning the goodness and justice of God had this result. **15:5,6** He believed Job was trying to cover up his sins by insincerely insisting on his innocence, and that it was obvious from his defiant words against God that he was a great sinner.

**15:7-10** He accuses Job of being proud of his wisdom and unwilling to humbly listen to others. He tries to bring against him the authority of men much older than he.

**15:11** He calls his and his friends' words to Job about repentance and restoration "God's consolations" (5:8-27; 8:5-7; 11:13-19). No doubt those words were beautiful and would be full of good exhortation and comfort to a man who needed to repent of his sins and turn to God. But Job did not need to do that (he had already done so – long before this), so those words were not God's consolations to him.

**15:12,13** Certainly Job's friends were shocked at some of the things he dared to say to God.

**15:14-16** Similar to language Eliphaz had used in his first speech (4:17-19) but stronger. These words reveal how disturbed he was by Job's claims of innocence. The last part of v 16 in Hebrew is literally "drinks up wrong."

**15:17-19** He thinks he has a message for Job and begins with a solemn introduction.

**15:20-35** There is nothing new in his message, no advance to higher ground in his argument. He describes very vividly the punishment that comes to a wicked man. He obviously wants Job to apply the lesson to himself. He mentions things that actually happened to Job or that Job revealed about himself. Compare v 20 with 2:13; v 21 with 1:14,17; v 22 with 10:20-22; v 24 with 7:13-15. Eliphaz believes Job is behaving as the man described in v 25. He is sure that Job is trusting in something altogether false – his supposed innocence. So he puts in the warning of v 31.

"Hypocrites" – the Hebrew indicates

For emptiness will be his reward.  
 32 This will be fulfilled before his time,  
 and his branch will not become green.  
 33 Like a vine he will shake off his unripe grape,  
 and like an olive tree will shed his blossom.  
 34 For the company of hypocrites *will be* barren,  
 and fire will consume the tents  
*enriched* by bribery.  
 35 They conceive trouble and give birth to evil,  
 and their inner man prepares deceit."

**16** Then Job answered and said,  
 2 "I have heard many such things.  
 Miserable comforters *are* you all.  
 3 Let windy words come to an end.  
 What compels you to answer?  
 4 I also could speak like you.  
 If you were in my place,  
 I could heap up words against you,  
 and shake my head at you.  
 5 *But* I would strengthen you with  
*the words* of my mouth,  
 and comfort from my lips would bring  
 relief *to you*.  
 6 "If I speak my grief is not relieved.  
 And *if* I refrain, how is it eased?  
 7 But now he has worn me out.  
 You have made all my family desolate.  
 8 You have shriveled me up,  
*which* is a witness *against me*.  
 And my emaciation rises up and  
 testifies against me to my face.  
 9 He who hates me tears *me* in his wrath.  
 He gnashes on me with his teeth.  
 My enemy fastens his sharp gaze on me.  
 10 They gape at me with their mouth.

profane or godless persons.  
**16:1-6** Since there is nothing new in the speech of Eliphaz Job doesn't bother to answer it. These friends came to comfort him (2:11), and it was comfort he wanted. But he got none from them. Nor, for that matter, from his own words.  
**16:7,8** 10:2; 13:20.  
**16:9** 10:16,17; 13:24.  
**16:10** Job includes his three friends in this.  
**16:11,12** Refers to the first two chapters of the book.  
**16:13,14** 6:4.  
**16:15,16** These words all indicate intense grief and mourning (Gen 37:34; Jer 6:26; Lam 2:10; Ezek 27:30).  
**16:17** This he says in answer to Eliphaz's accusation in 15:4,5.  
**16:18** Compare Gen 4:10. Job likens himself to an innocent man who has been murdered. He does not want the injustice he feels has been done to him to be concealed forever. He wants his cry to go on resounding everywhere until action is taken to make matters right.

They insultingly strike me on the cheek.  
 They gather together against me.  
 11 God has delivered me up to the ungodly,  
 and handed me over to the wicked.  
 12 I was at ease, but he shattered me.  
 He seized *me* by my neck and shook  
 me to pieces.  
 He has set me up as his target.  
 13 His archers surround me.  
 He does not spare, but pierces my  
 kidneys and pours out my gall  
 on the ground.  
 14 He shatters me with break after break,  
 running at me like a warrior.  
 15 "I have sewed sackcloth over my skin,  
 and laid my horn in the dust.  
 16 My face is red with weeping and the  
 shadow of death *is* on my eyelids,  
 17 Although my hands *are* free of violence,  
 and my prayer *is* pure.  
 18 "O earth, do not cover my blood,  
 so that my cry has no place!  
 19 Even now, see, my witness *is* in heaven,  
 and my record *is* on high.  
 20 My friends scorn me, *but* my eye pours  
 out *tears* to God.  
 21 Oh, that someone might plead for a  
 man with God,  
 as a man *pleads* for his neighbour!  
 22 For after a few years have come,  
 I will go on the path of no return.

**17** "My breath is corrupt,  
 my days are extinguished,  
 the grave *is ready* for me.

**16:19** Job means God Himself is his witness and advocate. In his pain and depression he accused God of acting unjustly toward him, of being his enemy. But in the midst of these moments the faith in God which never leaves his heart shines forth again. If God will stand on his side and witness to his innocence, then, plainly, God is not his enemy. Job is not thinking clearly and logically; his thoughts are tossed this way and that by the fact of his extremely puzzling and dreadful circumstances. Unbelief and faith in God's justice struggle together in his mind. First one then the other gets the upper hand. He knows deep in his heart that the one true God must be just, but what has happened to him seems evidence against it.  
**16:21** The one who pleads for Job turns out to be God Himself (42:7). This may have been what Job had in mind. So now the believer's advocate is God Himself - the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 2:1).  
**16:22** 7:21; 10:20-22.  
**17:1** "My breath is corrupt" - strange as it may seem, this could also be translated "My



- 2 *Are not* mockers with me?  
My eye gazes on their provocation.
- 3 "Now put down a pledge for me with yourself.  
Who *else is there* who will give his  
hand *in pledge*?
- 4 For you have hidden their heart from  
understanding;  
therefore you will not exalt *them*.
- 5 *If* one speaks flattery to *his* friends  
even the eyes of his children will fail.
- 6 "He has made me a byword to the people,  
and I have become one at whom men spit.
- 7 And my eye has become dim because  
of sorrow,  
and my limbs *are* like shadows.
- 8 Upright *men* are astonished at this,  
and the innocent stirs himself up  
against the hypocrite.
- 9 And the righteous will hold to his way,  
and the one with clean hands will  
become stronger and stronger.
- 10 "But come on, all of you, *try* again!  
But I will not find a wise *man* among you.
- 11 My days are past, my plans are shattered,  
*and* the thoughts of my heart *are crushed*.
- 12 They change night into day, *and say*  
'Light *is* near',  
in the presence of darkness.
- 13 If I await the grave as my house,  
If I make my bed in darkness,
- 14 If I say to corruption, 'You *are* my father!'  
and to the worm, 'My mother!' and 'My sister!'
- 15 Where then *would* my hope *be*?  
Who could see my hope?
- 16 It would go down with me to the gates  
of death.  
We *would* descend together into the dust."

- 18 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,  
2 "How long *before* you put an end  
to *such* words?  
Use *some* understanding, and afterwards  
we can talk.
- 3 Why are we regarded as beasts *and*  
considered brutish in your sight?
- 4 You tear yourself in your anger.  
Will the earth be abandoned for you?  
Or will the rock be moved from its place?
- 5 "The light of the wicked will certainly be put out;  
the flame of his fire will no longer shine.
- 6 The light in his tent will become dark,  
and the lamp beside him will be put out.
- 7 His strong stride will be shortened,  
and his own scheme will overthrow him.
- 8 For he is hurled into the net by his own feet,  
as he walks into the snare.
- 9 The trap seizes *him* by the heel,  
*and* the snare catches him.
- 10 A noose *is* hidden for him on the ground,  
and a trap *awaits* him on the road.
- 11 Terrors frighten him on every side,  
and drives him to his feet.
- 12 His strength becomes famished,  
and destruction *is ready* at his side.
- 13 It devours parts of his skin;  
the firstborn of death devours his limbs.
- 14 His security is uprooted from his tent,  
and he is brought before the king of terrors.
- 15 In his tent nothing of his *will* reside;  
sulfur will be scattered over his dwelling.
- 16 His roots dry up below,  
and his branch above will be cut off.
- 17 The memory of him will perish from the earth,  
and he will have no name outside.
- 18 He is driven from light into darkness,  
chased out of the world.

spirit is broken." The Hebrew word translated "breath" also means "wind" or "spirit" and the word translated "corrupt" also has more than one meaning. See the note at Ps 14:7.

**17:2** Job means his three friends.

**17:3,4** "With yourself" – Job seems to be speaking to God here. God has kept his friends from understanding his true state before God. In the trial that seems to be going on to establish his guilt or innocence, Job wants justice. There is no one else to stand by him and help him to this end, so he appeals to God Himself.

**17:6** 30:10.

**17:7** 16:8,16.

**17:8,9** Job knows that what has happened to him amazes the righteous, but he is confident that they will not be stumbled by it. In fact, he thinks it may well promote righteous living. This is the opposite of the opinion expressed by Eliphaz in 15:4.

**17:10-16** As for himself Job questions whether there is any hope that conditions will improve for him. So it won't matter if his friends attack and accuse him again. And they are not slow to accept the invitation he gives them in v 10.

"Grave" (vs 13), "death" (v 16) – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**18:3** Bildad's pride is wounded. So he tries to hit back hard at Job.

**18:4** He insists that the reason for Job's continuing misery is in Job himself. Declaring Job innocent when he is guilty would be like completely turning upside down the natural order of the universe; God cannot be expected to act against His own laws just for the sake of one man.

**18:5-21** Job's friends simply cannot believe he is innocent of great wrong doing. They ignore all he says about it. Their minds are made up and they don't want to be

- 19 He has no son or descendant among his people,  
nor anyone remaining in his dwelling.  
20 *Seeing* his day those in the west  
are astonished,  
and those in the east are frightened.  
21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked,  
and this *is* the place of *the one who*  
does not know God."

- 19** Then Job answered and said,  
2 "How long will you torment my soul  
and break me in pieces with words?  
3 These ten times you have insulted me.  
You are not ashamed to wrong me.  
4 Even if I have really erred,  
the error remains with me *alone*.  
5 If indeed you exalt *yourselves* against me  
and plead my disgrace against me,  
6 Know, then, that God has wronged me,  
and closed his net around me.  
7 "See, I cry out about *this* wrong,  
but I am not heard;  
I cry out loudly, but *obtain* no justice.  
8 He has fenced up my way so that I cannot pass,  
and has set darkness in my paths.  
9 He has stripped me of my honour,  
and taken the crown *from* my head.  
10 He has destroyed me on every side,  
and I am gone.  
He has uprooted my hope like a tree.  
11 His anger burns against me,  
and he regards me as *one of* his enemies.

confused with facts. They are convinced beyond doubt that there is an unchangeable law of God at work. Their reasoning was very simple and went like this –

Great calamities are sent only on great sinners.

Great calamities have been sent on Job.  
Therefore Job is a great sinner.

Let us beware lest our system of theology, like theirs, ignores some of the facts and brings us to false conclusions. In his second speech Bildad follows the lead of Eliphaz. The verses which follow are a vivid description of what happens to the wicked man. Like Eliphaz, Bildad refers to events that have taken place in Job's life (vs 11-14,19). In v 21 he is saying that Job is an evil man who does not know God. **19:1-3** These words reveal how painful to Job were the false accusations of his friends.

"You are not ashamed to wrong me" – the Hebrew phrase may also be translated "You make yourselves strange to me."

**19:4,5** Even if Job had sinned, it had not hurt them in any way. And it is not their business to exalt themselves as prosecutors or judges.

**19:6,7** Well, he says, if they insist on judging

- 12 His troops come together and build up  
their way against me,  
and encamp around my tent.  
13 "He has removed my brothers far from me,  
and my acquaintances are estranged  
from me.  
14 My kinsmen have failed *me*,  
and my close friends have forgotten me.  
15 Those who live in my house and my  
maidservants count me a stranger.  
I am a foreigner in their sight.  
16 I call my servant,  
but he gives no answer.  
I have to beg him with my *own* mouth.  
17 My breath is offensive to my wife,  
and I am loathsome to my own brothers.  
18 Yes, *even* young children despise me.  
When I get up they speak against me.  
19 All my bosom friends abhor me,  
and those I love have turned against me.  
20 My bones cling to my skin and my flesh,  
and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.  
21 "Have pity on me, O my friends,  
have pity on me!  
For the hand of God has struck me.  
22 Why do you persecute me like God,  
and are not satisfied with my flesh?  
23 "Oh, that my words were written down!  
Oh, that they were recorded in a book!  
24 *Oh*, that they were permanently engraved  
on a stone with an iron pen and lead.

him he will give them something to use as evidence – he will say that God has not treated him fairly, has caught him in a net like a bird; he cries for justice, for release, but his cries are in vain.

**19:8-20** Job gives a list of the things he thinks God has unjustly done to him. God took away all these – light (v 8), honor (v 9), hope (v 10), God's smile (vs 11,12), the help of brothers and friends (vs 13-15), love (vs 17-19), and health (v 20).

**19:17** "Brothers" – the literal Hebrew is "sons of my womb," but this cannot mean Job's own children, for they were all dead. It must mean those who were born from the same womb as he was, his brothers.

**19:21,22** Job thinks the "hand of God" has struck him. But see 1:12; 2:6. He felt so forsaken, so sad, so desperate that he appeals even to these prejudiced accusers for pity. It should have been clear to him by now that he would receive none from them.

**19:23-27** We come now to some of the most beautiful and significant words in the book of Job. The harsh way Job's family and relatives have treated him and the accusations of his friends now produce a good result. Job finds no help, no comfort in them, so he must look to God alone. Once again

- 25 For I know *that* my Redeemer lives,  
and *that* he will stand at last on the earth.  
26 And after this skin of mine has been destroyed,  
in my flesh I will see God.  
27 I myself will see him,  
and my eyes will gaze *on him*, and not another.  
My inner being longs *for this*.  
28 "If you say,  
'How should we persecute him?'  
seeing the root of the matter is found in me,  
29 You yourselves should be afraid of the sword.  
For *God's* wrath *brings* the punishment  
of the sword,  
so that you may know *there is* judgment."

**20** Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said,  
2 "Therefore my *troubled* thoughts compel  
me to answer,

he finds hope and faith stirring in his heart (notes at 14:13-15,16-22; 16:19). He knows he is about to say something very important and wants his words recorded permanently (vs 23,24). In this his wish was fulfilled, for his words are forever recorded here in the Bible. In verses 25-27 Job's faith rises to its highest point. It becomes full assurance. He uses the words "I know."

The essence of what he knows is this: he has a living Redeemer; this Redeemer is none other than God Himself; and this Redeemer will stand on the earth at some future time and Job will see Him. In Old Testament days a redeemer was one who rescued others from trouble or bondage, restored to them their lost property, took their side against oppressors and avenged them (Gen 48:16; Deut 13:5; Lev 25:25; Num 35:12; Ruth 2:20; Prov 23:11; Isa 49:25,26; Jer 50:33,34. Note at Ps 78:35). Job was probably thinking along these lines – none of his relatives was willing to come to his help (v 14), and his friends accuse instead of defending him (v 19); so God Himself will come to his aid, will vindicate him, will deliver him, will avenge his blood (16:18,19).

When did Job expect this to happen? Would it be while he was still living or after he was dead? It is hard to know because the Hebrew in v 26 is very difficult to understand. It could be translated like this: "After my skin is destroyed, apart from my body I will see God." The Hebrew word translated "in" in some versions can mean "from within", or sometimes it can mean "away from." If the meaning is "away from" then Job is saying he expects to see God in a spiritual state after death. If this is the meaning then it is not clear what God standing on the earth would have to do with Job's seeing Him.

If the Hebrew word is translated "from

- and so I make haste *to speak*.  
3 I have heard the rebuke that reproaches me,  
and my understanding spirit causes me  
to answer.  
4 "Do you *not* know from olden times,  
since man was placed on earth,  
5 That the triumph of the wicked *is* brief,  
and the joy of the hypocrite *is*  
only for a moment?  
6 Though his arrogance mounts up to  
the heavens,  
and his head reaches to the clouds,  
7 *Yet* he will perish forever like his own dung.  
Those who had seen him will say, 'Where *is* he?'  
8 He will fly away like a dream,  
and will not be found.  
Yes, he will be chased away like  
a vision of the night,  
9 And the eye *which* saw him will *see him*  
no longer;

within" then we should look for a different meaning to Job's words. They have been interpreted in two ways. Some scholars have thought Job meant this: While he was still living God would appear on earth; his skin by his disease is breaking up and falling away, but he will still be in the body when God comes. At the end of the book God does come and vindicates Job and gives him health and prosperity again, and possibly this is the meaning of Job's words here. However, there is another interpretation – Job may be referring to the resurrection of the body after death; he will be able to see God because the Redeemer will come to earth and raise him to life again. The author of these notes believes this is the best interpretation of Job's words.

In 14:14 Job asks if man will live again after he dies. God had not yet revealed to men the answer to this question. Perhaps now God's Spirit begins to reveal it to his suffering servant and inspires him to declare the great hope of the resurrection. He may have been led by God to say more than he fully understood himself. In any case, how he longed for the day when he would see God, whether in the body or out of the body (v 27). This testifies to the fact that he had a good conscience and was ready to meet his Maker.

"At last" (v 25) – or "at a later time."

**19:28,29** Job now gives a warning to his friends. He is sure God will vindicate and avenge him. If they continue to accuse him they are in danger of judgment.

**20:3** Job's friends slander him and heap dishonor on him, but when he gives a comparatively mild rebuke to them (19:28,29) they are very much upset and offended.

**20:4** "Man" – or "Adam" – the Hebrew means both of these.

**20:4-29** Nothing Job says can overturn the false doctrine of his friends. Their minds

- nor will his place any longer set eyes on him.
- 10 His children will seek the favour of the poor,  
and his hands will give back his wealth.
- 11 His bones are filled with youthful *vigor*;  
but it will lie down with him in the dust.
- 12 "Though wickedness is sweet in his mouth,  
*though* he hides it under his tongue,
- 13 *Though* he spares it and does not forsake it,  
but still keeps it in his mouth,
- 14 *Yet* his food in his stomach will turn sour,  
*and become like* the venom of cobras  
inside him.
- 15 He has swallowed down riches,  
but will vomit them up again.  
God will expel them from his stomach.
- 16 He will suck the poison of cobras;  
the viper's tongue will kill him.
- 17 He will not see the streams,  
the rivers flowing with honey and cream.
- 18 What he laboured for he will give back,  
and will not swallow *it* down.  
He will get no enjoyment from the  
riches *obtained* from his trading.
- 19 Because he has oppressed *and*  
abandoned the poor,  
*because* he has violently taken away a  
house which he did not build,
- 20 "Surely he will feel no quietness in  
his inner being.  
He will not keep anything he desires.
- 21 Nothing will be left for him to eat,  
so his well-being will not last.
- 22 In the fullness of his abundance,  
he will experience distress.  
The hand of all the miserable will

- come against him.
- 23 *As* he is about to fill his stomach,  
*God* will hurl on him the fury of his wrath,  
will rain *it* down on him while he is eating.
- 24 He will flee from the iron weapon;  
a bronze bow will pierce him.
- 25 It is drawn out;  
it comes out of the back;  
yes, the glittering point goes through  
his gall *bladder*.  
Terrors *seize* him.
- 26 Total darkness *lies* in wait for his treasures.  
An unfanned fire will consume him.  
It will go ill with him who is left in his tent.
- 27 The heavens will reveal his iniquity,  
and the earth will rise up against him.
- 28 The increase in his house will depart,  
*and his possessions* will flow away  
in the day of *God's* wrath.
- 29 This *is* the allotment of a wicked man from God,  
the inheritance God appoints for him."

- 21** But Job answered and said,  
2 "Listen carefully to my words,  
and let this be the consolation you give.
- 3 Bear with me so that I can speak;  
and after I have spoken, mock on.
- 4 "As for me, *is* my complaint to man?  
And if *it were*, why should I not be impatient?
- 5 Look at me and be astonished,  
and lay *your* hand over *your* mouth.
- 6 Even as I remember I am afraid,  
and trembling seizes my body.
- 7 Why do the wicked live on, becoming old;  
yes, becoming mighty in power?

are not ready to receive any new ideas. They are convinced they are wise men who have the answers to life's problems. But they cannot even begin to understand a man like Job. In this second speech of Zophar he strikes the same note as in his first speech (11:6,10-12). But now, as he describes the kind of man he thinks Job is, his words are much sharper than before. He says that the history of man proves his doctrine (vs 4,5). The wicked may prosper for a time (as Job did), but he will certainly be destroyed (vs 6-11); his ill-gotten gain will perish with him (vs 12-22); God Himself will rise up against him, will expose his guilt and bring him to ruin (vs 23-29).

In this venomous speech Zophar indirectly is calling Job wicked (v 5), proud (v 6), a lover of evil (vs 12,13), an oppressor of the poor (v 19), and a covetous man (v 20). Zophar has no evidence at all that Job is like this. It is his false doctrine that assures him that Job *must* be like this (note on 18:5-21).

**21:1-3** How can Job listen to such wild accusations and then reply to them? See

Jam 5:11.

**21:4-34** Here Job undertakes to show that the doctrine of his friends is false. It does not at all happen to the wicked as Zophar, Bildad, and Eliphaz say (15:20-30; 18:5-21; 20:21-29).

In vs 4-7 Job says he is terrified, not because the wicked are punished on this earth, but because they are *not*. And he, a man who has lived a righteous life, is, he thinks, being punished. So his complaint is not against men but against God's way of dealing with men. The wicked, he says, live on to a ripe old age, their children prosper and are happy, no rod of God comes on them.

In vs 8-12 Job thinks of the happiness of the children of the wicked (and doubtless contrasts this with the sad loss of his own children). The wicked, after a long and pleasant life, die suddenly without pain and suffering (v 13). They are so evil they do not want God and refuse to pray to Him (vs 14-16). But they rarely experience the kind of calamities that have come on Job (vs 17,18). Job's friends suggest that the

- 8 Their children are established in  
their sight, with them,  
and their offspring before their eyes.
- 9 Their houses *are* safe from fear,  
and the rod of God *does* not *come* on them.
- 10 Their bull does not fail to breed;  
their cow has its calves without miscarriage.
- 11 They send out their little ones like  
a flock, and their children dance.
- 12 They take the tambourine and harp  
and rejoice at the sound of the flute.
- 13 They spend their days in wealth,  
and in a moment go down to the grave.
- 14 Yet they say to God,  
'Leave us, for we do not desire  
the knowledge of your ways.
- 15 Who *is* the Almighty that we should serve him?  
And what profit do we have if we pray to him?'
- 16 See, their prosperity *is* not in their hand.  
The counsel of the wicked is far from me.
- 17 "How often is the lamp of the wicked put out?  
*How often* does their destruction come  
upon them,  
the sorrows *God* distributes in his anger?
- 18 *How often* are they like straws before the wind,  
and like chaff that a storm carries away?
- 19 *It is said*, 'God stores up the *punishment*  
*of a man's* iniquity for his children.'  
Let him repay him, so that he will know *it*.
- 20 Let his eyes see his destruction, and let him  
drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
- 21 For what care *does* he *have* about  
his household after him,  
when in the number of his months *he* is cut off?
- 22 "Can *anyone* teach knowledge to God,  
since he judges those on high?
- 23 One dies in his full strength,
- being completely at ease and quiet.
- 24 His chest bulges with fat,  
and the marrow of his bones is moist.
- 25 Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul,  
never having eaten with pleasure.
- 26 They lie down alike in the dust,  
and the worms cover them.
- 27 "Look, I know your thoughts,  
and the schemes *by which* you would  
wrong me.
- 28 For you say, 'Where *is* the house  
of the nobleman,  
and where the tents where the wicked lived?'
- 29 Have you not asked travellers on the way?  
Do you not understand the indications  
they *give*?
- 30 For the wicked are reserved for  
the day of destruction.  
They will be brought out on the day of wrath.
- 31 Who declares his ways to his face?  
And who repays him *for what* he has done?
- 32 Yet he will be brought to the grave,  
and will remain in the tomb.
- 33 The clods of the valley will be pleasant to him.  
Everyone will follow him, just as innumerable  
*ones have gone* before him.
- 34 How then can you comfort me with vain *words*,  
since your answers contain falsehood?"
- 22** Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and  
said,  
2 "Can a man be of benefit to God,  
as a wise man may benefit himself?  
3 *Is it* any pleasure to the Almighty  
if you are righteous?  
Or *would he* gain *something*,  
if you made your ways perfect?

sins of evil men may be punished in their children (5:4; 20:10). In vs 19-21 Job says this would not be just.

Job tells his friends they should not try to teach God about judgment, but should learn from the facts. And the facts are that God's judgments are very mysterious; whether a man is good or bad doesn't seem to have anything to do with whether he enjoys prosperity (vs 22-27). Job's friends try to make him out to be a terrible sinner. But they ignore the facts in order to defend their idea (vs 27,28). Job says that their experience is confined to their own little circle, that even by asking travelers from other places they could learn the truth (vs 29-33). The truth is, a wicked man is sometimes spared when disasters occur in a place, and goes peacefully to the grave. Multitudes both before and after go in the same way. If Job's friends deny this fact they are speaking nonsense and lies (v 34.

See what Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 7:15). **21:12** "Flute" – the KJV has "organ" here, but this cannot be right. What we call an organ had not yet been invented.

**21:13** "Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**21:24** "Chest" – the meaning of the Hebrew word here translated "chest" is uncertain.

**21:30** "For the wicked are reserved for the day of destruction. They will be brought out on the day of wrath" – this could possibly be translated "That the wicked are spared from the day of calamity, that they are delivered from the day of wrath?" This translation actually fits the context better.

**21:33** "As innumerable ones have gone before him" – or "go before him."

**22:2,3** Eliphaz is saying that even if a man lived a righteous life it would not put God under obligation to him. God would not withhold punishment for sin for fear of losing some benefit.



- 4 "Is it because of your fear *of God*  
that he rebukes you,  
that he enters into judgment with you?  
5 *Is* not your wickedness great,  
and your iniquities without limit?  
6 For you have taken a pledge from your  
brother for nothing,  
and stripped the clothing from the naked.  
7 You have not given water to the weary  
to drink,  
and you have withheld bread from the hungry.  
8 But this mighty man possessed the land,  
and this honourable man lived in it!  
9 You have sent widows away empty-handed,  
and the arms of the fatherless have  
been broken.  
10 Therefore snares surround you,  
and sudden terror alarms you,  
11 Or darkness *so that* you cannot see,  
and a flood of waters covers you.  
12 "*Is* not God in the heights of heaven?  
And see how high are the highest stars!  
13 And you say, 'What does God know?  
Can he judge through the dark clouds?  
14 Thick clouds cover him so that he cannot see,  
and he walks above the circle of the heavens.'  
15 Will you keep to the old way that  
wicked men trod,  
16 *Those* who were cut down before their time,  
whose foundations were washed away  
by a flood?  
17 They said to God, 'Leave us!  
What can the Almighty do for *people*?'  
18 Yet *it was* he who filled their houses  
with good *things*.

**22:4-14** Eliphaz has already made up his mind. The truth of what Job said in chapter 21 should have been obvious to all, but it has no effect on Eliphaz. One idea has fastened itself in his mind – God does not send calamities on the innocent. He is so sure of this that though he does not know of any sins Job has done he is driven to invent some. In 13:4 this is just what Job said his friends were doing. These friends were all doing something God hates. It is described in Prov 17:15 – “He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of these are abomination to the LORD.” They were afraid of committing the first of these errors but they fell easily into the second. Later Job answers all of Eliphaz’s accusations in 29:12-17; 31:5-40.

**22:15-20** Eliphaz here probably refers to the wicked who lived in Noah’s day and were cut off in the great flood (Gen 6:5-7). He brings it forward to prove that it is not the righteous but the wicked who suffer great disasters. However, one example does not overthrow the facts as Job has stated them in

So the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

- 19 "The righteous see *all this*, and are glad.  
And the innocent laugh them to scorn, *saying*,  
20 'Surely our enemies are cut off,  
and fire consumes their remnant.'  
21 Become acquainted with him and be at peace.  
Good will come to you through that.  
22 Please receive instruction from his mouth,  
and store up his words in your heart.  
23 If you return to the Almighty,  
you will be built up;  
you will remove iniquity far from your tents.  
24 Then you will lay *your* gold in the dust,  
and the *gold* of Ophir among the  
stones of the brook.  
25 Yes, the Almighty will be your gold,  
and your choicest silver.  
26 For then you will delight in the Almighty,  
and will lift your face up to God.  
27 You will pray to him, and he will hear you;  
and you will pay your vows.  
28 You will decide a thing and it will be  
established for you.  
And light will shine on your ways.  
29 When *men* are cast down, then you will say,  
'Lifting up *will come*.'  
Then *God* will save that humble person.  
30 He will deliver even one who is not innocent;  
and he will be delivered because of  
the purity of your hands."

- 23** Then Job answered and said,  
2 "Even today my complaint *is* bitter.  
My hand is heavy on my groaning.  
3 Oh, that I knew where I might find him,

chapter 21. In v 20 Eliphaz may be referring to what happened to Job’s prosperity in 1:16. **22:21-30** Eliphaz may have realized that in the preceding verses he has gone too far in his accusations, and been too harsh in his condemnation of Job. Now he softens his words and gives a beautiful appeal to Job to repent and turn to God. However, just as his first appeal in chapter 5, so this one does not at all suit Job’s condition. See note on 5:17,18.

"Enemies" (22:20) – the KJV translators put "substance" here. It seems that they got this from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament), and not from the Hebrew.

**22:22** "Instruction" – the Hebrew word also means "law."

**22:25** "Gold" – the KJV has "defense" but this is not the meaning of the Hebrew word used here. "Gold" obviously fits the context better.

**22:30** "Not" – the KJV has "island" of the innocent, but the Hebrew also means "not."  
**23:1** In this chapter also the thoughts and desires which struggle in Job’s heart are self-

- that* I might come to his seat!
- 4 I would set *my* case before him,  
and fill my mouth with arguments.
- 5 I would know the words he would give  
in answer,  
and understand what he would say to me.
- 6 Would he oppose me with *his* great power?  
No, but he would give *his attention* to me.
- 7 There the righteous could dispute with him,  
and I would be delivered forever from  
my judge.
- 8 "Look, I go forward, but he *is* not *there*;  
and backward, but I do not perceive him.
- 9 When he is at work on the left,  
I cannot see *him*; when he turns to  
the right I cannot see *him*.
- 10 But he knows the way that I take.  
*When* he has tested me,  
I will come forth as gold.
- 11 My foot has held to his steps;  
I have kept to his ways and not turned aside.
- 12 Nor have I turned back from the  
command of his lips.  
I have treasured the words of his  
mouth more than my necessary *food*.
- 13 "But he alone *decides*,  
and who can change him?  
And *whatever* his soul desires, *that* he does.
- 14 He carries out *what is* appointed for me.  
And many such *plans are* with him.
- 15 Therefore I am fearful in his presence.  
When I consider, I am afraid of him.
- 16 For God makes me faint-hearted,  
and the Almighty frightens me.
- 17 Because I am not cut off from the darkness,  
*nor* from the dense darkness that  
covers my face.

contradictory. He longs to be able to come into God's presence (v 3), yet is terrified of Him (vs 15,16). He thinks if he could argue his case before God he would be proved innocent (vs 4-7); but in spite of his innocence he feels that God will go on making him suffer (vs 13-15).

Job is a mixture of faith and fear, of confidence and doubt. One idea that is prominent here is similar to that in 16:19 (see note). In answer to Eliphaz's accusing question in 22:15 Job says he has kept in God's way and not turned aside (vs 10-12). In v 10 Job seems almost to grasp the reason for his sufferings, as he did once before (7:18). However he quickly passes over the thought. But he is confident that whatever the test God may put on him he will remain a man of integrity and righteousness. He knew that no matter how hot the fire gold will not be damaged by it. If there is some mixture of impurity it will be separated by the heat and the gold will remain.

- 24** "Since times are not hidden from  
the Almighty,  
why do those who know him never see his days?
- 2 *Some men* remove boundary stones.  
They take away flocks by violence  
and devour *them*.
- 3 They drive away the donkey of the fatherless;  
they take the widow's ox as a pledge.
- 4 They push the needy off the road;  
the poor of the earth hide themselves  
*from them*.
- 5 Look, they go out to their work like  
the wild donkeys of the desert,  
seeking carefully for food.  
The wilderness *provides* food for them  
*and* for *their* children.
- 6 They gather their fodder in the field,  
and glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
- 7 They spend the night naked, without clothing;  
*they have* no covering in the cold.
- 8 They are wet with mountain showers,  
and hug the rocks for lack of shelter.
- 9 The fatherless are snatched from the breast;  
the *property of the* poor is taken as a pledge.
- 10 Lacking clothing, they must go about naked;  
and the sheaves are taken away *from*  
the hungry.
- 11 They press out oil inside their walls,  
*and* tread the winepresses,  
yet suffer thirst.
- 12 Men groan in the city, and the soul  
of the wounded cries out.  
Yet God does not charge *the wicked*  
with wrongdoing.
- 13 "They are the ones who rebel against the light;  
they do not know its ways, or remain in its paths.
- 14 The murderer rises before the light

**24:1** Job wonders why God does not set specific times to right the wrongs that exist on earth, times to clear the righteous and punish the wicked.

**24:2-4** He begins now a description of the behavior that should be judged.

**24:5-12** The destitute are crushed beneath the iron heel of the wicked. Yet God, Job thinks, does nothing about it (v 12). He has set no times to bring the wicked into court. He lets them go on in their violence and oppression. He lets the innocent poor suffer and groan. These are facts which his friends can hardly deny. But they seem to close their eyes to them because they are contrary to their idea of divine retribution. (If our ideas have to ignore the facts, is it not time to change our ideas?) Job, on the other hand, cries out "Where is justice? We search for it in vain in this world." He did not realize that justice would be handed out in the next world, after death.

**24:13-17** He describes the wicked as people

- and kills the poor and needy;  
at night he is like a thief.
- 15 The eye of the adulterer also waits  
for the twilight, saying, 'No eye will see me,'  
and he disguises *his* face.
- 16 In the dark they dig into houses,  
*which* they had marked out for  
themselves in daylight.  
They do not know the light.
- 17 For the morning *is* to them like the  
shadow of death;  
if *they* are recognized the terrors of  
the shadow of death *seize them*.
- 18 "They *are* swift on the surface of the waters.  
Their portion on the earth *is* cursed;  
they do not face the way of the vineyards.
- 19 As drought and heat consume snow water,  
the grave *consumes the one who*  
has sinned.
- 20 The womb will forget him.  
The worm will feed sweetly on him.  
He will no longer be remembered,  
and wickedness will be broken off like a tree.
- 21 He mistreats the barren, childless woman,  
and will not do good to the widow.
- 22 But *God* drags away the mighty by his power.  
*When* he arises, no one can be sure of life.
- 23 *If* they are given security, they rely *on it*;  
yet his eyes are on their ways.
- 24 They are exalted for a little while,  
then are gone;  
they are brought low and taken out of

- the way like all *others*,  
cut off like heads of grain.
- 25 "Now if *this is* not *so*,  
who will make me out to be a liar,  
and show that my speech *is* worthless?"
- 25 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said  
2 "Dominion and awe *belong to God*.  
He makes peace in his high places.
- 3 Is there any number to his armies?  
Upon whom does his light not arise?
- 4 How then can a man be righteous before God?  
Or how can one born of woman be pure?
- 5 In his sight, if even the moon lacks brightness,  
yes, if the stars are not pure,
- 6 How much less man, *who is but* a maggot,  
and a son of man, *who is* a worm?"
- 26 But Job answered and said,  
2 "How you have helped the powerless!  
*How* you have saved the feeble arm!
- 3 What counsel you have given to one  
without wisdom!  
*What* abundant advice you have made known!
- 4 To whom have you spoken *these* words?  
And whose spirit came *speaking* through you?
- 5 "The dead tremble, those under the waters,  
and all that live in them.
- 6 Hell *is* naked before him,  
and destruction has no covering.
- 7 He stretches out the north over empty space,  
*and* hangs the earth on nothing.

of darkness (compare Eph 5:8-12; John 3:19-21).

**24:18-21** Job admits that eventually the wicked will perish. He does not deny that at times divine retribution is at work in the world.

"Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**24:22-24** But often, Job says, God actually seems to be protecting evil men from disaster. And when they die it is in the natural course of things just as with everyone else. Like plants that develop fully ripened grain they have a full span of life before being cut off.

**24:25** Job says that these are the facts. His meaning in all this, of course, is that his friends are very wrong to teach that the wicked are always punished in this life and the righteous always rewarded.

**25:1-6** This is the third and last speech of Bildad. He has nothing new to say. He completely ignores the facts Job has given. Bildad has two points – God is very great, and compared to God's holiness no created thing, and certainly not man, can be considered righteous and pure. All very true, but it does not speak to the point Job has raised. The last remarks of Bildad are in

opposition to Job's claim of righteousness (23:10-12). These are the last recorded words of Job's three friends. They do not stop talking because they are convinced of their error, but because they see Job will not accept what they say about him.

**26:1-4** In very sarcastic language Job pours scorn on Bildad. It is plain to him that Bildad is totally incapable of helping him understand anything of God's ways. If we talk long enough people will find out what we are.

**26:5-13** Bildad has brought up the theme of God's greatness as though Job knew nothing about it. Job enlarges on the same subject and far surpasses Bildad (and the other two friends) in his eloquent descriptions of God's power. Bildad spoke of God's sovereignty in heaven. Job says he knows God's sovereignty extends even to the lowest regions of the universe – to the dead, to destruction, to Sheol (compare Isa 14:9-15).

**26:6** "Hell" – in Hebrew "Sheol."

"Destruction" – in Hebrew "Abaddon."

**26:7** Here he gives the picture of the earth hanging in space with no support. This may have been the common idea of educated men of Job's time and place. Or it could be evidence of a revelation God had once given to mankind not recorded any place else in

- 8 He binds up the waters in his thick clouds,  
but the cloud is not torn under  
*the weight* of them.
- 9 He covers the face of his throne,  
*and* spreads his cloud over it.
- 10 He draws a circle on the surface of  
the waters at the boundary of light  
and darkness.
- 11 At his rebuke the pillars of the  
heavens tremble, and are appalled.
- 12 He divided the sea by his power,  
and by his understanding struck  
down the proud.
- 13 By his Spirit the heavens became bright.  
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
- 14 See, these *are but* the edges of his ways;  
and how faint a whisper we hear of him!  
Then who can understand the thunder of  
his power?"

**27** And Job continued his discourse and said,  
2 "As God lives, *who* has taken justice  
away from me,  
the Almighty, *who* has brought

the Bible, or it might be a truth God had revealed directly to Job.

**26:9** "Of his throne" – or it could be translated "the full moon." See the note on the Hebrew language at Ps 14:7.

**26:12** "The proud" – in Hebrew "Rahab." The word is used six times in the Hebrew Bible. The root meaning of the word is "proud." Sometimes, at least, the word is used as a symbolic name for Egypt (Ps 87:4), and Job may be referring to Egypt here. If not, it is not clear what he means. It is possible, as some scholars have thought, that Job is speaking of the ocean lifting itself up like a proud sea monster. The name has nothing to do with the harlot Rahab mentioned in Joshua. In Hebrew her name is spelled differently – more like Rakhab.

**26:14** Job says God's works speak of Him. Compare Ps 19:1-4. But what men hear is only like a whisper. God's power is so great that His works which are known to us, wonderful as they are, can indicate only a tiny part of it. No one can begin to understand His omnipotence. Job obviously had very high views of the greatness of God. It is not because he is ignorant of it that he says God has unjustly sent calamities on him.

**27:1** Job may have paused here so that Zophar could take his turn to speak. Zophar said nothing, so Job continued. The Hebrew word translated "discourse" or "parable" in some English versions, as a verb means to speak using poetic language or proverbs or parables.

**27:2** The only time in the book Job speaks with an oath. He thinks God has denied him justice and has Himself caused his sufferings. However, notice that he does

- bitterness to my soul,
- 3 As long as my life *is* in me,  
and the breath of God *is* in my nostrils,
- 4 My lips will not speak wickedness,  
and my tongue will not utter deceit.
- 5 Far be it from me to admit that you are right.  
I will not put away my integrity  
from me until I die.
- 6 I will hold fast my righteousness,  
and not let it go.  
My heart will not reproach *me* as long as I live.
- 7 "May my enemy be like the wicked,  
and he who attacks me like the unrighteous.
- 8 For what is the hope of the hypocrite,  
even though he gains *much*,  
if God takes away his life?
- 9 Will God hear his cry when trouble  
comes on him?
- 10 Will he have delight in the Almighty?  
Will he always call on God?
- 11 "I will teach you about the hand of God.  
I will not conceal how *it is* with the Almighty.
- 12 Look, all of you have seen *this*.

not deny God or give up faith in Him.

**27:3** "Life" – or "breath" – Gen 2:7.

"Breath" – or "spirit" – the Hebrew word means several things.

**27:4-6** Job is determined to state things as he believes they are. He will not try to deceive his friends to win the argument. He will not admit he is guilty of some terrible sin when he knows he is not. Even if falsely admitting it would win back his friends and God's favor he would not do it.

**27:6** He knows he has lived a life of uprightness and integrity and he fully intends to go on the same way. He has lost property, family, health, the respect of his friends, and God's fellowship. One thing he is determined not to lose – his integrity. He will not start lying, deceiving, or acting wickedly. He is saying, "Though everything has gone, though I am shattered by God and despised by men, I will continue to be honest. Though I stand utterly alone and am reduced to poverty and loathsome disease, though the world mocks me, friends misunderstand me, and heaven frowns on me, I will go on being true and upright. My integrity at least I am resolved never to lose."

May God give us such men today – men who would rather lose their lives than lose their integrity! No wonder God spoke of Job as He did in 2:3. See also Ezek 14:14.

**27:8-10** Both Bildad and Zophar had used similar language about the ungodly (8:13; 20:5). Job now says he fully agrees with them.

**27:8** "Hypocrite" – the Hebrew word indicates a profane or godless person.

**27:11-23** Until now Job had maintained that often evil men prosper and live to a

Why then is your *talk* so empty?

- 13 "This is what a wicked man will get from God,  
and the inheritance oppressors will  
receive from the Almighty:
- 14 If his children increase in number,  
*it is* for the sword,  
and his offspring will not have enough bread.
- 15 Those who are left to him will be buried in death,  
and his widow will not weep.
- 16 Though he heaps up silver like dust,  
and accumulates garments  
*as abundant* as clay,
- 17 He may accumulate them,  
but the righteous will wear *them*,  
and the innocent will divide the silver.
- 18 The house he builds *is as fragile* as a moth,  
as a booth the watchman makes.
- 19 The rich man will lie down, but not again.  
He opens his eyes, and he *is* no more.
- 20 Terrors overtake him like a flood;  
a tempest snatches him away in the night.
- 21 The east wind carries him away,  
and he is gone;  
the storm sweeps him from his place.
- 22 It hurls itself against him and does not spare.  
He makes every attempt to flee from its power.
- 23 It *scornfully* claps its hands at him,  
and hisses him out of his place.

ripe old age, and that God's judgment does not always come on them in this world (21:7-13,30-33; 24:2-12). Job now seems concerned that his friends have misunderstood him. Have they thought he was defending the wicked? Did they think he was teaching that wickedness pays and so it is better to be wicked than righteous? See how Eliphaz accuses him in 15:4.

In this chapter Job would set the record straight and try to correct any false impressions he may have created in his friends' minds. Maybe he realized that he had insisted too strongly on one side of the argument. This often happens when men argue and their emotions are stirred up. Now in vs 13-23 Job fully admits that the wicked are not immune to punishment in this world. Job's language in these verses is almost like that of his friends when they described the fate of the wicked. He seems now to take their side of the argument. But actually he is a long way from doing so.

Remember their doctrine is this: God always rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked on earth; He does not send calamities on the righteous, nor allow the wicked to escape. For the sake of argument Job is willing to admit the second of these ideas, but not the first. He will agree that disasters come on the wicked, but not that they do not come on the righteous. In agreeing with his

- 28 "There is certainly a mine for silver,  
and a place *where* they refine gold.
- 2 Iron is taken out of the ground,  
and copper *is* smelted *from* ore.
- 3 *Man* puts an end to darkness  
and searches for ore in the deepest  
recesses,  
dark as the shadow of death.
- 4 He digs a shaft away from *human* habitation.  
*In places* forgotten by *man's* foot,  
away from men, he dangles,  
swinging back and forth.
- 5 Bread comes out of the earth,  
but underneath it is changed as by fire.
- 6 Its stones *are* the source of sapphires,  
and its dust *contains* gold.
- 7 No bird knows the path there,  
and the falcon's eye has not seen it.
- 8 The lion's cubs have not trodden on it,  
nor has the fierce lion passed along it.
- 9 He puts out his hand to the flinty rock,  
he overturns the mountains at *their* roots.
- 10 He cuts out channels in the rocks,  
and his eye sees everything of value.
- 11 He dams up the streams from flowing,  
and brings *what is* hidden out to the light.
- 12 "But where is wisdom found?  
And where *is* the place of understanding?

friends' position on the fate of the wicked Job may have been inconsistent. And it may strike the reader of his words that he agreed with them too strongly. (Job could never, it seems, state anything in lukewarm language. For every idea that he expressed he used very strong terms.) But surely one thing at least resulted from these words – his friends could no longer accuse him of defending the wicked or of thinking it didn't matter whether a person was wicked or righteous.

**28:1-28** Man makes great efforts to find precious metals and gems. He searches in barren and difficult places. But Job's subject is wisdom – something far more valuable than gold, silver, and jewels. Where can it be found? If a man actually finds it how can he identify it? Such is Job's theme in this chapter.

**28:3** "End to darkness" – by the lamps the miners take into the mines.

**28:4** "Dangles, swinging" – as the miner descends on ropes into the mine shaft.

**28:5** In his search for valuable things man creates destruction inside the earth much as a fire would do.

**28:7,8** Man searches for treasure in desolate places where even birds of prey and wild beasts do not go.

**28:12,13** If man understood the great worth of wisdom he would search for it with the same determination shown in searching for



- 13 Man does not know its value,  
nor is it found in the land of the living.
- 14 The deep says, 'It *is* not in me.'  
And the sea says, '*It is* not with me.'
- 15 It cannot be obtained for gold,  
nor can silver be weighed out as its price.
- 16 It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,  
in precious onyx or sapphire.
- 17 Gold and crystal cannot equal it,  
nor *can it be* exchanged for jewels of fine gold.
- 18 Coral or pearls are not to be mentioned,  
and the value of wisdom *is* above rubies.
- 19 The topaz of Ethiopia does not equal it,  
nor can it be valued with pure gold.
- 20 "Where then does wisdom come from?  
And where *is* the place of understanding?
- 21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living,  
and concealed from the birds of the air.
- 22 Destruction and death say,  
'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'
- 23 God understands the way to it,  
and he knows its place.
- 24 For he views the ends of the earth,  
*and* sees under the whole heavens.
- 25 When he established a weight for the wind,  
and measured out the waters,
- 26 When he made a law for the rain,  
and a path for the thunderbolt,
- 27 Then he saw *wisdom* and declared it;  
he prepared it,  
yes, he searched out its *depths*.
- 28 And to man he said,  
'See, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom,  
and to depart from evil *is* understanding.'"

gems and gold.

**28:15-19** Prov 3:13,14; 8:10,11,19; 16:16.

**28:20-23** No living being, including man, no one in the realm of death knows where wisdom is found. Neither life nor death can teach us wisdom. Only God knows what it is, where it is, and how man can obtain it.

"Destruction" (v 22) - in Hebrew "Abaddon."

**28:24-27** God is the only one who sees everything, and can do everything. So He alone really knows wisdom.

**28:28** God has revealed to man the truth about wisdom which man could never discover by searching. Wisdom is not piling up information, or storing up facts. Wisdom is not education. There are many educated fools in this world. Wisdom is not knowing the truth about the nature of things. Wisdom is not even having true doctrines about God and man. True wisdom is a proper attitude toward God. It is related to morality and ethics. It is devotion to God and fear of offending Him. It is turning away from evil (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 9:10; Eccl 12:13). We know from the first chapter

**29** And Job continued his discourse and said,  
2 "Oh, that I were as *in* months past,  
as in the days *when* God was  
watching over me,

- 3 When his lamp shone on my head,  
*when* I walked *through* darkness by his light;
- 4 As I was in the days of my prime,  
when God's nearness *remained* over my tent,
- 5 When the Almighty *was* still with me,  
*when* my children *were* around me,
- 6 When my steps were washed in cream,  
and the rock poured out rivers of oil for me,
- 7 When I went out to the gate through the city,  
*when* I prepared my seat in the square.
- 8 The young men saw me and hid themselves,  
and the aged arose *and* stood.
- 9 The princes stopped talking and put  
*their* hand on their mouth.
- 10 The nobles kept silent and their tongue stuck  
to the roof of their mouth.
- 11 When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me,  
and when the eye saw *me*,  
it showed approval of me,
- 12 Because I rescued the poor who  
cried out, and the fatherless,  
and *the one who* had no helper.
- 13 *Words of* blessing came on me from  
those who had been about to perish,  
and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
- 14 I dressed *myself* in righteousness,  
and it clothed me.
- My justice *was* like a robe and a turban.
- 15 I *was* eyes for the blind,  
and feet for the lame.

of this book that Job had this wisdom (1:1,8). We are not told his friends had it. Of course, they thought they themselves were the wise ones and that Job did not have wisdom (11:6; 15:2-4; 18:2,3; 20:3). **29:1** Perhaps Job paused again for one of his friends to speak. If he did not, it is unclear why these words should be used here again. From their continued silence it appears that the argument is over and they have lost it. Of course, they would not have been willing to admit this. Job now begins a lament which continues over the next two chapters (30:31). In it he contrasts the life he once enjoyed (chapter 29) with his present pathetic condition (chapter 30).

**29:2-6** Job is saying that when disasters came he was not living a sinful life, he was not without God's fellowship. He had God's light, God's presence, God's smile, God's blessings.

**29:7-11** Job was a man others honored and respected. In other words, they knew he was not wicked.

**29:12-17** He was respected because his deeds proved him worthy of respect. Compare this with Eliphaz's false accusa-

16 I *was* a father to the poor, and investigated the case I did not know.  
 17 And I broke the jaws of the wicked and snatched the plunder out of his teeth.  
 18 "Then I said,  
     'I will die in my nest, and cause *my* days to be as numerous as the sand.  
 19 My roots *are* spread out by the waters, and the dew lies all night on my branches.  
 20 My glory *remains* fresh in me, and my bow is renewed in my hand.'  
 21 "*People* listened to me and waited, and kept silent for my counsel.  
 22 After my words they did not speak again; and my words dropped on them.  
 23 And they waited for me as for the rain, and opened their mouth wide *as* for the spring rain.  
 24 *If* I laughed at them, they did not believe it; and they did not cause the light of my face to fail.  
 25 I chose the way for them, and sat as chief. I dwelt like a king among *his* army, like one *who* comforts mourners.

**30** "But now *those who are* younger than I mock at me, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs.  
 2 Yes, what *could* the strength of their hands *profit* me, since their vigor was gone?  
 3 *They were emaciated* from want and hunger, having lately fled to the desolate and waste wilderness.  
 4 They plucked salt marsh plants beside the bushes, and their food *was* the root of the broom tree.  
 5 They were driven out from among *the people* (who cried out after them as *after* a thief),  
 6 To live among the cliffs of the ravines, *in* the caves and rocks of the land.  
 7 They brayed among the bushes, and gathered together under the nettles.  
 8 *These are* the sons of fools,

tions in 22:5-11.

**29:18-20** He did not think calamities would come on him, because he could see no reason whatever why they should.

**29:21-25** He knows that he was a leader, a counselor of others, and that he had not abused his position.

**29:24** "Did not cause the light of my face to fail" – the meaning of the Hebrew here is uncertain.

**30:1-14** Instead of the honor and respect Job once experienced he faces the scorn and opposition of base and useless men.

yes, children of base men who were scourged from the land.

9 "And now I am their *mocking* song; yes, I am their byword.  
 10 They abhor me.  
     They keep their distance from me, and do not hold back from spitting in my face.  
 11 Because he has loosened my bowstring and afflicted me, they have also cast off restraint in my presence.  
 12 *At my right hand* the youth rise up; they push my feet away, and raise against me their destructive ways.  
 13 They break up my road; without any helper, they set up calamity for me.  
 14 They come *on me* like a wide break *in* the wall; in their ruins they come rolling in.  
 15 Terrors are turned on me; they pursue my soul like the wind, and my prosperity has passed like a cloud.  
 16 And now my soul is poured out within me. Days of affliction have seized me.  
 17 At night my bones in me are pierced, and my gnawing *pains* have no rest.  
 18 Because of their great power my clothing is changed; they bind me all around like the collar of my coat.  
 19 He has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.  
 20 I cry out to you, *O God*, but you do not hear me.  
     I stand up, but you *just* watch me.  
 21 You have become cruel to me.  
     With your strong hand you oppose me.  
 22 You lift me up to the wind and make me ride *on it*, dissolving my substance.  
 23 For I know *that* you will bring me *to* death, and *to* the house appointed for all the living.  
 24 "But he will not stretch out *his* hand toward the grave, though they cry out at its destruction.

Their fathers had been regarded by the people of that region as unfit to live there and had been driven out (vs 5,8). Now these young men spit in Job's face and try to cause him all the trouble they can (16:10,11).

**30:15-19** 3:24; 6:10; 7:4,5; 13:28; 16:8,17; 17:1; 19:20.

**30:20-22** Once more Job turns to God with his complaint (7:7-21; 10:2-22; 13:20; 14:22; 16:7,8; 17:3,4).

**30:21** 6:4; 13:24; 16:9.

**30:23** 9:22; 10:8.

**30:24** Even if he does not fear this falling

- 25 Did I not weep for anyone in trouble?  
Was my soul *not* grieved for the poor?
- 26 When I looked for good, then disaster came;  
and when I waited for light, darkness came.
- 27 The agitation inside me never stops.  
Days of affliction confront me.
- 28 I go about mourning,  
without *the light* of the sun.  
I stand up *and* cry out in the congregation.
- 29 I am a brother to jackals,  
and a companion of owls.
- 30 My skin on me is black,  
and my bones burn with heat.
- 31 And my harp is *tuned* to mourning, and  
my flute to the sound of those who weep.

- 31** "I made a covenant with my eyes.  
How then could I *lustfully* consider a  
maiden?
- 2 For what does God apportion from above?  
And *what is* the inheritance the  
Almighty *appoints* from above?
- 3 *Is* it not destruction for the wicked,  
and disaster for evildoers?
- 4 Does he not see my ways and count  
all my steps?

- 5 "If I have walked in falsehood,  
or if my foot has hurried after deceit
- 6 (Let me be weighed in accurate scales,  
that God may know my integrity),
- 7 If my step has turned out of the way,  
and my heart has followed my eyes,  
and if any stain has stuck to my hands,
- 8 *Then* let me sow and someone else eat *it*,  
yes, let my crops be uprooted.
- 9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman,  
or *if* I have lurked near my neighbor's door,
- 10 *Then* may my wife grind for someone else,  
and may others bow down over her.
- 11 For that *would be* a wicked deed,  
yes, iniquity for the judges *to punish*.
- 12 For that *would be* a fire *that*  
consumes to destruction,  
that would uproot all my increase.
- 13 "If I have despised the claim of my male or  
female servant when they complained to me,
- 14 Then what would I do when God rises up?  
And when he confronts me,  
what would I answer him?
- 15 Did not he who made me in the womb,  
make him?

toward death (and he did not – 6:8,9; 7:15), still he will cry out for help.

**30:25,26** This is his complaint all along – he has not been rewarded according to his deeds, but God has dealt with him unjustly. He thinks God has not treated him as well as he – Job – has treated others.

**30:27** 3:26.

**30:29** This may refer to the piercing, mournful sounds these animals make, and perhaps to their solitariness.

**30:31** Job compares his final lament to the mournful tones made by musical instruments, rising, falling, and dying away.

**31:1-4** This chapter closes Job's defense against the accusations of his friends. Here he sets forth his righteous behavior, not in a spirit of boasting but because his friends have driven him to it. See note on vs 38-40. The situation is not unlike that of Paul's who was forced by the church at Corinth to defend himself against the accusations of false teachers (2 Cor 11:21-29; 12:1-3. See also 1 Sam 12:1-3; 24:8-15; 26:17-24; Ps 17:1-5. Compare Psalm 26).

Job knew that he shared in the fallen condition of all men (13:26; 14:4,16,17; 31:33). Perhaps he did not yet have that deep understanding of the depravity of human nature that some other Old Testament saints had. But he lived (probably) before God gave his law through Moses, and the law gives men a deeper knowledge of sin (Rom 7:7-9). However that may be, Job well knew that he had lived a sincere, godly, and righteous life. He is not

self-righteous but has the testimony of a good conscience (compare Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2 Cor 1:12). So in his eyes he did not deserve the calamities that came on him, and the doctrine of his friends concerning divine retribution was hopelessly wrong.

**31:1** In the list of his virtues Job puts this one first. Not only had he kept himself from adultery and fornication, he had resolutely determined not even to let wrong desires form in his mind. He was very careful in the way he looked at a girl. In this he anticipated the teaching of Christ in the sermon on the mount (Matt 5:27,28). He understood that morality and purity were not merely a matter of outward acts but of the inner thoughts and desires.

**31:4** The reason for his virtuous behavior was his knowledge of God. God was always in his thoughts (vs 2,4,14,15,23,28). He feared God, wanted to please God, honored God in every sphere of his life.

**31:5-8** He has led a life of complete honesty and sincerity, always holding to God's way of holiness and virtue. He was fully aware that God hates lying and deceit.

**31:9-12** He has always been faithful to his wife, never once going with another woman. He regarded adultery as a very terrible sin, which indeed it is (Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10; 1 Cor 6:9; Heb 13:4).

**31:12** "Destruction" – in Hebrew "Abaddon."

**31:13-15** He has behaved fairly toward his servants. He recognized that in God's sight men are men, and that no one should be treated as if belonging to an inferior caste

Did not the same one form us in the womb?

16 "If I have held back from the poor  
*what* they desired,  
 or caused the eyes of the widow to fail,  
 17 Or have eaten my morsel alone,  
 without the fatherless eating of it  
 18 (But from my youth I brought him up  
*like* a father,  
 and from my birth I guided *the widow*),  
 19 If I have seen anyone perish for  
 lack of clothing,  
 or any poor *person* without a covering,  
 20 If he had no *reason* to bless me,  
 and *if* he was *not* warmed by the  
 fleece from my sheep,  
 21 If I have raised my hand against the fatherless,  
 when I saw support *for this* in the gate,  
 22 *Then* let my arm fall from my shoulder,  
 and my arm be broken at the joint.  
 23 For destruction *from* God terrified me,  
 and because of his majesty I could  
 not endure.

24 "If I have made gold my hope,  
 or said to fine gold,  
 'You are my confidence,'  
 25 If I have rejoiced because my wealth *was* great,  
 and because my hand had gotten much,  
 26 If I looked at the shining sun  
 or the moon moving *in* brightness,  
 27 And my heart was secretly enticed  
 and my mouth kissed my hand *in worship*,

28 This also *would be* iniquity to be judged,  
 for I would have denied God above.

29 "If I rejoiced at the destruction of  
 one who hated me,  
 or exulted when disaster found him  
 30 (But I have not allowed my mouth to  
 sin by invoking a curse against his soul),  
 31 If the men of my tent have not said,  
 'Who is there *of us* who has not been  
 satisfied with Job's meat?'  
 32 (The stranger never had to spend the  
 night in the street,  
*for* I opened my door to the traveller),  
 33 If I have covered my transgressions like Adam,  
 by hiding my iniquity in my bosom,  
 34 Because I feared the great multitude,  
 or dreaded the contempt of families,  
 so that I kept silent *and* did not  
 go out the door

35 "(Oh, that someone would hear me!  
 See, my desire is *that* the Almighty  
 would answer me,  
 and *that* my adversary would write down  
 the indictment in a book!  
 36 Surely I would carry it around on my shoulder,  
 and fasten it on me *like* a crown.  
 37 I would give him an account of all my steps.  
 I would approach him like a prince),  
 38 "If my land cries out against me,  
 or if its furrows complain,  
 39 If I have eaten its produce without cost to me,

or class. (See Eph 6:9; Col 4:1.)  
**31:16-23** He has treated the poor with kindness and compassion – a virtue God regards very highly indeed (Ex 22:22-27; Deut 24:17; Ps 68:5; 82:1-4; Prov 23:10,11).  
**31:21** "In the gate" – the place where the ruling body of the town met.  
**31:24-28** He kept himself from the idolatry of wealth, and from the worship of creation rather than the Creator. He knew that it is not possible to be true to God while worshiping anything other than God (see Ex 20:3-6; Deut 4:19; 17:2-5; Rom 1:25).  
**31:29,30** He has not allowed the spirit of vengeance to possess him (Prov 20:22; 24:29; 25:21; Rom 12:19-21).  
**31:31,32** He has practiced hospitality to strangers (compare Deut 10:17-19; Heb 13:2).  
**31:33,34** When he sinned he did not try to cover it up but confessed and forsook it. Observe that he does not deny he has sinned. He realized that true virtue is not merely what one does or does not do when others are watching, but what one does or does not do when only God is watching. Compare Ps 90:8; 139:23,24; Matt 6:6,18; John 3:20,21; Eph 5:8-14; Heb 4:13.  
 "Like Adam" – or "like a man." In

Hebrew the word for man and for Adam is the same, and here could be translated either way.  
**31:35** "My desire" – the literal meaning of the Hebrew word is "mark", and the sentence could be translated, "See, my mark. Oh, that the Almighty would answer me." "Mark" possibly indicated signature, as if Job's case is written out and he now signs it.  
**31:35-37** Job longs for a hearing before God's judgment seat (13:3,15,18; 16:19; 23:3-5; 24:1). He has prepared his defense. He has declared the righteous life he has lived before God and men. He desperately wants to know what God has against him. If God would write out His complaint against him Job says he would wear it like a crown where all could see it. That is, he is quite sure that God has no serious accusations to make against him. He thinks he can give even to God a good account of his whole life, could approach God with the firm, bold step of a prince. So certain is Job of his integrity.  
**31:38-40** Job has an afterthought. There is one aspect of his righteousness he hasn't mentioned – the proper way he had treated his land and those who worked for him. If he has behaved unjustly let a curse come

or caused its owners to lose their lives,  
40 May thistles grow up instead of wheat,  
and weeds instead of barley!"

The words of Job are ended.

**32** So these three men stopped answering Job, because he *was* righteous in his own eyes.

2 Then the anger of Elihu the son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job. His anger burned because *Job* justified himself rather than God.

3 Also his anger was aroused against his three friends, because they had found no answer, yet had condemned Job.

4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job,

on his land, he says. (See also vs 8,10,22.) At last he has no more to say. In legal terms, we would say the defense rests its case.

What should we think of Job's defense? We do not like to hear an individual telling us how good and righteous he is. Some people are quite eager for men to know their good deeds, and describe them even to God (Matt 6:2; Luke 18:9-12). So when a person speaks of his righteous life we tend to suspect that he is either ignorant of himself or is covering up some sin or is proud and boastful. But in Job's case this was not so.

Job and his friends are having a deep theological discussion which involved an important doctrine, and this discussion turns on the matter of Job's guilt or innocence. If his life style did not merit the calamities which came on him, then the doctrine of his friends was in error. This is what Job is attempting to prove. For the sake of the truth he felt compelled to describe his righteous life as it was. And we know he did not paint a false picture, did not exaggerate his virtues.

God Himself said Job was the best man on earth in his generation (2:3. See also Ezek 14:14). So his life is a beautiful example to all of us. If we wish to have God's approval as he did, let us live as he did. But was Job not self-righteous? Verses like 10:15 and 7:20,21 suggest otherwise. Self-righteousness is something that cleaves very naturally to man's fallen nature, and it would not be surprising if there were some taint of it in Job. For Job had a sinful nature as all men have. But if Job was much given to self-righteousness it is hard to understand God's unqualified approval of him in 1:8; 2:3 (in 2:3 one of the things God praises Job for was that he maintained his integrity in spite of all that Satan had done against him).

Surely God hates self-righteousness more than we ever can. So we may judge that if Job was guilty of it he was probably less guilty of it than anyone else in his generation. And it certainly was not a dominating force in his life. And, it seems to the author of these notes, that even if

because they *were* older than he.

5 When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of *these* three men, his anger was aroused.

6 And Elihu the son of Barakel the Buzite answered and said,

"I *am* young, and you *are* very old.

Therefore I was afraid and dared not express my opinion.

7 I told *myself that* age should speak, and advanced years should teach wisdom.

8 But *there is* a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives him understanding.

9 Great men are not *always* wise; nor do the aged *always* understand justice.

there was a taint of self-righteousness in Job's character, it is in no way central to the teaching of the book of Job.

**32:1** Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar have nothing more to say, concluding that Job was self-righteous.

**32:2** Apparently Elihu had been present all the time the discussion had been going on. For all we know there may have been several (or many) others there also. Elihu was not an uncommon name and other Elihus are mentioned in the Bible (1 Sam 1:1; 1 Chron 12:20), but this is the one place that this particular Elihu appears. We know nothing of the Barakel or Ram mentioned here, but it is also said that Elihu was a Buzite. One person named Buz was a son of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen 22:21). If Elihu was a descendent of that Buz then he was closely related to the forefathers of the Hebrew nation.

Elihu's anger burned against Job because Job had justified himself rather than God. (See also God's question to Job in 40:8.) Job had clearly said his cause was just (10:7; 27:5,6; 31:35-37) and that God had wronged him (19:6; 27:2; 30:25,26). Job said so because in his pain and perplexity and darkness no other explanation seemed to fit the circumstances. Job had also spoken in a way that showed he believed in the justice of God (16:19; 19:23-27; 23:3-7). If Job had not been convinced of God's just character he would not have wanted to appear before him in judgment). As we have seen, very painful and conflicting thoughts possessed Job's mind. See note on 16:19.

**32:3** Elihu was a lover of justice. If Job speaks unjustly about God his anger burns; when the three friends speak unjustly about Job his anger burns. Elihu sees clearly the fault of the friends – they condemned Job without being able to answer his arguments (v 12).

**32:7** "Age" – literally "days."

"Advanced" – literally "a multitude."

**32:8** Understanding does not come by mere age or experience or education, but by God's breath, God's gift. So the young may have



- 10 Therefore I say, Listen to me.  
I also will express my opinion.
- 11 Look, I waited for your words;  
I gave ear to your reasons,  
while you searched for what to say.
- 12 Yes, I paid close attention to you,  
and, look, none of you convinced Job,  
or answered his words.
- 13 Do not say 'We have found wisdom.  
God will bring him down, not man.'
- 14 Now he has not directed *his* words against me,  
and I will not answer him with your words.
- 15 "They are dismayed and give no  
further answer;  
words have failed them.
- 16 I have been waiting, but they did not speak,  
but stood there *and* gave no further answer.
- 17 I too will take my part in answering,  
I too will express my opinion.
- 18 For I am full of words,  
and the spirit within me compels me *to speak*.
- 19 Indeed my inner being *is* like wine  
without a vent;  
it is ready to burst like new wineskins.
- 20 I will speak, so that I may find relief.  
I will open my lips and answer.
- 21 Please, I will not show favoritism  
to anyone, or flatter any man.
- 22 For I do not know how to flatter;  
*if I did*, my Maker would soon take me away.

**33** "Therefore, Job, please hear what  
I have to say,

it as well as the old, Elihu says.

**32:12-17** Though the friends have failed to defeat Job in argument they must not think, he says, that every man will fail. Elihu thinks he can succeed. At v 15 he stops speaking to Job's friends and speaks about them.

**32:18-20** Elihu is very excited and eager. As Job's friends spoke he kept thinking of things he would like to say. He could hardly contain any longer the words that would rush from his mouth. He was not the last to feel so in time of argument and debate.

**32:21,22** Elihu has some fear of God, so refuses to take either Job's side or that of Job's friends. And he resolves to speak very frankly.

**33:1-4** Elihu is sure he has something very important to say. He thinks he can solve the problem that has arisen over Job's sufferings. This young man is very confident that he is wise and upright and honest (33:3; 36:3,4). But already, this early in his speech, he seems lacking in humility.

**33:5-7** In 9:32-35 Job expressed a wish for someone to act as a mediator. He wanted to argue his case before God, but because of the pain and disasters that came to him he experienced much fear (13:20-22). Elihu

and listen to all my words.

- 2 See, now I open my mouth,  
the tongue in my mouth speaks.
- 3 My words *come from* the uprightness  
of my heart,  
and my lips speak knowledge clearly.
- 4 The Spirit of God has made me,  
and the breath of the Almighty has  
given me life.
- 5 If you can answer me, set *your words*  
in order in front of me; take your stand.
- 6 See, just like you, I *belong* to God.  
I too have been formed out of clay.
- 7 Look, no fear of me should terrify you;  
nor will my hand be heavy on you.
- 8 "You have certainly spoken in my hearing,  
and I have heard the sound of  
*your words, saying*,
- 9 'I *am* pure, without transgression.  
I *am* innocent. No iniquity *is* in me.
- 10 See, *God* finds occasions against me;  
he counts me as his enemy.
- 11 He puts my feet in the stocks;  
he watches all my paths.'
- 12 "Look, *in* this you are not being just.  
I will answer you that God is greater than man.
- 13 Why do you struggle against him?  
For he does not give an account of  
any of his deeds.
- 14 For God speaks once, yes, twice,  
*but man* does not perceive it.
- 15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,

seems to be saying here that he will act as this mediator. Job can present his case fully to him without fear.

**33:6** "Just like you, I belong to God" – the KJV here seems a strange translation, hardly possible at all, but the Hebrew is difficult.

**33:8-11** Elihu is certain Job has said some wrong things and now calls them to his attention. In the last part of v 10 and in v 11 he quotes Job's words (13:24,27). In v 9 he gives what he thinks is the meaning of some of Job's remarks (9:21; 10:7; 16:16; 23:10; 27:5). However, Job has never said he was holy and pure. He knew otherwise (13:26; 14:4,16,17; 31:33). Elihu, by attributing to Job's words a meaning Job never intended, shows he will not be able to answer him. But Elihu has put his finger on the point of Job's biggest failing in the argument with his friends – Job had spoken of God as becoming his enemy and unjustly acting as a persecutor and jailer.

**33:12,13** Elihu is correct in this matter. God is far greater than any man and more just in His dealings than any man could ever be. God does not need to give to men an account of His behavior.

**33:14-30** In these verses we have Elihu's

- when deep sleep falls on men,  
while they slumber on the bed,  
16 Then he opens the ears of men,  
and seals their instruction,  
17 So that he may turn a man *from his evil*  
behaviour and keep a man from pride.  
18 He keeps back his soul from the pit,  
and his life from perishing by the sword.  
19 A man is also chastened by pain on his bed,  
by anguish in his many bones.  
20 So that his whole being loathes bread,  
and his soul the choicest food.  
21 His flesh wastes away from sight, and his bones,  
*which* were not seen, stick out.  
22 Yes, his soul draws near the grave,  
and his life to the destroyers.  
23 If there is a messenger for him,  
a mediator, one in a thousand,  
to show man *God's* uprightness,  
24 Then he is gracious to him and says,  
'Deliver him from going down to the pit;  
I have found a ransom.'  
25 *Then* his flesh will become fresher than a child's;  
he will return to the days of his youth.  
26 He will pray to God,  
and *God* will show him favour.

solution to the problem that has come up about Job's sufferings. He says that although God does not give an account of His actions He does speak to men. He speaks in dreams, especially fearful dreams, and visions (vs 15,16. See note at Num 12:6). God also speaks through chastisements and pains (vs 19-22). Eliphaz also, in his first speech, had referred to both of these (4:12-16; 5:17,18). But Elihu deals with these matters much more clearly and fully than Eliphaz. Job spoke of the fearful dreams and visions which had come to him (7:13,14), of his ceaseless pain (30:16,17), his lack of hunger (3:24), and his emaciated condition (16:8; 19:20).

Elihu uses similar language about dreams and sufferings. In other words, he wants Job to apply to himself all that he says. He tells Job what he thinks is the purpose of it all. Terrifying dreams and fearful pains are God's messengers, he says, and God sends them for three very good reasons. God wants to turn men from evil, break their pride, and save them from destruction (vs 17,18, 29,30). Evidently Elihu is sure that Job is guilty of wrongdoing and pride and needs to be saved from destruction. That is, in some measure at least, he is in agreement with the three friends. In general what Elihu says here is excellent and suitable to the condition of many people. But it did not fit Job's case and did not solve the problem of Job's sufferings.

**33:18** "Keeps back his soul from the pit" – this could also be translated "or preserve

- And he will see *God's* face with joy;  
for *God* will restore to man his righteousness.  
27 He looks at men and *if anyone* says,  
'I have sinned, and perverted *what was* right,  
and it was not *repaid* to me in equal measure,'  
28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit,  
and his life will see the light.  
29 "See, God does all these *things*.  
Twice, thrice *he does them* to a man.  
30 To bring his soul back from the pit,  
that the light of life may enlighten him.  
31 Pay attention, Job; listen to me.  
Keep silent and I will speak.  
32 If you have anything to say, answer me.  
Speak, for I want to justify you.  
33 If not, listen to me.  
Keep silent, and I will teach you wisdom."

**34** Elihu continued his answer and said,  
2 "Listen to my words, you wise *men*,  
and give ear to me, you who have  
understanding.

- 3 For the ear tests words as the mouth  
tastes food.  
4 Let us choose for ourselves what is just,  
let us find out among ourselves what *is* good.

him from the grave."

"From perishing by the sword" – or "from crossing the River." See note on the Hebrew language at Ps 14:7.

**33:23-30** Elihu describes a way which God may use to restore the suffering, chastised man. The language of vs 23,24 in Hebrew is difficult and obscure. We cannot be sure whether the messenger is an angel or a man, whether he is a very exceptional individual – one in a thousand, or one of many – one together with a thousand others. And we do not know what the "ransom" referred to means. Some scholars think Elihu regarded himself as the messenger; others think he means an angel from heaven; others think Elihu was unknowingly uttering a prophecy about Christ who would come as God's messenger to men, the one Mediator between God and men, who gave Himself as a ransom to redeem men. In any case, Elihu is holding out hope to Job – if only Job listens to what God is saying to him he will regain his health, joy, and righteousness, and God's fellowship (vs 25,26). Elihu thinks that then Job will speak like the man in vs 27,28.

**33:31-33** Elihu now gives Job an opportunity to answer if he wishes. Job remains silent – perhaps because he wants Elihu to continue, or perhaps because he sees Elihu has said nothing very new and that he has already given an answer to such ideas. Elihu's confidence in his own wisdom (v 33) causes us again to doubt his humility.

**34:1-4** Elihu believes his words to be so manifestly wise that if anyone has any discernment he will be forced to concede it (see 36:4).

- 5 "For Job has said, 'I am righteous,  
and God has taken away justice from me.
- 6 Should I lie about my right?  
My wound *is* incurable,  
*though I am* without transgression.'
- 7 What man *is* like Job,  
*who* drinks up scorn like water?
- 8 He goes in the company of evildoers,  
and walks with wicked men.
- 9 For he has said, 'It profits a man  
nothing for him to delight in God.'
- 10 "Therefore listen to me, you men of  
understanding.  
Far be it from God *to act* wickedly,  
and *from* the Almighty *to commit* iniquity!
- 11 For he will repay a man *according* to his deeds,  
and sees that everyone finds *the reward*  
for *his* ways.
- 12 Yes, certainly God will not act wickedly,  
nor will the Almighty pervert justice.
- 13 Who put him in charge of the earth?  
Or who has appointed *him over* the  
whole world?
- 14 If he sets his heart on it,  
and gathers back to himself his Spirit  
and his breath,
- 15 All flesh would perish together,  
and man would turn again to dust.
- 16 "Now if *you have* understanding hear this;

**34:5-9** He now sets forth what he thinks Job's position is. In v 5 he quotes some of Job's words (13:18; 27:2). In vs 6 and 9 he gives what he thinks is the essence of some of the things Job says. Job knew that when he claimed to live a righteous life his friends did not believe him, and that circumstances seemed to testify against him. Job never used the words of v 9, but Elihu thought he meant this from the words he did use (9:21-24; 21:7-9; 24:12).  
But Job also said things that indicate he sometimes thought the opposite of this (21:14-16; 27:7-23; 28:28). Elihu is being most unfair to Job in his accusations in vs 7,8. The lover of justice (32:3) can himself be unjust. Verse 7 suggests a constant thirst for mocking. Elihu is saying Job loves to use scornful language. Zophar accused him of the same thing (11:3). Job did scorn some of his friends' remarks, but this is because he saw that they were worthy of scorn. It is clear that Elihu with all his professed wisdom did not understand Job.  
**34:10-12** Elihu now begins to defend God's justice against what he thinks are Job's attacks. He has a very high view of God's justice. Whatever may have happened to Job, however Job may question God's justice, whatever may happen in the world, whatever suffering and calamities may come on men, one thing is absolutely certain –

- listen to the sound of my words.
- 17 Should one who hates the right govern?  
And will you condemn the most just *one*?
- 18 *Is it proper* to say to a king,  
'*You are* wicked'?
- And to princes, '*You are* ungodly'?
- 19 *How much less the One* who does not show  
favouritism to princes,  
or regard the rich more than the poor!  
For they *are* all the work of his hands.
- 20 In a moment they die in the middle of the night,  
and the people are troubled and pass away,  
and the mighty are taken away without  
a hand *touching them*.
- 21 "For his eyes *are* on the ways of man,  
and he sees all his steps.
- 22 *There is* no darkness or shadow of  
death where evildoers can hide themselves.
- 23 For he does not *need to* lay more  
*charges* on man, that he should go  
before him in judgment.
- 24 Without investigation he breaks in  
pieces mighty men  
and sets up others in their place.
- 25 For he knows their deeds, and he overturns  
*them* in the night, so that they  
are destroyed.
- 26 He strikes them down as the wicked  
*men* they are,  
openly, in the sight of others,

God can do no wrong. (How true this is – compare Gen 18:25; Deut 32:4; Ps 11:7; 89:14; Jer 9:24; Acts 7:31; Rev 16:7). In v 11 Elihu says that God gives to men according to their deeds. This indeed is the essence of justice and is often stated in the Bible (Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12; Jer 32:19; Ezek 33:20; Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12).  
However, like the three friends, Elihu assumed that this reward or punishment of deeds was taking place now in this world. He knew nothing, of course, of the judgments revealed in the New Testament (Matt 25:33-36; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-15). So Elihu is really saying just what the three friends said – Job is guilty and receiving the just punishment for his bad deeds. So Elihu has not been able to give a better reason for Job's sufferings than they did.  
**34:13-15** God is the absolute sovereign of the universe and can do what He will. He does not need to give an answer to anyone.  
**34:14** "On it" – the word for "man" (KJV) is not in the Hebrew here.  
**34:17** Verse 5; 40:8.  
**34:18-30** God is completely impartial in His judgments. He sees all, knows all, and rules over all with justice.  
**34:23** The Hebrew of the first phrase is very

- 27 Because they turned back from him  
and would not consider any of his ways,  
28 Causing the cry of the poor to come to him;  
and he heard the cry of the afflicted.  
29 When he gives quietness, who then can  
make trouble?  
And when he hides *his* face,  
who then can see him,  
whether *this is done* against a nation  
or against an individual?  
30 *He does this* so that the hypocrite does not  
reign and the people are not ensnared.  
31 "For it is right to say to God,  
'I have borne *punishment*.  
I will not offend again.  
32 Teach me *what* I do not see.  
If I have committed iniquity,  
I will not do so again.'  
33 *Should he reward* you according to your terms,  
even though you refuse *his* way?  
You must choose, and not I.  
Therefore tell what you know.  
34 Let men of understanding say to me,  
a wise man who listens to me,  
35 'Job has spoken without knowledge,  
and his words *were* without wisdom.'  
36 My desire *is that* Job may be tested  
to the utmost,  
for *giving* answers like wicked men.  
37 For he adds rebellion to his sin.  
He *scornfully* claps *his hands* together  
among us,  
and multiplies his words against God."

obscure and so the meaning is doubtful.

**34:31-33** Elihu wants Job to speak like the man in vs 31 and 32. If Job will not, Elihu is sure he cannot hope for God's mercy.

**34:34-37** Since Job refuses to be a humble penitent, confessing his sins and begging for mercy, Elihu, like the three friends, is certain that Job is a rebellious sinner. Notice v 36. Did Elihu not realize that Job had already been tried to the utmost? What more did he desire Job to suffer? Some "mediator" Elihu is proving to be! Oh, who is like Christ the Lord! (Heb 2:17,18; 4:15,16; 1 John 2:1).

**35:1-3** Elihu thinks he has suitably dealt with Job's words about God's justice. Now he takes up a second complaint he has against Job. He had already stated it in 34:9. See note there.

**35:2** "My righteousness is more than God's" – of course, Job never said this, but Elihu thought this was the meaning of some things he did say.

**35:3** "You" – or "me."

**35:4-8** Man's deeds, whether good or bad, cannot really affect God, Elihu says. God is exalted above the heavens, He is completely self-sufficient. Nothing that man does can

**35** Elihu continued speaking and said,  
2 "Do you think this is just?

You say, 'My righteousness *is*  
more than God's.'

3 For you say, 'What advantage would  
it be to you,

what benefit would I have,  
*if I refrained* from sinning?'

4 "I will answer you, and your companions  
with you.

5 Look at the heavens and see,  
and gaze at the clouds *which* are  
higher than you.

6 If you sin, what are you doing to him?  
Or *if* your transgressions are increased,  
what are you doing to him?

7 If you are righteous,  
what are you giving him?  
Or what does he receive from your hand?

8 Your wickedness *hurts* a man like yourself,  
and your righteousness *helps only*  
a son of man.

9 "The *people* cry out because of the  
many acts of oppression;  
they cry out because of the arm of the mighty.

10 But no one says,  
'Where *is* God, my Maker,  
who gives songs in the night,

11 Who teaches us more than the beasts  
of the earth,  
and makes us wiser than the birds of the sky?'

12 There they cry out, but he does not answer,  
because of the pride of evil men.

add anything to God or take anything away from Him. He deals with men with impartial justice. He has arranged matters in such a way that man's righteous deeds or evil deeds affect only men. For these reasons righteousness is profitable to men, and wickedness unprofitable. In this Elihu was not altogether accurate. All sins are against God (Ps 51:4); they cause Him pain and grief (Gen 6:6); eventually they were all laid on the Son of God (Isa 53:4-6), and meant sufferings and death to Him; and God gets satisfaction from the righteous deeds of His people, and their lives are significant in the unseen war going on between God and Satan (1:8-12; 2:3-6).

**35:9-15** Does Job think righteousness is unprofitable because God does not hear the cries of the righteous? Evidently Elihu thinks that Job thinks so. Certainly this is an idea that Satan inserts into many people's minds. Many true believers also are sometimes tested on this point. They sometimes are tempted to think when they get no answers to their prayers that serving God is useless. Elihu says there are good reasons why God does not hear men when they cry out in their misery.

- 13 Certainly God will not listen to an empty *cry*;  
the Almighty will not pay attention to it.
- 14 Although you say you do not see him,  
*yet the case for* judgment *is* before him,  
and you must wait for him.
- 15 But now, because he has not punished  
in his anger,  
in *his* great extremity *Job* does not  
understand.
- 16 Therefore Job opens his mouth for empty *talk*.  
He multiplies words without knowledge."

- 36** Elihu continued and said,  
2 "Bear with me a little while,  
and I will show you that *there is* still more  
to be said on God's behalf.
- 3 I will bring my knowledge from afar.  
I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
- 4 And truly my words *are* not false;  
one who is perfect in knowledge *is* with you.
- 5 "See, God *is* mighty,  
but does not despise *anyone*;  
*he is* mighty in strength *and* wisdom.
- 6 He does not preserve the life of the wicked,  
but gives the poor *their* rights.
- 7 He does not withdraw his eyes from  
the righteous,  
but *seats them* with kings on the throne;  
yes, he establishes them forever,  
and they are exalted.

First, they do not acknowledge God as Creator and Teacher and direct their cries to Him alone (vs 10,11). They act as if they had learned no more than dumb beasts. If they humbly pray to their Maker He would give them "songs in the night" – joy in the midst of troubles.

Second, God often ignores men's cries because they are both wicked and arrogant. So their prayers are empty and insincere (vs 12,13). In vs 14-16 Elihu applies this to Job. God, he says, is even less likely to hear Job's pleas than those of wicked, arrogant men. Why? Because of the way Job speaks. According to Elihu, Job has fully denied God's justice (vs 14,15); so he must be even worse than the arrogant and wicked man.

"Teaches" (v 11) – This could also be translated "Who teaches us by the beasts of the earth and makes us wise by the birds of the air."

"Wait for him" (v 14) – the Hebrew here does not mean "trust thou in him" (KJV).

"Extremity" (v 15) – the Hebrew word here also means weakness or folly or stupidity. This whole sentence in Hebrew is obscure and difficult.

**35:16** See 8:2; 11:3; 12:2; 15:2,3; 16:3; 18:2,3; 26:3; 34:35; 38:2.

**36:1,2** Elihu has already spoken three times (32:6; 34:1; 35:1), as often as any of the three friends. Do his hearers show signs

- 8 But if *they are* bound in fetters  
and held by the cords of affliction,
- 9 Then he shows them their deeds, and  
the transgressions they have  
arrogantly committed.
- 10 He also opens their ear to instruction and  
commands them to turn back from iniquity.
- 11 If they obey and serve *him*,  
they will spend their days in prosperity,  
and their years in pleasures.
- 12 But if they do not obey,  
they will perish by the sword,  
and they will die without knowledge.
- 13 "But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath;  
they do not cry out *for his help* when  
he binds them.
- 14 They die in youth, and their life *ends*  
among the male shrine prostitutes.
- 15 He delivers the poor in their affliction,  
and opens their ears *to hear him* in oppression.
- 16 "And also he would have brought you out  
of distress *into* a broad place  
free of restraint;  
and what is set on your table  
*would have been* full and rich.
- 17 But *now* your *life* is full of the judgment  
on the wicked;
- judgment and justice have taken hold *of you*.
- 18 Because of *his* wrath,  
*beware* that he does not take you away

of restlessness? Wait, he says, I have more to say on God's behalf.

**36:3,4** He thinks he will give new truth not revealed in anything the others have said. He is sure he knows the truth and that his wisdom is very great indeed. Again he gives us good reason to doubt his humility. Is he not speaking of himself when he says "one who is perfect in knowledge is with you"? It seems so, but see 37:16.

**36:5-21** In these verses Elihu has two main points. First, God wisely and impartially determines what men should experience (vs 5-9); second, God's chastening has a merciful purpose – the correction and reformation of erring men (vs 10-15. See 33:14-30). He then applies these truths to Job (vs 16-21). There is good in what he says (v 15, for example), but his remarks are not what we would expect from a person "perfect in knowledge." Concerning God's rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked in this world, he gives the same old view that both he and the three friends have presented before. He ignores, just as they did, all the facts which Job had urged against this view. And by some of his remarks he reveals again that he does not understand Job.

"Will perish by the sword" (v 12) – or the Hebrew may mean "will cross the River."

**36:18-20** The language of the Hebrew is



- with a blow;  
for a great ransom would not be able  
to deliver you.
- 19 Will he esteem your riches?  
*No*, not gold or all the powers of strength.
- 20 Do not desire the night,  
when people are cut off from their places.
- 21 Be careful, do not turn to iniquity,  
which you have preferred to affliction.
- 22 "See, God is exalted in his power.  
Who teaches like him?
- 23 Who can appoint his way for him,  
or say, 'You have done wrong'?
- 24 Remember to praise his work, which men see.
- 25 Everyone sees it; man looks on from afar.
- 26 See, God *is* great, and we do not know *him*;  
nor can the number of his years be  
searched out.
- 27 "For he draws up the drops of water;  
they distill as rain from the vapour,
- 28 Which the clouds pour out  
*and* let fall on man abundantly.
- 29 And can *anyone* understand how the  
clouds spread out,  
the *thundering* sound from his tent?
- 30 See, he spreads his light on it,  
and covers the depths of the sea.
- 31 Through these things he judges the  
peoples *and* gives food in abundance.
- 32 He conceals lightning in *his* hands,  
and commands it to strike the mark.
- 33 Its sound announces it.  
The cattle also *show* the rising *storm*.

difficult here and the meaning uncertain.

**36:22** With this verse Elihu begins a long passage on the greatness of God which goes on to 37:24. It is full of beautiful truth. We might call it "Elihu's sermon on nature." The key verses are 36:26 and 37:5,14,19. Elihu is saying to Job "we cannot understand God's ways with His physical creation. How then can we understand His ways in His government of the world of men? They also will be mysterious and beyond our ability to grasp." How true this is! (5:9; 11:7; 15:8; Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33,34). But we should not think it was a truth Job was ignorant of. Elihu wanted Job to apply this truth to himself. But was Elihu just as eager to apply it to himself? It seems he thought he knew all about God's ways with Job.

**36:23** He thinks Job is trying to do this.

**36:24** "Which men see" – the Hebrew could be translated "of which men sing."

**36:27** "He draws up the drops of water" – this means that God draws the water up from the earth by the process of evaporation.

"Distill as rain from the vapour" – or "distill as rain to the streams."

**36:27-33** God shows His great wisdom in

- 37** "At this also my heart trembles and  
leaps from its place.
- 2 Listen! Listen to the thunder of his voice and  
the sound *that* comes from his mouth.
- 3 He sends it out under the whole heaven,  
and his lightning to the ends of the earth.
- 4 A voice roars after it;  
he thunders with his majestic voice.  
He does not restrain the *lightning*  
*flashes* when his voice is heard.
- 5 God thunders marvellously with his voice.  
He does great things which we cannot  
comprehend.
- 6 For he says to the snow, 'Be *on* the earth',  
likewise to the gentle rain,  
and to his great strong rain.
- 7 He seals the hand of every man,  
so that everyone will know his work.
- 8 Then the beasts go into dens,  
and remain in their places.
- 9 From the south comes the whirlwind,  
and cold from the north.
- 10 Ice is given by the breath of God,  
and the broad waters are frozen.
- 11 And he loads the thick cloud with moisture,  
and scatters his lightning *through* the cloud.
- 12 By his guidance it swirls around,  
to do whatever he commands them over  
the face of the whole inhabited earth.
- 13 He causes it to come, whether for correction,  
or for his land, or as a mercy.
- 14 "Listen to this, Job.  
Stand still and consider the wonderful  
works of God.

the making of rain and storm, and in using them in governing earth's people (v 31).

**36:29** "His tent" – here the sky is regarded as God's tent.

**36:32** "He conceals lighting in his hands" – the Hebrew could also be translated "He covers the clouds with lightning."

"To strike the mark" – this translation of the phrase brings out the meaning of the Hebrew, while the KJV here does not.

**37:1-4** Evidently, while Elihu has been speaking, a storm has come up. He compares its thunders to the roar of God's voice.

**37:5** Elihu goes on (up to v 14) to other phenomena in nature which show God's great wisdom.

**37:10** God's breath here means the wind.

**37:13** God uses climatic conditions in His wise government of the earth.

**37:14-24** Elihu comes to the conclusion of all he has to say. The essence of it is this: He wants Job to recognize that God's greatness and wisdom are unsearchable (vs 14-18), to abandon his presumptuous desire to make a case before God (vs 19,20), and reverently submit to God (v 24). Verse 23

- 15 Do you know how God dispatches his  
clouds and causes their lightning to flash?
- 16 Do you know *how* the clouds *are* balanced,  
those wonderful works of the One who  
is perfect in knowledge?
- 17 Or how your clothes *are* hot when he  
stills the earth with the south *wind*?
- 18 Have you *joined* with him in spreading  
out the sky,  
*looking as* strong as a cast metal mirror?
- 19 "Teach us what we should say to him,  
*for* we cannot put *our words* in order  
because of the darkness.
- 20 Should he be told that I would speak?  
If a man speaks, surely he will be  
swallowed up.

- 21 And now *men* cannot look at the bright  
light in the clouds,  
but the wind passes by and clears them away.
- 22 From the north comes golden *splendour*;  
God *comes* in awesome majesty.
- 23 The Almighty! We cannot find him.  
*He is* excellent in power, in judgment,  
and in abundant justice.  
He does not oppress.
- 24 Therefore men fear him.  
He does not look to anyone wise in heart."

- 38** Then the LORD answered Job out of the  
whirlwind, and said,  
2 "Who *is* this who darkens counsel  
by words without knowledge?  
3 Now make yourself ready like a man,

gives the sum of his views of God. Such a God is worthy of all honor and reverence from men. Elihu speaks well of God's greatness, of His just and righteous character.

But what of the man and his words as a whole? We should think of him neither too highly nor too lowly. He was a man made of the same clay as Job and his friends (33:6), and he revealed in his words that this was indeed so. He was eloquent and had considerable wisdom and knowledge of God. But he seems over-confident in his own wisdom (on this see 1 Cor 8:2). He says some fine things, but he fails to understand Job or to solve the riddle of Job's sufferings. He did not know that Job was a better man than he was himself. He seems on the whole to be superior to Job's three friends, but he was not Job's equal in character. We have God's own word for this (2:3).

Like all believers Elihu was a mixture of good and bad, wisdom and ignorance. He is a reminder to us that the highest reach of man's reason cannot comprehend the mysteries of God (1 Cor 1:25). It was good that he himself recognized this to some extent at least. His closing words beautifully lead us up to the coming of God on the scene in chapter 38. His words, possibly, have prepared the minds of Job and his friends for the words of God which follow.

**37:24** "He does not look to" – or, possibly, "He does not have regard for."

**38:1** Job had expressed the desire to stand before God that he might present his case (13:3,22; 23:3-7). God now suddenly comes to him and gives him the desire of his heart. It seems fitting that God should come in the storm. A mighty storm has been blowing across Job's life and thoughts. God has been in that storm too and has achieved His purpose. Now He comes in the clouds and thunder and speaks to His suffering servant.

We might think that God would now reveal to Job the reasons for his sufferings, or say something very comforting such as, "Job, I love you. You have passed the test

I sent; you have kept your faith in me. Now I will greatly bless you." However, God did not do this. It would seem that God had more to do in God's life before giving Him assurance of His love.

**38:2** Whom did God mean by these words? Elihu was speaking when God came in the storm and God could have meant him. It seems a fitting rebuke to one who thought too highly of his own wisdom. If God did not speak these words about Elihu then He made no comment at all about him. And it seems strange that He would completely ignore him. He spoke to the three friends in 42:7,8, and had much to say to Job. However, God may have been speaking here about Job. Job himself thought so (42:3) – but this may have been merely a mark of Job's humility. Actually all five persons involved in the debate were there, so perhaps God meant these words as a rebuke to all of them. Maybe God put the question in an ambiguous way so that any of them who was willing to apply it to himself could do so.

God says that "counsel" has been "darkened" by foolish words. The Hebrew word translated counsel means here God's purpose, God's thought, God's plan that He was fulfilling toward Job. In their ignorance of God's ways Job, Elihu, and the other three all made this plan of God obscure. Their words, instead of bringing light on the subject, brought darkness. If we try to teach others this book, or any truth of God, we should be careful that we do not do as they did. We should never profess a knowledge we do not have, should never speak dogmatically about doubtful matters, should never think we have a monopoly on God's truth.

**38:3** "Make yourself ready" – the Hebrew means "gird up your loins", but this phrase is obviously used metaphorically here. Now God speaks directly to Job. He is going to ask Job a series of questions. If Job would try to answer them he must be prepared for a very vigorous effort. Why is God asking

- for I will question you,  
and you shall answer me.
- 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?  
Declare *it*; if you have understanding.
- 5 Who determined its measurements, if you know?  
Or who stretched out the measuring line on it?
- 6 On what are its foundations fastened?  
Or who laid its cornerstone,
- 7 When the morning stars sang together  
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?
- 8 "Or *who* shut in the sea with doors,  
when it burst out,  
*as if* coming from the womb,
- 9 When I made the clouds its garment,  
and thick darkness its swaddling bands,
- 10 And fixed my boundaries for it,  
and set up *its* bolted doors,
- 11 And said, 'You may come this far,  
but no farther;  
here your proud waves will stop'?
- 12 Since *the beginning* of your days have  
you given commands to the morning,  
*and* caused the dawn to know its place,
- 13 That it might take hold of the ends  
of the earth and shake the wicked out of it?
- 14 *The earth* takes shape like clay *under* a seal,  
and they stand out like a garment.
- 15 Their light is withheld from the wicked,  
and the upraised arm is broken.
- 16 "Have you entered the springs of the sea?

Job these questions instead of comforting him? Job has been questioning God's government of the world. He has expressed doubts about the justice of God's dealings with men. Did Job think, then, that he had more wisdom than God? In the matter of ruling the world did he think he could do a better job than God?

God asks the following questions in an ironic way. We can detect, can we not, a smile behind them. He knows very well that Job cannot answer a single one of them. His purpose is to show Job his proper place. He means to shut Job's mouth, to get him to confess he has spoken foolishly. God succeeds perfectly in this (42:3-6). Only after that does He comfort Job. Very often God must cause men to shut their mouths in order to bless them (compare Rom 3:19,21-24). Calamities did not come on Job because he was guilty of wrong doing. But after the calamities came, in his attempts to explain matters, Job at times was guilty of wrong speaking. This he had to confess and set right.

**38:4** God is showing Job how little he knows. See the ironic way God repeatedly reveals Job's lack of understanding (vs 5,18,20,21,33; 39:1,26).

**38:7** These morning stars may here signify

- Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep?
- 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you,  
or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?
- 18 Have you comprehended the wide expanse of the earth?  
Declare *it*; if you know all this.
- 19 "Where *is* the way to the dwelling place of *light*?  
And where *does* darkness *have* its place,
- 20 That you may take it to its boundaries,  
and know the paths *to* its house?
- 21 Do you know because you were born then,  
and the number of your days *is so* great?
- 22 "Have you entered the treasures of the snow?  
Or have you seen the treasures of the hail,
- 23 Which I reserve for a time of trouble,  
for a day of battle and war?
- 24 What is the way *to the place* where light is diffused,  
or the east wind *is* scattered over the earth?
- 25 Who cuts a channel for the flood,  
or a path for the thunderstorm,
- 26 To bring rain on the earth *where* no one *lives*,  
*on* the wilderness where no one *lives*,
- 27 To satisfy the desolate wasteland,  
and to cause the tender plant to bud?
- 28 Does the rain have a father?  
Who begets the drops of dew?
- 29 From whose womb comes the ice?  
And who gives birth to the frost

angelic beings.

"Sons of God" – angels. God is speaking of a time before men had been created (see also Job 1:6). Observe that the creation of earth was a source of great rejoicing in heaven.

**38:12-35** God shows Job also how little he can do (vs 16, 20, 22, 31, 32, 34). God wants Job to fully understand that he is lacking in knowledge and incapable of doing even the smallest thing God does; that his complaints have been against the all-wise, all-powerful Creator and Sovereign of the universe.

In these chapters God is showing also the folly of all men who question His wisdom, power, and ways. How many there are who know nothing, and can do nothing, who yet dare to criticize all God does! And how many others there are who look at this marvelous universe and dogmatically deny the existence of God! The arrogant ignorance of atheism! God here asks questions that should cause every human being to lay his hand on his mouth and admit his ignorance. Nature should teach us humility. Alas, many people, learning a tiny fraction of creation's mysteries, turn proud and imagine that nothing is beyond the power of their reason.

from the heavens?

- 30 Then the waters become *hard as* stone,  
and the surface of the deep is frozen.
- 31 "Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades,  
or loosen the cords of Orion?
- 32 Can you bring forth the constellations  
in their seasons,  
or lead out the Bear with its cubs?
- 33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?  
Or set up its dominion on earth?
- 34 "Can you raise your voice to the clouds,  
so that an abundance of water may  
cover you?
- 35 Can you send out lightning flashes,  
so that they go and say to you,  
'Here we *are*!'
- 36 Who has put wisdom in the inner being,  
or who has given understanding to the heart?
- 37 Who can number the clouds by *his* wisdom?  
Or who can tilt the water jars of heaven,
- 38 When the dust becomes hard,  
and the clods stick together?
- 39 "Do you hunt the prey for the lion,  
or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
- 40 When they crouch in *their* dens,  
or lie in wait in *their* lairs?
- 41 Who provides food for the raven, when its young  
ones cry out to God and wander around  
for lack of food?

- 39** "Do you know the time when the wild  
mountain goats give birth,  
or do you watch when the deer is in labour?
- 2 Can you number the months they fulfil?  
Or do you know the time when they give birth?
- 3 They crouch down, they give birth to  
their young ones,  
they rid themselves of their labour pains.
- 4 Their young ones flourish,  
they grow up in the field;  
*then* they go away and do not return to them.

- 5 "Who has let the wild donkey go free?  
Who has untied the bonds of the wild donkey?
- 6 To him I have made the wilderness a home,  
and barren land a dwelling place.
- 7 He scorns the crowded city;  
he does not hear the shouts of a driver.
- 8 The range of the mountains *is* his pasture,  
and he searches for any green thing.
- 9 "Will the wild ox be willing to serve you,  
or spend the night by your manger?
- 10 Can you harness the wild ox to the  
furrow with ropes,  
or will he harrow the valleys behind you?
- 11 Will you trust him because his  
strength *is* great,  
or will you leave your labour to him?
- 12 Will you trust him to bring home your grain,  
and gather *it* to your threshing floor?
- 13 "*Did you give* the noisy wings to the peacock,  
or wings and plumage to the ostrich?
- 14 She leaves her eggs on the ground  
and lets the sand warm them,
- 15 And forgets that a foot may crush them,  
or that a wild beast may break them.
- 16 She treats her young ones harshly,  
as though *they were* not hers;  
her labour is in vain, without fear,
- 17 Because God has deprived her of wisdom,  
and has not imparted understanding to her.
- 18 When she raises herself to *full* height *to run*,  
she scorns the horse and its rider.
- 19 "Have you given strength to the horse?  
Have you clothed its neck with thunder?
- 20 Can you frighten him like a grasshopper?  
His majestic snorting *produces* terror.
- 21 He paws the valley and rejoices in *his* strength.  
He goes out to meet *man's* weapons.
- 22 He mocks at fear and is not frightened;  
nor does he turn back from the sword.
- 23 The quiver rattles against him,  
the glittering spear and the shield.

**38:31** "The cluster of" – or "the twinkling of," or "the chains of," or even "the beautiful." The Hebrew is obscure. Pleiades and Orion are two constellations.

**38:32** "Constellations" – Hebrew "Mazzeroth." Some think the word indicates the morning star.

"The Bear" – the constellation called Ursa Major or the Big Dipper. But the meaning of the Hebrew here is unclear and several different translations have been offered.

**38:36** What makes man differ from the rest of earth's creation? How is it that he has a mind that can have wisdom and understanding? God has given it to man. Wisdom does not arise and evolve out of dumb and dead matter.

**38:39-41** God speaks of His wisdom and care over the whole animal creation. The implication is that if God cares about all, will He not have loving concern for men? Compare Matt 6:25-32.

**39:1** This whole chapter is taken up with the theme God began in the closing verses of the preceding chapter. God is keeping a close watch on everything on earth. He treats the whole animal world with wisdom and skill. Will He do less for men, for Job? Also we can see in this chapter the mighty Creator of the universe recounting with joy some of the works of His hands. He seems to be exulting in His creation (see also Gen 1:31; Prov 8:22-31; Ps 104:31).

- 24 He eats up the ground with fierceness and rage;  
nor does he stand firm at the sound  
of the trumpet.
- 25 At the *blast* of the trumpets, he says 'Aha!'  
He scents the battle from afar, the thunder  
of the captains and the shouting.
- 26 "Does the hawk fly by your wisdom,  
*and* stretch her wings toward the south?
- 27 At your command does the eagle soar up  
and make her nest on high?
- 28 She makes her dwelling on a rock and spends  
the nights *there* on the rocky crag,  
in *her* stronghold.
- 29 From there she seeks for prey;  
her eyes see *it* from a long distance.
- 30 Her young ones also suck up blood,  
and where the slain *are*, there *is* she."

**40** Then the LORD continued to answer Job  
and said,

- 2 "Will the one who contends with the  
Almighty correct *him*?  
Let the one who rebukes God answer it."
- 3 Then Job answered the LORD and said,  
4 "Look, I am insignificant.

**40:2** Job has been wanting to argue his case before God (13:3; 23:4). He thought he had a great many things to say in his defense. But in the two preceding chapters God has revealed something of His own great power and wisdom and has overwhelmed Job with questions he has no answers for. Now God asks him if he thinks he is wise enough to give God correction and advice. Does Job wish to continue the debate? Then let him answer God now.

**40:3-5** Job does not dare to answer. (Compare Rom 3:19.) Though his own questions about God's justice have not been answered, he will not repeat them to God's face (compare Rom 9:20). God's way with him is succeeding.

**40:4** "Insignificant" - this is a better translation of the Hebrew word for today than "vile" (KJV), which now conveys a wrong meaning. The Hebrew word means "small," "worthy of being despised," or "of no weight or worth," or "insignificant." Job is not confessing sin here or referring to his sinful nature or speaking of any vile acts. He is acknowledging his smallness and insignificance and so his inability to speak to the great Creator. God has still more to accomplish in Job before He gives him comfort and blessing. He will do His work in Job inwardly before He heals him outwardly. So He continues to speak to Job. Of course, the very fact that God had come to him and was speaking to him must have been an indescribable comfort in itself to this sad and suffering man. Job may well have thought "Let God say anything, only let Him be here and speak!" (compare Ps 28:1).

What answer can I give you?

I lay my hand over my mouth.

- 5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer.  
Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,

- 7 "Now make yourself ready like a man.  
I will question you, and you instruct me.
- 8 Would you indeed do away with my judgment?  
Would you condemn me that you may  
be justified?
- 9 Do you have an arm like God's,  
or can you thunder with a voice like his?
- 10 Then adorn yourself *with* majesty and  
splendor,  
and clothe yourself in glory and beauty.
- 11 Scatter the fury of your wrath, and see  
everyone *who is* proud and humble him.
- 12 Look on everyone *who is* proud  
and bring him low,  
*and* trample on the wicked in their place.
- 13 Hide them together in the dust;  
bind their faces in the concealed *place*.
- 14 Then I will also admit to you that  
your own right hand can save you.

**40:7** This is 38:3 repeated.

**40:8** This has been the tendency of some of the things Job has said (7:20,21; 9:22-24; 10:3; 19:6,7; 24:12; 27:2). Those who had disputed with Job did not understand the reason for his sufferings, but they discerned his fault and rebuked him for it (8:3; 15:4,12,13; 34:5,6). Now God Himself puts the matter before him. This was Job's one big error in the things he said. Job would not admit his friends were right even in this one point. But it is one thing to argue with one's friends, quite another to stand before God. God will now bring Job to full confession and repentance for his sinful speaking.

Complaining about God's dealings with us is the same as accusing Him of injustice. It implies we are better than He. No matter what troubles come to us God has a right to demand of us complete trust in Him, complete submission to His will, complete love and devotion. He is the great King over the universe (see note at Ps 47:2). The business of God's people is not to question God but to glorify Him (see notes on psalm 73). God will bring us believers (as He did Job) into situations where we cannot understand what He is doing, where His dealings with us seem contrary to reason, and where we must simply trust Him. In some way or other, and in some measure, all believers are Jobs. Have we yet learned simply to trust God as Job did, no matter what may be happening in our lives or circumstances?

**40:9-14** The purpose of these words seems to be to remind Job of this truth: Job does not have the power to bring the world to



- 15 "Look now at the behemoth,  
which I made *along* with you.  
He eats grass like an ox.
- 16 Now see what strength he *has* in his loins,  
and what power in the muscles of his belly.
- 17 He moves his tail like a cedar.  
The sinews of his thighs are knit together.
- 18 His bones *are like* strong pieces of bronze.  
His limbs *are* like bars of iron.
- 19 "He *is* chief of the ways of God;  
the one who made him can bring near his sword.
- 20 Surely the mountains produce food for him,  
and all the beasts of the field play there.
- 21 He lies under the lotus plants, in the hidden  
place of the reeds and marshlands.
- 22 The lotus plants conceal him *in* their shadow;  
the willow trees by the stream surround him.
- 23 See, though a river overflows him,  
he *is* not alarmed;  
he is confident even though the Jordan  
should pour into his mouth.
- 24 *Who* can catch him about the eyes,  
*or* pierce *his* nose with a trap?

## 41 "Can you draw out the leviathan with a hook,

judgment, so he doesn't have the wisdom  
to criticize God's dealings with men.

**40:15-24** From v 15 onward all God's message to Job is taken up with a description of two beasts – "behemoth" and "leviathan." At first, this might seem to us a very strange message to give to a man suffering in body and mind, a man who has been full of tormenting questions. But God knew He would very shortly bring Job's sufferings to an end. He also knew that there were more important matters than answering Job's questions. He was working to produce complete submission to Himself in Job's heart. He wanted Job to renounce his questioning of God's goodness, and justice, and simply trust Him fully and forever.

People sometimes think that above all else they want their questions answered. But when they come into God's presence and submit to Him in faith they find their questions are not as important to them as they had thought.

As for the beast described in these verses (behemoth) some scholars have thought it is an elephant, others a hippopotamus. Others think it refers to some huge animal now extinct. Certainly the beast described is more like a hippopotamus than an elephant. As for it being a now extinct creature such as some kind of dinosaur – v 19 may suggest a creature somewhat grander than the hippopotamus, but there is no proof that a now extinct animal is meant. We cannot be sure whether Job knew anything about any such animal, and God is calling his attention to an animal he

- or catch* his tongue with a rope you lower?
- 2 Can you put a reed through his nose,  
or pierce his jaw with a hook?
- 3 Will he make many supplications to you?  
Will he speak softly to you?
- 4 Will he make a covenant with you?  
Will you take him as a servant forever?
- 5 Will you play with him as *with* a bird,  
or will you keep him on a leash for your maids?
- 6 Will *your* companions make a banquet of him?  
Will they divide him up among the merchants?
- 7 Can you fill his hide with harpoons,  
or his head with fishing spears?
- 8 *If* you put your hand on him,  
*you will* remember the battle,  
and not do so again.
- 9 See, hope about him is in vain;  
the mere sight of him will bring *you* down.
- 10 "No one *is so* fierce that he dares  
to stir him up.  
Who then is able to stand against me?
- 11 Who has previously *given* to me,  
that I should repay *him*?  
*Everything* under the heavens is mine.
- 12 I will not keep silent about his limbs,  
his strength,

was familiar with (v 15). Some scholars have suggested that possibly some types of dinosaurs were on the ark with Noah and so were in existence after the flood, and that they could have been alive on the earth until Job's day. This may have been so, but as far as the author of these notes is aware, there is as yet no fully satisfactory evidence either for or against this view.

**41:1** "Leviathan" – there has been much speculation about this animal also. Most scholars think a huge crocodile is meant. The sea water crocodile is the largest of all reptiles in the world at present. It can grow to a length of 8 meters or even more. In Ps 104:25,26 "Leviathan" is said to be in the sea. Perhaps this is the "leviathan" described here in Job. It seems that the description here is in very poetic language. It may be interesting to speculate what animals are meant in these two chapters, but it does not seem important to the author of these notes to determine exactly what ones are meant. The important thing is to understand what message God is giving to Job (and to us). And that message is the same whether the animals are of the sort known to us today, or some kind of dinosaurs or other animals unknown to us now. The essence of God's message appears particularly in vs 10,11. Men who fear to stand before some of God's creatures should not think it a light matter to stand before God Himself the Creator of everything. No man can demand anything of God. God is not under obligation to anyone. All things and all men are His property. He does not owe anyone an ex-

- or his graceful proportions.
- 13 Who can take off his outer coat?  
Who can approach *him* with his double bridle?
- 14 Who can open the doors of his face,  
*with* his terrible teeth all around?
- 15 *His scales are his* pride,  
tightly sealed *together*.
- 16 They are so close to each other that  
no air gets between them.
- 17 They are joined to each other;  
they stick together, so that they  
cannot be separated.
- 18 A light flashes out when he sneezes,  
and his eyes *are* like the eyelids  
of the dawn.
- 19 From his mouth issue burning torches;  
sparks of fire leap out.
- 20 Smoke issues from his nostrils,  
as *from* a boiling pot *over* burning reeds.
- 21 His breath sets coals on fire,  
and a flame comes from his mouth.
- 22 Strength lodges in his neck,  
and dismay dances before him.
- 23 The folds of his flesh are joined together;  
on him they are firm and immovable.
- 24 His heart is as hard as a stone;  
yes, as hard as the lower *millstone*.
- 25 When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid.  
Because of his crashing about they  
get out of the way.
- 26 The sword that reaches him cannot  
prove itself;  
nor can the spear, the dart or the javelin.
- 27 He regards iron as straw,

- and* bronze as rotten wood.
- 28 The arrow cannot make him flee;  
stones *from* slings are like stubble to him.
- 29 Darts are regarded as straw.  
He laughs at the shaking of a spear.
- 30 His underside *is like* sharp pieces of pottery;  
on the mire he spreads out like a  
threshing sledge.
- 31 He makes the deep boil like a pot;  
he makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
- 32 He leaves a shining wake behind him;  
*one* might think the deep *has* white hair.
- 33 On earth there is nothing like him;  
he has been made fearless.
- 34 He looks *down* on all *that is* high;  
he is king over all the children of pride."

- 42** Then Job answered the LORD and said,  
2 "I know that you can do everything,  
and *that* no purpose can be  
withheld from you.
- 3 *You asked*, 'Who *is* this who darkens  
counsel without knowledge?'  
Therefore I have spoken things I did  
not understand,  
things too wonderful for me,  
which I did not know.
- 4 Listen, I pray you, and I will speak.  
*You said*, 'I will question you,  
and you shall answer me.'
- 5 I have heard of you by the hearing  
of the ear, but now my eyes see you.
- 6 Therefore I despise *myself*,  
and repent in dust and ashes."

planation of His ways. See Rom 11:33-35.

**41:34** "All the children of pride" – in the context of the debate between Job and the four others, and the appearance of what looks suspiciously like pride at times in all of them, God's mention of pride here may not be without significance.

**42:2** Job fully understands that God can conceive and carry out any plan He wants. He has learned the lesson from God's sermon on nature and applied it to his own sufferings and trials.

**42:3** The first part of v 3 was spoken by God in 38:2. Job now quotes it and applies it to himself. He confesses what all the speakers should have confessed – indeed what all men who dispute about God and His ways have reason to confess. Men so lightly and presumptuously speak of mysteries far beyond their understanding. If they want God's blessing they must humble themselves like Job and repent of their foolishness and sinful speaking.

**42:4** Job is probably referring to God's words in 38:3 and 40:7 addressed to himself. Job now finds that he has nothing to give as an answer but the following two verses, and no

question at all.

**42:5** God may or may not have appeared in some form of glory in the storm clouds. In any case Job means something more than an outward view of God's glory. He speaks of an inner perception, an enlightenment of the eyes of the mind. It was not any argument, not even any presentation of truth alone which brought Job to repentance. It was a new and deeper experience of God Himself. So it is with all men who are brought to full submission to God. In God's presence truths in the mind become the deep knowledge of spiritual experience.

**42:6** The first part of v 6 has no object in Hebrew – it is simply "I despise," or "I reject." Does he mean he despises his former opinions and complaints? Does he mean he abhors everything about himself? Or is he saying he renounces, rejects himself (as in Luke 9:23; etc.)? Probably all of that. A man humbly experiencing God's presence and God's rebuke can no longer have the same high regard for himself, his opinions, deeds, and spiritual attainments that he had before that. Job repents. Of what? Not of his previous righteous life – his need of repentance did not

7 And this is what happened after the LORD had spoken those words to Job: the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite,

“My wrath is burning against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken to me *what is* right, as my servant Job *has*. 8 Therefore take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves; and my servant Job will pray for you, for I will accept him. Otherwise I will

deal with you *as your* foolishness *deserves*; because you have not spoken to me *what is* right, as my servant Job *has*.”

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; and the LORD accepted Job.

10 And the LORD restored the well-being of Job, when he prayed for his friends. Also the LORD

have to do with that. And God never rebuked him for a thing in it. This was one way God vindicated Job before men.

What Job repents of is the foolish and sinful things he has said about God’s justice. He repents that he ever allowed his pains and perplexities to cause a word of complaint against God to come from his lips. He repents in dust and ashes – figurative of complete abandonment to repentance. He now sits spiritually in the ash heap his body sat in (2:8). Job has learned more about himself, more of his weakness and foolishness, through this experience – a very important thing for all of us to learn. He has also learned more of God – and this is the most important kind of learning for any of us. Any event or experience which comes from His hand to bring us this kind of knowledge is worth whatever it costs us, whether it be loss of property, loss of children, loss of reputation, or loss of all things. See John 17:3; etc.

**42:7** God now raises Job from the “dust and ashes” and vindicates him before his friends. By “vindicate” it is not meant that God declares Job to be sinless or faultless, but that God stands by His suffering servant and reveals him to be a man of uprightness and integrity, who feared God and shunned evil (1:8). This is the same kind of vindication David prayed for when he was unjustly slandered and accused – see Ps 26:1; 35:24; 43:1.

Here God calls Job His servant (four times in vs 7,8 – as if He loved to dwell on the idea and emphasize it). He did not call the others His servants. He says He is angry with them. He doesn’t say He is angry with Job. He says Job spoke to Him (or about Him) the right thing. He says they did not.

What is the right thing or things Job spoke? The views of scholars on this depend, in some measure, on how they translate one Hebrew word (*elai*) in this sentence. Some scholars translate like this: “You have not spoken what is right *concerning me* as my servant Job *has*.” This would mean that Job’s theory of how God dealt with mankind in general was more accurate than the theory of his friends.

However, others translate “You have not spoken that which is right *to me*.” It is possible to translate this Hebrew word either way, but the usual meaning of it and the usual way of translating it in the Old Testament is “to me.” For example, in

Isaiah it is translated “to me” a number of times, but never “of me” or “concerning me” (Isa 8:3,11; 21:11; 36:7; 37:21; 51:1). In the context of this chapter also it seems better to translate it “to me” (twice in this same verse, verse 7, part of that same Hebrew word is translated “to” – “to Job” and “to Eliphaz.” Nowhere else in Job is *elai* translated “of me”, or “concerning me”).

If we accept the translation “to me” (as the evidence suggests we should do), we will understand that God is commending Job, not for what he said in the debate with his friends, but for what he said directly to God in 40:3-5 and 42:1-6. In those verses Job admitted his ignorance, and his inability and unworthiness to speak about God or to God, and he repents of the things he had said. His friends did not do so. Probably they did not realize until this moment how mistaken they had been in some of the things they had said, and how much they needed to confess it as Job did. God commended Job’s repentance and confession. After all, why would God commend Job for saying those other things which Job himself saw were wrong? But Job’s confession of wrong speaking was pleasing to God. It is just the sort of confession that many philosophers and theologians (and many ordinary people who argue about God) need to make. Until they admit their ignorance and repent of their false and dogmatic utterances about God they will not know God’s blessing.

**42:8** Can we imagine a better way than this to humble Job’s friends and vindicate Job? Job must act as a priestly intercessor and mediator for his friends or God will not accept them. Observe that they have been guilty of “folly” (or “evil” – the Hebrew word means both), but Job is God’s servant. They condemned Job, but now find that they were worthy of condemnation.

**42:9** “Did” – it speaks well for the friends that they were willing to humble themselves and obey God. Job was willing to forgive their cruel and false accusations against him and pray for them (compare Matt 5:44; Luke 6:28; 23:34; Acts 7:60; Rom 12:14; 1 Pet 3:9). In the whole book of Job there is no indication that they ever prayed for him. If they had, perhaps their speeches would have been quite different.

**42:10** Another way God chose to vindicate Job was to make him prosperous again. He

gave Job twice as much as he had before.

11 Then all his brothers and all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house. And they consoled him and comforted him about the whole disaster that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each one a gold ring.

12 So the LORD blessed the latter *days* of Job more than his first; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of

oxen, and one thousand female donkeys.

13 He also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. 15 In all the land no women could be found *as* beautiful as the daughters of Job. And their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

16 After this Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his grandsons *to* four generations. 17 So Job died, old and full of days.

revealed His love for Job by a method his friends, relatives, and neighbors, and the whole world could understand. In Old Testament days God often blessed His faithful people with material prosperity. In these New Testament days God may not at all reward faithfulness under trial by giving prosperity. Christians are taught to desire and expect their vindication and rewards in the next world, not in this one. And the privilege of suffering loss and pain for Christ is as much a mark of favor as riches could ever be (Matt 6:19-21; Luke 6:20-22; 12:33,34; 18:22; 1 Tim 6:6-9,18,19; Heb 10:32-37; 1 Pet 4:12-16). At the second coming of Christ all things will be made right.

"Restored the well-being of" – the Hebrew also means "turned the captivity of." **42:11** 19:13,14.

"A piece of silver" – in Hebrew "a kesitah." Neither the weight nor value of this ancient unit of money is known to us.

**42:12** Verse 10.

**42:13** God did not give Job twice as many children as before. There was no need. The

ten children who had died (1:2,18,19) were not permanently lost as the sheep, camels, oxen, and donkeys were. The ten dead children were still in God's keeping.

**42:16,17** When calamity struck, Job had ten grown children. Afterwards he lived 140 years more. His many years of life place him possibly in the general era of Abraham. Abraham lived 175 years (Gen 25:7). After Abraham the ordinary life span of men became less.

Through the outer devastating events and inner agonizing experiences that Job endured there came to him a deeper knowledge both of himself and of God. And this, of course, was of immense spiritual value to him. The direct knowledge of God is the highest and best knowledge possible to man. Should we not think that this is one purpose God had in mind when He permitted all that came to Job? And should we not think, we who trust God as Job did, that every event in our own lives and every difficult and painful experience we go through are for the same great purpose? Surely such things are included in the promise of Romans 8:28.

# PSALMS

## Authors:

Many of the Psalms have a brief introduction giving the name of the author, or who the psalm was for or about, or what the theme is. According to these introductions (which were not a part of the original psalms), David wrote 73 psalms, Asaph wrote 12, Solomon wrote 2, Moses and Ethan each wrote one, and 11 were written by or for the sons of Korah (see the note on the introduction to Psalm 42). This leaves 50 psalms which are not attributed to anyone. Some of these too were very probably written by David. The translators of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) thought so; they put David's name in the introductions to 15 more psalms. Also they put the names of Haggai and Zechariah to a few of them.

## Dates:

David reigned 1010 - 970 BC. He wrote some psalms before he became king, some after that. Moses spent 1446 - 1406 in the desert with the people of Israel and must have written his psalm (or psalms) then. Some psalms were probably written after Israel went into captivity in Babylon about 600 BC (for example, see Ps 137). So, though the majority of the psalms were written during the time of David, the writing of all covered a span of at least 800 years.

## Themes:

There are many themes in the psalms, for they were written out of a wide variety of human experiences and circumstances. Because of this some psalm or other is suitable for any circumstance or condition believers may experience. For the most part the psalms are prayers or praises to the one true God. Some are meditations on His greatness, or on His dealings with His people or toward His enemies. Some are songs about the LORD (Jehovah – God's special name that He revealed to His people) or His city or His reign over the earth, and some are exhortations to others to praise Him. Of course, some psalms have more than one theme, so it is not possible to make an exact classification of all the psalms. The following classification may be helpful to the reader:

Psalms of praise or thanksgiving to God:

9, 18, 21, 65, 68, 75, 76, 84, 89, 92, 103-108, 116, 135, 145

Psalms which urge others to praise God:

29, 33, 47, 66, 68, 81, 95-100, 113, 117, 118, 134-136, 146-150

Psalms which speak of God's greatness or goodness:

2, 8, 18, 19, 23, 24, 29, 33, 34, 37, 45-48, 50, 65, 66, 68, 76, 77, 85, 86, 89-91, 93, 95-100, 102-104, 107, 111, 113, 115, 116, 118, 121, 135, 138, 139, 145-147

Psalms which describe God as King or Judge:

2, 7, 9-11, 24, 29, 44, 45, 47, 48, 50, 68, 74, 75, 80, 84, 93, 94-99, 102, 113, 132, 145, 146

Psalms which contain prayers for help in time of need:

3-7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 22, 25-28, 31, 35, 38-41, 43, 44, 51, 54-57, 59, 61, 64, 69-71, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 94, 102, 109, 120, 123, 130, 140-144

Psalms which express strong faith and confidence in God:

1, 3-5, 11, 13, 16-18, 20, 21, 23, 27, 28, 31, 34, 37, 40, 41, 46, 54-56, 62, 84, 86, 91, 103, 115, 116, 118, 121, 124, 125, 130, 135, 139, 140, 145

Psalms which speak of the writer's sin or of forgiveness:

25, 32, 38, 39-41, 51, 65, 73, 78, 79, 86, 89, 90, 99, 103, 106, 107, 119, 130

Psalms for the depressed:

13, 23, 25, 32, 37, 42, 43, 62, 73, 77, 91, 103, 107, 121

Psalms which express longings for God's fellowship:

27, 42, 61, 63, 84, 119, 143



Psalms containing prayers that God would punish wicked enemies:

7, 17, 35, 55, 59, 69, 109, 137, 139

Psalms which look back into history:

68, 78, 81, 105, 106, 114, 135, 136

Psalms written for the purpose of teaching:

(of course, all psalms teach whether written for that purpose or not)

1, 2, 14, 15, 19, 24, 32, 33, 34, 37, 46, 49, 53, 73, 78, 91, 103-108, 110-113, 115, 119, 121, 122, 125-128, 133, 135, 136

Psalms for pilgrims:

84, 120-134

Psalms which praise God's Word:

12, 19, 119, 138

Psalms which give prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ:

(as the New Testament makes clear)

2, 8, 16, 22, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 89, 102, 110, 118

## Contents:

The book of Psalms has five divisions. These divisions are given below. We have indicated some (not all) well known or much loved psalms and given the first words of each. We have also given a list of precious promises and prayers we may wish to use when we pray. The psalms record many reasons for praising God. We have given some of these also.

### BOOK 1 (psalms 1 - 41):

- Ps 1 - "Blessed is the man"
- Ps 2 - "Why do the nations rage"
- Ps 8 - "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is your name"
- Ps 14 - "The fool has said in his heart"
- Ps 16 - "Preserve me, O God"
- Ps 18 - "I will love you, O LORD, my strength"
- Ps 19 - "The heavens declare the glory of God"
- Ps 22 - "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?"
- Ps 23 - "The LORD is my shepherd"
- Ps 32 - "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven"
- Ps 37 - "Do not fret because of evildoers"
- Ps 40 - "I waited patiently for the LORD"

Promises and model prayers:

1:3; 5:8,12; 6:1; 9:9; 10:17,18; 11:7; 16:1,11; 17:7; 18:1,2,30; 19:12-14; 23:1-6; 25:4,5, 8-12,14,18; 27:4,5,10,11; 29:11; 30:5; 31:3,19,20; 32:1,2,33,4; 34:7-10, 15,17-19,22; 36:5-10; 37:4-6, 23-25, 28, 29; 38:1; 39:4,8; 40:4,5; 41:1,4

Reasons these psalms give for praising God:

7:17; 8:1-9; 9:1; 13:6; 16:7; 18:46-50; 21:13; 22:22-26; 28:6,7; 30:4,5,11,12; 31:21; 33:1-5; 34:1-4; 40:1-3

### BOOK 2 (psalms 42 - 72):

- Ps 42 - "As the hart pants for the water brooks"
- Ps 45 - "My heart overflows with a noble theme"
- Ps 46 - "God is our refuge and strength"
- Ps 47 - "Oh, clap your hands, all you people"
- Ps 50 - "The mighty God, the LORD, has spoken"
- Ps 51 - "Have mercy on me, O God"
- Ps 66 - "Shout joyfully to God, all the earth"
- Ps 69 - "Save me, O God, for the waters"
- Ps 72 - "Give the king your judgments, O God"

Promises and model prayers:

43:3; 46:1,7; 47:8; 48:14; 50:15; 51:1,2,7-12; 55:22; 57:1,5; 62:11,12; 65:2,3; 67:1-

3; 68:3-6; 69:32,33; 72:18,19

Reasons these psalms give for praising God:

47:7,8; 51:14,15; 52:9; 56:12,13; 57:9,10; 59:16,17; 61:7,8; 63:3,4; 66:1-3, 8-12,20;  
67:3,4; 68:4-6,19,20,32-35; 69:34-36; 71:5-8, 14-16,22,23; 72:18

### **BOOK 3** (psalms 73 - 89):

- Psalms 73 - "Truly God is good to Israel"
- Psalms 78 - "Give ear, O my people, to my law"
- Psalms 84 - "How lovely is your tabernacle"
- Psalms 87 - "His foundation is in the holy mountains"
- Psalms 89 - "I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever"

Promises and model prayers:

73:26; 74:22; 80:3,18; 81:10; 83:1; 84:5,11; 85:6,7; 86:4,5,11; 89:8

Reasons these psalms give for praising God:

75:1; 84:4,11; 86:12,13; 89:5-8

### **BOOK 4** (psalms 90 - 106):

- Psalms 90 - "LORD, you have been our dwelling place"
- Psalms 91 - "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High"
- Psalms 95 - "Oh, come let us sing to the LORD"
- Psalms 96 - "Oh, sing to the LORD a new song"
- Psalms 102 - "Hear my prayer, O LORD"
- Psalms 103 - "Praise the LORD, O my soul"

Promises and model prayers:

90:13-17; 91:3-16; 92:12-15; 94:14; 97:10,11; 102:17; 103:11-14

Reasons these psalms give for praising God :

92:1-5; 95:1-3; 96:1-6; 98:1,9; 99:2,3,9; 100:4,5; 101:1; 103:1-22; 104:1; 105:1,2;  
106:1

### **BOOK 5** (psalms 107 - 150):

- Psalms 107 - "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good"
- Psalms 109 - "Do not remain silent, O God of my praise"
- Psalms 110 - "The LORD said to my Lord"
- Psalms 115 - "Not to us, O LORD, not to us"
- Psalms 118 - "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good"
- Psalms 119 - "Blessed are the undefiled in the way"
- Psalms 121 - "I will lift up my eyes to the hills"
- Psalms 126 - "When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion"
- Psalms 133 - "See how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity"
- Psalms 136 - "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, His mercy continues on forever"
- Psalms 139 - "O LORD, you have searched me, and known me"
- Psalms 145 - "I will exalt you, my God, O king"
- Psalms 150 - "Praise the Lord"

Promises and model prayers:

108:5,6; 112:1; 115:1,13; 116:5,15; 119:9,12,17-19,29,33-38,65,66,73,76,77,124,130,  
133, 135,153,156,160, 169,170,176; 120:2;121:3-8; 125:1,2; 126:6; 130:4;138:6;139:17,23,24;  
141:3,4,9;143:1,2; 145:8,9,13,14,17-20; 146:5,6; 147:3,11; 149:4.

Reasons these psalms give for praising God:

107:1; 108:3,4; 109:30,31; 111:1-10; 117:1,2; 118:1; 119:164,171; 124:6,7; 135:3,4;  
136:1; 138:1-3; 139:14; 144:1,2; 145:1-23; 146:1-10; 147:1-20; 148:5,6,13,14; 149:1-9.

## BOOK 1 (Psalms 1 - 41)

## 1

- 1 Blessed *is* the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly,  
or stand in the path of sinners,  
or sit in the seat of the scornful;
- 2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,  
and in his law he meditates day and night.
- 3 And he will be like a tree planted by the

rivers of water,  
that brings forth its fruit in its season  
and whose leaf does not wither.  
And whatever he does will prosper.

- 4 The ungodly *are* not so,  
but *are* like the chaff which the  
wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the ungodly will not stand in  
the judgment,  
or sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

**1:1** The word "blessed" is the translation of a Hebrew word meaning happy or fortunate. For a fuller idea of the meaning of the word in the psalms see 2:12; 32:1,2; 40:4; 41:1,2; 65:4; 84:4,5; 94:12; 106:3; 119:1,2; 128:1. For other references and notes on God's blessing or on "blessed" see Gen 12:2,3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Jer 17:7; Matt 5:3-12; Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:9,14; Eph 1:3. God is love (1 John 4:8), and loves to bless men. But the fullness of God's blessing comes only on a certain kind of person, as described in the words which follow.

This opening verse contains a brief description of what this fallen world is like. On every hand are those who will give evil advice and instruction contrary to the Word of God, men who reject God's way and abandon themselves to sin, and those who scorn the truth of God. The blessed person will not listen to them or have fellowship with them. Notice a progression of wickedness in this verse – counsel, way, seat – walking, standing, sitting. Following bad advice brings a person into sinful ways, and eventually into scorn for the things of God. (The New Testament shows believers where they "sit" and how they are to "stand" and "walk" – Eph 2:6; 6:11,14; Col 2:6; etc.)

**1:2** This verse shows the connection between true blessedness and a love of the truth God has revealed. The blessed person will not merely avoid wrong words and wrong ways. He will be occupied with something else altogether, as the two strong words "delight" and "meditate" reveal. To delight in God's law is to delight in God and in God's ways and will which are revealed in it. This will bring joy to the heart as nothing else can. Compare 37:4; etc. For an example of a man delighting in the law of the Lord see psalm 119.

The Hebrew word translated here "law" could be translated "instruction" or "teaching", and here means all the revelation God had given up to that time. To us now it would mean the whole Bible. Men can find true blessedness only through the truth of God, and they will learn far more of it in the Bible than in all the writings of wise men, religious teachers, and philosophers put together. And they will experience this blessedness in the measure that they

delight in God's Word, and meditate on it, and obey it.

Notice the words "day and night." This means to be always occupied with God's revealed truth, to have it filling our hearts and minds even as we go about the ordinary activities of life. Compare John 15:7; Col 3:16; etc. If we delight in it we will not find this at all impossible.

"Meditates" – this means to think about God's Word so as to understand it and to use it in prayer and to apply it to our lives. It has nothing to do with the meditation techniques of yoga, and other such things.

**1:3** Here are the results of delighting in and meditating on God's instructions – spiritual provision, unceasing fruitfulness, and success. The righteous are trees planted by God – Isa 60:21; 61:3; Jer 17:8; Matt 15:13. They are planted by "streams of water." In the Bible water is sometimes used as a symbol of God's Spirit, and God is said to be the "spring of living water" (Jer 2:13; 17:13). Just as water is essential for the life of trees, so God's Spirit is essential for the life and fruitfulness of God's people. The believer who delights in God's truth and meditates on it continually, will find that he is by the source of all blessing, that God's Spirit is around him and in him. Compare John 7:37-39.

**1:4** Chaff driven by the wind indicates something worthless and unstable – 35:5; Isa 17:13; 29:5; Matt 3:12.

**1:5** God's judgment on the wicked is one of the constant themes of the psalms (as it is of the whole Bible) – 2:12; 7:11; 9:7,8; 11:6; 21:8,9; 94:1,2; 96:13; 119:84. This verse will be fulfilled at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now evil men may indeed mix themselves in the assemblies of God's people (Matt 13:24-30; Rev 2:14-16,20-25; 3:1-4). But when God arises as judge they will remain there no longer.

**1:6** "Knows" – God knows the way of the righteous for it is His own way. He regards it and all who are in that way with care and love. The way of the wicked and all who are in it will perish eternally – Isa 66:22-24; Matt 25:41-46; 2 Thess 1:8,9; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:22-27. The day is coming when all false ways, all crooked ways, all evil ways will be abolished from the earth and God's way of truth and holiness estab-

but the way of the ungodly will perish.

# 2

- 1 Why do the nations rage,  
and the peoples plot a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the LORD and against his  
Anointed, *saying*,
- 3 "Let us break their chains apart  
and throw off their cords from us."
- 4 He who sits in the heavens will laugh.  
The Lord will deride them.
- 5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,

lashed everywhere forever.

**2:1** This is the first of the psalms that are prophecies or contain prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Some other very important ones are 16, 22, 40, 45, 69, 72, 89, 110. This one is quoted several times in the New Testament. Verses 1 and 2 are found in Acts 4:25,26, and v 7 is quoted in Acts 13:33 and Heb 1:5 and 5:5. Verse 9 is referred to in Rev 2:27; 12:5; 19:15.

**2:2** The question of v 1 is answered here. The people are stirred up by their leaders. Together they are revealing their enmity against the LORD (Jehovah), the one true God of the universe, and against His anointed one (compare John 3:19,20; 15:18,19; Rom 1:30; 8:7). In Old Testament days kings, prophets, and priests were anointed (Ex 28:41; 1 Sam 15:1; 16:12; 1 Kings 19:16).

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus is the Anointed One. He is King, Prophet, and Priest – all three (note at Matt 1:1). In this psalm only His kingship is in view. The opposition and plots of the rulers referred to in this verse had to do specifically with the time of Christ's crucifixion (Acts 4:25,26), but in general the verse applies to all peoples who in any era set themselves against the Lord Jesus.

**2:3** This is what man's sinful, rebellious heart is like. Fallen men do not want God and His Anointed One to reign over them (1 Sam 8:6-8; Luke 19:14; John 19:15,16). They want to do as they please. They regard God's precious Word and God's commands as cords which would bind them in slavery. In this way they show their great ignorance as well as their great wickedness. What they believe to be bondage is glorious freedom, and what they take for freedom is sin's dreadful bondage. Those in this verse are representatives of the whole world of fallen men who are in rebellion against the true God and do all they can to shake off His control. This is proved by their attitude toward the Lord Jesus who is God's Anointed One.

**2:4,5** God laughs, not in amusement, but in contempt at the vain attempts of puny men to oppose His plans. (See 37:12,13; Prov

and terrify them in his fiery displeasure:

6 "Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion."

7 "I will declare the decree:  
the LORD has said to me, 'You *are* my Son;  
this day I have begotten you.

8 Ask of me, and I will give *you* the nations  
*as* your inheritance,  
and the uttermost parts of the earth as  
your possession.

9 You will break them with a rod of iron;  
you will dash them in pieces like a  
potter's vessel."

10 Now therefore be wise, O you kings.  
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.  
11 Serve the LORD with fear,

1:25,26.) This laughter of God is joined with His terrible anger against the wickedness of men. His anger will come to the full on all those who fight against Him and His Anointed One – 7:11-13; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5,8; 2 Thess 1:6-10; Rev 6:16,17; 19:15. "Terrify" – the KJV has "vex" here, but this is not a strong enough word to bring out the meaning of the Hebrew.

**2:6** God's appointed king is the same as His Anointed One, the Lord Jesus. Zion is Jerusalem. But there is a heavenly Jerusalem where Jesus now sits on the throne of His Father – Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22; Rev 3:21.

**2:7** In vs 7-9 the Anointed King Himself speaks. God has decreed certain things that no opposition of men can ever change. Verse 7 does not refer to the birth of the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem, or to some event in eternity past before the world was made. The apostle Paul quoted these words in connection with Christ's resurrection (Acts 13:32,33). It was then that Jesus was proved to be the Son of God (Rom 1:4), and it was then that Christ was raised to the throne of God the Father (Heb 1:3; Phil 2:9-11). Jesus is the First-born from the dead (Rev 1:5), the first of a new kind of human being – resurrection man. It was a new beginning in human history – a Man begotten from the dead, to be the progenitor of many such (Eph 2:1-5).

**2:8** The earth and all that is in it by right belongs to the Lord Jesus, but at the present time He has not fully entered into His inheritance. The hour will come when all peoples and all kingdoms will be put openly in His control (Rev 11:15-18). See note on Isa 2:1-4.

**2:9** "Dash them in pieces" – why should Christ destroy these gifts of God the Father? He will not utterly destroy them. He will shatter ungodly political powers, break to pieces all rebellious elements in society, and bring the world into complete subjection to Himself – Rev 19:11-16.

**2:10,11** Since Christ is the King of kings true wisdom can be only in submission and service to Him. Fear, reverence, and joy are all essential elements in genuine spiritual experience with God. Notes on "fear" at 34:11-14; 111:10;

and rejoice with trembling.  
12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,  
and you perish *from* the way,  
when his wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in him.

3

A Psalm of David, when he fled from  
his son Absalom

1 LORD, how they are increased who  
trouble me!  
Many *are* those who rise up against me.  
2 Many *there are* who say of my soul,  
"There is no help for him in God. *Selah*

3 But you, O LORD, *are* a shield for me;  
my glory, and the lifter up of my head.  
4 I cried to the LORD with my voice,  
and he heard me from his holy hill. *Selah*  
5 I lay down and slept;  
I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.  
6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of  
people who have set *themselves*  
against me all around.  
7 Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God!  
For you have struck all my enemies  
*on* the cheek bone;  
you have broken the teeth of the ungodly.  
8 Salvation *belongs* to the LORD.  
Your blessing is on your people. *Selah*

128:1; Prov 1:7.  
**2:12** Here the Anointed One of v 2, the king of v 6, is called the Son, that is, the Son of God. A son shares the nature of his father. The Jews of Jesus' day knew that when He said He was the Son of God He was saying that He shares God's nature, that He was claiming to be God (John 10:33-38). Kissing a ruler was an ancient way of showing recognition of his authority (1 Sam 10:1). It was also an act of homage toward objects of worship (1 Kings 19:18; Job 31:27; Hos 13:2).  
To kiss the Son means to give up all rebellion against Him, to receive Him as King, to worship Him as Lord. Those who will not do this are in grave danger. His anger is exceedingly great. But His grace is even greater toward all those who repent and turn to Him. The Hebrew word translated "put their trust in" also means "to take refuge in." Faith in Christ is the only way to peace and reconciliation with God, safety, and salvation (John 3:16,36; 5:24; Rom 5:1,9,10).  
**3:1-8** For Absalom's conspiracy see 2 Samuel chapters 15-18. It was a time of extreme humiliation and danger for David. The spiritual truth of this psalm can be applied to any believer who is in difficulties from enemies, and especially it applied to the Lord Jesus during the last days of His life on earth.  
**3:1** 2 Sam 15:12,13; 17:1,11; Ps 69:4; Eph 6:12.  
"Against me" – this is the first of many references in the Psalms to enemies. In the Psalms alone words indicating them (foes, enemies, they who rise against me, etc) appear well over 100 times. The authors of the psalms frequently suffered from those who opposed them as they tried to serve God. This is the common lot of God's faithful people throughout the history of the world, from Abel (1 John 3:12) to the prophets and saints of the Old Testament (Heb 11:32-38), to Christ and His disciples (Matt 10:16,17,21-23; 16:21; John 15:18-21;

2 Cor 11:23-27; 1 Thess 2:14-16), to the present time ("everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" – 2 Tim 3:12).  
In the Psalms (and in the Old Testament in general) usually the references to foes concern flesh and blood enemies. Believers now are to pray for flesh and blood enemies, not against them, and they are to realize that their real foes are not of flesh and blood (Eph 6:10-12). See note on enemies at 35:8.  
**3:2** Ps 22:7,8; 71:11; Matt 27:39-43. The exact meaning of the Hebrew word "selah" is unknown. It may mean "pause" or "slow", and may have been a sign to the musicians singing the psalm or playing instruments.  
**3:3** In both danger and humiliating circumstances, God is sufficient for the believer (5:12; 28:7; 62:7; Gen 15:1). Notes on "shield" at 28:7; Gen 15:1; Job 1:10,11; 2:6; etc.  
**3:4** In times of trouble, prayer is the believer's resource, and no enemy can prevent the believer using it. See references to prayer at 1 Thess 5:17. God heard David's prayer and brought him safely back to Jerusalem and enabled him to reign over Israel once again (2 Samuel chapter 19).  
**3:5,6** A good conscience and confidence in God can enable believers to get deep and satisfying sleep even at such times of trouble and danger as David was experiencing – Ps 4:8.  
**3:7** See 1 Sam 17:45-49; 18:12-16; 23:4,5; 30:17,18; 2 Sam 8:1-6,13; 10:17,18.  
**3:8** "Salvation" – see 28:8; 35:3; Isa 43:11; Jonah 3:9; Matt 1:21; Rev 7:10; 19:1.  
"Blessing" – Num 6:22-27.  
**4 Title:** Neginoth means "stringed instruments."  
**4:1-8** David first speaks to God (v 1), then to men (vs 2-5), then again to God. Though he is surrounded by those who express unbelief and despair (v 6), he is confident he will be heard because he has experienced many past mercies. He uses various means to turn the ungodly to God, methods we will do well to follow – pointing out their error



4

To the chief musician on neginoth,  
A Psalm of David

- 1 Hear me when I call,  
O God of my righteousness.  
You have given me relief *when I was*  
in distress.  
Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.
- 2 O you sons of men,  
how long *will you turn* my glory into shame?  
*How long* will you love emptiness,  
and seek a lie? *Selah*
- 3 But know that the LORD has set apart  
for himself the one who is godly.  
The LORD will hear when I call to him.
- 4 Tremble, and do sin not.  
Commune in your heart on your bed,  
and be still. *Selah*
- 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,  
and put your trust in the LORD.
- 6 *There are* many who say,  
"Who will show us *any* good?"

(v 2), speaking of answered prayer (v 3), exhorting (vs 4,5), testifying (vs 7,8).

**4:1** "Prayer" – this is the first use of this word in Psalms. See notes on prayer at 66:18; Gen 18:32; Matt 6:5-13; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-7; Rom 8:26,27; Eph 1:17; 6:18; Phil 4:6,7; Col 1:9; 1 Thess 5:17; Heb 4:16; 10:19-22; 11:6; Jam 1:5-8; 5:16-18; 1 John 5:14,15.

**4:2** "Will you turn my glory into shame" – or, possibly, "will you dishonor my Glorious One." Men do both of these. Compare Rom 1:21,23. Vanity and deception are what fallen sinful men pursue. A life not lived for the glory of God is an empty, hopeless existence (62:9; Eccl 1:2; 2:11).

"Lie" – in the Hebrew idiom this word sometimes meant a false god, and some versions have this. The KJV translation here – "leaving" – conveys a wrong meaning to readers today, so it was necessary to change it.

**4:3** Everywhere in the earth the God of the Bible has individuals who are His special people. They are His treasure, the object of His great grace and love (Ex 19:5; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9).

"The LORD will hear" – this kind of faith is vital in the life of prayer. See 5:3. David could not have had this confidence if there had been unconfessed and unforgiven sin in his life – see 66:18,19.

**4:4** "Tremble" – this is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word (not "stand in awe"). Many people sin and do not tremble, and so they keep on sinning.

**4:5** He is still speaking about getting answers to prayer in times of need and distress.

LORD, lift up the light of your  
countenance on us.

- 7 You have put gladness in my heart,  
more than in the time *that* their  
grain and their wine increased.
- 8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;  
for you alone, O LORD, cause me to dwell  
in safety.

5

To the chief musician on nehiloth,  
a Psalm of David

- 1 Give ear to my words, O LORD.  
Consider my meditation.
- 2 Listen to the sound of my cry, my King,  
and my God; for to you I will pray.
- 3 You will hear my voice in the morning, O LORD;  
in the morning I will direct *my prayer*  
to you, and will look up.
- 4 For you *are* not a God who takes pleasure  
in wickedness;  
nor does evil dwell with you.

"Sacrifices of righteousness" – compare 51:17; Heb 13:15,16.

"Trust" – v 3.

**4:6** "Light of your countenance" – Num 6:24,25.

**4:7,8** 5:11. "You have put" – true and lasting joy is the result of God's work in the heart, not of wealth or prosperity, and it is a result of believing God. Who but real believers who trust in the one true God can experience joy and peace in the midst of great trouble?

**5 Title:** Nehiloth indicates musical instruments, probably flutes.

**5:1** "Meditation" – this could be translated "sighing" or "groaning." Groans and sighs are sometimes a proper element in prayer (Rom 8:26). Indeed at times we can find no words to convey our longings and groaning is all we are able to do.

**5:2** King David knew who the true, the eternal King is – 10:16; 24:7; 47:2 (note); 74:12; 149:2; Isa 6:5; Jer 10:10. And he gladly accepted God's rule in his life, as we all should do.

**5:3** Morning is the best time to get alone with God, to pray before the work, and burdens of the day begin (57:8; 88:13; 108:2; 119:147).

"Will look up" – waiting in expectation for an answer, it seems. This also is necessary if we want answers to our prayers – Heb 11:6; Jam 1:6-8; 1 John 5:14,15; Mark 11:24. One reason people do not receive answers from God is that they do not expect to receive any. Let us not complain that God does not answer our prayers when we do not really think that He will do so.

**5:4** See 92:15; 1 John 1:5,6; Matt 7:23;

- 5 The foolish will not stand in your sight.  
You hate all evildoers.
- 6 You will destroy those who speak lies.  
The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and  
deceitful man.
- 7 But as for me, I will come *into* your  
house by the abundance of your mercy,  
*and* in your fear I will worship toward  
your holy temple.
- 8 Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness  
because of my enemies.  
Make your way straight before my face.
- 9 For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth.  
Their heart *is* utter wickedness.  
Their throat *is* an open grave.  
They flatter with their tongue.
- 10 Pronounce them guilty, O God!  
Let them fall by their own counsels.  
Throw them away in the multitude of  
their transgressions;  
for they have rebelled against you.
- 11 But let all those who put their trust in  
you rejoice.  
Let them always shout for joy,  
because you defend them.  
And let those who love your name be

- joyful in you.
- 12 For you, O LORD, will bless the righteous.  
You will surround him with favour as  
*with* a shield.

6

To the chief musician,  
On neginoth upon sheminith,  
a Psalm of David

- 1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger,  
or discipline me in your hot displeasure.
- 2 Have mercy on me, O LORD,  
for I *am* weak. O LORD, heal me;  
for my bones are troubled.
- 3 My soul is also greatly troubled.  
But you, O LORD, how long?
- 4 Return, O LORD. Deliver my soul.  
Oh, save me for your mercy's sake.
- 5 For in death *there is* no remembrance of you.  
In the grave who will give you thanks?
- 6 I am weary with my groaning.  
All night I make my bed swim,  
I drench my couch with my tears.
- 7 My eye is consumed because of grief;

25:41. See note at Lev 20:7.

**5:5** "Hate" – see 11:5; Lev 26:11,30; Deut 32:19; Hos 9:15; Mal 1:3. This means that those who will not repent but persist in wickedness are objects of God's hostility. If they would repent He would lovingly receive them, forgive them, and make them His own dear children. But He hates their deeds, thoughts, motives, and character. All they are and all they do is an offense to His holy nature.

**5:6** God is the God of truth (Ps 31:5). He hates lies and deceit as if they were poison – which in a sense they are (Prov 6:17,19; 12:22; 19:5,9,22; John 8:44; Rev 21:8,17; 22:15). In this verse deceit is joined with murder in things which are abominable to God.

**5:7** By God's grace David is resolved to be different from the wicked. But he knows that when God blesses him it is an act of God's mercy, not because of his own righteousness and goodness (51:1; 69:13).

**5:8** He did not want his enemies to have an occasion to accuse him, and so bring dishonor to the God he served.

**5:9** Here is a vivid picture of man's sinful nature. See Matt 15:18,19; Rom 1:28-32; 3:10-18; Gal 5:19-21.

"Open grave" – the stink of death, rotteness, and corruption comes from the inner nature of God's enemies, and is revealed in their words. This is the result of being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1).

**5:10** Is it right for God's people to pray against the wicked in this way? See note at 35:8

**5:11** "Trust" – 2:12; 7:1; 18:2; Deut 33:27.

"Joy" – 4:7; Neh 8:10.  
"Defend" – 12:7.  
"Name" – 69:36.

**5:12** "Bless" – 29:11; Num 6:23-27; etc.  
"Shield" – 3:3; 28:7; Gen 15:1; Job 1:10,11; 2:6.

**6 Title:** Neginoth indicates stringed instruments. Sheminith was probably a musical term.

**6:1** David is conscious of God's chastening. Though he does not mention any particular sin he is well aware that he is worthy of rebuke and punishment. He only pleads that God will be gentle with him (compare Ps 38:1).

**6:2-6** He is suffering greatly in both body and mind. He is very ill (v 2), and fears that he may be near death (v 5). He does not ask for mercy according to his righteousness, but according to God's grace (v 4).

**6:3** "Greatly troubled" – God's discipline, though it may affect the body, will work on the mind and heart of a believer, and his thoughts may become exceedingly painful (vs 6,7; 13:2; 51:3; 73:14,21,22; etc).

"How long" is often the cry of the troubled and tried believer (13:1,2; 35:17; 74:10; 80:4; 89:46; 90:13; 94:3).

**6:5** "Grave" – the Hebrew word ("Sheol") might be translated "the realm of the dead" (Gen 37:35). In David's time, and in the long era before that, God had revealed very little about life after death. In those days to believers the realm of the dead was a place of darkness and forgetfulness (30:9; 88:10-12; 115:17; Job 10:21,22; Eccl 9:10; Isa 38:18).

**6:6,7** David's foes rejoiced at his miserable condition, made his sorrow even greater, and

it grows old because of all my enemies.  
8 Depart from me, all you evildoers!  
For the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.  
9 The LORD has heard my supplication;  
the LORD will receive my prayer.  
10 Let all my enemies be ashamed and exceedingly troubled;  
let them turn back *and* suddenly be put to shame.

7

Shiggaion of David,  
which he sang to the LORD,  
concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite

1 O LORD my God, in you I put my trust.  
Save me and deliver me from all those who persecute me,  
2 Or he will tear my soul like a lion,  
ripping *it* in pieces, while *there is* no one to bring deliverance.  
3 O LORD my God, if I have done this,  
if there is wickedness in my hands;  
4 If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me (yes, I have delivered him who without cause is my enemy)  
5 Let the enemy pursue me and overtake *me*;  
yes, let him trample down my life on the earth,  
and lay my honour in the dust. *Selah*  
6 Arise, O LORD, in your anger;

rise up because of the rage of my enemies,  
and awake for me *to* the judgment you have decreed.  
7 So the congregation of the people will gather around you.  
For their sakes, therefore, return on high.  
8 The LORD will judge the people.  
Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to my inner integrity.  
9 Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just;  
for the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.  
10 My defense *is* from God who saves the upright in heart.  
11 God is a righteous judge,  
and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.  
12 If he does not turn back,  
he will sharpen his sword.  
He will bend his bow, and made it ready.  
13 He has also prepared deadly weapons for himself;  
he makes his flaming arrows ready.  
14 Look, *the wicked* travails with wickedness,  
and conceives trouble,  
and gives birth to falsehood.  
15 He made a pit, and dug it out;  
and has fallen into the ditch *which* he made.  
16 His trouble will return on his own head,  
and his violent acts will come down on his own pate.

revealed what fallen sinful creatures they were.  
**6:8-10** Suddenly everything was bright. The Holy Spirit had given David the assurance that his request was heard. He knew that he had what he asked God for. He had won the victory by prayer and faith. Compare 4:3; 5:3. This way is open to all believers – Mark 11:24; 1 John 5:14,15.  
**7 Title:** “Shiggaion” – no man now knows the meaning of this Hebrew word. It was probably a literary or musical term.  
**7:1,2** For believers God Himself is the refuge from all enemies, all troubles – 2:12; 9:9; 14:6; 46:1; 57:1; 59:16; 62:7,8; 91:2; 142:5; Deut 33:27; 2 Sam 22:3; Isa 25:4; Jer 16:19; Heb 6:18. He is well able to save and deliver His people – vs 8,10,17. This is an unusual feature of this psalm. Great danger cries out for a great God.  
**7:3-5** This is similar to Job’s defense of his integrity in Job chapter 31. See also Samuel’s words to the people in 1 Sam 12:1-3 and David’s words to Saul in 1 Sam 24:9-15; 26:17-20.  
**7:4** The Hebrew of the last phrase is obscure and difficult. It may also be translated “or without cause have robbed my foe.”  
**7:6-9** See note at 35:8. Here David wants

judgment to come on the wicked for these five reasons – for justice’s sake (v 6), for a display of God’s rightful place as ruler (v 7), that David’s integrity might be revealed (v 8), that violence might be ended (v 9), that the righteous might be established in the earth (v 9).  
**7:8** “Judge” – this the first of many places in Psalms which speak of God as judge (9:8; 50:6; 72:2; 82:8; 94:2; 96:13; etc. See also Acts 17:31; Heb 9:27; Rev 20:11-15).  
**7:9** See 11:4; 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Chron 28:9; Jer 11:20; 17:10; 20:12; Rev 2:23.  
**7:10** “Defense” – see 3:3; 18:2,30.  
**7:11** “Angry” – God’s anger against evil is clearly and repeatedly revealed in the Bible. An unrepentant sinner is in constant danger from God’s wrath. See notes at 90:7-11; Num 25:3; John 3:36; Rom 1:18.  
**7:12** “Sword” – see 45:3-5; Deut 32:41; Isa 34:6; Ezek 21:5,15; 32:18; Rev 19:11-15. Who can escape if the Most High God, the Lord of Hosts, armed for battle, rises against him?  
**7:14-16** God has arranged things so that eventually a person will reap what he sows, and the fruit of his deeds will come back on his own head. Though this will not always be seen in this life it will be at the end of it

17 I will praise the LORD in accordance  
with his righteousness,  
and will sing praise to the name  
of the LORD Most High.

8

To the chief musician on Gittith,  
a Psalm of David

- 1 O LORD, our Lord, how excellent *is* your  
name in all the earth!  
*You* have set your glory above the heavens.
- 2 Out of the mouth of babes and infants you  
have ordained strength because of  
your enemies,  
so that you may silence the enemy and  
the avenger.
- 3 When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars, which you have  
ordained,
- 4 What is man, that you are mindful of him?  
and the son of man, that you visit him?
- 5 For you have made him a little lower than

- the angels, and have crowned him  
with glory and honour.
- 6 You caused him to have dominion over  
the works of your hands.  
You put all *things* under his feet;
- 7 All sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts  
of the field,
- 8 The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
*and whatever* passes through the paths  
of the seas.
- 9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* your  
name in all the earth!

9

To the musician on muth-labben,  
a Psalm of David

- 1 I will praise *you*, O LORD,  
with my whole heart.  
I will tell of all your marvellous works.
- 2 I will be glad and rejoice in you.  
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.
- 3 When my enemies turn back, they will fall

(57:6; 94:23; Esther 7:10; Job 4:8; Prov 22:8; Gal 6:7; Rev 22:12).

**7:17** "Righteousness" – the theme of this whole psalm.

"I will praise" – or "I will give thanks" – one of the great themes of the book of Psalms and of the whole Bible. Notes at 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

"Righteousness" – the theme of this whole psalm.

"Praise" – the first place in Psalms this word is used. In the 150 psalms the various Hebrew words for praise are used more than 150 times. See note on praise at 33:1-3.

"Most High" – Gen 14:18.

**8 Title:** Gittith was probably a musical term.

**8:1** "LORD" – in Hebrew Jehovah. His name means his character and nature (note at Ex 3:14,15). Everywhere His name is glorious (29:2; 48:10; 72:19; 86:11; 145:21; Prov 18:10; Deut 28:58; Ex 34:5-7).

**8:2** This was quoted by the Lord Jesus in Matt 21:16. The religious leaders of Israel became His enemies and opposed Him, but God gave enlightenment and a voice of praise to the children. See also Matt 11:25.

**8:3** We should all let nature teach us – 19:1-3; Isa 40:26; Rom 1:20.

**8:4** How tiny and insignificant is man when compared to the immensity of the universe (Isa 40:15-17, 22-24)! Yet how important he is in the plan of God, as the following verses make clear.

**8:5** "Lower" – this could also be translated "a little lower than God", but it would not make good sense to do so. Man is not a little lower, but vastly, infinitely lower than

God. God is the almighty Creator (Gen 1:1); man is a weak creature made by God. Others translate this "a little lower than a god" or "a little lower than the gods", but this makes no proper sense.

"Crowned" – these words are quoted in Heb 2:6-9. This and the remaining verses of this psalm were partially fulfilled in the first Adam (Gen 1:26-28), but will be more completely fulfilled in the last Adam, Jesus Christ. He is the head of a new race of men who will rule with Him over the world and who, with Him, are raised above the angels (1 Cor 15:45; Eph 1:20-23; 2:6; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21; 5:10; 20:4).

**8:6** According to Heb 2:8 this has not yet taken place. Only in regard to the Lord Jesus is it fully true (1 Cor 15:27; Eph 1:22).

**8:7,8** On the whole, man has been a very poor ruler over the animal kingdom. He has been guilty of cruelty, greed, and ignorance. And he has often bowed down to worship those creatures which he was appointed by God to rule. There will be great and wonderful changes when the Lord Jesus comes the second time.

**8:9** Happy are they who can say with David that the LORD, Jehovah, the one and only Lord of the universe, *is their* Lord. This is the only safety in the present, the only hope in the future.

**9 Title:** Muth-labben probably indicated the tune to be used, The Death of a Son.

**9:1,2** This psalm of triumph and joy was written probably after one of David's many victories in battle. He knows it was God who gave the victory and not his own skill or might (vs 3-6). Therefore he gives all the glory to

- and perish at your presence.
- 4 For you have maintained my right and my cause.  
You sat on the throne judging righteously.
- 5 You have rebuked the heathen.  
You have destroyed the wicked;  
You have blotted out their name forever and ever.
- 6 O enemy, endless destructions have come!  
And you have destroyed cities;  
their remembrance has perished with them.
- 7 But the LORD remains forever.  
He has prepared his throne for judgment.
- 8 And he will judge the world in righteousness.  
He will administer judgment to the people in uprightness.
- 9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed,  
a refuge in times of trouble.
- 10 And those who know your name will put their trust in you;  
for you, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.
- 11 Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion.  
Proclaim his deeds among the peoples.
- 12 When he takes vengeance for blood,  
he remembers them.  
He does not forget the cry of the humble.
- 13 Have mercy on me, O LORD.  
Consider my trouble *which I suffer from*

God. In these opening verses he uses four words to express his delight in God – praise, tell, rejoice, and sing. This psalm is also a declaration that Jehovah, the one true God, reigns over the world and executes judgment. When He destroys the wicked and rescues the righteous he is displaying perfect justice.

**9:4** “Throne judging” – 7:11; 47:2. This is something God is continually doing. Though His final judgment of men is still in the future, already, in some measure, His judgments are in all the earth.

**9:5,6** Compare Gen 6:7; etc.

**9:7,8** David goes from the particular victory he has experienced to a general truth. What God did in helping David and destroying his enemies He will do to the whole world. He is the eternal King who will punish the wicked and reward the righteous (47:2; 96:13; 98:9; John 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rev 20:11-15).

**9:9,10** In the meantime, before God arises to judge the whole world, He is the refuge for His people (see 7:1,2). He will never forsake the person who sincerely seeks Him, never. Let us encourage ourselves with this truth when our seeking does not seem to bring any results, when our experience tempts us to give in to discouragement and depression, and when our enemy Satan suggests that God, at least for the time, refuses to hear us, or has even forsaken

- those who hate me, you who lift me up from the gates of death,
- 14 So that I may tell all your praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion.  
I will rejoice in your salvation.
- 15 The nations have sunk down in the pit *that* they made.  
Their own foot has been taken in the net which they hid.
- 16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executes.  
The wicked are ensnared in the work of his own hands. *Higgaion. Selah*
- 17 The wicked will be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.
- 18 For the needy will not always be forgotten.  
The expectation of the poor will *not* perish forever.
- 19 Arise, O LORD! Do not let man prevail.  
Let the nations be judged in your sight.
- 20 Put them in fear, O LORD, *so that* the nations may know themselves *to be* *but* men. *Selah*

10

- 1 Why do you stand far off, O LORD?  
*Why do you hide yourself* in times of trouble?
- us.
- 9:11,12** Such truth causes David to break forth again in praise. The LORD (Jehovah) was enthroned in Zion (Jerusalem). That is where the ark of God was kept and God Himself was enthroned above the cherubim on the ark (Num 7:89; 2 Sam 6:2; Ps 76:2; 80:1).
- 9:13,14** In the midst of David’s song of joy a dark note creeps in. He is not fully triumphant and knows his enemies will attack again.
- “Daughter” – Isa 1:8.
- 9:15,16** See 7:14-16. The meaning of the Hebrew word “higgaion” is not now known.
- 9:17,18** Though it was not very clear to believers in Old Testament times how God would reward the righteous and punish the wicked, there was the confidence that He would surely do so.
- “Hell” – in Hebrew “Sheol” – note at Gen 37:35.
- 9:19** Sinful men are at war with justice and they must not be allowed to triumph (Num 10:35).
- 9:20** Note at 35:8. Men may like to think they are like God, incarnations of God, or a part of God. They very much need to know they are mere creatures, and very sinful creatures at that (14:2,3; Rom 3:9,19,23).
- 10:1** Apparently this psalm was written



- 2 The wicked in *his* pride persecutes the poor.  
Let them be taken in the schemes they  
have devised.
- 3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire,  
and praises the covetous,  
*whom* the LORD abhors.
- 4 The wicked, in the pride of his  
countenance, will not seek *God*.  
God is not in any of his thoughts.
- 5 His ways are always prosperous.  
Your judgments *are* far above,  
out of his sight.  
*As for* all his enemies, he snorts at them.
- 6 He has said in his heart,  
"I will not be moved; for *I will* never  
*be* in distress."
- 7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit  
and oppression.  
Under his tongue *are* trouble and evil.
- 8 He sits in ambush in the villages;  
in secret places he murders the innocent.  
In secret his eyes are fixed on the poor.
- 9 He lies in wait secretly like a lion in his den.  
He lies in wait to catch the poor.  
He catches the poor, when he draws him  
into his net.

- 10 He crouches, *and* lies low, that the poor  
may fall by his strength.
- 11 He has said in his heart,  
"God has forgotten. He hides his face.  
He will never see *it*."
- 12 Arise, O LORD! O God, lift up your hand!  
Do not forget the humble.
- 13 Why does the wicked spurn God?  
He has said in his heart,  
"You will not require *an account*."
- 14 You have seen *it*; for you look at trouble  
and sorrow to repay *it* with your hand.  
The poor commits himself to you.  
You are the helper of the fatherless.
- 15 Break the arm of the wicked and the evil *man*!  
Search out his wickedness *until* you  
find none.
- 16 The LORD *is* King for ever and ever.  
The nations have perished from his land.
- 17 LORD, you have heard the desire of the  
humble.  
You will prepare their heart;  
you will cause your ear to hear,
- 18 To execute justice for the fatherless and  
the oppressed, so that the man of  
the earth may no longer oppress.

when wickedness in the land had the upper hand. Yet God seemed to stand afar off doing nothing about it. This has often perplexed God's people – why does God not immediately put down wickedness and reward righteousness (73:3-12; Job 9:24; 21:4-34; Hab 1:2-4)? Part of the answer is found in verses like Ps 103:8 and 2 Pet 3:9. If God immediately destroyed all the wicked Saul of Tarsus would never have become Paul the apostle. And what would have happened to us when we were still in our sins? Also we should understand that God in His wisdom often allows men's wickedness to be revealed to the full before bringing a halt to it (Gen 15:16).

**10:2-11** The writer recounts to God the character of wicked people that so much merits God's judgment. Certain sins are emphasized – pride (vs 2,4,5) and preying on the weak (vs 2,8-10), and words full of boasting and contempt for God and His laws (vs 3-7), and cruelty and murder (vs 8-10).

**10:3** See what the fallen heart of man can come to. A bad man can reach the place where he actually takes pride in what he should be deeply ashamed of. Compare Phil 3:19. And do we not see this on every hand?

**10:4** "Pride" – see what keeps men from seeking God – they think they are too wise or too strong or too self-sufficient to bother with Him.

"Not in any of his thoughts" – this is the real cause of the behavior of the individual described here. And this outlook on life can

bring anyone to the same base manner of life. Speaking generally, the whole human race has no time, no place for the one true God of the universe. Compare 14:1; Ex 5:2; John 1:10,11; etc.

**10:5,6** Compare 73:4-12.

**10:7-10** 5:9; Rom 3:13-18; etc.

**10:11** 73:11. Such people have enough knowledge of right and wrong that they do not want God to see and know what they are doing – so they persuade themselves that He does not. Their ideas of God are not based on reason or revelation, but on what they want to think. This too is very common among people everywhere.

**10:12** "Arise" – God's people may sometimes be impatient with God's seeming lack of action (13:1; Hab 1:2,3; etc). God will arise in His own good time – 12:5.

**10:13** "You will not require an account" – nothing could be further from the truth than this thought of wicked men. See Rom 14:12; Acts 17:31; Rev 20:11-15.

**10:14** He is confident that eventually God will come to the aid of the helpless who commit themselves to Him (vs 16-18).

**10:15** See note at 35:8.

**10:16** "King" – note at 47:2.

**10:18** "Fatherless" – 68:5; 82:1-4; Ex 22:22-24; Deut 10:18; Isa 1:17. Observe here that the wicked are "of the earth." Their desires, aims, motives, and actions are all concerned with what they can get and enjoy in this world. All their portion is here (17:14). Hereafter they will go into eternal punishment (Matt 25:46). Believers in Christ are "of heaven", and should live

11

To the chief musician,  
a Psalm of David

- 1 In the LORD I put my trust.  
How can you say to my soul,  
"Flee *like* a bird to your mountain?"
- 2 For, look, the wicked bend *their* bow.  
They make ready their arrow on the string,  
so that they can secretly shoot at the  
upright in heart."
- 3 If the foundations are destroyed,  
what can the righteous do?
- 4 The LORD *is* in his holy temple.  
The LORD's throne *is* in heaven.  
His eyes see, his eyelids test the  
children of men.
- 5 The LORD tests the righteous;  
but his soul hates the wicked and the  
one who loves violence.
- 6 On the wicked he will rain snares,  
fire and brimstone,  
and a fiery tempest.  
*This will be* the portion of their cup.
- 7 For the righteous LORD loves righteousness.  
His countenance sees the upright.

as if this were so (John 17:14,16; Eph 2:6,7; Phil 3:20; Col 3:1-4).

**11:1,2** Once again David speaks of a time of personal danger. At some such times it might be wise to flee. But at other times it is better to take one's stand and confidently trust in God - 7:1. This is what David now does, in spite of the counsel of others. In times of difficulty the most important question is not, what is safe? but, what is right? what is God's will?

**11:3** When wicked men destroy the just foundations of society what can good men do? They can take their stand for righteousness, knowing full well that God is on their side - vs 4,7.

**11:4** Here is David's confidence in times of difficulty and danger - God knows what is going on, and is ruling all from His holy throne (note at 47:2). There is peace in this for troubled hearts.

**11:5** Notes on "tests" at 66:10-12; Gen 22:1. On "hates" see 5:5.

**11:6** Gen 19:24,25; 2 Thess 1:7,8; Rev 21:8.

**11:7** People of integrity who love justice as God does are the ones who will see His face - 16:11; 17:15; Matt 5:8; Rev 22:4. Do we not have in these words of David a suggestion of the blessed life after death for the righteous?

**12 Title:** Sheminith was probably a musical term.

**12:1,2** Sometimes the servant of God must stand all alone - Gen 7:1; Ex 32:9,10;

12

To the chief musician on sheminith,  
a Psalm of David

- 1 Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases,  
for the faithful fail from  
among the children of men.
- 2 Everyone speaks vanity with his neighbour.  
They speak *with* flattering lips  
*and* with a double heart.
- 3 The LORD will cut off all flattering lips,  
*and* the tongue that speaks proud things,  
4 that have said, "With our tongue we will  
prevail.  
Our lips *are* our own.  
Who *is* lord over us?"
- 5 "Because of the oppression of the poor,  
because of the sighing of the needy,  
I will now arise," says the LORD,  
"I will set *him* in safety *from* the  
*one who* snorts at him."
- 6 The words of the LORD *are* pure words,  
*like* silver refined in a furnace of  
earth, purified seven times.
- 7 You will keep them, O LORD,  
you will preserve them from this

1 Kings 18:22; 19:10; Jer 1:17-19; Micah 7:2; 2 Tim 4:16,17. This is very difficult but those who do so will find that in a special way God is their help.

**12:3** "Cut off" - see notes at 35:8 and introduction to psalm 109.

**12:4** "Who is lord over us?" - this rejection of God's lordship over them was the source of their ungodly behavior. Those who will not be ruled by God will be ruled by sin and Satan - Luke 19:14; John 8:34; Eph 2:2; 2 Pet 2:10,19. They ignored the Creator and said their lips were their own. In truth nothing is our own. On the basis of creation, we are all God's possession, creatures He has made for Himself.

**12:5** David the poet here speaks as David the prophet. He has been speaking of men to God. Now he speaks to men of God's promises. God hears the groans of the helpless and He knows the right time to arise for their help - Ex 3:7-10; Luke 18:7.

**12:6** What God says, He will do. His word has been tested in the furnace of men's experience and proved all through the history of mankind - compare 18:30; 19:8,10; 119:140; John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16. There is no mixture of error in God's Word. This is in contrast with the words of the people referred to in vs 2-4.

**12:7,8** Though the situation appears desperate, meditating on the purity of God's Word will give confident hope for the future.

generation forever.

8 The wicked walk *about* on every side,  
when the vilest men are exalted.

13

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

- 1 How long will you forget me, O LORD?  
Forever? How long will you hide your  
face from me?
- 2 How long will I take counsel in my soul,  
*having* sorrow in my heart daily?  
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?
- 3 Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God.  
Give light to my eyes, so that I do not  
sleep the *sleep of death*,
- 4 So that my enemy does not say,  
"I have prevailed against him,"  
*and* those who trouble me rejoice

**13:1** Evidently David wrote this psalm when he was in danger and difficulties and was tempted to discouragement and depression. Compare psalm 42.

"How long" – 6:3; etc. Of course God does not ever forget His people – Isa 49:14-16; Heb 6:10. But it seems sometimes to them that He does so – 42:9; 77:9; Lam 5:20. To "hide" the face to them meant rejection, displeasure. Shining of the face meant favor and acceptance – 27:9; 30:7; 69:17; 102:2; Num 6:22-27; Deut 31:17,18; 32:20; Isa 1:15.

**13:2** God's people very often have intense inner struggles. Their thoughts bring them pain and sorrow. They cannot understand why things are happening as they are (see Job 3:1). First they think one thing, and then another. One explanation of events brings relief for a while, and then another explanation intrudes. We might say that often the real battle of believers is with thoughts, and not with outward circumstances or human enemies, and when they win the battle in their own mind and rest in God by faith, they can win everywhere. Compare 2 Cor 10:5.

**13:3,4** The thought that the wicked should triumph was unendurable to David. The thought that our greatest foe, Satan, should triumph over us should be unendurable to us.

**13:5,6** See what we should do when we are in difficulties, when we wrestle with our thoughts, when we seem to be defeated and are cast down in our minds, when God seems to have forgotten us. David shows the way. He rejoices even when he has sorrow in his heart, he trusts God's love even when God seems to be at a distance and frowning on him. He remembers God's goodness to him in the past and will sing to Him because of that. For the time being, at least, David has won the battle in his mind and his thoughts

when I am shaken.

- 5 But I have trusted in your mercy.  
My heart will rejoice in your salvation.
- 6 I will sing to the LORD, because he has  
dealt bountifully with me.

14

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

- 1 The fool has said in his heart,  
*There is no God.*  
They are corrupt, they have done  
abominable deeds.  
*There is* no one who does good.
- 2 The LORD looked down from heaven on the  
children of men to see if there were any  
who understand *and* seek God.
- 3 They have all turned aside,  
they have *all* together become corrupt.

were again full of confidence. Trust in God's grace is a great tonic for troubled hearts. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world (and everything else that is in opposition to God) – 1 John 5:4,5; John 14:1. For victory we must look away from ourselves and our troubles. An attitude of faith can conquer all discouraging, depressing thoughts.

**14:1** Evidently this is a very important psalm because it is repeated with only a few changes in psalm 53, and Paul quotes from it in Romans chapter 3. The Hebrew word translated "fool" does not mean an uneducated person or one lacking in mental ability. It means one who is perverse in his thinking, one who because he is morally corrupt will not permit the truth to enter his head. The atheist is like this. He believes something (the non-existence of God) not because there is proof for it, but because there is hostility in his heart toward the God he denies (John 15:18; Rom 1:30; 8:7) – in other words, he allows his base feelings to rule his thoughts (Col 1:21). Atheism strikes a blow at ethics and morality (as someone has said, "If there is no God, I can do as I please").

The atheist reveals his "foolishness" in other ways as well. He believes in the non-existence of God even though it is impossible to prove this, and though there is tremendous evidence against this view. In order to believe his atheism he must ignore all of this evidence, suppress the voice of God speaking in nature and in his conscience, and reject God's revelation of Himself in the Bible which comes with great internal evidence of its truthfulness. Observe that the fool says inwardly that there is no God. Because of his circumstances, or the society in which he lives, he may not have the courage to deny God outwardly and may even profess to be religious.

**14:2,3** See 53:2,3. David turns from

- There is* no one who does good, no, not one.
- 4 Are all the evildoers without knowledge?  
They devour my people like they eat bread,  
and do not call on the LORD.
- 5 There they are in great fear;  
for God *is* among the generation of the righteous.
- 6 You have shamed the counsel of the poor,  
because the LORD *is* his refuge.
- 7 Oh, that the salvation of Israel *would come* out of Zion!  
When the LORD brings back his people

from captivity,  
Jacob will rejoice, *and* Israel will be glad.

# 15

A Psalm of David

- 1 LORD, who may abide in your tabernacle?  
Who may dwell on your holy hill?
- 2 He who walks uprightly, and works  
righteousness, and speaks the truth  
from his heart.

thoughts of the corrupt nature of the atheist to thoughts of the corruption of human nature in general. Not all men will say there is no God, but because of their sinful nature they live to a large extent as if there were no God. If they really believed in God would they not try to seek Him? Would they not heartily try to do good? Since they do not, they show by their actions that their nature is corrupt and their belief in God for the most part is an empty thing. Paul used these verses to show the sinfulness and guilt of every human being – Rom 3:9-12.

Is this description of people too harsh and pessimistic? No. It is what God sees. Notice David's words in v 2 – "The LORD looked down from heaven." David could know this only by revelation from God Himself. People in their ignorance and darkness may think they see something very good in or among themselves. But God does not see as man does – 1 Sam 16:7; Luke 16:13. And in this psalm we have God's view, not man's.

**14:4,5** Those who practice evil have no understanding of the most essential thing in the world for them. The time will come when they will be overwhelmed with dread of God's anger. Compare Rev 6:15-17. Notes on God's anger at 90:7-11; Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; John 3:36; Rom 1:18. **14:6,7** In the midst of a corrupt humanity, God, the righteous one, is doing His work, bringing salvation to His chosen ones, justifying them and restoring them to a blessed state.

"Brings back. . . from captivity" – the phrase in Hebrew also means "restores the well-being of."

**Note on the Hebrew language:** Is it possible that the same Hebrew words can be translated so differently? Yes, it is. See also the note on Prov 19:22. Speaking in general, some words and expressions and phrases in Hebrew can have more than one meaning. Others are obscure and ambiguous, and it is very difficult to come at the exact meaning. Some sentences are very terse and omit words we would put in when using English, and so the meaning is doubtful. In other cases there are sometimes slight variations in the spelling of words

in various manuscripts.

And we should understand that the Hebrew of the Old Testament is an ancient language, and in written form originally had only consonants – no vowels, no punctuation marks, and often no space between words. Many hundreds of years later a group of Jewish scholars added what they thought were the right vowels to the basic consonants. Their work is called the Masoretic Text, and it is the text used in the translation of the Old Testament for hundreds of years. No doubt they did their work remarkably accurately, but there is no reason to think that it was absolutely perfect. And if, here and there, they made mistakes in adding vowels, this can give meanings different from the ones the original writer intended.

We are very fortunate to have so ancient a book that on the whole is so remarkably clear as to meaning. We should understand that God fully inspired the original writings of the Bible (see notes at 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). Though interpretations of those ancient manuscripts are not inspired in the same way as the originals, the translation used in this Study Bible is very accurate.

**15:1** This psalm is in great contrast to the previous one. The question naturally arises, if all are corrupt, if no one seeks God or does good (14:2,3), how is it possible to have the kind of character described in this psalm? The answer is that in grace and love God seeks people, forgives them, saves them, changes them, gives them a new nature, and begins the work of sanctifying them (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:8-10). In this way God prepares them to live in His presence and enjoy Him forever. Without the work of God in the heart not one human being could live as this psalm describes, or be prepared for His presence.

**15:2-5** The character of the righteous man described here is perfectly seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. In union with Him and sharing His righteous nature we can and should live as He lived – Rom 6:3-8; Eph 4:22-24; 1 John 2:3-6.

**15:2** All believers in Christ (not just a few exceptional ones) should be blameless in behavior – 1 Cor 1:8; Phil 2:14,15; 2 Pet 3:14. All of us should always speak the

- 3 *He who* does not slander with his tongue,  
and who does no evil to his neighbour,  
and does not take up a taunt against  
his neighbour.
- 4 *He* in whose eyes a vile person is despised,  
but who honours those who fear the LORD;  
*who though* he takes an oath to *his own* hurt  
does not change *it*;
- 5 *He who* does not lend his money for usury,  
or take a bribe against the innocent.  
He who behaves *like* this will never be shaken.

# 16

Miktam of David

- 1 Preserve me, O God, for in you I put my trust.

truth – Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9,10. The true God is a God of truth (31:5), and demands that we love truth and speak the truth. Those who do not are in great danger – Prov 12:22; 2 Thess 2:10,11; Rev 21:8,27; 22:15. Liars are Satan's children (John 8:44), and will be punished with Satan.

**15:3** Ex 20:16; 23:1; Lev 19:16,18; Matt 7:12; Col 3:8; Jam 4:11,12.

**15:4** Evil is a great offense to a holy God and so it will be to holy men as well. See 5:5. A truly righteous person will keep his word no matter what it may cost him.

**15:5** "Usury" – see Ex 22:25; Lev 25:35-37. "Bribe" – Ex 23:8; Deut 10:17; 16:19; Prov 15:27; 17:23; Isa 5:22,23.

"Shaken" – or "moved" – 16:8; 55:22; 66:8,9; 112:6; 2 Pet 1:10. These two psalms, 14 and 15, stand side by side. The one reveals what human beings are in themselves, the other reveals what God by His grace can make them.

**16 Title:** "miktam" – no one now knows the meaning of this word for certain. Some think it comes from the Hebrew word for "sold" or "treasure." Others think it comes from the word to "hide" or "hidden." Others think it means merely something written – a poem. Others have made other suggestions.

**16:1** This is a very remarkable psalm. David is speaking here once again as a prophet. In truth the Lord Jesus Christ by His Spirit speaks through the mouth of David (1 Pet 1:11; 2 Pet 1:21), and refers to His life on earth and His resurrection from the dead – all this about 1000 years before He came into the world. See Acts 2:25-32; 13:34-37. Though doubtless something of David's own experience appears here let us look at this psalm in the way it applies to the Lord Jesus. The refuge of the Lord Jesus when He was on earth was God the Father. Though He was the Son of God He laid aside His divine glory and privileges and trusted in God's power (Phil 2:5-7; Matt 3:16,17). Though He was perfectly holy He needed to be kept from Satan and evil as we all need to be

- 2 *O my soul*, you have said to the LORD,  
"You are my Lord;  
my goodness *without* you is nothing."
- 3 But as for the saints who are in the earth,  
they *are* the excellent ones in whom *is*  
all my delight.
- 4 The sorrows of those *who* run *after*  
another *god* will be multiplied.  
Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer,  
or take up their names on my lips.
- 5 The LORD *is* the portion of my inheritance  
and of my cup.  
You maintain my lot.
- 6 The *boundary* lines have fallen to me in  
pleasant *places*.  
Yes, I have a good inheritance.
- 7 I will praise the LORD, who has given me  
counsel.

(Matt 4:1-10; Luke 4:28-30; John 1:14; Heb 2:14,17,18; 4:15). And He needed to be rescued from death (Heb 5:7). Notes on Christ's humanity at Heb 2:14,17; John 1:14.

**16:2** Jesus acknowledged the Father (Jehovah) as His Lord in everything and as the source of everything He was and had – John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 12:49; 15:10; 17:7; Matt 26:39; Heb 10:5-7.

**16:3** Christ loves His believers, here called "saints" or holy ones. He considers them alone the great ones of the earth. He delights in them, not in the worldly wise, the rich, the powerful. In His eyes believers, even those who are poor and uneducated, are the glorious ones of the world. They are His special treasure – Ex 19:5,6; John 17:6; 1 Cor 6:19,20; 1 Pet 2:9. For some of the things the Lord Jesus delights in see 147:11; 149:4; Prov 12:22; 15:8; Isa 66:2; Jer 9:24.

**16:4** The more gods a person has the more trouble he will have. If the one true God is not enough for a person many gods will be both not enough and too much for him. The Lord Jesus served His heavenly Father, the Creator of the universe, the one true God (Matt 4:10; John 17:3,4). He abhorred all gods and all idolatry. Those who want to follow Him must do the same.

**16:5,6** God the Father was Christ's portion, His inheritance. His delight was in doing God's will – John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; etc. Though it meant much pain and sorrow and a cruel death He was perfectly content with the place and the work the Father had appointed for Him. He completely fulfilled the picture of the Old Testament priests and Levites whose portion was not in the land, but in God alone – Deut 10:9; 18:1,2. They who believe in Him now (the New Testament priests – 1 Pet 2:5,9) should follow Him in this also. The will of God must be their main concern, whether it means plenty or poverty. When they live in the center of God's will as the Lord Jesus did, they will find great delight in it as He did.

**16:7** The Lord Jesus got all His directions as



My inner being also instructs me in the night seasons.  
8 I have set the LORD always before me.  
Because *he is* at my right hand,  
I will not be shaken.  
9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices.  
My flesh also will rest in hope.  
10 For you will not leave my soul in the realm of the dead;  
nor will you let your Holy One see corruption.  
11 You will show me the path of life.  
In your presence *is* fulness of joy.  
At your right hand *there are* pleasures forevermore.

17

A prayer of David

1 Hear a righteous *cause*, O LORD.  
Be attentive to my cry, give ear to my

to what He should speak and do from God the Father – John 5:19,20; 12:49; 14:31. By day and by night He got His instructions inwardly through the Holy Spirit of God.  
**16:8** Here we see the secret of Jesus’ victory in every trouble and trial. His eyes were always on the Father. He knew that God was at His right hand for all the strength and help He needed. So He was never moved from the course His Father had appointed for Him. In all these matters He is the perfect example to all of us.  
**16:9** The Lord Jesus was a man of sorrows and knew grief – Isa 53:3. In the Gospels we read that He wept but not that He laughed. Yet deep in His heart was a great gladness, a solemn and holy joy – John 15:11; 17:13. This was joy in being the Son of the Father, of having the privilege of doing the Father’s will and glorifying Him on earth.  
“My flesh also will rest in hope” – this refers to the confidence He had that He would rise from the dead, as the next verse makes clear.  
**16:10** “The realm of the dead” – Hebrew “Sheol” – note at Gen 37:35. The New Testament makes sufficient comment on this verse – Acts 2:25-32; 13:34-37.  
**16:11** Joy was before Jesus when He endured the cross – Heb 12:2. It was the joy of God’s presence, the joy of finishing His work, the joy of bringing believing people to His Father’s house. The path of life which Jesus knew, leads there. He Himself is that way – John 14:6. On earth He put God at His right hand. In heaven God put Him at His right hand, the place of honor – Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3. Those who follow the path of life to God’s presence will have joys that are eternal, unlike the brief fading joys the pleasures of this world may bring. In this

prayer, *that does* not come out of deceitful lips.  
2 Let my vindication come from your presence.  
Let your eyes look at the things that are right.  
3 You have tested my heart.  
You have visited *me* in the night.  
You have tried me, *and* will find nothing.  
I am determined *that* my mouth will not transgress.  
4 Concerning the works of men,  
by the word of your lips I have kept *myself from* the paths of the destroyer.  
5 Uphold my steps in your paths,  
*so that* my footsteps do not slip.  
6 I have called to you,  
for you will hear me, O God.  
Bow down your ear to me; *hear* my words.  
7 Show your marvellous loving kindness,  
O you who save by your right hand those who put their trust *in you* from those who rise up *against them*.  
8 Keep me as the apple of your eye.  
Hide me under the shadow of your wings,

psalm we are introduced into the holy of holies of Christ’s mind and heart. We have His thoughts revealed, His inward prayers, motives, faith, and aims. In all of it He is the perfect example to all of us who believe in Him. He showed the way of faith and obedience that leads to glory and eternal joy. See Heb 12:1-3.  
**17:1,2** Once again David prays in a time of great danger – vs 9,11,12. It is clear too that his enemies had brought unjust charges against him – vs 1,2. So David cried to God for two things – vindication (v 2), and preservation (vs 7,9,13). The event in David’s history that fits this psalm seems to be Saul’s pursuit of him in the desert areas of southern Israel. See 1 Sam 23:24 to 24:22. At that time David was sure of his righteous conduct, and wanted the Lord to judge between him and Saul – 1 Sam 24:11,12,15.  
**17:3** David does not mean that he is sinless and has no fallen nature (note at 18:23). He means that in the charges his enemies made against him there was no truth at all. He had not sinned against his persecutors either in word or in deed – v 5. There is no spirit of self-righteousness here. David is merely conscious of his integrity (compare Job chapter 31; Acts 23:1; 1 Cor 4:4).  
**17:4** We can keep ourselves from the ways of the wicked only by God’s Word – 119:9,105.  
**17:6** David’s conscience was clear. This gave him great confidence in prayer. See 66:18; 1 John 3:21,22. If we live like the wicked we should not expect God to reward us as if we were righteous.  
**17:7** Here we have a long and precious title given to God. Let us use it when Satan attacks.  
**17:8,9** “Eye” – Deut 32:10; Prov 7:2; Zech 2:8.

- 9 From the wicked who oppress me,  
from my deadly enemies, *who* surround me.
- 10 They have closed up their fat *hearts*.  
With their mouths they speak proudly.
- 11 They have now surrounded us in our steps.  
They have set their eyes bowing down  
to the earth
- 12 Like a lion *that* is greedy for its prey,  
and like a young lion lurking in secret places.
- 13 Arise, O LORD! Disappoint him!  
Hurl him down! *By* your sword deliver my  
soul from the wicked,
- 14 By your hand from men, O LORD, from men  
of the world who have their portion  
in *this* life,  
and whose belly you fill with your  
hidden *treasure*.  
They are satisfied with children, and leave  
the rest of their *possessions* to their babies.
- 15 As for me, I will see your face in righteousness;  
I will be satisfied when I awake with  
your likeness.

18

To the chief musician, *a Psalm* of David,  
the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the

"Wings" – 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4; Ruth 2:12; Matt 23:37; Luke 13:34.

**17:12** See 1 Pet 5:8.

**17:13** Note at Ps 35:8.

**17:14** "Men of the world" – see 10:18. However much they enjoy life here they must leave it all and go into eternity without hope, without God.

**17:15** David contrasts his enemies with himself – they are wicked, he is righteous; they see their prosperity, he will see God's face; they are satisfied with things of this world, he will be satisfied when he rises to experience God's likeness. Compare Matt 5:8; Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2,3; Rev 22:4.

"When I awake" – David is referring to awakening from the sleep of death. The hope expressed here could not be realized in any way other than resurrection from the dead. We know from 16:9,10 that he had some idea of the resurrection of the body. Though God had revealed very little about the resurrection in Old Testament days He did reveal something (see also Job 19:23-27; Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2).

**18:1** This psalm is found with a few changes in 2 Samuel chapter 22. This is the song of the victorious warrior. His battles have been as "the servant of the LORD" (Title), and he gives all the glory to the Lord alone for the victories. Now the battles of believers are spiritual battles. We must fight against sin, and the flesh in us, and Satan and his hordes without – 1 Cor 9:26; Eph 6:11,12; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 6:12. We are to be good

LORD the words of this song on the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,

- 1 I will love you, O LORD, my strength.
- 2 The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress,  
and my deliverer; my God,  
my strength in whom I will trust,  
my shield, and the horn of my salvation,  
*and* my high refuge.
- 3 I will call to the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised;  
so I will be saved from my enemies.
- 4 The sorrows of death surrounded me,  
and the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.
- 5 The sorrows of hell surrounded me;  
the snares of death confronted me.
- 6 In my distress I called to the LORD,  
and cried out to my God.  
He heard my voice from his temple,  
and my cry came before him,  
into his ears.
- 7 Then the earth shook and trembled;  
also the foundations of the hills moved  
and were shaken, because he was  
angry.

soldiers of Jesus Christ – 2 Tim 2:3. David loved the Lord (the Hebrew word means the love between parents and children, the love that moves the heart to overflowing affection). Blessed is the man who loves God. Everything will turn out for his good – Rom 8:28. It will prove to be the secret of his victory. God Himself was David's strength for the fight – 21:1; 46:1; 68:28; 84:5; Ex 15:2; Isa 12:2; 40:31; 1 Chron 16:11.

**18:2** "Rock" – Deut 32:4. In vs 1,2 David uses eight different terms to express the completeness of the strength, power, and protection he found in God. The terms all are associated with battle, and attacks, and need of safety. Whatever his dangers, trials, and fears, he found that he was *absolutely secure* (compare John 10:28, 29; Rom 8:35-39; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 1).

**18:3** This was the continual experience of his whole life. It can and should be ours also – 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Tim 4:18; 2 Pet 2:9.

**18:4-6** David remembers times of extreme danger and distress, but he knew what to do. Cannot we see Christ in these verses? See Acts 2:24 and Heb 5:7.

**18:5** "Hell" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**18:7** From here to v 19 we see God's answer to David's cry. How powerful is the prayer of a righteous person! – Jam 5:16; Luke 18:1-8. The prayer of a single believer is sometimes followed by marvelous results. It is not recorded in David's history that God ever came in an earthquake or storm to

- 8 A smoke went up out of his nostrils,  
and devouring fire out of his mouth.  
Coals were kindled by it.
- 9 He bowed the heavens also,  
and came down, and darkness *was* under  
his feet.
- 10 And he rode on a cherub and flew;  
yes, he flew on the wings of the wind.
- 11 He made darkness his secret place.  
His canopy around him *was* dark waters  
*and* thick clouds of the skies.
- 12 From the brightness *that was* before him  
his thick clouds passed with  
hailstones and coals of fire.
- 13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens,  
and the Most High uttered his voice,  
hailstones and coals of fire.
- 14 He sent out his arrows and scattered them,  
and he shot out lightning flashes and  
routed them.
- 15 Then the channels of waters were seen,  
and the foundations of the world  
were uncovered at your rebuke,  
O LORD, at the blast of breath from  
your nostrils.
- 16 He stretched down from above,  
he took hold of me, he drew me out of  
many waters.

- 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,  
and from those who hated me;  
for they were too strong for me.
- 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity;  
but the LORD was my support.
- 19 He also brought me out into a broad place;  
he delivered me, because he delighted in me.
- 20 The LORD rewarded me according to my  
righteousness;  
according to the cleanness of my hands  
he has repaid me.
- 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,  
and have not wickedly departed from my God.
- 22 For all his judgments *were* before me,  
and I did not put away his statutes from me.
- 23 I was also upright before him,  
and I kept myself from my sin.
- 24 Therefore the LORD has repaid me  
according to my righteousness,  
according to the cleanness of my hands  
in his sight.
- 25 With the merciful you will show yourself  
merciful;  
with an upright man you will show  
yourself upright;
- 26 With the pure you will show yourself pure;  
and with the twisters you will show  
yourself able to twist.

deliver him but it could have happened at one time or another – or possibly David is using very poetic language to describe another kind of deliverance.

**18:8** A picture of great wrath. God is angry when wicked men persecute His people – 1 Thess 2:6,7.

**18:9** Man's need and true prayer bring God down.

**18:10** "Cherub" – Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-20.

**18:11-15** God is pictured as arriving in the storm. The dark clouds are His clothing, the thunder is His voice, lightening flashes are His arrows, the wind is His breath. The language is poetical, full of beautiful metaphors. Writers of the Bible never worshiped the forces of nature or called them gods. They saw the one true God behind them.

**18:13** "Coals of fire" – or the meaning could be "bolts of lightning."

**18:16,17** David was drowning, as it were, in troubles and dangers, and God drew him out of them. Observe that his enemies were too strong for him. Yes, but not too strong for the Lord.

**18:18** Disaster almost overwhelmed him but he had someone to lean on (this is the meaning of the Hebrew verb).

**18:19** See 31:8; 118:5. David begins to set forth the reason why God came and wonderfully rescued him. God was well pleased with both his character and actions. He was a man after God's own heart – see the note at 1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22. If we want to be delivered when trouble comes we should

try to live lives pleasing to God. The perfect fulfillment of this verse, of course, is in the Lord Jesus (Matt 3:17; Heb 5:7).

**18:20-24** This is not self-righteousness, but a simple setting forth of the facts by the inspiration of God's Spirit (see 17:3).

**18:23** David was well aware of his sinful nature and his besetting temptations. Indeed, no one in the Bible speaks of his sin more than David – 25:7,11,18; 31:10; 32:5; 38:3,4,18; 39:8; 40:12; 41:4; 51:3,5; 69:5; 103:10,12. But even in that matter where he was most prone to sin he kept himself by the grace of God. He knew that he hated his sins, mourned over them, forsook them, was cleansed from them and forgiven. He knew that he loved God and righteousness and that he sought to keep from sin and to live an upright life.

**18:25,26** Here is one very important principle of God's dealings with people. In some measure at least He acts toward them as they act toward Him and others – 62:12; Lev 26:3-5,23,24,27,28; Prov 3:34; Matt 5:7; 6:14,15; Rom 2:5,6. This is a principle of perfect justice. It is in accordance with the law God gave. Does God, then, change His character when He deals with different kinds of people? No, He merely reveals that side of His character which suits the person and the case. He will see that the faithful, blameless, and pure will thus learn in experience more of God's faithfulness, blamelessness, and purity. But the wicked and deceitful will learn that God

27 For you will save lowly people;  
but will bring down haughty looks.  
28 For you will make my lamp give light;  
the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.  
29 For by you I have run through a troop,  
and by my God I have leaped over a wall.  
30 *As for* God, his way *is* perfect.  
The word of the Lord is tested *and proven*.  
He *is* a shield to all those who trust in him.  
31 For who *is* God except the LORD?  
Or who *is* a rock except our God?  
32 *It is* God who arms me with strength,  
and makes my way perfect.  
33 He makes my feet like deer's *feet*,  
and sets me on my high places.  
34 He teaches my hands to war, so that my  
arms can bend a bow of bronze.  
35 You have also given me the shield of your  
salvation,  
and your right hand has held me up,  
and your gentleness has made me great.  
36 You have enlarged my path under me,  
so that my feet did not slip.  
37 I have pursued my enemies and overtaken  
them.  
I did not turn back until they were consumed.  
38 I have wounded them so that they were not  
able to rise.  
They are fallen under my feet.  
39 For you have armed me with strength to  
the battle.  
You have subdued under me those who  
rose up against me.

can outwit them and make their own crook-  
edness to work against them – 5:10; 7:16;  
9:16; 1 Cor 3:19.

“Twisters” – this is probably as close to  
the meaning of the Hebrew word as any  
other. It indicates those who try to twist  
everything for their own ends, pervert God’s  
truth, and make their ways corrupt and dis-  
honest – Deut 32:5; Prov 2:15; 10:9;  
17:20; Isa 59:8; Gal 1:7; 2 Peter 3:16.  
God knows how to deal justly with such and  
make their twisting efforts twist them up –  
7:15,16; Gal 6:7.

**18:27** An example of God’s just dealings  
(compare Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5).

**18:28** “Lamp” – 132:17; 1 Kings 15:4.  
“Enlighten” – 27:1; 112:4; Isa 50:10;  
Micah 7:8; John 8:12.

**18:30** Deut 32:4; Zeph 3:5. God knows how  
to deal with every individual and with the  
world as a whole. He never makes a mis-  
take, never acts unjustly, never fails to do  
what he should do. Sinful men, not under-  
standing this, blame Him for all sorts of  
things which happen on earth. See note on  
47:2. On His Word see Ps 12:6; Prov 30:5.

**18:31** The LORD (Jehovah), the God of  
Israel, the Creator of the universe is the  
one true God, and there is no other – Isa

40 You have also given me the necks of my  
enemies, so that I might destroy  
those who hate me.  
41 They cried out, but *there was* no one to  
save *them*; to the LORD,  
but he did not answer them.  
42 Then I beat them as fine as the dust  
before the wind.  
I hurled them out like dirt in the streets.  
43 You have delivered me from the strivings  
of the people;  
*and* you have made me the head of the  
nations.  
A people *whom* I have not known will serve me.  
44 As soon as they hear of me, they obey me;  
the foreigners submit themselves to me.  
45 The foreigners fade away,  
and frightened come from their strongholds.  
46 The LORD lives! Blessed *be* my rock!  
Let the God of my salvation be exalted!  
47 *It is* God who avenges me,  
and subdues the peoples under me.  
48 He delivers me from my enemies,  
and you lift me up above those  
who rise up against me.  
You have delivered me from the violent man.  
49 Therefore I will give thanks to you,  
O LORD, among the nations,  
and sing praises to your name.  
50 He gives great deliverance to his king,  
and shows mercy to his anointed,  
to David, and to his offspring forever.

44:6,8,24; 45:5,18.  
“Rock” – Deut 32:4.

**18:32** In Hebrew the word “perfect” here is  
the same word used of God above. David  
does not say that God had made him  
perfect – only his way. God perfectly equipped  
him for the fight he had to face, the work he  
had to do. He made him honest and up-  
right in his behavior. This is what God wants  
for us all (Deut 18:13; Ps 101:2,6).

**18:33-36** All his abilities and powers and  
successes he attributes to God’s grace alone.

**18:35** God’s gentleness is what makes truly  
great, not man’s restless striving after  
position and power.

**18:37-42** References from the history of  
David – 1 Sam 30:16-19; 2 Sam 5:6-  
10,17-25; 8:1-14; 10:17-19.

**18:43-45** Other references from history –  
2 Sam 8:2,6,11,12,14; 10:19; 1 Chron  
18:1-13.

**18:46-50** David would never think of at-  
tributing to himself the success and victo-  
ries he gained. From first to last it was all  
of God. So shall it be with us if we get the  
victory over the world, the flesh, and the  
devil (Rom 8:37; 2 Cor 1:21; 2:14; 3:5).

**18:50** Here David remembers the covenant  
God made with him about this (89:3,4; 1 Chron

# 19

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God;  
and the expanse shows his handiwork.
- 2 Day by day they pour forth speech,  
and night by night show forth knowledge.
- 3 *There is* no speech or language *where*  
their voice is not heard.
- 4 Their *boundary* line has gone out through  
all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world.  
In them he has set a tent for the sun,
- 5 Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of  
his chamber,  
*and* like a young man rejoicing to run a race.
- 6 Its rising *is* from one end of heaven,

17:7-14). He expresses his confidence that God would keep this covenant. This verse finds its perfect fulfillment in David's descendant, Jesus Christ the Lord (Matt 1:1; Rom 1:3). In fact, thinking of spiritual warfare and victory the enlightened believer can see Christ all through this psalm. Christ is much in the psalms as He is everywhere in the Old Testament (see Luke 24:25-27,44).

**19:1** This psalm speaks of two witnesses for God – creation (vs 1-6), and the teaching God has revealed (vs 7-11). It closes with the desire to be free from sin and to be pleasing to the Creator.

"Expanse" – see Gen 1:6-8.

**19:2** Creation testifies to God's being and glory. Compare Rom 1:19,20. Christ Himself pointed to nature as teaching God's wisdom, glory, and care – Matt 6:26-30; 10:29. So it is in vain for any philosopher or scientist to deny it. Those who do so only show their own spiritual blindness or prejudice.

**19:3,4** The heavens, the sun, moon, and stars do not speak words, but their silent testimony is universal and very powerful. It reaches every nation, tribe, and village on earth. These created objects are saying, "There is a Creator, a God of infinite power and glory." This testimony goes everywhere, including places where no human preacher has ever gone.

"Line" – translations of the Hebrew into Greek (the Septuagint), Latin, and Syriac have "voice" here (perhaps indicating that in those far-off days the Hebrew word also conveyed that meaning). Whether we keep "line" or opt for "voice" the teaching seems to be the same – namely, there is no place that the testimony of the heavens does not reach.

**19:4-6** The sun is singled out as the brightest object in the sky that declares the glory of God. Men at different times and places have worshiped the sun as God. The writers of the Bible, inspired by God's Spirit, knew better. The sun is simply an object made by God (Gen 1:1,16), and points to God as the

and its circuit to the *other* ends of it,  
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

- 7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect,  
converting the soul.  
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure,  
making wise the simple.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right,  
giving joy to the heart.  
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure,  
enlightening the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean,  
enduring forever.  
The judgments of the LORD *are*  
altogether true *and* righteous.
- 10 *They are* more desirable than gold, yes,  
than much fine gold.  
*They are* sweeter also than honey and the  
honeycomb.
- 11 Moreover by them your servant is warned,

proper object of worship.

**19:7** "Law" – the Hebrew word also means "instruction," "teaching." The teaching or the law God has given in His Word also reveals His glory. David is doubtless referring to the books of Moses, which made up nearly all the written Word of God then available. Believers now have the rest of the Bible, a much fuller revelation of God's wisdom, love, power, and glory. The revelation God has given is perfect – there is no flaw of any kind in it (12:6; 18:30; Matt 5:17,18). It has wonderful power to change the human heart (119:25,107; John 15:3; Jam 1:21; 1 Pet 1:23). We may be sure that what God has revealed is trustworthy – Ps 93:5; 111:7. A simple person who knows, believes, and loves the Word of God will be far wiser than those highly educated and intelligent persons who do not do so (111:10; 119:99; Prov 1:7). This is because the Word of God will teach him the fear of the Lord.

**19:8** Two more results of the Word of God received – joy (119:111; Jer 15:16; John 17:13; 1 Thess 1:6; 1 John 1:4), and light (119:105,130; Prov 6:23; 2 Cor 4:4; 2 Pet 1:19).

**19:9** Notes on "fear of the Lord" at 34:11-14; 111:10; Job 28:28; Prov 1:7; Gen 20:11. The fear of the Lord has a permanent effect for good in a person's life. One of the glories of God's teachings in the Bible is that they are altogether holy, just, and good (Rom 7:12).

**19:10** If men would go after the wonderful truths of the Word of God as they pursue wealth how blessed they would be and how different the whole world would be! (119:72,127; Prov 8:10,11,19). The Word of God is very sweet to the spiritual man (119:103; Prov 24:13,14). If it is not so with us it is because we are still carnal and sin is powerful in us.

**19:11** As long as we are in this world we will continue to need warnings from God



and in keeping them *there is* great reward.  
12 Who can discern *his* errors?  
Cleanse me from secret *faults*.  
13 Keep back your servant also from  
presumptuous *sins*.  
Let them not have dominion over me.  
Then I will be blameless, and I will be  
innocent from great transgression.  
14 May the words of my mouth,  
and the meditation of my heart,  
be acceptable in your sight, O LORD,  
my strength and my redeemer.

20

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

1 The LORD hear you in the day of trouble.

(2 Chron 19:10; Ezek 3:18-21; Acts 20:31; 1 Cor 4:14; Col 1:28; 1 Thess 5:14; Heb 11:7). On "reward" see 17:4; 25:10; 119:9; Josh 1:7,8; Isa 66:2; John 17:17; Jam 1:21; 1 Pet 2:2. Spiritual prosperity and success, safety, God's loving favor, purity of life, God's esteem, increasing sanctification, spiritual growth – these are some of the "rewards" of obedience to God's Word. Besides there will be the eternal rewards to be enjoyed in heaven (Rev 22:12).  
**19:12** See 90:8; 139:23,24; Lev 4:1,2 (note). No doubt we all may commit acts which in our eyes may not be errors or sins but will be such in the eyes of God (Jer 17:9,10).  
**19:13** See note at Num 15:30,31. Willful or presumptuous sins are extremely dangerous. Any sin will try to get the upper hand and rule over us. See Gen 4:7; John 8:34. But believers now have the promise of Rom 6:14.  
"Great transgression" – sins of lesser seriousness, if they gain the mastery over us, may lead on to more serious sins. Cain did not master his anger and so later killed his brother. David did not master his lust and so became guilty of adultery and murder (2 Samuel chapter 11). Judas did not master his love of money and ended up as Christ's betrayer, and a suicide. There are many other examples both in the Bible and out of it.  
**19:14** "Words" – 39:1-3; Matt 12:36; Jam 3:1,2. The writers of the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit, knew the great importance of words.  
"Heart" – they also knew the great importance of inner thoughts and ideas (Prov 4:23; etc). On "meditation" see 1:2; 104:34; 119:99,148; Josh 1:8; 1 Tim 4:15. Note on "Redeemer" at 78:35.  
**20:1** It seems that this psalm was written as a prayer for the king facing a battle. It was for the chief musician – that is, to be sung publicly. The first five verses express the desire of the people for the king's welfare. But they are fitting words to express the needs of every child of God.  
"Name . . . defend you" – see Prov 18:10.

The name of the God of Jacob defend you;  
2 Send you help from the sanctuary,  
and strengthen you out of Zion,  
3 Remember all your offerings,  
and accept your burnt sacrifice. *Selah*  
4 May He grant you according to *the desire*  
of your heart, and fulfil all your purpose.  
5 We will rejoice in your salvation,  
and in the name of our God we will set  
up *our* banners.  
May the LORD fulfil all your petitions.  
6 Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed.  
He will hear him from his holy heaven  
with the saving strength of his right hand.  
7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses;  
but we will remember the name of the  
LORD our God.  
8 They are brought down and fallen,  
but we have risen and stand upright.

Name indicates character and attributes, all that God is. In a world like this of fallen men and unseen evil spirits protection is one of the principal needs of believers, and protection is to be had no place except in the God of Jacob.  
"God of Jacob" – see note at 146:5.  
**20:2** "Sanctuary" – then God dwelt among His people in the sanctuary of the earthly temple in Jerusalem. Now He dwells in the living temple, the true church – Eph 2:21,22. In either case God is always Immanuel – the God who is near.  
**20:3** There are still offerings and sacrifices God's people want Him to keep in mind – Rom 12:1,2; Heb 13:15,16.  
**20:4** "Desire of your heart" – 21:2; 37:4. This assumes that the heart's desire is in accordance with God's will. If our desires are contrary to His will it would actually harm us if He were to give us what we desire.  
"Purpose" – Prov 16:3. If our plans are the same as His plans for us (as they should and can be), they will succeed. If they are not His plans, they should not succeed (though sometimes they may actually seem to succeed).  
**20:5** "Banners" – compare Ex 17:15. Only Jehovah-Nissi could give the kind of victory needed then or now – Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14.  
"Petitions" – 1 John 5:14,15.  
**20:6** Here is a shift from the plural to the singular pronoun. Perhaps a priest or Levite or the chief musician was to sing these words. It would be no mistake to believe that the "anointed" here refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. The king of Israel was a type, a picture of Him who was born king of the Jews (Matt 1:1; 2:2-6).  
**20:7-9** Again the plural pronoun is used as the people express their confidence and joy in God.  
**20:7** See 33:16-18; 1 Sam 17:45; Deut 20:2-4.  
**20:8** What a person trusts in will determine

9 Save, LORD! May the king hear us when we call.

21

To the chief musician, a psalm of David

- 1 The king will have joy in your strength,  
O LORD, and in your salvation how  
greatly he will rejoice!
- 2 You have given him his heart's desire,  
and have not withheld the request  
of his lips. *Selah*
- 3 For you met him with the blessings of  
goodness.  
You set a crown of pure gold on his head.
- 4 He asked life from you, *and* you gave *it*  
to him, length of days forever and ever.
- 5 His glory *is* great in your salvation.  
You have placed on him honour and majesty.
- 6 For you have made him most blessed forever.  
You have made him exceedingly glad  
with your presence.
- 7 For the king trusts in the LORD,  
and through the mercy of the Most High

in large measure the experiences and re-  
sults for good or evil in his life (32:10; 34:8;  
Prov 11:28; 28:26; Isa 31:1-3; 42:17;  
47:10,11; Jer 7:4,8,14,15; 13:24,25;  
17:5,7; Ezek 33:13; Hos 10:13; Acts 16:31).  
**20:9** Here is a recognition that Jehovah is  
the true, the eternal king.  
"Hear us" – people who pray in spirit and in  
truth want answers to their prayers. They are  
not content to pray merely for the sake of form.  
**21:1** Like the preceding psalm this one too  
was meant for singing in public worship. It  
is a song of joy and praise because of  
answered prayer. David speaks of himself  
in the third person because a choir or  
congregation would be singing these words.  
The psalm refers to David, but remember  
to look for Christ in the Psalms. Here Jesus  
the King surely appears, victorious, joyful,  
glorified, crowned, living forever.  
**21:3** This may refer to events in 2 Samuel  
(see 2 Sam 2:4; 5:3; 12:30). In a proph-  
etic sense it refers to the Lord Jesus  
crowned with glory and honor (Heb 2:9).  
**21:4** Eternal life is not a common theme of  
the Old Testament as it is of the New. But the  
beginning of the revelation of this truth was  
there (16:11; 23:6; 61:6; 133:3; etc.).  
This verse doubtless finds its most perfect ful-  
fillment in the Lord Jesus (Heb 5:7; Rev 1:18).  
**21:5** By God's grace David became a very  
powerful and honored king. But much  
greater than his victories were those of King  
Jesus over Satan, sin, death, and the gates  
of hell. And His glory and honor are far  
greater – John 17:1,5; Acts 2:32-36;  
3:13; Eph 1:20-23; Phil 2:9-11; Heb

- he will not be shaken.
- 8 Your hand will find all your enemies;  
your right hand shall find those who hate you.
- 9 You will make them like a fiery furnace  
in the time of your anger.  
The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath,  
and the fire will devour them.
- 10 You will destroy their fruit from the earth,  
and their seed from among  
the children of men.
- 11 For they intended evil against you.  
They devised a wicked plot,  
*which* they are not able *to carry out*.
- 12 Therefore you will make them turn their back,  
*when* you make *your arrows* ready on  
your string, *aimed* at their faces.
- 13 Be exalted, O LORD, in your own strength!  
We will sing and praise your power.

22

To the chief musician on Ayeleth shahar,  
a Psalm of David

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
*Why are you so far from helping me,*  
12:2; Rev 3:21; 5:12; 19:16.  
**21:6** Whatever eternal blessings we may  
eventually experience they have all been  
gained for us by the Lord Jesus. 16:11  
also speaks of the joy of God's presence.  
**21:7** Faith is the hand that receives God's gifts  
and the victory that overcomes the world – Mark  
10:52; Luke 7:50; Acts 3:16; 15:9; 26:18;  
Rom 3:22,25; 4:16; 5:1,2; Eph 2:8; 3:17;  
Heb 6:12; 11:6,33; Jam 1:5-7; 1 John 5:4.  
**21:8** Heb 10:31. It is a fearful and terrible  
thing to be an enemy of the Lord Jesus  
Christ.  
**21:9** See 2:12; 2 Thess 1:6-8; Rev 14:10;  
19:11-16. Note at Num 25:3.  
**21:10** See 37:28. When Christ returns He  
will purge the earth of all who practice evil.  
**21:11** Note at 2:2,4-6.  
**21:12** See 7:12,13; 45:5.  
**21:13** So let us sing our thanks to the Lord  
Jesus, the incarnation of Jehovah, for the  
victories He has accomplished for us by His  
might (Eph 5:19,20; Col 3:16,17).  
**22 Title:** Ayeleth shahar probably indicated  
the tune to be used when singing this song.  
It means "Doe of the Morning."  
**22:1** Like Psalm 16 this is a very wonderful  
and profound psalm. Here we have a  
prophetic picture of the Lord Jesus Christ  
on the cross (vs 1-21), and after His resur-  
rection (vs 22-31). There are quotations  
from, or references to, this psalm in Matt  
27:39,43,46, John 19:23,24 and Heb 2:12.  
Christ's crucifixion is described in v 16, His  
thirst in v 15 (John 19:28). The whole psalm  
may have been in the thoughts of the Lord  
Jesus when He hung on the cross.

- and from* the words of my groaning?
- 2 O my God, I cry out in the daytime,  
but you do not hear;  
and in the night season, and am not silent.
- 3 But you *are* holy, *you* who inhabit  
the praises of Israel.
- 4 Our fathers trusted in you;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 They cried out to you, and were delivered.  
They trusted in you, and were not put to shame.
- 6 But I *am* a worm, and no man;  
a reproach of men,  
and despised by the people.
- 7 All those who see me laugh me to scorn.  
They shoot out the lip;  
they shake the head, *saying*,
- 8 "He trusted in the LORD *that* he would  
deliver him!  
Let him deliver him, since he delights in him!"
- 9 But you *are the one* who took me out of

- the womb.  
You caused me to hope *when I was* on my  
mother's breasts.
- 10 I was cast on you from birth.  
You *are* my God from my mother's womb.
- 11 Be not far from me, for trouble *is* near;  
for *there is* no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls have surrounded me.  
Strong *bulls* of Bashan have encircled me.
- 13 They opened wide their mouths at me,  
*like* a ravenous and roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart is like wax; it is melted in  
the midst of my bowels.
- 15 My strength is dried up like a broken piece of  
pottery, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws.  
And you have brought me to the dust of death.
- 16 For dogs have surrounded me;  
the assembly of the wicked have encircled me.

David here is speaking as a prophet by the Spirit of God. There is no event in his history that corresponds to the experience described in this psalm, though some of the language would have been suitable to describe various trials he went through.

"Forsaken me" – being forsaken by God (Matt 27:46) was the most terrible of the sufferings the Lord Jesus endured for us – far worse than the crown of thorns, the nails, or the scorn and hatred of men. Being forsaken by God is like hell itself – 2 Thess 1:8,9. Of course, before He faced this experience the Lord Jesus knew it would be a terrible thing to be a substitute for sinners, to bear the sins of the whole world – Isa 53:5,6; John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21. But He could not have known in advance this utter spiritual desolation. It had to be experienced to be known. And when it was experienced it could only call forth groans and the word "why" from a heart wounded and sorrowful beyond endurance. Remember this – it is we who deserved to be there suffering, not He (1 Pet 3:18).

**22:2** Jesus once said that God the Father always heard Him, and it was surely true (John 11:41,42). On the cross Jesus cried to Him and the Father remained silent and withdrawn for the first time. For Jesus was enduring the punishment that sinners deserve. Still the suffering Saviour calls the Father "my" God. There is no break in His love and loyalty, no drawing back from the Father's will.

**22:3** He did not accuse God of injustice. He held to the immovable rock of the truth about God – God can commit no wrong, either in what He does, or in what He permits. And God is enthroned, still in charge of events even in that blackest of hours.

"Praises of Israel" – this verse could be translated "Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel", or "Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praises of Israel." See note at 14:7.

**22:4,5** The whole history of the nation Israel

gives evidence of the truth of these words.

**22:6** Here the Lord Jesus in complete self-abasement says He is less than those forefathers whose prayers God heard, less than any man. The great "I am" declares "I am a worm" – someone to be crushed under foot by scornful men. Hardly anything is weaker, uglier, less regarded by men than a worm. See how men regarded Him – Isa 53:3; Mark 10:33,34. Did not Jesus say He was a worm because He was a substitute for sinners and identified Himself with the least, worst, and weakest of all? because He was in the sinner's place enduring God's wrath against sin? because He was made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21)?

**22:7** Matt 27:39; Mark 15:29; Luke 23:35.

**22:8** Matt 27:43,44.

**22:9,10** In a special way God looked after the birth of His Son into the world. From His earliest memories as a human being on earth the Lord Jesus was conscious of His trust in God as His Father.

**22:11** Now in His time of supreme danger He calls on the God He has always trusted in. For He is utterly alone wrestling with all the forces of evil and darkness.

**22:12-18** Here Christ's experiences on the cross, His very thoughts are given to us. His enemies surrounding Him seemed like fat, raging bulls (v 12), roaring lions (v 13), and fierce wild dogs (v 16). He is in the hands of brutal torturers who have no compassion whatever for Him.

**22:14** This indicates a feeling of complete inner sickness and weakness, and outer agony. His body was suspended from the nails in His hands, the muscles and ligaments stretched more and more, the bones slipping from their sockets.

**22:15** "Dried up" – John 19:28. "You" means God the Father. The Lord Jesus is conscious all the while that this is God's appointment for Him (John 18:11). On "dust" see 90:3; Gen 3:19.

**22:16** He was pierced at the crucifixion, iron

- They pierced my hands and my feet.  
 17 I can count all my bones;  
     they look *and* stare at me.  
 18 They divide my garments among them,  
     and cast lots for my clothing.  
 19 But you, O LORD, be not far from me.  
     O my strength, come quickly to help me.  
 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,  
     my precious *life* from the power of the dog.  
 21 Save me from the lion's mouth; for you have  
     heard me from the horns of the wild oxen.  
 22 I will declare your name to my brethren.  
     In the midst of the congregation I will  
     praise you.  
 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
     All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him!  
     And fear him, all you offspring of Israel!  
 24 For he has not despised nor abhorred the  
     afflictions of the afflicted one,

- nor has he hidden his face from him;  
 but when he cried out to him, he listened.  
 25 My praise *will be* of you in the great  
     congregation.  
     I will pay my vows before those who fear him.  
 26 The meek will eat and be satisfied.  
     Those who seek the LORD will praise him;  
     your heart will live forever.  
 27 All the ends of the earth will  
     remember and turn to the LORD,  
     and all the families of the nations  
     will worship before you.  
 28 For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,  
     and he *is* the ruler over the nations.  
 29 All *those who* are prosperous on earth  
     will eat and worship;  
     all those who go down to the dust will  
     bow before him,  
     and no one can keep his own soul alive.

spikes being driven through His hands and feet into the wood of the cross.

**22:17,18** John 19:23,24. Jesus was publicly stripped and became a spectacle to the hostile crowd. Stripping indicates utter defeat and humiliation. In ancient times conquerors sometimes stripped their defeated enemies and led them away naked in chains. So it seemed at the cross that Christ's enemies had completely triumphed over Him.

**22:19** God the Father was the strength of Christ – John 5:19,30.

**22:20** "Sword" – Zech 13:7; Matt 26:31. On this prayer for deliverance see Heb 5:7.

**22:21** "Lion" – compare 1 Pet 5:6.

"Wild oxen" – stretched on the cross it was as though He were impaled on the horns of a wild buffalo.

**22:22** With this verse there is a sudden change. He knows His prayers have been answered. He has fought the good fight of faith and won. (For assurance of faith see also 6:9; 28:6; 31:22.) He immediately thinks of those for whom He is dying and calls them brothers. Believers would hardly dare to call the Lord from heaven their brother, but He calls them so. This verse is quoted in Heb 2:12. It indicates His confidence that God would raise Him from the dead. In fact the remainder of this psalm speaks of events that took place only after the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead. "Name" signifies character and attributes. On "declare" see John 17:26.

**22:23** The fear of God is a very important theme in the Bible, a very necessary attitude for men (notes at 34:11-14; Gen 20:11; Prov 1:7). Jesus Himself was heard because He feared God (Heb 5:7). Here He commands this reverence to others. In the individual, and in the congregation it is the most basic and essential thing if the praise of God is to be heartfelt and genuine. Jesus lived His whole life and died on the cross for

the glory of God. Here He commands us to glorify God. He never tells us to do what He would not do Himself. He Himself was the perfect example of all that He taught.

**22:24** A great cause for praising and glorifying God! God, far from despising the sufferings of His Son, accepted them as the punishment due to the sins of believers and then released Him from them. The hiding of God's face was only temporary. He heard Jesus when He cried out of the depths.

**22:25** The Lord Jesus, though not present bodily in a congregation on earth, is present through His Spirit in the meetings of believers (Matt 18:20). His praise mingles with theirs and rise to the throne of God. In the great congregation in heaven (Heb 12:22-24) His praises will be heard. What vows did Christ make? The new covenant God made with men is full of promises of good things. Jesus is the mediator of this covenant. Also He was a servant of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers (Rom 15:8). As the Son of God and Saviour of men all such promises are His promises and He will infallibly fulfill them.

**22:26** "Eat and be satisfied" – Jesus is the bread from heaven. Only the meek and humble will come to Him and find satisfaction (the proud will not find satisfaction in anything). Jesus has opened up a new and living way into God's presence – Heb 10:19,20. All that truly seek God through Christ will end by praising God and living forever.

**22:27** This is the result of the work accomplished by the Lord Jesus on the cross – 2:8; 86:9; Matt 28:19; Rev 7:9,10.

**22:28** See 47:2,7,8; Matt 28:18. What God has determined to do He has the power and authority to do, and He will do it.

**22:29** In the Lord Jesus there is food enough for all, and even the rich and powerful may partake if they humble themselves. Eventually every knee will bow to Him – Isa

30 A posterity will serve him;  
it will be counted to the Lord as a generation.  
31 They will come and declare his righteousness to  
a people who will be born, that he has  
done *this*.

23

A Psalm of David

1 The LORD *is* my shepherd;  
I will not *be in* want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.  
He leads me beside the still waters.  
3 He restores my soul.  
He leads me in the paths of  
righteousness for his name's sake.  
4 Yes, though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; for you *are* with me.  
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.  
5 You prepare a table before me in the  
presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil.  
My cup runs over.

45:22-24; 49:7; Phil 2:10.  
**22:30** We who believe and serve Him now are proof of the truth of this prophecy. And His worship and praise shall never end.  
**22:31** The great themes of God's people throughout all generations will be God's righteousness, His way of making men righteous, and the finished work of Christ on the cross. In this psalm we see that Christ was forsaken by God that believers might never be forsaken. He was laid in the dust of death that we might be raised from the dust and never die. He was in the lion's mouth that we might be eternally delivered. But if we reject Him then a forsaken condition, death, and the lion's mouth will be our eternal portion.  
**23:1** Here the LORD (Jehovah) is said to be the shepherd of His people. In John 10:11 the Lord Jesus is the good shepherd. This is evidence that Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See also 24:7-10; 96:10-13; Isa 6:1; Zech 12:10; Gen 16:7; Ex 3:14. Note at Luke 2:11. David views himself as a sheep. All of Christ's believers are His sheep, His purchased and personal possession. They are sheep, not by nature, but because of the work of God in their hearts (Eph 2:3-10). They hear Christ's voice, trust in Him, and follow Him (John 10:25-27).  
His people should not doubt that the good shepherd will provide. He may not give us all we **desire**, but if we follow Him and trust Him He will give us all what we **need** (37:25; Matt 6:25-33; Phil 4:19). This means all we need for both physical and spiritual life. David here is expressing his confidence in his Shepherd and his contentment in what the Shepherd gives – both qualities we should all try to maintain in our hearts – Heb 13:5,6. If we really know Him can we doubt that He will take care of us, or that what He gives or withholds is given or withheld in perfect wisdom and love?  
**23:2** Compare Matt 11:28-30 and John 10:4. Wherever He brings His sheep there will be the green pastures of His word and fellowship, and the calm deep waters of the Holy Spirit. This knowledge too brings contentment, rest and freedom from all that can frighten and frustrate, trouble and harass us.  
**23:3** As long as believers are in this world they will have times of weariness and trial. They will be sometimes cast down and

tempted to faint. At such times the Shepherd draws near and restores and refreshes the soul. He leads only in the paths of righteousness, never in crooked ways, never in the broad way of deception, ungodliness, and sin. If you have gone in a bad way, a way that involved you in lies, or breaking the law, or in unjust behavior, do not boast that the good Shepherd has led you there. This He will never do. His name and the glory of His Father are bound up with His sheep. He will always lead them in ways of truth and justice and honesty.  
**23:4** Times of darkness, gloomy trials, and finally death will come to Christ's sheep. Evil will sometimes surround them. But their Shepherd is the all-powerful Creator. He is by their side. Why should they fear? (Luke 12:4-7; John 14:1; Rom 8:15; 2 Tim 1:7; Heb 2:14,15; Heb 13:6; 1 John 4:18; Rev 2:10). Fear not, little flock! The comfort of Christ's sheep is His authority over them, His sovereign care signified by His rod and staff. The staff was a long stick or pole bent and curved at the end. The shepherd used it both to draw sheep near and to guide them. The staff could be placed along the side of the sheep and pressure exerted to indicate the direction they should go.  
The rod was a shorter stick often with a carved knob at the end. It could be used for three different purposes. It was a defensive weapon which could be used against animals dangerous to the sheep. It was a tool to discipline the sheep. And it was used to examine the condition of the sheep by lifting up the wool that covered them, so that which was underneath could be inspected. All of these things Christ the good Shepherd does for believers. With His rod and staff (the Word of God and His Spirit and any other means He uses in our lives) He exercises authority over us (Matt 28:18), draws us near to Himself in fellowship (1 John 1:3), guides us (John 10:4), defends us against all enemies (Ps 5:12; 32:7; John 10:28), examines us to see if we are in a healthy spiritual condition (Ps 7:9; 1 Chron 28:9; Jer 20:12; Rev 2:23), and disciplines us that we might enter this condition (Heb 12:5-11). Can their be any greater comfort than this to poor, weak, and foolish sheep?  
**23:5** Sheep have many enemies – wild beasts that prey on anything as helpless as they are.



6 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the  
LORD forever.

24

A Psalm of David

- 1 The earth *is* the LORD's, and its fulness;  
the world, and those who live in it.
- 2 For he has founded it on the seas,  
and established it on the waters.
- 3 Who may ascend onto the hill of the LORD?  
Or who may stand in his holy place?
- 4 He who has clean hands, and a pure heart,  
who has not lifted up his soul to

The case of believers is no different. If no one opposes us, if we have no enemies, we may well wonder if we are following the Shepherd and standing up for justice and integrity. The world that hated Christ will not love His sheep (John 15:18,19). And Satan and his hordes will hate them with a fierce hatred. But even while Satan rages and our enemies surround us the good Shepherd prepares a feast of good things for us. Like the humble, serving shepherd He is (John 13:3-5; Luke 12:37) He serves table for us and anoints our heads with the precious oil of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20). Thus we will have enough, and more than enough, of everything. Table here also suggests the Lord's Table where we meet with Him and with each other to remember the love He showed in giving Himself for us that we might feast on Him and live forever (John 6:35; 1 Cor 11:23-26).

**23:6** With such a Shepherd, believers now, like David, can enjoy full assurance of faith (Rom 5:9,10; 8:37-39; Phil 1:6; 2 Tim 4:18; 1 Pet 1:5). Our Shepherd goes before us, goodness and mercy follow us. What companions we have for life's pilgrimage! If we belong to His flock we will be safe in His keeping forever (John 10:28).

**24:1,2** The LORD Jehovah is the creator of the universe, therefore all things are His and every human being belongs to Him. Whatever we use in this world is not our property but God's. Whatever we do to another human being we do to God's possession. On the basis of creation alone we belong to the Creator. If we give ourselves to anything else – the world, sin, Satan's power – we are denying God's ownership of us.

**24:3,4** Though the above is true, the fact is that man has given himself to sin and Satan, and so not everyone is going to ascend joyfully into the presence of God. He will not accept us into His holy heaven if our hands and hearts are filthy, if we practice deceit, or go after vain things. (In the Old Testament a vain thing frequently means an idol.) It is useless to boast of our

- a vain thing, or sworn deceitfully.
- 5 He will receive blessing from the LORD,  
and righteousness from the God of  
his salvation.
- 6 This *is* the generation of those who seek  
him; who seek your face,  
O *God of Jacob*.

*Selah*

- 7 Lift up your heads, O you gates,  
and be lifted up, you everlasting doors,  
and the King of glory will come in.
- 8 Who *is* this King of glory?  
The LORD strong and mighty,  
the LORD mighty in battle.
- 9 Lift up your heads, O you gates.  
Lift *them* up, you everlasting doors,  
and the King of glory will come in.
- 10 Who is this King of glory?

religion if our lives are full of impurity, dishonesty, lying, and deceit. See also Psalm 15. There is a fountain where such things can be washed away. The blood of Christ can cleanse us from all guilt and sin, and God's Spirit can set us free (Zech 13:1; 1 John 1:7-9).

**24:5** The believer cleansed from sin does not attribute this to himself. He knows God his Saviour has done it. Salvation, righteousness, and every blessing is a free gift from God above – Eph 2:8,9.

**24:6** The righteous have sought God and will go on seeking and finding, and at last will ascend to His presence to be with Him forever. The meaning of this verse may be clearer if Jacob is placed earlier in the sentence – "This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face."

**24:7-10** Many think David wrote this psalm for the time described in 2 Samuel chapter 6. He calls out in joy for Jerusalem's gates to open for the unseen presence of Jehovah the King coming with the ark of His covenant. But the words surely have a prophetic meaning. They fit perfectly the time of the ascension into the heavenly Jerusalem of the Lord Jesus the King (Luke 24:50,51; Acts 1:9; Eph 4:8-10). Observe in v 8 and v 10 that the king of glory is none other than the LORD (Jehovah) Himself. In the New Testament Jesus is the King of glory, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Matt 21:5; Luke 19:38; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:11-16). In other words, Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See also 23:1; 96:10-13; Isa 6:1; Zech 12:10; Gen 16:7; Ex 3:14. Note at Luke 2:11.

It is interesting to notice the connection between psalms 21, 22, 23, 24. In 21 we have the King, in 22 the suffering Saviour, in 23 the good Shepherd, in 24 the King in triumph entering His city again – the city He left to come to earth that He might be the Saviour and Shepherd of His people.

**24:10** "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

The LORD of hosts,  
he *is* the King of glory.

*Selah*

25

A Psalm of David

- 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
- 2 O my God, I trust in you.  
Do not let me be ashamed;  
do not let my enemies triumph over me.
- 3 Yes, let no one who waits on you be ashamed.  
Let them be ashamed who transgress  
without cause.
- 4 Show me your ways, O LORD;  
teach me your paths.
- 5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me;  
for you *are* the God of my salvation.  
On you I wait all the day.
- 6 Remember, O LORD, your tender mercies  
and your *acts of* loving kindness;  
for they *are* from ancient times.
- 7 Remember not the sins of my youth,  
or my transgressions.

**25:1** In this psalm we see several features of David's character which made him a man after God's own heart. These are prayerfulness (vs 1,16-22), trust (v 2), desire to know God's ways (vs 4,5), hope (vs 5,15,21), confession of sin and dependence on God's mercy alone (vs 6,7,11,18), desire to give others the truth (vs 8-10,12-14).  
**25:2,3** See 34:5; 37:19; 119:5,6,80; Isa 41:11; 42:17; 44:9-11; 45:16,17,24; 49:23; Rom 5:5; 10:11.  
**25:4** A prayer every human being should make to the Creator of the universe. What a difference it would make in this confused and sinful world! Any such sincere prayer God will certainly hear. He loves to teach men His ways if they are willing to learn them - 32:8; 71:17; 94:10,12; Isa 2:3; 54:13; Matt 5:2; Mark 6:34; John 6:45; 14:26. We see in this psalm the people God teaches - believers (v 5), sinners (v 8), the humble (v 9), those who fear the Lord (v 12). If we do not want God to teach us, it will be no surprise if we remain in ignorance and darkness about spiritual truth.  
**25:5** Especially should believers pray for God's guidance and teaching - 27:11; 86:11; 119:12,26,33,64,66,108; Ex 33:13. What wonderful things a person will learn who has God for his teacher! Everyone who is taught of God will come to the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in Him - everyone. See John 6:45.  
**25:7** Verse 11. Note at 18:23. David knows that it is only because of God's mercy, love, and goodness that he has hope.

- According to your mercy remember me for  
your goodness' sake, O LORD.
- 8 Good and upright *is* the LORD;  
therefore he will teach sinners in the way.
  - 9 The meek he will guide in judgment,  
and the meek he will teach his way.
  - 10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and  
truth to those who keep his covenant  
and his testimonies.
  - 11 For your name's sake, O LORD,  
pardon my sin; for it *is* great.
  - 12 Who *is* the man who fears the LORD?  
Him he will teach in the way *that* he  
chooses.
  - 13 His soul will dwell in prosperity,  
and his offspring will inherit the earth.
  - 14 The secret of the LORD *is* with those who  
fear him, and he will show them his  
covenant.
  - 15 My eyes *are* ever toward the LORD,  
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.
  - 16 Turn to me, and have mercy on me,  
for I *am* desolate and afflicted.
  - 17 The troubles of my heart have grown large.  
*Oh*, bring me out of my distresses.
  - 18 Look at my affliction and my pain,

**25:8** If God did not condescend to teach sinners not one of us would ever learn the truth. But God is kind to His enemies and wants to make them His friends.  
**25:9** See 32:9; Deut 8:3; Matt 11:29; Jam 1:21. Those whom God would teach He first humbles, for the proud can hardly learn spiritual truth.  
**25:10** See 103:17,18; Ex 34:5-7.  
**25:11** It is to the glory of God's name to pardon the sins of His people who repent and seek Him. Forgiveness is one of the sweetest words in the language.  
**25:12** Notes on fear of the Lord at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; Prov 1:7.  
**25:13** These were blessings promised under the old covenant. Note at 1:1-3.  
**25:14** Spiritual truth can be understood only by those who have right attitudes toward God (Gen 18:17-19; Prov 3:22; Matt 11:25; Luke 14:25-35; 24:45; John 7:17; 1 Cor 2:11-14).  
**25:15** See 16:8; 123:2; 141:8.  
**25:16** Sometimes the believer is alone in his stand for God - 1 Kings 18:22; 19:10,14-18; 2 Tim 4:16,17.  
"Desolate" - the Hebrew word means "alone."  
**25:17** Troubles of the heart are the most troublesome of all and inward struggles the most grievous of all (13:2; 73:26; Job 3:20-26; 7:11; 10:1; Prov 14:10; John 14:1).  
**25:18** Evidently David thought that his sins might be the source of his present difficulties. On forgiveness see 103:3; 130:4; Luke 24:46,47; Acts 13:38; 1 John 1:9.

- and forgive all my sins.
- 19 Consider my enemies, for they are many,  
and they hate me with cruel hatred.
- 20 Oh, keep my soul, and deliver me!  
Let me not be ashamed, for I put my  
trust in you.
- 21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
for I wait on you.
- 22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

26

A Psalm of David

- 1 Act as my judge, O LORD, for I have  
walked in my integrity;  
I have also trusted in the LORD.  
*Therefore* I shall not slip.
- 2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me.  
Test my mind and my heart.
- 3 For your loving kindness *is* before my eyes,  
and I have walked in your truth.
- 4 I have not sat with worthless persons,  
nor do I go with hypocrites.
- 5 I have hated the congregation of evildoers,  
and will not sit with the wicked.
- 6 I will wash my hands in innocence;  
so I will go around your altar, O LORD,
- 7 That I may proclaim with the voice of

- thanksgiving, and tell of all your  
wondrous works.
- 8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of your  
house, and the place where your  
honour dwells.
- 9 Do not gather my soul with sinners,  
or my life with bloodthirsty men,
- 10 In whose hands *is* an evil scheme,  
and whose right hand is full of bribes.
- 11 But as for me, I will walk in my integrity.  
Redeem me, and be merciful to me.
- 12 My foot stands in a level place.  
In the congregations I will praise the LORD.

27

A Psalm of David

- 1 The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD *is* the strength of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?
- 2 When the wicked, my enemies and my foes,  
came against me to eat up my flesh,  
they stumbled and fell.
- 3 Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart will not fear.  
Though war rise against me,  
in this I *will be* confident.

**25:19** See 3:1; 23:5.  
**25:21** Here are two perfect guards for our life, when our hope is in God alone.  
**25:22** On God as Redeemer see note at 78:35.  
**26:1** In this psalm David insists on his integrity and innocence. He had the testimony of a good conscience. In psalm 25 he thrice mentions his sins (vs 7,11,18). He was not self-righteous, but he knew that his heart was right with God, that he was innocent of his enemies accusations (note at 17:3). His integrity is revealed in his trust in God (v 1), in his prayer to be tested (v 2), in keeping himself from deceitful and evil men (v 4,5), in his strong desire to worship God (vs 6-8), and in his prayer for mercy (vs 9-11). The root of integrity is a true desire to please God more than one's self (v 3). Surely this is a requirement for everyone who calls himself a Christian. In this, as in everything good, Christ Himself is the believer's example (John 8:29; Rom 15:3).  
**26:2** See 7:9; 17:3; 139:23.  
**26:3** See 16:8.  
**26:4,5** See 1:1; 2 Cor 6:14-16; 1 Cor 13:33.  
**26:6** This is a metaphor taken probably from Ex 30:18-21.  
**26:7** See 9:1; 50:14; 69:30; 95:2; 100:4; Phil 4:6; Col 2:7.

**26:8** See 27:4; Acts 2:46; 5:42; Heb 11:25.  
**26:10** "Bribes" – he means bribes to pervert justice. This is everywhere condemned in the Bible as a wicked thing (15:5; Ex 23:8; Deut 10:17; 16:19; Prov 15:27; 17:23; Isa 5:22,23). But see note at Amos 5:12.  
**26:11** David was determined to continue in the path of integrity. So must we be. And he knew that any such life can be based only on God's merciful activity.  
**26:12** "Level place" means the solid, even foundations of truth and righteousness.  
**27:1** It was a time of danger and slander (v 12). David needed light so as to know what to do, and protection from enemies. He never dreamed he could make a light for himself out of the kindling of his own imagination, or ever thought his salvation was in his own strength or goodness. He always acknowledged God as the source of everything good. On "light" see 18:28. On "fear" see 23:4.  
**27:2,3** Rom 8:37; Eph 6:10,11. Believers now should have the same confidence in God against spiritual foes as David had against human foes.  
**27:4-6** David was frequently away from God's place of worship, in battle, in hiding from enemies, in other lands. He longed for the house of God, quiet meditation and worship in a place of peace and safety, the music and gladness of the tabernacle.

- 4 One *thing* I have asked from the LORD;  
I will seek for this: that I may dwell in the house  
of the LORD all the days of my life,  
to see the beauty of the LORD,  
and to inquire in his temple.
- 5 For in the time of trouble he will hide  
me in his pavilion;  
he will hide me in the secret place of  
his tabernacle;  
he will set me high on a rock.
- 6 And now my head will be lifted up above  
my enemies around me.  
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of  
joy in his tabernacle.  
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.
- 7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry out with my voice,  
and have mercy on me, and answer me.
- 8 *When you said*, "Seek my face",  
my heart said to you,  
"Your face, LORD, I will seek".
- 9 Do not hide your face from me,  
do not turn your servant away in anger.  
You have been my help.  
Do not leave me or forsake me,  
O God of my salvation.
- 10 When my father and my mother forsake me,  
then the Lord will receive me.
- 11 Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me  
in a straight path, because of my enemies.
- 12 Do not hand me over to the will of my  
enemies; for false witnesses have  
risen up against me,  
and those who breathe out violence.
- 13 *I would have fainted*, unless I had  
believed that I would see the goodness

- of the LORD in the land of the living.
- 14 Wait on the LORD. Be courageous,  
and he will strengthen your heart.  
Wait, I say, on the LORD.

28

A Psalm of David

- 1 To you I will cry out, O LORD my rock;  
do not be silent to me.  
For *if* you are silent to me,  
I will become like those who go down  
into the pit.
- 2 Hear the voice of my supplications,  
when I cry out to you, when I lift up  
my hands toward your holy sanctuary.
- 3 Do not drag me away with the wicked,  
and with those who do evil,  
who speak peacefully to their  
neighbours, but *who have*  
wickedness in their hearts.
- 4 Give to them according to their deeds,  
and according to the wickedness of  
their actions;  
give to them according to the work of  
their hands.  
Pay them back what they deserve.
- 5 Because they show no regard for the works  
of the LORD,  
or for what his hands have done,  
he will destroy them, and not build them up.
- 6 Blessed *be* the LORD, because he has heard  
the voice of my supplications.

**27:4** The Hebrew word translated "beauty" also means pleasantness, delightfulness. See also 90:17. There was no form of God in His place of worship, no idol, no image that men might think beautiful. David is speaking of the spiritual beauty that can be seen only with the eyes of faith.

**27:5** If God keeps us, hides us in His shelter, and sets us on the rock (Himself – Deut 32:4), then we are safe indeed, and will have cause for shouts of joy and happy singing to His name.

**27:8** The importance of seeking God's face is everywhere emphasized in the Bible (105:4; Isa 45:19; 55:6,7; Hos 10:12; Amos 5:6; Zeph 2:3; Matt 7:7; Heb 11:6). God tells us to seek Him because He wants to reveal Himself to those who seek, and He wants them to know that He is the source of all good.

**27:9** See 13:1.

**27:10** See 68:5; Isa 49:15; Hos 14:3. The LORD will take on the job of both father and mother to believers who are forsaken of their earthly ones. And He will love and care for them as no human could ever do.

**27:11** See 25:5. "Straight" – the Hebrew does not mean "plain" (KJV) in the sense of "clear", but "level" or "straight."

**27:12-14** What should a believer do when he is the object of lies and slander? Pray (v 12), trust God (v 13), and hope in God for the future (v 14). If we do not we will be anxious and troubled.

**28:1,2** "Rock" – Deut 32:4. David wanted results from his prayers. He could not be satisfied unless he got an answer from God. He will consider himself like a dead man unless he has living contact with God. We should have the same earnestness in our praying. Dead, formal, cold prayers are useless.

**28:3** Did David think this was possible? He was well aware of his sinful nature, and the power of it. Compare Ps 51:3-5,11.

**28:4** See the note at 35:8.

**28:5** David wants the wicked punished, not because they had injured *him*, but because of their attitude toward God. When he called on God to judge his enemies it was not out of a spirit of personal vengeance.

**28:6** See 6:8-10.

- 7 The LORD *is* my strength and my shield.  
My heart trusted in him, and I am helped.  
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,  
and I will praise him with my song.
- 8 The LORD *is* their strength, and he *is*  
the saving stronghold of his anointed.
- 9 Save your people,  
and bless your inheritance,  
and shepherd them,  
and carry them forever.

29

A Psalm of David

- 1 Ascribe to the LORD, O you mighty ones,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to his name.  
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.
- 3 The voice of the LORD *is* over the waters;  
the God of glory thunders;  
the LORD *is* over many waters.
- 4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful.  
The voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.

**28:7** See 3:3; 5:12; 18:35; 32:7,10; 33:20; Gen 15:1; Job 1:10. Nothing can come from outside to God's chosen people that God does not permit. He shields them from all that is not His will for them. He Himself is their protection against Satan and evil men. What a joy this is to the trusting heart. **28:8** See 18:1; 21:1; 68:28; 84:5; Ex 15:2; Isa 12:2; 40:31; 1 Chron 16:11. David was anointed king over Israel, but we can see here also David's Son, the Lord Jesus, the anointed one. All that happened to Christ was in the will of God (John 18:11; Acts 2:22,23). **28:9** God's people are His inheritance – Deut 4:20; 9:26,29; Eph 1:18. "Shepherd" – 23:1; 80:1; Deut 1:31; Isa 40:11; 63:9; John 10:11; Heb 13:20. **29:1** We have in this psalm a description of a powerful thunder storm sweeping into northern Israel from the Mediterranean Sea and on to the desert regions of Kadesh. David by divine inspiration calls on God's people to recognize God's activity in the storm. Storms display something of God's glory and strength. According to God's revelation of Himself in the Bible, He Himself is in charge of such events – 104:4,7,13,32; 133:6,7; 148:8; Job 38:22,23; Habakkuk chapter 3. **29:2** The power and glory revealed in creation belong to the LORD (Jehovah God) alone, not to any other so-called god (1 Chron 16:26). But the most splendid thing about Him is His holy character. Therefore the wicked cannot truly worship God – Prov 15:8; Isa 1:12-17; Jer 6:19,20; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8. Believers have no innate holiness. Christ is their holy beauty and beauty of holiness – Rom 13:14; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-11.

- 5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;  
yes, the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
- 6 He also makes them skip like a calf,  
Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.
- 7 The voice of the LORD divides the flames  
of fire.
- 8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness,  
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 9 The voice of the LORD causes the deer to  
give birth,  
and strips the forests bare.  
And in his temple everyone speaks of *his* glory.
- 10 The LORD sits *enthroned* over the flood;  
yes, the LORD sits as King forever.
- 11 The LORD will give strength to his people.  
The LORD will bless his people with peace.

30

A Psalm, a song *for* the dedication  
of the house of David

- 1 I will extol you, O LORD, for you have  
lifted me up, and have not let

**29:3** Here the thunder is God's voice (18:13; Job 37:2-5). **29:4-9** The results of God's mighty thunderings and lightning. **29:6** "Sirion" – another name for Mount Hermon. **29:9** Those engaged in worship in the temple do not fear the storm; they exult at the display of God's power and glory. "Causes the deer to give birth" – or "twists the oaks." The Hebrew words for "deer" and "oaks" are similar. The word translated "causes. . .to give birth" comes from a Hebrew word meaning to writhe or twist in pain, such as someone giving birth would do. See note on Hebrew at Ps 14:6,7. **29:10** The present storm brings to David's mind the tremendous storms of the flood (Gen 7:4,11,12). Jehovah was king then; He is the king over all storms, and over everything else, forever (note at 47:2). **29:11** Peace in the storm, peace in any kind of upheaval – this is God's will for His people. Peace is God's gift – Num 6:26; John 14:27; 16:33. It comes to those who recognize God's kingship over everything – v 10; Phil 4:6,7. **30 Title:** the Hebrew word here translated "house" may also mean palace or temple. The temple was not built until after David's death. It is possible that David wrote this psalm in advance for its dedication, but it seems more likely that he wrote it for the dedication of his own palace. Whether we construct a church for God's worship, or a mansion or a cottage or a hut for ourselves, it is a good thing to dedicate it to God and cause Him feel at home there as long as we use it. **30:1-3** This is a song of gratitude for



- my foes rejoice over me.
- 2 O LORD my God, I cried out to you,  
and you healed me.
- 3 O LORD, you brought my soul up from the grave.  
You have kept me alive, so that I would  
not go down to the pit.
- 4 Sing to the LORD, you saints of his,  
give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.
- 5 For his anger *remains but* a moment;  
in his favour *is* life.  
Weeping may endure for a night,  
but joy *comes* in the morning.
- 6 And in my prosperity I said,  
"I will never be shaken."
- 7 LORD, by your favour you have made  
my mountain to stand strong,  
*but when* you hid your face I was troubled.
- 8 I cried out to you, O LORD,  
and made supplication to the LORD.
- 9 What profit *is there* in my blood,  
in my going down to the pit?  
Will the dust praise you?  
Will it declare your truth?
- 10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me!  
LORD, be my helper!
- 11 You have turned my mourning  
into dancing for me.  
You have removed my sackcloth,  
and clothed me with gladness,
- 12 So that *my* glory may sing praise to you,  
and not be silent.  
O LORD my God, I will give thanks  
to you forever.

healing when David had been sick to the point of death. When we are sick we should seek healing from God as well as from medicine and doctors, and think of Him before we think of them (6:2; 103:3; Deut 32:39; 2 Chron 16:12; Matt 9:35; Jam 5:16). One of God's names is Jehovah Ropheka – the LORD who heals you (Ex 15:26).

"Grave" (v 3) – "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**30:4,5** It is a great reason for singing and praising that God deals so gently with believers when they have provoked Him to anger (103:8-10; Isa 54:7).

**30:6,7** Self-confidence will result in a fall (1 Cor 10:12; 2 Pet 3:17). Our health, our peace, our prosperity are all based on God's goodness, not ours. So should we be willing to behave badly? Not at all. We should be resolved to behave well, by His grace and power, out of gratitude, if for no other reason. (See also Rom 6:1,2.)

**30:8-10** Note at 6:5. "Dust" – Gen 3:19.

**30:11,12** What a change God can make in our lives! Those who sincerely call on Him as David did will also have experiences similar to these that he had (4:1,7; Isa

31

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

- 1 In you, O LORD, I put my trust;  
let me never be ashamed.  
Deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Bow down your ear toward me.  
Deliver me quickly.  
Be my rock of refuge, a fortress of  
defense to save me.
- 3 For you *are* my rock and my fortress;  
therefore, for your name's sake,  
lead me and guide me.
- 4 Pull me out of the net that they have  
secretly laid for me;  
for you *are* my strength.
- 5 Into your hands I commit my spirit.  
You have redeemed me,  
O LORD God of truth.
- 6 I have hated those who have regard for  
lying vanities,  
and I trust in the LORD.
- 7 I will be glad and rejoice in your mercy,  
for you have considered my trouble;  
you have known my soul in adversities,
- 8 And have not delivered me into the hand  
of the enemy.  
You have set my feet in a spacious place.
- 9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in  
trouble;  
my eye is consumed with grief,

61:1-3; Jer 31:3; John 16:20,22,24).  
"Thanks" – 7:17; Lev 7:12,13; etc.

**31:1** "Ashamed" – 25:2,3. "Righteousness" – 7:6-9.

**31:2** "Rock" – Deut 32:4.

**31:3** "Name's sake" – 23:4.

**31:4** Traps will be set for believers. Even if men don't, Satan will.

**31:5** The first part of this verse was quoted by the Lord Jesus as He died on the cross (Luke 23:46), also by many believers since then as they faced death. We may be sure that God will carefully keep and guard what we have committed to Him (2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 4:19). It is the height of wisdom to put our spirit, our life, our eternity in God's hands. What God redeems is His special property. He knows how to look after it.

"God of truth" is one of God's precious names. He is absolutely true to His Word. It is impossible for Him to lie – Titus 1:3. And He hates all lying and deception – 5:6; 15:2; Prov 6:16-19.

**31:6** Deut 32:21; Jer 2:5; 10:14,15; 14:22; 16:19; 18:15; 1 Cor 8:4.

**31:7** Ex 2:25; Rev 2:9.

**31:9-13** David is in great grief, trouble, and danger. His language is similar to some

- yes, my soul and my body.
- 10 For my life wastes away with grief,  
and my years with sighing.  
My strength fails because of my sin,  
and my bones are consumed.
- 11 I am an *object of reproach* among all my  
enemies,  
but especially among my neighbours,  
and a dread to my acquaintances.  
Those who see me outside run away  
from me.
- 12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind.  
I am like a broken vessel.
- 13 For I have heard the slander of many.  
Fear *was* on every side.  
When they took counsel together against me,  
they plotted to take away my life.
- 14 But I have trusted in you, O LORD.  
I have said, "You *are* my God."
- 15 My times *are* in your hands.  
Deliver me from the hands of my enemies,  
and from those who persecute me.
- 16 Make your face shine on your servant.  
Save me for your mercies' sake.
- 17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD,  
for I have called to you.  
Let the wicked be ashamed, *and* let them  
be silent in the grave.
- 18 Let lying lips be put to silence.  
They speak bold things proudly and

- contemptuously against the righteous.
- 19 Oh, how great *is* your goodness which you  
have stored up for those who fear you,  
*which* you have prepared for those who  
trust in you before the sons of men!
- 20 You will hide them in the secret place of  
your presence from the pride of man.  
You will keep them secretly in a  
pavilion from the strife of tongues.
- 21 Blessed *be* the LORD, for he has shown me  
his marvellous kindness in a strong city.
- 22 For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from  
before your eyes."  
Nevertheless you heard the voice of my  
supplications when I cried out to you.
- 23 Oh, love the LORD, all you *who are* his saints!  
For the LORD preserves the faithful,  
but fully pays back the proud.
- 24 Be courageous, and he will strengthen  
your heart,  
all you who hope in the LORD.

## 32

*A Psalm of David, a maskil*

- 1 Blessed *is the one whose* transgression  
*is* forgiven, whose sin *is* covered.
- 2 Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does  
not impute iniquity,

words of Job and Jeremiah (Job 3:24; 19:13,14; 30:15; Jer 6:25). He acknowledges that his guilt or sin was at least partly the cause of his miserable condition – v 10. Sin is the great troubler of mankind in general and a great misery to all believers. **31:14** David's faith remained firm – no trouble, no slander, no opposition could diminish it. He was not of the sort who leave off belief in God when strange and difficult and painful circumstances occur. God is no less the God of believers when they are experiencing trouble. **31:15** He is willing to leave to God the ordering of his life. He recognizes that the good times, the bad times, the prosperous times, the miserable times are all in the hands of an all-wise, loving, sovereign God. He who waits for God's time for things will not be disappointed. **31:16** Num 6:25. **31:17** See 25:2,3. "Grave" – "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35. **31:18** See 7:6-9; 35:8. David had learned from God Himself to hate lying lips. **31:19-22** Once again faith and prayer have won the victory and brought comfort and joy to a sorrowing heart. **31:19** 1 Cor 2:9,10; Eph 2:7. **31:23** A person who loves God wants others to love Him too. Here David sets forth the

greatest command of the law (Deut 6:5). It is also the highest privilege of man.

**31:24** No matter what the difficulties, God is still in control and believers can safely rest on the foundation of His sure promise. Being shaken by threats, slanders, and dangers, giving in to depression, fear, and weakness must have no place in the believer's life (Josh 1:8,9; 1 Cor 15:58).

**32 Title:** Maskil probably was a literary or musical term.

**32:1,2** Three Hebrew words are used here to fully describe wrong doing. "Transgression" means breaking the law of God. "Sin" indicates missing the mark or going astray. "Iniquity" means the badness of a deed in itself, or the guilt that deserves punishment. In the Hebrew Bible the same three words are in Ex 34:7. Also David uses three words to describe the way God dealt with confessed sin in the Old Testament.

"Forgiven" – this comes from the Hebrew word "to lift" or "take away from." On forgiveness see 86:5; Isa 55:7; Jer 50:20; Micah 7:18,19; Matt 6:12; 9:6; 12:31; etc.

"Covered" – see notes at Ex 29:33; Lev 1:2.

"Does not impute" – God refuses to bring the guilt into the believer's record. This is wonderful news to a sinner who repents and turns to the Lord for mercy. The apostle Paul in

- and in whose spirit *there is* no guile.
- 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old  
through my roaring all the day long.
- 4 For day and night your hand was heavy on me.  
My moisture was turned into the drought  
of summer. Selah
- 5 I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and I did not hide my guilt.  
I said, "I will confess my  
transgressions to the LORD;  
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.
- Selah
- 6 For this reason everyone who is godly  
will pray to you in a time when  
you may be found.  
Surely the floods of great waters will  
not come near him.
- 7 You *are* my hiding place.  
You will preserve me from trouble.  
You will surround me with songs of  
deliverance.
- Selah
- 8 I will instruct you and teach you in the

- way you should go.  
I will guide you with my eye.
- 9 Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule,  
*which* have no understanding,  
whose mouth must be controlled with bit  
and bridle, or they will not come near you.
- 10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked,  
but mercy will surround the one who  
trusts in the LORD.
- 11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice,  
you righteous;  
and shout for joy, *all you who are*  
upright in heart.

33

- 1 Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous;  
*for* praise is fitting for the upright.
- 2 Praise the LORD with *a* harp.  
Sing to him with the lyre,  
an instrument of ten strings.
- 3 Sing to him a new song.  
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

Romans chapter 4 refers to these two verses to show that the Old Testament is in agreement with the New Testament teaching about justification (Rom 4:6-8).

"Guile" – this is a very important word here. To obtain forgiveness confession must be genuine. Blessed is the person who faces himself and his sin honestly, calls it by its right name, and sincerely confesses to God what he has done wrong. Many there are who deceive themselves and never come to a proper knowledge of who and what they are (Jer 17:9; 2 Thess 2:10; Heb 3:13; 1 John 1:8).

**32:3,4** "Silent" – unconfessed sin in a believer is a source of much misery, for God will lay His chastening hand on such a person. Compare psalms 6 and 38. This psalm (32) was written probably after David's confession of his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12). After that sin many months passed before he confessed it – 2 Sam 11:1-5,27.

**32:5** 2 Sam 12:13,14. Sincere confession of sin results in forgiveness. God loves to be merciful and gracious to the sincere and repentant person (Prov 28:13; Isa 55:7; Micah 7:18; 1 John 1:9).

**32:6** Isa 55:6. God will not wait forever for the guilty to confess their sin and seek forgiveness (Gen 6:3).

"Floods" – David is thinking of a flood of judgment against sin. Believers have sought and found God and will be safe at such a time because they are forgiven and the Lord will not hold their sins against them.

**32:7** Confession and forgiveness of sin bring restful confidence and deliverance. He who does not hide his sin can find a hiding place for himself in God.

**32:8,9** It is unclear who the speaker is in these verses. Is God speaking to David? Or is David speaking to the readers and hearers of the psalm instructing them as he says he will do in 51:13? In either case the advice is the same. If we want to learn how to walk in God's ways we must renounce all stubbornness and be humble and obedient toward the Word of God. The mule is famous for its stubbornness. The self-confident and disobedient are compared to horses in Jer 8:6.

**32:10** Everywhere in the Bible we see that eventually the wicked will have to pay for his wickedness – 1:4-6; 16:4; 34:21; 68:2; 119:155; Prov 3:33; 5:22; 10:24; 11:5; 13:21; 16:4; Isa 3:11; 13:11; 57:20,21; Jer 23:19; Mal 4:3; Matt 25:46; Rom 2:8,9; Gal 6:8; 2 Thess 1:6; Rev 14:9-11; 21:8. Observe in this verse the contrast between the prospects of the wicked and righteous. See also 5:12; 16:11; 23:6; Isa 35:10; Eph 2:7. Does God regard any of you reading this as wicked? If so, take warning.

**32:11** No one on earth has more cause for rejoicing than the justified person, the true in heart (64:10; 68:3; 97:12; Phil 2:18; 3:1; 4:4). Repentance, confession, forgiveness, and victory over deceit in the heart take the gloom away and make true joy a possibility even in a dark, sorrowful, sinful world.

**33:1-3** "Praise" – 7:17; 8:2; 9:1; 16:7; 18:3; 42:5; 100:4; 150:6; Gen 24:27; Ex 15:2; Lev 19:24; Deut 8:10; 32:3; 1 Chron 16:4,9,25; Isa 12:1; Matt 5:16; 11:25; Luke 1:68; Rom 15:7,11; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3,6,12,14; Rev 5:12,13; 19:5. God does not command us to praise Him because He is hungry for praise. He is not

- 4 For the word of the LORD *is* right,  
and all his works *are done* in truth.
- 5 He loves righteousness and justice.  
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.
- 6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were  
made,  
and all the host of them by the breath  
of his mouth.
- 7 He gathers the waters of the sea together  
as a heap.  
He lays up the depth in storehouses.
- 8 Let all the earth fear the LORD.  
Let all the inhabitants of the world  
stand in awe of him.
- 9 For he spoke and it was *done*;  
he commanded, and it stood firm.
- 10 The LORD brings the counsel of the  
nations to nothing.  
He makes the plans of the people of no effect.
- 11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,  
the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
- 12 Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD,  
*and* the people *whom* he has chosen as

- his own inheritance.
- 13 The LORD looks from heaven;  
he sees all the sons of men.
- 14 From his dwelling place he looks on all  
the inhabitants of the earth.
- 15 He forms their hearts together;  
he considers all their deeds.
- 16 No king is saved by the multitude of an army;  
a mighty man is not delivered by much  
strength.
- 17 A horse *is* a vain thing for safety;  
and it cannot deliver *anyone* by its  
great strength.
- 18 See, the eye of the LORD *is* on those who  
fear him, on those who hope in his mercy,
- 19 To deliver their soul from death,  
and to keep them alive in famine.
- 20 Our soul waits for the LORD.  
He *is* our help and our shield.
- 21 For our heart will rejoice in him,  
because we have trusted in his holy name.
- 22 Let your mercy, O LORD, be on us,  
just as we hope in you.

like men who long to have everyone speak well of them. When God commands us to praise Him He is actually telling us to find our joy and delight in Him and express it. Praise is admiration expressed in words. Men praise what they think is good or beautiful or strong or meaningful. They express their delight in what they consider a worthy object. The highest good and beauty and strength and meaningfulness are found in God. Therefore among all things and persons and beings in the universe He is the most worthy of praise. He wants us to recognize this, not for His sake, but for ours. He wants us to be the kind of people who know and praise that which is most worthy of praise. To praise God means to see His worthiness, His excellence. It means we find our delight in the best and highest. It is fitting and right that we should do this (v 1). Men praise all kinds of objects and persons not worthy of their praise. Is it not fitting for those who know God to praise Him who is worthy of it? The wicked, the discontented, the selfish, the unbelieving, the morally and spiritually blind cannot, will not, praise God in spirit and in truth. The humble, the righteous, the enlightened person can and will. Wicked people glory in their shame, and praise earthly things and delight in them (Phil 3:19). Righteous people glory in God and in Christ their Saviour (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17; Gal 6:14; 1 Tim 1:17). Lack of thanksgiving and praise to God is blameworthy. It shows a defect in character and outlook, and God wants His people to be free of it. Giving thanks, singing, and praising God are fitting for them and should come naturally to them. These things are ways in which they can show their renewed

nature. Those who know God best and who are the humblest and most enlightened will praise Him most. **33:4-7** Here are further reasons why the righteous should praise God – His word and faithfulness, His righteousness and justice, His grace, His power exercised in marvelous and beautiful works. Another reason is seen in vs 10,11 – His ability to accomplish all His purposes and plans. **33:6** There is more truth in this one verse concerning the origin of the universe than in all the speculations of scientists and philosophers combined. See 148:5; Gen 1:1; Isa 40:25,26; John 1:1,2; Heb 11:3. **33:8-11** The unsaved cannot properly praise God but they should learn to fear Him. He is the mighty Creator. He overthrows the plans of earthlings and fulfills His eternal plan (2:4-6; Prov 19:21; Isa 8:10; 14:24; 19:3; Acts 2:23; Rom 11:33-36). **33:12-19** To accomplish His plans and purposes in the earth God chose the nation Israel and watches all peoples everywhere. He knows all that is going on, and nothing will take Him by surprise. Armies march, horses rush to battle, warriors test their strength, but God alone determines the outcome. God will arrange all things for His glory and the good of the righteous (2 Chron 16:9; Rom 8:28). **33:19** Observe the sort of people God keeps in time of famine. See also 37:19. **33:20-22** This is the only proper attitude of heart, the only way to peace of mind in a raging, rebellious, ruined world. "Our soul waits", "we have trusted", "we hope" ("hope" here does not imply uncertainty but confident expectation). And this attitude brings safety and joy. **34 Title:** This psalm was written concerning one of David's darkest hours. It is described

## 34

*A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour in the presence of Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.*

- 1 I will praise the LORD at all times.  
His praise *will* continually *be* in my mouth.
- 2 My soul will make its boast in the LORD.  
The humble will hear *of this* and be glad.
- 3 O glorify the LORD with me, and let us  
exalt his name together.
- 4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me and  
delivered me from all my fears.
- 5 They looked to him and became radiant,  
and their faces were not ashamed.
- 6 This poor man cried out,  
and the LORD heard *him*,  
and saved him out of all his troubles.
- 7 The angel of the LORD encamps around  
those who fear him and delivers them.
- 8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD *is* good!

in 1 Sam 21:10-15. Abimelech seems to have been a title of successive kings of the Philistines, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian kings (Gen 20:2; 26:1).

**34:1-3** David learned to praise God even in difficulties and dangers. He found God sufficient for all times, a sure help in every circumstance. Many there are who boast in themselves. David was determined to boast in the Lord alone.

**34:4** Here is the reason for David's praise. Also vs 6,17,19. God hears prayer. He listens to the cries of His people and in His time and way He delivers them.

**34:5** Their shining is the reflected light of God who is light.

**34:7** Note on angels at Gen 16:7. The Lord Jesus Himself does what is described here.

**34:8** Experience alone can teach us certain things. We learn more of the sweetness of honey by tasting it than by reading any number of books about it. So with the goodness of God. We may read endless books of theology and devotion, and constantly meditate on the Bible, but until we actually experience God ourselves we will not really understand His goodness. So David exhorts us to taste, to try God, to experience Him. How can we do this? The answer is in this same verse – by believing Him. Faith enables us to experience God's goodness (Matt 9:29; 21:22; Mark 11:24; Heb 11:6).

**34:9** Compare Ps 31:23. These two verses give us two great words of the spiritual life – love and fear (reverential awe).

**34:10** The promise to supply all that is needed is made to those who fear God and who seek Him. It is not enough to have one of these without the other. But a great promise is here for those who have both.

**34:11-14** See other notes on the fear of

Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in him.

- 9 Oh, fear the LORD, you saints of his;  
for *there is* no lack to those who fear him.
- 10 The young lions are in want and suffer hunger;  
but those who seek the LORD will not  
lack anything good.
- 11 Come, you children, listen to me.  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- 12 What man *is there who* desires life,  
and loves to have many days,  
so that he may see good?
- 13 Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips  
from speaking deceit.
- 14 Depart from evil and do good.  
Seek peace, and pursue it.
- 15 The eyes of the LORD *are* on the righteous,  
and his ears *are open* to their cry.
- 16 The face of the LORD *is* against  
those who do evil,  
to cut off the remembrance of them  
from the earth.
- 17 *The righteous* cry out, and the LORD hears

the Lord at 86:11; 111:10; Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Prov 1:7. What is this fear of the Lord which is so very important? It is to have a reverential awe and respect for Him and His Word, to recognize His majesty, greatness and authority and to fear – offending Him. These verses give us several things that are involved in it.

Fearing God means to guard the tongue. Lies and deceit are of the devil, and the person who truly fears God will refrain from this most dangerous of sins, this sin which God hates with all His holy being (5:6; Prov 6:16-19). Malicious gossip, evil speaking, filthy or bad or blasphemous language – these too must never have a place in the mouths of God's people (Eph 4:29; 5:4; Col 3:8,9; Jam 3:9-12).

Fearing God means turning from evil (v 14; Prov 3:7; 8:13). But this alone is not sufficient. Some people's religion is merely negative – "I don't do this evil, I abstain from that wrong." We must also do good (Isa 1:16,17). If we do not, we are guilty of sins of omission, and these are just as blameworthy as sins of commission (1 Sam 12:23; Matt 25:41-46). If we have the fear of the Lord as we ought we will not practice either kind of sin.

Fearing God also means to seek always to be at peace with Him and with all men (v 14; Heb 12:14). Here are some other references on the fear of God – 25:14; 33:18,19; 85:9; 103:11,13,17; 115:13; 128:1; Deut 5:29; 6:2,24; Prov 9:10; 14:27; 15:33; 16:6; 19:23; Isa 33:6. Verses 12-14 of this psalm are quoted in 1 Pet 3:10-12.

**34:15-17** The righteous are those who trust and fear God. God will act toward such people entirely differently than He does toward the wicked (see 18:25,26).



and delivers them out of all their troubles.  
18 The LORD *is* near those who are of a broken heart,  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.  
19 Many *are* the distresses of the righteous,  
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.  
20 He protects all his bones;  
not one of them is broken.  
21 Evil will slay the wicked,  
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.  
22 The LORD redeems the soul of his servants,  
and none of those who trust in him will be condemned.

35

A Psalm of David

1 Plead *my cause*, O LORD, with those who strive with me.

**34:18** God delights to see this condition in men. This is not because He wants them to be unhappy, but because it opens the way for Him to make them happy forever (51:17; Isa 57:15; 61:1; 66:2).  
**34:19** The Bible does not hold out false hopes of an easy, trouble-free life for believers. It insists again and again that they will suffer in this world (Mark 10:30; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3; 1 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 2:21; 4:1).  
**34:20** This is a prophecy fulfilled at Christ's death. See John 19:33-36.  
**34:21** The evil that unbelievers do will turn to their destruction. Perfect justice will be fulfilled.  
**34:22** Rom 8:1.  
**35:1** This psalm has three clear divisions. In each division there is a description of David's enemies and then a statement that when God answers him it will bring joy to his heart and praise to his lips. The divisions are vs 1-10, 11-18, and 19-28.  
**35:1-3** When God fights for the believer who can stand against him? - 56:9; 118:6; 1 Sam 17:47; 1 Chron 5:20; 2 Chron 20:15; Rom 8:31.  
"Buckler" - a small shield.  
**35:4** See 25:2,3.  
**35:5** Note on angels at Gen 16:7.  
**35:6** See 73:18; Deut 32:35; Jer 23:12.  
**35:7** The persecution and hatred David endured from his enemies were not because he had done anything against them. This fact reveals their wickedness and enmity toward God.  
**35:8** Is it right for believers to pray for the destruction of their enemies, for God's judgment on them? It was right in the time when the Old Testament was written and when those who so prayed were in tune with God's purposes and inspired by the Holy Spirit to do so, as the writers of the Psalms were.

Fight against those who fight against me.  
2 Take hold of shield and buckler,  
and stand up for my help.  
3 Draw out the spear also,  
and bar *the way* to those who persecute me.  
Say to my soul, "I *am* your salvation."  
4 Let those who seek after my life be disgraced and put to shame.  
Let those who plot to harm me be turned back and brought to confusion.  
5 Let them be like chaff before the wind,  
and let the angel of the LORD drive *them* away.  
6 Let their way be dark and slippery,  
and let the angel of the LORD pursue them.  
7 For without cause they have hidden their net for me *in* a pit which,  
without cause, they dug for my soul.  
8 Let destruction come on him unexpectedly,  
and let his net, which he hid, catch him.  
Let him fall into that very destruction.

There are such prayers in many psalms - 5, 7, 9, 17, 28, 31, 35, 40, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 69, 74, 79, 83, 109, 129, 140. The reasons for such prayers are also given here and there - 7:6; 9:19,20; 28:4; 59:13; 74:22; 83:16,18.  
Personal vengeance was not the main concern of the writers of the psalms. They were concerned with justice. They often emphasized the truth that God takes holy vengeance on the wicked enemies of His servants, that God will see to it that men reap what they sow. These writers wanted God to rise in judgment to display His justice which was being forgotten, and to make His holy nature known. They wanted men to fear Him, and seek Him, and know Him. They wanted the poor and needy to be rescued from the oppression of wicked men.  
Remember these writers lived under the law of Moses. The essence of law is not grace and mercy but perfect justice in action (see note at Ex 19:21-25; 21:23-25). David's attitude is the same as that revealed in Deut 27:15-26 which God Himself taught the nation Israel. This attitude is an intense desire to see God vindicated and honored in the display of His just judgments. The writers of the psalms simply prayed that God would do what He said He would do.  
Now we live in the age of God's grace. Under the law God often emphasized judgment on the wicked for their sins. In this age God is emphasizing the gospel of His love for fallen men, His patience toward sinners. The Son of God did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them - Luke 19:10; 9:54-56; John 3:17. Believers now are to be in tune with God's purposes, and so are told to pray for their enemies' good - Matt 5:43,44; Luke 6:27,28; Rom 12:19,20; 1 Tim 2:1-4. For all we know enemies of the church may, like Saul of

- 9 And my soul will be joyful in the LORD;  
it will rejoice in his salvation.
- 10 All my bones will say,  
"LORD, who is like you who delivers the poor  
from the one who is too strong for him;  
yes, the poor and the needy from  
the one who plunders him?"
- 11 False witnesses rise up.  
They question me about *things* that I  
do not know.
- 12 They repay me evil for good *to* bring loss  
to my soul.
- 13 But as for me, when they were sick,  
my clothing *became* sackcloth.  
I humbled my soul with fasting;  
and my prayer returned into my own bosom.
- 14 I went about as though *he was* my friend  
or brother.  
I bowed down sorrowfully, like one who  
mourns *for* his mother.
- 15 But in my adversity they rejoiced,  
and gathered together.  
*Yes*, attackers gathered together  
against me, and I did not know *it*.  
They tore *me*, and did not stop;
- 16 With ungodly mockers at feasts,  
they gnashed their teeth at me.
- 17 Lord, how long will you look on?  
Rescue my soul from their *attempts* to  
destroy, my precious life from the lions.
- 18 I will give you thanks in the great congregation.  
I will praise you among many people.
- 19 Do not let those who are my enemies  
wrongfully rejoice over me,  
*or* let those who hate me without cause  
wink with the eye.
- 20 For they do not speak peace,  
but devise deceitful matters against  
*those who are* quiet in the land.
- 21 Yes, they opened their mouth wide against

- me, *and* said,  
"Aha! Aha! Our eyes have seen *you*."  
22 You have seen *this*, O LORD.  
Do not keep silent.  
O Lord, do not be far from me.
- 23 Stir yourself up, and awake for my vindication,  
for my cause, my God and my Lord.
- 24 Vindicate me, O LORD my God,  
in accordance with your righteousness,  
and do not let them rejoice over me.
- 25 Do not let them say in their hearts,  
"Ah, so we would have it!"  
Do not let them say, "We have swallowed  
him up!"
- 26 Let those who rejoice at my distress be  
ashamed and altogether be brought  
to confusion.  
Let them be clothed with shame and  
dishonour who exalt *themselves*  
against me.
- 27 Let those who favour my righteous cause  
shout for joy and be glad.  
Yes, let them say continually,  
"May the LORD, who has pleasure in the  
prosperity of his servant, be exalted."
- 28 And my tongue will speak of your  
righteousness *and* of your praise  
all the day long.

## 36

To the chief musician, a *Psalm* of David,  
the servant of the LORD

- 1 The transgression of the wicked says  
within my heart, *that there is* no  
fear of God before his eyes.
- 2 For he flatters himself in his own eyes,  
until his wickedness is found to be hateful.

Tarsus, be converted to Christ and turned into friends. In any case, believers are to love their enemies and desire their salvation. At the end of this age God will rise in judgment on the wicked. At that time all angels and all of God's people will be in harmony with God's decision - Rev 6:9-11; 16:5-7; 19:1-4. See note at 109:1 also.

**35:9,10** This is a believer's heart rejoicing in the justice of the Lord which helps the helpless against strong and evil men.

**35:13-16** The character of David's enemies is clearly seen here as being worthy of God's judgment. Apparently at first David had prayed for their good. But when their behavior continued to be evil God's Spirit in him inspired him to pray for their punishment. See in v 13 one good purpose in fasting. On fasting see also Isa 56:6,7; Joel 1:14; 2:12; Matt 6:16-18.

**35:18** "Thanks" - 7:17; Lev 7:12,13; etc.

**35:19-26** It is unbearable that wrong should triumph over right, that wicked men should crush the righteous and escape.

**35:27,28** And it is a joyful thing in this fallen evil world when the right gets the upper hand and the righteous are rescued and rewarded.

**36:1** In this psalm we have a very striking contrast between the wickedness of men (vs 1-4), and the grace of God (vs 5-10). Some people blame God for the darkness, the corruption, and the disasters which are prevalent in the world. We see here where the blame really rests. Wicked men are responsible for it all. Notes on the fear of God at 34:11-14; 111:10; Gen 20:11; Prov 1:7.

**36:2** This verse in Hebrew is obscure and translation is difficult. In any case, the meaning has to do with the deceitfulness of sin and human nature (Jer 17:9; Heb 3:13).

- 3 The words of his mouth *are* wicked and deceitful.  
He has ceased to be wise, *and* to do good.
- 4 He devises wickedness on his bed.  
He sets himself in a way *that is* not good.  
He does not abhor evil.
- 5 Your mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens,  
*and* your faithfulness *reaches* to the clouds.
- 6 Your righteousness *is* like the great mountains.  
Your judgments *are* a great deep.  
O LORD, you preserve man and beast.
- 7 How excellent *is* your loving kindness, O God!  
Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings.
- 8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fulness of your house;  
and you will cause them to drink from the river of your pleasures.
- 9 For with you *is* the fountain of life.  
In your light we will see light.
- 10 Oh, continue your loving kindness to those who know you,  
and your righteousness to the upright in heart.
- 11 Let not the foot of pride come against me,  
and let not the hand of the wicked drive

- me away.
- 12 There the evildoers have fallen.  
They are thrown down, and will not be able to rise.

# 37

*A Psalm of David*

- 1 Do not fret because of evildoers,  
or be envious of those who do wicked things.
- 2 For they will soon be cut down like the grass, and wither like the green plant.
- 3 Trust in the LORD, and do good;  
*so* dwell in the land, and faithfully you will be fed.
- 4 Delight yourself in the LORD,  
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- 5 Commit your way to the LORD and trust in him,  
and he will accomplish *this*.
- 6 He will bring forth your righteousness like the light,  
and your just *cause* like the noonday.

**36:5** The wicked plot evil, God plans good. It is immense folly to blame God for the evil of the wicked. His grace is as measureless as the heavens.

"Faithfulness" – 57:10; 85:10; 89:1,8, 14; Isa 11:5; Lam 3:23; Rom 3:3.

**36:6** All that God does is in perfect justice.

**36:7** Who can put a price on God's grace and love? Compare Eph 1:6-8.

"Trust" – 2:12; 7:1.

**36:8** All good things men enjoy are gifts of God (Jam 1:17).

**36:9** Here is one of the many great verses of the Old Testament. Much of John's Gospel and letters is a filling out of this verse (John 1:4,5; 3:16; 4:13,14; 5:21,26; 7:37,38; 8:12; 1 John 1:1-6; 5:11,20). Without spiritual life from God we are dead people in a dead world. Without His light all we do is darkness, and we do not know who or what we are or where we are going. See John 3:3-8,19; 12:35,36.

**36:10,11** A prayer to be kept continuously in God's favor and protected from the wicked described in vs 1-4.

**36:12** David sees before the eyes of his understanding the complete overthrow of the wicked. He is as certain of God's judgment on them as if it had already happened.

**37:1** This psalm is another gem. David wrote it in old age (v 25). It is full of wonderful spiritual counsel to those who are troubled by the prosperity and success of the wicked. But like all such counsel it is only of use if followed. The psalm has eight exhortations or instructions when considering the prosperity of the wicked (vs 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 27, 34), and at least a dozen great prom-

ises to go with them (vs 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 19, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 37, 40).

The main object of this psalm is to encourage believers to have a calm, restful, peaceful, trusting heart no matter how difficult the circumstances. It is summed up in such sayings of the Lord Jesus as John 14:1 and 16:33. Many are troubled when the wicked prosper. Others envy them. We must learn to resist both attitudes (73:2,3; Prov 3:31; 23:17; 24:1,19; Phil 4:6). Either of them can bring poison into our hearts.

**37:2** Why should we fret about or envy those who are ripening for destruction? (vs 10, 20, 35, 36; 73:17-20; 90:5,6; 92:7; Jam 1:11).

**37:3** The remedy for both fretting and envying is trust in God and being occupied in good works for Him. The "land" means Israel. God's people were to remain there and not leave it because of difficulties.

**37:4** See 21:2; 145:19. Those who delight in the LORD (Jehovah) will receive the desires of their hearts because the desires of their hearts will be in accordance with His will. They will want what He wants them to have. Many there are who delight in the things of the world and the flesh and then murmur against God because He does not answer their selfish or carnal prayers.

**37:5** See 55:22; 16:3; 1 Pet 5:7. Our way and our life are too uncertain and our burdens too difficult for us. For those who trust Him God will do what they cannot do for themselves.

**37:6** There is rest of heart in this verse for believers who are the victims of slander and lies. God will look after their reputation and they need not worry about it.

- 7 Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for him.  
Do not fret because of the one who prospers in his way,  
because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.
- 8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath.  
Do not at all fret and *so* do wrong.
- 9 For evildoers will be cut off,  
but those who wait for the LORD will inherit the earth.
- 10 For yet a little while, and the wicked *will be no more*.  
Yes, you will look diligently for his place, and it *will* not be.
- 11 But the meek will inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
- 12 The wicked plots against the just and gnashes at him with his teeth.
- 13 The Lord will laugh at him,  
for he sees that his day is coming.
- 14 The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow to bring down the poor and needy,  
*and* to kill those who are of upright conduct.
- 15 Their sword will enter their own heart,  
and their bows will be broken.
- 16 A little that a righteous man has *is*  
better than the many riches of the wicked.
- 17 For the arms of the wicked will be broken,  
but the LORD upholds the righteous.
- 18 The LORD knows the days of the upright,  
and their inheritance will be forever.
- 19 They will not be put to shame in the evil time,  
and in the days of famine  
they will have plenty.
- 20 But the wicked will perish, and the enemies of the LORD *will be* like  
the splendour of the meadows.  
They will vanish, vanish away into smoke.
- 21 The wicked borrows and does not repay;  
but the righteous shows mercy, and gives.
- 22 For *those who are* blessed by *the LORD*  
will inherit the earth,  
and *those who are* cursed by him will be cut off.
- 23 The steps of a *good* man are established  
by the LORD who delights in his way.
- 24 Though he falls, he will not be  
completely thrown down;  
for the LORD upholds *him with* his hand.
- 25 I have been young, and am *now* old,  
yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,  
or his offspring begging bread.
- 26 *He is* always merciful and lends,  
and his offspring *are* blessed.
- 27 Depart from evil, and do good,

**37:7,8** God will act on the believer's behalf at just the right time, in just the right way. The believer should not let the prosperity and success of the wicked trouble him. Getting agitated will lead believers to commit sin and accomplish no good whatever.

"Fret" – the root meaning of the Hebrew word in these verses (and in verse 1) is "to burn" or "ignite," and then "to get angry" or "burn with anger" or "get hotly agitated."

**37:9** The Hebrew word for both land and the earth are the same. David probably meant that the righteous in Israel would inherit that land (vs 11,22,29). But Jesus promised that the meek would inherit the whole world (Matt 5:5).

**37:12** Verses 14,32. The wicked hate the righteous simply because they are righteous. They need no other reason (John 15:19; 1 John 3:12).

**37:13** See 2:4.

**37:14** If God and the laws of society did not restrain them, no doubt wicked people would try to kill all those who stood up for righteousness and truth.

**37:15** 7:14-16; 1 Sam 31:4; Esther 7:10.

**37:16** Far, far better to have only a little and be honest than to have great abundance and be crooked. Better to starve and be a person of integrity than to feast and be wicked. Let us write this verse on the tablets of our hearts. See also Prov 15:16; 16:8; 1 Tim 6:6-8.

**37:17** See 71:6; 145:14; Matt 6:33.

**37:18** Believers have an eternal inheritance, wonderful riches that will never pass away – 1 Cor 3:21-23; 2 Cor 4:17; Heb 9:15; 1 Pet

1:3,4. Should they, then, envy those who enjoy their riches for only a few passing years?

**37:19** See 33:18,19; 1 Kings 17:4-6,9-16; 18:2-4; Matt 6:33; 7:7,11.

**37:20** "Splendour of the meadows" – the KJV has "fat of lambs," but the Hebrew word they translated "fat" means splendour or beauty, not fat. The word they translated "lambs" does mean that, but it also came to mean the meadows or pastures where the lambs fed.

**37:21** Deut 15:6; 28:12,44.

**37:22** Deut 27:11-26; 28:1-20 (see notes there).

**37:23** See 16:11; 35:27; 40:2; 66:9; 119:5; 1 Sam 2:9; Isa 62:5; 65:19; Zeph 3:17; Eph 2:10.

**37:24** Prov 24:16. Those who are truly God's people may stumble and fail. We cannot deny it. The Bible gives a great many examples of it – Gen 12:10-13; 13:10,11; 16:1,2; 26:6-10; 27:22-24; Ex 32:1-5; Num 20:8-12; Jud 16:1,4; 2 Sam 11:1-27; 1 Kings 11:1-6; 2 Chron 16:10; 20:35; 26:4,5,16; Matt 26:69-75; Gal 2:11-13; Jam 3:2. But because God will not let go of their hand, they will not utterly fall away and be lost – v 28; John 10:28,29.

**37:25,26** Sometimes some of the righteous seem to be forsaken (e.g. Job, David, Jeremiah). But they really are not. And they and their children as a general rule do not need to beg for their food. Often they will have enough to lend to others.

**37:27** In true religion there is both a negative and a positive aspect. Forsaking evil is

and dwell forever.

28 For the LORD loves justice and does not forsake his saints.

They are preserved forever.

But the offspring of the wicked will be cut off.

29 The righteous will inherit the land, and live in it forever.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom and his tongue talks of justice.

31 The law of his God *is* in his heart. None of his steps will slip.

32 The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to kill him.

33 The LORD will not leave *the righteous* in his hands, or condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off, you will see *it*.

35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a native green tree.

36 Yet he passed away, and *lo and behold*, he *was* no *more*; yes, I looked for him, but he could not be found.

37 Consider the blameless *man*, and see the upright; for the future of *that* man *is* peace.

38 But the transgressors will be destroyed together; the future of the wicked will be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD. *He is* their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the LORD will help them, and deliver them. He will deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

not enough. Doing good is equally as important – 34:14; Isa 1:16,17.

**37:28** John 6:37,39; 17:11; Heb 13:5; 1 Pet 1:5. A very blessed truth.

**37:30-33** What a contrast!

**37:34** The wheels of justice often seem to turn slowly, but they will certainly turn. We should make no mistake about it.

**37:35,36** Times without number history has proved the truth of this. Read the books of Kings and Chronicles and see.

**37:37,38** Rom 2:6-10.

**37:39** "Salvation" – 3:8; 62:1; Jonah 2:9; Rom 1:16; Eph 2:8,9.

"Strength" – 18:1,2; 27:1; 73:26.

**37:40** See 7:1,2.

**38:1-11** This is one of the "penitential" psalms – that is, psalms of mourning over personal sins. Others are 6, 31, 32, 51. Here David writes of the sickness of his body, the distress of his mind, and the neglect of his friends. He traces the cause of all this to

## 38

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance

1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in your wrath or discipline me in your hot displeasure.

2 For your arrows pierce me, and your hand presses me down.

3 *There is* no soundness in my flesh because of your anger; nor *is there any* rest in my bones because of my sin.

4 For my sins have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go about mourning all day long.

7 For my loins are filled with a burning *pain*, and *there is* no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and utterly crushed. I groan because of the roaring of my heart.

9 Lord, all my desire *is* before you, and my sighing is not hidden from you.

10 My heart pants, my strength fails me. As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me.

11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my disease, and my kinsmen stand at a distance.

12 Also those who seek my life lay snares *for me*, and those who seek my harm speak of *my* destruction and devise deceitful *things* all day long.

13 But I, like a deaf *man*, do not listen, like a mute *who* does not open his mouth.

his own sin, and instead of vain murmuring and complaining about his lot, he make confession and opens his heart to God. Surely a good example to all of us. This portion is similar to Ps 6; 31:9-12; 102:3-11.

**38:1** See 6:1.

**38:2** Deut 32:23; Job 6:4.

**38:3** "No soundness" – sin and God's chastisement may result in serious illness, as the following verses vividly show. Compare 1 Cor 11:30.

**38:4** This is true of every single person, but not every one is aware of it as David was.

**38:6,8** The conviction of sin is a very painful experience (vs 17,18; 32:3,4).

**38:11** The unkindness of friends adds to his grief (31:11; Job 19:13-19).

**38:12** When the righteous fall their enemies try to get in a kick at them, and rejoice at their misery (v 16).

**38:13,14** Unlike Job (before God came to him at the end) David cannot say a word in



14 So I am like a man who does not hear,  
and in whose mouth *are* no replies.  
15 For in you, O LORD, I hope.  
You will hear, O Lord my God.  
16 For I said, "*Hear me*,  
or they will rejoice against me,  
when my foot slips;  
they will exalt *themselves* over me."  
17 For I *am* about to fall, and my sorrow *is*  
continually before me.  
18 For I will declare my guilt;  
I will be sorry for my sin.  
19 But my enemies *are* lively, *and* they are  
strong,  
and those who hate me wrongfully have  
increased in number.  
20 And those who repay evil for good  
are my adversaries,  
because I follow *what is* good.  
21 Do not forsake me, O LORD.  
O my God, do not be far from me.  
22 Come quickly to help me, O Lord,  
my salvation.

39

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun,  
a Psalm of David

1 I said, "I will watch my ways, so that I  
do not sin with my tongue.  
I will keep a muzzle on my mouth,

while the wicked are before me."  
2 I was bound to silence.  
I kept quiet, *even* from good;  
and my sorrow was stirred.  
3 My heart was hot within me;  
while I was musing, the fire burned.  
*Then* I spoke with my tongue.  
4 LORD, make me know my *life's* end,  
and what the number of my days *is*,  
so *that* I may know how frail I *am*.  
5 See, you have made my days *like* a hand  
breadth,  
and my age *is* as nothing before you.  
Truly every man in his best state *is*  
altogether vanity.

Selah

6 Surely every man walks about like a shadow.  
Surely they are agitated in vain.  
He heaps up *riches* and does not know  
who will gather them.  
7 And now, Lord, what do I wait for?  
My hope *is* in you.  
8 Deliver me from all my transgressions.  
Do not make me the scorn of the foolish.  
9 I was mute; I did not open my mouth;  
because you did *it*.  
10 Remove your plague from me;  
I am destroyed by the blow of your hand.  
11 When you *use* rebukes to correct a man for sin,  
you make his beauty consume like a moth.  
Surely every man *is* vanity. Selah  
12 Hear my prayer, O LORD,

his own defense – he is conscious that he has sinned and that he deserves everything that has come on him.  
**38:15** He is submissive to God and waits for God's time and God's way to bring him out of his trouble and anguish. He knows full well that all that has happened to him is his own fault. And he has confessed his sin. Now he is confident that God will give him victory again.  
**38:19** 35:19; 37:14.  
**38:20** Though he has spoken of his enormous sin in v 4, here he speaks of seeking to do good. He means that he refuses to remain in his sin. He resolves to forsake it completely. Without this desire and intention confession is vain. He means too that the whole trend of his life is doing good, that his sin was a deviation, an aberration. Sheep do not remain in the mire and wallow like pigs.  
**38:21,22** Such prayers from a penitent heart are like music in God's ears.  
**39 Title:** "For Jeduthun" – see 1 Chron 16:41,42; 25:1-6. Two other psalms are for him – 62 and 72. Parts of this psalm are similar to 38:13,14; 32:3-5; and to some words of Job.  
**39:1** A fine resolution. James says if a man does not sin with his tongue he is a perfect man (Jam 3:2). David was careful lest he

dishonor God by something he said, or lest the wicked pervert his good words for a bad use (73:15; Eccl 3:7; Matt 7:6).  
**39:2,3** How common is this experience to us! How hard it is to control the tongue (Jam 3:7,8).  
"Tongue" – perhaps there should be a colon here and quotation marks at the beginning of v 4 (the Hebrew has no punctuation marks anywhere).  
**39:4-6** One aid to controlling the tongue is to really understand the brevity of life. See 62:9; 90:12; 1 Cor 7:31; Jam 1:10,11; 1 Pet 1:14. Knowing this we will not want to spend our time telling of the prosperity and success of the wicked, or their opposition to us. We will have much better things to talk about.  
**39:7-11** Another help in controlling the tongue is to submit in hope to God's chastening hand.  
**39:7** See 38:15.  
**39:8** He wants more than mere forgiveness. He wants to be *delivered from* the power and effect of his sins (see also 51:14; Matt 1:21).  
**39:9** To endure quietly God's chastening hand is a very healthy thing (Lam 3:22-33).  
**39:10** Job 9:34; 13:21.  
**39:11** On discipline see Heb 12:5-11.  
"Moth" – Matt 6:19,20.  
**39:12** On tears see 56:8; Isa 38:5.

and give ear to my cry.  
Do not be silent at my tears;  
for I *am* a foreigner with you,  
*and* a sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.  
13 Oh, look away from me,  
that I may recover strength,  
before I leave here and am no more.

40

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

1 I waited patiently for the LORD,  
and he bent down to me and heard my cry.  
2 He also brought me up out of a horrible  
pit, out of the miry clay,  
and set my feet on a rock,

*and* established my steps.  
3 And he put a new song in my mouth,  
praise to our God.  
Many will see *it* and fear,  
and will trust in the LORD.  
4 Blessed *is* that man who makes the LORD  
his trust, and does not respect the proud,  
or turn aside to lies.  
5 Many, O LORD my God, *are* your wonderful  
works *which* you have done,  
and your thoughts toward us.  
They cannot be recounted to you in order.  
*If* I would declare and speak *of them*,  
they are more than can be numbered.  
6 Sacrifice and offering you did not desire;  
my ears you have opened.  
Burnt offering and sin offering you did  
not require.

“Foreigner” – or “stranger.” The Hebrew was used to indicate a temporary resident, and David is referring to his brief time in this world. 119:19; Lev 25:23; 1 Chron 29:15; Heb 11:13; 1 Pet 2:11.  
**39:13** Job 7:19; 10:20,21; 14:6. Job and David could not endure what they regarded as God’s frowning and angry face.  
**40:1** Another great psalm in which we have a prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ (in vs 6-8). Some scholars think every word in the psalm refers to Him. If this interpretation is true then the iniquities mentioned in v 12 would have to mean our sins which He took as His own to bear to the cross in our place (Rom 4:25; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24). Much of the language of the psalms describes experiences that all God’s people go through, and can apply equally well to Christ the second (and last) Adam, the head of a new race of men (1 Cor 15:45-49).  
“Waited patiently” – 27:14; 37:7. He recognizes that help cannot come from any source but the Lord Himself. And he has learned that God has His times of action and will not be hurried. Even when we are in desperate need of something from God, patient waiting on Him is His appointed way. Impatience, fretting and inner turmoil will accomplish nothing.  
**40:2** “Horrible pit”, etc – speaks of something very unpleasant indeed, something too treacherous or too slippery to extricate oneself from. Deliverance had to come from God. Note the words “He brought me up,” “He established”, and “He put” (v 3). All that David did was to cry to God and wait patiently, God did all the rest. David speaks of an experience that happens to many of God’s children. It is an experience of immense difficulty, danger, or misery. The foundations of life seem to collapse. Heart, mind, and spirit seem to be sinking ever further down without a solid place of support (69:2,14). Job, David, Jonah, Jeremiah, and many others went through such experiences. We may think too of the Lord Jesus sinking

beneath the burden of man’s sins in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross.  
The “Rock” here is God Himself. Note at Deut 32:4. In His own good time and way God brought deliverance.  
“On a rock” – in a world of many pitfalls and much mud and mire what we greatly need is a firm place to stand. Standing on the Rock we are safe and secure.  
**40:3** Deliverance brings a song, and every new deliverance a new song, and others seeing the deliverance of believers and their joy are inspired to trust in God. Supremely true this is in the case of the Lord Jesus. We see Him raised from the dead and rescued from every enemy, and so we trust Him to deliver us too.  
**40:4** See 34:8; 84:12. Many follow the proud leaders, the peddlers of falsehood in this world. But the true way of blessing is seen here.  
“Lies” – in Hebrew this word sometimes signified false gods.  
**40:5** “Wonderful works” – 72:18; 136:4; Deut 6:22; Job 5:9; 9:10. The powerful, the wealthy, the famous may never have a thought about God’s people, may never have a purpose except to exploit and oppress them. But God the Almighty thinks of them constantly, has exceedingly high and wonderful purposes and plans for those who believe in Him.  
**40:6** Verses 6-8 are quoted in Heb 10:5-7 and applied to Christ. God Himself appointed sacrifices for Israel (Ex 20:24; Leviticus chapters 1 to 6. See notes there). Now He says that He did not desire them. Is this a contradiction? Absolutely not. There are no contradictions in the Bible. God knew that those offerings and sacrifices were valueless to Him. He did not desire them for Himself. They were mere pictures of Christ who was to come as a sacrifice for sin. And even in those days when the people offered animal sacrifices at God’s command, God always put far more value on faith and obedience and holy living than on the bring-

- 7 Then I said, "Look, I come.  
In the book's scroll *it is* written of me.
- 8 I delight to do your will, O my God.  
Yes, your law *is* within my heart.
- 9 I have proclaimed righteousness in the  
great congregation.  
See, I have not restrained my lips;  
O LORD, you know.
- 10 I have not hidden your righteousness in  
my heart.  
I have declared your faithfulness and  
your salvation.  
I have not concealed your loving  
kindness and your truth from the  
great congregation.
- 11 Do not withhold your tender mercies from  
me, O LORD.  
Let your loving kindness and your truth  
continually preserve me.
- 12 For innumerable evils have surrounded me.  
My sins have overtaken me,  
so that I am not able to look up.  
They are more than the hairs of my head;  
therefore my heart fails me.
- 13 Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me!  
O LORD, come quickly to help me!
- 14 Let those who seek my soul to destroy it  
be put to disgrace and confusion together.  
Let those who wish evil for me be

ing of sacrifices (51:16; 1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:11-17; Hos 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Matt 12:7; Mark 12:33).

**40:7** This is the Lord Jesus speaking through David. It can hardly refer to David himself. Often the prophets wrote things which they understood did not refer to themselves but to the Messiah (1 Pet 1:10-12). Christ speaks here of coming from heaven to earth. He comes in accordance with all that is written in the "scroll." This means the Old Testament. It was written on scrolls. The whole Old Testament is full of prophecies and types of Christ (notes at Matt 5:17; Luke 24:25-27,44-47; etc).

**40:8** This should be true of all God's people. It was very often true of David. It was supremely and eternally true of the Lord Jesus (John 4:34; 50:30; 6:38; 8:29). Because of this complete obedience of the Lord Jesus salvation is made available to all who will receive it.

**40:9,10** These words can refer to both David and Christ. Christ, of course, completely fulfilled them (22:22,25; Matt 9:35; Mark 1:38; 2:13; John 18:20; 1 Tim 6:13; Heb 2:11,12).

**40:12** The true saints are often more conscious of their sins than anyone else is. What David says here is true of us all. Our sins of omission and commission are innumerable. This verse can refer to the Lord Jesus only as bearing our sins. He Himself never sinned (2 Cor 5:21; Heb

- driven backward and put to shame.
- 15 Let those who say to me "Aha, aha!"  
be appalled at their disgrace.
- 16 Let all those who seek you rejoice and be  
glad in you.  
Let those who love your salvation say  
continually,  
"The LORD be exalted."
- 17 But I *am* poor and needy.  
*Yet* the Lord thinks of me.  
You *are* my help and my deliverer.  
Do not delay, O my God.

41

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

- 1 Blessed *is* he who considers the poor.  
The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.
- 2 The LORD will preserve him and keep him  
alive;  
*and* he will be blessed on the earth.  
And you will not hand him over to the  
will of his enemies.
- 3 The LORD will strengthen him on the bed  
of illness.  
You will transform all his bed in his sickness.
- 4 I said, "LORD, be merciful to me.

4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22-24). But do our hearts not fail when we think of our sins? How earnestly we should cry to God for protection against them and against all evils that surround us in this world (vs 13,17).

**40:14,15** Note at 35:8.

**40:16** This will be the eternal result of the salvation the Lord Jesus gained for men by His sufferings. It is experienced by those who seek Him and all the glory will be God's.

**41:1** We have in this psalm also a word fulfilled in the experience of the Lord Jesus (v 9). However it is very plain that the whole psalm does not refer to Him because v 4 is a confession of personal sin (see note 40:12). The weak or poor have a special place in God's heart and should have in ours also (82:3,4; Ex 22:25; 23:11; Lev 19:10; Prov 14:21; Luke 6:20; Gal 2:10; Jam 2:5). Blessed are those who help them. It is very instructive to trace through the psalms those whom God declares are blessed (see note at 1:1,2).

**41:3** Sickness may come to even the most trusting and faithful believers (1 Kings 15:23; Job 2:7; Isa 38:1; Gal 4:13; Phil 2:26,27; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20). But see here who will be both doctor and nurse to them. Compare 103:3; Ex 15:26.

**41:4** "Heal my soul" - this was sometimes the way the Hebrews expressed themselves when they meant simply "heal me," but there could be a deeper meaning here. The

Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.”

5 My enemies speak evil of me,  
“When will he die, and his name perish?”

6 And if *one of them* comes to see *me*,  
he speaks falsehood.  
His heart gathers evil to itself.  
When he goes out, he tells *it*.

7 All who hate me whisper together against me.  
They plot harm against me.

8 “An evil disease,” *they say*,  
“clings to him, and *now* that he is  
lying down he will never get up again.”

9 Even my own familiar friend, whom I  
trusted, who ate my bread,  
has lifted up *his* heel against me.

10 But you, O LORD, be merciful to me,  
and raise me up, that I may repay them.

11 By this I will know that you are pleased  
with me:

sickness of sin, with its effects on the soul, is far more dangerous and difficult to deal with that bodily illness. David turns to the only one who can truly heal him in body, soul, and spirit.

**41:5** See 38:12.

**41:6** See 12:2; 62:4; Prov 26:24-26.

**41:7** See 56:5.

**41:8** See 71:10,11; Isa 53:4. His enemies accused Christ of blasphemies and declared Him worthy of destruction (Matt 26:55,56).

**41:9** In David’s case this probably refers to Ahiotophel (2 Sam 15:12,31; 16:15,20-23). It was fulfilled in the life of the Lord Jesus by the betrayal of Judas (Matt 26:23; John 13:18). Observe that the Lord Jesus quoted only a part of this verse. He did not use the words “friend in whom I trusted”, because He never trusted Judas. He knew from the beginning what Judas was like and what he would do (John 6:64,70,71).

**41:10** He prays for something his enemies said was impossible (v 8). However this may have been fulfilled in David’s case it was gloriously fulfilled in Christ at His resurrection. On “repay” see 2:12; Isa 65:6; note at Num 31:2. The enemies of God will be rewarded according to their deeds.

**41:11** See 37:23; 147:11. If God is pleased with us it little matters what men think of us. So Paul in Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4.

**41:12** See 17:3; 18:20-24.

**41:13** See 72:18,19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6; Rom 9:5.

**42 Title:** The sons of Korah (see Num 16:32) were a band of singers in the worship of God (1 Chron 6:1,7,16; 9:19; 26:1). The Hebrew word translated “for” here can also mean “of.” Usually in the titles to the psalms it seems to mean “of” or “by”, but here it could mean “for” the sons of Korah – in other words, written for them to sing, or compose music to. It is unlikely that a group of people would write a psalm as personal as this, and use the singular pronoun. However, since it

because my enemy does not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, you uphold me in my integrity, and set me before your face forever.

13 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting.  
Amen and Amen.

BOOK 2 (Psalms 42 - 72)

42

To the chief musician,  
a maskil for the sons of Korah

1 As the deer pants for the water brooks,  
so pants my soul for you, O God.

2 My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God.

is possible that an individual among them did so, “of” may indicate “one of” the sons of Korah. The matter is doubtful. The language of this psalm sounds very much like David’s language in other places. Maskil was probably a literary or musical term.

**42:1** Perhaps a good name for this psalm is “Spiritual depression, its causes and cure.” See also psalms 13 and 77, which have a similar theme. Here the writer speaks of five causes of his depression.

He sought God but did not seem to be able to enter into a fresh experience of His presence (vs 1,2).

His enemies taunted him because it seemed he was deserted by God (v 3).

He compared his present condition with happier, better times and grieved at the comparison (v 4).

He thinks he is submerged in troubles and sorrows sent by God (v 7).

And He feels that God has forgotten him for the time (v 9).

These are reasons enough for continual depression if one neglects the cure. He gives the cure in vs 5, 6, and 11. In the word “why” (vs 5,9,11) he shows that he sees his depression is not proper, and not in accordance with a spiritual mind. In spite of very difficult circumstances he realizes that since God is his Saviour and his God, he should not be depressed. He decides to meditate on God (v 6). And he encourages himself to put his hope and trust in God. This is still the cure for troubled minds and depressed hearts. Giving in to gloomy feelings, unbelief, and despair is the opposite of what we should be doing, and we must fight against it and use God’s way to overcome all such things (Eph 6:10-18 is not without relevance here. One of the weapons Satan and his hordes use to try to defeat us in our spiritual life is discouragement or depression).

**42:1,2** In times of depression (indeed at all times) he shows us what we should seek –

- When will I come and appear  
before God?
- 3 My tears have been my food day and night,  
while they continually say to me,  
"Where *is* your God?"
- 4 When I remember these *things*,  
I pour out my soul in me.  
For I used to go with the multitude;  
I went with them to the house of God,  
with the sound of joy and praise,  
with a multitude keeping a pilgrim festival.
- 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul?  
And *why* are you restless in me?  
Hope in God, for I will yet praise him  
*for* the help of his presence.
- 6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me.  
Therefore I will remember you from the  
land of Jordan and from the heights

- of Hermon, from the hill Mizar.
- 7 Deep calls to deep at the noise of your  
waterspouts.  
All your waves and your billows have  
gone over me.
- 8 Yet the LORD will command his  
loving kindness in the daytime,  
and in the night his song *will be* with me,  
*and* my prayer to the God of my life.
- 9 I will say to God my rock,  
"Why have you forgotten me?  
Why do I go about mourning because of  
the oppression of the enemy?"
- 10 *As* with a sword in my bones,  
my enemies taunt me,  
while daily they say to me,  
"Where *is* your God?"
- 11 Why are you cast down, O my soul?

not merely rescue from unhappy circumstances, or what God can do for us or give us, but *God Himself*. Personal experience with the great Creator of the universe is of greater value than the whole world and anything else that can be gained. Knowing Him is eternal life (John 17:3), and knowing Him better and experiencing His fellowship more deeply must be the chief concern of those who have eternal life (Eph 1:17; 3:18,19; Phil 3:8,10). And it is surely the way to overcome discouragement and temptations to despair. From David's experience recorded here (if indeed David wrote this) we can see that at times God seems at a distance and must be sought (Jer 29:13; etc).

**42:3** The taunts of others may increase depression vs 9,10; 44:15,16; Job 19:1-3; etc.

**42:4** Remembrance of things past can add to depression, but may also be a step toward relief from it (see note on remembering at Deut 8:1). Remembrance of God's nearness and goodness in the past can give hope that He will draw near and show His goodness again.

"Used to go" – the writer refers to worship in Jerusalem's tabernacle or temple. From the place where he is now he can no longer join with those who go there.

**42:5** Hope for the future rises in his heart because of his faith in God, and his confidence that God has not forsaken him completely. Seeking God and renewing our trust in Him can conquer depression when nothing else can.

"I will yet praise Him" – the meaning seems to be that God will work in his behalf and give further reason to praise Him, that God will bring him out of his depressing experiences. A person who knows that the true and living God is his or her Saviour and God has a ground of hope that is rock solid. God does not change with our changing circumstances and He will cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him (Rom 8:28).

**42:6** "Heights of Hermon" – when the author wrote of his deep depression he was away from his home in Jerusalem. If David wrote this (and there is no certainty that he did) this may have occurred at the time of Absalom's rebellion when David fled across the Jordan river (2 Samuel chapters 16 and 17). That time when his own son turned violently against him was one of the worst experiences of his life (and he had many unhappy experiences). But even then he refused to abandon hope in God. Psalm 3, which David wrote sometime during that experience, records his quiet confidence that God would act in his defense. Our experiences and the causes of our depression may be different from his, but if our hope is in the same God we will find that He works things out for our good also. And if He does not bring us out of depressing circumstances He will give victory and peace in those circumstances.

**42:7** It sometimes seems to believers that they are drowning in a great sea of troubles (18:16; 69:1,2; 88:7). Notice that the writer says that it is *God's* waves and breakers which have swept over him. Compare Job 1:21; 2:10; Gen 45:8; 50:20; etc. What God causes to sweep over us He can cause to pass on beyond us, and give us peace even when we are hit by the waves. No matter what conditions are like now, there is still a good future ahead for those who hope in God.

**42:8** Even in the deepest trouble and depression he did not give up his confidence in God. Compare 13:5,6. God is with His people in all circumstances (Isa 43:2; 50:10). And we should be confident that He can make them victorious in everything – compare Rom 8:37; 2 Tim 4:18.

"In the night his song" – Job 35:10.

"God of my life" – Acts 3:15; 17:25.

**42:9** "Rock" – Deut 32:4.

**42:10** Verse 3.

**42:11** We too may speak, and should speak, to ourselves and encourage ourselves to hope



And why are you restless within me?  
 Hope in God, for I will yet praise him,  
*who is* the health of my countenance,  
 and my God.

## 43

- 1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause  
 against an ungodly nation.  
 Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and  
 unjust man;
- 2 For you *are* the God of my strength.  
 Why do you cast me off?  
 Why do I go about mourning because of  
 the oppression of the enemy?
- 3 Oh, send out your light and your truth!  
 Let them lead me, let them bring me to  
 your holy hill and to your tabernacle.
- 4 Then I will go to the altar of God,  
 to God, my exceeding joy.  
 Yes, I will praise you on the harp,  
 O God, my God.
- 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul?  
 And why are you restless within me?  
 Hope in God, for I will yet praise him,  
*who is* the health of my countenance,  
 and my God.

and believe that God will give us victory and peace in depressing circumstances.

**43:1** The last verse of this psalm and the last verse of 42 are identical. It seems probable that both psalms were written by the same person at about the same time. Some Hebrew manuscripts combine these two psalms into one.

"Vindicate me" – see 26:1; 35:1,24. He knows he has done nothing against the nation to merit their opposition.

"Against an ungodly nation" – this indicates that the writer was a very prominent leader opposed by the nation as a whole. David at the time of Absalom's rebellion fits the picture well.

**43:2** "God of my strength" – the God who gives me strength, or the God who is my strength – 18:1; 28:7; 31:4.

"Cast me off" – if David wrote this when he fled at the time of Absalom's rebellion he may have feared that God was rejecting him as king of Israel. He is not speaking of personal salvation.

"Mourning" – 42:9.

**43:3** A beautiful prayer every human being on earth should make. We need a guide to show us the way to God's holy heaven. His light and truth must be that guide. If we follow anything else we will infallibly go astray.

"Light" – 19:8; 119:105; John 8:12; 2 Cor 4:6.

"Truth" – 25:5; John 1:14; 8:32; 14:6; 2 Thess 2:10-12.

**43:4** Let us permit the author to teach us

## 44

To the chief musician,  
 for the sons of Korah, a maskil

- 1 We have heard with our ears, O God,  
 our fathers have told us,  
*what* deeds you did in their days,  
 in olden times;
- 2 *how* you drove out the nations with your  
 hand, and planted them;  
*how* you shattered the peoples and drove  
 them out.
- 3 For they did not get the land in *their*  
 possession by their own sword,  
 nor did their own arm save them,  
 but your right hand, and your arm,  
 and the light of your countenance,  
 because you were pleased with them.
- 4 You are my King, O God.  
 Command victories for Jacob.
- 5 Through you we will push down our  
 enemies;  
 through your name we will trample on  
 those who rise up against us.
- 6 For I will not trust in my bow,  
 nor will my sword save me.
- 7 But you have saved us from our enemies

where true joy is found. It is not in the world, in things, or in self, but in God alone. If we do not find it in Him it is certain that we will not find it anywhere. In v 2 he speaks of mourning; here he speaks of joy and delight. See 2 Cor 6:10. Compare Isa 53:3 with John 17:13. Joy and sorrow can co-exist in the same heart at the same time.

**43:5** 42:11.

**44 Title:** Maskil was probably a literary or musical term.

**44:1** We do not know who wrote this psalm nor when it was written. The divisions of the psalm are clear. The writer remembers the past (vs 1-3); then he expresses his desire and confidence that God will work on their behalf in the same way He did in days gone by (vs 4-8); he describes the present sad state of things (vs 9-16); yet the people have remained faithful to God and have suffered and died for His name's sake (vs 17-22); he closes with a prayer for deliverance (vs 23-26).

**44:2** This refers to Israel conquering Canaan as described in Joshua.

**44:3** See 78:54,55; Josh 24:11-13; Neh 9:24.

**44:4** See 5:2; 74:12. God is the great king of the universe. He has the right to accomplish His will by merely giving commands (33:9; 47:2).

**44:5** Believers now should think of spiritual foes and have confidence in God for victory – Eph 6:10-12.

- and have put to shame those who hated us.  
 8 In God we boast all the day long,  
 and praise your name forever. *Selah*  
 9 But you have cast *us* off and put us to shame,  
 and do not go forth with our armies.  
 10 You make us turn back from the enemy,  
 and those who hate us take plunder  
 for themselves.  
 11 You have given us up like sheep *taken* for  
 food, and have scattered us among  
 the nations.  
 12 You sell your people for nothing,  
 and do not increase *your wealth* by  
 their price.  
 13 You make us an *object of* reproach to our  
 neighbours,  
*and* scorn and derision to those who are  
 around us.  
 14 You make us a byword among the nations,  
 a shaking of the head among the peoples.  
 15 My dishonour *is* continually before me,  
 and the shame of my face has covered me,  
 16 Because of the voice of him who  
 reproaches and reviles,  
 because of the enemy and avenger.  
 17 All this has come on us,  
 but we have not forgotten you,  
 nor have we dealt falsely with your covenant.  
 18 Our heart has not turned back,  
 nor have our steps departed from your way,  
 19 Though you have crushed us in the place

- of jackals and covered us with the  
 shadow of death.  
 20 If we have forgotten the name of our God,  
 or stretched out our hands to a foreign god,  
 21 Will God not search this out?  
 For he knows the secrets of the heart.  
 22 Yes, for your sake we are killed all the day long.  
 We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.  
 23 Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?  
 Arise! Do not reject *us* forever.  
 24 Why do you hide your face, *and* forget our  
 misery and our oppression?  
 25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust.  
 Our body clings to the earth.  
 26 Arise for our help, and redeem us,  
 for your mercy's sake.

## 45

To the chief musician on Shoshannim,  
 for the sons of Korah, a maskil,  
 a song of love

- 1 My heart overflows with a good theme.  
 I speak of the things which I have  
 produced about the king.  
 My tongue *is* the pen of a ready writer.  
 2 You are fairer than the sons of men.  
 Grace is poured into your lips;  
 therefore God has blessed you forever.  
 3 Gird your sword upon *your* thigh,

**44:8** Victory over spiritual enemies too is gained only in the strength of God and all the glory should be His.

**44:9** See 43:2; 60:1,10; 74:1; 89:38; 108:11.  
**44:13,14** See 69:11; 79:4; 109:25; Deut 28:37; Jer 24:9.

**44:17,18** Here the few faithful ones who remained in Israel speak. There were not many times in Israel's history when this was true of the nation as a whole.

**44:20** In the Bible both of these were regarded as very serious evils – 9:11; 50:22; 81:9; Deut 6:12,14; 8:11,14,19; Ex 20:3,4.  
**44:21** See 139:12; Jer 12:3; John 2:24,25; Heb 4:13.

**44:22** Paul quotes this verse in Rom 8:36 and applies it to Christian believers. But Paul's attitude, unlike this psalm's author, was one of triumphant submission to God.

**44:23** See 7:6; 78:65. These are very bold words to use to God. This is the confidence of children who know their Father well.

**44:24** See 13:1.

**44:25** Sometimes believers are laid as low as can be. The only way left to go is up.

**44:26** There's no better way to pray than to plead God's grace and mercy.

**45 Title:** Shoshannim probably indicated the tune to be used with this psalm. It means "lilies." Maskil was probably a literary or musical term.

Here is a glorious psalm concerning the Lord Jesus as King and heavenly Bridegroom to His church. That it refers to no earthly monarch is clear from verses like 2,6,7,11. Verses 6,7 are quoted in the New Testament as referring to Christ (Heb 1:8,9). The divisions of the psalm are clear. After announcing his theme in v 1, the author speaks to the King in vs 2-9; the church is pictured as the bride of Christ in vs 10-15; then there are closing remarks addressed once more to the King in vs 16,17.

**45:1** Thoughts of the beauty, the splendor, the grace, the power, the holy character of the heavenly King fill the writer's heart to overflowing. A "good matter" indeed has completely captured his attention. No other matter that will ever engage our thoughts can be better.

"Overflows" – from a Hebrew word which means to boil or bubble up, and possibly indicates the sound boiling water makes.

**45:2** The beauty of the Lord Jesus on earth was not physical (Isa 53:2,3) but spiritual – grace was poured on His lips (Luke 4:22), and He loved righteousness and hated wickedness (v 7). So God the Father gave Him eternal blessings.

**45:3-5** Jesus is not only the meek and suffering Saviour so movingly depicted in Ps 22; He is the mighty King of kings who will

O *most* Mighty One,  
with your glory and your majesty.  
4 And in your majesty ride victoriously in  
the cause of truth and meekness  
*and* righteousness;  
and your right hand will teach you  
awesome things.  
5 Your arrows *are* sharp in the heart of  
the king's enemies.  
The peoples fall under you.  
6 Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever.  
The sceptre of your kingdom *is* a  
sceptre of righteousness.  
7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness.  
Therefore God, your God, has anointed  
you with the oil of gladness more  
than your companions.  
8 All your garments *smell* of myrrh,  
and aloe, *and* cassia, out of the  
ivory palaces,  
by which they have made you glad.

9 Kings' daughters *are* among your  
honourable women.  
At your right hand stands the queen in  
gold of Ophir.  
10 Listen, O daughter, and consider, and  
incline your ear.  
Also forget your own people, and your  
father's house;  
11 And the king will greatly desire your beauty.  
Because he *is* your Lord, worship him.  
12 And the daughter of Tyre *will be there*  
with a gift.  
The rich among the people will seek your  
favour.  
13 The king's daughter *is* all glorious  
within *the palace*.  
Her clothing *is* woven with gold.  
14 She will be brought to the king in  
embroidered garments.  
Her virgin companions who follow her will  
be brought to you.

fight the battle for truth, humility, and righteousness, and will win. His is the sword of God's Spirit (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; Rev 1:16). He is clothed in splendor and majesty (Rev 1:12-16). Does it seem sometimes that justice and truth and meekness will never prevail on earth? Do not doubt. Christ will ride on until victory is His. The final fulfillment of this is seen in Rev 19:11-16. Opposing Him is the utmost folly (2:12; 7:11-13). Sharp indeed are His arrows (120:4; 92:9).  
**45:6** Here Jesus is called God (Heb 1:8). In the next verse it speaks of the King's God. That is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Two members of the Trinity are in view here (notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc). Some people who deny that Jesus is truly God have twisted the most natural meaning of the Hebrew here (and the Greek in Heb 1:8). They have tried to translate it like this – "God is your throne forever." But even such an absurd translation does not eliminate the truth of the deity of Christ in this verse. Actually it makes Jesus greater than the Father, for greater is the one who occupies a throne than the throne itself.  
The character of Christ's kingdom is revealed here: absolute justice, integrity, honesty, uprightness. This is the reason this fallen world hates Him (compare John 3:19,20; 7:7). It is also the reason why His kingdom will be a reign of indescribable blessedness to all those who, like Him, love righteousness and hate wickedness.  
**45:7** Did Jesus, "the man of sorrows," have joy? Yes, a deep and abiding joy in spite of His sorrows (John 15:11; 17:13). Now His sorrows are ended and His joy is made full forever. Only those who love righteousness will enter into His eternal joy. God has put a link between joy and righteousness which no one can break.  
**45:8,9** Here Christ appears as the heavenly

Bridegroom. The details of the language signify a festive occasion. Is it anything other than the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:7-9)? In v 9 the queen appears dressed in gold. And what does this signify but the church of our Lord Jesus, composed of all His true believers (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-27)?  
**45:10,11** Now the writer of this psalm through the Holy Spirit gives instructions to the bride, that is, to believers. To have a satisfactory relationship with heaven's King certain things are very necessary. The first is turning away from the past life to cleave to the King alone (Gen 12:1; Matt 10:37,38; Luke 14:25,26,33; Heb 11:8-10,15,16). No earthly king would be satisfied with a bride whose heart was somewhere else. The heavenly King too demands our heart, our love (compare Prov 23:26). The King finds great beauty in the person who leaves all for Him (v 11; Song of Songs 4:7; Luke 14:33). The believer is also to recognize King Jesus as Lord and worship Him (John 13:13; Rom 10:9; Matt 2:2; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; Heb 1:6; Rev 5:7,13,14).  
**45:12** Here the city of Tyre probably represents all the Gentile nations around Israel. When the Church is at last united with Christ in glory the nations of earth will bring their gifts (Rev 21:24-26). And the church will reign with Christ (Matt 19:28; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21; 5:10; 20:4).  
**45:13-15** The garments of the bride of any earthly king will be chosen with great care. Is it less so for the bride of the heavenly King? See Isa 61:3; Ezek 16:9-14; Eph 5:25-27. The virgins who are the bride's companions are kings' daughters (v 9). They may signify the nations which will share in the joy of the King and His bride (Rev 21:24-27; 22:2). But it is not wise to be dogmatic about this.

- 15 They will be brought in with gladness and rejoicing.  
They will enter the king's palace.  
16 Instead of your fathers there will be your sons, whom you will make princes in all the earth.  
17 I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;  
therefore the people will praise you forever and ever.

46

To the chief musician,  
for the sons of Korah, a song on alamoḥ

- 1 God *is* our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
2 Therefore we will not fear,  
though the earth be removed,  
and though the mountains be carried into the middle of the sea,  
3 *Though* its waters roar *and* are in turmoil,  
*though* the mountains shake with its surging. Selah  
4 *There is* a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy *place* of the tabernacle of the Most High.

"Within" – the Hebrew word indicates the inner wall of a house or room or court or palace, which is opposite the door and appears to those who come to the doorway.  
**45:16,17** These words are addressed, it seems, to the King. His "fathers" would be those saints in the Old Testament. Christ was the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. He had real human nature, was made flesh. We see both His deity and humanity in this psalm. His "sons" would be those since His first coming who trust Him and are born again by His Spirit (John 1:12,13). There will never be a time when God does not have His children on earth. Some people in each generation will know the King and declare His praises throughout the earth.  
**46 Title:** Alamoḥ was probably a musical term.  
**46:1** "Refuge" – 7:1.  
"Strength" – 18:1; 28:7; 73:26. Not armies, not fortifications, not human strength or tactics, but God Himself is the refuge, strength and help of His people.  
**46:2,3** If we are in God, the mighty and eternal refuge, who or what can harm us (23:4)? And why should we fear as if we were not in Him? Believers need not fear even in natural disasters such as are described here, or in the upheaval of nations and societies. These are sometimes symbolized in the Bible by mountains and bodies of water or floods – Isa 17:12; 59:19; Jer 46:7,8; 47:1,2;

- 5 God *is* within her. She will not be shaken.  
God will help her at early morning.  
6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved.  
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.  
7 The LORD of hosts *is* with us.  
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge.

Selah

- 8 Come, see the works of the LORD,  
the desolations he has made in the earth.  
9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two.  
He burns the chariot in the fire.  
10 "Be still, and know that I *am* God.  
I will be exalted among the nations.  
I will be exalted in the earth."  
11 The LORD of hosts *is* with us.  
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah

47

To the chief musician,  
a Psalm for the sons of Korah

- 1 Oh, clap your hands, all you people!  
Shout to God with the voice of triumph!

51:24,25; Dan 2:35; Rev 17:1,15.  
**46:4** See 36:8; 65:9; Ezek 47:1-12; Rev 22:1.  
**46:5** See 48:1; 87:1-3; Rev 3:12; 21:22; 22:3. God was in the earthly Jerusalem the capital city of His people Israel. He is also in the heavenly Jerusalem and He is in His church which is compared to a city in Rev 21:9,10.  
**46:6** See 2:1. Nations are frequently in an uproar, but God is in absolute control of events.  
**46:7** The sovereign God is Immanuel, He is with His people. Note at Ex 25:8. Here are two of His names.  
"The LORD of hosts" – the one who controls both the forces of heaven and the armies of earth. Note at 1 Sam 1:3.  
"God of Jacob" – note at 146:5.  
**46:8** Think of the ruins of ancient civilizations – Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, Edom, Greece, Troy, Harappa, etc. It is the Lord God of Israel, the one true God, who has brought about these desolations.  
**46:9** 76:2,3; Isa 2:4; 9:7; 11:6-9; 32:17,18; Micah 4:3.  
**46:10** God Himself now speaks to the writer and through the writer to us. If men would stop their struggles and spend some time in the contemplation of who and what God is, what a difference it would make! The day is coming when Jehovah God alone will be exalted and praised – 47:2; Isa 2:11,17; Zech 14:9.  
**47:1** In the activities of the true God there

- 2 For the LORD Most High *is* awe-inspiring.  
*He is* a great King over all the earth.
- 3 He will subdue the peoples under us,  
and the nations under our feet.
- 4 He will choose our inheritance for us,  
the excellence of Jacob whom he loved.

*Selah*

- 5 God has gone up with a shout,  
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
- 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises!

- Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
- 7 For God *is* the King of all the earth.  
Sing praises with understanding.
- 8 God reigns over the nations.  
God sits on the throne of his holiness.
- 9 The leaders of the people have gathered  
together,  
the people of the God of Abraham.  
For the shields of the earth *belong* to God.  
He is greatly exalted.

is great cause for joy for all the peoples of earth. One reason for this joy is in the next verse.

**47:2** The God of Israel (Jehovah) is not a mere tribal god or national god. He is the only God there is, the Creator of the universe (Isa 45:21,22). Above all nations and governments He sits enthroned. That is, He who is perfect in holiness, justice, grace, and love reigns over mankind. Is this not cause for joy? (vs 6-9).

"Great king" - see 5:2; 24:8; 95:3; Isa 6:5; 33:22; 43:15; Jer 10:6,7,10; Dan 4:34-37; Mal 1:14; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:15; Rev 15:3; 17:14; 19:16. Some people question the manner of God's rule over the earth and ask: "If God is the great king why are conditions on earth so terrible? Why does evil prevail? Why do the innocent suffer? Why are the poor and weak crushed under the feet of the rich and strong? Why do disasters strike - drought and starvation, cyclones, earthquakes and floods? Why do devastating wars, persecutions of whole people, or genocides take place?" Asking such questions some people dare to deny that God exists. They insist that if there were a God things could not be as they are. This is poor reasoning and poor philosophy. In facing such questions none of us should leave out of our reasoning some very important Bible facts.

According to the Bible the world is in its present condition not because God fails in His rule, but because mankind in general does not accept His rule. People are sinners and rebels against the great King of the universe. It is they who ruin the world, not God. Compare Gen 6:5-7,11,12; 8:21; Ps 14:2,3; Isa 24:5; Rom 1:18-32; Rev 11:18. Mankind deserves nothing good from God, but actually receives much good - which the majority of people take and misuse without gratitude to the heavenly Giver. The only times many people mention God is to take His name in vain or to curse or in complaint against Him. The general practice of mankind is to blame God for anything they consider bad, but never to thank Him for any good He does.

God, as the righteous Ruler of the world must send punishment on the wicked. He must use methods to restrain the restless, greedy, rebellious nature in man. And He is perfectly justified in using at times very

severe methods (see Rev 16:5-7; 2 Thess 1:6; Gen 6:5-8; etc). Actually God's judgments are always at work in the world and those judgments are perfectly just. He is always just in His dealing with individuals and with mankind as a whole - Ps 33:5; 89:14. See also the note at Gen 15:16.

Accepting this is, of course, a matter of faith. We can rejoice in God's reign over the earth (as we are told to do in v 1) if we believe His revelation in the Bible. Then we can understand that God cannot do, and does not do, any wrong or unjust thing to anyone, ever. We can understand that He knows what He is doing even if we do not, that He has ways and plans we do not know and which are far above us (Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33-36). God is "awe-inspiring" in His nature and activities. He is worthy of the utmost of reverent fear and trust.

**47:3,4** A further cause for joy is the activities of God with His chosen people Israel. However much these verses might have been fulfilled in the past there surely will be a more complete fulfillment in the future (Isa 9:6,7; 11:1-10; Matt 19:28; Acts 1:6; Rev 20:4-6). All the earth will be brought under the sway of the Lord Jesus and with Him those who have trusted Him.

"Inheritance" - if we entrust the choice of our inheritance to God we need not worry about the size or quality of it (Acts 20:32; 26:18; Eph 1:11,14; Col 1:12; Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4).

**47:5** Jehovah God is here described as ascending to His throne after winning a great victory. We are reminded of the day when Jehovah, incarnated in the Lord Jesus, after winning the fight against all the forces of Satan, ascended into glory (Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:9-11; Eph 4:7-10).

**47:6,7** Note on praise at 33:1.

**47:9** "God of Abraham" - the writer clearly identifies the God he is speaking of. He is the God of the Bible, the God who made a covenant with Abraham and called him to be His servant in the world.

"Shields" - he may mean the leaders of nations who act as shields against aggression from other nations. See 89:18. All such are under God's sovereign control, and He uses them to fulfill His gracious plan toward mankind. All the authority exercised by kings actually belongs to God (Rom 13:1-5).



48

A song, a psalm for the sons of Korah

- 1 Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be  
praised in the city of our God,  
*in* his holy mountain.
- 2 Beautiful for elevation, the joy of the  
whole earth, *is* mount Zion,  
*on* the sides of the north,  
the city of the great King.
- 3 God is known in her palaces as a refuge.
- 4 For, see, the kings assembled,  
they passed by together.
- 5 They saw *it and* so they marvelled;  
they were troubled *and* hurried away.
- 6 Fear took hold on them there,  
*and* pain like that of a woman in childbirth.
- 7 You broke *them like* the ships of Tarshish,  
*broken* by an east wind.
- 8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the  
city of the LORD of hosts,  
in the city of our God.  
God will establish it forever. Selah
- 9 We have thought of your loving kindness,  
O God, within your temple.
- 10 According to your name, O God,  
so *is* your praise to the ends of the earth.  
Your right hand is full of righteousness.
- 11 Let mount Zion rejoice.  
Let the daughters of Judah be glad,

**48:1** We do not know when, or by whom, this psalm was written. From vs 4-8 we judge it was after an attack on Jerusalem by federated kings. No such event occurred in the days of David. It is likely that the time was either during the invasion described in 2 Chronicles chapter 20, or the one in Isaiah chapters 36,37.

**48:1-3** God chose Jerusalem as His royal residence, the place for His temple. There He reigned as King over His people, and defended them from His enemies (9:11; 76:2; 132:13; 135:21; Matt 5:35). The greatest thing we can say of any place or people is that the true God is there and is known. Without this any other beauty is hardly beauty at all.

**48:4** 2 Kings 18:17; 2 Chron 20:1.

**48:5-8** 2 Kings 19:32-36; 2 Chron 20:20-24.

**48:9** God's love and grace are the great subjects that should be the theme of our meditations. If they are, we will not find it difficult to praise God (vs 10,11).

**48:12,13** The writer is thrilled by the sight of Jerusalem. What joy and satisfaction, then, should we not find in meditating on the Jerusalem which is above (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22; Rev 21:2,10-26). Remember in the study of the psalms and, for that mat-

- because of your judgments.
- 12 Walk about Zion, and go around her.  
Count her towers.
- 13 Set *your eyes* well on her bulwarks.  
Consider her palaces, so that you may  
tell *it* to the following generation.
- 14 For this God *is* our God forever and ever.  
He will be our guide *even* to death.

49

To the chief musician,  
a Psalm for the sons of Korah

- 1 Hear this, all *you* people.  
Give ear, all *you* inhabitants of the world,
- 2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.
- 3 My mouth will speak of wisdom,  
and the meditation of my heart *will*  
*bring* understanding.
- 4 I will turn my ear to a proverb;  
I will disclose my riddle on the harp.
- 5 Why should I fear in the days of evil,  
*when* the wickedness at my heels  
surrounds me?
- 6 Those who trust in their wealth,  
and boast of the greatness of their riches,
- 7 none *of them* can by any means redeem  
his brother,  
or give to God a ransom for him
- 8 (for the redemption of their souls *is* costly,

ter, of the whole of the Old Testament, that earthly things are often pictures and types of spiritual and heavenly truths.

**48:14** The best of all is not the city, but God's presence to guide until death, and to be enjoyed forever and ever.

"Guide" – 22:3,4; 25:9; 73:24; John 16:13.

**49:1-4** The inspired writer of this psalm has a message for all peoples everywhere. He was fulfilling one purpose God had for Israel, and that was to be a channel for His Word to the world. The Bible is for all, not for a small part of humanity. The message of this psalm concerns some exceedingly important matters of earthly life.

**49:5** In the rest of the psalm he reveals why he does not fear the sinful rich who bring evil days to him. Their power is extremely limited – they cannot escape death (vs 6-14), and cannot prevent God from redeeming him (v 15). And they are like beasts which have no real understanding (v 20). The teachings of the Lord Jesus are in perfect harmony with this, as we might expect (Matt 10:28; Luke 12:32; 12:15-21; 16:13,19-31; 18:24,25).

**49:7-9** No amount of money will keep a man permanently alive, no sum can redeem another from death. Then what is the value

and is left undone *by them* forever)  
 9 that he should live on forever,  
*and* not see the grave.  
 10 For he sees *that* wise men die;  
 likewise the fool and the senseless  
 person perish,  
 and leave their wealth to others.  
 11 Their inward thought *is that* their  
 houses *will continue* forever,  
*and* their dwelling places to all generations.  
 They call *their* lands after their own names.  
 12 Nevertheless, man, *even though* in honour,  
 does not remain.  
 He is like the beasts *that* perish.  
 13 This *is* the way of their folly,  
 and their posterity approve of  
 their sayings.

Selah

14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave.  
 Death will feed on them,  
 and the upright will rule over them in  
 the morning;  
 and their beauty will be consumed in  
 the grave, far from their home.  
 15 But God will redeem my soul from the  
 power of the grave;  
 for he will receive me.

Selah

16 Do not be afraid when someone is made rich,

when the glory of his house is increased,  
 17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away.  
 His glory will not descend after him.  
 18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul  
 (and *men* will praise you,  
 when you do well for yourself),  
 19 He will go to the generation of his fathers.  
 They will never see light.  
 20 Man *who has* honour,  
 and does not understand,  
 is like the beasts *that* perish.

# 50

A Psalm of Asaph

1 The mighty God, the LORD, has spoken,  
 and called the earth from the rising  
 of the sun to its going down.  
 2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,  
 God shines forth.  
 3 Our God will come and will not keep silence.  
 A fire will devour before him,  
 and it will be very tempestuous around him.  
 4 He will call to the heavens from above,  
 and to the earth,  
 that he may judge his people:  
 5 "Gather my saints together to me,  
 those who have made a covenant with

of the wealth of these wicked men? Though it may make them more comfortable here for their brief time on earth, it cannot help them in the endless ages of eternity.  
**49:10** See 39:6; Eccl 2:18,21; Luke 12:20; 1 Tim 6:7.  
**49:11** See 10:6. They foolishly and proudly refuse to face the fact of death.  
**49:12** 2 Pet 2:12; Jude 10; Ps 14:4.  
**49:13,14** "Grave" – "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35. Foolish ways will bring men to a sad end (Prov 14:12). What a shepherd such men have – death!  
 "Death will feed on them" – "Death will be their shepherd" is a possible translation of the Hebrew here.  
 The righteous will at last prevail over the wicked and rule the world.  
**49:15** Note on "redeem" at 78:35. What no man can do (vs 7-9) God has done (Hos 13:14; Gal 4:5; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18; Rev 5:9). In this verse again there is the suggestion of eternal life with God. It was but dimly perceived by Old Testament believers and sometimes hardly perceived at all. But the teaching was there in seed form (16:11; 17:15; 23:6; etc). It was the assurance of heavenly life after death in the heart of the psalmist which took away the fear of what the sinful rich could do.  
**49:16** In v 5 he encouraged himself concerning the state of affairs in the world.

Here he encourages others (compare 37:7; Prov 23:17; 24:19,20).  
**49:18** Luke 12:19.  
**49:19,20** The rich may forget God and still greatly prosper. But the end of such people is eternal darkness – Matt 25:30; John 12:35; 2 Pet 2:17; Jude 13.  
**50 Title:** On "Asaph" see 1 Chron 15:16,17,19; 25:2; 2 Chron 29:30. He was of the tribe of Levi, a great musician, poet, and seer. In this remarkable and powerful psalm God strikes at three great evils of religious people – formalism, spiritual ignorance (vs 7-15), and hypocrisy (vs 16-21).  
**50:1-6** The picture in these verses is God coming out of His city Jerusalem as judge and calling the whole world to hear His verdict on Israel's behavior.  
**50:2** See 48:1,2; Deut 33:2. This suggests a visible appearance.  
**50:3** Ex 19:16; 20:18. Fire signifies God's holiness and just judgments – Deut 9:3; 32:22; 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 12:29.  
**50:4** Deut 4:26; 31:28; 32:1; Isa 1:2. A very solemn way of emphasizing the importance of what follows.  
**50:5** Both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant were inaugurated by sacrifice. The first by animal sacrifices, the second by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus (Ex 24:4-8; Matt 26:26-28; Heb 9:11-15).

me by sacrifice.”  
6 And the heavens will declare his  
righteousness,  
for God himself *is* judge. Selah  
7 “Hear, O my people, and I will speak.  
*Listen*, O Israel, and I will testify against you.  
I *am* God, your God.  
8 I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices  
or your burnt offerings,  
*which are* continually before me.  
9 I will take no ox from your house,  
or male goats from your folds.  
10 For every beast of the forest *is* mine,  
and the cattle on a thousand hills.  
11 I know all the birds of the mountains,  
and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.  
12 If I were hungry, I would not tell you;  
for the world and its fulness *is* mine.  
13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls,  
or drink the blood of goats?  
14 Offer to God thanksgiving,  
and fulfil your vows to the Most High,  
15 And call to me in the day of trouble.  
I will deliver you, and you will glorify me.”

“Gather” – compare Matt 24:31.  
**50:6** All is now ready, and God the judge speaks in the rest of the psalm.  
**50:7** God speaks to those who are called here His people – to those who belong at least outwardly to their community.  
**50:8-13** The Israelites brought the sacrifices commanded by the law. But evidently some of them ignorantly supposed that God needed them, and foolishly imagined that formal ritual satisfied Him in some way. The apostle Paul criticized the same error at Athens (Acts 17:22-25). The Lord spoke through Isaiah too about the uselessness of religious rituals when the heart is not right with God and the life is unholy (Isa 1:11-17). The Lord Jesus sharply criticized the Pharisees for the same thing (Matthew chapter 23). In this age many Christians go through the forms of worship at the communion service who have no spiritual life, no obedience to God, and no love for His Word. Such worship is all in vain.  
**50:14,15** God here reveals what He wants from His worshippers – heartfelt gratitude, fulfilling one’s promises to God, true prayer which honors Him. On thanksgiving see 7:17; 56:12; 107:21,22; 116:17,18; Lev 7:12,13; Micah 6:6-8; Rom 12:1; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; Heb 13:15. On vows see 56:12; 61:8; 76:11; Num 30:2; Deut 23:21; Eccl 5:4-6.  
**50:15** 91:15; 107:6,13. God wants us to call on Him in times of trouble. He loves to hear prayer and to help those who pray in spirit and in truth. God answers the faithful believing prayers of His people, and new answers to prayer will give fresh reasons for

16 But to the wicked God says,  
“What *right* do you have to declare my statutes,  
or to take my covenant in your mouth,  
17 seeing that you hate instruction,  
and cast my words behind you?  
18 When you saw a thief, you were pleased with him,  
and have taken part with adulterers.  
19 You give your mouth to evil,  
and your tongue is joined to deceit.  
20 You sit *and* speak against your brother.  
You slander your own mother’s son.  
21 These *things* you have done, and I kept silent.  
You thought that I was altogether like you.  
*But* I will rebuke you, and set *them* in array before your eyes.  
22 Now consider this, you who forget God,  
lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* no one to rescue you.  
23 Whoever offers praise glorifies me,  
and to him who directs *his* conduct *rightly* I will show the salvation of God.”

them to glorify Him. But is God hungry for man’s praise and honor? No. See note at 33:1.  
**50:16-21** The disobedient, the thief, the adulterer, the deceiver, the slanderer has no business trying to preach God’s truth to others. If he tries to do so he is a hypocrite, and God’s judgment will come on him (Matt 23:1-3,33; Rom 2:8,9,21-24; 1 Cor 6:9,10). In spite of such clear warnings many preachers who live in such sins seem to think they will escape. They may speak about God’s holiness and righteous judgment but in reality they are ignorant of them (v 21). Sin has deceived them (Heb 3:13), and they abuse God’s grace (Jude 4) and misunderstand His patience (Eccl 8:11; Rom 2:4,5). They think God is like them – that is, without a hatred of sin, without the fire of holiness, without a loathing for hypocrisy. Sinful men can hardly slander God more than by saying He is like them.  
**50:22** All along it seems God has been speaking of forgetting God and not merely about formalism and hypocrisy. From this we might learn that formalism and hypocrisy are really the same as forgetting God. Hypocritical formalists can practice their religion with hardly a thought of God. They will be occupied with rituals, with self, and with sins. See in this verse what God thinks of such people! See how dangerous a sin forgetting God is!  
**50:23** “Offers praise” – here is the alternative to a vain and empty practice of religion. What shall it be for us – to have God tear us to pieces, or to have Him show us His salvation?  
**51 Title:** see 2 Sam 11:1 to 12:13 for the

# 51

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David,  
when Nathan the prophet came to him,  
after he had gone with Bathsheba

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your loving kindness.  
According to the multitude of your  
tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness,  
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,  
and my sin *is* always before me.
- 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and

events mentioned here.

**51:1** The only hope David had for the forgiveness of his terrible sins was the mercy and grace of God. No good work of his could earn forgiveness, no sacrifice he could make could blot out his sin – vs 16,17. Mercy was his one hope and mercy he craved (compare 41:4; Dan 9:18; Luke 18:13).

**51:2** David uses three words to describe his wrongdoing – transgression, wickedness (or guilt), and sin. See 32:1,2. Transgressions are against the law of God and need to be forgiven and blotted out. Wickedness and sin are like stains and spots and filth which need to be washed away. God does all this for the repentant believing person who turns to Him – Isa 44:22; 43:25; Jer 33:8; Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:7,9.

**51:3** We see David’s confession was not an empty, easy, insincere thing that he made simply because his sin had been found out. His sin troubled him constantly, was an agony to him. It was a sword in his heart, a mountain of guilt that always faced him, hiding God’s face. Such conviction is produced only by the Holy Spirit of God. And this psalm of confession is given also by the Holy Spirit to those who have been convicted by Him. Let us use it.

**51:4** According to the Bible all sin is primarily against God, because individuals involved in other people’s sin are God’s creation, God’s possession. Injuring the King’s property is an offense against the King Himself, and breaks the King’s laws (41:4; Gen 9:6; 13:13; 20:6; 39:9; Num 5:6; 32:23; 2 Sam 12:9,13; 1 Cor 8:12). One principle of the judgment of men is seen in Matt 25:40,45. What men do to Christ’s people is done to **Him**, and what they do not do to them is not done to **Him** (compare Acts 9:4,5). David was so conscious of sinning against God it swallowed up every other consideration at the moment.

“Just. . .pure” – Rom 3:4. Sin is so manifest, so terrible that when God pronounces judgment on it there can be no accusation against Him that He is too harsh or unloving.

**51:5** David has been speaking of his sins.

- done *this* evil in your sight,  
so that you are just when you speak *and*  
pure when you judge.
- 5 Behold, I was brought forth in evil,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
  - 6 Behold, you desire truth in the inner parts,  
and in the hidden *heart* you will cause  
me to know wisdom.
  - 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I will be clean.  
Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
  - 8 Cause me to hear joy and gladness,  
*that* the bones *which* you have  
broken may rejoice.
  - 9 Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my evil deeds.

Here he goes to the root of it all. He confesses that his nature is bad from the time of his conception. This is true of every human being born into the world, except the Lord Jesus (who was conceived by God’s Spirit and born of a virgin and so was not as other men are – Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1:30-35). Since the fall of Adam and Eve all parents have sinful natures and transmit them to their offspring (58:3; Gen 5:3; 8:21; Lev 12:6; Job 14:4; Eph 2:3). David is not saying that his mother conceived him while engaged in an act of sin. We have no reason to think that she was not a very moral woman, completely faithful to her husband – but still a sinner, as we all are.

**51:6** Since man’s inner nature is corrupt there is the necessity of inner change. God desires sincerity, honesty, integrity in the heart. This is opposed to the hypocrisy, deceitfulness, and dishonesty men have by nature. Nothing that a person can say or do can satisfy God if there is not this inner love of the truth, this change that puts **truth at the core of his or her being** (15:2; Prov 12:22; Eph 4:15,21-25; 6:14; 2 Thess 2:10; 1 John 3:19). And no wisdom is good wisdom except what God gives, and He gives it also in the inner man (1 Kings 3:12; Job 38:36; Prov 2:6; Eph 1:17,18; Jam 1:5).

**51:7** Hyssop was a shrub used in sprinkling the blood of animal sacrifices – Ex 12:22; Lev 14:4; Heb 9:19. That blood was but a symbol of the blood of Jesus Christ which now purges sin (1 John 1:7). Only God’s great grace and skill can make something white which was scarlet (Isa 1:18).

**51:8** Only forgiveness, cleansing, and truth in the inner parts can bring back joy. Conviction of sin to the heart is like broken bones to the body (compare 31:10; 32:3).

**51:9** Blot out means erase from the record. This is exactly what God does, and He refuses to put them back in the record again (32:2). But observe that David does not ask that God cancel all the punishment due to his sin (compare 2 Sam 12:9,10). He is willing to face God’s chastening hand if only he can be cleansed and restored to God’s fellowship.

- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me *with your* gracious Spirit.
- 13 *Then* I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will be converted to you.
- 14 Deliver me from blood guiltiness,  
O God, the God of my salvation,  
*and my tongue will sing aloud of your*  
righteousness.
- 15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will  
declare your praise.
- 16 For you do not desire sacrifice,  
or I would give *it*.  
You do not delight in burnt offering.
- 17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit.  
A broken and a contrite heart,  
O God, you will not despise.

**51:10** See how David's concern is with his inner state and not with outer appearances. And he knows that only God can make him right and pure within.

"Clean" – 24:4; 73:1; Matt 5:8; Acts 15:9. This means a pure, sincere heart with unmixed motives, a heart with clean affections, a heart that fights against sin, a heart under the influences of the Holy Spirit of God. If men are to have such a heart God must create it in them (Eph 2:10; 4:24. Compare Jer 24:7; Ezek 11:19; 36:26). Try as they may they will not be able to create it for themselves, though believers should cooperate with God in the work (Ezek 18:31; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Pet 1:22). A fixed and determined mind, a stable disposition against sin is needed to maintain purity of heart (119:5; 1 Cor 15:58; 1 Pet 5:9,10). This is something David once had but lost by sinning.

**51:11** David was convinced of his depravity, weakness, and sin. However, he believed that God had not yet cast him away or taken His Spirit from him. But he seems to fear that God might do so. David may have been referring to his anointing as king (1 Sam 16:13,14) and the fear that he might be rejected as Saul was. In any case, in Old Testament days believers did not have the full revelation of God's truth and His purposes toward them. And they did not have the full bestowal of the Spirit as the Church now has (John 7:39; 14:16,17; 16:7). And they did not have the promises of John 6:37,40; 10:28; 14:1-3; Rom 5:9,10; 8:38,39), as believers now do. But even we who live in this age of grace should fear that sin might rob us of the Spirit's sweet and powerful influences, that we may lose fellowship with God. See Eph 4:30.

**51:12** The Holy Spirit had not gone from him but joy had fled. Spiritual joy and sin cannot exist together. Joy follows pardon and purity, and only God can give it. David wanted it back, and longed for a mind that

- 18 Do good in your good pleasure to Zion.  
Build up the walls of Jerusalem.
- 19 Then you will be pleased with the  
sacrifices of righteousness,  
with burnt offering and whole burnt offering.  
Then they will offer bulls on your altar.

## 52

To the chief musician, a maskil of David,  
when Doeg the Edomite came and spoke to  
Saul, and told him that David had  
come to the house of Abimelech

- 1 Why do you boast in wickedness,  
O mighty man,  
*scorning* the goodness of God continually?
- 2 Your tongue devises ruin, like a sharp  
razor, working deceitfully.
- 3 You love evil more than good,

willingly, gladly, spontaneously serves God.

**51:13** Who can better teach other transgressors than the person who has fallen himself and been restored to spiritual health? Thus his fall and restoration will work for good, for God will use the account of it in the lives of others.

**51:14** He means his guilt in the death of Uriah (2 Sam 11:14-17). If God delivers him from this guilt he will not sing of his own righteousness (as some like to do), but of God's.

**51:15** Even opening the lips in God's praise is a gift of God.

**51:16** Note at 40:6.

**51:17** See 34:18; 145:3; Isa 57:15; 61:1; 66:2; Joel 2:12,13; Matt 5:3. When there is true repentance and sorrow for sin God will forgive and accept the person who has sinned. Without true repentance no sacrifice will be of the slightest use to him. On repentance see note at Matt 3:2.

**51:18,19** David had truly repented and forsaken his sin. His heart is now free to pray for others. Had trouble and disgrace come on Israel by the sin of David their king? Our sins affect others and when we are pardoned and restored we should pray for their welfare. In this psalm we may make a list of those things only God can do for the person fallen into sin. These are: show mercy and blot out sin (v 1), wash and cleanse (v 2), create a clean heart and give a steadfast mind (v 10), restore joy and a spirit of spontaneous obedience (v 12), open lips to praise (v 15).

**52 Title:** See the story of this in 1 Sam 22:6-23. Maskil was probably a musical term.

**52:1** There are not wanting people in this fallen world who are ashamed of doing good but boast in doing evil – 10:4; 94:4; Phil 3:19; 2 Pet 2:18. Doeg was one of these.

"*Scorning*" – in Hebrew there is no verb in the last sentence of this verse.

**52:2** Doeg's words resulted in the death of many servants of God.

**52:3** See 36:1-4. Are there such people now



and lying rather than speaking  
righteousness.

Selah

- 4 You love all devouring words,  
you deceitful tongue.
- 5 God will certainly destroy you forever.  
He will take you away and pluck you out  
of your dwelling place,  
and uproot you from the land of the living.
- Selah
- 6 And the righteous will see *this*, and fear,  
and will laugh at him *and say*:
- 7 "Look, *this* is the man *who* did not make  
God his strength,  
but trusted in his abundant riches *and*  
strengthened himself in his wickedness."
- 8 But I *am* like a green olive tree in the  
house of God.  
I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.
- 9 I will praise you forever,  
because you have done *this*;  
and in the presence of your saints I  
will hope in your name, for *it* is good.

53

To the chief musician on mahalath,  
a maskil of David

1 The fool has said in his heart,

who love evil and lies more than good and truth? A very great many – John 3:19,20; Rom 1:18; 2 Thess 2:10.

**52:4** See 5:9; 10:7; 109:2; 120:2,3; Prov 10:31; 12:19.

**52:5-7** A life of evil and deceit will have a certain harvest – God's anger and punishment. At the end of this life the righteous will rejoice at God's just judgment on wickedness (Rev 18:20; 19:1-3). This is not personal vindictiveness but a holy joy in God's justice. Note at 35:8.

**52:8** See 1:3; 92:12; 128:3; Jer 11:16. God's people are to be like green and fruitful trees all the days of their lives.

**52:9** In spite of evil boasters and persecutors David has full confidence in God. We should never let the wicked acts of men destroy our confidence in God's goodness.

**53:1** This is Psalm 14 repeated with variations. Repetitions are given in the Bible for emphasis, and help to teach what men are slow to learn. David wrote both psalms, and introduced changes here by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to fit a different time and circumstance. For comments on the unchanged parts see psalm 14. In this first verse the Hebrew emphasizes the corruptness of men's behavior more than in 14:1. But in both psalms a fool is a fool, and because he is a fool he comes to a foolish

"There is no God."

- They are corrupt, and have done  
abominable wickedness.
- There is* no one who does good.
- 2 God looks down from heaven on the  
children of men,  
to see if there are *any* who understand,  
who seek God.
- 3 Every one of them has turned away.  
They have together become filthy.  
*There is* no one who does good.  
No, not one.
- 4 Have the evildoers no knowledge?  
They eat up my people like they  
eat bread,  
and do not call out to God.
- 5 There they are, in great fear, *where*  
*there* was no fear.  
For God has scattered the bones  
of him  
who encamped against you.  
You have put *them* to shame,  
because God has despised them.
- 6 Oh, that the salvation of Israel *would*  
*come* out of Zion!  
When God brings back his people from  
captivity,  
Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be  
glad.

conclusion about a subject he things foolishly about.

**53:2** Here the word "God" is put instead of "LORD" (Jehovah) in 14:2. The same change occurs in vs 4,5,6. Why? One possibility – when David wrote Psalm 14 he may have been thinking particularly of foolish men in Israel, the people of Jehovah; now he thinks of men in general and uses the more general term "God." And of course the Holy Spirit was working in the minds of God's inspired prophets and writers of the Scriptures.

**53:3** "Become filthy" – the Hebrew indicates something like milk or food gone bad, and so it went into the Greek translation of this as "become worthless" (Rom 3:12).

**53:5** Here the two verses of 14:5,6 have been made one verse with several changes. There we have a general assurance of God's presence with the righteous; here we have a celebration of a victory already won over the wicked. In this psalm sin is seen in its ugliness – it makes fools of people; it corrupts their nature and deeds; it drives them away from God and keeps them from seeking Him; it causes them to persecute the righteous; it brings them at last to fear, shame, and destruction.

**53:6** "Brings back. . .from captivity" – or "restores the well-being of" – the Hebrew means either.

54

To the chief musician on neginoth,  
a maskil of David,  
when the Ziphites came and said to Saul,  
"Does not David hide himself among us?"

- 1 Save me, O God, by your name,  
and vindicate me by your strength.
- 2 Hear my prayer, O God.  
Give ear to the words of my mouth.
- 3 For strangers have risen up against me,  
and oppressors seek my life.  
They have not set God before them.      Selah
- 4 Look, God *is* my helper.  
The Lord *is* with those who uphold my soul.
- 5 He will repay my enemies *for their* evil.  
Cut them off in your truth!
- 6 I will freely sacrifice to you.  
I will praise your name, O LORD,  
for *it is* good.
- 7 For he has delivered me out of all trouble,  
and my eye has seen *its desire* on my  
enemies.

**54 Title:** The story of David’s danger at the hands of the Ziphites is in 1 Sam 23:13-29. Neginoth indicated this psalm should be sung with stringed instruments. Maskil was probably a literary or musical term.

**54:1** God’s name means His nature, His person and attributes. He alone could save David in the midst of implacable enemies, and work justice for him.

**54:3** The men of Ziph did not know David, but to gain the favor of king Saul tried to destroy him. They cared nothing for the justice of David’s case, and had no regard for God.

**54:4** See 30:10; 37:40; 118:7; Isa 41:10. If God keeps a man let his enemies take care!

**54:5** See 7:14-16. They will get what they deserve. See note at 35:8. David wanted the truth to prevail and be recognized.

**54:6** David had the excellent quality of a thankful heart.

**54:7** See 6:8-10; 59:10; 92:11; 112:8; 118:7.

**55 Title:** neginoth indicated stringed instruments. Maskil was probably a literary or musical term.

**55:1** See 5:1; 17:6; 54:2; 61:1; 86:6. We do not know the time or circumstances when David wrote this. Perhaps it had to do with the rebellion of Absalom recorded in 2 Samuel chapters 15-17. The first eleven verses speak of enemies in general, the next four of betrayal by a close friend, and the concluding eight verses reveal David’s confidence in God in the time of trial and danger.

55

To the chief musician on neginoth,  
a maskil of David

- 1 Give ear to my prayer, O God,  
and do not hide yourself from my  
supplication.
- 2 Be attentive to me, and hear me.  
I am restless in my complaint and cry out,
- 3 because of the voice of the enemy,  
because of the oppression of the wicked.  
For they bring trouble on me,  
and hate me in *their* wrath.
- 4 My heart is in anguish within me,  
and the terrors of death have fallen on me.
- 5 Fear and trembling have come on me,  
and horror has overwhelmed me.
- 6 And I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!  
*For then* I would fly away and be at rest.
- 7 Yes, *then* I would wander far away *and*  
remain in the wilderness.      Selah
- 8 I would quickly make my escape from the  
windy storm *and* tempest."

**55:2,3** See 64:1; 77:3; 142:2; 1 Sam 1:16; Job 9:27; Isa 38:14; 59:11; Ezek 7:16; Matt 26:28; Heb 5:7.

**55:4,5** See 18:4,5; 116:3. Do believers ever fear death? Though they should not, some do, especially if their faith is not strong, or if it is upset by circumstances, or if they do not feel God’s nearness at the time, or if they do not know the Word of God very well, or if Satan overwhelms them with his evil presence. But we in this New Testament age should understand that the Lord Jesus died that all those who believe in Him might *be freed* from the fear of death (Heb 2:14,15; 1 John 4:18; Rev 2:10). Because the Lord Jesus died in agony, the believer can die in peace and triumph (Acts 7:59,60; 1 Cor 15:55-57; 2 Cor 5:1-8; Phil 1:20-23). However, in Old Testament times believers did not have this revelation in its fullness.

**55:6-8** Sometimes troubles and sorrows seem unendurable and we long to escape. But the spiritual person will recognize that trials are sent or permitted by God, not that we might run from them, but that we might endure them for His glory and our good (Luke 22:41,42; Jam 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6,7; 4:12,13). Trying to run away from troubles is natural but useless. It is not God’s way for us, and there is no wilderness where we will find rest. There is a better place, a better way. That is to find peace in Christ’s will and rest in God’s compassionate arms (Matt 11:29; John 14:1; 16:33; 2 Cor 1:3-5; Phil 4:6,7).

9 Destroy *them*, O Lord, *and* split their  
tongues in two!  
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.  
10 Day and night they go around it on its walls;  
and evil *and* sorrow are within it.  
11 Wickedness *is* within it;  
deceit and guile do not depart from its  
streets.  
12 For *it was* not an enemy *who*  
reproached me.  
Then I could have endured *it*.  
Nor was it one who hated me *who*  
exalted himself against me.  
Then I would have hidden myself from him.  
13 But *it was* you, a man like me,  
my friend and my acquaintance.  
14 We took sweet counsel together *and*  
walked to the house of God with  
the throng.  
15 Let death seize these *enemies*,  
*and* let them go down alive into hell,  
for wickedness *is* among them in their homes.  
16 As for me, I will call on God;  
and the LORD will save me.  
17 Evening, and morning, and at noon,  
I will pray and cry out aloud;  
and he will hear my voice.  
18 He has delivered my soul in peace from  
the battle *that was* against me;  
for there were many with me.  
19 God will hear, and afflict them,

**55:9-11** In the days immediately preceding Absalom's rebellion Jerusalem may well have been like this. The city of David was greatly disturbed by the activities of wicked men.  
**55:12-14** If the man described here was not Ahitophel (2 Sam 15:12; 16:23) then we have no clue whatever to his identity. The prayer of David in the last part of v 9 is similar to the prayer he made concerning Ahitophel in 1 Sam 15:31. Whoever he was David addresses his remarks to him directly in vs 13,14. Some think they see here Judas, the betrayer of Jesus. It is true Christ called Judas "friend" in Matt 26:50. But He never trusted him (Ps 41:9; John 6:64,70,71).  
**55:15** Note on such prayers at 35:8. "Hell" - "Sheol" - note at Gen 37:35.  
**55:16-18** Salvation from enemies and victory in battle are repeatedly seen in David's life. The reason is found in his prayer life (compare Luke 11:9-13; 18:1-8; Eph 6:18; Jam 5:16). He labored to keep his conscience clear and his heart clean, to be faithful in prayer and to exercise faith when he prayed. This resulted in great confidence toward God (see 6:8-10).  
**55:19** He believed even in that dark hour that God reigns and is in control of affairs (29:10; 90:2; 93:2; Deut 33:27).  
"They do not fear God" - notes at

*the God* who abides from ancient times.  
Selah  
Because they do not change,  
therefore they do not fear God.  
20 He has put forth his hands against those  
who are at peace with him;  
he has broken his covenant.  
21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother  
than butter, but war *was* in his heart.  
His words were softer than oil,  
yet they *were* drawn swords.  
22 Cast your burden on the LORD,  
and he will sustain you.  
He will never allow the righteous to be  
shaken.  
23 But you, O God, will bring them down into  
the pit of destruction.  
Bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not  
live half their days.  
But I will trust in you.

# 56

To the chief musician on  
Jonath-elem-rehokim, a miktam of David,  
when the Philistines took him in Gath

1 Be merciful to me, O God, for man would  
swallow me up;  
fighting all day he oppresses me.

34:11-14; 111:10; Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Prov 1:7.  
**55:20,21** A deceitful, hypocritical friend is worse than an avowed enemy. A person with friendliness on the face and hatred in the heart is hard and painful to deal with (12:2; 28:3; 62:4). But God knows what to do with such hypocrites (v 23).  
**55:22** Though David felt his troubles were unendurable (vs 6-8), he really knew what to do with them (37:5. Compare Prov 16:3; 1 Pet 5:7). People who do this will not be shaken (15:5; 112:6; 2 Pet 1:10; Jude 24).  
**55:23** How many victories, how much peace of mind, how much glory to God can be traced to the words in the closing sentence!  
**56 Title:** This was written probably during David's first time in Gath as described in 1 Samuel 21:10-15. It is not said that the Philistines laid hands on him but the language of 1 Sam 21:13 suggests it, and 1 Sam 22:1 says he escaped from there. In any case, it was a time of grave danger both from Saul and his forces, and from Philistines the enemies of Israel. Jonath-elem-rechokim probably indicated the tune to be used in singing this psalm. It means "A Dove on Distant Oaks".  
**56:1,2** Men were acting like wild beasts toward him, thirsting for his blood (35:25; 57:3; 124:3).

2 All day my enemies would swallow *me* up,  
for *there are* many who fight against me,  
O Most High.

3 When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

4 In God I will praise his word,  
in God I have put my trust;  
I will not fear what flesh can do to me.

5 All day they twist my words.  
All their thoughts *are* against me for evil.

6 They gather themselves together,  
they hide themselves,  
they watch my steps  
while they lie in wait for my life.

7 Shall they escape by wickedness?  
In *your* anger cast down the people, O God!

8 You count up my wanderings.  
Put my tears in your bottle.  
*Are they* not in your book?

9 When I cry out *to you*,  
my enemies will turn back.  
I know this, for God *is* for me.

10 In God I will praise *his* word;  
in the LORD I will praise *his* word.

11 In God I have put my trust;  
I will not be afraid what man can do to me.

12 Vows to you are on me, O God.  
I will render praises to you.

13 For you have delivered my soul from death.  
*Will you* not *deliver* my feet from falling,  
that I may walk before God in the light  
of the living?

**56:3,4** He does not say he was unafraid. The bravest of men may sometimes fear. But David knew what to do when he was afraid, and his faith in God drove his fear away and enabled him to praise even in those dangerous and difficult circumstances. The same language of faith is seen in Heb 13:5. Observe what David praised – the Word of God, pure, faithful, holy, a sure foundation for his faith.

**56:5** This is a trick of the wicked. They try to twist the words of the righteous and even the words of God to use for their own purposes (Matt 26:59-62; Gal 1:7; 2 Pet 3:16).

**56:7** Note at 35:8.

**56:8** The tears of His people are precious to God. He knows their sorrows, He hears their weeping, He sees their tears – Ex 2:23-25; 3:7; Isa 25:8; 38:5; Rev 7:17; 21:4. No mother ever paid as much heed to the tears of her child as God does to the tears of His children.

“Put my tears in your bottle” – in other words, remember them.

“Book” – 69:28; 139:16; Ex 32:32; Mal 3:16; Rev 3:5; 20:12.

**56:9-11** See 6:8-10. Faith is the victory (Eph 6:16; 1 John 5:4,5; Rom 8:31).

**56:12,13** “Praises – ingratitude is a black and deadly sin (Rom 1:21), and many professing Christians are guilty of it. They seldom think of offering something to God

# 57

To the chief musician,  
al-taskith, a micktam of David,  
when he fled from Saul in the cave

1 Be merciful to me, O God,  
be merciful to me, for my soul trusts in you.  
Yes, in the shadow of your wings I will  
make my refuge,  
until *these* calamities have passed.

2 I will cry out to God Most High,  
to God who performs *good things* for me.

3 He will send from heaven and save me *from*  
the taunt of the one who would  
swallow me up. Selah

God will send forth his mercy and his truth.

4 My soul *is* among lions,  
*and* I lie down *among* those who are set  
on fire,  
the sons of men whose teeth *are* spears  
and arrows,  
and whose tongue *is* a sharp sword.

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.  
*May* your glory *be* above all the earth.

6 They have prepared a net for my steps.  
My soul is bowed down.  
They have dug a pit in front of me;  
they *themselves* have fallen into the  
middle of it. Selah

7 My heart is steadfast, O God,

for all His benefits to them. Not so David, the man after God's own heart.

“Death” – 30:3; 86:13; 116:8; Eph 2:4,5.

“Falling” – John 11:9,10; Jude 24.

**57 Title:** Al-taskith probably indicated the tune to be used in singing this psalm. It means “Do not Destroy”. Miktam was probably a literary or musical term.

**57:1** This was written when David fled to a cave. Two such times are recorded in 1 Samuel (22:1 and 24:1-3). Both were times of seeming great danger, but who can really be in danger when he is in God the almighty refuge? See 7:1,2.

“Wings” – 17:8; 38:7; 63:7; 91:4; Ruth 2:12; Matt 23:37.

**57:2,3** “Most High” – Gen 14:19. Prayers to the Creator, the one true God will be heard. He has good purposes toward His children and He will fulfill them (37:5; 138:8; Phil 1:6).

**57:4** See 56:1,2. A very vivid picture of the cruelty of his enemies.

**57:5** No greater prayer can be offered. Here is concern for far more than personal safety. Even in deep troubles David wanted God to be honored and glorified. Compare 1 Cor 10:31.

**57:6** See 7:14-16.

**57:7-11** David knew that his deliverance was not by his own strength and wisdom. God's goodness and love fill his thoughts, bring joy

- my heart is steadfast.  
I will sing and give praise.  
8 Awake, my glory!  
Awake, lyre and harp!  
I *myself* will awake early.  
9 I will praise you, O Lord, among the peoples.  
I will sing to you among the nations.  
10 For your mercy *is* great,  
*reaching* to the heavens,  
and your truth to the clouds.  
11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.  
*May* your glory *be* above all the earth.

58

To the chief musician, al-taskith,  
a micktam of David

- 1 Do you indeed speak righteousness, O rulers?  
Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?  
2 No, in heart you devise wickedness.  
You weigh out the violence of your  
hands in the earth.  
3 The wicked are estranged from the womb;  
they go astray as soon as they are born,  
speaking lies.  
4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent.  
*They are like the deaf cobra that* has  
stopped up its ear,  
5 Which will not listen to the voice of

to his heart, and a song to his lips. Can we be silent who have been delivered by the Lord Jesus in a far greater display of grace and love than David experienced?

"Steadfast" - 51:10.

**58 Title:** Al-taskith probably indicated the tune to be used in singing this psalm. It means "Do not Destroy". Miktam was probably a literary or musical term.

**58:1** The Hebrew word here translated "rulers" is an adjective meaning "silent" or "in silence" (it comes from a Hebrew root meaning "to bind" or "to be dumb"). Perhaps this verse could be well translated "Do you indeed speak righteousness, O silent ones?"

**58:2** David's experience with such people was sad indeed. They behaved as if they represented Satan rather than God.

**58:3** "From the womb" - everyone comes into the world with a sinful nature (51:5). The first steps a person takes are away from the right path. So from the earliest years a child needs proper instruction and guidance (but how many receive this?). One of the plainest evidences of man's depravity is lying, and it is one of the earliest to appear in every individual. Since men begin telling lies so early in life, it is no wonder they become such experts at it as time goes on.

**58:4,5** Can men be like poisonous snakes? In many ways, yes (140:3; Deut 32:33; Matt 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Rom 3:13). In

- charmers, charming ever so skillfully.  
6 Break their teeth in their mouth, O God!  
Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!  
7 Let them flow away like waters *which* run continually.  
*When* he bends *his bow to shoot* his arrows,  
let them be as though cut in pieces.  
8 *May they be* like a snail *which* melts away as it goes along,  
*like* a woman's stillborn child,  
*so that* they may not see the sun.  
9 Before your pots can feel the *fire from the thorns*, he will sweep them away as with a whirlwind, in living wrath.  
10 The righteous will rejoice when he sees *this* vengeance;  
he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked,  
11 So that a man will say,  
*"There really is a reward for the righteous; God really is one who judges in the earth."*

59

To the chief musician, al-taskith,  
a miktam of David, when Saul sent  
*men* to watch the house to kill him

- 1 Deliver me from my enemies, O my God.  
Defend me from those who rise up against me.  
2 Deliver me from those who do evil,

some ways they can be worse than snakes. Snakes can be charmed and controlled and rendered harmless for a time. But the unruly depravity of the wicked is uncontrollable. It will always break out in some form or other (Prov 27:22; Jer 13:23; Rom 8:7). They are deaf to law, to reason, and to God.

**58:6-9** Note at 35:8. God will deal with incorrigible sinners in perfect justice. If a man tries to sink his venomous fangs in others it will be no surprise if God should break his teeth out. And God, David says, will sweep them away while they are in the process of cooking up some scheme or other.

**58:10** The righteous will not rejoice in a spirit of personal vengeance and should not take vengeance themselves, but they will rejoice when justice triumphs. They will not rejoice to see the wicked tormented, but they will not make the mistake of siding with God's enemies or accuse Him of injustice in punishing them. Note at Num 31:2,3.

**58:11** See 9:8; 67:4; 75:7; 94:2. This is what all men should understand, and any means God uses to help them understand it is good.

**59 Title:** See 1 Samuel 19:11-18. Al-taskith probably indicated the tune to be used in singing this psalm. It means "Do not Destroy". Miktam was probably a literary or musical term.

**59:1-3** See 3:7. In this case the enemies are Saul the king of Israel and those who



and save me from bloodthirsty men.  
3 For, see, they lie in wait for my life.  
The mighty have gathered against me;  
not *because of* transgression or sin of  
mine, O LORD.  
4 They run and make themselves ready,  
without fault *of mine*.  
Awake to help me and see!  
5 Therefore, O LORD God of hosts,  
the God of Israel,  
awake to punish all the nations.  
Do not be merciful to any wicked  
transgressors. Selah  
6 They return at evening.  
They snarl like a dog,  
and go around the city.  
7 See, they spew out with their mouth.  
Swords *are* in their lips,  
for *they say*, "Who hears?"  
8 But you, O LORD, will laugh at them.  
You will scoff at all the nations.  
9 *Because of* his strength I will wait  
for you; for God *is* my defense.  
10 My merciful God will go before me.  
God will let me see *my desire* on my enemies.  
11 Do not kill them, so that my people will  
not forget.  
Scatter them by your power,  
and bring them down, O Lord our shield.

came at his orders to murder David.  
**59:4** David was entirely innocent of any wrong doing in regard to Saul. He was loyal to him as the king. Unfortunately for him he was more successful, more popular, and more righteous than Saul and so became the object of Saul's envy and hatred. Envy is murderous (Prov 27:4; Matt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 17:5; Rom 1:29). David could justly and confidently ask God to arise to help him (7:6; 35:23).  
**59:5** Note at 35:8. The behavior of those wicked men in Israel made David think of the wicked nations of the world which did not know God. He calls on the LORD (Jehovah), the self-existing One (Ex 3:14), the Lord who controls all the armies in heaven and earth, the only true God, the God in covenant with His people Israel.  
**59:6,7** Verses 14,15. The wicked are compared to cruel dogs who run in packs seeking something to eat. David does not mean watch dogs or house pets, but the mangy, hungry, noisy dogs that belong to no one and feed on whatever they can find. With their words like swords and their hearts full of contempt for everyone, the wicked are far more dangerous than such dogs. Compare 22:16.  
**59:8** See 2:4,5; 37:13; Prov 1:26. It is absurd for men to fight against the one true God. Evidently His response at such times is scornful laughter. Who do men think they are? (2:4; Isa 40:15-17,22).

12 *For* the sin of their mouth *and* the words  
of their lips let them be taken in their pride,  
and for the curses and lies *which* they speak.  
13 Consume *them* in wrath;  
consume *them*, so that they *may be* no *more*,  
and let them know that God rules in  
Jacob to the ends of the earth. Selah  
14 And at evening they return,  
*and* they snarl like a dog and go  
around the city.  
15 They wander up and down for food,  
and howl if they are not satisfied.  
16 But I will sing of your power.  
Yes, in the morning I will sing aloud  
of your mercy,  
for you have been my defense and refuge  
in the day of my trouble.  
17 To you, O my strength, I will sing;  
for God *is* my defense, *and* my merciful God.

60

To the chief musician on shushan-eduth,  
a miktam of David, to teach;  
when he fought against Aram-naharaim and  
Aram-zobah, when Joab returned and  
struck down twelve thousand *men* of Edom  
in the valley of salt

1 O God, you have cast us off.  
**59:9** See 18:1,2,32,39; 19:14; 27:1; 28:7.  
**59:10** Once more David is sure that God will hear him. Once again faith wins the victory.  
**59:11-13** A sudden destruction might be forgotten. He wants God to bring them down by degrees, to make them wandering examples of God's righteous judgment on evil men, and then to destroy them. His motive for this was God's glory. See 7:6-9. The knowledge of the true God is the greatest blessing that men can have. David means that anything that brings this knowledge is to be welcomed.  
**59:16,17** Who but believers in the one true God can sing in the midst of peril, and praise surrounded by trouble? Compare Acts 16:22-25. "In the morning" David had already escaped and sung praises to God (1 Sam 19:11). On "refuge" see 7:1,2.  
**60 Title:** David's campaigns against the armies of Aram (Syria) are recorded in 2 Samuel chapters 8 and 10. The battle against the Edomites is recorded in 1 Chronicles 18:12, where it is said that Abishai, Joab's brother, killed 18,000 Edomites. Joab was the commanding general and killed 12,000 in his own engagement with the enemy. Joab and Abishai sometimes divided a battlefield between them (2 Sam 10:9-11). Shushan-eduth probably indicated the tune to be used in singing this psalm. It means "Lily of the Covenant". Miktam was probably a literary or musical term.  
**60:1-3** The title suggests victory, but these

You have scattered us.  
 You have been displeased.  
 Oh, turn to us again.  
 2 You have caused the earth to tremble.  
 You have broken it.  
 Heal its broken places, for it shakes.  
 3 You have showed your people hardness.  
 You have made us drink the wine of trembling.  
 4 You have given a banner to those who fear  
 you,  
 that it may be displayed because of the truth.

Selah

5 Save *with* your right hand and hear me,  
 that your beloved may be delivered.  
 6 God has spoken in his holiness:  
 "I will rejoice. I will divide Shechem,  
 and measure out the valley of Succoth.  
 7 Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine,  
 and Ephraim *is* the helmet for my head.  
 Judah *is* my lawgiver.  
 8 Moab *is* my wash pot.  
 On Edom I will cast my sandal.  
 Philistia, shout in triumph because of me."  
 9 Who will bring me *into* the strong city?

verses speak of defeat. David may be speaking of a defeat in the midst of his victories which is not recorded in the historical books. It is possible that when he and his army were away fighting the Syrians, the Edomites invaded Israel. Or he may be referring, as some think, to conditions which prevailed at the time of Saul his predecessor. From the language David uses we judge the defeat was very severe, the conditions quite desperate. Observe that David traces their trouble to its source – God. On "wine" (v 3) see 75:8; Isa 51:17,22; Jer 25:15; 49:12. It here signifies God's judgment causing confusion, weakness, and distress.

**60:4,5** David's tone now becomes more hopeful and remains so throughout the rest of the psalm.

"Banner" – Ex 17:15; Isa 5:26; 11:12; 13:2.

**60:6-8** Some scholars would put a full stop at the end of the first sentence in v 6, and attribute the words which follow to David speaking of himself. But it seems more likely that God Himself is speaking down to the end of v 8.

**60:7** Gilead and Manasseh were places in the land Israel occupied east of the Jordan river. Ephraim was a tribe with great military strength (Gen 48:19; Deut 33:17).

"Lawgiver" – or the Hebrew word may mean "sceptre" – see Gen 49:10. Judah was appointed by God as the ruling tribe in Israel.

**60:8** Moab and Edom were two nations near Israel conquered by David and reduced to servitude. They became like servants to pour water on the hands of God's servants, or clean his shoes. Philistia, on Israel's western border, would also acknowledge its

Who will lead me into Edom?  
 10 *Will* not you, O God, *you who* have cast us off?  
 And *you*, O God, *who* did not go out with  
 our armies?  
 11 Give us help from trouble, for vain *is*  
 the help of man.  
 12 Through God we will do valiantly,  
 for *it is* he *who* will trample down  
 our enemies.

# 61

To the chief musician on neginah,  
*a Psalm of David*

1 Hear my cry, O God.  
 Listen to my prayer.  
 2 From the end of the earth I will cry out  
 to you, when my heart is overwhelmed.  
 Lead me to the rock *that is* higher than I.  
 3 For you have been a shelter for me *and* a  
 strong tower from the enemy.  
 4 I will abide in your tabernacle forever.

master in David and in David's God.

**60:9,10** Is this a moment of doubt because of a past defeat? Past defeats can be a blow at hope and faith for the future, if we let them.

**60:11,12** David overcomes the temptation to discouragement and prays on until confidence returns. He is sure that only God can give him the victory – not his general Joab, not the armies of Israel, not his own courage and skill (118:8; 146:3; Isa 2:22; Jer 17:5; 1 Cor 15:57).

"Trample" – 44:5; Isa 63:3; Luke 10:18,19; Rom 8:37; 16:20. The last 8 verses of this psalm appear almost unchanged in 108:6-13.

**61 Title:** Neginah indicated stringed instruments.

**61:2** The words "ends of the earth" suggest that David was out of the land of Canaan when he wrote this. Some scholars think this was when he fled from there during the time of Absalom's rebellion. In any case, it was a time of severe depression when his heart was overwhelmed with grief. This also suits the time of Absalom's rebellion. David felt that he was sinking in a sea of troubles. There was a Rock of safety, but it was far above him and he was unable to climb on to it. This Rock is God Himself (Deut 32:4). He is the Saviour and security of His people in time of trouble. Standing on this Rock all the troubles, sorrows, and difficulties of earth cannot endanger us. Notice God Himself must place us on this rock (27:5; 40:2). It is all of grace.

**61:3** "Tower" – 9:9; 59:9; Prov 18:10.

**61:4** "Wings" – 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 63:7; 91:1,4; Matt 22:37.

I will trust in the shelter of your wings.

Selah

- 5 For you, O God, have heard my vows.  
You have given *me* the heritage of those  
who fear your name.
- 6 You will increase *the days* of the king's life,  
and his years *will be* for many generations.
- 7 He will abide in God's presence forever.  
Oh, prepare mercy and truth, to preserve him.
- 8 So I will sing praise to your name forever,  
that I may daily perform my vows.

62

To the chief musician, to Jeduthun,  
a Psalm of David

- 1 Truly my soul waits for God.  
From him *comes* my salvation.
- 2 He alone *is* my rock and my salvation.  
*He is* my defense.  
I will not be greatly shaken.
- 3 How long will you make attacks against a man?  
All of you will be killed.  
*You will be* like a leaning wall,  
*and like* a tottering fence.

**61:5** From here on it is as though David was on the high Rock, securely and calmly surveying the future.  
"Vows" – 22:25; 50:14; 56:12; 66:13; 116:14,18. The word "heritage" (or "inheritance") has to do with all the promises of blessing God made to Abraham (Gen 12:1,2). These have been secured by the Lord Jesus for believers now (16:5; 37:18; Acts 20:32; Rom 4:16; Eph 1:11; Col 1:12; Heb 1:4; 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4).  
**61:6,7** David himself could not expect to live on earth for many generations, indeed forever (v 7). These verses may refer to David's assurance of eternal life with God in heaven. But David does not use the word 'I' here, but refers to the king, so it is much more likely that he is speaking of his dynasty, the offspring of David to rule forever in accordance with God's promise (2 Sam 7:12-16). In other words, David speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ who is of the royal line of David and God's appointed king forever (2:6-12; Luke 1:31-33).  
**61:8** A God so gracious in His ways is surely worthy of our praise (30:4; 33:1,2; 71:22).  
**62 Title:** "Jeduthun" – 1 Chronicles 16:41; 25:1.  
**62:1** Some trust in men. But what are men? Failing, sinful beings – vs 3,4,9. Some trust in violence or riches which are here today and gone tomorrow. Only God is worthy of our trust. True salvation can come only from Him (3:8; 37:39).  
**62:2** "Rock" – Deut 32:4.  
"Shaken" – 15:5; 16:18; 55:2; 66:9; 121:3.  
**62:3** Many there are who would try to shake

- 4 They only confer to throw *him* down from  
his high position.  
They delight in lies.  
They bless with their mouth,  
but inwardly they curse.

Selah

- 5 My soul, wait for God alone,  
for my expectation *is* from him.
- 6 He alone *is* my rock and my salvation.  
*He is* my defense; I will not be shaken.
- 7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory.  
The rock of my strength, *and* my refuge,  
*is* in God.
- 8 Trust in him at all times, you people.  
Pour out your heart before him.  
God *is* a refuge for us.
- 9 Surely men of low status *are* a vapour,  
*and* men of high status *are* a lie.  
*If* they are weighed in the balances,  
they *are* altogether *lighter* than vapour.
- 10 Do not trust in oppression, and do not  
have a vain *hope* in robbery.  
If riches increase, do not set your heart  
*on them*.
- 11 God has spoken once;  
twice I have heard this:

Selah

and destroy God's people. But though in themselves they are weak, all the attempts of the wicked to defeat them will come to nothing. God is the salvation and defense of His people. What can the wicked do?  
**62:4** To tell lies is bad enough, to delight in falsehood is a mark of the deepest depravity. Those David describes here were the worst sort of hypocrites (12:2; 28:3; 55:21).  
**62:8** See 37:3,5; 52:8; Isa 26:4. Better counsel was never given any people. The one true and living God, the Creator of the universe, is worthy of our trust and will never fail the person who depends on Him. We should trust "at all times" – in health and in sickness, in rest and at work, in joy and in sadness, in success and in failure, in prosperity and in poverty, in security and in danger, in times of light and understanding and in times of darkness and perplexity.  
God wants us to "pour out" before Him everything in our mind and heart, to be completely frank and open with Him about all our sorrows, difficulties, desires, failures, sins, troubles, and joys and successes (Job 10:2). Far more than human friends He will listen with sympathy, understanding, and compassion, and willingness and ability to help. He is the refuge from Satan, and all troubles, and all evil men, and all weakness, ignorance and sinfulness within us.  
**62:9** See 39:5; Isa 2:22; 40:17.  
**62:10** There is a living God to trust. Why foolishly dream of trusting anything else? On riches see 49:6; 52:7; Mark 10:24; Luke 12:15; 1 Tim 6:10.  
**62:11,12** God has both the ability and the

power *belongs* to God.

- 12 Also to you, O Lord, *belongs* mercy,  
for you repay every man according  
to his work.

## 63

A psalm of David, when he was in the  
wilderness of Judah

- 1 O God, you *are* my God.  
Early I will seek you.  
My soul thirsts for you, my flesh longs  
for you in a dry and thirsty land,  
where there is no water,
- 2 To see your power and your glory,  
just *as* I have seen you in the sanctuary.
- 3 Because your loving kindness *is* better  
than life,  
my lips will praise you.
- 4 So I will praise you while I live.  
I will lift up my hands in your name.
- 5 My soul will be satisfied as *with* marrow  
and fatness,

willingness to help His people. There is no  
lack of power or grace with Him. To whom,  
then, should we go?

"Repay" – 28:4; Jer 17:10; Matt 16:27;  
Rom 2:6; 1 Cor 3:8; Rev 2:23.

**63 Title:** This psalm was written when David  
was king (v 11), and pursued by enemies  
(v 9). These facts fit in with the rebellion of  
Absalom described in 2 Samuel chapters  
15-17. Escaping through the desert of Judea  
toward the Jordan river, probably at night  
(v 6), he wrote this, or we can say it came by  
the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – the way all  
the psalms came (and, indeed, the whole  
Bible). In this psalm we have a leading theme  
of all of them, perhaps the essence of all.

**63:1** Blessed is the person who can truly  
say "my God" to the true and only God, the  
all-powerful Creator of the universe. With  
that one word eventually all problems will  
have their solution, all holy longings will have  
their satisfaction. David did not thirst for  
comforts in the desert, nor for vengeance  
on his enemies, nor for bodily or fleshly  
satisfactions of any kind, nor for the gifts of  
God. He thirsts for God Himself. Nothing  
else could satisfy him but God's fellowship.  
He knew God but he wanted to know Him  
better, to experience Him more (compare  
Phil 3:10. See also Ps 42:2; 84:2; Jer  
29:13; Matt 5:6; 6:33; 7:7).

One of the most important and search-  
ing questions that can be asked is, what do  
you thirst for? what do you seek? At the  
time perhaps David's life and experience  
were like the dry and barren desert he was  
moving through. To a believer often the  
whole world seems like a desert without a  
drop of water to quench the thirst of the soul.

- and my mouth will praise *you* with joyful lips,  
6 When I remember you on my bed *and*  
meditate on you in the *night* watches,  
7 Because you have been my help.  
Therefore in the shadow of your wings  
I will rejoice.  
8 My soul follows you closely.  
Your right hand upholds me.
- 9 But those *who* seek to destroy my soul  
will go into the lower parts of the earth.  
10 They will fall by the sword.  
They will be a portion for foxes.  
11 But the king will rejoice in God.  
Everyone who swears by him will glory.  
But the mouth of those who speak lies  
will be stopped.

## 64

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

- 1 Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer.  
Preserve my life from the fear of the enemy.
- 2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked,

**63:2** He had beheld God's power and glory  
with the eyes of his understanding. So  
should we – Eph 1:18,19.

**63:3** He is in the desert pursued by enemies  
but speaks of God's grace. To experience  
God's grace is far better than all of life with  
its comforts and honors and riches without  
His grace.

**63:3-5** Blessed are those who can praise  
and sing and be satisfied in deserts, in  
dungeons, in the shadows of death. No one  
can, except those who can truly speak the  
opening words of this psalm.

**63:6** No doubt this psalm is a result of his  
meditations in the night.

**63:7** See 27:9; 40:17.

"Wings" – 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4;  
91:1,4.

**63:8** Here is a picture of the mutual love  
between God and the believer. The believer  
longs for more of God, follows after Him,  
clings to Him. God holds the believer in His  
right hand, the hand of power, as the arm  
of a loving father holds his child. Not all the  
malice of men, not all the power of Satan  
can break God's embrace or tear His  
children from His arms (John 10:28,29).

**63:9-11** Observe the contrast between David  
and his enemies. He seeks God; they seek  
his life. So the ends of these two classes of  
people will be different. How could it be  
otherwise? How can God give the wicked  
the reward of the righteous, or give the righ-  
teous the punishment due to the wicked?  
Notice in the last phrase of the psalm the  
danger of lying. God will stop the mouths  
of liars forever (Rev 21:8).

**64:1** This psalm consists of two parts – a  
prayer for deliverance from enemies

from the scheming of evildoers,  
 3 Who sharpen their tongue like a sword,  
 and bend bows to shoot their  
 arrows of bitter words,  
 4 That they may secretly shoot at the innocent.  
 They suddenly shoot at him and are not afraid.  
 5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter.  
 They talk about secretly laying snares.  
 They say, "Who will see them?"  
 6 They devise wicked deeds:  
 "We have made a perfect scheme."  
 Both the inward *thought* and the heart  
 of each one of them are deep.  
 7 But God will shoot an arrow at them.  
 Suddenly they will be wounded.  
 8 So they will cause their own tongue to  
 overthrow them.  
 All who see them will flee away.  
 9 And all men will fear and declare the  
 work of God,  
 for they will wisely consider his deeds.  
 10 The righteous will be glad in the LORD  
 and will trust in him,  
 and all the upright in heart will glory.

(vs 1-6), and the assurance that God will answer (vs 7-10). This prayer about enemies is similar to prayers in other psalms (e.g. 57, 58, 59). Note at 35:8. Remember all conspiracies against God's people are hatched in the counsels of Satan and his brood.  
**64:4** They had none of that fear of God which would have restrained them (notes at 34:11-14; 111:10; Job 28:28; Gen 20:11; Prov 1:7).  
**64:6** Jer 17:9; Prov 18:4; 20:5.  
**64:7,8** Here again we see God's perfect justice. The wicked shoot arrows at God's people. He will shoot arrows at them. And they will see who is the better archer. They will use their tongues like a sword to wound others, but God will use their own tongue against them to bring them wounds.  
**64:9,10** God's just judgment of the wicked will produce the good results recorded in these verses. See Isa 26:9. It is a big mistake to think that because God is love He will forget justice and refrain from punishing the wicked. The righteous will rejoice, not in the suffering of the wicked, but in God's justice and in Him.  
**65:1** This psalm is taken up completely with God. It can be divided into three parts: the worship of God (vs 1-4), the mighty acts of God (vs 5-8), and God's goodness in sending a rich harvest (vs 9-13). The Hebrew of the first part of verse 1 is difficult. It could also be translated "to you silence is praise, O God, in Zion." This is because the Hebrew word translated "waits" may also mean "silence."

# 65

To the chief musician, a Psalm,  
 a song of David

1 Praise waits for you, O God,  
 in Zion,  
 and to you the vow will be fulfilled.  
 2 O you who hear prayer, to you all flesh  
 will come.  
 3 Sins prevail against me.  
 As for our transgressions,  
 you will purge them away.  
 4 Blessed is the man whom you choose and  
 cause to approach you,  
 so that he may dwell in your  
 courts.  
 We will be satisfied with the goodness  
 of your house, of your holy temple.  
 5 You will answer us by awe-inspiring  
 things in righteousness,  
 O God of our salvation,  
 who are the confidence of all the ends  
 of the earth,  
 "Vow" - 22:25; 50:14; 61:8; 76:11;  
 116:14,18; 132:2.  
**65:2** Here is a name of the true God, an attribute as sure as His holiness, His justice, or His love. The God of the Bible, the great Creator answers prayer - 66:19,20; 81:7; 86:5; 99:6; 118:5; Gen 35:3; Ex 19:19; Matt 7:7; Rom 10:12; Heb 11:6. He is contrasted in the Bible with gods and idols, none of which can ever answer prayer - 115:3-7; Jer 10:3-5; 1 Kings 18:24-29,36-39.  
**65:3** Anyone who wants to pray to the true God will have to face the problem of sin. Sin separates between God and man and keeps God from answering prayer. See 66:18; Isa 59:1-4. Our sins must be put away, be forgiven. This God Himself does because of the sacrifice of His Son Jesus (Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:7-10). But the sins God forgives we must forsake.  
**65:4** Note on blessed at 1:1,2. God chooses us before we ever choose Him - John 15:16; Eph 1:4,11; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2. Then He brings us near to be His worshippers and live in His presence (John 14:23; Eph 2:13-18; Heb 10:19-22).  
**65:5** Those who pray should be prepared for the mysterious, awe-inspiring and altogether just working of God in their lives. He will fight against their sin and pride. He will discipline and test them. He will prepare them for answers in ways that sometimes will bring them to the verge of despair (66:10-12). But we should always remember that He is the God of salvation, desires our highest good, and is completely trustworthy.



and of those who are far off *on*  
the sea,  
6 Who established the mountains by his  
strength,  
*being* clothed with power,  
7 Who stills the noise of the seas,  
the noise of their waves,  
and the tumult of the people.  
8 Also those who live in the uttermost  
parts are afraid of your signs.  
You cause the dawning of the morning  
and evening to rejoice.  
9 You visit the earth, and water it.  
You greatly enrich it with the river of God,  
*which* is full of water.  
You prepare grain for them, for you  
have provided it like this.  
10 You water its ridges abundantly.  
You settle its furrows.  
You make it soft with showers.  
You bless what springs up.  
11 You crown the year with your goodness,  
and your paths drip *with* abundance.  
12 They drip *on* the pastures of the  
wilderness,  
and on every side the little hills  
rejoice.  
13 The pastures are clothed with flocks.  
The valleys also are covered  
with grain.  
They shout for joy, they also sing.

**65:6-8** God is able to answer prayer in any way He sees fit, for He is the mighty Creator in control of the wild sea or turbulent peoples (Matt 8:23-27).  
**65:9-13** A beautiful picture of the Creator sending rain on the earth and giving fruitful fields and abundant harvests. He does this even though few people acknowledge Him or give Him thanks for it. O ungrateful man, who has made the soil and the seed you plant? Who brings the rain? Who brings the crops to harvest? Lift up your eyes to the heavens and thank the gracious Maker of both earth and mankind (Acts 14:15-17; Joel 2:23,24; Ezek 34:26,27; Job 5:10; Deut 11:13-15).  
**66:1-4** A person who loves God wants all of mankind to honor Him. There is here a prophetic meaning, for the prophets spoke of a time when all the earth would know God and praise Him (Isa 2:2-4; 11:9).  
**66:3** See 18:44; 81:15. Enemies will be afraid to show any spirit of rebellion and so will pretend to be obedient.  
**66:5** See 65:5; 106:22.  
**66:6** Ex 14:21; Josh 3:16 – two examples among many of God’s awesome deeds.  
**66:7** God ruled in the days of Moses and Joshua. He rules now (47:2). He will rule forever. He knows what is going on and

# 66

To the chief musician, a song, a Psalm

1 Shout joyfully to God, all you lands.  
2 Sing out the honour of his name,  
make his praise glorious.  
3 Say to God, “How awe-inspiring *you are in*  
your works!  
Through the greatness of your power  
your enemies will submit themselves to you.  
4 The whole earth will worship you and sing  
to you;  
they will sing *to* your name.”  
*Selah*  
5 Come and see the works of God.  
*He is* awe-inspiring *in his* deeds toward  
the children of men.  
6 He turned the sea into dry *ground*.  
They went through the river on foot.  
There we rejoiced in him.  
7 He rules by his power forever.  
His eyes see the nations.  
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.  
*Selah*  
8 O praise our God, you people,  
and make the sound of his praise  
to be heard.  
9 He keeps our soul among the living,  
and does not let our feet be moved.

how to control events to work out His purposes (Gen 50:20). All sin is rebellion against the mighty ruler of the universe. Is not sin, then, madness rather than a cause of boasting or self-exaltation? Do the rebellious vainly imagine that the Creator cannot bring them down?  
**66:8** Why does he call on all people to praise the God of Israel? Because He is the Creator, the only God there is, and He has a high purpose for all nations and eventually will manifest Himself as the God of all nations.  
**66:9** If we live it is because of Him. If we do not fall, if we still stand, still maintain our position, it is His grace. Praise Him.  
**66:10-12** God will test, try, and discipline every child of His. He will test and prove all that we are, all that we think, believe, and do. This world is a testing ground for His believers. It is a furnace where God’s silver is tried and purged, that is, where their faith and character are refined and developed. It is a wilderness where they are captured, loaded with heavy burdens, and where men arrogantly ride over them, trampling them in the dirt – all to some good purpose of God. It is a place where God’s metal is tempered, first plunged into fire and then into water. This is the way the saints are

- 10 For you, O God, have tested us.  
You have refined us, as silver is refined.
- 11 You brought us into the net,  
you laid affliction on our backs.
- 12 You caused men to ride over our heads.  
We went through fire and through water;  
but you brought us out into *overflowing*  
abundance.
- 13 I will go into your house with burnt offerings.  
I will fulfil my vows to you,
- 14 Which my lips have uttered and my mouth  
has spoken, when I was in trouble.
- 15 I will offer to you burnt sacrifices of  
fat animals, with the fragrant  
aroma of rams.  
I will offer bulls with goats.
- Selah
- 16 Come *and* hear, all you who fear God,  
and I will declare what he has done  
for my soul.
- 17 I cried out to him with my mouth,  
and he was extolled with my tongue.

made strong.  
Thus it happened in David's personal life. Thus it will happen to some extent in the lives of all God's true people – John 16:33; Heb 12:7-11; 1 Pet 1:6,7; 4:1,12. Observe in these verses that though the agents may have been men, the one behind their activities was God. See Gen 45:5; 50:20; Acts 2:23. See other notes on testing at Gen 22:1; Jud 2:22.

**66:10** Great care and skill are required in refining silver. The fire must be just right, neither too much nor too little. God will exercise great care and patience in the trying of His children. Parents who do not love their children let them grow up without discipline except perhaps for an occasional thoughtless slap. God loves His own, and so He disciplines them carefully. If we refuse trials we are saying we don't wish to be refined and made pure.

**66:11** "Into the net" – like a bird caught in the net of a hunter. Notice it is God Himself who causes this to happen.

**66:12** See the result of these trials. When God had accomplished His purpose in them He said "enough", and brought His people into great blessing. Even while we are on this earth trials do not go on continually. God knows just how long to keep us in the heat (1 Pet 1:7; 5:10; Jam 1:3,4; Heb 12:11; 2 Cor 4:17; Rom 8:17,18; Ps 18:16-19; 71:20; 103:13,14).

**66:13-15** Trials successfully endured are a cause of great thanksgiving. We should see the loving hand of God in them working for our good and bring the gifts we think will please Him. Let us give Him our hearts and our bodies a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1,2). These are the offerings He desires.

**66:16-20** He has spoken to God, now he

- 18 If I regard sin in my heart,  
the Lord will not hear *me*.
- 19 *But* God has certainly heard *me*.  
He has listened to the voice of my prayer.
- 20 Blessed *be* God who has not turned  
away my prayer, or his mercy from me.
- Selah
- 1 God be merciful to us, and bless us,  
*and* cause his face to shine on us,
- 2 That your way may be known on earth,  
your salvation among all nations.
- 3 May the people praise you, O God;  
may all the people praise you.
- 4 Oh, may the nations be glad and  
sing for joy,  
for you will judge the people righteously,

67

To the chief musician, on neginoth,  
a Psalm, a song

will speak to men also. It is right and fitting to declare to others what God has done for us (71:15,16; 107:2; Matt 10:32). The substance of his testimony is this: God has been gracious and loving and has heard his prayers. Note at 65:2,3.

**66:18** The meaning here seems to be this: if in any way he saw evil in his heart and permitted it to remain, if there was sin consciously kept there, unconfessed and unforsaken, or if any evil motives or desires were in his prayers, then God would not hear (Prov 15:29; Isa 1:15; 59:2; John 9:31; 1 John 3:21,22). Nothing hinders prayer more than sin cherished in the heart. God does not encourage evil or hypocrisy.

**67 Title:** Many of the psalms were given to the director of music for him to compose melodies for. They were to be sung by the worshipers in the temple. If some poets and musicians in the various languages of India (and other countries) in these days would set many of the psalms to good music to be sung in churches they would be doing great service for God and for His people. Neginoth means stringed instruments.

**67:1** Praying for God's blessing is praying according to God's desire, for He loves to bless us when He can justly do so. This is why He has given us the Bible, why He sent His Son, why His Spirit is at work in the world. The prayer here is based on the blessing God taught Israel in Num 6:22-27.

**67:2** God's blessings are for the whole world. See Gen 12:1,2. He blessed Israel that this verse, which speaks of very great blessings indeed, might be fulfilled.

**67:3-5** The time will come when his prayer will be fully answered, this desire completely

and govern the nations on earth.

*Selah*

- 5 May the people praise you, O God;  
may all the people praise you.
- 6 *Then* the earth will yield her increase,  
and God, our own God, will bless us.
- 7 God will bless us; and all the ends of  
the earth will fear him.

# 68

To the chief musician, a Psalm,  
a song of David

- 1 May God arise, may his enemies be scattered,  
and may those who hate him flee from  
his presence.
- 2 As smoke is driven away, drive *them* away.  
As wax melts before the fire,  
so may the wicked perish at the  
presence of God.
- 3 But may the righteous be glad;  
may they rejoice before God, yes,  
may they rejoice exceedingly.
- 4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name.  
Extol him who rides on the heavens by  
his name YAH, and rejoice before him.

realized (Isa 2:2-5; etc).

**67:6** If God is acknowledged and gratitude is shown for His blessings, more blessings will be the result. God is not hungry for praise (see note at 33:1), but He will not encourage the sin of ingratitude.

**68:1** The subject of this great psalm is the entry of God into His sanctuary in Jerusalem. The author speaks of Him coming through the desert (v 7), stopping at Mount Sinai (v 8), leading His people victoriously into Canaan (vs 12,14), choosing Mount Zion as His dwelling place (v 16), ascending there (v 18), and ruling in power and majesty (vs 18,21,31-35). In the New Testament the Holy Spirit applies v 18 to the ascension of the Lord Jesus to the heavenly Jerusalem (Eph 4:8). This indicates that there is a prophetic quality in this psalm. There is far more here than events in the history of Israel.

Many scholars believe that it was written to be sung at the occasion of the taking of the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to Mount Zion (2 Sam 6:1-19). The first verse supports this. It is based on the blessing of the high priest in the wilderness journeys when the ark set out (Num 10:35). The ark was the sign of God's presence. Where God went His enemies scattered, His haters fled. But are there indeed haters of the one true God? There are many (John 7:7; 15:18,24,25; Rom 1:30; 8:7).

**68:1-4** The wicked are enemies of truth, of righteousness, of holiness, and of all that is truly good. They hate God Himself. When

- 5 A father for the fatherless and a  
defender of widows,  
*is* God in his holy habitation.
- 6 God places the solitary in families.  
He brings out those who are bound with  
chains;  
but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.
- 7 O God, when you went out before your  
people, when you marched through  
the wilderness, *Selah*
- 8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped  
at the presence of God;  
*even* Sinai itself *was moved* at the  
presence of God, the God of Israel.
- 9 You, O God, sent abundant rain which you  
provided for your inheritance when  
it was weary.
- 10 Your congregation has lived in it.  
You, O God, have provided from your  
goodness for the poor.
- 11 The Lord gave the word;  
great *was* the company of those who  
proclaimed *it*.
- 12 Kings of armies hurriedly fled,  
and she who stayed at home divided the  
plunder.
- 13 Though you lie down among the pots,

they perish it is because they fully deserve it. It is a display of God's magnificent justice in ridding the earth of harmful beings. And shall He not cause the righteous to rejoice with Him?

"YAH" – a shortened form of Jehovah (Yahweh).

**68:5,6** God is the King of the universe, the one who destroys wicked enemies and reigns in majesty. Is this all God is? No – He is the tender, compassionate One who loves and helps the fatherless, the widow, the lonely. No earthly monarch ever showed such love and concern for his subjects as God does (Ex 22:2,24; Deut 10:18; 14:29; 24:17-21; Ps 10:14,18; 82:3; 86:15; Isa 1:17; Jer 7:6; Matt 9:36). He deals gently with prisoners and gives them joy – 69:33; 102:19,20; 107:10,14; 146:7; Isa 61:1; Luke 4:18. Only the rebellious fail to receive God's blessing, and He wants them also to turn to Him and enjoy His goodness (Prov 1:23; Isa 55:7; Jer 3:14; Ezek 18:32).

**68:7** Ex 13:18,21.

**68:8** Ex 19:18.

**68:9** Lev 26:4; Deut 11:11,12.

**68:10** Note on "poor" at 41:1.

**68:11,12** This takes us back to the opening verses of the psalm. "The Lord gave the word" here means that by His almighty command He secured victory for His people over their enemies in Canaan. The women in v 12 benefitted from that.

**68:13** This verse, very difficult in Hebrew, seems to suggest peace and prosperity

*yet you will be like* the wings of a  
dove covered with silver,  
and her feathers with yellow gold.  
14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it,  
it was like snow on Zalmon.  
15 The mountain of God *is like* the mountain  
of Bashan,  
a high mountain *like* the mountain of Bashan.  
16 Why do you watch with envy,  
you high peaks?  
*This is* the mountain *where* God desires  
to dwell.  
Yes, the LORD will dwell *in it* forever.  
17 The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand,  
and thousands of thousands.  
The Lord *is* among them, *as on* Sinai,  
in the Holy Place.  
18 You have ascended on high,  
you have led captivity captive,  
you have received gifts among men,  
yes, *among* the rebellious also,  
that the LORD God might dwell *among them*.  
19 Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loads us  
*with good things*, the God of our  
salvation. Selah  
20 *He who is* our God *is* the God of salvation,  
and to God the Lord *belong* escapes

from death.  
21 But God will wound the head of his enemies,  
*and* the hairy scalp of the one who  
still goes on in his trespasses.  
22 The Lord said,  
"I will bring back from Bashan,  
I will bring *my people* back from the  
depths of the sea,  
23 That your foot may be dipped in the blood  
of *your* enemies,  
*and* the tongue of your dogs *have* their share."  
24 They have seen your procession,  
O God, the procession of my God,  
my King, in the sanctuary.  
25 The singers went in front,  
the musicians followed.  
Among *them were* the maidens playing on  
tambourines.  
26 Praise God in the congregations;  
the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.  
27 There *is* little Benjamin *with* their leader,  
the princes of Judah *and* their company,  
the princes of Zebulun  
*and* the princes of Naphtali.  
28 Your God has commanded strength for you.  
Strengthen, O God, what you have done

after battle.  
**68:14** Zalmon is a hill near Shechem in a central part of Canaan. The scattering of the kings was like snow being driven before the wind on the dark slopes of that hill.  
"Almighty" – in Hebrew "Shaddai" (Gen 17:1).  
**68:15,16** The mountain range of Bashan rose high and imposing to the northeast of Canaan. The peaks there are much grander than the hills around Jerusalem. But God chose Mount Zion for His dwelling, not one of earth's high and lofty mountains (2:8; 9:11; 76:2; 87:1-3; 132:13,14). This was one of the peaks in the region of Moriah where God confirmed His covenant with Abraham to bring blessing to the whole world. Mount Zion on earth is only a pale picture of the heavenly Mount Zion or Jerusalem (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22; Rev 3:12; 21:10).  
**68:17** Deut 33:2; 2 Kings 6:17; Dan 7:10; Hab 3:8; Matt 26:53. The KJV has added the word "angels" here, but this is not in the Hebrew.  
**68:18** This has two meanings. First, it refers to God ascending to Mount Zion with the ark of the covenant to dwell in the midst of His people Israel, having conquered all enemies. But according to Eph 4:8-11 this verse refers to the Lord Jesus who conquered sin, death, Satan and all his hordes, and ascended into the heavenly mount Zion. The ark is a symbol of the Lord Jesus. See note at Ex 25:10-16. There is a difference

between this verse and Eph 4:8. Here it says the Lord "received gifts", there it says He "gave gifts." The Lord God needs nothing from men. He takes from them only what He has first given, and only that He might give them the more. In either taking or giving He is the eternal King, ruling in majesty and might (47:2).  
"Among men" – this could also be translated "for men" or "from men." In general Hebrew prepositions have more than one meaning.  
**68:19** "Loads us" – the Hebrew word may also mean "carries us." This great King of heaven does not lay burdens on His subjects as earthly kings do. He takes their burdens and bears them Himself (55:22; Isa 46:4; 53:4; Matt 11:28; 1 Pet 5:7). If He "loads" His people with anything, it is only the best of things. Observe that the words "with good things" have been added.  
**68:20** One meaning of this is He keeps His people alive on earth until their course is finished. A deeper meaning is He delivers from spiritual death and gives eternal life with Him forever (John 5:24; 11:25; Rom 6:23; 8:2; 1 Cor 15:21,26,54; 2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:14; Rev 20:14; 21:4).  
**68:21-23** Terrible words but none the less true for that.  
**68:24-27** He resumes the description of the triumphal procession of the ark into the sanctuary in Jerusalem.  
**68:28-31** God will show Himself strong for His people, for His city and His sanctuary,

for us.  
 29 Because of your temple at Jerusalem kings  
 will bring presents to you.  
 30 Rebuke the beast of the reeds,  
 the herd of the bulls with the  
 calves of the people,  
*until everyone* submits himself with pieces  
 of silver.  
 Scatter the people *who* delight in war.  
 31 Princes will come from Egypt.  
 Ethiopia will soon stretch out her hands to God.  
 32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth.  
 Oh, sing praises to the Lord, *Selah*  
 33 To him who rides on the heavens of  
 heavens, *which are* of old.  
 See, he sends out his voice, a mighty voice.  
 34 Ascribe strength to God.  
 His majesty *is* over Israel,  
 and his strength is in the clouds.  
 35 O God, *you are* awe-inspiring from your  
 holy places.  
 The God of Israel *is* the one who gives  
 strength and power to *his* people.  
 Blessed *be* God.

and will subdue the nations some of which  
 are here referred to as beasts (compare Isa  
 43:3; 45:14; 60:5; Dan 7:3-7; Rev  
 21:24-26).

"Beast of the reeds" – this is probably  
 the best translation of the obscure Hebrew  
 phrase. "Company of spearmen" is a very  
 unlikely meaning. Some commentators  
 think the phrase signifies Egypt.

**68:32-35** The psalm closes with a fitting  
 exhortation to all nations to praise this  
 mighty, splendid God. These verses are  
 prophetic. The time will come when all  
 nations will worship the one true God.

**69 Title:** Shoshannim probably indicated the  
 tune to be used when singing this psalm.  
 It means "Lilies."

**69:1** This wonderful psalm is often quoted  
 in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus  
 applied v 4 to Himself in John 15:25. Verse  
 9 is applied to Him in John 2:17 and Rom  
 15:3, and v 21 in Matt 27:34. David wrote  
 of both himself and the Lord Jesus, of his  
 own sufferings and those of Jesus too. How  
 can we sort these sayings out? How can we  
 tell which refer to David and which to the  
 Lord Jesus, and which to both of them?  
 (These same questions can be asked of  
 some other psalms as well.) These ques-  
 tions are not always easy to answer, but  
 perhaps a good rule is, see the Lord Jesus  
 where you can, see David where you must,  
 see both Jesus and David where possible.

We cannot see Jesus in v 5, for He was  
 never foolish, never sinned, and so had no  
 personal guilt. But it is easy to see David  
 there. And the prayers against the wicked  
 in verses 22-28 do not sound like the one  
 who prayed for His enemies in Luke 23:34

# 69

To the chief musician, on Shoshannim.  
 A Psalm of David

1 Save me, O God,  
 for the waters have come into *my* soul.  
 2 I sink in deep mire,  
 where *there is* no standing.  
 I have come into deep waters,  
 where the floods overflow me.  
 3 I am weary of my crying.  
 My throat is dried up;  
 my eyes fail while I wait for my God.  
 4 Those who hate me without a cause are  
 more than the hairs of my head.  
 Those who would destroy me,  
 my enemies wrongfully, are mighty.  
 I had to restore what I did not steal.  
 5 O God, you know my foolishness,  
 and my sins are not hidden from you.  
 6 Do not let those who wait for you,  
 O Lord God of hosts,  
 be ashamed for my sake.

(though actually He prayed there for those  
 who did not know what they were doing, not  
 for those who did know). Other expressions  
 in this can hardly fit David's experience. The  
 Holy Spirit of God inspired him to write words  
 that were beyond his experience and were  
 prophecies of the Messiah.

Verses 1-3 speak of extreme peril and  
 helplessness. Certainly David had  
 experienced such times (40:2; 18:16,17;  
 6:6). But could these words possibly fit the  
 experience of the Lord Jesus? Was He not  
 God incarnate? Could He ever be described  
 as in such danger He could not help Him-  
 self? Understand that He laid aside His di-  
 vine glory, power, and privileges and became  
 a man obedient to death (Phil 2:5-8). He  
 Himself said He could do nothing by Him-  
 self (John 5:19,30), and that included sav-  
 ing Himself from death. He could not be-  
 cause He knew it was God the Father's will  
 for Him and He would not oppose God's will  
 in anything. Thus we have the mention of  
 His tears and agonizing prayers (Luke  
 22:41-44; Heb 5:7). So these verses  
 beautifully fit His experience as He faced  
 the cross. Remember that He voluntarily  
 put Himself in this position, and that He did  
 it all for us.

**69:4** David was hated by king Saul and many  
 others. The Lord Jesus was hated by nearly  
 all the Jewish leaders of His day and by the  
 world as a whole (John 15:18,24,25).

**69:5** This was true of David (32:5; 51:1-4),  
 but not true of Jesus (John 8:46; Heb 4:15;  
 7:26; 1 Pet 2:21,22).

**69:6** This is a strong ground in prayer. If  
 God did not bring him through these diffi-  
 culties triumphantly then his friends and



Do not let those who seek you be  
disgraced for my sake, O God of Israel.  
7 Because for your sake I have borne scorn;  
shame has covered my face.  
8 I have become a stranger to my brethren,  
and an alien to my mother's children.  
9 For the zeal of your house has eaten me up,  
and the scorn of those who scorned you  
have fallen on me.  
10 When I wept, *and humbled* my soul with  
fasting, I was scorned for that.  
11 Also I made sackcloth my clothing,  
and I became a byword to them.  
12 Those who sit in the gate speak against me,  
and I *am* the song of the drunkards.  
13 But as for me, my prayer *is* to you,  
O LORD, *in* the acceptable time.  
O God, in the greatness of your mercy,  
hear me, in the truth of your salvation.  
14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink.  
Let me be delivered from those who hate  
me, and out of the deep waters.  
15 Do not let the flood water overflow me,  
nor the deep swallow me up,  
and do not let the pit shut its mouth on me.

16 Hear me, O LORD,  
for your loving kindness is good.  
Turn to me in accordance with the  
abundance of your tender mercies.  
17 And do not hide your face from your servant,  
for I am in trouble. Hear me quickly.  
18 Draw near to my soul, *and* redeem it.  
Rescue me because of my enemies.  
19 You have known my reproach,  
and my shame, and my dishonour.  
My adversaries *are* all before you.  
20 Scorn has broken my heart,  
and I am full of heaviness.  
And I looked *for someone* to take pity,  
but *there was* no one,  
and for comforters, but I found none.  
21 They also gave me gall for my food,  
and in my thirst they gave me  
vinegar to drink.  
22 Let their table before them become a snare,  
and let *what should have been for their*  
welfare become a trap.  
23 Let their eyes be darkened,  
so that they can not see,  
and make their loins shake continually.

followers would be put to shame. We can be sure that this will never happen to the followers of Jesus (Rom 9:33; 10:11).  
"LORD God of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.  
**69:7,8** True of David, far more true of the Lord Jesus (Matt 9:24; 27:29,41; Mark 3:21,30; 6:6; Luke 23:26; John 8:48; 7:5; 1:11).  
**69:9** John 2:17. This is one reason Jesus was scorned and dishonored and treated as a stranger by His own people. Some worldlings are extremely zealous for making money, for gaining power, for their own honor, or for other things of this world, but they cannot stand anyone who is zealous for the one true God. They call it fanaticism. They cannot understand anyone caring that much about God's house, God's work, God's honor. They are blind and ignorant about the importance of these things. The Lord Jesus had so much zeal for God He was consumed by it. Jesus also became the object of insults the ungodly aimed at God.  
**69:10,11** Isa 53:3. Nothing the Lord Jesus did could please the ungodly. Even His mourning and weeping for them was a reason to them to insult Him.  
"Sackcloth" – a sign of grief.  
**69:12** "In the gate" – Gen 19:1; Ruth 4:1. Drunkards often make a mock of religion and think it fun to sneer at the holy Son of God! God's zealous children also will be held up to ridicule by the ungodly.  
**69:13-18** Compare 22:19-21. A prayer most suitable to David, to the Lord Jesus, and to many others since in great danger and distress, a prayer God the Father delighted

to answer.  
**69:15** This was a prayer that death would not be able to hold Him. Gloriously fulfilled in Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:24).  
**69:19** See 22:6,12,13,16. Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, priests, the mob of ungodly people, the soldiers of Rome – all became His enemies.  
**69:20** The Lord Jesus died with a broken heart, deserted, scorned, insulted. Some were shocked but who had compassion? Who shed with Him a friendly tear?  
**69:21** Matt 27:34,48. The most unpalatable of food and drink was given to the sufferer. This verse in this psalm was the last prophecy in the Old Testament fulfilled before Jesus died (John 19:28-30). The Lord Jesus came with a feast of good things for mankind. They gave Him their worst in return.  
**69:22-28** Note at 35:8. Though these verses seem at variance with Luke 23:34 (but we should understand whom Jesus referred to in Luke 23:34), the Holy Spirit inspired David, a man under the law, to write them to show the just vengeance of God that was to overtake the people who caused the death of the Son of God. Though there is reason to think that the Lord Jesus did not offer these prayers in His life and death, He knew, of course, they were in this psalm and would be answered. He taught this by parable (Matt 21:38-41; 22:6,7), and by plain words (Matt 23:33-36).  
Paul applied vs 22,23 to the unbelieving Jews of his day (Rom 11:9,10). Peter applied v 25 to Judas Iscariot the betrayer of Jesus (Acts 1:20). And Jesus applied it to the Jews in general (Matt 23:38). In

- 24 Pour out your indignation on them,  
and let your burning anger take hold of them.
- 25 Let their habitation be desolate,  
and let no one live in their tents.
- 26 For they persecute the *one* whom you have  
struck,  
and talk of the grief of those whom you  
have wounded.
- 27 Ascribe wickedness to their wickedness,  
and let them not come into your  
righteousness.
- 28 Let them be blotted out of the book of  
the living,  
and not be written with the righteous.
- 29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful.  
Let your salvation, O God, set me up on high.
- 30 I will praise the name of God with a song,  
and will exalt him with thanksgiving.
- 31 *And this* will please the LORD better than  
*offering* an ox or bull that has  
horns and hoofs.
- 32 The humble will see *this, and* be glad;  
and you who seek God, your heart will live.
- 33 For the LORD hears the poor,  
and does not despise his prisoners.
- 34 May the heaven and earth praise him,  
the seas, and everything that  
moves in them.

these verses we see a cry for perfect justice to prevail. And prevail it did, and will (see 18:25,26; 2 Thess 1:6). They fed Jesus gall and vinegar – their tables will become a snare. They tried to put out the light of God – their eyes will be darkened. They tried to shake the Lord Jesus and laid many stripes on His back – their loins will shake. They poured anger on the Son of God – God’s anger will be poured on them.

**69:26** See Isa 53:4-6,10.

**69:27,28** The people referred to here never were partakers of God’s righteousness as Abraham their father was (Gen 15:6). They had never come into the register of the righteous. That is, they had never trusted God, never been saved. The first part of verse 28 does not mean that the saved, those who are counted righteous, can fall away and be lost. This would be contrary to the teachings of the Bible in many other places (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:28; Rom 5:9,10; 1 Pet 1:4,5).

“Book of the living” – not “the book of life” (Rev 3:5; 20:12,15).

**69:29** See 22:11-21.

**69:30,31** Worthy indeed is the God of such wonders. Jesus praises Him. Shall we not? What better “offering” than praise?

“Thanksgiving” – 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**69:32** It is the poor, especially the “poor in spirit” (Matt 5:3), and not the proud, who will be able to enter into this with a true

- 35 For God will save Zion and will build the  
cities of Judah,  
that they may live there and possess it.
- 36 And the offspring of his servants will inherit it,  
and those who love his name will live in it.

## 70

To the chief musician. A Psalm of David,  
to bring to remembrance

- 1 *Come quickly*, O God, to rescue me;  
come quickly to help me, O LORD.
- 2 Let those who seek my life be ashamed and  
disgraced.  
Let those who desire my harm be turned  
back and put to confusion.
- 3 Let those who say “Aha, aha!” be turned  
back because of their shame.
- 4 Let all those who seek you rejoice and  
be glad in you,  
and let those who love your salvation  
say continually,  
“May God be exalted.”
- 5 But I *am* poor and needy.  
Come quickly to me, O God;  
you are my help and my deliverer.  
O LORD, do not delay.

heart. And all things will come to those who humbly seek God. The heart is kept alive in the process.

“Your heart will live” – a very great promise.

**69:33** God hears the humble, godly poor, not the wicked poor simply because they are poor.

“Prisoners” – 68:6

**69:34** See 96:11; 98:7; 148:1-13; 150:6. God has done glorious things in the Lord Jesus, things that will be the subject of praise everywhere, throughout all time, and in eternity.

**69:35,36** See 147:2; 51:18; 46:5; 25:13.

**70 Title:** This psalm is almost identical to Ps 40:13-17. It was probably taken out of that psalm, a few changes made, and used for some special occasion about which we know nothing.

**70:1** Sometimes in great danger and distress God’s help is speedily required. At such times a prayer like this is not forbidden.

**70:2,3** God can turn back those who pursue His people to injure them – sometimes He does, but not always.

**70:4** See 69:32. See the contrast in the words of David’s enemies – “aha, aha”, and the words of those who love God’s salvation – “May God be exalted.” Here are two streams of humanity. The one type opposes, the other praises.

**71 Title:** We do not know for certain when and by whom this psalm was written. It seems likely that David was the author. The

# 71

- 1 In you, O LORD, I put my trust.  
Let me never be put to confusion.
- 2 Rescue me in your righteousness,  
and enable me to escape.  
Bend down your ear to me, and save me.
- 3 Be my strong dwelling place,  
to which I can continually resort.  
You have given the command to save me,  
for you *are* my rock and my fortress.
- 4 Rescue me, O my God,  
from the hands of the wicked,  
from the hands of the unrighteous  
and cruel man.
- 5 For you are my hope, O Lord God.  
*You are* my trust from my youth.
- 6 By you I have been upheld from birth.  
You are the one who took me from my  
mother's womb.  
My praise *will* continually *be* of you.
- 7 I have become like a sign to many;  
but you *are* my strong refuge.
- 8 Let my mouth be filled *with* your praise  
*and with* your honour all day.
- 9 Do not reject me in the time of old age;  
do not forsake me when my strength fails.
- 10 For my enemies speak against me,

- and those who lay in wait for my life  
conspire together,  
11 Saying, "God has forsaken him.  
Persecute and take him,  
for *there is* no one to rescue *him*."
- 12 O God, do not be far from me. O my God,  
come quickly for my help.
- 13 Let those who are the enemies of my soul  
be put to shame *and* consumed.  
Let those who seek my harm be covered  
*with* scorn and dishonour.
- 14 But I will hope continually and will  
praise you still more and more.
- 15 My mouth shall declare your righteousness  
*and* your salvation all day,  
though I do not know *its* measure.
- 16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God.  
I will mention your righteousness,  
yours alone.
- 17 O God, you have taught me from my  
youth;  
and to this *day* I have declared  
your wonderful works.
- 18 Even when I *am* old and gray-headed,  
O God, do not forsake me,  
until I have declared your strength  
*to this* generation,  
and your power to everyone *who*  
is to come.

writer was facing old age (vs 9,18). Looking back over a lifetime of trials and difficulties (v 20) he praises God for His faithfulness, power, and especially for His righteousness. God's righteousness is referred to five times – verses 2, 15, 16, 19, 24. So we may consider it one of the main themes of the psalm. God is always just and acts justly toward all.

**71:1-3** These verses are very similar to the opening verses of psalm 31 penned by David. The writer has trusted Jehovah, the God of the Bible, the Creator of the universe. All his victories and blessings, all his hope flows from this fact. God's power and righteousness are at work on behalf of those who trust Him. It is a just and righteous thing for God to keep His promises to His children, and therefore He will certainly do so.

**71:3** Note on "Rock" at Deut 32:4. Notice the words, "to which I can always go." The door of prayer, of God's grace, of God's protection stands always open to the believer. Never an hour, day or night, when he is not welcome to enter (compare Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18; Heb 10:19-22).

**71:4** See 17:13; 22:20; 35:17; 59:2; 140:1,4. Why are there so many prayers in the psalms for protection against wicked men? Because wicked men would not refrain from trying to harm godly and zealous believers.

**71:5** See 39:7; 146:5; Jer 17:7,13,17;

Rom 15:13; Col 1:27; 1 Tim 1:1.

**71:6** See 22:10; Isa 46:3; Jer 1:4,5; Luke 1:15.

**71:7** Many knew of his trials and dangers, and how God brought him wonderfully through them all.

**71:8** Now in old age he has one theme only – God.

**71:9** Verse 18. There is no danger of God forsaking believers when they are old, and we should never fear that He might (92:14; Isa 46:4; Heb 13:5).

**71:10,11** See 3:2; 17:2; 31:13; 56:6; 83:3.

**71:12** See 10:1; 22:11; 35:22; 38:21; 40:13; 70:1,5.

**71:13** Note at 35:8.

**71:14** Notice the word "continually" – v 3 speaks of continual access, v 6 of continual praise, v 14 of continual hope. Notice the words "all day long" in vs 8, 15, 24. Continual access to God's presence gives continual hope which leads to continual praise. Compare Rom 5:1-5.

**71:15,16** Countless mercies call for continual praise. Observe whose righteousness he praises; not his own as hypocrites and Pharisees do (Matt 6:1,2,5; Luke 18:9-12). Let us not be like those who praise themselves and boast in their own righteousness, not God's.

**71:17,18** The person who has God for his teacher has a great teacher indeed! And

- 19 Your righteousness also, O God,  
*is* very lofty,  
 you who have done great things.  
 O God, who *is* like you!
- 20 *You*, who have showed me great and  
 severe troubles,  
 will cause me to live again,  
 and will bring me up again from the  
 depths of the earth.
- 21 You will increase my greatness,  
 and comfort me on every side.
- 22 And with the lyre I will praise you,  
*and* your truth, O my God.  
 To you I will sing with the harp,  
 O Holy One of Israel.
- 23 When I sing to you my lips will greatly  
 rejoice, and my soul,  
 which you have redeemed.
- 24 My tongue also will speak of your  
 righteousness all day long;  
 for those who seek my harm are  
 disappointed,  
 they are brought to shame.

## 72

A Psalm for Solomon

- 1 Give the king your judgments, O God,  
 and your righteousness to the king's son.
- 2 He will judge your people with  
 righteousness,  
 and your poor with justice.
- 3 The mountains will bring peace to the  
 people, and the little hills,  
 through righteousness.
- 4 He will judge the poor of the people.  
 He will save the children of the needy,  
 and will break the oppressor in pieces.
- 5 They will fear you as long as the sun and  
 moon endure,  
 throughout all generations.
- 6 He will come down like rain on the mown grass,  
 like showers *that* water the earth.
- 7 In his days the righteous will flourish,  
 and abundance of peace as long as the

the younger he begins to learn from God the better. But will God be willing to become our teacher? Yes, He will (25:4,5; 119:102; Isa 54:13; John 6:45; 14:26; Eph 4:21). If God Himself is the teacher why should men try to teach other men? One of the ways God teaches us is through men whom He has taught – Eph 4:11-13; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2. So the writer of this psalm is resolved to declare to others what He has learned of God.

**71:19** 35:10; Deut 3:24; Isa 40:18-26; Rom 11:33-36; Rev 15:3,4.

**71:20,21** Nothing comes to a child of God that God has not sent, or in His wisdom permitted to come. This is a ground of great assurance and hope. God's purpose is not to afflict believers or cause them to experience great difficulties, but to teach us, give us new life and raise us at last to new heights and give us new comfort. Compare Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28.

**71:22-24** Meditating on the greatness and goodness of God brought strong determination to the writer – he will sing to God, praise Him, and speak of His righteousness *all day long*.

**72 Title:** This could also be translated "of (or by) Solomon." Verse 20 indicates that perhaps it was a prayer of David. It may be that David in his old age, having appointed Solomon as his successor, prayed for him some of the things we have in this psalm, and that Solomon put them in the poetic form we have here. So it could contain David's prayer and be Solomon's psalm. In any case, this psalm, however much Solomon may be in it, is about one greater than Solomon. This, like psalms 2, 21, and 45, is a prophetic psalm concerning God's

anointed King, the Lord Jesus Christ. His reign will be righteous and peaceful (vs 1-7), worldwide (vs 8-11), compassionate (vs 12-14), perpetual and prosperous (vs 15-17).

**72:1** As for Solomon, he was a king and the son of king David. As regards Christ, He is God's anointed King and the Son of heaven's eternal King. Solomon's reign in some measure is a type or picture of Christ's. The writer describes an ideal ruler and an ideal reign. The first essential for this is to know God's just decisions, to have a God-given sense of justice. Compare Solomon's prayer for himself in 1 Kings 3:5-9.

**72:2** Isa 9:7; 11:2-5; 32:1.

**72:3** Isa 2:4; 9:5,6; Micah 4:3,4; Zech 9:10. Peace is a result of righteousness (Isa 32:17). One trouble with the world is that nations and individuals hope and seek for peace without righteousness. Observe the prominence given to righteousness in these opening verses. The great King's compassionate heart is more fully described in vs 12-14.

**72:5** This was not true of Solomon, but is eternally true of the Lord Jesus.

**72:6** Blessings as refreshing showers will accompany Christ's reign. But this verse speaks of more than blessings coming down. It speaks of the King Himself coming down. And come down He shall (1 Thess 4:16; Rev 19:11-16).

**72:7** A great promise to those who are righteous! Now in this world to be righteous is often to be an object of scorn, opposition, and persecution (John 15:18-21; Heb 11:36-38). When King Jesus takes up His reign on earth there will be vast changes made. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

- moon endures.
- 8 And he will rule from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- 9 Those who dwell in the wilderness will  
bow before him,  
and his enemies will lick the dust.
- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the islands  
will bring presents.  
The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts.
- 11 Yes, all kings will fall down before him,  
all nations will serve him.
- 12 For he will rescue the needy when  
he cries out,  
also the poor and *the one* who has no helper.
- 13 He will spare the poor and needy and save  
the souls of the needy.
- 14 He will redeem their soul from deceit  
and violence, and their blood will  
be precious in his sight.
- 15 And he will live on, and to him the gold  
of Sheba will be given;  
also prayer will be made for him continually,  
*and* daily he will be praised.
- 16 There will be an abundance of grain in  
the earth on the top of the mountains;  
its fruit will wave like *the cedars of Lebanon*;

**72:8-11** Solomon never reigned over all nations. The One who is far greater than Solomon will (2:8,9; Isa 2:2-4; Zech 9:9,10; 14:9; Rev 19:15).

"River" (v 8) – the Euphrates.  
"Islands" – or "coastlands."

**72:12-14** Here a reason is given why all will bring gifts to Him, bow before Him and serve Him. His character is surpassingly excellent, His deeds full of compassion. Though some rulers and leaders occasionally talk about helping the poor and needy, how many of them ever actually do so? The Lord Jesus will do more than talk about the poor and needy. He will stand up on their behalf and deliver them. He will truly abolish poverty from the earth, and destroy those who oppress the poor.

**72:15-17** Then there will be no fear that some tyrant, some wicked ruler, will supplant the Lord Jesus. He will rule forever.

**72:15** "For him" – the Hebrew here can also be translated "through him" or "for Him" or "in him." His people pray through Him as mediator, they pray for Him when they pray for His kingdom to come, when they pray for His church or His work. And they pray in Him as members of His body. In general Hebrew prepositions have more than one meaning.

**72:16** No famines will afflict mankind in Christ's reign.

**72:17** In Christ's reign at last the blessings God promised to Abraham will be fully manifested (Gen 12:1-3).

**72:18,19** Surely the above revelation should stir the hearts of believers to joy and praise and prayer for its fulfillment.

- and those of the city will flourish  
like the grass of the earth.
- 17 His name will endure forever,  
his name will go on as long as the sun;  
and *men* will be blessed in him.  
All nations will call him blessed.
- 18 Blessed *be* the LORD God,  
the God of Israel,  
who alone does wonderful things!
- 19 And blessed be his glorious name forever!  
And let the whole earth be filled *with*  
his glory! Amen, and Amen.
- 20 The prayers of David,  
the son of Jesse, are ended.

BOOK 3 (Psalms 73 - 89)

73

A Psalm of Asaph

- 1 Truly God *is* good to Israel,  
to those who are pure in heart.
- 2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,

**72:20** Other psalms David wrote appear later on in the book of psalms. But judging from this his last prayers before he died were concerning God's kingdom.

**73 Title:** Note on Asaph at 50:1. Altogether twelve psalms are ascribed to him.

**73:1** Here Asaph gives the conclusion he has reached after his struggles with doubt. He almost fell into unbelief about God's goodness because of perplexing things that happen in the world. He came through the spiritual battle victoriously and is fully assured that God is good. Is God good to all? Yes, He is (145:9; Matt 5:45). He is good even to the wicked until it becomes no longer right to show them any more kindness. But God is especially good to His own dear people. God displays His goodness to the wicked to lead them to repentance (Rom 2:4). He is good to the righteous for their blessing, happiness, and sanctification.

Satan, who is the enemy of all goodness, will try to convince us God is not good at all. He will point to the world with its cruelty, suffering, and injustice. Satan will not say, of course, the truth that he and wicked men, not God, are responsible for all that. In this New Testament age when Satan tempts us to doubt God's goodness we can look at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (something Asaph could not do), and be assured again that God is eternal love and everlasting goodness.

**73:2** Asaph said God is good to the pure in heart – those in Israel who were true believers and who because of it tried to live holy lives (note on the pure in heart at Matt



- my steps had nearly slipped.
- 3 For I *was* envious of the foolish,  
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- 4 For *there are* no pangs in their death;  
but their strength *is* firm.
- 5 They *are* not in trouble *like* other men,  
nor are they plagued like other men.
- 6 Therefore pride surrounds them like a necklace;  
violence covers them *like* a garment.
- 7 Their eyes bulge with fat;  
they have more than heart could wish.
- 8 They scoff, and speak wickedly *concerning*  
oppression;  
they speak arrogantly.
- 9 They set their mouth against the heavens,  
and their tongue walks through the earth.
- 10 Therefore his people return here,  
and waters of a full *cup* are drained by them.
- 11 And they say, "How does God know?"  
and "Is there knowledge in the Most High?"
- 12 See, these *are* the ungodly,  
who prosper in the world;

5:8). Here he confesses his own weakness and folly. He realized he could hardly be classed with the pure in heart. Almost he had fallen away from God.

**73:3** Here is the reason for Asaph's spiritual struggle and near fall – envy. He compared his condition (vs 13,14) with the wicked who were prosperous, and he thought they were better off than he. On envy see Job 5:2; Prov 14:30; 23:17; 27:4; Matt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 3:3; Jam 3:14-16.

**73:4-12** These verses are a vivid description of a certain class of people in their prosperity, pride, and ignorance. To understand fully Asaph's folly in envying them we should remember an important fact. He was a Levite (God chose the Levites for service in the temple). The Levites were not supposed to desire material things. They had no inheritance in the land of Canaan. God Himself was their inheritance – Deut 10:9; 18:1,2. They were to devote themselves to the service of God and be supported by the offerings of the people of Israel – Num 18:21-26; Deut 14:27-29.

For Asaph to envy the wicked in their prosperity was to show dissatisfaction with God's calling for him. It was to forget that he had the greatest inheritance of all, and the greatest privilege and blessing of all men – God and God's service. In these days many Christian workers commit Asaph's blunder. And many do not come through this spiritual test as victoriously as he did.

**73:10** "Waters of a full cup" – probably indicates an abundance of everything they want.

**73:13,14** In his doubts and lack of understanding he concluded that any effort to be holy and spiritual was useless. All he got for his efforts was God's chastisement,

they increase *in* riches.

- 13 Surely *in* vain I have cleansed my heart,  
and washed my hands in innocence.
- 14 For all day long I have been plagued,  
and punished every morning.
- 15 If I had said, "I will speak thus",  
see, I would have betrayed the  
generation of your children.
- 16 When I thought to understand this,  
it was too painful for me;
- 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God.  
*Then* I understood their *coming* end.
- 18 Surely you set them in slippery places.  
You cast them down to destruction.
- 19 How they are *brought* into desolation,  
as in a moment!
- They are completely consumed with terrors.
- 20 As a dream when *one* awakes,  
so, O Lord, when you awake,  
you will despise their image.
- 21 Thus my heart was grieved,

every morning and all day long. He had expected better rewards for faithful service than that. So he thinks he has grounds to quarrel with God. How easy it is for us also to forget the purpose of God's punishment and chastisement (Heb 12:5-11). God's taking such pains to correct Asaph shows that Asaph was chosen of God and very precious.

On the whole, God is not much concerned with making His children materially prosperous. He wants to make them holy, faithful, trusting, and true. He is not in the business of building fortunes for them – He is building their character, something far more important than money and property. See also Psalm 37.

**73:15,16** In this carnal condition he still had respect for the people of God and did not want to be a cause of stumbling to them. So he very wisely kept quiet about his doubts and inner turmoil.

**73:17-20** Understanding began to dawn in Asaph's mind when he got into God's presence. There alone can we come to right opinions about things. The wicked enjoy their prosperity only for a little while. Then they are cut off and sink down to terrors, misery, and destruction. How foolish to envy those whose end is so dreadful! From the New Testament point of view, with its emphasis on eternal life, Lazarus, for example, had no need to envy the rich man, but the rich man had much cause to envy Lazarus (Luke 16:19-24).

**73:21,22** This is the result of questioning God's goodness and envying the wicked. Such sins make men like beasts without spiritual understanding (2 Pet 2:12; Jude 10). Asaph had been appointed to sing joyful songs to God (1 Chron 15:16,17), not to question God's justice in His dealings with men. Grief and bitterness of spirit will re-

- and I was pierced in my inmost being.  
22 I *was* so foolish and ignorant;  
I was *like* a beast in your presence.  
23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with you.  
You hold *me* by my right hand.  
24 You will guide me with your counsel,  
and afterwards receive me *into* glory.  
25 Whom have I in heaven *but* you?  
And there is nothing on earth *that* I  
desire besides you.  
26 My flesh and my heart fail,  
*but* God *is* the strength of my heart,  
and my portion forever.  
27 For, see, those who are far from you will  
perish.  
You destroy all those who go from you  
acting like a prostitute.

sult from such quarrels with God. Here when Asaph confesses his folly he begins to be restored to a healthy spiritual state.  
**73:23** “Nevertheless” – this word coming here has great meaning. It is the difference between salvation and destruction, peace and despair. Asaph had failed, had doubted, had quarreled with God’s ways, but God had not left him for a single moment. As a father holds the hand of a little son stumbling on a dark path so God held Asaph’s hand (compare John 10:28).  
**73:24** Because of God’s grace, complete assurance floods back into Asaph’s heart. God Himself will be his guide and lead him all the way to the place of eternal glory. The prosperity of the wicked has to do only with this earth and for their little time here. The believer has his inheritance in God Himself and so it will never pass away – Rom 8:17; Eph 1:14,18; 1 Pet 1:3,4; Matt 6:19-21.  
**73:25** Asaph returns to his proper spiritual position as a Levite who has God for his portion. In this New Testament age believers are priests and Levites in a spiritual sense (note at Ex 28:1). Happy is the person who can truly say that he wants nothing on earth but God Himself.  
“Nothing” – or “no one.”  
**73:26** How weak and deceiving are our own hearts – Prov 28:26; Jer 17:9. There is nothing in ourselves that we can depend on – Rom 7:18; 2 Cor 1:9; 3:5. God is the strength of our heart (or “Rock” – the literal meaning of the Hebrew word used here. Note at Deut 32:4). See 18:1,2; 27:1; 62:7; 84:5; 2 Cor 12:9.  
**73:27** This will be the fate of those who despise God’s goodness and will not repent at His kindness. Since they spurn His grace that would save them they will taste of His justice which condemns them.  
“Acting like a prostitute” – a phrase used by the writers of the Old Testament to indicate unfaithfulness to the one true God, and running after false gods.  
**73:28** The supreme good for man is just this –

- 28 But *it is* good for me to draw near to God.  
I have put my trust in the Lord God,  
that I may declare all your works.

74

A maskil of Asaph

- 1 O God, why have you cast *us* off forever?  
*Why* does your anger smoke against the  
sheep of your pasture?  
2 Remember your congregation *which* you  
purchased of old,  
the tribe of your inheritance *which* you  
redeemed,  
this mount Zion, where you have dwelt.  
3 Lift up your feet to the perpetual ruins,

to know God and live joyfully in His presence forever. The way to obtain this good is to make Him our refuge. The result will be that we will want to declare His goodness to others.  
**74 Title:** This psalm is ascribed to Asaph. He lived during David’s reign and it is certain that at that time the events described in vs 3-8 did not take place. And v 9 was not true then, for Nathan the prophet was living, David himself was a prophet, and Asaph was a seer – another name for a prophet (2 Chron 29:30). A seer could look into the future and describe events that had not yet taken place as though they had. Asaph wrote this psalm by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit regarding future calamities. Let no one think this a strange thing (see Isa 46:9,10). In Psalm 22 David wrote of the crucifixion of Christ that took place a thousand years later.  
There are many other examples of writings in the Old Testament which describe future events using verb forms in Hebrew that we would call in English past or present tenses. See, for example, Isaiah chapter 53. Here Asaph puts himself in the place of these future people of God and speaks as though he were one of them. In this way the Holy Spirit provides a prayer for those in the future who would actually experience the disaster described here.  
“Maskil” – probably a literary or musical term.  
**74:1** See 44:9; 77:7. There is no confession of sin in this psalm, only perplexity at God’s dealings with His people (vs 10,11). When strange events occur, when God’s anger seems to be aroused, it is no mistake to ask God for the cause. For of one thing we may be sure – God does nothing without a very good reason.  
“Sheep” – 79:13; 95:7; 100:3.  
**74:2** “Redeemed” – Ex 15:13,16; Deut 32:6; Ps 78:35 (note); Isa 63:9.  
“Zion” – 9:11; 68:16; 76:2; 132:13.  
**74:3-9** This language points to a time long after the temple in Jerusalem had been

- all that the enemy has destroyed in the sanctuary.
- 4 Your enemies roared in your meeting places; they set up their banners *as* signs.
- 5 A man was famous for lifting up axes on the thick trees.
- 6 But now they have broken down its carved work all at once with axes and hammers.
- 7 They have set your sanctuary on fire, they have defiled the dwelling place of your name by casting it down to the ground.
- 8 They said in their hearts, "Let us destroy them altogether." They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.
- 9 We do not see our signs. No longer *is there* a prophet, nor *is there* anyone among us who knows how long.
- 10 O God, how long will the foe taunt *you*? Will the enemy blaspheme your name forever?
- 11 Why do you withdraw your hand, your right hand? Take it out of your bosom and destroy *them*!
- 12 For God *is* my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.
- 13 You divided the sea by your strength. You broke the heads of the monsters in the waters.
- 14 You broke in pieces the heads of leviathan *and* gave him *as* food to the people living in the desert.
- 15 You split open the fountain and the flood.

destroyed. Both this verse and v 9 indicate a time after Jeremiah's day (he described the destruction of the temple in Jeremiah chapter 52). So Asaph was looking several hundred years into the future.

**74:10** See 6:3; 13:1,2; 35:17; 80:4; 89:46; 90:13; Rev 6:10.

**74:11** God's ways are not our ways and are not to be understood by mere human reason (Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33,34). "Destroy them" – note on such prayers at 35:8.

**74:12-17** Here Asaph reminds God that He has previously acted in behalf of His people, and that He is the all-powerful Creator and Ruler of the world. Vs 13,14 probably refer to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the destruction of the Egyptian armies in Exodus chapter 14. Happy is the person who can say as Asaph did "God is my king." For God is the most benevolent of rulers, always seeking the highest good of His people. Of course, He demands their complete loyalty, trust, and obedience.

**74:18-23** Asaph appeals to God the great

- You dried up mighty rivers.
- 16 The day *is* yours; the night also *is* yours. You prepared the light and the sun.
- 17 You set all the borders of the earth. You made summer and winter.
- 18 Remember that the enemy has taunted *you*, O LORD, and *that* the foolish people have blasphemed your name.
- 19 O do not deliver the soul of your dove to the horde *of the wicked*. Do not forget forever the congregation of your poor.
- 20 Have regard for the covenant. For the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.
- 21 Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed! Let the poor and needy praise your name.
- 22 Arise, O God, plead your own cause! Remember how the foolish man scorns you daily.
- 23 Do not forget the voice of your enemies. The uproar of those who rise up against you increases continually.

# 75

To the chief musician, al taskith,  
a Psalm, a song of Asaph

- 1 To you, O God, we give thanks,  
*to you* we give thanks,  
for your wonderful deeds declare that  
your name is near.
- 2 "When I choose the proper time I will

Creator to act in behalf of His people as He did before. They are like a dove, their enemies like fierce beasts trying to destroy them completely. He could not understand God's inaction when people curse Him and mistreat His dear people. But God has His purposes in that too, and when they are fulfilled He will arise to judge the world.

**75 Title:** Al-taskith probably indicated the tune to be used when singing this psalm. It means "Do not Destroy."

**75:1** "Thanks" – 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13. In the previous psalm Asaph prayed that God would judge the wicked. Here there is thanksgiving for God's answer. There Asaph cries out "How long?" Here is the assurance that God will act at the proper time. God's name means His person, His attributes. He is near to help His people – Deut 4:7; 34:18; 145:18; 148:14; Deut 4:7; Isa 55:6.

**75:2-7** In v 2 God Himself begins to speak. He sees the turmoil in the world and the persecution of His people. He hears the

judge uprightly.  
3 The earth and all its inhabitants melt away, I hold up its pillars. *Selah*  
4 I said to the boasters, 'Do not boast', and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horn,  
5 Do not lift up your horn on high. Do *not* speak *with* an arrogant neck."  
6 For exaltation *does* not *come* either from the east or from the west or from the south,  
7 But God *is* the judge. He puts down one, and sets up another.  
8 For in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup, and the wine is red. It is fully mixed, and he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drain *it*, drinking *it* to its dregs.  
9 But I will declare *this* forever. I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.  
10 I will also cut off all the horns of the wicked; but the horns of the righteous will be exalted.

76

To the chief musician, on neginoth, a Psalm, a song of Asaph

1 In Judah God *is* known.

boasting of wicked and arrogant people. He knows exactly how long He should let such things go on. God has set times to perform certain acts (Dan 8:19; 11:27,35; Hab 2:3; John 7:30; Acts 17:31). Until He arises to judge the world He Himself keeps the pillars of the world, the foundations of society from crumbling. And He has a message for all those who wickedly exalt themselves on earth: "Do not lift up your horn." In the Bible horn sometimes signifies strength, authority, sometimes honor (89:17,24; 92:10; 148:14; 1 Sam 2:1,10; Lam 2:3,17; Zech 1:21; Luke 1:69).  
"Lift up" or exalt is one of the key themes of this psalm - vs 4,5,6,7,10. A man may lift himself to some high place but it will be only to fall - v 10. God's people should quietly wait for God to lift them up (1 Sam 2:6-8). Let not the man who exalts himself by deceitful tricks or human strength vainly imagine that it is God who lifts him up.  
**75:8** The ancients sometimes offered to criminals before their execution wine mixed with stupefying drugs. That seems to be the picture here. Compare Isa 51:17-23; Jer 25:15,27; 49:12; Ezek 23:32-34; Rev 14:9,10.  
**75:9** Note on God of Jacob at 146:5.  
**75:10** The wicked rise only to fall. The righteous are abased only to be exalted (Luke 14:11; 18:14).  
**76 Title:** Neginoth means string instruments.

His name is great in Israel.  
2 Also his tabernacle is in Salem, and his dwelling place in Zion.  
3 There he broke the arrows of the bow, the shield and the sword of battle. *Selah*  
4 You *are* more glorious *and* excellent than the mountains of prey.  
5 The brave have been plundered; they sleep their sleep; and none of the mighty men have found *the use* of their hands.  
6 At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the charioteer and horse have been cast into a *deep* sleep.  
7 You, you *alone*, *are* to be feared. And who can stand in your sight when you become angry?  
8 You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth was afraid and became quiet,  
9 When God rose up for judgment to save all the meek of the earth. *Selah*  
10 Surely the wrath of man will praise you. With the remainder of wrath you arm yourself.

**76:1** The greatest possible blessing for a people or an individual is to have the knowledge of the true God. In those days this was the blessing the people in Israel had. Now this true and only God is known among Christ's believers scattered here and there throughout the whole world. See John 17:3.  
**76:2** "Salem" - Jerusalem. "Zion" - 74:2.  
**76:3** This psalm is a triumphant hymn after a battle in which God had fought for His people and conquered their enemies - vs 5-9. Some scholars believe the event referred to was the defeat of Sennacherib's army described in 2 Chronicles chapter 32 and Isaiah chapter 37. This psalm is ascribed to Asaph and Sennacherib's invasion occurred long after Asaph's death. If that invasion is meant (and we cannot be sure of this) Asaph was writing of the future as if it had already happened. See note on the title of Psalm 74.  
**76:4** See 1 Tim 6:16; Jam 1:17; 1 John 1:5.  
**76:7** Notes on fear of the Lord at 34:11-14; 111:10; Gen 20:11; Prov 1:7. On "stand" see Ezra 9:15; Nahum 1:6; Mal 3:2; Rev 6:17. Notes on wrath at 90:7-11; Num 25:3; etc.  
**76:9** Observe why God pours out His wrath on wicked enemies. It is necessary for the sake of justice and for the salvation of the humble.  
**76:10** "Surely the wrath of man will praise

- 11 Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill them.  
May all who are around him bring presents to him who ought to be feared.
- 12 He will cut off the spirit of princes.  
*He is awesome toward the kings of the earth.*

# 77

To the chief musician, to Juduthun,  
a Psalm of Asaph

- 1 I cried out to God with my voice,  
yes, to God with my voice,  
and he gave ear to me.
- 2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.  
My hand was unceasingly stretched out  
in the night.  
My soul refused to be comforted.
- 3 I remembered God and was troubled.  
I complained and my spirit was  
overwhelmed.
- 4 You hold my eyes open.  
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
- 5 I considered the days of old,  
the years of ancient times.

*Selah*

- 6 I remembered my song in the night.  
I meditated in my own heart,  
and my spirit made diligent search.
- 7 Will the Lord cast off forever?  
And will he be favourable no more?
- 8 Is his mercy completely gone forever?  
Does *his* promise fail for evermore?
- 9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?  
Has he in anger shut up his tender mercies?

*Selah*

- 10 And I said, "This is my infirmity,  
*but I will remember* the years of the  
right hand of the Most High.
- 11 I will remember the deeds of the LORD.  
Surely I will remember your wonders of old.
- 12 I will also meditate on all your work,  
and talk of your deeds.
- 13 Your way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary.  
Who *is as* great a God as *our* God?
- 14 You *are* the God who does wonders.  
You have declared your power among the  
people.
- 15 With *your* arm you redeemed your people,  
the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

*Selah*

- 16 The waters saw you, O God,

you. With the remainder of wrath you arm yourself" – this seems a better translation of the somewhat obscure and difficult Hebrew than others which have been made. God can and does turn all the doings of men, including their anger against God's people, to His own glory and His people's good (Gen 50:20; Ex 9:16; Acts 2:22-24; Rom 9:17). Also God can and does use men's anger against Him as a weapon against them (compare Ex 14:5-28; Esther 7:10).

**76:11** "Vows" – 50:14. "Presents" – 68:29; 2 Chron 32:22,23.

**76:12** See 47:2.

**77:1** Asaph in this psalm writes of a time of great depression. Compare psalm 42. He could not understand God's dealings with him, and his faith was being severely tested. We may divide the psalm into three parts: Asaph's depressed condition and prayer (vs 1-9); his decision to call to mind God's greatness (vs 10-12); and the works of God in particular which he remembered.

**77:2** When one is depressed and sad this is one part of the remedy. Seeking God will bring new life, strength, and joy – 9:10; 22:26; 34:10; 40:16; 69:32; 70:4; 105:3. Asaph refused all human comfort, all comfort which did not meet his need. He wanted God's comfort alone.

**77:3** Thoughts of God brought thoughts of former joys (vs 5,6), and increased his mental distress. Sighs and groans are sometimes the best prayers. A mother hears her baby's cries when it has no words.

**77:4** Sometimes words seem empty and

vain to express the distress of the mind, the longings of the heart. Even the Holy Spirit uses groans in the human heart to appeal to God the Father (Rom 8:26).

**77:7-9** These are the words of a man experiencing great suffering of mind. He seems to have lost all fellowship with God and feels that God is angry. See also Job 6:4 and Lamentations 3:1-18. Such an experience may come to any of us. When it does we have this psalm to guide us.

**77:10-12** Asaph while seeking God resolved to meditate on God's former great deeds toward His people. Such remembrance is food for faith. Faith grows stronger by it and triumphs over depression. Peace of heart does not come by looking within at self, but by looking without to God's acts of redemption. Verse 10 in Hebrew is quite obscure and there have been a number of different translations of it. Probably the KJV is best here.

**77:11** Here Asaph determines to do what the Word of God commands (Deut 7:18; 8:2,18; 32:7).

**77:12** 1:1,2; 143:5; 145:5; 1 Tim 4:15.

**77:13** The first thing Asaph remembers is that God's way is perfectly holy. Therefore God's dealings with him were just and good and without possibility of mistake (18:30). On God's holiness see Lev 20:7; on His greatness see – 71:19; 86:8; Ex 15:11; Deut 32:31; Isa 40:25.

**77:14** See 72:18; 86:10; 136:4.

**77:15-20** He remembers the exodus from Egypt, the way through the Red Sea, the journey through the desert. All this brings



the waters saw you.  
They were afraid;  
the depths also were troubled.  
17 The clouds poured out water.  
The skies sent out a sound.  
Your arrows also went abroad.  
18 The voice of your thunder *was* in the heavens.  
The lightning flashes lit up the world.  
The earth trembled and shook.  
19 Your way *is* in the sea and your path in  
the great waters,  
and your footsteps are not known.  
20 You led your people like a flock by the  
hand of Moses and Aaron.

78

A maskil of Asaph

- 1 Give ear, O my people, *to* my law.  
Bow down your ears to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable;

to his mind God's love and faithfulness (vs 15,20), God's power and glory (vs 16-18), and God's mysterious dealings with His people (v 19). Remembrance of these matters was just the remedy Asaph needed for his gloomy depression. For peace of mind we do not need to know all the mysteries of God's ways, we need only trust Him for His grace and follow His guidance through the barren wilderness of this world. Now, of course, believers can look to God's acts of redemption in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and find comfort and help in times of depression.

**77:17** "Arrows" – flashes of lightning.  
**78 Title:** Maskil was probably a literary or musical term.

**78:1** In this psalm Asaph speaks as a prophet (see Matt 13:35 where v 2 of this psalm is referred to). Here we have a contrast between God's grace and mighty deeds, and Israel's rebellion and sin. It was intended as an exhortation and a warning to the people based on their history (see also psalms 105 and 106). It also gives the reason why the tribe of Ephraim was put down and Judah exalted. It teaches the true meaning of the events of history, and we can learn much needed lessons from it for today.

Men often slander God because He does not give them all they desire, or behave as they think He ought, or because He punishes sin and rebellion. In this psalm we see God's true righteous character and man's depravity very strikingly and clearly revealed. Here we can learn much of what God is and what we are. We have no grounds for thinking that by nature we are in any way better than the people of Israel described here. And we have no excuse if we indulge in their rebellion and sins, if we

- I will utter difficult sayings of old,
- 3 Which we have heard and known,  
and *which* our fathers have told us.
- 4 We will not hide *them* from their children,  
declaring to the generation to come  
the praises of the LORD,  
and his strength, and his wonderful  
deeds which he has done.
- 5 For he established a testimony in Jacob,  
and appointed a law in Israel,  
which he commanded our fathers,  
that they should make them known to  
their children,
- 6 That the generation to come might know *them*,  
the children who would be born;  
*who* should arise and declare *them* to  
their children,
- 7 That they might set their hope on God,  
and not forget the works of God,  
but keep his commandments,
- 8 And might not be like their fathers,  
a stubborn and rebellious generation,  
a generation *that* did not prepare their

have as much light and revelation from God as they had (and with the New Testament in our hands we have much more light than they had). There is much in this psalm on the fruits and penalties of unbelief. Unbelief causes people

- To turn back (v 9),  
Be disobedient (v 10),  
Be forgetful of God's great mercies (v 11),  
Go on sinning and rebelling (v 17),  
Live a life of futility (v 33),  
Flatter and lie (v 36),  
Limit God (v 41),  
And be disloyal and unreliable (v 57).  
And unbelief brings on men the anger of  
God and great loss.

**78:2-8** These verses, particularly vs 7,8, give the reason why Asaph wrote this psalm. He is doing what God commanded His people to do (Ex 12:26,27; 13:8,9; Deut 4:9,10; 6:7,20-25; 11:19; 32:46). It is the solemn responsibility of parents to train up their children in the discipline and teaching of the Lord (Eph 6:4), and each generation of believers must instruct the next generation.

**78:2** These words are applied to the teaching method of the Lord Jesus in Matt 13:35.

**78:7,8** There are two kinds of examples in the Bible – good ones which we should follow, and bad ones which we should avoid. The brief history of Israel recorded in the rest of this psalm gives many of the second kind of example. Those people went astray for the three reasons given in v 8 – they would not obey God; they would not make their hearts right with Him; they would not be faithful to Him. The second of these reasons is the cause

heart rightly,  
and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.  
9 The children of Ephraim, armed *and*  
carrying bows,  
turned back in the day of battle.  
10 They did not keep the covenant of God,  
and refused to walk in his law,  
11 And they forgot his deeds and his wonders  
that he had shown them.  
12 He did marvellous things in the sight of  
their fathers,  
in the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.  
13 He divided the sea and caused them to  
pass through,  
and he made the waters stand like a heap.  
14 Also in the daytime he led them with a cloud,  
and all the night with a light of the fire.  
15 He split the rocks in the wilderness,  
and gave *them* drink as *out of* the  
great depths.  
16 He also brought streams out of the rock,  
and caused waters to run down like rivers.  
17 And they sinned still more against him by  
provoking the Most High in the desert.  
18 And they tempted God in their heart by  
asking for their desired food.  
19 Yes, they spoke against God.  
They said, "Can God prepare a table in  
the wilderness?  
20 Look, he struck the rock,  
so that the waters gushed out,  
and the streams overflowed.

Can he give bread also?  
Can he provide meat for his people?"  
21 Therefore the LORD heard *this* and was angry.  
So a fire was kindled against Jacob,  
and anger also came up against Israel,  
22 Because they did not believe in God,  
and did not trust in his salvation,  
23 Though he had commanded the clouds  
from above,  
and had opened the doors of heaven,  
24 And had rained down manna on them to eat,  
and had given them the grain of heaven.  
25 Man ate angels' food.  
He sent them food to the full.  
26 He caused an east wind to blow in the  
heavens,  
and by his power he brought in the  
south wind.  
27 He also rained meat on them like dust,  
and feathered birds like the sand  
of the sea,  
28 And let *them* fall in the middle of their  
camp, around their homes.  
29 So they ate, and were well satisfied,  
for he gave them their own desire;  
30 They were not turned away from their craving.  
But while their food *was* still in their mouths,  
31 The wrath of God came on them,  
and killed the stoutest of them,  
and struck down the chosen *men* of Israel.  
32 In spite of all this they still sinned,  
and did not believe even though

of the other two. Preparing the heart and making sure the inner life is right with God is the most important duty of all. It is far more important than any outward service, for without it outward service will not be pleasing and acceptable to God (Prov 4:23; Luke 6:45).  
**78:9** During and after the conquest of Canaan Ephraim rose to a place of prominence among the tribes. Joshua and Gideon were both from this tribe. Ephraim is mentioned particularly because it failed in its leadership. We do not know to what battle Asaph refers – possibly to the times in general described in the book of Judges.  
**78:10,11** This was true, not merely of Ephraim, but of the whole nation. However, it was more markedly true in Ephraim than in the other tribes.  
**78:12** See Exodus chapters 7-13. Zoan was the city of Pharaoh, the capital of that part of Egypt near Goshen where the people of Israel lived.  
**78:13** Ex 14:21,22.  
**78:14** Ex 13:21,22; 14:24.  
**78:15,16** Ex 17:6; Num 20:11; Ps 105:41; 114:8.  
**78:17** A sad verse indeed. All God's miracles on their behalf did not work in them an

effective change, did not produce a living faith or obedient heart. Actually miracles by themselves never produce true faith and obedience (vs 22,32; Matt 11:20-24; John 6:26). To produce these God's work in the heart is required and true repentance. The awful depravity of human nature is not overcome by outward things, including powerful miracles.  
**78:18** Ex 17:6; Deut 6:16; Ps 95:9; 106:14; 1 Cor 10:9.  
**78:19** Ex 16:3; Num 11:4; 20:3; 21:5. Compare Ps 23:5.  
**78:20** Num 11:18.  
**78:21** Notes on God's anger at 90:7-11; Num 25:3; etc.  
**78:22** Here is the reason for God's anger. Their unbelief was in the face of great evidence of God's power and goodness. It was willful, blameworthy unbelief. Doubting so great a God who had displayed such great grace was a great sin.  
**78:23-28** Ex 16:4,14,15.  
**78:26-28** Ex 16:13; Num 11:31,32.  
**78:29-31** See 106:14,15; Num 11:33,34.  
**78:32-42** Neither gracious miracles nor severe punishments changed the hearts of the people. They were incorrigible. But the rest of mankind is no better than they, and by nature we ourselves are in no way su-

*they saw* his wonderful works.  
 33 Therefore, he consumed their days in futility,  
 and their years in trouble.  
 34 When he killed them, then they sought him,  
 and they turned back and soon inquired  
 after God.  
 35 And they remembered that God was their rock,  
 and the high God their redeemer.  
 36 Nevertheless they flattered him with  
 their mouth and lied to him with  
 their tongues.  
 37 For their heart was not right with him,  
 they were not firm in his covenant.  
 38 But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave  
*their* wickedness,  
 and did not destroy *them*.  
 Yes, many times he turned his anger away,

and did not stir up all his wrath.  
 39 For he remembered that they *were* but  
 flesh, a wind that passes away and  
 does not come again.  
 40 How often they provoked him in the  
 wilderness,  
 and grieved him in the desert!  
 41 Yes, they turned back and tested God,  
 and limited the Holy One of Israel.  
 42 They did not remember his hand,  
 or the day when he delivered them from  
 the enemy,  
 43 How he appointed his signs in Egypt,  
 and his wonders in the field of Zoan,  
 44 And turned their rivers and their streams  
 into blood,

perior (Rom 3:9). These verses are a sad commentary on man's fallen nature in which we all share. People in general are sinful and unbelieving (v 32), turning to God only in time of trouble (v 34), but even then insincere (vs 36,37), feeble in all they can do (v 39), continually grieving God (v 40), setting limits to God's power (v 41), and easily forgetful of all God's mercies (v 42). This is what human nature reveals itself to be when put to the test. Even God does not attempt to reform it. He says it is worthy of death, and gives a new nature altogether to the believer in Christ (Rom 6:3-5; 7:4-6; 2 Cor 5:14-17; Eph 2:1-10; 4:22-24; Col 3:1-4).

**78:33** Israel went around in the desert for forty years without a goal. Emptiness of heart and futility of life and fear of the future and death – these are the sad fruits of sin, rebellion and unbelief. If our lives are fruitless and vain and empty and plagued by various fears, let us learn to trace these things to their true source.

**78:35** The Hebrew word translated here "redeemer" (goel) is used 46 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, sometimes of God, sometimes of men. It had various meanings. A redeemer was one who delivered from trouble and bondage (Gen 48:16; Deut 13:5); a close relative who would buy a person's lost property and restore it to him (Lev 25:25); an avenger of a family member who had been killed (Num 35:12); a close relative who would marry the widow of a family member and raise up progeny for him, besides buying up her lost property (Ruth 2:20); and one who takes the side of his people against oppressors (Prov 23:11). As Redeemer God saved His people from bondage, restored them to the land, and punished their enemies (Isa 49:25,26; Jer 50:33,34).

In the New Testament the word has more spiritual meanings. There the Lord Jesus is the Redeemer. He paid the price to release us from sin's bondage. The price was His own blood. By His blood believers have

forgiveness, freedom, and an eternal inheritance. Jesus stands up for believers against their spiritual enemy Satan. He will destroy this one who has brought death on the human race, and will restore to man all that he lost by falling into Satan's hands. The Lord Jesus has redeemed His people that collectively they might become His holy, spiritual "bride" to bring forth fruit for God. See Matt 20:28; 26:28; Rom 3:24; 7:1-4; 8:23; Gal 3:13,14; Eph 1:7,14; 4:30; 5:25-33; Col 1:14; Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:4,18,19; Rev 1:5; 5:9,10; 19:6-9.

**78:36,37** Will men lie to God and try to deceive Him? Yes, of course. Men will try anything to evade the responsibility of truly repenting and living a life of obedience to God. **78:38** Ex 34:6; Num 14:18-20; Isa 48:9. If God did not restrain His just anger against men, none of them would be left alive.

**78:39** See 103:14-16; Gen 6:3; Jam 4:14.

**78:40** See 95:8-10; 106:43; 107:11; Heb 3:16; Isa 63:10; Eph 4:30.

**78:41** "Limited" – this seems to the author of these notes to be a better translation of the somewhat obscure Hebrew word than others which have been offered. But is not God all-powerful? Can man limit God in any way? God is all-powerful (Gen 18:14; Jer 32:27; Matt 19:26). But men can limit Him in the good He would do for them. Compare Matt 23:37-39; Mark 6:1-6. Sin keeps people from experiencing the good they might otherwise receive (Jer 5:25), and an unbelieving attitude toward God is one of the worst of sins (it is the same as calling God a liar – 1 John 5:10). God has so arranged matters that people's faith enables His power to work among them to bring blessing (Matt 9:29; 17:19,20; Mark 11:22-24), and their unbelief prevents it from working. In this area unbelief limits the omnipotent One. By not trusting God as we ought, are we limiting what God wants to do in us and through us? **78:42** Judges 3:7; 8:34. This was a deliberate refusal to remember, and this was blameworthy indeed.

**78:43-51** Exodus chapters 7-13.

so that they could not drink.  
45 He sent swarms of flies among them which  
devoured them,  
and frogs which destroyed them.  
46 He also gave their crops to the caterpillar,  
and their labour to the locust.  
47 He destroyed their vines with hail,  
and their sycamore trees with frost.  
48 He also gave up their cattle to the hail,  
and their flocks to flaming thunderbolts.  
49 He cast on them the fierceness of his  
anger, wrath, and indignation, and  
trouble,  
by sending destroying angels *among them*.  
50 He made a path for his anger.  
He did not spare their soul from death,  
but gave their life over to the plague,  
51 And struck down all the firstborn in Egypt,  
the chief of *their* strength in the  
tents of Ham,  
52 But caused his own people to go out like  
sheep,  
and guided them in the wilderness  
like a flock.  
53 And he led them on safely,  
so that they were not afraid;  
but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.  
54 And he brought them to his holy territory,  
to this mountain,  
*which* his right hand had obtained.  
55 He also drove out the nations before them,  
and apportioned an inheritance to them,  
and caused the tribes of Israel to  
live in their tents.  
56 Yet they tested and provoked the Most  
High God,  
and did not keep his testimonies,  
57 But turned back and behaved unfaithfully  
like their fathers.  
They were turned aside like a deceitful

bow.  
58 For they provoked him to anger with their  
high places,  
and moved him to jealousy with their  
carved idols.  
59 When God heard *this*, he was enraged,  
and greatly abhorred Israel,  
60 So that he forsook the tabernacle at Shiloh,  
the tent *which* he placed among men,  
61 And delivered his strength into captivity,  
and his glory into the enemy's hand.  
62 He also gave his people over to the sword,  
and was angry with his inheritance.  
63 The fire consumed their young men,  
and their maidens were not given  
in marriage.  
64 Their priests fell by the sword,  
and their widows made no lamentation.  
65 Then the Lord awoke like one out of sleep,  
*and* like a mighty man who shouts  
because of wine.  
66 And he beat back his enemies;  
he put them to continual shame.  
67 Moreover, he refused the tent of Joseph,  
and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim,  
68 But chose the tribe of Judah,  
Mount Zion which he loved.  
69 And he built his sanctuary like heights,  
like the earth which he established  
forever.  
70 He also chose David his servant,  
and took him from the sheepfolds,  
71 From following the ewes great  
with young.  
He brought him to feed his people  
Jacob, and his inheritance Israel.  
72 So he shepherded them according to the  
integrity of his heart,  
and guided them by the skillfulness of  
his hands.

**78:52,53** Ex 14:19,20,27,28; 15:22.  
**78:54,55** Josh 1:1-3; 4:23; 10:40-42;  
24:11-13.  
**78:56-58** These verses speak of the sin of  
the generation following the death of Joshua  
(Jud 2:7-13). They soon fell into the grievous  
and forbidden sin of idolatry (Ex 20:3-5;  
etc). A change of location did not mean a  
change of heart. They were as sinful and  
rebellious and unbelieving as their  
ancestors, as all men.  
**78:59** Notes on God's anger at 90:7-11;  
Num 25:3.  
"Abhorred" - Lev 20:23; 26:30; Deut  
32:19; Ps 5:6; 10:3. Evil is always  
disgusting to Him and all who practice it are  
offensive to Him.  
**78:60** Their sin was so great that God  
left the place He had chosen for His

tabernacle. Shiloh was in the territory of  
Ephraim (v 9).  
**78:61** The symbol of His strength and the  
place where His glory was displayed was the  
ark in the tabernacle. Because of the  
people's sin He gave the ark into the hands  
of enemies (1 Sam 4:1-11).  
**78:62-64** Jud 20:21; 1 Sam 4:10,11.  
**78:65-72** In these concluding verses Asaph  
in poetic language describes a new work of  
God. He rejected the leadership of Ephraim,  
brought another tribe to power, caused a  
new king (David) to be anointed, chose a  
new place for the ark (Jerusalem), and  
crushed the enemies of Israel. This is a  
summary of events recorded in various  
chapters of 1 and 2 Samuel.  
**78:72** David is the great Old Testament type  
of Christ as victorious warrior, king, and

79

A Psalm of Asaph

- 1 O God, the nations have come into your inheritance;  
they have defiled your holy temple;  
they have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
- 2 They have given the dead bodies of your servants *as* food to the birds of the heavens, the flesh of your saints to the beasts of the earth.
- 3 They have shed their blood like water around Jerusalem,  
and *there was* no one to bury *them*.
- 4 We have become objects of reproach to our neighbours,  
a scorn and derision to those who are around us.
- 5 How long, LORD?  
Will you be angry forever?  
Will your jealousy burn like fire?
- 6 Pour out your wrath on the nations that have not known you,

- and on the kingdoms that have not called on your name.
- 7 For they have devoured Jacob,  
and laid waste his dwelling place.
- 8 Oh, do not remember former *our* evil deeds against us.  
Let your tender mercies come speedily to us, for we are brought very low.
- 9 Help us, O God of our salvation,  
for the glory of your name;  
and rescue us, and purge away our sins,  
for your name's sake.
- 10 Why should the nations say,  
"Where *is* their God?"  
Let it be known among the nations,  
in our sight,  
*that you* avenge the blood of your servants *which has been* shed.
- 11 Let the groaning of the prisoner come before you.  
In accordance with the greatness of your power preserve the dying.
- 12 And repay seven times as much into the bosoms of our neighbours the scorn with which they scorned you, O Lord.

shepherd of His people.  
**79:1** This psalm is very similar to psalm 74. See note on Asaph there. In the first four verses of this psalm he sees a great future calamity as though it were then present. But it did not take place for several hundreds of years. In the remaining verses Asaph gives an inspired prayer that would be suitable to the people when the event occurred.  
**79:2** Deut 28:26; Jer 7:33.  
**79:3** Jer 14:16; 22:18,19.  
**79:4** See 44:13.  
**79:5** See 13:1; 74:1,9,10; 85:5; 89:46. On God's jealousy see Ex 20:4-6; Deut 29:20; Ezek 36:5; 38:19.  
**79:6** Note on such prayers as this at 35:8. Not knowing or acknowledging the one true God is blameworthy. Men willfully refuse the knowledge of God (Prov 1:29), and suppress what God has revealed about Himself (Rom 1:18). If any person really wishes to know and serve Him God would be willing to move heaven and earth if necessary to get instruction to that person. We know this from the revelation of God's character in the Bible. The sad truth is that people do not wish to know Him and they make no attempt to call upon His name or seek His face. Therefore they are very guilty indeed, and God's anger will certainly come on them (2 Thess 1:8).  
**79:8** See Ex 20:5; 34:6,7; Lam 5:7. Asaph here is speaking of national sin and guilt, and prays that God will not send punishment for it. There is such a thing as an accumulation of national sin which affects following generations. At last great punishment comes

on the nation in a single generation. One example of this is the Amorites in Canaan (Gen 15:16). When their sin was full God sent Israel into Canaan to destroy them. Another example was Israel punished in the days of king Nebuchadnezzar for previous sins (2 Kings 23:26,27; 2 Chron 36:15-19). Another example is the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of Israel by the Romans in 70 A.D. as prophesied by the Lord Jesus in Matt 23:35,36.  
God is patient and long-suffering. But at last when the accumulated sins of a nation become so great that justice can delay no more, God pours out His anger on that nation. In the cases given above each generation of a people became what all previous generations made it, and what they themselves decided to be, the final generation being the worst and the most guilty of all. This is the story of human history. The only way God's punishment can be averted on either an individual or a nation is repentance and sincere turning to God for mercy (2 Chron 7:14; Isa 55:7; Ezek 18:30-32; Jonah 1:1,2; 3:6-10; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 3:19).  
**79:9** The concern of godly people is not merely that they may receive God's grace and mercy and escape from His wrath, but that **God's name may be glorified** (57:5). If a person has no concern for the glory of God's name he knows nothing of the true spiritual life.  
**79:10** Note on vengeance at Ex 21:23-35; Num 31:20.  
**79:11** See 102:20; Isa 61:1.  
**79:12** Note at 18:25,26.



13 So we, your people and sheep of your pasture,  
will give you thanks forever.  
We will declare your praise to all generations.

## 80

To the chief musician, on Shoshannim-eduth  
A Psalm of Asaph

- 1 Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock.  
You who dwell *between* the cherubim,  
shine forth.
- 2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and  
Manasseh stir up your strength,  
and come *and* save us.
- 3 Restore us, O God, and cause your  
face to shine; and we will be saved.
- 4 O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be  
angry with the prayer of your people?
- 5 You feed them with the bread of tears  
and give them a great many tears to drink.
- 6 You make us an *object* of strife to our  
neighbours,  
and our enemies laugh among themselves.

- 7 Restore us again, O God of hosts,  
and cause your face to shine;  
and we will be saved.
- 8 You brought a vine out of Egypt.  
You drove out the nations and planted it.
- 9 You prepared *room* for it and caused it to  
take deep root,  
and it filled the land.
- 10 The hills were covered with its shadow,  
and the mighty cedars with its branches.
- 11 It sent out its boughs to the sea,  
and its branches to the *Euphrates* River.
- 12 Why *then* have you broken down its walls,  
so that all who pass by the way  
pick its *grapes*?
- 13 The boar out of the woods ruins it,  
and the wild beast of the field devours it.
- 14 Return, we beseech you, O God of hosts!  
Look down from heaven, and see,  
and visit this vine,
- 15 And the vineyard which your right hand  
has planted,  
and the branch *that* you made strong for  
yourself.
- 16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down.  
They perish at the rebuke of your countenance.
- 17 Let your hand be on the man of your right  
hand,  
on the son of man *whom* you made strong

**79:13** "Sheep" – 74:1; 95:7.

**80 Title:** Shoshannim-eduth probably indicated the tune to be used when singing this psalm. It means "Lilies of the covenant." This is similar to psalms 74 and 79. Israel's enemies have triumphed, God's people are in great trouble. Note on Asaph at Ps 74.

**80:1** "Shepherd" – 23:1; 78:52; Gen 50:24; Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10.

"Cherubim" – 99:1; Ex 25:22; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2.

**80:2** The mention of the tribe of Joseph in verse 1 and the tribes descended from Joseph's two sons, along with Benjamin indicate that the disaster described in this psalm probably had to do with the northern kingdom and took place many years after Asaph wrote. In the march of Israel through the wilderness Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin were together immediately behind the ark (Num 2:18-24), and Ephraim became the leading tribe in Israel before the rise of Judah under David (78:9,67,68).

**80:3** Verses 7,19. This prayer for restoration would have been fitting for many occasions in the history of Israel, and is still fitting for us today. The first phrase could also be translated "revive us." Prayers for revival are always important to God, always necessary for men. It is something He wants to do (85:6; 2 Chron 7:14; Isa 57:15; Hos 6:2; Hab 3:2). "Shine" – 4:6; 31:16; Num 6:25.

**80:4** Is it possible that God would ever be

angry with the prayers of His people? Yes. And He is angry with them when they indulge in evil and refuse to repent (Isa 1:15-17).

**80:5** Tears for both food and drink! And notice that God Himself has done it.

**80:8-16** The nation Israel here is compared to a vine. See also Isa 5:1,2,7; Jer 2:21; 12:10; Ezek 17:6; 19:10.

**80:8** See 44:2; Josh 13:6; 2 Chron 20:7.

**80:11** At its greatest extent under Solomon Israel controlled the area between the Euphrates river and the Mediterranean Sea ("the sea").

**80:12** Walls speak of God's protection around His people (Job 1:10). God may remove it for purposes of testing or chastisement or punishment.

**80:13** The surrounding nations.

**80:14-16** Asaph reminded God that it is God's vine that is being destroyed and begged Him to look after His own property. A prayer, no doubt, God is not reluctant to answer.

**80:17** Benjamin (v 2) means "son of the right hand." But the complete fulfillment of this prayer can be seen only in the Lord Jesus. The Son of man is a title which He very often used of Himself (note at Matt 8:20). Benjamin was the son of Jacob's right hand. Jesus is the Son of God's right hand – the one especially honored and exalted (Acts 5:30,31). When He bore our sins as our substitute God's hand was on Him to

for yourself.  
18 Then we will not turn back from you.  
Revive us, and we will call on your name.  
19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;  
cause your face to shine,  
and we will be saved.

81

To the chief musician, on Gittith.  
A Psalm of Asaph

1 Sing aloud to God our strength!  
Make a joyful sound to the  
God of Jacob!  
2 Take up a psalm, and assign the  
tambourine, the pleasant harp with  
the lyre.  
3 Blow the trumpet in the new moon at the  
set time, on our solemn feast day.  
4 For this *is* a statute for Israel,  
*and* a law of the God of Jacob.  
5 He ordained this in Joseph *for* a  
testimony, when he went throughout  
the land of Egypt,  
*where* I heard a language *that* I did  
not understand.  
6 *God says* "I removed the burden from his  
shoulder.  
His hands were freed from the baskets.

7 You called out in trouble,  
and I rescued you.  
I answered you in the secret place of  
thunder.  
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.  
Selah  
8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify to you.  
O Israel, if *only* you would listen to me!  
9 You must have no foreign god among you,  
nor worship any alien god.  
10 I *am* the LORD your God who brought you  
out of the land of Egypt.  
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.  
11 But my people would not listen to my voice,  
and Israel would have none of me.  
12 So I gave them up to their own hearts'  
desire;  
*and* they walked in their own counsels.  
13 Oh, that my people had listened to me,  
*and* Israel had walked in my ways!  
14 I would soon have subdued their enemies,  
and turned my hand against their  
adversaries.  
15 The haters of the LORD would have  
submitted themselves to him,  
and their time would have gone on forever.  
16 He would also have fed them with the  
finest of the wheat,  
and with honey out of the rock I would  
have satisfied you."

punish sin. Later the same hand exalted Him to the highest place in the universe – Eph 1:19-22; Phil 2:9-11.  
**80:18** When God's hand is on the Son of His right hand it will have eternal results. He is the one who will keep His people from turning away from God. To enable us to call on God as we ought in spirit and in truth we need to be given new life. And when we are given this new life we will certainly call on God.  
**81 Title:** Gittith was probably a musical term.  
**81:1-5** Joy is the result of putting God first in life, of obeying His will. Here the subject is the joy of God's people at the time of one of the national festivals (Leviticus chapter 23). To understand this psalm it is not necessary to identify which one is meant here.  
**81:5** The tribe of Joseph was the leading tribe of Israel in Egypt and here seems to signify the whole of Israel. The phrase "a language that I did not understand" is obscure in Hebrew. Does Asaph mean the words that follow which were spoken by God? Does he identify himself with Israel in Egypt and mean the language of the Egyptians? The literal translation is "I will hear a lip I did not know" – a voice not known.  
**81:6-16** In all these verses God is speaking through Asaph. See 2 Pet 1:21.  
**81:6** Ex 1:8-14.  
**81:7** Ex 2:23-25; 19:19; 20:18; 17:6,7;

Num 20:13.  
**81:8** God longs to bless His people but cannot justly do so unless they listen to Him – vs 13-16.  
**81:9** Ex 20:3; Deut 5:7; 32:12.  
**81:10** It is not men who beg God to be allowed to come to Him and be cared for by Him. It is God who has to beseech men! It is God who constantly has to urge men to pray, not men who have to try to get God to let them pray. God is far more eager to bless men than they are to seek His blessing. God wants to fill His people with good things. The mouth here of course represents the whole person. God will give us all we need, both material and spiritual things. It is our part to fully open our minds, our hearts, our lives to Him (37:4; 107:9; Matt 7:7-11).  
**81:11** This was the sin, the tragedy of Israel throughout most of its history.  
**81:12** A very terrible punishment but a perfectly just one (Prov 1:30,31; Rom 1:24,26,28; 2 Thess 2:10-12; Rev 22:11,12). The person or the people who will not listen to God is in grave danger (Heb 12:25).  
**81:13-16** These are only a few of the blessings God promises His people when they listen and obey. Notice the word "soon" in v 14. It indicates God's heart to bless His people when it is just and right to do so.

82

A Psalm of Asaph

- 1 God stands in the congregation of the mighty; he judges among the gods.
- 2 "How long will you judge unjustly, and show favouritism to the wicked?

*Selah*

- 3 Defend the poor and fatherless.  
Deal out justice to the afflicted and needy.
- 4 Deliver the poor and needy.  
Rescue *them* from the hand of the wicked.
- 5 They do not know,  
they do not understand,  
they walk on in darkness.  
All the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- 6 I said, 'You *are* gods, and all of you *are*

**82:1** "Gods" – or it could possibly be translated "mighty ones" or "rulers." Who are the people mentioned in this verse and in v 6? They were not the gods worshiped then by some people in the land of Israel or by the nations outside Israel. God had nothing to do with such "gods", and was not speaking to them in this psalm. In fact, God says they are not gods at all and that He alone is God (Ex 20:3; Isa 37:19; 44:6,7; 46:9; Jer 16:20; 1 Cor 8:4-6; Gal 4:8). The "gods" in this psalm were the leaders, the judges in Israel. In Hebrew they are called "gods" in Ex 21:6 and 22:7,8 (translated "judges" in the KJV). God called them gods because they were appointed by God and acted as God's representatives and judged on God's behalf.

The work of determining punishment for evil doers and clearing the innocent is the work of God or of those whom God delegates to do so (Deut 1:17; 19:17; 2 Chron 19:6,7; Rom 13:1-4). Judges must understand that they themselves will be judged by God. The judges in Israel had become corrupt, and were perverting justice. So God Himself speaks to them through the mouth of Asaph. Since judges stand in God's place to administer justice, any perversion of justice, any partiality, any taking of bribes is a terrible sin not merely against men but against God.

**82:2** "How long?" – God now begins to speak to the judges.

**82:3,4** See 10:18; 41:1; Deut 24:17; Isa 1:17; 11:4; Jer 22:16.

**82:5** "They" – God speaks of the unjust judges.

"They do not know" – Jer 4:22; Micah 3:1-3. Darkness signifies both ignorance and wickedness. Because of the perversion of justice the whole of society shakes and totters. If the foundation is rotten how can the building stand?

**82:6** The Lord Jesus quoted this verse in

- children of the Most High'.
- 7 But you will die like men,  
and fall like one of the rulers."
- 8 Arise, O God, judge the earth,  
for you will inherit all nations.

83

A song, a Psalm of Asaph

- 1 Do not keep silent, O God;  
do not be quiet and do not be still, O God.
- 2 For, look, your enemies make an uproar,  
and those who hate you have lifted up  
*their* head.
- 3 They have craftily plotted against your people,  
and conspired together against your  
hidden ones.

John 10:34. He defines who the "gods" of this psalm are as those "to whom the Word of God came." The Word of God came to the leaders, rulers, and judges of Israel, all of whom at various times judged the people. They were God's representatives. Their national relationship to God was as children to a father. Individually many of them may have been wicked men who did not know, trust, or serve God, and were not God's spiritual children.

**82:7** Though they had a very high position and were called "gods", they would die like everyone else, and perhaps even be destroyed suddenly as indicated by the word "fall."

**82:8** These human judges had become so blind and corrupt that Asaph prays that God Himself will come and do the work of judging. This prayer God will yet answer (96:13; 98:9; John 5:22,27; Acts 17:31; Rev 20:11,12).

**83 Title:** In the recorded history of Israel we never read of the exact alliance against Israel of all the nations mentioned in this psalm. It is probable that Asaph is reviewing attacks on Israel made by different nations at different times. In other words, all Israel's enemies were of one mind through the centuries to destroy it from being a nation.

**83:1** God's enemies were not silent – v 2. Let God speak and silence them.

**83:2** God raised up the nation Israel to be the channel for bringing His Word, His truth, His salvation to the world. Those who hated Israel were haters of light, of truth, of God. Today those who hate Christ's believers are in the same sad condition. They are haters of God – John 3:20; 15:18,24; Rom 1:30; 1 John 3:13.

**83:3** "Hidden ones" – or possibly "treasured ones" or the combined idea of hidden treasure. To God that is what believers are.

**83:4-8** Diverse people who have no common interests are united in one thing – they all oppose God and would like to

4 They have said,  
"Come, and let us cut them off as a nation,  
so that the name of Israel may be  
remembered no more."  
5 For they have consulted together with one  
purpose;  
they have formed an alliance against you:  
6 The tents of Edom, and the Ishmaelites,  
of Moab, and the Hagarenes,  
7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek,  
the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;  
8 Assyria too has joined with them;  
they have helped the children of Lot.

Selah

9 Do to them as *you did to* the Midianites,  
to Sisera, to Jabin, at the Kishon river,  
10 *Who* perished at Endor;  
they became *like* refuse on the ground.  
11 Make their leaders like Oreb and like  
Zeeb; yes, all their princes like  
Zebah and Zalmunna,  
12 Who said, "Let us take possession of the  
pastures of God for ourselves."  
13 O my God, make them like a *rolling* wheel,  
like chaff before the wind.  
14 As the fire burns a forest,

destroy the people of God. So Herod and Pilate, former enemies, became allies and friends at the crucifixion of Christ (Luke 23:12. See Ps 2:2).

**83:4** Pharaoh in Egypt, the nations around Canaan, Haman in Persia, and many others since including Adolph Hitler in Germany have tried to crush the Jews and exterminate them as a people. All such attempts failed and cannot but fail. God has always had His purposes with Israel and He will certainly fulfill them. Likewise there have been attempts made by various peoples at various times to exterminate the followers of Christ. It is utterly impossible to do so (Matt 16:18). In fact such attempts have often resulted in an increase in their numbers, power, and purity.

**83:6-8** The enemies mentioned here were on all sides of Israel, east, south, west, and north.

**83:9-12** Asaph bases his prayer on the history of Israel. Jud 4:7,15,21-24; 7:1-25; 8:12,21.

**83:12** Israel's "pastures" belong to God.

**83:13-15** Note on such prayers at 35:8.

**83:16-18** The inspired psalmists always had good reasons for praying for their enemies' defeat or destruction (see 7:6-9). Here Asaph gives two reasons: that men may seek the true God (v 16), and may know that Jehovah alone is the God of the universe (v 18). So Asaph's prayer does not arise from a vindictive heart or motives of human revenge, but from a desire for God's glory and the good of those who will seek God and come to know Him. On this high

and as a flame sets the mountains on fire,  
15 So pursue them with your tempest,  
and frighten them with your storm.  
16 Fill their faces with shame,  
so that they may seek your name, O LORD.  
17 Let them be disappointed and dismayed  
forever;  
yes, let them be put to shame, and perish,  
18 That *men* may know that you,  
whose name alone *is* the LORD,  
are the Most High over all the earth.

84

To the chief musician on gittith,  
a Psalm for the sons of Korah

1 How lovely *are* your tabernacles,  
O LORD of hosts!  
2 My soul longs, yes, even faints for the  
courts of the LORD.  
My heart and my flesh cry out for the  
living God.  
3 Even the sparrow has found a house,  
and the swallow a nest for herself  
where she may put her young,

note the psalms of Asaph are at an end.

**84 Title:** Note on the sons of Korah at psalm 42. Here, as there, we do not know whether this psalm was written by one of the sons of Korah or for them as a group to put to music and sing. It sounds like a psalm of David but we cannot be sure that it is his. Gittith was probably a musical term.

**84:1** "Lovely" – the Hebrew word could be translated "beloved" or "dearly loved." The writer is not admiring the beauty of God's dwellings, but revealing how much they mean to him, how he longs to be there.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**84:2** See 42:1,2; 63:1,2. From this we judge that the writer is at a distance from Jerusalem and unable to get there. But just the thought of being there to worship God brings joy to his heart. The worship of God in the congregation of other believers was a delight to him. No one had to force him to go to such meetings. The compulsion was inward and constant. How is it with us in regard to attending places where Christ is worshiped?

**84:3,4** He could even envy the birds who find some place in the tabernacle compound to live. And he thinks of the priests who dwell there and so have daily opportunities to join in worship. Observe how he addresses God with assurance and joy "*my* King, *my* God." Verse 4 gives us the first of three "blessed's" in this psalm. We might call this psalm "the blessed life."

The blessed are those who are near God (v 4),

*even* your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
my King, and my God.  
4 Blessed *are* those who dwell in your house;  
they will always be praising you. *Selah*  
5 Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in  
you, in whose heart *are* the ways of  
*pilgrimage*,  
6 *who* when passing through the valley of  
Baca make it a spring.  
The rain also fills the pools.  
7 They go from strength to strength,  
*every one of them* appears in Zion  
in the presence of God.  
8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer.  
Give ear, O God of Jacob.

*Selah*

9 See, O God our shield, and look on the  
face of your anointed.  
10 For a day in your courts *is* better than

who are strong in God (v 5),  
who are pilgrims in heart (v 5),  
and who trust in God (v 12).

For other references to “blessed” see note at 1:1.

**84:5** “Strength” – 18:1,2; 28:7; 31:4; 73:26. Some of the appointed religious festivals in Israel were times when God’s people came from all over the land up to Jerusalem to worship. The writer here says the blessed person is not the one who physically treads the ways leading to Zion, but the one who has the ways in his heart, the one who delights to be a pilgrim, a traveler to the city of God. This speaks of the pilgrim life that believers are now to lead, moving on from this sad and sinful world to the heavenly Zion (Heb 11:13-16; 1 Pet 2:11).

**84:6** Baca probably means “weeping.” We do not know where this valley was or why it was called the valley of weeping. We do not need to know. It is enough to know that even through the vale of tears, the sad experiences of the pilgrim life, and the desolations of the rocky desert, faith can make it all a well of comfort, joy, and refreshing (Acts 16:22-25; 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 2:17; Col 1:24).

**84:7** In the long journey, instead of finding themselves growing weaker and weaker, they find more and more strength (103:5; Isa 40:30,31; 2 Cor 4:7-10,16; 12:9,10). Every pilgrim arrived at last in God’s presence – Ex 23:17; 34:23; Deut 16:16. Every real pilgrim, every true believer, will at last appear with joy before God’s presence in the heavenly Zion (John 14:3; 17:24; 2 Cor 5:1; Eph 1:4; Col 3:4; Jude 24,25).

**84:8** See 4:1; 5:1; 54:2; 140:6. The writers of the psalms could not be satisfied with unanswered prayer. Note on the God of Jacob at 146:5.

**84:9** See 3:3; 5:12; 28:7; 35:2. This is a prayer for the king.

**84:10** Words could hardly express more

a thousand *elsewhere*.  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the  
house of my God, than live in the  
tents of wickedness.  
11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield.  
The LORD will give grace and glory.  
No good *thing* will he withhold from  
those who walk in integrity.  
12 O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man who  
trusts in you.

85

To the chief musician,  
a Psalm for the sons of Korah

1 LORD, you have been favourable to your  
land.  
You have brought Jacob back from captivity.

clearly the attitude we should have toward the worship and service of God. One day spent before God is more valuable than three years spent somewhere else. Doing the most menial task God gives us to do is more satisfying and important than all the activities of the sinful world. God’s least is far better than the devil’s best. Humble service for God is so far above all the luxuries, riches, and pleasures of wicked people that there is really no comparison.

The Korahites, by whom or for whom this psalm was written, were actual doorkeepers at the house of God (1 Chron 9:19). We will not be the kind of people God wants us to be until we have right views about the service of God. It should be our delight to do something, to do anything, for our Saviour who has done everything for us.

**84:11** God is the one who gives light on the pilgrim’s path and protection from their enemies. And He gives all we need for the journey now and honor hereafter (John 1:16; Rom 5:2; 1 Cor 1:4; 15:10; 2 Cor 12:9; John 12:26; 17:22; Rom 2:10; 8:17,18; 2 Cor 4:17; Col 1:27; 2 Tim 2:10; Heb 2:10; 1 Pet 1:7).

“Good” – 34:9,10; 37:25; Matt 7:11; Rom 8:28; Phil 4:19. But we must leave the choice of what is good for us (and what is not good) to God. And we should see that our walk is blameless before Him.

**84:12** See 2:12; 40:4. Faith is the hand that receives all of God’s blessings.

**85 Title:** See note at psalm 42. This psalm divides naturally into three parts. In the first 3 verses the author remembers God’s favor shown at a previous time. In vs 4-7 he pleads for God to act again in the same way. In vs 8-13 he gives the message he has received from God.

**85:1** We do not know what specific time the writer had in mind. He may be referring to several different events such as are



- 2 You have forgiven the wickedness of your people.  
You have covered all their sin.
- Selah
- 3 You have removed all your wrath.  
You have turned away from the fierceness of your anger.
- 4 Restore us, O God of our salvation,  
and cause your anger toward us to cease.
- 5 Will you be angry with us forever?  
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
- 6 Will you not revive us again,  
that your people may rejoice in you?
- 7 Show us your mercy, O LORD,  
and grant us your salvation.
- 8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak;  
for he will speak peace to his people,  
and to his saints.  
But let them not turn back to folly.
- 9 Surely his salvation *is* near those who fear him,

- so that glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth have met together;  
righteousness and peace have kissed  
*each other*.
- 11 Truth will spring out of the earth,  
and righteousness will look down  
from heaven.
- 12 Yes, the LORD will give *what is* good,  
and our land will yield its crops.
- 13 Righteousness will go before him,  
and will set *us* in the way of his steps.

86

A prayer of David

- 1 Bow down your ear, O LORD, hear me;  
for I *am* poor and needy.
- 2 Preserve my soul, for I *am* godly.

recorded in the book of Judges.  
“Brought back. . . from captivity” – or “restored the well-being of.” The Hebrew can mean to deliver from either physical or spiritual captivity, or from afflictions of various kinds (14:7; 53:6; 68:18; Job 42:10).  
**85:2** Note at 32:1,2.  
**85:3** See 78:38; 106:23. Sin is what brings the anger of God. When sin is forgiven and covered the anger of God departs. Notes on God’s anger at 90:7-11; Num 25:3.  
**85:4** If God had already restored them and withdrawn His anger why this prayer that He would do so? Evidently the people had once again fallen into sin. Compare Jud 2:11-19; Ezra 9:5-10.  
**85:5** See 74:1; 79:5; 80:4.  
**85:6,7** There is no real joy without spiritual life and an experience of God’s grace and salvation. Since God wants His people to forsake their sins and be happy this is a prayer based on the solid foundation of the will of God.  
**85:8** It is not enough to speak to God. We must also let Him speak to us. If we listen to what He says to us He will listen to what we say to Him. And if we do not stop praying before He answers but look forward in faith, He will surely answer. Here the psalmist has received a message of peace and righteousness. Righteousness is used three times in the remaining verses and so is a key word. God’s people will quickly lose God’s peace if they turn back to foolish, sinful ways.  
**85:9** God’s glory dwelt in Jerusalem because there were still some in the land who feared God. It departed from the temple in Ezekiel’s time – Ezek 10:18,19; 11:23. With the coming of Christ God’s glory came again to Israel in a deeper, fuller way (John 1:14). Notes on the fear of God at 34:11-14; 111:10; Job 28:28; Gen 20:11; Prov 1:7.

**85:10** These four great attributes of God meet and embrace in the Lord Jesus Christ. Especially at the cross of Jesus we see these all combined. At Calvary there was the greatest display of God’s grace and mercy it is possible to conceive. There the truth of man’s nature, Christ’s nature, and God the Father’s nature brilliantly shines forth. There the righteousness of God which demands punishment for man’s sin is fulfilled and peace between a holy God and sinful man flows forth (Rom 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:18,19; Col 1:19,20). Peace must be based on righteousness (Isa 32:17). Peace not based on righteousness is no real peace at all.  
**85:11** Isa 45:8. Through the work of Christ on the cross it is as though the seed of truth was planted in the earth, which will continue to spring up and produce an abundant harvest. Righteousness will look peacefully, smilingly down from heaven. The earth still waits the complete fulfillment of this verse.  
**85:12** See 84:11; Jam 1:17.  
**85:13** See 89:14. Where God goes righteousness will always go too and where righteousness goes grace and truth will follow. When we follow after God all these will be ours.  
**86 Title:** In this third division of the psalms this is the only one ascribed to David. It is called a prayer, and in it he not only gives his personal prayer but shows us the grounds on which we may expect to get answers to our prayers. Let us observe them very carefully. They will help us in our praying.  
**86:1** The first reason David gives that God should answer his prayer is his deep need and the fact that he prays to the LORD (Jehovah), the true and only God, the God who had made a covenant with Israel and whose nature is compassionate and merciful (v 15; Ex 34:6,7).  
**86:2** Another reason why God should answer his prayer is the relationship he has

- O my God, save your servant who trusts in you.
- 3 Be merciful to me, O Lord,  
for I cry out to you daily.
- 4 Cause the soul of your servant  
to rejoice, for to you, O Lord,  
I lift up my soul.
- 5 For you, Lord, *are* good, and ready  
to forgive,  
and abundant in mercy to all those who  
call on you.
- 6 Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer,  
and be attentive to the voice of my  
supplications.
- 7 In the day of my trouble I will call on you,  
for you will answer me.
- 8 Among the gods *there is* no one like you,  
O Lord,  
nor *are there any* works like yours.
- 9 All nations whom you have made will come  
and worship before you,  
O Lord, and will glorify your name.
- 10 For you *are* great and do wonderful things.  
You alone *are* God.

- 11 Teach me your way, O LORD.  
I will walk in your truth.  
Unite my heart to fear your name.
- 12 I will praise you, O Lord my God,  
with all my heart,  
and I will glorify your name forevermore.
- 13 For great *is* your mercy toward me,  
and you have delivered my soul from  
the depths of hell.
- 14 O God, the proud have risen up against me,  
and a mob of violent *men* have  
sought my life,  
and have not set you before them.
- 15 But you, O Lord, *are* a God full of  
compassion, and gracious,  
slow to get angry, and abundant in  
mercy and truth.
- 16 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me.  
Give your strength to your servant,  
and save the son of your maid servant.
- 17 Show me a sign for good, so that those  
who hate me may see *it* and be ashamed;  
because you, LORD, have helped me,  
and comforted me.

with God. God is his God, the one he trusts and loves. He is God's worshiper, God's servant. The prayer of the wicked is an abomination, and God does not hear sinners – 66:18; Prov 15:29; 28:9; Isa 1:15; John 9:31. But God hears His servants who walk righteously and try to keep His Word.

Another good reason why God should hear him is that he *trusts* in God. If we trust in ourselves, or in false gods or idols we have no ground for expecting God to answer us. But when our trust is in Him alone He will give us all we need (37:5; Mark 11:24; Heb 11:6,32-34).

**86:3** A further reason why God should hear him – he does not faint and give up but continues in faith and expectation. Jesus taught how important persistence is in prayer – Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8.

**86:4** David gives a further reason why God should answer him. He seeks help in God alone and not from some other source.

**86:5** The last ground for believing prayer is the character of God. David does not claim perfection for himself. He knows there are things in his life that will require forgiveness. But God is always ready to forgive (103:3; 130:4; 1 John 1:9). He shows great love to all who call on Him – will He not also to us? See Rom 10:12.

**86:6,7** The reasons David has given that God will answer him are good and sufficient, so his faith is firm and he is sure God will hear his prayer. We too should learn to pray with the same confidence.

**86:8-10** If the God to whom we pray is to answer our prayers two things are required – He must be *willing* to answer, and He must be *able* to answer. David has shown God's

willingness in the preceding verses. Now he speaks of God's ability, and contrasts it with the inability of all others that are called gods. See how He speaks of God's power – He has made all nations. Therefore He can answer people when they call. David speaks as a prophet when he says all nations will come to God (compare Micah 4:1,2; Zech 14:16; Rev 7:9; 21:24-26). For the time will come when the world will realize that the God of the Bible is the great Creator, the only God there is.

**86:11-17** David knew both God's willingness and ability to answer prayer. Knowing that God will answer him, he now continues his requests.

**86:11** "Teach" – see note at 25:5. An undivided or united heart is the opposite of a double mind (Jam 1:6-8). It means to have a heart resting in one object – God Himself, and not struggling between different aims, motives, and desires.

"Fear" – 34:11-14; 111:10; Job 28:28; Gen 20:11; Prov 1:7; etc. See how David prays that he might have a proper fear of God. He knew it was the very foundation of the spiritual life.

**86:12** The only proper response to answered prayer is this.

**86:13** See 30:3. "Hell" – "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**86:14** This was the cause of his sad condition described in v 1. David may be referring either to his persecution by king Saul, or the time of Absalom's rebellion.

**86:15** See 86:5; 103:8; Ex 34:6,7.

**86:16** See 18:1; 28:7; 31:4.

**86:17** He wants manifest proof of God's blessing and help that others can see so

87

A Psalm, a song for the sons of Korah

- 1 His foundation *is* in the holy mountains.
- 2 The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
- 3 Glorious things are spoken of you,  
O city of God. *Selah*
- 4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know me.  
See Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia:  
this *one* was born there.
- 5 And it will be said of Zion,  
"This *one* and that *man* was born in her;  
and the Most High himself  
will establish her."
- 6 When the LORD writes up the *register* of the peoples,

they will stop their persecution.  
**87:1** This is a very remarkable psalm and one of the most remarkable chapters in the Old Testament. In it we see the nations surrounding Israel, Israel's ancient enemies, united with Israel and become the "children" of Jerusalem by a new birth. The psalm is an expansion of 86:9. The holy mountain is Mt Zion. It was holy because it was sanctified by God's temple and God's presence.  
**87:2** God chose Jerusalem over all the cities of Israel, all the cities of the world to be His capital city. He did not love it because it was the largest or most beautiful of cities; it was neither. Rather, He loved it because of its spiritual associations. It contained His temple; it represented His chosen people; it was a symbol of the Jerusalem which is above; it was the city where Christ would show His eternal love for men and for God.  
**87:3** Some of these glorious things are recorded in the next verses.  
**87:4-7** Rahab here probably means Egypt which had persecuted Israel (89:10; Isa 51:9). Babylon was later to destroy Jerusalem and take captive God's people. The Philistines also engaged in frequent wars against Israel. Tyre became a great and proud city that opposed God.  
"Ethopia" - in Hebrew "Cush." This was the region of the upper Nile river including a part of present-day Ethiopia, and here probably represents more distant peoples of earth. This verse gives a prophecy of a great change that will take place. These nations will come to know God, they will be *born in Zion*. This is repeated in v 5 and v 6.  
The meaning is this - Jerusalem will become the source of spiritual life to the nations of the world, the new birth of individuals and peoples will be closely connected with events that take place there. All fountains of spiritual life, of eternal joy and gladness are there. Can this refer to anything other than the crucifixion and resurrection of

he will record *that* this *one* was born there. *Selah*

- 7 Both the singers and the musicians *will say*, "All my springs *are* in you."

88

A song, a Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief musician on Mahalath-leannoth, a maskil of Heman the Ezrahite

- 1 O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day *and* night before you.
- 2 Let my prayer come before you.  
Bow down your ear to my cry,
- 3 For my soul is full of troubles,  
and my life draws near to the grave.
- 4 I am counted with those who go down into the pit.

the Lord Jesus in Jerusalem two thousand years ago? Because of those events, and those alone, we may be born again and the nations of the world brought to God. The fountains of eternal life were not in Athens, city of philosophy, nor in Rome, city of imperial power, nor in Babylon, city of idolatry. They flow from Jerusalem alone, city of the great King of heaven.  
**88 Title:** Heman is mentioned in 1 Chron 6:33,42, but we know very little about him. This is the only psalm of his we have. Of all the psalms this is the saddest one. There is not a hint of happiness in it. It reveals a heart very badly depressed, a mind filled with gloomy thoughts. In this regard it is similar to certain utterances of Job (chapters 3,6,7) and parts of Lamentations (3:1-18).  
God's servants sometimes may be called to go through such experiences (see 66:11,12; Isa 50:10). At such times prayers like these are acceptable to God. He does not ask us to try to hide from Him what we feel and think. In every experience of life we can pour out our hearts before Him - 62:8.  
Mahalath leannoth may have indicated the tune to be used when singing this psalm. It means "Suffering Affliction." Maskil was probably a literary or musical term.  
**88:1** Observe carefully that in all the darkness that comes over him, and in all the troubles he is immersed in, he holds to one great truth. The LORD (Jehovah) is the God of his salvation (see also 22:1; 42:5). And he continues to cry out to God though he thinks he has not yet been heard (v 9. Compare 22:2; 86:3; Luke 18:7) - a good example to us all.  
**88:2** See 18:6; 31:2; 86:1.  
**88:3** "Grave" - "Sheol" - note at Gen 37:35.  
**88:3-6** He is so troubled that he feels he is already in the realm of the dead. He probably was suffering with a severe illness. His strength is gone and he thinks he will not live much longer. Illness of the body

I am like a man *who has* no strength,  
 5 Adrift among the dead, like the slain  
 who lie in the grave,  
 whom you remember no more and who  
 are cut off from *the care of your hand*.  
 6 You have laid me in the lowest pit,  
 in darkness, in the depths.  
 7 Your wrath lies heavy on me,  
 and you have afflicted *me* with all your  
 waves.

*Selah*

8 You have put away my acquaintances far  
 from me.  
 You have made me an abomination to them.  
*I am* shut up, and I cannot get out.

9 My eye wastes away because of misery.  
 LORD, I have called out daily to you,  
 I have stretched out my hands to you.  
 10 Will you show wonders to the dead?  
 Will the dead rise up *and* praise you?

*Selah*

11 Will your loving kindness be declared in  
 the grave, *or* your faithfulness in  
*the place of destruction*?  
 12 Will your wonders be known in the  
*place of darkness*,  
 and your righteousness in the land of  
 forgetfulness?  
 13 But to you I have cried out, O LORD, and

in the morning my prayer comes  
 before you.  
 14 LORD, why do you cast away my soul?  
*Why* do you hide your face from me?  
 15 I *am* afflicted and about to die from *my*  
 youth up.  
 I suffer your terrors *and* I am perplexed.  
 16 Your fierce wrath has come over me.  
 Your terrors have cut me off.  
 17 All day long they came around me like water.  
 They altogether engulfed me.  
 18 You have put loved one and friend far  
 from me,  
*and* my acquaintance into darkness.

# 89

A maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite

1 I will sing of the mercies of the LORD  
 forever.  
 With my mouth I will make known your  
 faithfulness to all generations.  
 2 For I have said,  
 "Mercy will stand firm forever;  
 you will establish your faithfulness in  
 the very heavens."  
 3 *You have said* "I have made a covenant with  
 my chosen one;

may cause depression of the mind.  
**88:7** He mentions God's wrath and terrors  
 again in vs 15,16. His experiences made  
 him think that God was angry with him. And  
 it is possible that he was conscious of some  
 sin which brought God's anger against him.  
 But it may be that he was not guilty, and  
 that God was not angry but only testing His  
 servant as He did Job (Job 6:4; 16:9-17;  
 31:23). Sickness or other difficult experi-  
 ences that may come to us are not evidence  
 in themselves that God is angry with us (Job  
 chapters 1 and 2).  
**88:8** Verse 18; 31:11; 142:4; Job  
 19:13,19; 30:10.  
**88:9** See 6:7; 31:9.  
**88:10-12** In the days in which the author  
 lived little had been revealed about the  
 realm of the dead. Note at Job 10:21,22.  
**88:11** "Destruction" – in Hebrew "Abaddon."  
**88:13** See 5:3; 30:2; 119:147.  
**88:14** See 13:1; 43:2; 44:9,24; Job 13:24.  
**88:15-17** All day and every day he faced  
 nothing but experiences which caused fear  
 and pain. His were much like Job's  
 experiences.  
**88:18** Can one go deeper into depression  
 than the experience seen in this psalm? No  
 light, no comfort, no help, no cheer, no  
 understanding of what was happening – only  
 darkness surrounded him. But after writing  
 this did he not, like Job, find joy in God

again? It is not impossible to believe so  
 (Jam 5:11).  
**89 Title:** This is another psalm of the Mes-  
 siah – one contains a prophecy about the  
 Lord Jesus Christ. The author is Ethan, a  
 colleague of Heman and Asaph in the days  
 of king David (1 Chron 15:19). This is the  
 only psalm of his we have. He may have  
 written it in very old age at the time of the  
 division of the kingdom of Israel into two  
 parts during the time of Rehoboam. Maskil  
 was probably a literary or musical term.  
**89:1** Here he gives the theme of the psalm  
 – the mercy and faithfulness of the LORD  
 (Jehovah), the covenant God of Israel.  
 God's faithfulness is mentioned by name in  
 vs 1, 2, 5, 8, 14, 24, 33, 49. The same  
 attribute is indicated by the words "I will not  
 lie" in v 35, and "I have sworn" or "you  
 swore" in vs 3,35,49. God's mercy is  
 spoken of in vs 1, 2, 14, 24, 28, 33, 49.  
 "All generations" – through this psalm  
 Ethan has been declaring the faithfulness  
 of God for about 3000 years of generations.  
**89:2** God's mercy and faithfulness are  
 permanent, fixed, and eternal (103:17;  
 114:89,90). There is no change of mind,  
 no going back, no shadow of turning with  
 God (1 Sam 15:29; Titus 1:2; Jam 1:17),  
 and no one can separate His loved ones  
 from His love (Rom 8:38,39).  
**89:3,4** Here Ethan refers to the covenant

I have sworn to my servant David:  
4 I will establish your offspring forever,  
and make your throne firm to all  
generations.”  
*Selah*  
5 And the heavens will praise your wonders,  
O LORD,  
and also your faithfulness in the  
congregation of the saints.  
6 For who in the heavens can be  
compared to the LORD?  
*Who* among the sons of the mighty  
can be likened to the LORD?  
7 God is greatly to be feared in the  
assembly of the saints,  
and to be regarded with reverence by  
all *those who are* around him.  
8 O LORD God of hosts, who *is* powerful  
like you, O LORD?  
Your faithfulness surrounds you.  
9 You rule the raging of the sea.  
When its waves rise up, you still them.  
10 You have broken Rahab in pieces,  
like one who is slain.  
You have scattered your enemies with  
your strong arm.  
11 The heavens *are* yours,  
the earth also *is* yours.  
*As for* the world and its fulness,  
you have founded them.  
12 You have created the north and the south.  
Tabor and Hermon will rejoice in your name.  
13 You have a mighty arm.  
Your hand is strong, *and* your right

hand is exalted.  
14 Righteousness and justice *are* the  
foundation of your throne.  
Mercy and truth go before your face.  
15 Blessed *are* the people who know the  
joyful sound.  
They will walk, O LORD, in the light of  
your countenance.  
16 In your name they will rejoice all day long,  
and in your righteousness they will be  
exalted.  
17 For you *are* the glory of their strength,  
and by *your* favour our horn will be exalted.  
18 For the LORD *is* our defense,  
and the Holy One of Israel *is* our king.  
19 Then you spoke in a vision to your holy  
one, and said,  
“I have granted help to *one who is* mighty.  
I have exalted *one* chosen from the people.  
20 I have found David my servant.  
I have anointed him with my holy oil.  
21 With him my hand will be established;  
my arm will also strengthen him.  
22 The enemy will not make him a debtor,  
nor will the son of wickedness oppress him.  
23 And I will beat down his foes before his face,  
and plague those who hate him.  
24 But my faithfulness and my mercy *will be*  
with him,  
and in my name his horn will be exalted.  
25 I will also set his hand over the sea,  
and his right hand over the rivers.  
26 He will cry out to me,  
‘You *are* my father, my God,

God made with David. See 2 Sam 7:8-16. From here to the end of the psalm he writes of God’s love and faithfulness as they relate to this covenant.  
**89:5-13** Ethan is disappointed by the way in which God has dealt with the house of David (vs 38-51). It seems to him that such ruin is beginning in Israel that the fulfillment of God’s promise is endangered. Why should this be? Is God not able to fulfill His word to David? In these verses (5-13) Ethan reminds himself of God’s almighty power. There is no one like Him (vs 6,8). He controls the elements of nature (v 9); He subdued Egypt and other enemies (v 10); He is the Creator who possesses all things (vs 11,12). God is well able to do all He said to David (v 13).  
**89:10** “Rahab” – 87:4.  
**89:14-16** God is not only able to keep His promises, His whole character must cause Him to do so. Verse 14 is a very wonderful verse. On earth all too often dishonesty, corruption, and injustice reign supreme. But we can and should rejoice that righteousness and justice are the very foundations of God’s

throne. God will not turn a hair’s breadth from perfect justice and holiness. This is indeed a cause of rejoicing all day long.  
**89:17,18** Ethan encouraged himself by these facts. God is gracious, God is mighty, and God has Israel under His protection and has chosen Israel’s king. “Horn” here means strength.  
**89:19-37** With the mention of the king in v 18 Ethan returns to the theme of God’s covenant with David. The person in v 19 to whom the vision came was Nathan the prophet (2 Sam 7:4,17). The mighty one is David.  
**89:20** See 1 Sam 13:14; 16:1-13.  
**89:21** See 18:35; 80:17.  
**89:23** See 18:40; 2 Sam 7:9.  
**89:24** Horn means power, strength, authority. This verse and those following up to v 37 refer to David, but also to the Lord Jesus the son of David. David the king was a type of the Lord Jesus the king of heaven and earth (132:17; Luke 1:69).  
**89:25** See 72:8.  
**89:26** “Father” – 2 Sam 7:14; John 17:1,5,11,21,24,25.



and the rock of my salvation.’  
27 Also I will make him *my* firstborn,  
the highest of the kings of the earth.  
28 I will keep my mercy for him forevermore,  
and my covenant will stand firm with him.  
29 I will also cause his offspring *to remain*  
forever,  
and his throne as long as the days of heaven.  
30 If his children forsake my law,  
and do not walk in my judgments,  
31 If they break my statutes,  
and do not keep my commandments,  
32 Then I will punish their transgression  
with the rod,  
and their wickedness with blows.  
33 Nevertheless, I will not completely take  
my loving kindness from him,  
or allow my faithfulness to fail.  
34 I will not break my covenant,  
or alter what has gone out of my lips.  
35 Once I have sworn by my holiness that I  
will not lie to David.  
36 His offspring will remain forever,  
and his throne *as long* as the sun  
before me.  
37 It will be established forever like the  
moon, and *like* the faithful witness

in the heavens.”  
Selah  
38 But you have cast *him* away and abhorred  
*him*.  
You have been angry with your  
anointed one.  
39 You have spurned the covenant with your  
servant.  
You have defiled his crown *by throwing*  
*it down* on the ground.  
40 You have broken down all his walls;  
you have brought his strongholds to ruin.  
41 All who pass by the way plunder him.  
He is an *object of* reproach to his  
neighbours.  
42 You have set up the right hand of his foes.  
You have caused all his enemies to rejoice.  
43 You have also turned away the edge of his  
sword,  
and have not caused him to stand in battle.  
44 You have made his glory cease, and cast  
his throne down to the ground.  
45 You have shortened the days of his youth.  
You have covered him with shame.  
Selah  
46 How long, LORD?  
Will you hide yourself forever?

“Rock” – Deut 32:4.  
**89:27** Firstborn means the one who has the pre-eminence (2:7; Col 1:15,18; Rev 1:5).  
“Highest” – 72:11; Rev 19:16.  
“Make him” – indicates this is not based on order of birth but has to do with high position. A person born first, before any other child, cannot be “made” the firstborn – he is the firstborn.  
**89:28,29** Observe the word “forever.” As long as the heavens endure so long will remain the throne of David, and the Lord Jesus will occupy it (Isa 9:7; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:30). The covenant God made with David went far beyond the earthly rule of a small kingdom in western Asia. It concerned the eternal rule of God’s Son over the whole world.  
**89:30-37** These verses apply first of all to David’s descendants, but they are true also of all who are children of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. From Bible history we know that many of David’s descendants violated God’s covenant and failed to follow God’s law. God’s children now likewise fail in many ways. They may prove, and in fact, often do prove, to be unfaithful. But God will not be unfaithful because they are (Rom 3:3,4; 2 Tim 2:13). Nothing will keep Him from fulfilling His promises to David. He will punish unfaithfulness on the part of His people. He will chastise all of His sons (Heb 12:5-13). But He will never make void the covenant He made with David. David’s royal house (the meaning of throne here) will last forever.

**89:38-45** Ethan now reveals what has troubled his mind. He can’t understand why God has been acting toward the house of David as He has. He uses very strong language to God and even accuses Him of ignoring His covenant with David. Ethan knows this cannot be true, but it *seems* to be true; so he pours out his heart to God. We do not know the circumstances that called forth these words. Perhaps it was something God revealed to Ethan that would happen in the future. The destruction of Judah by the Babylonians and the captivity there of Judah’s king and people would fit the language here. But Ethan lived several hundreds of years before that event – unless the author of this psalm was an Ethan other than the one who lived in David’s time.  
Observe here that Ethan says that the source of all the calamities that have come on David’s house is God Himself – “**You** have cast him away and *abhorred him*”, “**You** have spurned,” etc. Whatever human instruments were involved, Ethan was sure that it was God who was behind it all. And because of God’s action David’s throne, which God said would remain forever, was cast to the ground (v 44). This was a puzzle to Ethan.  
Many things in life will puzzle and dismay believers if they are too much occupied with circumstances. We must get our theology and find our rest, not in what seems to be happening in the world, but in God’s unchanging and faithful Word.  
**89:46-51** He longs for and prays for a

Will your wrath burn like fire?  
47 Remember how short my time is.  
Why have you made all men in vain?  
48 What man *is there who* lives who will not  
see death?  
Will he deliver his soul from the hand  
of the grave?

*Selah*

49 Lord, where *are* your former acts of  
loving kindness, *which* you swore to  
David in your truth?  
50 Remember, Lord, the scorn your  
servants *have endured*,  
*how* I bear in my heart *the taunting of*  
all the mighty people,  
51 *The scorn* with which your enemies have  
taunted, O LORD, with which they  
have taunted the footsteps of  
your anointed one.  
52 Blessed *be* the LORD forevermore.  
Amen, and Amen.

restoration of God’s favor to the house of David. He gives several reasons why he thinks God should answer his prayers – the brevity of life, the vanity of life without God’s favor (vs 47,48), the promises of God (v 49), the suffering of God’s people and the triumph of God’s enemies (vs 50,51). See how fitly the last sentence in v 50 applies to the Lord Jesus.

**89:48** “Grave” – “Sheol” – note at Gen 37:35.

**89:52** Here is victory and peace for troubled hearts. No matter what seems to be happening, God is still the faithful God worthy of all praise (Phil 4:6,7).

**90 Title:** It is certain that a man of God will be a man of prayer. In the book of Psalms this is the only one attributed to Moses. This is one of the oldest poems in existence, being written about 3,400 years ago. In subject matter and choice of words it is weighty and solemn, much like the other writings of Moses we have.

**90:1** Moses and the people of Israel were in the wilderness living in tents. They were coming from a land not their own to a land they had not possessed. They were like pilgrims and strangers on earth. But they had a fixed and permanent dwelling place – the Lord God Himself.

This is true also of believers in this New Testament era (John 17:21; Col 3:3; 1 John 4:15). When God is our home we have no business envying the rich for their mansions, or the kings for their palaces. Long after those mansions, those palaces crumble to dust the true home of believers, the living God, will still be there. Now if believers must inhabit poor huts and hovels or wander about in tents or seek refuge in caves (Heb 11:37,38), they should never

BOOK 4 (Psalms 90 - 106)

90

A prayer of Moses the man of God

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place in  
all generations.  
2 Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or *before* you had formed the earth and  
the world,  
even from everlasting to everlasting,  
you *are* God.  
3 You turn man to dust, and say,  
“Return, you children of men.”  
4 For a thousand years in your sight *are*  
like yesterday when it is past,  
and *like* a watch in the night.  
5 You carry them away like a flood.  
They are *like* a sleep.  
In the morning *they are* like grass growing up;

forget that their present home and their eternal habitation is God.

**90:2-6** Moses now contrasts God’s eternity with man’s brief, frail life.

**90:2** God was there before creation and will be there when the present creation passes away. Creation added nothing to God, the passing of creation will take nothing away from God (93:2; 102:24,27; Deut 33:27; Jer 10:10; Rom 1:20).

**90:3** But man was taken from the dust and will return to it (Gen 3:19; Ps 104:29). Oh, but how proud these frail and ignorant creatures are, even to the denying of the existence of the God who made them!

**90:4** 2 Peter 3:8. For us time drags by and we feel a hundred years to be a long time. With God even a thousand years is like a day – even less. A “watch” was a four hour period. Since there are six such “watches” in a twenty-four period, in God’s eyes man’s recorded history is only a day long, and the lifetime of an individual is only a few minutes. History to us seems like a film shown in very slow motion. To God it is otherwise. From His point of view, the point of view of eternity, it is as if Adam sinned very early in the morning and Christ came the same day and died for Adam and for all of us, and is prepared to come again the same day at midnight. It may be, as others have suggested, that God lives in the eternal “now” – where there is no passage of time, and all events are so clear to Him that it is as if there were happening together in rapid succession.

**90:5** God lives on forever, but mankind, generation after generation, passes away like foam and bubbles on the top of a swiftly flowing river.

- 6 In the morning it flourishes and grows up,  
in the evening it is cut down and withers.
- 7 For we are consumed by your anger  
and are dismayed by your wrath.
- 8 You have set our evil deeds before you,  
our secret *sins* in the light of your  
countenance.
- 9 For all our days are passed away in your  
wrath.  
We spend our years as a tale *that is told*.
- 10 The days of our lives *are* seventy years,  
and if because of strength *they are*  
eighty years, still their prime *is*  
labour and sorrow;  
for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

- 11 Who knows the power of your anger?  
For your wrath *is* in accordance with  
the fear of you.
- 12 So teach *us* to number our days,  
that we may gain hearts of wisdom.
- 13 Return, O LORD, how long?  
And relent concerning your servants.
- 14 Oh, satisfy us early with your mercy,  
so that we may rejoice and be glad all  
our days.
- 15 Make us glad according to the days  
*in which* you have afflicted us,  
*and* the years *in which* we have seen  
evil.

**90:6** Man is like grass that hardly survives a day (Isa 40:6-8; 1 Pet 1:24).

**90:7-11** In these verses Moses sets forth the reasons why man's life is so brief, so full of trouble, so sorrowful. It is all the result of God's anger against man's sin. Remember that Moses was leading the people of Israel in the desert. Because of their unbelief and rebellion the whole generation that came out of Egypt who were 20 years of age and over were destroyed. We read of God's anger repeatedly coming on them (notes on His anger at Num 25:3 and Deut 4:25). Since God's anger was on His own people we can be sure it is on all the rest of mankind in its sin and unbelief (John 3:36; Rom 1:18).

But is God's anger on believers in this age of grace? God is always angry with sin wherever it is found. It is perfectly true that believers have been delivered from the wrath of God that will burn against all unbelievers in hell (Rom 5:9; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9). But God is certainly angry with the sin that is in believers and with the sins they commit, and sometimes shows His anger in very clear ways (Eph 5:6; 1 Cor 11:27-30). Immorality, selfishness, deceit, lying, greed, envy, malicious gossip – such sins are no less hateful to God in believers than in unbelievers. God will always hate sin and fight against sin no matter where it is found.

**90:7** Observe that the reason that men fade and wither away like grass and die is God's anger, and not merely some inevitable process of nature.

**90:8** Here the reason for God's anger is stated. God has His holy, searching gaze on all the sins of men, their inner, secret sins as well as their outward, obvious transgressions.

**90:9** Notice Moses' strong expression "all our days." But is it possible that God's people dwell in God and at the same time are surrounded by His anger? Indeed, yes. Dwelling in God means being in the bosom of God's holy nature, and this holy nature always burns like fire against all sin, all wrong. So believers are at the very heart of infinite anger against the evil that is in men. Their safety is in the love and grace which are also there.

"We spend our years as a tale that is told" – this could also be translated "we end

our years like a sigh [or groan]."

**90:10** A time that falls far short of the age of the ancients who lived nearly a thousand years (Genesis chapter 5). But still long enough for suffering believers. And too long for unrepentant sinners who, the longer they live, the more they store up wrath and punishment for themselves (Rom 2:4,5).

"Prime" – or "best of them", as it could be translated (the basic meaning of the Hebrew word is "pride"). Even the best years, the proudest, strongest years of our lives are soon over and are not free of trouble and sorrow.

**90:11** God's anger is so great, so fierce against sin that no man can know it or understand it. It is revealed in terrible words in some parts of the Bible (see Lev 26:14-39; Deut 4:25; 28:15-68; Isa 24:1-6; 30:33; Mark 9:42-49; Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thess 1:6-10; Rev 14:9-11; 16:1-21; 20:11-15; 21:8). But the power of God's anger is never exaggerated. In fact, it is impossible to exaggerate it. No words can really describe how terrible, how awe-inspiring, how fearful is God's anger. Think of the folly of men who do not fear it, who count it a light thing, or who even deny it altogether!

**90:12-17** Here is the beginning of the prayer of Moses. All else is leading up to this.

**90:12** In the light of all the above our one great concern should be to have wisdom (to know God and to have the true fear of God), to understand how brief our life is, and to make sure that our eternal dwelling will be God Himself.

**90:13** See 6:3; 74:10.

**90:14,15** But are satisfaction, gladness, and joyful singing possible when the truth of vs 7-11 is recognized? Moses evidently thought so. He well knew that even though the dark clouds of God's wrath hang above sin, the bright beams of love, mercy, compassion and grace shine through them. He knew, as all believers now know, that there is forgiveness of sins and there is a joy that comes when the conscience is clear, when God's face shines on them (5:11; 16:11; 30:5; 32:11; 35:27; 42:4; 51:8; 132:9,16).

Though believers dwell in the midst of

- 16 Let your work appear to your servants,  
and your glory to their children.  
17 And let the beauty of the LORD our God be  
upon us;  
and establish the work of our hands for us;  
yes, establish the work of our hands.

# 91

- 1 He who dwells in the secret place of the  
Most High will abide under the  
shadow of the Almighty.  
2 I will say of the LORD,  
"He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God; in him I will trust."  
3 Surely he will deliver you from the snare  
of the fowler, *and* from the deadly plague.  
4 He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will trust.

God's holy anger against sin, they dwell in the heart of His holy joy also.

Observe that Moses knew that when Israel was afflicted it was God who afflicted them, and when they rejoiced it was God alone who enabled them to rejoice.

**90:16** "Work" – 44:1; 77:12; 92:4; Deut 32:4. It was the children of those wilderness wanderers who would inherit the promised land. Moses prays that they would behold God's glory as their fathers once had.

**90:17** As a servant of God he wanted to accomplish a work that would endure, that would have the stamp of God's blessing on it. Should not we? (John 15:16; 1 Cor 3:13-15; Rev 22:12). Then let us earnestly pray as he did.

**91:1-16** Many scholars have thought that Moses wrote this psalm, but we cannot be sure of it. In any case it is a psalm that fits very well after psalm 90, a prayer of Moses. Both psalms speak of God as being the dwelling place of believers (90:1; 91:1,9). But 90 emphasizes the anger of God against sin; this one emphasizes the complete protection and victory God gives. The apostle Paul gives the essence of this psalm in Rom 8:31.

"Almighty"(v-1) – in Hebrew "Shaddai" (Gen 17:1).

**91:1** The great promises made in this psalm are only for those who abide under God's protection. They are not for those who live as they please and try to use God only when danger or trouble comes.

**91:2** "Refuge" – 7:1,2. Notice the different names for God the writer uses in these first two verses – "Most High" is the one who can raise the believer far above all dangers; "Almighty" is the one who has infinite power to protect the believer; "LORD" (Jehovah) is the God who made covenants and promises to His people and faithfully keeps them; "my God" is the Creator who has become

His truth *will be your* shield and buckler.

- 5 You will not be afraid of the terror at night,  
*or* of the arrow *that* flies by day,  
6 *Or* of the plague *that* walks in darkness,  
*or* for the destruction *that* lays waste  
at noon.  
7 A thousand will fall at your side,  
and ten thousand at your right hand,  
*but* it will not come near you.  
8 Only with your eyes you will look and see  
the reward of the wicked.  
9 Because you have made the LORD,  
*who is* my refuge, the Most High,  
your habitation,  
10 No evil will befall you,  
no disaster will come near your dwelling.  
11 For he will give his angels orders  
concerning you, to protect you in  
all your ways.  
12 They will lift you up in *their* hands,  
so that you do not dash your foot

the believer's God. These names together show how perfect, how sure is the security God gives those who dwell in Him, who trust Him for protection.

**91:3** In this and the following verses the author gives a number of dangers from which God's protection is needed. "Snare" is the first. The believer is like a bird which the hunter tries to catch. Satan will lay snares for his feet. By "plague" the author may have had in mind the fearful plagues in Egypt and the safety of Israel through them all.

**91:4** "Wings" – 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 63:7; Matt 23:37.

"Shield" – 3:3; 5:12; 28:7; 35:2.

"Buckler" – a smaller shield.

**91:5,6** God is just as capable of protecting His people from enemy attacks at night as He is from dangers by day. In all circumstances the believer can have peace of mind and a complete sense of security.

**91:7** The believer sheltered by God is indestructible. As long as it is God's will for him to live he cannot die. Nothing can touch him except what God in His wisdom decides is for his good.

**91:8** See 37:34; 58:10. He will see this, if not in this life then in the final judgment when God arises to judge the world.

**91:9** The great promises surrounding this verse are only to those who experience its truth. See 90:1.

**91:10** See 23:4; 41:2; 121:7; Prov 1:33; 12:21; 2 Tim 4:18.

**91:11,12** Satan partly quoted these verses in the temptation of Christ (Matt 4:6). The promise of angelic help is not a mere poetic figure. The angels are real and powerful beings whom God sends to minister to His people (34:7; Dan 6:21,22; Acts 12:11; Heb 1:14). The angels can guard these dwellers in God from even small obstacles such as a stone that could cause

against a stone.

- 13 You will tread on the lion and cobra;  
the young lion and the serpent you will  
trample under foot.
- 14 *The LORD* says,  
"Because he has set his love on me,  
I will deliver him.  
I will set him on high,  
because he has known my name.
- 15 He will call on me, and I will answer him.  
I *will be* with him in trouble.  
I will deliver him, and honour him.
- 16 With long life I will satisfy him,  
and show him my salvation."

## 92

A Psalm, a song for the Sabbath day

- 1 *It is* a good *thing* to give thanks to the  
LORD, and to sing praises to your name,  
O Most High,
- 2 To declare your loving kindness in the  
morning,  
and your faithfulness every night,
- 3 On an instrument of ten strings,  
on the lyre, on the harp,

them to stumble and fall.

**91:13** Such a mention of a lion and a serpent brings to mind Satan, a roaring lion going about to devour (1 Pet 5:8), and a serpent full of deadly poison (Rev 12:9). Dwellers in God have power to trample even such a mighty foe under foot. See Luke 10:19,20; Jam 4:7.

**91:14-16** Here God Himself speaks directly through the writer. Notice that the promises here are only for those who truly love God. Such people God will deliver, exalt, answer, protect, honor, and satisfy. The promise of long life is in accordance with other Old Testament promises such as Ex 20:12 and Deut 5:33; 6:2 (this is not an emphasis of the New Testament). Only love God, and the Bible has many great promises for you.

**92 Title:** This is the only one of the psalms specifically stated to be for the Sabbath day (note on Sabbath at Ex 20:8-11). This does not mean that other psalms were not to be read or sung then, but that this one was especially suited for that day. The reason is that it is a psalm of rest and gladness, of praise to God for His works. Verse 4 gives the essence of it. There is no gloom here, no depression, no doubt, no questioning of God's ways. There is only rest of heart, peace of mind, joy in God. This was the real meaning of the Sabbath.

**92:1** On thanksgiving and praise see Lev 7:12,13 (note); Ps 50:14.

**92:2,3** See 89:1,2. God's love and

with a solemn sound.

- 4 For you, LORD, have made me glad through  
your deeds.

I will exult in the works of your hands.

- 5 O LORD, how great are your works!  
*And* your thoughts are very deep.

- 6 A senseless man does not know,  
nor does a fool understand this.

- 7 When the wicked spring up like grass,  
and when all the evildoers flourish,  
*it is* for them to be destroyed forever.

- 8 But you, LORD, *are most* high forevermore.

- 9 For look at your enemies, O LORD,  
for, look, your enemies perish.  
All the evildoers will be scattered.

- 10 But you will exalt my horn like *the horn*  
*of* a wild ox.

I will be anointed with fresh oil.

- 11 My eye will also see *my desire fulfilled*  
on my enemies,

*and* my ears will hear *my desire fulfilled*  
on the wicked who rise up against me.

- 12 The righteous will flourish like the palm tree;  
he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

- 13 Those who are planted in the house of the  
LORD will flourish in the courts of our God.

- 14 They will still bring forth fruit in old age;  
they will be fresh and flourishing,

faithfulness are the twin themes of many scriptures.

**92:4** A right view of God's works, of God's dealings with mankind, an attitude of complete trust and submission will bring joy and gladness to the believer (4:7; 9:1,2; 21:6,7; 64:9,10).

**92:5** See 33:11; 40:5; 111:2; 136:4; 139:17; Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33,34; Rev 15:3.

**92:6** The Hebrew words translated "senseless" and "fool" indicate those who have no spiritual enlightenment, those who because of a love for sin refuse to let God teach them. They have no true moral and ethical understanding.

**92:7** Here is one thing the senseless and foolish do not understand. The very things the wicked pursue and delight in will finally bring them to utter ruin.

**92:8** See 83:18; 93:4; 113:5. There is no need then for believers to worry about the administration of the universe.

**92:9** See 37:20; 73:27; 89:10.

**92:10** See 75:4,5; 89:17; 112:9; Luke 1:69.

**92:11** See 54:7; 91:8.

**92:12-14** In the Bible believers are frequently compared to fruitful vines and trees - 1:3; 52:8; Gen 49:22; Hos 14:5,6; John 15:1-5. Observe some truths here about the righteous.

They will continue to grow spiritually

They are planted in the house of



15 To declare that the LORD is upright.  
*He is my rock, and there is no*  
*unrighteousness in him.*

94

93

- 1 The LORD reigns.  
He is clothed with majesty,  
the LORD is clothed with strength,  
*with which* he has arrayed himself.  
The world also is established,  
so that it cannot be moved.
- 2 Your throne *is* established of old;  
you *are* from everlasting.
- 3 The floods have lifted up, O LORD,  
the floods have lifted up their voice;  
the floods lift up their waves.
- 4 The LORD on high is mightier than the  
noise of many waters,  
*yes, than* the mighty waves of the sea.
- 5 Your testimonies are very sure.  
Holiness makes your house beautiful,  
O LORD, forever.

God– that is, they have their roots in holy ground and grow up in God’s fellowship, surrounded by a holy atmosphere  
Even in old age they are spiritually vigorous and productive  
The essence of their message is not their own righteousness but God’s.

**92:15** “Rock” – note at Deut 32:4.  
“No unrighteousness” – Rom 9:14; 1 John 1:5.  
**93:1** 96:10; 97:1; 99:1. The theme of this psalm is given in the preceding one (92:8) – the LORD (Jehovah) God, the God of Israel, is the Creator and Ruler of the universe.  
**93:2** See 45:6; 90:2; Lam 5:19; Heb 1:8,9.  
**93:3,4** Jehovah God is able to control all forces of nature, and all the turbulent uproar of nations (sometimes compared to floods and to waters – 18:4; Isa 59:19; Jer 46:7,8; 47:2; Rev 17:15).  
**93:5** See 19:7. The author here moves from the subject of God’s rule over creation to His revelation in the Bible. The Bible is where God reveals the facts about His kingdom and sets forth the principles of His rule. And holiness is the beauty of His house – 29:2; 96:9; 1 Cor 3:17.  
**94:1** The author, who is unknown to us, was suffering under the oppression of wicked people in places of authority and disturbed at the perversion of justice in the nation. The rule of the people was in the hands of evil men (v 20), who crushed God’s people (v 5), and murdered the weak and helpless (v 6). So he prays that God will take vengeance on them. This is not a prayer that is

- 1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongs;  
O God, to whom vengeance belongs,  
shine forth!
- 2 Rise up, O judge of the earth!  
 mete out repayment to the proud!
- 3 LORD, how long will the wicked,  
how long will the wicked triumph?
- 4 *How long* will they speak *and* say hard things,  
*and* all the evildoers boast of themselves?
- 5 They break your people in pieces,  
O LORD, and afflict your inheritance.
- 6 They kill the widow and the foreigner,  
and murder the fatherless.
- 7 Yet they say, “The LORD does not see,  
the God of Jacob does not pay  
attention to it.”
- 8 Understand, you senseless among the  
people.  
And *you* fools, when will you be wise?
- 9 He who planted the ear, does he not hear?  
He who formed the eye, does he not see?

prompted by a desire for personal vengeance. It is prompted by desire for justice to prevail and for the persecuted to be rescued. Vengeance must be left to God to work out in His time and way (Ex 21:23-25; Num 31:2; Nahum 1:2,7; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30,31).  
**94:2** Here is a name of God. He is one who will judge the world – 58:11; Gen 18:25; Acts 17:31.  
**94:3** See 6:3; 74:10; 90:13.  
**94:4** Notice the link between evil ways and boasting (10:3; 52:1).  
**94:5** Believers are God’s people, God’s inheritance. Will He forever let them be crushed? Absolutely not.  
**94:6** According to the law of God, the people of Israel were to show special compassion for widows, strangers, and orphans – Ex 22:21,22; Deut 10:18,19; 14:28,29; 24:19,20; 27:19. Instead, these wicked rulers murdered them.  
**94:7** See 10:11; 14:1. The wicked are atheists at heart no matter how pious and religious they may try to appear. They suppress the truth about the one true and holy God, and would like to deny Him altogether.  
**94:8-11** The author points out the extreme folly of godless unbelievers. They may be highly educated and look down on humble believers, but they are fools, and believers have far more reason to look down on them (though they should not do so). Can these unbelievers think of the human ear, that marvelous instrument of hearing, and imagine that it had no Maker, or that He is deaf? And that wonderful instrument of vision, the human eye – only the fool can

- 10 He who corrects the nations,  
does he not judge *rightly*?  
He who teaches man knowledge,  
*does he not know*?
- 11 The LORD knows the thoughts of man,  
that they *are* futile.
- 12 Blessed *is* the man whom you discipline,  
O LORD, and teach from your law,
- 13 That you may give him rest from the days  
of trouble, until the pit has been  
dug for the wicked.
- 14 For the LORD will not cast away his people,  
he will not forsake his inheritance.
- 15 But judgment will return to righteousness,  
and all the upright in heart will follow it.
- 16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?  
*Or* who will stand up for me against  
those who do evil?
- 17 Unless the LORD *had been* my help,  
my soul would soon have dwelt in silence.
- 18 When I said, "My foot is slipping,"  
your mercy, O LORD, held me up.
- 19 In my many anxieties within me,  
your comforts delight my soul.
- 20 Will the throne of wickedness,  
which creates trouble by law,  
have fellowship with you?

think it had no Maker or that its Maker is unable to see. And can man, proud of his little scraps of knowledge, imagine that God has none at all? God punishes whole nations; can He not deal with these wicked individuals? The vanity and wickedness of man's thoughts! When a man thinks God is nothing he becomes nothing himself.

**94:12-15** Now the tone of the psalm changes. The writer expresses his quiet confidence in God. God, he is sure, has a loving purpose in the troubles that have come from wicked men. God will use those troubles to chastise and teach him (v 12), and in spite of them all give rest of heart (v 13). And God will restore righteous judgment to the people (v 15).

**94:12** Here is a wonderful truth (Deut 8:5; Job 5:17; Ps 119:71,171; Prov 3:11,12; Heb 12:5,6). God's chastening is painful, but we should welcome that which does us so much good.

**94:13** Men dig pits to catch wild beasts. The wicked, like wild beasts, try to tear God's sheep, and so pits will be dug for them to fall into.

**94:14** See 37:28; 1 Sam 12:22; Lam 3:31; Rom 11:2; Heb 13:5.

**94:15** See 97:2; Isa 42:3; Micah 7:9.

**94:16** Ex 32:26.

**94:17** He means he would be dead if the Lord had not helped him.

**94:18** See 38:16; 73:2.

**94:19** Anxious thoughts will naturally come to us in times of trouble and injustice, but

- 21 They gather themselves together against  
the soul of the righteous,  
and condemn innocent blood.
- 22 But the LORD is my defense,  
and my God *is* my rock of refuge.
- 23 And he will bring on them their own evil,  
and will cut them off in their own wickedness;  
*yes*, the LORD our God will cut them off.

# 95

- 1 Oh come, let us sing to the LORD!  
Let us make a joyful sound to the rock  
of our salvation!
- 2 Let us come before his presence with  
thanksgiving,  
and make a joyful sound to him with psalms.
- 3 For the LORD *is* the great God,  
and the great King above all gods.
- 4 In his hand *are* the deep places of the earth;  
the heights of the hills also *are* his.
- 5 The sea *is* his, and he made it;  
and his hands formed the dry *land*.
- 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down!  
Let us kneel before the LORD our maker!
- 7 For he *is* our God,

we do not need to be overcome by them. God wants us to have joy in trials and difficulties.

**94:20,21** Sometimes rulers make laws that enable them to oppress people and work evil. God has no part in such regimes.

**94:22** "Defense" - 18:2; 31:3; 71:3.

"Rock" - Deut 32:4.

**94:23** 7:16; 140:9,11; Deut 32:35.

**95:1,2** Judging from Heb 4:7 David wrote this psalm. Of course, the true author of this psalm (and all the psalms) is God's Holy Spirit (see Heb 3:7; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). There are three interwoven themes in this psalm - a call to worship the true God, reasons why His people should worship Him, and a warning against hardening our hearts. Joy, singing, and worship are natural results of a proper spiritual relationship with God (66:1,2; 81:1; Eph 5:19,20). True worship is not in mere outward form; it flows from a heart made right with God (John 4:23,24).

**95:3-7** The writer gives good reasons why God's people should worship Him. He knew that they needed encouragement and exhortation to do what they should do. The reasons he gives for worship are these:

Jehovah God is great, therefore He is greatly worthy of worship;

He is the King of the universe, higher than all else that is called God or god;

He is the Creator of the world and mankind - the rivers, hills, and mountains where other gods are sometimes worshiped were

and we *are* the people of his pasture,  
and the sheep of his hand.  
Today if you will hear his voice,  
8 "Do not harden your heart,  
as in the time of provocation,  
and as in the day of testing in the  
wilderness,  
9 When your fathers tested me,  
put me on trial, and saw my work.  
10 Forty years long I was grieved with *that*  
generation, and said,  
'It *is* a people who go astray in their heart,  
and they have not known my ways';  
11 To whom I swore in my wrath that they  
would not enter my rest."

96

- 1 Oh sing to the LORD a new song!  
Sing to the LORD, all the earth!
- 2 Sing to the LORD, praise his name,  
speak forth his salvation from day to day.
- 3 Declare his glory among the nations,

all made by Him;  
He has a special relationship to His people – they can say "He is *our* God, we are His people, His sheep under His care."  
Surely these are sufficient reasons why His people should sing to Him joyfully and praise Him with heart, soul, mind, and strength.  
**95:8-11** Now he gives a severe warning. But what connection does it have with the foregoing exhortation to joyfully worship God? It seems to be this: if God's people are reluctant to worship Him, if there is no longer any joy in His presence or any recognition of His greatness and goodness, it indicates a hardening of their hearts. There may be danger of them becoming like their ancestors in the desert who continually murmured and complained against God, but rarely worshiped Him with joy. For Meribah and Massah see Ex 17:2-7; Num 20:13; Deut 6:16. Meribah means quarreling, Massah means testing. In the desert Israel tested God instead of trusting Him – 78:18; Num 14:22; 1 Cor 10:9.  
**95:10** On God's anger against them see Num 14:26-35; Josh 5:6; Acts 13:18; Heb 3:10,17. Their habitually went astray – they were wanderers both in the desert and in heart. Wandering in heart came first. If they had not wandered away from God there they would not have had to wander in the desert. Above all things men should keep their hearts – Prov 4:23. If we go astray in our hearts we will go astray in everything.  
**95:11** Carefully observe the result of hardness of heart and the unbelief which accompanies it.

his wonders among all peoples.  
4 For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be praised.  
He *is* to be feared above all gods.  
5 For all the gods of the nations *are* idols, but the LORD made the heavens.  
6 Honour and majesty *are* before him. Strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.  
7 Ascribe to the LORD, O you families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.  
8 Ascribe to the LORD the glory *due to* his name.  
Bring an offering and come into his courts.  
9 Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!  
Tremble before him, all the earth.  
10 Say among the nations *that* the LORD reigns.  
The world also is established so that it will not be moved.  
He will judge the people righteously.  
11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad.

**96:1** Most of the words of this psalm are included in a larger one recorded in 1 Chronicles chapter 16. A new song indicates a new thing that God has done or will do. This psalm is addressed to "all the earth", so this new work of God is related to the world at large and not just to the nation Israel.  
**96:2** The first reason for this new song is this: God's salvation is made available to all the world. This looks forward to a time future to David's day. For this salvation surely means the salvation the Lord Jesus provided by His death on the cross and which He told His disciples to preach in all the world (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47,48).  
**96:3** See 145:10-12; John 1:14; Acts 3:13; 2 Cor 3:7-11; 4:6. The glory of God is revealed in Christ and in Him God performed the wonderful deeds of reconciliation, resurrection, and the ascension. These wonders are now being declared among all nations.  
**96:4** See 95:3.  
**96:5** One immense difference between the LORD (Jehovah) God and all others called gods is just this: He is the mighty Creator, they are idols created by men and without power. See 96:5; 115:4-11.  
**96:6** See 27:4; 50:2; 93:1; 104:1.  
**96:7,8** He is saying that all peoples of earth should cast their idols to the winds and ascribe glory to the only one worthy of it.  
**96:9** See 29:2. Holiness is beautiful. Sin is ugly.  
"Tremble" – 2:11; 33:8; 114:7; Isa 66:2.  
**96:10-13** Here is another reason for the new song he urges the nations to sing – the

Let the sea, and its fulness, roar.  
12 Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* in it.  
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice  
13 Before the LORD.  
For he comes, for he comes to judge  
the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the people with his truth.

97

- 1 The LORD reigns!  
May the earth rejoice!  
May the multitude of islands be glad!
- 2 Clouds and darkness *are* around him.  
Righteousness and justice *are* the  
foundation of his throne.
- 3 A fire goes before him and burns up his  
enemies all around.
- 4 His lightnings lit up the world.  
The earth saw and trembled.
- 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence  
of the LORD,  
at the presence of the Lord of the  
whole earth.

judgment of God and His just rule over all the earth. This is a prophecy to be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ (Isa 2:1-4; 11:1-10). Then creation itself will be released from bondage and shout for joy (Rom 8:19-22). Observe that the coming of the LORD (Jehovah) in the Old Testament is the coming of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament. That is, Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See also 23:1; 24:7-10; 96:10-13; Gen 16:7; Ex 3:14; Isa 6:1; Zech 12:10. The following three psalms are on this same theme – the coming of Jehovah to rule as King over the whole earth. **97:1** The opening words could be translated “The LORD has become King”, or “The LORD has begun to reign.” Of course, the LORD (Jehovah) is King of the universe and always has been. But this psalm refers to His manifest rule over earth after His coming described in the last verse of the preceding psalm. **97:2-9** In these verses we have the effects of the coming of Jehovah. The picture is one of perfect holiness and justice. Compare these verses with Ex 19:9; Deut 4:11; 1 Kings 8:12; Ps 18:11. “Righteousness” – 89:14; Isa 9:7; 11:4,5; 32:1. **97:3** See 18:8; 50:3; Dan 7:10; Mal 4:1; 2 Thess 1:7,8; Heb 12:29. **97:4** See 18:7; 77:16-18; Ex 19:16; Heb 12:26-28. **97:5** See 46:6; Amos 9:5; Micah 1:4; Nahum 1:5. **97:6** See 19:1-4; 50:6; 89:5.

- 6 The heavens declare his righteousness,  
and all the people see his glory.
- 7 May all those who serve graven images,  
who boast of idols, be put to shame.  
Worship him, all *you* gods.
- 8 Zion heard and was glad,  
and the daughters of Judah rejoiced  
because of your judgments, O LORD.
- 9 For you, LORD, *are* high above all the  
earth.  
You are exalted far above all gods.
- 10 You who love the LORD, hate evil.  
He preserves the souls of his saints.  
He rescues them from the hand of the wicked.
- 11 Light is sown for the righteous,  
and gladness for the upright in heart.
- 12 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous,  
and give thanks at the remembrance of  
his holy name.

98

A Psalm

- 1 Oh, sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done marvellous things.

“Glory” – 98:2; Isa 40:5; 66:18. **97:7** “Shame” – 16:4; Isa 42:17; 44:9,11; Jer 10:14,15; Zech 14:9. This will result when Jehovah reveals Himself as the one true God. The command to the “gods” are spoken in contempt. It does not indicate that these so-called gods are real gods. See 96:5; 115:4-11. **97:8** The above results will bring great joy to the worshipers of the one true God (48:11; Zeph 3:14). “Daughters of Judah” – this is an ambiguous phrase. If we take it literally the meaning is the women of Judah, if we take it as an idiom or figure of speech the meaning is the towns and villages of Judah (see Isa 1:8). **97:10-12** In the light of the above what kind of lives should we live? – Titus 2:11-13; Heb 12:28; 2 Pet 3:10-14. **97:10** “Hate evil” – 34:14; Prov 8:13; Amos 5:15; Rom 12:9; Jude 23. God Himself hates evil (note at Lev 20:7), and there is no evil whatever in Him (1 John 1:5). Those who love God must be prepared for a continual fight against all sin and evil. We must choose either God or evil – we cannot have both. And the more we love God the more we will hate evil and vice versa. **97:11,12** While we wait for the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ He would have us experience light and joy. And for them we should continually give thanks to Him. **98:1** This psalm is very similar to psalm 96. It begins with the same words as that

## 99

- His right hand and his holy arm have  
gotten him the victory.
- 2 The LORD has made known  
his salvation.  
He has openly revealed his righteousness  
in the sight of the nations.
- 3 He has remembered his mercy and his truth  
toward the house of Israel.  
All the ends of the earth have seen the  
salvation of our God.
- 4 Make a joyful sound to the LORD,  
all the earth.  
Make a loud sound, and rejoice,  
and sing praise.
- 5 Sing to the LORD with the harp,  
with the harp and the sound of a psalm;
- 6 With trumpets and the sound of a ram's  
horn make a joyful noise before the  
LORD, the King.
- 7 May the sea and its fulness roar;  
the world, and those who live in it.
- 8 May the floods clap *their* hands,  
may the hills be joyful together
- 9 Before the LORD;  
for he comes to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
and the people with equity.

- 1 The LORD reigns!  
May the peoples tremble!  
He sits *between* the cherubim.  
May the earth be moved!
- 2 The LORD *is* great in Zion,  
and he *is* high above all the peoples.
- 3 May they praise your great and  
awe-inspiring name, *for it is* holy.
- 4 The king's strength also loves justice.  
You have established equity;  
you have ordained justice and  
righteousness in Jacob.
- 5 Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his  
footstool, *for he is* holy.
- 6 Moses and Aaron *were* among his priests,  
and Samuel among those who called on his  
name; they called to the LORD,  
and he answered them.
- 7 He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar.  
They kept his testimonies,  
and the ordinance *that* he gave them.
- 8 You answered them, O LORD our God.  
You were a God who forgave them,  
though you took vengeance on their  
misdeeds.

and has the same theme. The first three verses speak of what God has done, the next three speak of what men should do because of what God has done, and the last three speak of the proper response of the world and mankind at the coming of the LORD (Jehovah).

"Marvelous things" – 40:5; 96:3; 136:4.  
"Right hand" – Ex 15:6; Ps 118:15,16;  
Isa 51:9.

**98:2** Isa 52:10.

**98:3** "Remembered" – Luke 1:54,72.

"Ends of earth" – 22:27.

**98:4-7** To God's wonderful display of victory over evil, of righteous salvation, of grace and faithfulness, these verses give the proper response (66:1; 99:3; 100:1; Isa 44:23). The author exhorts all the earth to sing for joy, because all the earth will at last participate in God's victory and salvation, and experience His righteous rule.

**98:7-9** See 96:11-13.

**99:1** This psalm begins with the same words as psalms 93 and 97 and deals with the same subject – God's reign on the earth. In this psalm the emphasis is somewhat different from the emphasis in those psalms. In this one the holiness of God is mentioned thrice (vs 3,5,9), and His mountain is called holy (v 9). And examples of God's holy and righteous dealings in the past, and of those who rendered to God holy worship are given – vs 6-8.

"Cherubim" – 80:1; Ex 25:22; 1 Sam 4:4.

**99:2** See 48:1; 97:9; 113:4; Isa 12:6.  
**99:3** "Awe-inspiring name" – Deut 28:58;  
Ps 76:1.

"Holy" – Lev 20:7.

**99:4** 11:7; 17:2; 33:5; 98:9; 103:6;  
146:7; Jer 23:5.

**99:5** "Exalt" – 34:3; 107:32; 118:28.  
Footstool here may mean the ark of the covenant or God's temple in Jerusalem (132:7; 1 Chron 28:2; 32:7; Isa 60:13; Lam 2:1).

**99:6** All three of these men acted as priests, though only Aaron was high priest in Israel (Lev 8:13-30; 1 Sam 9:13). All three worshiped and exalted God in the way the writer of this psalm exhorts men to do, and all three called on God and received answers to their prayers (Ex 18:19; 32:11-30; Num 11:2; 14:9; 21:7; Deut 5:5; 9:18,19; 1 Sam 7:9; 12:23; Ps 106:23).

**99:7** "Pillar" – Ex 33:9; Num 12:5. These three were among the few who did obey God.

**99:8,9** See 78:38; Num 14:20. In these verses not only the three mentioned in the preceding verses but the people of Israel are in view. Observe that though God forgave them He also punished them. In other words, chastisement is consistent with forgiveness. God fights against sin no matter where it is found (Ex 32:28; Num 20:12; 2 Sam 12:13,14; see Ps 90:7-12). He is absolutely holy (Ex 15:11; Lev 20:7; Isa 6:3), and we should praise and glorify Him because He is that way.



9 Exalt the LORD our God and worship at his  
holy hill,  
for the LORD our God *is* holy.

His mercy is everlasting, and his truth  
continues to all generations.

# 100

# 101

A Psalm of thanksgiving

A Psalm of David

- 1 Make a joyful sound to the LORD,  
all you lands!
- 2 Serve the LORD with gladness.  
Come before his presence with singing.
- 3 Know that the LORD *is* God.  
*It is he who* has made us,  
and not we ourselves.  
*We are* his people and the sheep of his  
pasture.
- 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,  
*and* into his courts with praise.  
Be thankful to him *and* praise his name.
- 5 For the LORD *is* good.

- 1 I will sing of mercy and justice.  
I will sing to you, O LORD.
- 2 I will conduct myself wisely in a perfect way.  
Oh when will you come to me?  
I will walk in my house with a perfect heart.
- 3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes.  
I hate the deeds of those who turn  
aside. *They* will not cling to me.
- 4 A perverse heart will depart from me.  
I will not become acquainted with  
wickedness.
- 5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbour,  
him I will cut off.  
I will not endure one who has a haughty

**100 Title:** "Thanksgiving" – or "praise." The Hebrew word is usually translated "thanksgiving" in the KJV, as in v 4.

**100:1** This is the last in this series of psalms concerning the reign of the LORD (Jehovah) on the earth. It looks forward to the time when all the peoples of the earth ("all you lands"), and not just Israel, become His people and His sheep. Compare Ex 19:5; Deut 4:20; 7:6; Ps 73:1,2; 79:13; 95:7. This is one of the reasons the writer gives for the joyful thanksgiving and praise which are the theme of this psalm. It is an interesting fact that this is the only psalm which has the title "of thanksgiving," though, of course, many of them contain much thanksgiving to God.

**100:2** Rom 6:12,13; 12:1; 14:17; 15:13.

**100:3** The writer is still addressing the whole earth. Jehovah is not a small god of a little nation. He is the one true God, the Creator of all. He wants all men to know this, for there can be no true service to God, no real joy, without this knowledge. But when all the earth does know this, when all peoples become His people and His sheep, what joy and praise will fill the whole wide earth! (98:3; Isa 11:9; 45:6; Hab 2:14).

**100:4** "Thanksgiving" – 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; Heb 13:15; Rev 11:17.

**100:5** Further great reasons for joy and thanksgiving. The only true God is good, gracious, and faithful, and will remain unchangeably so forever.

**101:1,2** David wrote this psalm, not as a private person, but as king. He had found in the LORD (Jehovah) perfect grace and perfect justice. God knows just when and to whom to show mercy, and just when and whom to judge and punish. Now David

praises Him for that and resolves to strive ever to follow the King of heaven and be blameless in his conduct as the leader of his people and in the administration of the kingdom.

This is a great resolution and one every leader of Christian organizations and churches needs to make before God. David never achieved perfection, but he aimed at it. It is far better to aim at perfection and miss it than to aim at imperfection and achieve it. See the prayer in the midst of the resolution. He knew that if his resolution was to stand and produce fruit he needed God's presence and power with him. "Perfect" – or "blameless" or "with complete integrity."

**101:3-8** David resolved that he would keep himself from all evil and would not permit evil persons to serve in the palace or in the administration of the kingdom. He would choose only those who were faithful to God, people of integrity. He refused to select anyone as workers, ministers, or administrators simply because they were relatives or friends, or of the same tribe or community. He knew how ruinous nepotism can be, how it leads to corruption and abuse of power. No matter who people were, if they were evil, slanderers, proud, deceitful, or liars they had no part in his work or kingdom. Today we need such wise, holy, and determined leaders.

**101:3** No vain or wicked thing would be a model for him. He refused even to contemplate such. And he was aware that when we come into contact with evil it can stick to us (1 Cor 15:33). So he kept his distance from evil men and evil deeds.

**101:4** Prov 11:20.

**101:5** See 15:3; 50:20; Prov 10:18; Jer 6:28. As the leader of God's people David

look and a proud heart.

6 My eyes *will* be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me.

The one who walks in a perfect way, he will serve me.

7 He who acts deceitfully will not dwell in my house.

He who tells lies will not remain in my sight.

8 Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land, so that I may cut off all evildoers from the city of the LORD.

## 102

A prayer of the afflicted,  
when he is overwhelmed and pours  
out his complaint before the LORD

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD,  
and let my cry come to you.

2 Do not hide your face from me in the day

I am in trouble,  
*but* bow down your ear to me.

In the day I call, answer me speedily.

3 For my days are consumed like smoke,  
and my bones are burned like a hearth.

4 My heart is beaten down and withered like  
grass,  
so that I forget to eat my bread.

5 Because of the sound of my groaning my  
bones cling to my skin.

6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness.

I am like an owl of the desert.

7 I lie awake, and am like a sparrow alone  
on the housetop.

8 My enemies taunt me all day long,  
*and* those who act like madmen against  
me swear *an oath* against me.

9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,  
and mixed my drink with weeping,

10 Because of your indignation and your wrath.  
For you have lifted me up and

considered that a slanderer or a proud man should have no place in God's work – see also 10:4; 18:27; Prov 6:17; 21:4; 30:13; Isa 2:11.

**101:6** Faithfulness to God and blamelessness of life were the two qualifications David looked for. To him they were more important than talent, intellect, strength, courage, or any other such quality. If a person did not have integrity he had no place in David's work.

**101:7** See 5:6; 52:2-5; Prov 6:16-19. If liars and deceivers were not fit for David's palace how much less fit are they for the palace of the heavenly King! If David would not have them near him can we vainly imagine that God will? See 15:1-3; 24:3,4; Rev 21:8,23-27; 22:14,15.

**101:8** Court was held in the morning and judgment given. David was determined to rid the nation of evil doers. For sins that required the death penalty under the law see note at Ex 21:36. It is a very sad thing that sins which were considered worthy of death under the law of Moses are often viewed with complacency in some Christian circles and nothing is done about them. Often this is not because leaders want to show God's grace, but because they abuse His grace.

Of course, it is not the business of the church to execute the death penalty for offenses against God's law. But it the business of the church to try to keep itself pure and holy, and to maintain standards of integrity. God's heavenly city is a holy place prepared for a holy people. This was David's desire for the earthly city of Jerusalem. Dare we desire it less for the church and Christian organizations?

**102 Title:** The author was passing through an experience of deep grief when he wrote this, and in vs 1-11 he expresses this sorrow in very picturesque language. His sadness is tied up altogether with the ruined condition of Jerusalem (vs 13,14. Compare Lam 1:1-13; 2:1,2; 3:1-6; Luke 19:41-44). Verses 25-27 of this psalm are quoted in Heb 1:10-12, and applied to the Lord Jesus. So this can be called a Messianic psalm. One theme of it is the future restoration of Jerusalem – vs 15,21, 22. In this regard this psalm is similar to psalms 95 - 100.

All this will happen when the LORD (Jehovah) appears in glory – v 16. This refers to the coming of God's kingdom. But before that wonderful time comes there will be much sorrow and affliction for the people of God, as appears in the opening verses of this psalm. And there will be earnest prayers that the kingdom of God might come (Matt 6:10).

**102:2** See 10:1; 13:1; 17:6; 18:6; 27:9; 31:2; 56:9; 66:13; 71:2.

**102:3** See 6:2; 31:10; 35:10; 37:20; 42:10.

**102:4** See 90:5,6; 37:2; Job 33:20; Ezra 10:6.

**102:5** See 22:14,17; Job 19:20.

**102:6,7** Indicates loneliness and desolation of heart.

**102:8** See 31:11; 42:10.

**102:9** Ashes are symbolic of mourning (2 Sam 13:19; Esther 4:1,3; Job 2:8; 42:6). This may mean that the ashes on which he sat or poured on his head became mixed with his food. Or perhaps he is using the word metaphorically.

"Weeping" – 42:3; 80:5.

**102:10** He traces his sorrow and affliction to God's anger. See note at Ps 90:7-11.

thrown me down.

11 My days *are* like a lengthening shadow,  
and I am withered like grass.

12 But you, O LORD, will remain forever,  
*and* the remembrance of you to all  
generations.

13 You will arise *and* have mercy on Zion,  
for the time to favour her,  
yes, the set time, has come.

14 For your servants take pleasure in her  
stones,  
and favour to its dust.

15 So the nations will fear the name of the LORD,  
and all the kings of the earth your glory.

16 For the LORD will build Zion;  
he will appear in his glory.

17 He will have regard for the prayer of the  
destitute,  
and will not despise their prayer.

18 This will be written for the generation  
to come;  
and the people who are yet to be  
created will praise the LORD.

19 For he looked down from the height of his  
sanctuary;

from heaven the LORD saw the earth,

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner,  
to free those who are dying,

21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion,

and his praise in Jerusalem,

22 When the peoples and the kingdoms are  
gathered together to serve the LORD.

23 He brought down my strength in the way;  
he shortened my days.

24 I said, "O my God, do not take me away  
in the midst of my days;  
your years *are* throughout all generations.

25 Of old you laid the foundation of the earth,  
and the heavens *are* the work of your  
hands.

26 They will perish, but you will remain;  
yes, all of them will become old like  
a garment;  
like a cloak you will change them,  
and they will be changed.

27 But you *are* the same,  
and your years will have no end.

28 The children of your servants will continue,  
and their offspring will be established  
before you."

## 103

A Psalm of David

1 Praise the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,

**102:11** See 109:23; Job 14:2. An evening shadow is soon gone, swallowed up in night's darkness.

"Grass" – 90:5,6; 103:15.

**102:12-28** With v 12 the tone of the psalm changes. The writer has spoken of the brevity of his own life. Now he speaks of God's eternal being. And thinking of God's greatness brings hope and assurance to his sad heart. He knows things will change, that God has a wonderful plan which He will fulfill.

**102:12** See 9:7; 10:16; 135:13; Ex 3:15; Lam 5:19; Rev 11:15.

**102:13** Isa 54:8,10; 60:10,11; Zech 1:16,17; 2:10,11.

**102:14** Stones and dust mean the city's ruins.

**102:15** See 138:4; 72:11; Isa 59:19,20.

**102:16** See 147:2; Isa 60:1,2.

**102:17** See 22:24; 31:22; 69:33.

**102:18** Deut 31:19; Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11.

**102:19** See 14:2; 53:2; Deut 26:15.

**102:20** See 79:11; 107:10-13; 146:7; Ex 2:23-25; Luke 4:17-20.

**102:21,22** For complete fulfillment these words still look to the future.

**102:23** See 39:5; 89:45.

**102:24** The writer longs to live until he sees the restoration of Zion, the fulfillment of his own words.

**102:25-27** According to the inspired writer

to the Hebrews (Heb 1:10-12) these words were spoken to the Lord Jesus before His incarnation. In the Hebrew of v 24 there is the usual Old Testament word for God. This is further proof that the writers of the New Testament regarded Jesus as God, the incarnation of Jehovah of the Old Testament, the great Creator of the universe.

**102:25** Gen 1:1; John 1:1-3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:10.

**102:26** Isa 34:4; 51:6; Matt 24:35; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 20:11. Creation is like a garment God wears. Clothing speaks of someone who made it or who wears it. Those who worship creation, the sun, moon, stars, or any other material object, are occupied, not with God, but with garments which are getting old and will perish.

**102:27** See Isa 41:4; 43:10; Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8.

**102:28** See 69:36; 89:4. Because God is eternal, His children, though on earth frail and soon to pass away, can safely trust Him to fulfill His word and His plans.

**103:1** "Praise" – seems a better translation than "Bless." See Hebrews 7:7. This is a hymn on God's goodness. The theme, given in v 8, is based on God's revelation of Himself in Ex 34:6. David wanted the praise he offered to such a good God to be inward, sincere, overflowing from the heart. On

*praise* his holy name.

- 2 Praise the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits;
- 3 Who forgives all your sins;  
who heals all your diseases;
- 4 Who redeems your life from destruction;  
who crowns you with loving kindness and  
tender mercies;
- 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*,  
*so that* your youth is renewed like  
the eagle's.
- 6 The LORD administers righteousness and  
justice for all who are oppressed.
- 7 He made known his ways to Moses,  
his acts to the children of Israel.
- 8 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious,  
slow to get angry,  
and has abundant mercy.
- 9 He will not always contend,  
nor will he retain *his anger* forever.
- 10 He has not dealt with us according to our  
sins,

- or repaid us according to our evil deeds.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the  
earth,  
*so* great is his mercy toward those who  
fear him.
  - 12 As far as the east is from the west,  
*so* far he has removed our  
transgressions from us.
  - 13 Like a father pities *his* children,  
*so* the LORD pities those who fear him.
  - 14 For he knows how we are formed,  
he remembers that *we are* dust.
  - 15 *As for* man, his days *are* like grass.  
He flourishes like a flower of the field.
  - 16 For the wind passes over it,  
and it is gone,  
and its place remembers it no more.
  - 17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from  
everlasting to everlasting on those  
who fear him,  
and his righteousness to children's children,
  - 18 To those who keep his covenant,

praise see note on 33:1-3.

**103:2** Deut 4:9; 6:12; 8:11. Forgetfulness of God's benefits is a great fault and will rob us of much joy and consolation.

**103:3-5** To inspire his praise David meditates on five ways in these three verses in which God has shown His grace toward him. God forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, and satisfies. Of course this list is not exhaustive (40:5).

**103:3** "Forgives" - 86:5; 130:8; Ex 34:7; Isa 43:25; Matt 12:31; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9. Forgiveness is the foundation blessing. Without it all other blessings lose much of their value. What are health, wealth, vigor, or satisfaction of desires, if we do not obtain God's forgiveness? if we enjoy them only for a little while and then perish forever?

"Heals" - 30:2; Ex 15:26; Matt 9:35. This was David's personal experience. It is not a promise that God will always heal every disease of every person. But there is such a thing as God's healing which can be received by faith (Matt 9:28,29; Jam 5:14-16).

**103:4** "Redeems" - note on God as Redeemer at 78:35.

"Destruction" signifies death, or possibly the unseen world of darkness and punishment, or both, and Jehovah God alone can save from them (16:10; 49:15; 56:13; Heb 2:14,15).

"Crowns" - 8:5. God gives far better crowns than any kingdom of earth can offer.

**103:5** "Satisfies" - see 21:2; 37:4; 145:19; Matt 7:7,8; Isa 40:31.

**103:6-18** Now David considers God's goodness to the nation Israel, indeed to all who fear Him.

**103:6** See 12:5; 99:4; 146:7.

**103:7** Moses prayed to learn God's ways and God answered him (Ex 33:13). The people

because of unbelief and rebellion learned only God's acts and these they speedily forgot (78:11; 106:13). Like Moses we should pray that God will teach us His ways so that we will have some understanding of His acts (25:4; 27:11; 86:11) - not that we can ever on this earth learn all of God's ways (Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33).

**103:8** Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 145:8; Lam 3:22; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Matt 9:36; Jam 5:11.

**103:9** See 30:5; Isa 57:16; Jer 3:5,12; Micah 7:18.

**103:10** Ezra 9:13. If God dealt with us according to our sins we would all be in hell and not one of us would escape.

**103:11** See 36:5; 57:10. David meant an immeasurable distance, as he does also in the next verse.

**103:12** Isa 38:17; 43:25; 44:22; Jer 50:20; Micah 7:19; Heb 9:26.

**103:13** The fatherhood of God spoken of in a small measure in the Old Testament is fully and gloriously revealed in the New Testament (68:5; 1 Chron 22:10; Isa 9:6; Matt 6:4,8,9; John 1:14,18; Rom 8:15; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:14,15; 4:6). God has the nature all fathers should have but which many do not. He is loving, compassionate and understanding, and He considers the welfare of His children above all else.

**103:14** See 78:39; Gen 3:19; Eccl 12:7.

**103:15** See 90:5; Isa 40:6; Jam 1:10,11; 1 Pet 1:24.

**103:16** Job 7:10; 8:18; 20:9; Isa 40:7.

**103:17** David contrasts man's frailty and brief life with God's eternal being and perpetual favor (25:6; John 10:29; 1 Pet 1:3-5).

**103:18** All the benefits mentioned in this psalm are for a certain type of people - those who fear God (vs 11,13), and those

and to those who remember his  
commandments, to do them.  
19 The LORD has prepared his throne in the  
heavens,  
and his kingdom rules over all.  
20 Praise the LORD, you his angels,  
who excel in strength,  
who do what he says,  
listening to the voice of his word.  
21 Praise the LORD, all his hosts,  
*you* ministers of his, who fulfil his pleasure.  
22 Praise the LORD, all his works in all  
places of his dominion.  
Praise the LORD, O my soul.

# 104

1 Praise the LORD, O my soul.  
O LORD my God, you are very great.  
You are clothed with honour and majesty,  
2 *You* who cover *yourself* with light as  
*with* a garment,  
who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.  
3 He lays the beams of his chambers in the  
waters.  
He makes the clouds his chariot.  
He walks on the wings of the wind.  
4 He makes his angels spirits,  
his ministers a flaming fire.  
5 *He* laid the foundations of the earth,

*so that* it would never be moved.  
6 You cover it with the deep as *with* a  
garment.  
The waters stood above the mountains.  
7 At your rebuke they fled;  
at the sound of your thunder they  
hurried away.  
8 They went up over the mountains;  
they went down by the valleys to the  
place which you founded for them.  
9 You have set a boundary that they may not  
pass over,  
so that they do not turn back to cover  
the earth.  
10 He sends water from the springs into the  
valleys,  
*which* runs among the hills.  
11 They provide drink to every beast of the  
field;  
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.  
12 The birds of the heavens have their nests  
by them,  
singing among the branches.  
13 He waters the hills from his chambers.  
The earth is filled with the fruit of  
your works.  
14 He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,  
and plants for the service of man,  
so that he may bring food out of the earth,  
15 And wine *that* makes the heart of man glad,  
*and* oil to make *his* face shine,  
and bread *which* strengthens man's heart.

who obey Him. If we do not revere God and attempt to be obedient to Him it is useless for us to try to claim the blessings He gives. For notes on the fear of God see 34:11-14; 111:10; Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Prov 1:7.  
**103:19-22** God is so great, so good, the universal sovereign – 47:2. Therefore David exhorts the whole of creation to praise Him.  
**103:19** See 11:4; 47:2,8; Isa 66:1; Dan 4:17,25; Matt 5:34; Rev 4:2.  
**103:20** See 68:17; 91:11; 104:4; Gen 16:7 (note).  
**103:22** David returns to the opening word of the psalm. He will not urge others to do what he will not do himself.  
**104:1** This is a hymn to the Creator of the world. It is a song of pure praise and joy. The writer does not ask God for anything for himself. He only wants his meditation to be acceptable to God. In its main outline the psalm follows the story of creation given in the first chapter of Genesis. One difference between this psalm and that chapter is that the creation there is in the past, here it is still going on. After God made the world He did not withdraw somewhere and cease His work forever. True, He ceased to work on the seventh day (Gen 2:2). But He

resumed His activities and still works (John 5:17). He is not an idle God. This is clearly seen in this psalm. The Creator continually sustains and renews His creation.  
As we see in v 2 the splendid garment of God is the light (compare Dan 7:9; Mark 9:2,3; 1 Tim 6:16; Rev 1:14-16). God Himself is invisible to the eye of flesh, but His glory is revealed in His creation by means of light.  
**104:2-4** This is based on Gen 1:3-8.  
**104:2** Isa 40:22.  
**104:3** See 18:9,10; Isa 19:1; Amos 9:6.  
**104:4** See 148:8; Heb 1:7; 2 Kings 2:11; 6:17.  
**104:5-9** This is based on Gen 1:9,10.  
**104:5** See 24:2; Job 38:4.  
**104:6** Gen 1:2.  
**104:7,8** Gen 1:9.  
**104:9** Job 38:10,11; Jer 5:22.  
**104:10-18** This is based on Gen 1:11,12, 20,24,27.  
**104:10** See 107:35; Isa 41:18.  
**104:11** Job 39:5.  
**104:12** Matt 6:26; 8:20.  
**104:13** See 65:9; 147:8; Jer 10:13.  
**104:14,15** See 147:8; Job 38:27; Acts 14:17.



- 16 The trees of the LORD are full of *sap*;  
the cedars of Lebanon which he has  
planted,  
17 Where the birds make their nests.  
*As for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her  
house.  
18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild  
goats,  
*and* the rocks for the rock badgers.  
19 He appointed the moon for seasons.  
The sun knows its going down.  
20 You make darkness, and it is night,  
in which all the beasts of the  
forest creep *forth*.  
21 The young lions roar after their prey,  
and seek their food from God.  
22 The sun rises; they gather together,  
and lie down in their dens.  
23 Man goes forth to his work and to his  
labour until the evening.  
24 O LORD, how manifold are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all.  
The earth is full of your riches.  
25 *So is* this great and wide sea,  
in which *teem* innumerable things,  
both small and great creatures.  
26 There go the ships.

- There is* that leviathan,  
*which* you have made to play there.  
27 These all wait on you, that you may give  
*them* their food in due season.  
28 They gather *what* you give them.  
You open your hand; they are satisfied  
with good *things*.  
29 You hide your face; they are troubled.  
You take away their breath; they die,  
and return to their dust.  
30 You send forth your Spirit,  
they are created, and you renew the  
face of the earth.  
31 The glory of the LORD will remain forever.  
The LORD will rejoice in his works.  
32 He looks on the earth, and it trembles.  
He touches the hills, and they smoke.  
33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live.  
I will sing praise to my God while I  
have my being.  
34 My meditation of him will be sweet.  
I will be glad in the LORD.  
35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the  
earth,  
and let the wicked be no more.  
Praise the LORD, O my soul!  
Praise the LORD!

**104:16** They are called the trees of the Lord because He originally planted them and caused them to grow.

**104:17,18** God made a place for each animal and put each animal in its place.

**104:19-23** This is based on Gen 1:14-18.

**104:19,20** See 19:6; 74:16; Isa 45:7.

**104:21** See 145:15; Job 38:39; Joel 1:20.

**104:23** Gen 3:19.

**104:24-26** This is based on Gen 1:21.

**104:24** 136:5; Prov 3:19; Jer 10:12; 51:15; Rev 4:11.

**104:26** "Leviathan" – see 74:14; Job 41:1; Isa 27:1.

**104:27-30** All animals, fish, and birds are dependent on God for life and food. God ceaselessly provides, continually creates and renews.

**104:27** Job 36:31; 38:41; Ps 136:25; 145:15; 147:9.

**104:29** "Hide" – 30:7; Deut 31:27.

"Take away" – 146:4; Job 34:14,15.

**104:30** Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ezek 37:9.

**104:31-35** The keynote here is joy – both God and men rejoicing in creation.

**104:31** Gen 1:31.

**104:32** See 97:4,5; 114:7; Jud 5:5; Hab 3:10.

**104:33** See 63:4; 146:2. While men praise unworthy objects and gods of wood and stone (Dan 5:4; Rev 9:20), Bible believers praise the great Creator of the universe.

**104:34** "Meditation" – 19:14.

"Be glad" – this is true spiritual joy – God rejoices in His believers, they rejoice in Him.

**104:35** In the whole of earth's creation, and in this whole psalm, the only thing that mars, the only sad note, is found here. Sinners pollute and ruin God's creation. They have proved themselves completely unworthy of it (Isa 24:5). Therefore the writer expresses the desire that they be removed from it. He wants creation made perfect again and holy. We know from the last chapter of the Bible that this will take place.

"Praise the LORD" – in Hebrew "Hallelu Yah." Yah is often used in Hebrew for Jehovah (Yahweh).

**105:1-7** This psalm reveals God's sovereignty over both the history of Israel and the acts of sinful men. Notice carefully how God was involved in ruling over everything – vs 14, 16, 17, 24, 25, 26, etc. He was continually at work to fulfill His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – vs 8-10. We might say this is the psalm concerning God's covenant with Abraham, just as psalm 89 is the psalm of His covenant with David. Like psalms 78 and 106 this one deals with history. Psalm 78 was given chiefly for the purpose of teaching and exhortation. Psalm 106 is a confession of Israel's many sins. But this psalm rejoices in the mighty acts of the LORD (Jehovah) God and there is no mention at all of the sin of Israel. The first 15 verses are found in 1 Chron 16:8-22. From that reference we may judge that David wrote it.

In the introduction (vs 1-7) David sets forth seven duties or privileges of God's

105

- 1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD.  
Call on his name.  
Make his deeds known among the people.
- 2 Sing to him, sing psalms to him.  
Talk of all his wonderful works.
- 3 Glory in his holy name.  
May the heart of those who seek the LORD rejoice.
- 4 Seek the LORD, and his strength.  
Seek his face always.
- 5 Remember his marvellous works that he has done,  
his wonders and the judgments of his mouth,
- 6 O you offspring of his servant Abraham,  
you children of Jacob his chosen one.
- 7 He *is* the LORD our God.  
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
- 8 He remembers his covenant forever,  
the word *which* he commanded,  
for a thousand generations,
- 9 The *covenant* he made with Abraham,  
and his oath to Isaac.
- 10 And he confirmed *it* to Jacob as a law,  
to Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,

- 11 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan,  
the portion of your inheritance,"
- 12 When they were *only* a few men in number,  
yes, very few, and foreigners in it.
- 13 When they went from one nation to another,  
from *one* kingdom to another people,
- 14 He did not allow anyone to wrong them;  
yes, he rebuked kings for their sakes,
- 15 *Saying*, "Do not touch my anointed,  
and do my prophets no harm."
- 16 Moreover, he summoned a famine to the land.  
He destroyed the whole supply of bread.
- 17 He sent a man before them, Joseph,  
*who* was sold as a servant,
- 18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters.  
He was put in irons,
- 19 Until the time that his word came.  
The word of the LORD tested him.
- 20 The king sent and released him;  
the ruler of the people *sent* and let him go free.
- 21 He made him master of his house,  
and ruler of all his possessions,
- 22 To bind his princes at his pleasure,  
and to teach his elders wisdom.

people -  
Giving thanks,  
Praying,  
Making known God's deeds,  
Singing to God or about God,  
Glorying in Him,  
Seeking Him,  
And remembering His wonderful works  
and words.

Following these instructions will result in a healthy spiritual life in any believer.

**105:1** "Give thanks" - 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; note at Lev 7:12,13.

"Call" - 50:15; 91:15; 145:18; Luke 18:1.

"Make. . .known" - 67:2; Matt 28:19,20; Luke 24:46,47.

**105:2** "Sing" - 96:1; 98:5; Eph 5:19.

"Talk" - 9:11; 66:16; 75:9; 96:3.

**105:3** See 13:5; 28:7; 33:21.

**105:4** Note at 27:8.

**105:5,6** Deut 8:2,18; 9:7; 2 Tim 2:8. Though the psalm was originally addressed to the nation of Israel, the physical seed of Abraham, we should not forget that now believers in Christ are the spiritual seed of Abraham (Rom 4:11; Gal 3:29).

**105:7** See 10:5; 36:6; Rom 11:33. Though the majority of the world's people are not aware of it, God's judgments are continually being worked out in the lives of individuals and nations.

**105:8-11** David now begins the main theme of the psalm. For God's covenant with Abraham see Gen 12:7; 17:2,8; 22:16-18; 26:3; 28:13-15.

**105:11** This is a chief part of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The land of Canaan was given to their offspring as their portion forever - Gen 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 2 Chron 20:7.

**105:12,13** When God made the promise to give Canaan to them the nation of Israel was at its beginning. They had no strength to conquer Canaan or any other land, and were like a wandering tribe. Only God could fulfill His promise, not they.

**105:14,15** Gen 12:17; 20:3; 35:5. This refers to the three men Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All were prophets - Gen 20:7; 27:27-29,39,40; 49:1-28.

**105:16** Gen 41:54. The great famine in Joseph's time is here said to have been brought about by God. This does not mean that He causes every famine in every place. Some result from man's doings. But whenever there is a famine men should seek the mercy of the one true God, the Creator of men and rain and soil and seed.

**105:17** Gen 45:5; 50:20,21.

**105:18** Gen 39:20; 40:15.

**105:19** "Came" - here probably means "was fulfilled" - Gen 40:20-22; 41:12-14.

"Tested him" - note at 66:10-12.

**105:20-22** Gen 41:14,40-44.

23 Israel also came into Egypt,  
and Jacob stayed in the land of Ham.  
24 And the *LORD* increased his people greatly,  
and made them stronger than their enemies.  
25 He turned their hearts to hate his people,  
to deal craftily with his servants.  
26 He sent Moses his servant,  
and Aaron whom he had chosen.  
27 They showed his signs among them,  
and wonders in the land of Ham.  
28 He sent darkness, and made it dark;  
and they did not rebel against his word.  
29 He turned their waters into blood,  
and killed their fish.  
30 Their land brought forth frogs in  
abundance, in the rooms of their kings.  
31 He spoke, and various kinds of flies came,  
and lice inside all their borders.  
32 He gave them hail for rain,  
and flaming fire in their land.  
33 He also struck their vines and their fig trees,  
and broke down the trees inside their  
borders.  
34 He spoke, and the locusts came,  
and caterpillars without number,  
35 And they ate up all the plants in their land,  
and devoured the fruit of their ground.  
36 He also struck all the firstborn in their land,  
the first of all their strength.  
37 He also brought the *people* out with  
silver and gold,  
and not one feeble *person was* among  
their tribes.

38 Egypt was glad when they departed,  
for the fear of them had fallen on them.  
39 He spread a cloud as a covering,  
and fire to give light in the night.  
40 *The people* asked, and he brought quail,  
and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.  
41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed  
out.  
They ran in the dry places *like* a river.  
42 For he remembered his holy promise,  
and his servant Abraham.  
43 And he brought out his people with joy,  
and his chosen with gladness,  
44 And gave them the lands of the nations;  
and they inherited the labour of the peoples,  
45 That they might observe his statutes,  
and keep his laws.  
Praise the *LORD*!

106

- 1 Praise the *LORD*!  
Oh, give thanks to the *LORD*,  
for *he is* good,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever.
- 2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the *LORD*?  
*Who* can declare all his praise?
- 3 Blessed *are* those who maintain justice,  
and the one who practices righteousness  
at all times.
- 4 Remember me, O *LORD*, with the favour

**105:23** Gen 46:6.  
**105:24** Ex 1:7,9.  
**105:25** Ex 1:8,10; 4:21. God uses even the hatred and cunning of men for the good of His people and the fulfillment of His purposes.  
**105:26** Ex 3:10; 4:12,14.  
**105:27** See 78:43-51.  
**105:28-36** Exodus chapters 7-12.  
**105:37** Ex 12:35,36.  
**105:38** Ex 12:33; 15:16.  
**105:39** See 78:14; Ex 13:21; Neh 9:12.  
**105:40** Ex 16:12-15; Num 11:31; Neh 9:15; John 6:31.  
**105:41** Ex 17:6; Num 20:11.  
**105:42-44** All God did He did to fulfill His covenant and promises. To do that God would be willing to move heaven and earth.  
**105:45** This was God's command and good purpose in all He did for Israel (Deut 4:1,40). All He has done for believers now is also with this end in view (Rom 14:7-9; Col 3:16,17; 1 John 2:3-6).  
"Praise the *LORD*" - in Hebrew "Hallelu Yah." See note at 104:35.  
**106:1-6** This psalm, like 78 and 105, is a review of the history of Israel, but the

purpose here is different. Here we have a confession of Israel's many sins and a description of how God dealt with them because of their sins. The first 6 verses are an introduction. Then there are alternating portions describing Israel's sins and God's response. In v 7 we see Israel's sins in Egypt, in vs 13-33 their sins in the wilderness, and in vs 34-43 their sins in the land of Canaan. Of all their many sins three are repeated three times - forgetting (vs 7,13,21), rebellion (vs 7,33,43), and idolatry (vs 19,28,36-39).  
The recurring lesson of the psalm is this: when God's people sin they must expect God's chastisement. He is a God of love, mercy and holiness, and so cannot let His people rebel and transgress His laws without punishing and disciplining them. That would be to encourage them to sin, and to ruin their character.  
"Praise the *LORD*" - see note at 104:35.  
**106:1** See 7:17; 100:4,5; 105:1; 107:1; 118:1; 136:1.  
**106:2** See 40:5; 71:15; 139:18.  
**106:3** See 15:2; 24:4; Isa 33:15,16.  
**106:4** See 44:3; 119:132.

- that you have toward your people.*  
 Oh, visit me with your salvation,  
 5 That I may see the good *enjoyed* by your  
   chosen *ones*,  
   that I may rejoice in the gladness of  
   your nation,  
   that I may glory with your inheritance.  
 6 We have sinned along with our fathers.  
   We have done evil.  
   We have acted wickedly.  
 7 Our fathers did not understand your  
   wonders in Egypt.  
   They did not remember your many *deeds*  
   of mercy,  
   but provoked *you* at the sea,  
   at the Red Sea.  
 8 Nevertheless, he saved them for his  
   name's sake,  
   so that he might make his mighty power  
   known.  
 9 He also rebuked the Red Sea, and it was  
   dried up;  
   so he led them through the depths,  
   as through the wilderness.  
 10 And he saved them from the hand of the  
   one who hated *them*,  
   and redeemed them from the hand of the  
   enemy.  
 11 And the waters covered their enemies;  
   not one of them was left.  
 12 Then they believed his words;  
   they sang his praise.  
 13 They soon forgot his works.  
   They did not wait for his counsel,  
 14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,  
   and put God to the test in the desert.  
 15 And he gave them their request,

**106:5** See 105:3; 118:15.

**106:6** Like all the saints in the Bible the author knows that he and his generation are no better than the previous generation that sinned grievously against the Lord (1 Kings 8:47; Ezra 9:7; Neh 1:7; Jer 3:25; Dan 9:5).

**106:7** "Did not remember" – forgetting God's gracious deeds is a sin that is the root cause of many other sins (78:1,41; Jud 3:7).

"Provoked him" – 78:17; Num 14:1-4, 10-12; Deut 1:26; 9:24.

**106:8** Ex 9:16; Rom 9:22.

**106:9-12** See Ex 14:21-31; 15:1-21; Ps 78:42,53; Isa 51:10. God saved Israel from Egypt, not because they were good, but because He is.

**106:13-33** Their sins in the wilderness were many and very grievous. These verses mention events recorded in Exodus chapters 15, 16, 17, 32 and Numbers chapters 11, 14, 16, 20, 25. They give a sad picture of continual unbelief and rebellion.

**106:13** Ex 15:24; 16:2; 17:2.

**106:15** See 78:29. It is dangerous for us

but sent leanness into their soul.

16 They also envied Moses in the camp,  
   *and* Aaron, the saint of the LORD.

17 The earth opened up and  
   swallowed Dathan,  
   and covered the company of Abiram.

18 And a fire blazed in their company;  
   the flame burned up the wicked.

19 They made a calf in Horeb,  
   and worshipped the cast metal image.

20 Thus they exchanged their glory for the  
   likeness of an ox that eats grass.

21 They forgot God their saviour,  
   who had done great things in Egypt,

22 Wonderful deeds in the land of Ham,  
   *and* awe-inspiring things by the Red Sea.

23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them,  
   had not Moses his chosen one stood  
   before him in the breach,  
   to turn away his wrath so that he would  
   not destroy *them*.

24 Yes, they despised the pleasant land.  
   They did not believe his word,

25 But murmured in their tents,  
   *and* did not listen to the voice of the LORD.

26 Therefore he raised his hand against them,  
   to overthrow them in the desert,

27 To overthrow their offspring also among  
   the nations,  
   and to scatter them in the lands.

28 They joined themselves also to Baal-Peor,  
   and ate sacrifices *made* to the dead.

29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with  
   their deeds;

and the plague broke out among them.

30 Then Phineas stood up and executed

to insist that God answer prayers not in His will. The answer He gives may result in great trouble to both body and soul.

**106:16-18** Num 16:1-3,32,35.

**106:19** Ex 32:4.

**106:20** Jer 2:11; Rom 1:23. Such is the amazing darkness and sinfulness that reign in the human heart.

**106:21** See 78:11.

**106:22** This means they refused to keep those things in mind and to live in the light of them.

**106:23** Ex 32:10-14.

**106:24** Num 14:31. If they had believed God's promises they would have gone in and possessed the land. True faith always produces action in obedience to God's Word.

**106:25** Num 14:2.

**106:26** Num 14:28-35. Sin brings penalties. It is not a light thing that God can overlook in His people.

**106:27** Lev 26:33; Deut 4:27.

**106:28-31** Num 25:1-13. God observes and honors those who take a righteous stand for Him.

- judgment,  
and *so* the plague was stopped.
- 31 And that was counted to him as  
righteousness to all generations  
forevermore.
- 32 They also angered *him* at the waters of strife,  
so that it went ill with Moses on their account;
- 33 Because they provoked his Spirit,  
so that *Moses* spoke rashly with his lips.
- 34 They did not destroy the nations,  
concerning whom the LORD had given  
command to them,
- 35 But mingled with the nations, and learned  
their deeds.
- 36 And they served their idols;  
which became a snare to them.
- 37 Yes, they sacrificed their sons and their  
daughters to demons,
- 38 And shed innocent blood,  
*even* the blood of their sons and of  
their daughters,  
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan.  
And the land was polluted with blood.
- 39 Thus they were defiled with their own actions,  
and behaved like a prostitute with  
their own deeds.
- 40 Therefore the wrath of the LORD  
burned against his people,  
so that he abhorred his own inheritance.
- 41 And he gave them into the hands of the  
nations,  
and those who hated them ruled over them.

**106:32,33** Num 20:2-13.

**106:34-43** Israel did not stop sinning when they finally arrived in Canaan. A change of location did not mean a change of heart. They went on sinning and God continued to punish them for it.

**106:34-36** Jud 1:21,27-36; 2:12; 3:5,6.

**106:37** See Deut 12:31; 32:17; 2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; Ezek 16:20,21; 1 Cor 10:20.

**106:38** Num 35:33; Deut 18:10; Ps 94:21; Isa 24:5; Jer 3:1,2.

**106:39** "Like a prostitute" – Lev 17:7; 18:24; Num 15:39; Jud 2:17; Ezek 20:18; Hos 4:12. In the Bible unfaithfulness to God, especially turning from Him to worship other gods, is compared to adultery and prostitution. See Jeremiah chapter 3, and Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23.

**106:40** "Wrath" – 78:59; Jud 2:14; notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**106:41** Jud 2:14; Neh 9:27.

**106:42** Jud 4:3; 10:12.

**106:43** Jud 2:16-18; 6:6; Ps 81:12.

**106:44-46** Though God had to punish them for their sins He remained faithful, compassionate, and loving (Mal 3:6). The unchangeable goodness of God is the only

- 42 And their enemies oppressed them,  
and they were brought low under their hand.
- 43 Many times he rescued them,  
but they rebelled against *him* with  
their counsel,  
and were brought low for their wickedness.
- 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction,  
when he heard their cry,
- 45 And for their sake he remembered his  
covenant,  
and relented in accordance with his  
many deeds of mercy.
- 46 He also caused them to be pitied by all  
those who carried them away captives.
- 47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us  
from among the nations,  
to give thanks to your holy name,  
*and* to triumph in your praise.
- 48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from  
everlasting to everlasting;  
and let all the people say, "Amen!"  
Praise the LORD!

## BOOK 5 (Psalms 107 - 150)

# 107

- 1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD,  
for *he is* good,  
for his mercy *continues* on forever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*,  
whom he has redeemed from the hand of

ground of hope for any of us.

**106:47** See 147:2; 1 Chron 16:35,36; Dan 9:17-19.

**106:48** See 41:13; 72:18; 89:52. Praise be to God for all His love, compassion, mercy, goodness, faithfulness and patience.

**107:1** The great theme of this psalm is clear – God is good and worthy of all praise and thanksgiving. In His great goodness He watches over men and hears and answers prayer. After an introduction (vs 1-3), the writer in vs 4-32 gives four examples of God delivering men from trouble. Since God has done it, it is only right to give God thanks for it. This exhortation to give thanks is found in vs 1, 8, 15, 21, 31. It is found also in many other places in the Bible (106:1; 118:1; 136:1; 1 Chron 16:34; Jer 33:11; 1 Thess 5:18).

In vs 33-41 he speaks of God's judgments in the world (105:7). He is a great king over all the earth. Those who are really wise will be able to see something of God's wisdom, grace, and love in His dealings with mankind.

"Thanks" – 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**107:2** "Redeemed" – Isa 35:9,10; 62:12;



the enemy,  
 3 And gathered out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.  
 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate path;  
 they found no city to dwell in.  
 5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.  
 6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,  
 and he delivered them out of their distresses.  
 7 And he led them forth by the right way,  
 that they might go to a city for their dwelling place.  
 8 Oh, that *men* would praise the LORD for his goodness,  
 and for his wonderful deeds to the children of men!  
 9 For he satisfies the longing soul,  
 and fills the hungry soul with goodness.  
 10 Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
 bound in affliction and irons,  
 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God,  
 and despised the counsel of the Most High.  
 12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour.

They fell down, and *there was* no one to help.  
 13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,  
 and he saved them out of their distresses.  
 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,  
 and broke their chains apart.  
 15 Oh, that *men* would praise the LORD for his goodness,  
 and for his wonderful works to the children of men!  
 16 For he has broken the gates of brass,  
 and cut through the bars of iron.  
 17 Fools, because of their transgression,  
 and because of their wicked deeds,  
 are afflicted.  
 18 Their soul abhors all kinds of food,  
 and they draw near to the gates of death.  
 19 Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble,  
 and he saves them out of their distresses.  
 20 He sent his word, and healed them,  
 and delivered them from what brought them down.  
 21 Oh, that *men* would praise the LORD for his goodness,  
 and for his wonderful deeds to the children of men!

Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18,19. Note at Ps 78:35.  
 "Say" – God's people must speak up and tell others what God has done for them (9:11; 73:28; 118:17; Matt 10:32; Acts 1:8; Rom 1:15,16; Rev 12:11).  
**107:3** Some scholars think this shows that this psalm was written after the return from the captivity in Babylon in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. It may be so.  
**107:4-9** Here is the first example of God's deliverance in answer to prayer. It speaks of troubles encountered by exiles on the journey home. Though physical difficulties are here described, it would be no mistake for us to apply it also to the believer's spiritual pilgrimage now and the difficulties along that way.  
**107:6** This is what we should do always (34:6,17; 50:15; 91:14,15). If there is a sincere turning to God He will either bring us out of trouble, or give us grace and strength to endure trouble and make it all turn out for our good.  
**107:8** Verses 15,21,31.  
**107:9** See 22:26; 34:10; 63:5; 103:5; 146:7; Isa 55:1,2; Matt 5:6; John 4:14; Rev 22:17.  
**107:10-16** The second example of God's deliverance in answer to prayer. Though this is a picture of physical bondage these terms

can speak to us of spiritual bondage too. Though this bondage was the result of sin, God did not reject the peoples' prayer when they turned to Him.  
**107:10** See 102:20; 143:3; Job 36:5; Isa 42:7; Micah 7:8; Luke 1:79.  
**107:11** See 78:40; 106:7; Lam 3:42. Rebellion against God will inevitably bring us into some kind of bondage.  
**107:14** See 86:13; 116:16; Jer 2:20; 30:8; Nahum 1:13; Luke 13:16.  
**107:16** Isa 45:1,2. No gate, no bars are strong enough to keep God's people locked in when He arises to deliver them (Acts 12:5-11).  
**107:17-22** The third example of God's deliverance in answer to prayer. The case here is of disease brought on by sin and rebellion. Those afflicted were at the point of death before they cried to the LORD (Jehovah) – v 18. In v 17 they are called "fools." Their foolishness is revealed by their sin and rebellion and by the fact that they waited so long to turn to God. But observe here God's great goodness. He answers even the prayers of fools when they seek Him. And He will begin the process of making them wise.  
**107:17,18** Lev 26:14-16.  
**107:19,20** See 30:2; 103:3; 147:3; 2 Kings 20:5; Jam 5:13-15.

22 And let them offer the sacrifices of  
    thanksgiving,  
    and declare his deeds with rejoicing.  
23 Those who go down to the sea in ships,  
    who do business on great waters,  
24 These see the deeds of the LORD,  
    and his wonders in the deep.  
25 For he gives a command and raises the  
    stormy wind,  
    which lifts up its waves.  
26 They mount up into the sky;  
    they go down again to the depths;  
    their soul melts because of trouble.  
27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a  
    drunken man,  
    and are at their wits' end.  
28 Then they cry out to the LORD in their  
    trouble,  
    and he brings them out of their distresses.  
29 He calms the storm, so that its waves  
    become still.  
30 Then they are glad, because they are quiet.  
    So he brings them to their desired haven.  
  
31 Oh, that *men* would praise the LORD *for*  
    his goodness,  
    and *for* his wonderful deeds to the  
    children of men!  
32 Let them also exalt him in the  
    congregation of the people,  
    and praise him in the assembly of the elders.  
33 He turns rivers into a desert,  
    and springs of water into dry ground,  
34 *and* a fruitful land into barrenness,  
    because of the wickedness of those  
    who live in it.  
35 He turns the desert into pools of water,

    and dry ground into springs of water.  
36 And he causes the hungry to  
    dwell there, that they may prepare  
    a city for habitation,  
37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards,  
    which yield fruitful harvests.  
38 He blesses them also, so that they  
    greatly increase in number;  
    and he does not let their cattle decrease.  
39 When they are diminished and brought low  
    through oppression, affliction, and  
    sorrow,  
40 He pours contempt on princes,  
    and causes them to wander in the  
    wilderness, *where there is* no path.  
41 Yet he sets the poor on high,  
    away from affliction, and makes  
    families *for him* like a flock.  
42 The righteous will see *it* and rejoice,  
    and all wickedness will shut its mouth.  
43 Whoever *is* wise, and will observe these  
    *things*, they will understand  
    the loving kindness of the LORD.

108

A song, a Psalm of David

1 O God, my heart is steadfast.  
    I will sing and give praise,  
    even with my glory.  
2 Awake, lyre and harp.  
    I *myself* will awaken early.  
3 I will praise you, O LORD, among the peoples,  
    and I will sing praises to you among  
    the nations.

**107:22** See 50:14; 116:17; note at Lev 7:12,13.  
**107:23-32** The fourth example of God's deliverance in answer to prayer. The dangers to sailing vessels in a storm are very great. For New Testament pictures of this see Matt 8:23-27 and Acts 27:14-44. On the believer's life's voyage to the heavenly harbor also there are many dangers and difficulties.  
**107:25** Compare this with v 29. There was not one god who brought the storm and another who rescued them from the storm, as was thought in much of ancient mythology and even today by some people. There is only one true God and He both brings storms and causes them to cease.  
**107:27,28** When we don't know what to do we should turn to Him who always knows what to do and can also do it.  
**107:29** See 65:7; 89:9; Matt 8:26.  
**107:32** See 34:3; 99:5; Isa 25:1.  
**107:33-41** Here are other acts of Jehovah

which reveal His absolute sovereignty in the affairs of men.  
**107:33,34** Lev 26:19; Deut 28:23,24; 1 Kings 17:1,7; Ps 74:15; Isa 42:15; 50:2.  
**107:35** See 105:41; 114:8; Isa 35:6,7; 41:18; 44:3.  
**107:40** This is taken from Job 12:21. An example of this is in Dan 4:28-33.  
**107:41** See 59:1; 113:7,8; 1 Sam 2:8.  
**107:42** The result of God's righteous judgments (52:6; 63:11; Job 40:4; Rom 3:19).  
**107:43** Great things can be learned about God's character by meditating on His deeds in the Bible.  
**108:1** This psalm is made up of parts of two others - 57:7-11 and 60:5-12. See notes on those psalms. We cannot be sure why or when this psalm was made this way, but we should notice that this is called a song, the other two are not. Sometimes to express praise and thanks to God for new mercies a new song is needed (96:1; 98:1). But sometimes old thoughts and old verses

- 4 For your mercy *is* great,  
higher than the heavens;  
and your truth *reaches* to the clouds.
- 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,  
and your glory above all the earth,
- 6 That your loved one may be delivered.  
Give salvation *with* your right hand,  
and answer me.
- 7 God has spoken in his holiness:  
"I will rejoice;  
I will divide Shechem, and measure out  
the valley of Succoth.
- 8 Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine;  
and Ephraim *is* the helmet for my head.  
Judah is my lawgiver.
- 9 Moab *is* my wash pot.  
Over Edom I will throw my sandal.  
Over Philistia I will triumph."
- 10 Who will bring me into the strong city?  
Who will lead me into Edom?
- 11 *Will* not *you*, O God, *who* rejected us?  
And will not you, O God, go forth with  
our armies?
- 12 Give us help from trouble,  
for useless *is* the help of man.
- 13 Through God we will do valiantly,  
for he *it is who* will tread down our enemies.

perfectly fit the present case.

**109:1** This is the last of the psalms which contain curses against enemies and it has the most terrible of these curses. For a note on this subject see 35:8. We should always remember when reading such psalms that they were written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and are not the writers' desires for personal vengeance. They set forth perfect justice under the law. For when the law was broken it brought a curse (see Gal 3:10,13; Deut 27:14-26). These curses speak of offended righteousness that demands just punishment for evil doers who will not repent.

Believers now are under the reign of grace and are not to make such prayers against enemies, but should imitate their Saviour and His disciples (Matt 5:43-45; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:59,60).

This psalm has been called the psalm of Iscariot because the apostle Peter applied some of the words of v 8 to Judas (Acts 1:20). No doubt this psalm perfectly describes the character of that wicked betrayer of the Lord Jesus.

**109:2-5** In these verses David speaks of enemies in the plural. From v 6 he singles out an extremely wicked enemy and speaks of him alone up to v 20. In these opening verses the chief sins he charges against his enemies are slander and hatred. He showed them love; they responded with deadly malice. He lived a righteous life; they eagerly poured out lies about him. How much

# 109

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

- 1 Do not remain silent, O God of  
my praise.
- 2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth  
of the deceitful have opened against me.  
They have spoken against me with a lying  
tongue.
- 3 They also surrounded me with words of  
hatred,  
and fought against me without a cause.
- 4 In return for my love they are  
my accusers;  
but I *give myself to* prayer.
- 5 And they have repaid me evil for good,  
and hatred for my love.
- 6 Set a wicked man over him,  
and let Satan stand at his right hand.
- 7 When he is judged, let him be condemned,  
and let his prayer become sin.
- 8 Let his days be few, *and* let another take  
his position.
- 9 Let his children be fatherless,  
and his wife a widow.

more true all this was in the case of the Lord Jesus than in David's. Slander is one of the worst of sins. Violence may destroy a man's property or his life; slander is an attempt to destroy his name, reputation, and ministry.

**109:4** "Accusers" – 35:12; 38:20. This is the exact opposite of Christ's standard of right behavior (Luke 6:27-31).

"Prayer" – there is always a place where the suffering believer can find help and strength – God's presence.

**109:5** John 10:31,32; 15:18,23-25.

**109:6-20** This is a cry for exact justice to fall on a man who has abandoned himself to wickedness; a prayer in accordance with principles revealed in such verses as 18:26; Ex 21:23-25; Lev 26:23,24; Prov 24:12.

**109:6** Wicked men deserve wicked opponents. "Wicked man" could be translated "the wicked one."

"Satan" – compare Zech 3:1.

**109:7** "Condemned" – he slandered and judged others harshly; let him be judged for his evil deeds.

"Prayer" – Prov 28:9. A wicked, unrepentant man's prayers will be selfish, hypocritical, and unbelieving, and so will work for his condemnation.

**109:8** "Few" – 55:23.

"His position" – Acts 1:20. A man who does not use his office for God's glory and men's good, deserves to have it taken away from him.

**109:9** Ex 22:24; Jer 18:21. This evil man

- 10 Let his children continually be vagabonds and beg;  
let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.
- 11 Let a creditor seize all that he has, and let strangers plunder his labour.
- 12 Let there be no one to extend mercy to him, no one to show favour to his fatherless children.
- 13 Let his offspring be cut off, *and* in the following generation let their name be blotted out.
- 14 Let the wickedness of his fathers be remembered before the LORD, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.
- 15 Let them continually be before the LORD, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth,
- 16 Because he did not remember to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even kill the heartbroken.
- 17 Since he loved cursing, so let it come to him; since he did not delight in blessing, so let it be far from him.
- 18 Since he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment,  
so let it enter into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.
- 19 Let it be to him like the garment *which* covers him,  
and like a belt tied around him continually.
- 20 *Let this be* the payment to my accusers, and to those who speak evil against my soul.

- 21 But you, O God the Lord, deal *well* with me for your name's sake.  
Rescue me, because your mercy *is* good.
- 22 For I *am* poor and needy,  
and my heart is wounded within me.
- 23 I am gone like the shadow when it lengthens.  
I am shaken off like a locust.
- 24 My knees are weak through fasting,  
and my flesh is thin *and* feeble.
- 25 And I became an object of scorn to them.  
*When* they looked at me they shook their heads.
- 26 Help me, O LORD my God!  
Oh, save me according to your mercy,
- 27 That they may know that this *is* your hand, *that* you, LORD, have done it.
- 28 Let them curse, but you bless.  
When they arise, let them be ashamed,  
but let your servant rejoice.
- 29 Let my accusers be clothed with shame,  
and let them cover themselves with their own disgrace, as with a cloak.
- 30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth;  
yes, I will praise him among the great crowd.
- 31 For he stands at the right hand of the poor,  
to save *him* from those who condemn him.

# 110

A Psalm of David

- 1 The LORD said to my Lord,  
"Sit at my right hand, until I make  
your enemies your footstool."

cared nothing for widows and orphans (compare John 12:4-6). Now he must reap the fruit of his loveless and selfish behavior.

**109:10** See 59:15; Ex 20:5 (note); Job 30:5-8.

**109:11** A judgment God may bring on evil men (Isa 1:7; Lam 5:2; Ezek 7:21).

**109:12** He did not show mercy to others (v 16); now let him be judged in accordance with his own behavior.

**109:13** See 9:5; 21:10; 37:28; Prov 10:7.

**109:14** Num 14:18; Neh 4:5; Isa 65:6,7; Jer 18:23; 32:18.

**109:15** See 34:16; Jer 16:17.

**109:16** Justice cries out against such evil persons and justice will eventually overtake them and bring them down.

**109:17-19** This evil man loved to heap curses on others; now this righteous man by God's Holy Spirit calls down curses on him. He made cursing a continual part of his life; now let curses cleave to him.

**109:20** See 54:5; 94:23; Isa 3:11; 2 Tim 4:14. No punishment will overtake the wicked man which he does not fully deserve.

**109:21-28** In these verses David speaks to God of his own sad condition and appeals for help.

**109:21** Foremost in David's thinking is not his need, but God's glory (23:3; 25:11; 79:9; 106:8). What a contrast this is with the character of wicked men!

**109:22** "Needy" - 40:17; 86:1.

"Wounded" - 143:4; Job 24:12; Prov 18:14.

**109:23** "Shadow" - 102:11. "Locust" here indicates a thing of no account.

**109:24** See 35:13.

**109:25** See 22:6,7; Jer 18:16; Lam 2:15; Matt 27:39.

**109:26,27** He wants God to be known in the help He gives.

**109:28** If God blesses us, let men curse us if they will. Their curses will come to nothing.

**109:29** See 35:26; 132:18; Job 8:22.

**109:30** See 22:22; 35:18; 111:1.

**109:31** Contrast this with v 6. Satan stands at a man's right hand to accuse; the Lord stands there to save.

**110:1** It is impossible to overestimate the

- 2 The LORD will send the rod of your strength out of Zion.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies.
- 3 Your people *will be* willing in the day of your power,  
in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning.

- You have the dew of your youth.
- 4 The LORD has sworn, and will not repent:  
"You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."
  - 5 The Lord *is* at your right hand.  
He will strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

importance of this psalm. It is one of the most significant of all the psalms concerning the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and is the one most often quoted or referred to in the New Testament (Matt 22:41-45; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44; Acts 2:34,35; 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:13; 5:6; 7:17,21; 10:13. All references in the New Testament to Christ at God's right hand are based on the first verse of this psalm – Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet 3:22).

In this psalm we have words of the Most High God spoken to one called David's Lord. How could David know that God spoke to his Lord, or what He said? See Mark 12:36. God's Spirit revealed God's words to David. The Messiah was to be the son of David (2 Sam 7:16; Matt 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 21:9; 22:42; John 7:42; Rom 1:3; Rev 22:16). How then could He be David's Lord? The answer is He is far greater than David, being not merely David's Lord but the Lord of all lords and of all men (Acts 10:36; Rom 14:9; Phil 2:10,11; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16), the Lord from heaven (1 Cor 15:47). He is David's son but He is also God's Son, sharing God's nature and seated now with God on His throne (Rev 3:21). There He will sit at God's right hand until the hour strikes for the putting down of all earthly power and His coming to reign openly over the whole earth. See 2:8,9.

A good title for this psalm would be "The victorious King-Priest."

**110:2** The first sentence means that God will extend his rule. This verse seems to speak of a time before Christ's enemies become a footstool for His feet, a time when He rules in their *midst*, without their destruction. The rule begins from Jerusalem and is extended from there to other places. This suggests the secret rule of Christ now over His church and in the affairs of men, and the spread of His Gospel throughout the world (Matt 28:18-20; Luke 24:46,47; John 17:2; Acts 2:32,33; Rev 1:5).

At present many of Christ's enemies are still very much in places of authority on earth, but in the midst of them His power is displayed in the conversion of sinners and the protection of His Church, and no one can thwart His purposes or overturn His rule and authority (2:2-6; Matt 28:18-20; John 17:2). He overturns kingdoms and governments as He will, exalts one man to power and puts down another, even though they may not have the slightest knowledge of this. And in all of this He is working out His

great plan.

**110:3** "Be willing" could be translated "offer themselves" (compare Rom 12:1).

"Day of your power" – or "day of your army." This whole age of grace is Christ's "day of power" mentioned here, and His people gladly enlist under His banner and go forth to fight in His spiritual battle (Eph 6:10-18; 2 Tim 2:3). Christ wants no grudging service but only that which is hearty, voluntary, loving. Some commentators think that "beauties of holiness" may refer to the holy, beautiful garments worn by priests in Old Testament days (Ex 28:4; Lev 16:4). The mighty conquering King depicted in this psalm is a priest, as we see from the next verse, and all those who form His army are priests in the New Testament sense of the word (note at Ex 28:1). But the garments they are to wear are robes of righteousness and holy living. The last phrase perhaps could be translated "Your young men will come to you like the dew." They will be like the dew in its myriads of drops, fresh every morning, sparkling and clean, not produced by man's activities but by God (compare Micah 5:7).

**110:4** The prophecy concerning Christ in this verse is introduced by very solemn words. God has made a promise, a decree, and there is no possibility of changing it. The decree is this: Christ shall be the priest for His people, not as Aaron was, but as Melchizedek was (see Gen 14:18-20). By this one word, God revealed His plan to lay aside the covenant He made through Moses at Sinai with its priesthood and animal sacrifices – Hebrews chapters 7-10. The priesthood and sacrifices under the law were mere shadows and pictures and types. Christ's sacrifice of Himself and His eternal priesthood are the reality – Ex 25:9; 28:1; Lev 1:2; Heb 8:2,5; 10:1. Through Him we can come directly into God's presence by a new and living way – Heb 10:19-22.

**110:5** It is difficult to know who is speaking in this verse and to whom he is speaking. Is it the LORD (Jehovah) continuing to speak to Christ? Or is David speaking to Jehovah? Or David speaking to Christ? Perhaps the question does not need an answer. Jehovah and Christ are so completely at one in their purposes and work that anything such as this that can be said of one can also be said of the other. Christ is the incarnation of Jehovah. Certainly the two verses that follow speak of Christ. The day of His wrath is the time of judgment at the end of this age – 2 Thess 1:6-9; Rev 6:15-17; 11:18;



- 6 He will judge among the nations.  
He will fill *the places* with dead bodies.  
He will crush the head of many countries.
- 7 He will drink from the brook by the wayside;  
therefore he will lift up the head.

111

- 1 Praise the LORD!  
I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,  
in the assembly of the upright,  
and *in* the congregation.
- 2 The works of the LORD *are* great,  
sought out by all those who have  
pleasure in them.
- 3 His work *is* honourable and glorious,  
and his righteousness continues on forever.
- 4 He has caused his wonderful deeds to be  
remembered.  
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.
- 5 He has given food to those who fear him.  
He will always keep his covenant in mind.
- 6 He has shown his people the power of his

- works,  
by giving them the inheritance of the  
heathen.
- 7 The works of his hands *are in* truth and  
justice.  
All his commandments *are* sure;  
8 They stand firm forever and ever,  
and *are done* in truth and uprightness.
- 9 He sent redemption to his people.  
He ordained his covenant forever.  
His name *is* holy and awe-inspiring.
- 10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of  
wisdom.  
All those who do *his commands* have  
good understanding.  
His praise continues forever.

112

- 1 Praise the LORD!  
Blessed *is* the man *who* fears the LORD,  
*who* delights greatly in his commandments.

15:1; 16:1; 19:15.  
**110:6** "Judge" – Isa 2:4; Joel 3:12; John 5:22,23,27; Acts 10:42; 17:31.  
"Head" – in Hebrew the word is in the singular. This "head" or ruler may refer to the one in the New Testament called the antichrist, the lawless one, the "beast" (in Revelation chapter 13). He will lead his armies against Christ and will be utterly crushed – Rev 19:19-21; 2 Thess 2:3-8.  
**110:7** The victorious King-Priest is here seen pursuing His enemies on the field of battle. He shall not be wearied in the fight until all ungodliness and opposition are put down. Compare Ps 45:3-5.  
"He will drink from the brook by the wayside" – someone has suggested the translation "The One who grants succession will set him in authority." This fits the context well, but the translation is very questionable.  
**111:1** "Praise the LORD" – see 104:35, and note on praise at 33:1.  
"With my whole heart" – the highest and best occupation of men is praising God. To do it properly requires all of our faculties, our whole heart. Half-hearted praise is hardly praise at all – it may even imply criticism.  
**111:2** See 92:5; 40:5; 143:5. This is the theme of this psalm. God's works are worthy of all praise and should be the constant subject of our meditation. The more we study and understand them the more wonderful they appear.  
**111:3** "Forever" is one of the key thoughts of this psalm – vs 3, 5, 8, 9, 10. Whatever God is He is that forever. He is the eternally unchanging one – Heb 1:12; 13:8.  
**111:4** See 86:5,15; 103:8; 145:8; Ex 34:6.

**111:5** "Given food" – 37:25; Ex 16:13-35; Matt 6:31-33.  
"Always" – 105:8,42; Luke 1:72; Heb 6:17,18.  
**111:6** Num 21:1-3,21-25,33-35; Josh 6:1,2; 10:40-43; 24:2-13.  
**111:7,8** See 19:7,9; 93:5; 119:160; Isa 40:8; Matt 5:18; Rev 15:3.  
**111:9** "Redemption" – Ex 20:2; Deut 7:8; Luke 1:68; Eph 1:7. Note at Ps 78:35.  
"Awe-inspiring" – 99:3; Luke 1:49; Ex 20:7; Deut 28:58-61.  
**111:10** Job 28:28; Prov 1:7; 9:10. Other notes on the fear of the Lord at 34:11-14; Gen 20:11; etc. Without the fear of the Lord there is not even the beginning of wisdom. A man may have a powerful intellect, vast learning, and great skills, but if he does not have the fear of God he does not have wisdom. He may know all philosophy and all religion, but without the fear of God he does not have wisdom. He may think he is wise and others may think he is wise, but if he does not have the fear of God he does not have wisdom. See here what the fear of the Lord is and what it causes a person to do. True wisdom is not merely in knowing; it is in doing. A man who will not set himself to obey the God of the universe as revealed in the Bible is far from being wise.  
**112:1** "Praise the LORD" – note at 104:35. This psalm and the preceding one make a pair. Psalm 111 speaks of the LORD's (Jehovah's) righteousness and works, this psalm speaks of the believer's righteousness and works. In this psalm we see the result in human hearts of the work of the God of psalm 111. Perhaps this is the greatest of all God's works. If there is any

- 2 His offspring will be powerful on earth.  
The generation of the upright will be blessed.
- 3 Wealth and riches *will be* in his house,  
and his righteousness continues on forever.
- 4 To the upright light dawns in the darkness.  
*He is* gracious, and full of compassion,  
and righteous.
- 5 A good man is gracious and lends.  
He will conduct his dealings with discretion.
- 6 Surely he will never be shaken.  
The righteous will be *kept* in  
everlasting remembrance.
- 7 He will not be afraid of bad news.  
His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
- 8 His heart *is* established;  
he will not be afraid, until he sees *his*  
*desire fulfilled* on his enemies.
- 9 He has dispersed, he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness continues on for ever.  
His horn will be exalted with honour.
- 10 The wicked will see *it*, and be grieved;  
he will gnash his teeth, and waste away.

The desire of the wicked will perish.

# 113

- 1 Praise the LORD!  
Praise, O servants of the LORD,  
praise the name of the LORD!
- 2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this  
time on and forevermore.
- 3 From the rising of the sun to its setting  
the LORD's name *is* to be praised.
- 4 The LORD is high above all nations,  
*and* his glory above the heavens.
- 5 Who *is* like the LORD our God,  
who dwells on high,
- 6 Who humbles *himself* to look at *the things* in  
heaven, and on the earth?
- 7 He raises the poor out of the dust,  
*and* lifts the needy from the ash heap,
- 8 That he may set *him* with princes,

genuine righteousness in any man  
Jehovah is the one to be praised for it.

"Blessed" – note at 1:1; etc.

"Fears" – fearing the Lord is always  
closely connected with keeping His com-  
mands – 111:10.

**112:2-9** See 102:28; 127:4.

**112:3** "Riches" – Prov 3:16; 8:18. In Old  
Testament times the giving of wealth and  
riches was frequently God's way of reward-  
ing righteous behavior. In the New  
Testament spiritual wealth and riches are  
emphasized – Matt 6:19-21; 1 Tim 6:7-9.  
See Ps 1:3. And Jesus proclaimed a bless-  
ing on the poor – Luke 6:20,24; 12:33.

"Forever" – the same words spoken of  
God in 111:3 are here spoken of those who  
fear Him. This is because their righteous-  
ness is from Him, is His gift – 1 Cor 1:30,31;  
Phil 3:8,9.

**112:4** "Dawns" – 97:11; Prov 4:18. In  
times of darkness, doubt, and confusion  
those who are upright will see the right path  
when no one else knows what to do. They  
are gracious and compassionate because  
of God's work in them (compare Eph 4:24).

**112:5** See 37:21. This is one example of  
the kindness and compassion God wants to  
see in His people.

**112:6** "Shaken" – 15:5; 55:22.

"Everlasting" – Prov 10:7. Long after the  
great and mighty of earth have been  
forgotten the humble and righteous believer  
will be remembered before God.

**112:7,8** Prov 1:33. Those who fear the  
LORD need not fear any thing or anyone  
else (Matt 10:28; Heb 13:6). God will  
deal with their enemies at the proper time  
and make all things work for their good.

**112:9** Note at Ps 41:1.

**112:10** The wicked cannot endure it when

the righteous are exalted – 35:16; 37:12;  
Prov 10:28; 11:7. Hatred of good and envy  
of others are two of their ruling passions.

**113:1** This begins a series of six psalms  
of praise which Israel used at their great  
religious festivals (Leviticus chapter 23). At  
the time of the Passover especially, psalms  
113 and 114 were sung before the meal,  
and 115 – 118 after the meal. All six psalms  
emphasize the greatness and goodness of  
God, and call on His people to praise and  
thank Him. We cannot reasonably expect  
God to give us blessings in the future if we  
will not thank Him for those in the past.

In this psalm God's greatness is set forth  
in the first six verses and His goodness in  
the last three verses. In the opening verse  
God's servants are called on to praise Him.  
True service should result in praise, and the  
praise must not be to the servants but to  
God who gives them the privilege of serving  
– 115:1.

"Praise the LORD" – note at 104:35.

**113:2** God's name is His character. Praising  
His name is not a repetition of one or an-  
other of His names but a joyful recognition  
of His nature and qualities (33:1).

**113:3** From east to west in all places and at  
all times the true God is worthy of praise –  
Isa 24:15; 45:6; 59:19.

**113:4-6** The LORD (Jehovah) is no local  
deity, the God of one nation only. He is the  
mighty Creator, so exalted that to view the  
heavens and earth He must stoop down  
(99:2; 138:6; Isa 40:15,22).

**113:7-9** Here God's goodness and compas-  
sion come into view. Though He is so great  
He has regard for the poor, the humble, the  
needy – 35:10; 68:10; 107:41; Gen  
16:7-10; 21:17-19; 1 Sam 2:8; Isa  
57:15.

with the princes of his people.

- 9 He causes the barren woman to keep house,  
*and to be* a joyful mother of children.  
Praise the LORD!

114

- 1 When Israel went out of Egypt,  
the house of Jacob from a people of  
foreign language,  
2 Judah was *God's* sanctuary, *and* Israel his  
dominion.  
3 The sea saw *it* and fled;  
the Jordan turned back.  
4 The mountains skipped like rams,  
*and* the little hills like lambs.  
5 What *ailed* you, O sea, that you fled?  
O Jordan, *that* you turned back?  
6 O mountains, *that* you skipped like rams?  
O little hills, like lambs?  
7 Tremble, you earth, at the presence of  
the Lord,  
at the presence of the God of Jacob,

Who turned the rock *into* a pool of water,  
the flint into a spring of waters.

115

- 1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us,  
but to your name give glory,  
because of your mercy *and* because of  
your truth.  
2 Why should the nations say,  
"Now where *is* their God?"  
3 But our God *is* in heaven.  
He does whatever he pleases.  
4 Their idols *are* silver and gold,  
the work of men's hands.  
5 They have mouths, but they do not speak.  
They have eyes, but they do not see.  
6 They have ears, but they do not hear.  
They have noses, but they do not smell.  
7 They have hands, but they do not feel.  
They have feet, but they do not walk.  
Nor do they speak with their throat.  
8 Those who make them are like them;

**113:9** It is Jehovah God who gives children or withholds them – Gen 16:1,2; 20:17,18; 21:1,2; 25:21; 29:31; 30:22; 1 Sam 1:2,19,20.

**114:1** This is a psalm about the exodus from Egypt in bold metaphor and beautiful poetic imagery (81:10; Ex 13:3; Lev 26:3).

**114:2** The nation of Israel became God's home on earth, the people of His kingdom – Ex 19:5,6; 25:8; 29:46. God is so exalted He must stoop to see the heavens and earth (113:5,6), but He is so loving that He comes to dwell with a sinful, stubborn nation.

**114:3** Ex 14:21,22; 15:10; Josh 3:14-17. God's power was revealed in His control of nature's elements (compare Matt 8:23-27).

**114:4-6** Ex 19:18,19; Jud 5:5; 2 Sam 22:8; Ps 18:7; 29:6.

**114:7** Ex 15:14; 1 Chron 16:30; Heb 12:25-29. Note on the God of Jacob at 146:5.

**114:8** An example of God's loving care for His people – Ex 17:6; Num 20:11; 1 Cor 10:3,4.

**115:1** This psalm gives us a contrast between the LORD (Jehovah God) and the idols worshiped as gods by the nations. He is in heaven; they are on earth. He is the possessor of all things, for He is the Creator; idols have been made by men, and have made nothing and can possess nothing themselves. He does whatever He wishes; they can do nothing at all. His worshipers will be blessed forever; their worshipers will be as useless to God as the gods they worship. On this solid foundation the psalmist exhorts God's people to trust God

and praise God. The desire of all of God's true servants is that glory might come to God in everything. Those who serve to obtain fame, money, position, or glory from men are not true servants of God at all (and, alas, there are a great many such people even in Christian circles). God should have all the glory for He is a God of grace and truth who alone saves, protects and blesses His people and enables them to serve.

**115:2** See 42:3. All true children of God will be sad at the reproaches of godless people. Because they cannot see our God, some people will vainly imagine that we have none.

**115:3** But the true God is in heaven where He should be, ruling over the universe. None of His plans will fail, no one can defeat His purposes – 135:6; Isa 14:27; Dan 4:35.

**115:4-11** Compare 135:15-20. Here we can see the folly of worshiping what man has made rather than the God who made man. It is seen also in Isa 40:18-26; 44:9-20, and other places.

**115:5** The living God gives messages, but idols can give none (Jer 10:5). Perhaps one of the reasons for the popularity of idols is just this – they can't see what is going on, or say anything about it.

**115:6** No prayer is ever heard by an idol. The living God can hear anyone anytime – 65:2.

**115:8** Idol worshipers become like their idols. They are unable to speak God's messages, see God's truth, hear God's voice, or do anything at all for God. They have no spiritual understanding or ability, just as idols have none. And in God's eyes they become worthless, just as their idols are worthless –

*so is* everyone who trusts in them.

- 9 O Israel, trust in the LORD!  
He *is* their help and their shield.
- 10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD!  
He *is* their help and their shield.
- 11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD!  
He *is* their help and their shield.
- 12 The LORD has kept us in mind.  
He will bless *us*.  
He will bless the house of Israel.  
He will bless the house of Aaron.
- 13 He will bless those who fear the LORD,  
*both* small and great.
- 14 The LORD will increase you more and more,  
you and your children.
- 15 You *are* blessed by the LORD  
who made heaven and earth.
- 16 The heaven, the heavens *above*, *are* the  
LORD's,  
but the earth he has given to the  
children of men.
- 17 The dead do not praise the LORD,  
no one who goes down to silence.
- 18 But we will praise the LORD from this

time on and forevermore.  
Praise the LORD!

# 116

- 1 I love the LORD, because he has heard my  
voice and my supplications.
- 2 Because he has bowed down his ear to me,  
I will call to *him* as long as I live.
- 3 The cords of death surrounded me,  
and the pains of the unseen world took  
hold of me.  
I found trouble and sorrow.
- 4 Then I called on the name of the LORD:  
"O Lord, I beg you, rescue my soul!"
- 5 The LORD *is* gracious and righteous;  
yes, our God *is* merciful.
- 6 The LORD preserves the simple.  
I was brought low, and he helped me.
- 7 Return to your rest, O my soul,  
for the LORD has been good to you.
- 8 For you have delivered my soul from death,  
my eyes from tears,

Jer 2:5.

**115:9-11** No one then or now has ever had any need to turn to idols. The living God is there to trust. He is someone who can come to our aid in every circumstance of life and give us perfect protection.

"Help" – 20:2; 33:20; Ex 18:4; Deut 33:29.

"Shield" – 3:3; 5:12; Gen 15:1. Trusting Him will result in complete protection and blessing.

**115:12-15** The result of the writer's trust was the full confidence that He would bless His people. They are always in God's memory, in God's heart – 98:3; 111:5; Isa 49:15.

**115:15** Gen 1:1; 14:19. If we are blessed by the Creator of the worlds it little matters what men may do to us – Heb 13:6.

**115:16** The earth also is God's. But He has put it into man's hands – 8:6-8; Gen 1:28. However, man has sinned and made a ruin of things on earth.

**115:17,18** That is, the dead do not praise God on earth (which is the viewpoint of the psalmist). The saved dead do praise God in heaven – Rev 7:9-17; 14:1-3; 15:2-4.

"Praise the LORD" – note at 104:35.

**116:1** There are two main themes of this psalm – God's goodness and the psalmist's response to it. God's goodness is seen in hearing prayer (vs 1-4), in His gracious character revealed in His acts (vs 5,6), and in His work of deliverance (vs 8,9). The writer, experiencing God's goodness, makes five resolutions:

he resolves to be a man of prayer as long as he lives (v 2),  
to walk in God's presence (v 9),

to take the cup of salvation (v 13),  
to publicly fulfill the promise made to God (vs 14,18),  
and to offer thanksgiving offerings (v 17).

Believers today in the light of Christ's sacrifice on the cross can see God's goodness even more clearly than the author of this psalm. And with him they should lovingly ask "How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me?" Love for God is the greatest of all qualities (Deut 6:4-6; Matt 22:36-38; 1 Cor 13:13). Love for God is a result of His love for us (1 John 4:10). He hears prayer, He delivers from trouble, He displays His great goodness toward us, and so we come to love Him more and more.

**116:2** Answered prayer should encourage us to resolve as he did. See also Luke 18:1; Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17.

**116:3,4** See 18:4,5; 80:18; 118:5; 2 Sam 22:6.

"Unseen world" (v 3) – "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**116:5** This is why believers love Him. He is a God who has proved Himself in every way fully worthy of love. Three of His chief attributes are recorded in this verse (103:13; 129:4; 145:17; Ex 22:27; 34:16; John 17:25).

**116:6** The worldly wise and crafty may think they can look out for themselves; the childlike believer has God's protection.

**116:7** The believer's rest is in God alone (62:1; 131:2; Matt 11:29; Heb 4:1). And we can encourage ourselves to experience that rest.

**116:8** A great deliverance! For God's

- and* my feet from falling.  
 9 I will walk before the LORD in the land  
 of the living.  
 10 I believed, therefore I spoke.  
 I was greatly afflicted.  
 11 I said in my haste: "All men *are* liars."  
 12 What shall I do to repay the LORD *for* all  
 his benefits toward me?  
 13 I will take the cup of salvation,  
 and call on the name of the LORD.  
 14 I will now fulfil my vows to the LORD in  
 the presence of all his people.  
 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the  
 death of his saints.  
 16 O LORD, truly I *am* your servant;  
 I *am* your servant, *and* the son of your  
 maid servant.  
 You have loosed my bonds.  
 17 I will offer to you the sacrifice of  
 thanksgiving,  
 and will call on the name of the LORD.  
 18 I will now fulfil my vows to the LORD  
 in the presence of all his people,  
 19 In the courts of the LORD's house,

in your midst, O Jerusalem.  
 Praise the LORD!

# 117

- 1 Oh, praise the LORD, all you nations!  
 Praise him, all you peoples!
- 2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us,  
 and the truth of the LORD *remains* forever.  
 Praise the LORD!

# 118

- 1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD,  
 for *he is* good;  
 because his mercy *continues on* forever.
- 2 Let Israel now say,  
 "His mercy *continues on* forever."
- 3 Let the house of Aaron now say,  
 "His mercy *continues on* forever."
- 4 Let those who fear the LORD now say,

deliverance in some other matters see  
 7:1; 17:13; 22:20; 34:4; 39:8;  
 41:1; 43:1; 51:14; 54:7; 56:13;  
 69:14; 72:12; 79:9; 86:13; 91:3;  
 107:6,20; 120:2; 144:7.

**116:9** Here is the writer's second resolution.  
 Many walk for the eyes of other men,  
 concerned only with what others may think  
 and say. The believer should learn to walk  
 in God's presence to please Him alone.  
 Compare 2 Cor 5:9.

**116:10** 2 Cor 4:13. Believing does not  
 mean believers will escape all troubles.  
 Indeed, their troubles in this world may  
 be increased because they trust in Christ  
 – John 15:19; 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom  
 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; 4:17; Phil 1:29;  
 1 Pet 4:12-16.

**116:11** Though God has saved many people  
 from sin, freed them from lying and made  
 them people of honesty and integrity, on  
 the whole men's words cannot be depended  
 on (Jer 17:5; Rom 3:4). But not all men  
 are liars.

**116:12** Let all we who have tasted the Lord's  
 goodness heartily ask this, and get God's  
 answer.

**116:13** Here is the writer's third resolution.  
 "Cup" – 16:5; 23:5; Lev 23:13; Num  
 15:5; Matt 26:27. What more can he give  
 God to repay Him for His goodness? – the joy  
 of seeing him pray (147:11; 149:4). God  
 commands us to pray – 1 Thess 5:17. He de-  
 lights in the prayers of the upright (Prov 15:8).

**116:14** Here is the writer's fourth resolution  
 (compare 65:1; 66:13; Num 30:2;  
 1 Sam 11:1,21; Eccl 5:4).

**116:15** God lovingly watches over the death  
 of His people. He delights to have them

released at last from the trials, pains, and  
 troubles of this life. He gathers them to His  
 bosom. Their death is precious to Him.  
 What is precious in God's sight should not  
 be despised in ours. Let us imitate the  
 apostle Paul in this – Phil 1:21-24; 2 Cor  
 5:1-5. How great the gospel of Christ that  
 makes the death of believers precious to  
 God and a gain to themselves!

**116:16** See 68:6; 107:14; Isa 61:1,2;  
 Nahum 1:13; Luke 4:17-19.

**116:17** Here is the writer's fifth resolution.  
 Notes at 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev  
 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**116:18,19** He wanted all to know God's  
 goodness to him. Anyone who is trying to  
 be a secret believer should take such verses  
 to heart.

"Praise the LORD" – note at 104:35.

**117:1** This is the shortest chapter in the  
 Bible, but it is long in meaning.

"Praise the LORD" – note at 104:35. The  
 God of the Bible (Jehovah), has made all  
 nations. Any real blessings they have He  
 has given. All peoples, then, should praise  
 and glorify Him. And all nations will yet  
 praise Him – this psalm has prophetic over-  
 tones. It points to a time when all na-  
 tions will come to know Him. We know that  
 God sent Christ to die for all and that people  
 from all nations will receive Him by faith.

**117:2** These are good reasons why He  
 should be praised by all nations – He is the  
 God of grace and truth.

**118:1-4** This is the last of the psalms of  
 praise (starting with 113) which the Jews  
 used to sing at their religious festivals,  
 especially at the Passover. As some think,  
 it may have been the hymn sung by Jesus



"His mercy *continues on forever*."

- 5 I called on the LORD in *my* distress;  
the LORD answered me, *and set me* in  
a spacious place.
- 6 The LORD *is* on my side; I will not be  
afraid. What can man do to me?
- 7 The LORD is with me among those who  
help me,  
therefore I will see *my desire*  
*fulfilled* on those who hate me.
- 8 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to  
put confidence in man.
- 9 *It is* better to trust in the LORD than to  
put confidence in princes.
- 10 All nations surrounded me, but in the  
name of the LORD I destroyed them.
- 11 They surrounded me; yes, they came all  
around me,  
but in the name of the LORD I destroyed  
them.
- 12 They surrounded me like bees;

they were quenched like fire among thorns;  
for in the name of the LORD

I destroyed them.

- 13 You pushed me violently to make me fall;  
but the LORD helped me.
- 14 The LORD *is* my strength and song,  
and has become my salvation.
- 15 The sound of rejoicing and salvation *is*  
in the tents of the righteous.  
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
- 16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted.  
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
- 17 I will not die, but live,  
and declare the deeds of the LORD.
- 18 The LORD has chastened me severely,  
but he has not given me over to death.
- 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness.  
I will go through them,  
*and* I will praise the LORD.
- 20 This is the gate of the LORD,  
through which the righteous enter.

and His disciples the night of their last Passover together (Matt 26:30). What psalm could have been better suited to the occasion? This is a psalm of victory over enemies, a song of the conqueror over all opposition. Though the events after the last Passover of Jesus for a little while looked like defeat, this state of affairs was only temporary. Jesus, despised and rejected by men, rose victoriously from the dead and became the great cornerstone of the New Testament Church.

In this psalm the basis for the call to praise is God's goodness and love. Though we are not of Israel's or Aaron's descendants, if we fear the Lord we are included in this invitation to praise. The God of the Bible is good. His nature is good, His plans are good, His motives are good, His acts are good. He alone is fully, perfectly, eternally good (Mark 10:18). He is a gracious God and will be eternally so (Eph 2:7). Never were His goodness and grace more clearly revealed than at the events surrounding the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

"Thanks" - 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**118:5** See 18:6; 31:7; 77:2; 120:1; Heb 5:7. This is the best possible thing to do in times of trouble. Jehovah is a God who answers - 18:19; 31:8; 34:4; 66:12; 86:7; 116:1; 138:3.

**118:6,7** Deut 31:6; 33:29; Josh 1:5; Heb 13:5,6. If God is with us, man can do nothing to us except what God permits. Why then should we fear frail men when the Almighty is our protector?

**118:8,9** Men may deceive and fail us. God never will. Princes too are but men with all man's failings. It is sad to see men neglecting the almighty refuge and unflinching

help God gives and seeking the favor of men whose authority is only for a brief time on earth. Verse 8 is the central verse of the Bible; it also gives a central truth.

**118:10-12** See 3:6; 37:9; 88:17. The presence, the help, and the name of the Lord give great confidence (1 Sam 17:45-47; 2 Chron 14:11,12; 32:6-8).

**118:13** If the Lord helped him why was he pushed back and about to fall? God knows how to test our faith, and when to come to our rescue.

**118:14** See 18:1; 28:7; 31:4; 62:2.

**118:15** Eventually the righteous will gain full and perfect victory, and eternal joy shall be theirs.

**118:16** He knows that victory and salvation and deliverance are God's work and not man's. And he wants God to have all the glory. Compare Eph 1:6,12,14.

**118:17** See 64:9; 71:16; 73:28; Deut 32:3; Acts 1:8.

**118:18** The attacks of enemies, his dangers and troubles have been God's chastening to make him more trusting, more faithful, more holy (compare Jer 31:18; 1 Cor 11:32; Heb 12:5-11).

**118:19,20** The gates of righteousness are the only gates that open into the presence of the righteous God. He has made these gates to shut out all who persist in evil (compare Rev 21:25-27). To enter these gates we must first of all be clothed with Christ's righteousness and justified by His blood. Then as God's people if we want Him to hear our prayers and accept our worship we must have righteousness of life (15:1-5; 18:23,24; 66:18).

"Gates" - 100:4; Matt 7:13,14; John 10:7,8; Ps 100:4; Isa 26:2; 60:18; 62:10; Rev 22:14.

- 21 I will praise you, for you have heard me,  
and have become my salvation.
- 22 The stone *which* the builders rejected  
has become the chief cornerstone.
- 23 This is the LORD's doing.  
It *is* marvellous in our eyes.
- 24 This *is* the day *which* the LORD has made.  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.
- 25 Save now, I pray, O LORD.  
O Lord, I pray, now send success.
- 26 Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of  
the LORD.  
We have blessed you from the house of  
the LORD.
- 27 God *is* the LORD, *and* he has shown us light.

- Bind the sacrifice with cords to the  
horns of the altar.
- 28 You *are* my God, and I will praise you.  
*You are* my God; I will exalt you.
- 29 Oh, give thanks to the LORD,  
for *he is* good;  
for his mercy *continues on* forever.

# 119

ALEPH

- 1 Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way,  
who walk in the law of the Lord.

**118:21** Answered prayer should produce thankful hearts.

**118:22,23** The Lord Jesus applied these verses to Himself. See Matt 21:42. See also Acts 4:10,11; 1 Pet 2:7; Eph 2:20; Isa 28:16. The "builders" of the Jewish society rejected the Lord Jesus (Matt 26:63-68; John 1:13; Isa 53:3), but He has become the cornerstone of God's spiritual temple (Eph 2:19-22). God the Father took His despised and rejected Son and made Him the most important stone in His temple, the stone without which there would be no true building at all (the cornerstone is the stone with which the whole building is aligned). All this was the work of God and it should be marvelous in our eyes too.

**118:24** Here "day" could mean the day when God laid this cornerstone of the New Testament Church, or it could mean this whole age of grace in which believers are to rejoice and be glad. "Day" sometimes means extended periods of time (Isa 34:8; John 9:4; 2 Cor 6:2).

**118:25** In vs 23-27 the plural "we" appears. The author prays as the representative of all the people of God. We should not be content without increase, progress, success in our spiritual life and work.

**118:26** Matt 21:9; Luke 13:35; 19:38; John 5:43. Those who are in the house of the Lord (God's presence) will praise Him (the Lord Jesus).

**118:27** The LORD (Jehovah) is the one true God - 1 Kings 18:21,39; Isa 45:18,22. He alone gives spiritual light - 27:1; Num 6:25; Isa 58:10; 60:1,19,20; 2 Cor 4:4,6.

"Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar" - this could also be translated "With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar" or "Bind the festal sacrifice with ropes and take it up to the altar" (see the note on Hebrew at 14:7). Now believers in Christ are the sacrifice and the Lord Jesus the altar - Rom 12:1; Heb 13:10-14. Let us bind ourselves to Him completely, eternally with the cords of love. Let us never try to free ourselves from Him, or waver in our utter

dedication to Him.

**118:28** See 33:12; 146:5; Deut 33:29. If the God of the Bible is our God how blessed we are and how thankful we should be. And if He is our God we have no business exalting ourselves. He alone must be the object of our praise.

**118:29** We return here to v 1 with, it is to be hoped, a fuller understanding of God's goodness and grace from the study of this psalm.

**119:1** This sublime psalm is a hymn of praise for the Word of God. In nearly every verse the writer uses one word or another to indicate God's revelation - law, word, testimonies, judgments, etc. It is divided into 22 sections according to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In Hebrew each line of a particular section begins with the same letter of the alphabet. It is the believer's alphabet of the praise, love, and use of God's Word.

God's Word applied as the writer does in this psalm is the only way to a truly spiritual life. In this connection remember that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God, the alpha and omega of all God has to say to man. We cannot separate the Lord Jesus from the written Word of God. When we apply it by God's Spirit, we are drawing power, strength, and grace from the Lord Jesus. As love for the Word of God grows in us so does our love for the Lord Jesus grow and so does every flower of grace in our lives.

Ps 1:1-3 gives us the theme of the book of Psalms. Here the way of blessedness, briefly described there, is fully revealed. Here in v 1 (and throughout this psalm) the Hebrew word translated "law" also means "instruction", "teaching." God wants people to be blessed, so He gave us His Word. Blessing comes, not from merely having His Word, or listening to it, or teaching and preaching it, but from *obeying* it. Happiness results from holiness and eternal joy will come when believers are completely conformed to God's Word. See other notes on blessing at Gen 12:3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Matt 5:3-14; Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:9,14; Eph 1:3.

- 2 Blessed *are* those who keep his  
testimonies, *and who* seek him with  
*their* whole heart.
- 3 They also do no evil; they walk in  
his ways.
- 4 You have commanded us to keep your  
precepts diligently.
- 5 Oh, that my ways were directed to keep  
your statutes!
- 6 Then I would not be ashamed,  
when I pay attention to all your  
commandments.
- 7 I will praise you with uprightness of heart,  
when I learn your righteous judgments.
- 8 I will keep your statutes.  
Oh, do not utterly forsake me.

BETH

- 9 How can a young man make  
his way clean?  
By keeping watch *on it* according to your word.
- 10 I have sought you with my whole heart.  
Oh, do not let me wander from your  
commandments.
- 11 Your word I have hidden in my heart,  
that I might not sin against you.
- 12 Blessed *are* you, O LORD.  
Teach me your statutes.
- 13 With my lips I have declared all the  
judgments of your mouth.
- 14 I have rejoiced in the way of your  
testimonies,  
as *much as* in all riches.

**119:2** "Testimonies" – means God's instruction through His law, or revealed word.

"Seek" – we cannot walk in God's ways without seeking God and His grace, power, and presence. The more we truly seek God the more we will experience Him, the more obedient we will learn to be, and the more blessing we will have. The believer's life should be a constant seeking and finding (1 Chron 16:11; Matt 7:7,8). This seeking must be with the "whole heart" – completely sincere, coming out of an understanding of its importance and a deep longing for God's presence (Deut 4:29; Jer 29:13).

**119:3** Those who do not live according to verses 1 and 2 will not walk in God's ways. They will inevitably do wrong, and will fail to learn what true blessedness is.

**119:4** God's commands are not given merely to instruct the mind but to change the life. Our religion is vain if we do not try to do what God tells us – Matt 7:21-23; Luke 11:27,28; John 14:15,21; 15:10; 1 John 5:3.

"Precepts" – means rules of conduct.

**119:5** He implies that he is not yet fully experiencing the blessed life he has described. But though He knows his own weakness, sinfulness, and failure, he longs with all his heart to experience that blessed life. It is very important what our aims are. If we are content with poor spiritual standards and experience we will make little progress in the spiritual life.

"Statutes" – means things ordained or prescribed by law.

**119:6** "Ashamed" – vs 46,80; 1 John 2:28.

**119:7** The more a believer understands God's Word the more he should be filled with thanksgiving for it. The Bible is one of God's exceedingly wonderful gifts to men.

"Judgments" – here means decisions made with justice, declarations of the lawgiver.

**119:8** See 27:9; 38:21; 71:9,18. He is resolved to live according to God's Word. Then why does he plead with God not to forsake him? He is aware that in spite of

his good resolutions and sincere determination he has failed before and may well fail again (see v 176). He realizes that if God in His holiness and justice would treat him according to his sins, God would forsake him completely. Believers should value very highly indeed the promises of God not to forsake them (37:28; 94:14; 118:6; Deut 4:31; 31:6; Isa 41:17; Heb 13:5). If God *seems* to forsake them, it is only partial and temporary.

**119:9** Surely this is one of the most important questions a young man can ask, and one of the highest ambitions he can have. The answer is clearly given in this and the following verses. Purity of life comes from using the Word of God (v 9), seeking God for His grace and power to do so (v 10), keeping His Word at the center of our thoughts and desires (v 11), learning from God Himself the meaning of His Word (v 12), speaking of God's Word when one has learned it (v 13), and rejoicing, meditating, and delighting in it (vs 14-16).

**119:10** Verse 2. It is easy to stray from God's commandments. To do so is the natural tendency of our fallen natures. Hence the necessity of seeking God with the whole heart.

**119:11** Deut 6:6-8. In the believer's fight against sin hardly anything is so important as the Word of God (John 15:3,7; Eph 6:17; Col 3:16,17). It must occupy a central place in our thoughts, hopes, ambitions, desires, and meditations. It must be at the very spring of our actions. Observe that sin is against God – see 51:4.

**119:12** If we are kept from sin this should not make us congratulate ourselves, but praise God who has done it. Nine times in this psalm the writer asks God to teach him – vs 12, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135. See also 25:4,5; 143:8,10. This indicates the value he put on it and the earnestness with which he sought it.

**119:13** The author delights to speak forth God's laws because they have come from the very mouth of God (v 72; Deut 8:3; Matt 4:4).

**119:14** The greatest possible joy comes

- 15 I will meditate on your precepts,  
and pay attention to your ways.
- 16 I will delight myself in your statutes.  
I will not forget your word.

GIMEL

- 17 Do good to your servant *that* I may live  
and keep your word.
- 18 Open my eyes that I may see wonderful  
things from your law.
- 19 I *am* a stranger on earth.  
Do not hide your commandments from me.
- 20 My soul breaks with the longing *that it*  
*has* for your judgments at all times.
- 21 You rebuke the proud, *who are* accursed,  
who go astray from your commandments.
- 22 Remove reproach and contempt from me,  
for I have kept your testimonies.
- 23 Princes also sit *and* speak against me;  
*but* your servant meditates on your  
statutes.

from putting the Word of God into practice. Then it becomes more to us than silver and gold could ever be (v 72; 19:10; Prov 2:1-5). **119:15** Verses 97,148; 1:2. **119:16** See 112:1. **119:17** Judging from this verse and vs 22,23 the writer is in a time of trial and trouble. He knows what to do and is an example to all of us who are experiencing such things. He meditated on God's instructions (v 23), delighted in them (v 24), and resolved to put them into practice (v 17). **119:18** There are wonderful things in the Word of God which we will never see until God opens the eyes of our understanding. Well might we pray as the writer did here. See Luke 24:45; Eph 1:17,18. **119:19** "Stranger" – the Hebrew word indicates a foreigner or temporary resident. See Lev 25:23; Phil 3:20; Heb 11:13. Did he feel that perhaps God should hide truth from him if God acted toward him as he deserved? **119:20** See 42:2; 84:2. If we had the intense longing to know God's Word that he had, we would soon make great strides in the spiritual life. **119:21** See 5:5; Deut 27:26; Jer 20:7; 50:32; Dan 4:37. **119:22** See 39:8; 69:7; 79:4; Dan 9:16. **119:23** Verse 161; 31:13; 50:20; 101:5; 1 Pet 3:15,16. **119:24** The Word of God will infallibly teach us how to behave in a godless and hostile world. **119:25** See 44:25. Nine times in this psalm he asks God to revive him (vs 25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159) – indicating the importance of it in his eyes and the earnestness with which he sought it. A prayer for reviving means that he felt himself in a condition where his spiritual life seemed threatened. Whether this meant physical danger of death, or spiritual

- 24 Your testimonies also are my delight *and*  
my counsellors.

DALETH

- 25 My soul clings to the dust.  
Revive me in accordance with your word.
- 26 I declared my ways, and you answered me.  
Teach me your statutes.
- 27 Make me understand the way of your  
precepts;  
so I will meditate on your wonderful works.
- 28 My soul melts from heaviness.  
Strengthen me according to your word.
- 29 Remove from me the way of lying,  
and graciously grant me your law.
- 30 I have chosen the way of truth;  
I have placed your judgments *before me*.
- 31 I cling to your testimonies.  
O LORD, do not put me to shame.
- 32 I will run in the path of your commandments,  
when you enlarge my heart.

depression and need of revival he does not say. The Hebrew word could be used for either condition. One thing is sure – often when believers desires to rise to the heights of spiritual experience with God they feel bound to the dust, in a condition that seems to them more like spiritual death than life. When God renews them it will always be in accordance with His Word. "Revive" – this is a translation of the same Hebrew word translated "revive" in Ps 85:6; 138:7; Isa 57:15; Hos 6:2; 14:7; Hab 3:2. It can mean "to keep alive" or "to give life", whether physical or spiritual life, "to quicken", "revive", "restore", "cause to grow." **119:26** He told God just what he had been doing. God wants us to be completely open and honest with Him and speak to Him as a child with a loving father (62:8; 142:1,2; Job 10:1,2). "Teach" – v 12; 27:11; 86:11. **119:27** See 105:2; 145:5. **119:28** See 6:7; 116:3; Isa 51:11; Jer 45:3. This is sometimes the experience of godly men in this hostile world, and we will often need to pray as he did. **119:29** See 26:4; 101:7. He wanted nothing to do with deceit himself or with anyone who engaged in it. **119:30** See 26:3. No greater choice can be made (John 14:6). The way of truth is revealed only in God's Word. There we have the way laid out, the signposts erected, the goal clearly defined. If we do not walk in the way of truth we are still in the way of deceit, the broad way that leads to destruction. Observe that the way of truth must be *chosen*. **119:31** If we do not want to be put to shame we too must make a firm, unyielding choice for truth and obedience. **119:32** We need a heart made broad enough for all of God's commandments and

HE

- 33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes,  
and I will keep it *to* the end.
- 34 Give me understanding, and I will keep your law;  
yes, I will observe it with *my* whole heart.
- 35 Cause me to go in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.
- 36 Turn my heart to your testimonies,  
and not to covetousness.
- 37 Turn away my eyes from seeing worthless things,  
*and* revive me in your way.
- 38 Establish your word to your servant,  
who *is devoted* to your fear.
- 39 Turn away my reproach, which I fear;  
for your judgments *are* good.
- 40 See, I have longed for your precepts.  
Revive me in your righteousness.

VAV

- 41 Also let your mercies come to me,

O LORD, your salvation, according to your word.

- 42 So I will have an answer for him who taunts me; for I trust in your word.
- 43 And do not take the word of truth completely from my mouth;  
for I have put hope in your judgments.
- 44 So I will keep your law continually forever and ever.
- 45 And I will walk in liberty;  
for I seek your precepts.
- 46 I will speak of your testimonies also before kings,  
and will not be ashamed.
- 47 And I will delight myself in your commandments, which I love.
- 48 I will also lift my hands to your commandments, which I love,  
and I will meditate on your statutes.

ZAYIN

- 49 Remember the word to your servant,  
on which you have caused me to hope.

to take in every word God gives. And our obedience must not be a slow, hesitant, crawling thing but swift, zealous, and full. The writer does not imagine that he has it within himself to do this. He knows that God must be at work in him if he is to run and not faint in the way of truth (Isa 40:31; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29).

**119:33,34** See 25:4,5; 1 Kings 3:9,10; Luke 24:45; 1 John 5:20. He realizes the great importance of understanding spiritual truth and knows that his own intellect is not sufficient for it. So he cries to God. Observe that he means to be fully, eternally obedient. Spiritual understanding is to result in a life lived in accordance with God's Word and will. Otherwise it is all in vain.

**119:35** He delights in God's way and knows he should walk in it. But he knows also that by nature he is unable to do so (see Rom 7:18-25). God's power alone can cause us to live a life pleasing to God. So this prayer.

**119:36** Though he delights in God's way he knows that in him there is a tendency to evil that would go after worldly things. He prays that his inner life might be right, that the motives, desires, and inclinations of his heart may all be toward God. God Himself must do this in us, but we must cooperate with Him.

**119:37** Could not the author turn his own eyes away? Evidently he knew the power of the lust of the eyes and that only God could break this power (1 John 2:16,17). He is indicating his own helplessness and confesses his need of new life and strength.

**119:38** Notes on this fear at 34:11-14; 111:10; Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Prov 1:7; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:17; etc.

**119:39** Verse 22; 69:9; 89:51; Isa

25:8; 51:7; 54:4.

**119:40** Verse 20; 42:2; 84:2.

**119:41** Verses 76, 116, 154, 170. All that God does is in accordance with His Word. The more we understand His Word the more we will understand what He plans and does.

**119:42** See 42:10; Col 4:6; 1 Pet 3:15,16.

**119:43** This prayer is that God will not let him get into a situation or spiritual condition that would make him unable to speak for God. This had happened to David as recorded in psalm 51 (see 51:12-15). Paul requested prayer that he might always be able to speak as he ought (Eph 6:19,20).

**119:44** A resolution made not in fleshly self-confidence but in hope of the fulfillment of the prayer in v 41.

**119:45** See 18:19; 31:8; Job 26:16.

**119:46** Matt 10:18; Acts 26:1,2.

**119:47** Verses 77,143; 112:1.

**119:48** See 28:2. The movement of the hands here is an outward expression of the love he had for God's commands. Even a small child holds out his hands to that which he wants.

**119:49** We could entitle this section "comfort in remembering." He was suffering because of the scorn of ungodly men. But he encourages himself in the Word of God and in remembering God's gracious attributes and ways. In all this he is an example to all God's people who are unjustly suffering. He is speaking of some specific promises God had given him. In asking God to "remember" he is not suggesting God may forget. He is a man using man's ways of speaking. God does not forget anything about His people except their sins (Isa 49:15; Heb 6:10; 8:12; 10:17).



- 50 This *is* my comfort in my affliction;  
for your word has revived me.
- 51 The proud have derided me greatly;  
*yet* I have not turned away from your law.
- 52 I remembered your judgments of old,  
O LORD, and have comforted myself.
- 53 Indignation has taken hold of me because  
of the wicked who forsake your law.
- 54 Your statutes have been my songs in the  
house of my pilgrimage.
- 55 I remember your name, O LORD,  
in the night, and keep your law.
- 56 This has been my way, because I keep your  
precepts.

## KHETH

- 57 *You are* my portion, O LORD;  
I have said that I would keep your words.
- 58 I entreated your favour with *my* whole  
heart.

**119:50** Some have comfort without suffering, others have suffering without comfort. Believers as a whole have both. The comfort of believers in times of suffering is this – the promises of God. They give a living hope that no trouble can destroy.

**119:51** Verses 61, 83, 87. The object of the proud when they mock God's people is to turn them from the right path. In this case their attempts were in vain.

**119:52** For every trial and trouble there is comfort and encouragement in God's Word if we will but seek it out (Rom 15:4).

**119:53** The behavior of evil men will often make believers angry at the violation of justice and the dishonor done to God. Also they may often feel grief at the thought of the terrible fate awaiting godless men (v 136; Ex 32:19; Jer 8:18-22; Luke 19:41-44; Acts 17:16; 2 Cor 5:11).

**119:54** Verse 172; 101:1; 138:5; Job 35:10; Eph 5:19.

**119:55** Verse 62; 42:8; 63:6. In night when sleep does not come, far better to think of God's gracious attributes than our own troubles and temptations (compare 36:4; Prov 4:16; Micah 2:1).

**119:56** To be enabled to live according to the Word of God is the greatest of all blessings on earth.

**119:57** In the section which follows, he finds in himself certain marks that all believers have or should have – they have God as their portion, and they want to obey God's Word (v 57); they seek God in prayer (v 58); and they think about their actions and try to correct them (v 59). They should show eagerness to obey (v 60), should not be crushed by persecution (v 61), should be thankful (v 62), should seek fellowship with other believers (v 63), and should long for God to teach them (v 64).

"Portion" – 16:5; 73:26; Deut 32:9; Jer 51:19; Lam 3:24.

- Be merciful to me according to your word.
- 59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet  
to your testimonies.
- 60 I made haste, and did not delay to keep  
your commandments.
- 61 The cords of the wicked have bound me,  
*but* I have not forgotten your law.
- 62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks to you,  
because of your righteous judgments.
- 63 I *am* a companion of all *those* who fear you,  
and of those who keep your precepts.
- 64 The earth, O LORD, is full of your mercy.  
Teach me your statutes.

## TETH

- 65 You have dealt well with your servant,  
O LORD, according to your word.
- 66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge,  
for I have believed your commandments.
- 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,

"Keep" – vs 17,67,101.

**119:58** Verse 41; 34:4; Deut 4:29; 1 Chron 16:11.

**119:59** Lam 3:40; Hag 1:5,7.

**119:60** Delay to obey is the same as disobedience. Many hasten to commit sin. Let us hasten to conquer sin by obeying God's Word.

**119:61** Verses 51, 83, 87. Mocking could not turn him from God's Word, nor could persecution.

**119:62** Verse 55. This is one of a great many things believers have to be thankful for.

"Thanks" – notes at 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**119:63** See 15:4; 101:6,7; Acts 2:46; Heb 10:25. A person is known by the company he keeps. He chose his friends carefully.

**119:64** "Full" – 33:5; Isa 6:3; Matt 5:44-48.

"Teach" – v 12.

**119:65** This section could be entitled "Learning by suffering" (vs 67, 71). If our troubles do not teach us any lessons or do not make us better people, they are useless to us. But if they do, they are a means of great gain. The writer was not made bitter by sufferings, but by them learned more of God's Word and God's goodness. See notes on suffering at Job 3:20; etc. In this verse the writer speaks of God's goodness, not merely in giving him many blessings, but in sending these troubles that would teach him the things which he needed to learn.

**119:66** Verse 12.

**119:67** We walk about in good weather but head for home when the storm begins to roll in. Suffering taught him to return to his home in God (90:1), and to God's Word and obedience. See Heb 2:10; 5:8. Since this principle is true we should not be so eager to avoid all trouble and suffering. Indeed we should welcome all experiences which make

but now I have kept your word.  
 68 You *are* good, and do good.  
 Teach me your statutes.  
 69 The proud have forged a lie against me,  
*but* I will keep your precepts with *my*  
 whole heart.  
 70 Their heart is as fat as grease;  
*but* I delight in your law.  
 71 *It is* good for me that I have been  
 afflicted that I might learn your statutes.  
 72 To me the law of your mouth *is* better  
 than thousands of *pieces* of gold and silver.

YOD

73 Your hands have made me and formed me.  
 Give me understanding that I may learn  
 your commandments.  
 74 Those who fear you will be glad when they  
 see me,  
 because I have hoped in your word.  
 75 I know, O LORD, that your judgments *are*  
 right,  
 and *that* you in faithfulness have

afflicted me.  
 76 Let, I pray, your merciful kindness be my  
 comfort,  
 according to your word to your servant.  
 77 Let your tender mercies come to me that I  
 may live,  
 for your law *is* my delight.  
 78 Let the proud be ashamed, for they  
 treated me wrongly, without a cause;  
*but* I will meditate on your precepts.  
 79 Let those who fear you turn to me,  
 and those who have known your  
 testimonies.  
 80 Let my heart be blameless in your statutes,  
 so that I may not be ashamed.

KAPH

81 My soul faints for your salvation;  
*but* I hope in your word.  
 82 My eyes fail for your word, saying,  
 "When will you comfort me?"  
 83 For I have become like a bottle in the  
 smoke;

us more conformed to God's Word and will.  
**119:68** See 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 135:3.  
**119:69** See 5:9; 10:7; 52:4; 109:2. In  
 v 51 he speaks of proud people mocking  
 him. In v 61 he speaks of persecution. Here  
 he speaks of slander. But none of these  
 things turned him from God's Word.  
**119:70** See 17:10; 73:7. Observe the  
 tremendous contrast between believers and  
 unbelievers. Unbelievers are completely  
 unmoved by that which is the great delight  
 of believers.  
**119:71** Verses 65,75; Deut 8:2-5; Heb  
 12:5-11. Affliction, he says, is good. Good,  
 but not pleasant. Anything is good that  
 opens our eyes to the truth and beauty of  
 God's Word and helps to make us obedient  
 to it. His troubles came from men, but God  
 turned it all to good (notes at Gen 50:20;  
 Rom 8:28). God brings health out of sick-  
 ness, riches out of poverty, strength out of  
 weakness. It is the cross we have to bear  
 that moves us closer to heaven.  
**119:72** Verses 14,57,111,127,162; 19:10;  
 Job 28:17; Prov 2:4,5. If we wish to  
 progress in the spiritual life we must value  
 the Word of God as he did.  
**119:73** "Formed" - 138:8; 139:13-16;  
 Gen 1:27.  
 "Understanding" - vs 12, 18, 26, 27, 33,  
 34. His reasoning here is that God has not  
 made him for ignorance and disobedience,  
 but to live a wise and holy life. Any fool can  
 sin. It takes great understanding of God's  
 Word to be as holy as God wants us to be.  
 The writer pleads with God to complete the  
 work He has begun.  
**119:74** See 34:2. He wanted his life to be  
 a source of joy and blessing to others.  
**119:75** Verses 7,138,172; Deut 4:8. He

knew that even though God has permitted  
 him to suffer at the hands of ungodly men  
 this has been in accordance with God's per-  
 fect righteousness and faithfulness. God  
 will never violate His laws in dealing with His  
 people and He afflicts them for a good  
 purpose (Heb 12:10; Rev 3:19).  
**119:76** Verse 41.  
**119:77** His troubles were so severe he  
 sometimes despaired of life, and felt only  
 God's compassion could keep him alive, but  
 he had a joy through them all. If the Word  
 of God is not a delight to us as it was to him  
 we have no right to think that God should  
 preserve us alive. Should God keep us alive  
 only that we might violate His laws and sin  
 against Him?  
**119:78** Note on such prayers at 35:8.  
**119:79** Perhaps some believers had been  
 alienated from him because of his troubles.  
 He wants perfect fellowship restored with all  
 godly men.  
**119:80** "Blameless" - v 1. It was not enough  
 for him to have a blameless outer life. He  
 wanted his inward life, its motives,  
 ambitions and desires to be blameless also.  
 "Ashamed" - vs 6,46; 1 John 2:28. Sin  
 and disobedience will always bring shame.  
**119:81** In this section the writer, suffering  
 great persecution, longs for God to act in  
 his behalf. He knows he is trusting God's  
 Word and waits for God to fulfill it.  
 "Faints" - v 20; 84:2.  
 "Hope" - vs 43,74,114,147; Rom 5:2-5.  
**119:82** See 6:7; 69:3; Lam 2:11.  
**119:83** He compares himself in his perse-  
 cution to a wineskin in a tent, unused,  
 blackened by smoke, and wrinkled by heat.  
 "I do not forget" - vs 51, 61, 87.  
 Whether in the smoke or in the fire let us

*yet* I do not forget your statutes.  
84 How many *are* the days of your servant?  
When will you execute judgment on those  
who persecute me?  
85 The proud have dug pits for me,  
which *is* not according to your law.  
86 All your commandments *are* trustworthy.  
They persecute me wrongfully. Help me!  
87 They almost made an end of me on earth,  
but I did not forsake your precepts.  
88 Revive me according to your loving  
kindness;  
so I will keep the testimony of your mouth.

LAMED

89 Forever, O LORD, your word stands firm in  
heaven.  
90 Your faithfulness *is* to all generations.  
You have established the earth, and it  
remains.  
91 They continue to this day in accordance  
with your ordinances.  
For all *things are* your servants.  
92 If your law *had* not *been* my delight,  
then I would have perished in my affliction.  
93 I will never forget your precepts,

for with them you have revived me.  
94 I *am* yours; save me,  
for I have sought your precepts.  
95 The wicked have waited for me to  
destroy me;  
*but* I will consider your testimonies.  
96 I have seen an end of all perfection;  
*but* your commandment is exceedingly  
broad.

MEM

97 O how I love your law!  
It *is* my meditation all the day.  
98 Through your commandments you have  
made me wiser than my enemies,  
for they *are* always with me.  
99 I have more understanding than all  
my teachers,  
for your testimonies *are* my meditation.  
100 I understand more than the ancients,  
because I keep your precepts.  
101 I have withheld my feet from every  
evil way,  
that I might keep your word.  
102 I have not departed from your judgments,  
for you have taught me.

hold fast to God’s Word.  
**119:84** See 6:3; 13:1; 35:17; 89:46; 90:16; 94:3; Rev 6:10.  
**119:85** See 35:7; 57:6; Jer 18:20,22; Mark 12:13; Luke 11:53,54. We need, then, to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves.  
**119:86** “Trustworthy” – vs 138; 19:7; 111:7; Matt 5:17,18.  
**119:87** Verses 51, 61, 83. He had resolved to hold fast to God’s Word regardless of what men did to him. If persecution and trouble will cause us to renounce the Word of God is our faith at all genuine?  
**119:88** The Word of God, though written down by men, comes from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4). Life to us should mean obedience to it.  
**119:89** See 111:7,8; Matt 5:18; 1 Pet 1:25. Since God’s Word is eternally firm and sure in heaven, nothing that happens on earth can overthrow it.  
**119:90** See 36:5; 45:17; 89:1; 90:1. God works out His fixed purpose and fulfills His Word toward the earth and in the world.  
**119:91** “Ordinances” – Jer 33:25. Creation is governed, not by mere laws of nature, but by the laws of God.  
“All things” – 104:2-4; Jer 31:35. All created objects from the tiny atom to the giant constellations and galaxies in space, all animals, fish, and birds obey God’s laws. In the whole universe only men together with Satan and his hordes disobey God and refuse to be His servants.  
**119:92** How can people live without the joy of knowing God’s Word? Without hope and

without God how can they keep from dying of despair? God’s Word is the remedy for despair, for meaninglessness in life.  
**119:93** Note at v 50.  
**119:94** Believers belong to the Lord (1 Cor 6:19,20). He has created them, chosen them, redeemed them, given them new spiritual life, and claimed them as His own forever. They prove they belong to God by seeking to obey Him. The writer prays that God will deal with him according to this fact. So may we if we are believers.  
**119:95** Verses 51, 61, 85.  
**119:96** All that men think best on earth, all they most pride themselves in, all things that seems most perfect, have defects. God’s teaching has a perfection that is boundless and without defect (19:7).  
**119:97** The subject of this section is wisdom and understanding that come from God’s Word.  
“Meditation” – verses 15, 47, 99. Our minds will always fasten on those things and those persons we love.  
**119:98-100** Verse 130; 19:7; Deut 4:6; Prov 2:1-5; 2 Tim 3:15. The Word of God is the wisdom of believers. But it is not enough to have it in the home – it must be in the heart, at the center of an obedient life.  
**119:101** Evil ways and the Word of God are mutually antagonistic and will not mix.  
**119:102** Very wonderful indeed to have God as our teacher! See also Isa 54:13; Jer 31:33,34; 1 Cor 2:13; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 8:10,11; 10:16; 1 John 2:27. If we want God to teach us we must be believing and

103 How sweet are your words to my taste!  
Yes, *sweeter* than honey to my mouth!  
104 Through your precepts I get  
understanding;  
therefore I hate every false way.

NUN

105 Your word *is* a lamp to my feet,  
and a light to my path.  
106 I have sworn that I will keep your  
righteous judgments,  
and I will perform *it*.  
107 I am greatly afflicted.  
Revive me, O LORD, according to your word.  
108 Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings  
of my mouth, O LORD,  
and teach me your judgments.  
109 My soul *is* continually in my hand;  
yet I do not forget your law.  
110 The wicked have laid a snare for me;  
yet I have not gone astray from your  
precepts.  
111 I have taken your testimonies as a  
heritage forever,  
for they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.  
112 I have inclined my heart to perform your  
statutes continually, *to* the end.

obedient.  
**119:103** See also 19:10; Prov 24:13,14. Honey is sweet to the mouth, but God's Word when believed and obeyed brings a sweet and holy joy to the spirit.  
**119:104** Verse 128; Prov 13:5. Understanding God's Word enables us to discern wrong paths and to hate them as being dishonoring to God and destructive to men.  
**119:105** The subject of this section is the great value of God's Word and the writer's determination to keep it at all costs.  
"Lamp" - Prov 20:27; 2 Pet 1:19.  
"Light" - v 130; 19:8; Prov 6:23. The Word of God is an infallible guide to conduct. It tells us exactly how to walk and what the goal is. If we neglect or spurn God's Word we are choosing darkness and we will not know what we're doing or where we're going. So we should be as the writer of this psalm was as seen in v 131.  
**119:106** Neh 10:29.  
**119:107** Verse 25; Rom 7:24.  
**119:108** "Teach" - v 12; 25:4,5; 143:8,10.  
**119:109** See 1 Cor 15:30,31; 2 Cor 6:9; 11:23.  
**119:110** Verses 51, 61, 83, 87.  
**119:111** The land of Canaan was a heritage of the people of Israel (105:11; Josh 1:6). But a far greater possession than any land, any property on earth is the Word of God. It is an eternal inheritance (Matt 24:35), a joy forever.  
**119:112** Verse 106. To obey the Word of God requires great determination and self-discipline.

SAMEKH

113 I hate divided *thoughts*,  
but I love your law.  
114 You *are* my hiding place and my shield.  
I hope in your word.  
115 Depart from me, you evildoers;  
for I will keep the commandments  
of my God.  
116 Uphold me according to your word,  
that I may live;  
and do not let me be ashamed of my hope.  
117 Hold me up, and I will be safe,  
and I will observe your statutes continually.  
118 You reject all those who go astray  
from your statutes,  
for their deceit *is* falsehood.  
119 You put an end to all the wicked of the  
earth *like* dross;  
therefore I love your testimonies.  
120 My flesh trembles for fear of you,  
and I am in awe of your judgments.

AYIN

121 I have acted in justice and  
righteousness;  
do not leave me to my oppressors.  
122 Give a pledge to your servant for good.

Without these, because of the weakness of our nature, it is all too easy to forget God's Word and drift away from its teachings.  
**119:113** 1 Kings 18:21; Jam 1:6,7; 4:8. Because he had such an intense love for God's Word, everything opposed to it was disgusting to him. If there is hesitation in obeying God's Word, if one has two minds about it, a love of sin is at the bottom of it.  
**119:114** "Shield" - 3:3; 18:2; 28:7; Gen 15:1.  
"Hope" - vs 43, 81, 147.  
**119:115** 6:8; 97:10; 139:19. Those who love God cannot be happy in the fellowship of those who love evil.  
**119:116,117** See 41:1-3; 55:22; Isa 41:10; 46:4.  
**119:118** Such people may think themselves very wise and great, but they cannot persuade God to have the same view of them (Gal 6:7).  
**119:119** Mal 4:1; Matt 25:41; Rev 21:8. He loved God's laws because they are opposed to all wickedness, and because according to them God will purify the earth of wicked men.  
**119:120** Thinking of the destruction of the wicked made him tremble for himself. He was well aware that he had a sinful nature and that only the grace of God could keep him from evil. Note on the fear of God at 34:11-14; 111:10; Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; 1 Peter 1:17; 2:17.  
**119:121,122** He was not self-righteous like the Pharisee in Luke 18:9-12. Throughout this psalm he appears as one conscious of

Do not let the proud oppress me.  
 123 My eyes fail for your salvation,  
 and for the word of your righteousness.  
 124 Deal with your servant according to  
 your mercy,  
 and teach me your statutes.  
 125 I *am* your servant.  
 Give me understanding so that I may  
 know your testimonies.  
 126 *It is* time for *you*, LORD, to work,  
 for they have violated your law.  
 127 Therefore I love your commandments  
 more than gold,  
 yes, more than fine gold.  
 128 Therefore I regard all *your* precepts  
*concerning everything to be* right,  
*and* I hate every false way.

## PEY

129 Your testimonies *are* wonderful;  
 therefore my soul keeps them.  
 130 The entrance of your words gives light;  
 it gives understanding to the simple.  
 131 I opened my mouth and panted,

for I longed for your commandments.  
 132 Look at me, and be merciful to me,  
 as you always do to those who love  
 your name.  
 133 Direct my steps in your word,  
 and do not let any sin get the  
 mastery over me.  
 134 Deliver me from the oppression of man;  
 so I will keep your precepts.  
 135 Make your face shine on your servant,  
 and teach me your statutes.  
 136 Rivers of waters run down my eyes,  
 because they do not keep your law.

## TSADE

137 You *are* righteous, O LORD,  
 and your judgments are upright.  
 138 Your testimonies *that* you have  
 commanded *are* righteous and very  
 trustworthy.  
 139 My zeal has consumed me,  
 because my enemies have forgotten  
 your words.  
 140 Your word *is* very pure;

his weakness and failure. A low opinion of themselves and a high quality of life should both be found in believers. But he knew that on the whole he had, by God's grace, lived according to God's righteous ways. He knew that he was truly a servant of God.

**119:123** Verse 82; 6:7; 63:3; Lam 2:11.  
**119:124** "Deal" - v 88; 25:7; 69:16;  
 109:26.

"Teach" - v 12.

**119:125** If we are God's servants we will want to understand His instructions to us, and we can pray with confidence that He will give us wisdom (Jam 1:5; 1 John 5:14,15).

**119:126** Man's sin will have God's judgment, and when the time is ripe God will arise to judge the world.

**119:127** Verses 14,57,111,162; 19:10.

**119:128** "Right" - 19:8; 33:4.

"False way" - vs 104,163; 97:10; Prov 13:5.

**119:129** Verse 13. God's Word is full of wonderful truth, promises, instructions, and revelations of God. But he did not imagine that it was enough to simply praise God's Word - he wanted to obey it. It is not admiration of it that brings blessing but obedience to it.

**119:130** Verse 105; 19:7,8.

**119:131** Verse 20. We live in a dark world. It is filled with religions and philosophical teachings, with false speculations about God and salvation, with dark and slippery paths that lead to hell. We, like the author, should pant for understanding of God's Word, and use every available means to study it.

**119:132** See 6:4; 25:6; 69:16; 86:16. It seems sometimes to believers that God

has turned away from them and left them to their troubles and sufferings. At such times we must not trust our feelings in this matter but the unchanging promises of God.

**119:133** It is a sad thing when our enemies rule over us. Far sadder it is, and more dangerous, when our greatest enemy - sin - rules us. Freedom from sin's dominion results only from the power of the Word of God in the life (v 11; John 8:31-36; Rom 6:16).

**119:134** Verse 122. To fully carry out the commands of the Word of God freedom from man's oppression is also important (1 Tim 2:1,2).

**119:135** "Shine" - 4:6; 67:1; 80:3; Num 6:25.

"Teach" - v 12; 25:4,5.

**119:136** He knew something of God's punishment, the disaster, suffering and destruction which come on a disobedient and sinful people. So he wept (compare Isa 22:4; Jer 9:1; Lam 1:16; 3:48; Luke 19:41-44; Rom 9:1-3).

**119:137** The subject of this section is God's righteousness and the eternal rightness of His laws (129:4; 145:17; Isa 24:16; Jer 23:6; Dan 9:7; Zeph 3:5; John 17:25).

**119:138** "Trustworthy" - v 86; 19:7; 111:7; Matt 5:17,18.

**119:139** See 69:9; John 2:17. He experienced an overwhelming desire that all should honor God and submit to the authority of God's Word, and was deeply pained when God was dishonored by disobedience. This kind of zeal is much needed among believers.

**119:140** See 12:6. There is no dross, no impurity, nothing useless in God's Word. It



therefore your servant loves it.

141 I *am* small and despised;

*yet* I do not forget your precepts.

142 Your righteousness *is* an everlasting  
righteousness,

and your law *is* the truth.

143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold of me;

*yet* your commandments *are* my delight.

144 The righteousness of your testimonies  
*is* everlasting;

give me understanding, and I will live.

#### KOPH

145 I cried out with *my* whole heart.

Hear me, O LORD.

I will keep your statutes.

146 I cried out to you. Save me,

and I will keep your testimonies.

147 I rise before dawn in the morning,

and cry out. I hope in your word.

148 My eyes remain awake through the  
*night* watches,

that I might meditate on your word.

149 Hear my voice, according to your  
loving kindness.

O LORD, revive me according to  
your judgment.

150 Those who follow evil draw near;  
they are far from your law.

151 You *are* near, O LORD,

and all your commandments are truth.

is altogether worthy of the hearty love the author had for it, and that we should have for it.

**119:141** "Small" – love for God's Word and humility must go together.

"Forget" – vs 57, 61, 83, 87.

**119:142** Verses 151, 160.

**119:143** Only the believer can experience acute suffering, and joy in God's Word at the same time (2 Cor 6:10; 7:4; Phil 2:17; Col 1:24).

**119:144** Verses 34, 73, 125, 169. The fourth of five prayers in this one psalm for understanding. Nine other times he asks God to teach him. Have we ever asked it even once?

**119:145** See verse 10.

**119:146** See verse 77.

**119:147** See 5:3; 57:8; 108:2; Mark 1:35. All believers should attempt to establish and maintain a time for prayer and meditation early in the morning. But their hope should be, not in their discipline, or prayers, but in God's Word.

**119:148** 63:6; Luke 6:12. Special times of need call for special seasons of prayer.

**119:149** The writer may be requesting either preservation in a time of danger, or spiritual quickening. See v 25.

**119:150** Some people are so spiritually ignorant that they not merely act wickedly, they do so with great eagerness (Eph 4:19;

152 Concerning your testimonies, I have  
known for a long time that you  
have established them forever.

#### RESH

153 Consider my affliction, and rescue me;  
for I do not forget your law.

154 Plead my cause, and rescue me.

Revive me according to your word.

155 Salvation *is* far from the wicked,  
for they do not seek your statutes.

156 Great *are* your tender mercies, O LORD.

Revive me according to your judgments.

157 Many *are* my persecutors and my enemies;  
*yet* I do not turn away from your  
testimonies.

158 I saw the transgressors, and was grieved  
because they did not keep your word.

159 Consider how I love your precepts.

Revive me, O LORD, according to your  
loving kindness.

160 Your word *is* true *from* the beginning,  
and every one of your righteous  
judgments *remains* forever.

#### SHIN

161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause,  
but my heart stands in awe of your word.

162 I rejoice at your word, like someone who  
finds great plunder.

163 I hate and abhor lying,

1 Pet 4:4). They are near believers to try to ruin them, but are far from God.

**119:151** If the Lord is near He will keep His servants, and deal with the wicked in His time and way.

**119:152** Verse 89; 111:8; Luke 21:33.

**119:153** In this section the writer in his great trouble asks God to look into his case and deal with him according to His wisdom and grace.

**119:154** See 35:1; 1 Sam 24:15; Jer 50:34.

**119:155** The wicked are far from salvation because they willingly remain in ignorance of God's Word. If they sought God and His Word they too could be saved (Isa 55:7; Jam 4:8-10).

**119:156** "Tender mercies" or "compassion" – 103:8; 106:45; Lam 3:22,23.

"Revive" – vs 25,107.

**119:157** Verse 113; 3:1,2; 44:15-18.

**119:158** See 5:6; 139:21,22; Lev 26:30.

**119:159** He calls God as witness that he truly loves God's Word, and makes this the ground of his prayer.

**119:160** Verse 89; 111:8.

**119:161** "Persecuted" – vs 23, 122, 157.

"Stands in awe" – or "trembles" or "fears" – v 120; Ezra 9:4; Isa 66:2.

**119:162** Verse 72; 19:10.

**119:163** Verses 104,128; 97:10; Prov

*but* I love your law.  
164 Seven times a day I praise you  
because of your righteous judgments.  
165 Great peace have they who love your law,  
and nothing makes them stumble.  
166 LORD, I hope for your salvation,  
and do your commandments.  
167 My soul has kept your testimonies,  
and I love them exceedingly.  
168 I have kept your precepts and your  
testimonies,  
for all my ways *are* before you.

TAV

169 Let my cry come before you, O LORD.  
Give me understanding according to  
your word.  
170 Let my supplication come before you.  
Deliver me according to your word.  
171 My lips will utter praise,

13:5. Mark this down as certain – if we do not hate lies and deceit we do not love the truth.  
**119:164** Have we once in our whole life praised God for His just laws and judgments?  
**119:165** See 37:11; Isa 26:3,12; 27:5; 32:17; 57:19,21. Only those who are right with God and walk according to His Word can love God’s teaching, and only they can enjoy the peace God gives. Since the lives of such people are based on the great foundation of God’s Word they will not fall.  
**119:166-168** Verse 81. In time of persecution he did not wait in despair or idleness. While he waits for God to deliver him, he is active in obedience to God’s commands. He knew the truth expressed in Heb 4:13 before it was written.  
**119:169** See verse 144.  
**119:170** See 17:1; 28:2; 61:1; 86:6; 140:6; 143:1.  
**119:171** Nine times in this psalm he asks God to teach him. Here he expresses his confidence that God is doing so. And he considers this a matter for great praise, which indeed it is (94:12). We must always remember that if we are taught of God, the reason is that we might praise Him and not ourselves for what we have learned.  
**119:172** God’s righteousness should be a frequent theme of our songs – 7:17; 9:2-4; 33:3-5; 51:14; 71:22-24; 98:1,2.  
**119:173** “Help” – 37:24; 73:23; Isa 41:10. “Chosen” – he did not try to follow God’s commands merely because he was born an Israelite and it was expected of him. No, he heartily chose to do so, he made an earnest decision to do so.  
**119:174** Verse 166.  
**119:175** Verses 77, 116, 159.  
**119:176** The writer loved God’s Word. God’s commands were not grievous to him but a delight. He longed to know God’s Word better and live according to it more perfectly.

for you teach me your statutes.  
172 My tongue will speak of your word,  
for all your commandments *are* righteous.  
173 Let your hand help me,  
for I have chosen your precepts.  
174 I have longed for your salvation,  
O LORD, and your law *is* my delight.  
175 Let my soul live, and it will praise you;  
and let your judgments help me.  
176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep.  
Seek your servant, for I do not forget  
your commandments.

120

A song of ascents

1 In my distress I cried out to the LORD,  
and he heard me.  
2 Rescue my soul, O LORD, from lying lips,  
But he has to confess his failure. Sin working in him had sometimes led him astray, and he needed God to seek him and restore him (see Isa 53:6; Luke 15:4). Though he has gone astray he knows he is still God’s servant and that he still keeps God’s commandments in mind. Those who most earnestly try to live according to God’s Word are often the most conscious of how far they fall short of fully doing so (Isa 64:5; Jer 3:25; Dan 9:4,5; Rom 7:18-21; Jam 3:2).  
**120 Title:** The fifteen psalms beginning with this one are all called songs of “ascents” (from a Hebrew word which means “to go up”). Scholars have speculated a great deal about the significance of the word as used here and have offered many diverse suggestions. Perhaps the best suggestion is this: According to Ex 34:23,24 and Deut 16:16 and the custom of the Jews, at the times of religious festivals, three times a year, the people went up to Jerusalem as pilgrims to worship the true and living God. Jerusalem was high in the hills of Judah, so that it meant that most of the people had to ascend to get there. It is likely that they sang these “songs of ascent” on the way.  
Verses 1 and 4 of psalm 122 may well be key verses of this whole group of psalms. The chief concern of believers now should be to ascend spiritually, drawing nearer and nearer to God. This will surely result if we put into practice the spiritual teachings of these songs of ascent. Most of these psalms are quite short. They show that prayers need not be long to be weighty and powerful.  
**120:1** See 18:6; 31:7; 77:2; 120:1; 118:5.  
**120:2** His distress was caused by liars and slanderers (compare 5:9; 10:7; 12:2; 28:3; 36:3; 43:1; 144:8). When lies, deceit and slanders are on every side we must appeal only to God. God can use such circumstances to cause us to ascend in our spiritual lives.

*and* from a deceitful tongue.  
 3 What shall be given to you?  
 or what shall be done to you, you false tongue?  
 4 Sharp arrows of the mighty,  
 with coals of fire of the broom tree!  
 5 Woe is me, that I live in Meshech,  
*that* I dwell in the tents of Kedar!  
 6 My soul has dwelt too long with him who  
 hates peace.  
 7 I *am* for peace:  
 but when I speak, they *are* for war.

# 121

A song of ascents

1 I will lift up my eyes to the hills from  
 where my help comes.  
 2 My help *comes* from the LORD,  
 who made heaven and earth.  
 3 He will not allow your foot to be moved.  
 He who keeps you will not slumber.  
 4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither  
 slumber nor sleep.  
 5 The LORD *is the one* who keeps you.

**120:3,4** God will deal with liars and deceivers at the proper time and in a perfectly fitting way. Lying tongues are like sharp arrows (57:4; 64:3; Prov 25:18; Jer 9:8), and a burning fire (Prov 16:27; Jam 3:6). Arrows and fire will be God's punishment for such. For God's way of dealing in just judgment see 18:25-27; 63:9,10; 64:7,8; etc. Eventually God will deliver all His people from liars and slanderers and make the world free of them (Rev 21:8,27).  
**120:5** Meshech was far to the north of Israel, Kedar to the south. The writer could not live in both places at the same time. He is speaking metaphorically. It seems to him that his neighbors were like those barbaric peoples who did not know God.  
**120:6,7** Rom 12:18; 14:19; Heb 12:14. But it is not always possible to live at peace with all. For the sake of peace scriptural principles cannot be abandoned or compromised.  
**121 Title:** See psalm 120. We might call this "the psalm of protection on the believer's pilgrimage."  
**121:1** The pilgrim draws near to the hills of Judea, and Jerusalem, the city of God, and knows that the God who dwells there in the temple will give him help.  
**121:2** The LORD (Jehovah), the mighty Creator of the universe, is the helper of all believers (33:6; 89:11-13; 96:4,5; 124:8; 134:3; 136:4-9). Safety on our earthly pilgrimage comes from Him alone.  
**121:3,4** "Foot" - 26:12; 38:16; 91:12; 94:18. The believer will never fall to destruction.  
 "Sleep" - 1 Kings 18:25-27; Hab 2:19. The eternal God does not grow weary or

The LORD *is* your shade at your  
 right hand.  
 6 The sun will not strike you by day,  
 nor the moon by night.  
 7 The LORD will preserve you from all evil;  
 he will preserve your soul.  
 8 The LORD will preserve your going out  
 and your coming in from this time on  
 and forevermore.

# 122

A song of ascents by David

1 I was glad when they said to me,  
 "Let us go into the house of the LORD."  
 2 Our feet stand within your gates,  
 O Jerusalem.  
 3 Jerusalem is built like a city that is  
 compacted together;  
 4 There the tribes go up, the tribes of  
 the LORD,  
 to the Testimony of Israel,  
 to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

sleep. Life is no dream in the mind of a sleeping deity. The true God is eternally alert to watch over His own.  
**121:5** See 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 91:1; Isa 25:4; 32:2.  
**121:6** This does not mean that believers may not feel the effects of sun or moon. It does not mean that difficulties, dangers, and death will not come to them as to everyone else. It means that believers will not be truly *harmed* by these things, that only what God permits for their good will come to them by day or by night (Rom 8:28). The outworking of all this is not something we can always detect and understand on this earth.  
**121:7,8** 2 Tim 4:18; 1 Pet 1:5; 2 Pet 2:9; Deut 28:6. Throughout life's pilgrimage and to all eternity the person who trusts in the God of the Bible has perfect protection.  
**122 Title:** See psalm 120.  
**122:1** A person who loves God will love the true worship of God and the people of God. Our attitude toward the house of God is an indication of the state of our spiritual life (26:8; Acts 2:42,46,47; 3:1; 5:42; Heb 10:25).  
**122:2-4** Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel, the center of rule and worship, the city of God. God intended it to be a unifying force among the twelve tribes. That is one reason He instructed His people to go there at least thrice yearly for worship (Ex 34:22,23; Deut 12:4,5; 16:5,6,16; 31:11). He wanted them to have one center, one heart, one faith. Believers now have no earthly center. Their city is the Jerusalem which is above (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22). Their center is Christ. Compare Eph 4:13-16.

- 5 For thrones of judgment are set there,  
the thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.  
They who love you will prosper.
- 7 Peace be within your walls,  
and prosperity within your palaces.
- 8 For the sake of my brethren and  
companions I will now say,  
"Peace *be* within you."
- 9 I will seek your good because of the  
house of the LORD our God.

123

A song of ascents

- 1 To you I lift up my eyes,  
O you who dwell in the heavens.
- 2 See, as the eyes of servants *look* to the  
hand of their masters,  
and as the eyes of a maid *look* to the  
hand of her mistress,  
so our eyes *look* to the LORD our God,  
until he has mercy on us.
- 3 Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us,  
for we have faced very great contempt.
- 4 Our soul endures the very great scorn of  
those who are at ease,

**122:6-9** For Israel's national unity the peace of Jerusalem was absolutely necessary. If quarreling and divisions occurred there, it would harm the whole life of the nation. The tribes would not be attracted to go up to a center filled with strife. So he prayed for peace for the sake of the people (v 8), and for the sake of God's house (v 9). Today people are not attracted to churches and assemblies that are divided and quarreling. For the sake of the people of God and the honor of God we too must seek to maintain unity and peace in the Holy Spirit and in the truth (Rom 15:5,6; Eph 4:3; Col 3:15).

**122:9** An example to every Christian. We must always think of ways to do good to Christ's church and people (Heb 10:24).

**123 Title:** See psalm 120.

**123:1** There are ascending steps of thought in these first four songs of ascent. In 120 he saw the sad conditions around him. In 121 he lifted his eyes to the hills around Jerusalem. In 122 he stood in the city looking about, admiring and praising. Now he lifts his eyes higher still. God was with His people in Jerusalem, but His throne is in heaven where He rules over the earth and the whole universe. Let us keep our eyes there and we will ascend in our spiritual life (25:15; Col 3:1,2; Heb 12:2).

**123:2** He is a willing slave of the God of heaven, as we too should be. He leaves the rule of the world and his own

and the contempt of the proud.

124

A song of ascents by David

- 1 "If *it had* not *been* the LORD who was  
on our side,"  
now may Israel say,
- 2 "If *it had* not *been* the LORD who was  
on our side,  
when men rose up against us,
- 3 Then they would have swallowed us up  
quickly,  
when their anger burned against us.
- 4 Then the waters would have overwhelmed us,  
the stream would have gone over our soul;
- 5 Then the raging waters would have gone  
over our soul.
- 6 Blessed *be* the LORD,  
who has not given us as prey to their teeth.
- 7 Our soul has escaped like a bird out of  
the snare of the fowlers.  
The snare has been broken,  
and we have escaped.
- 8 Our help *is* in the name of the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth."

circumstances to God. In beautiful and meaningful language he expresses the utter dependence of God's people on God alone for mercy and a change in conditions. We are to look to God humbly, obediently, continually, attentively, believingly.

**123:3,4** It seems that proud and arrogant men were as numerous as the lying and deceitful he spoke of in 120 (10:2-5; 12:3,4; 86:14; 140:5). Both sorts of people are an abomination to God (Prov 6:16-19).

**124 Title:** See psalm 120.

**124:1-5** These verses refer to a great deliverance from enemies. They attacked Israel like a raging flood, like wild beasts (v 6), like fierce hunters (v 7). Israel is now urged to declare openly that deliverance was not due to their wisdom, skill, or strength, but only to this one fact: God was on their side. The church of Christ is in a hostile world. Satan combines with evil men to try to destroy it. Believers have been and still are ridiculed, threatened, discriminated against, persecuted, tortured, killed. But Christ's church will never be destroyed, for God is still on the side of His people (Matt 16:18; Rom 8:31).

**124:6,7** Praise to the Lord for His deliverance from the evil hunter of men's souls (25:15; 91:3).

**124:8** See 20:2; 27:9; 33:20; 40:17; 46:1; 60:11. If Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, is our help, what other help do we need?

125

A song of ascents

- 1 Those who trust in the LORD *are* like  
mount Zion, which cannot be shaken,  
*but* remains forever.
- 2 *As* the mountains *are* around Jerusalem,  
so the LORD *is* around his people  
from this time on and forever.
- 3 For the sceptre of the wicked will not  
rest over the allotment of the righteous,  
or else the righteous might put out  
their hands to wickedness.
- 4 Do good, O LORD, to *those who do* good,  
and to *those who are* upright in  
their hearts.
- 5 As for those who turn aside to their  
crooked ways,  
the LORD will cause them to depart  
with those who do evil.  
*But peace will be* on Israel.

**125 Title:** See psalm 120. Apparently at this time the throne at Jerusalem was in the hands of evil men (v 3). But he expresses confidence that believers will be secure (vs 1,2), and that the unrighteous reign will pass away (v 3). The psalm closes with a prayer and a prophecy (vs 4,5).

**125:1** Those who trust in the Lord are called the righteous in v 3, and good and upright in v 4. Righteousness, goodness, and uprightness are fruits of true faith in God.

“Forever” – generations have passed, nations have arisen and fallen, wars have engulfed the earth. Mount Zion is still there unshaken. Believers are made for eternity.

**125:2** Jerusalem is in a mountainous area and hills surround it. So God Himself is around believers as a shield, a refuge, a living presence, and He will never leave them (32:10; Deut 33:27; John 10:28; 17:15; Jude 1).

**125:3** See 89:22; Isa 13:11; 14:5,6. God permits unrighteous rulers to be in power for only a time. When the wicked rule, the righteous must be very careful not to fall into evil ways themselves.

**125:4** This prayer is in accordance with God’s revealed way of dealing with people. See 18:25-27.

**125:5** “Cause. . .to depart” – Matt 7:23; 25:11,41; Luke 13:24-27; 2 Thess 1:8-10.

“Peace” – 128:6; Rom 2:10; Gal 6:16; Eph 2:17,18.

**126 Title:** See psalm 120. Though very brief this psalm gives us a song of joy (vs 1-3), a prayer (v 4), and a promise (vs 5,6).

**126:1-3** “Brought back the captives of Zion” – this could be translated “restored the well-being of Zion” (see note at 14:7). It is not clear from the Hebrew what sort of captivity is meant. Perhaps it was physical

126

A song of ascents

- 1 When the LORD brought back the captives  
of Zion,  
we were like those who dream.
- 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with singing;  
then they said among the nations,  
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
- 3 The LORD has done great things for us;  
we are glad.
- 4 Bring back our captives, O LORD,  
like the streams in the South.
- 5 Those who sow in tears will reap in joy.
- 6 He who goes out weeping,  
bearing precious seed,  
will doubtless come again with rejoicing,  
bringing his sheaves *with him*.

captivity as in Jeremiah chapter 52. Or perhaps he meant a time of spiritual decline when Zion fell into evil hands as in 125:3, and experienced a spiritual captivity. The words fit either case. Release from captivity was altogether the Lord’s work and it brought great joy to those delivered. Compare Isa 61:1-3; Luke 4:17-19.

One of the great benefits of the gospel of Christ is that those who believe are released from bondage to sin, Satan, and the fear of death – John 8:32,26; Rom 8:2; Gal 5:1,13; 2 Tim 2:25,26; Heb 2:14,15. Is there any greater joy than to be released from such bondage (Luke 24:52,53; Acts 2:46,47; 1 Pet 1:8,9)?

**126:3** See 71:19; 106:21; Deut 10:21; 1 Sam 12:24; Joel 2:21,26. Let us meditate on the great things the Lord Jesus has done for us.

**126:4** “Bring back our captives” – could also be translated “Restore our well-being” (v 1). Either deliverance was not complete, or after the deliverance the people of God once again fell into some kind of bondage. They needed a new outpouring of God’s power and grace. The south of Israel was dry and desert-like. The streams dried up in summer and could flow again only when God sent rain from heaven. See Isa 35:6,7 for what God can do in both the natural and spiritual realms.

**126:5,6** These verses naturally follow the prayer for restoration. Those delivered from bondage are the ones who will labor in the gospel fields and reap a harvest for the Lord. The tears and weeping indicate the great earnestness of God’s servants. They weep because of the opposition of sinners, the hardness of men’s hearts, the danger that faces lost men. They may be sad too because of their own



# 127

A song of ascents for Solomon

- 1 Unless the LORD builds the house,  
those who build it labour in vain.  
Unless the LORD guards the city,  
the watchman stays awake in vain.
- 2 *It is* in vain for you to rise up early,  
to sit up late,  
to eat the bread of sorrows;  
for he gives his beloved sleep.
- 3 See, children *are* a heritage from the LORD,  
and the fruit of the womb *is his* reward.
- 4 Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man,  
so *are* the children of *one's* youth.

weakness and ineffectiveness and failure. They weep for love of Christ and compassion for lost men. Such people will certainly reap a harvest. Joy will be theirs in the end – 119:136; Isa 22:4; Jer 9:1; 13:17; 14:17; Luke 19:41; Acts 20:19,31; 1 Cor 15:58.

**127 Title:** Psalm 120. This psalm was either *for* or *by* Solomon the builder of the temple – the Hebrew can mean either.

**127:1,2** These verses do not teach laziness, idleness, or carelessness. They teach the uselessness of human effort apart from God. Of course, we must work diligently and well (Prov 24:30-34; Eccl 9:10; 1 Cor 15:58). But we must recognize that it is God alone who can prosper the work and make it truly fruitful. Though the ungodly may build huge mansions, great fortunes, and big families, it will all come to nothing, and is what Solomon called in another place “vanity of vanities” (Eccl 2:4-11).

**127:2** Here he condemns, not diligent work, but anxious care. We need not drive ourselves to exhaustion. God wants us to rest in Him, to trust Him in all our work, and to enjoy relaxing and refreshing sleep. See Matt 6:25-34; 11:28-30. He gives rest to those who have a relationship of trust and love with Him.

“He gives his beloved sleep” – this could be translated “while they sleep He provides for those He loves.” This also is true, but probably not the best translation.

**127:3-5** In Old Testament days the individual Israelite’s inheritance in the land was very important to him – Num 26:53; Josh 11:23; Jud 2:6. If he had no children, at his death the inheritance would go into the hands of others (Num 27:8-11). Children were linked with the land and both were God’s gift and heritage. In that time and place a big family was a blessing. This is not necessarily true of every time and place (see 1 Cor 7:1,7,8,32-34).

**127:4,5** Arrows speak of warfare and defense. Those who had children had help in the defense of their property and rights.

- 5 Happy *is* the man who has his quiver full of them.  
They will not be ashamed,  
but will speak with *their* enemies in the gate.

# 128

A song of ascents

- 1 Blessed *is* every one who fears the LORD,  
who walks in his ways.
- 2 For you will eat the labour of your hands.  
You *will* be happy, and *it will* be well with you.
- 3 Your wife *will be* like a fruitful vine  
within your house,  
your children like olive plants around your table.
- 4 See that the man who fears the LORD will

In these New Testament times believers are (or should be) concerned, not with worldly inheritances and defense of property rights, but with their inheritance in heaven – Matt 6:19,20; Acts 20:32; Rom 8:17; Heb 11:39,40; 1 Pet 1:3,4.

Children are compared to arrows – but this means the finished product. At birth they are more like little twigs – 128:3. Arrows are made – they do not grow by themselves. To be good arrows they must be smoothed and polished. They must be aimed and will go where they are pointed (compare Prov 22:6). Eventually they must be released – they are not effective in the quiver. Do we want our children to be arrows in the Lord’s hand to fight His spiritual battles?

**128 Title:** See psalm 120.

**128:1** This psalm gives a beautiful picture of an ideal home. The husband is a God-fearing man, successful in his work. His wife stays home and sees to the affairs of the house and the rearing of the children. The children are healthy and thriving. The blessing of God rests on them all. Notes on “blessed” at 1:1. Notes on “fear” at 34:11-14; 111:10; Job 28:28; Prov 1:7. The fear of the Lord causes us to walk in His ways. It is useless to think or say we fear the Lord or to hope for His blessing if we do not do what He says (1:1-3; 119:1-3; Jer 6:16; 7:23).

**128:2** See 58:11; Isa 3:10. In the Old Testament prosperity was sometimes a sign of God’s blessing (1:3; Gen 24:35).

**128:3** Happy the home where the wife honors her husband, and lovingly occupies herself with her children and household duties – 1 Tim 5:14; Titus 2:4,5; 1 Pet 3:5,6.

“Children” – 52:8; 144:12. Compare 127:4.

**128:4** A great blessing indeed to have a home like that described here. Observe carefully that the foundation of it all is **the fear of the Lord**.

**128:5,6** When the foundation is right one’s whole life can be full of hope, joy, and blessing.

be blessed like this.

- 5 The LORD will bless you out of Zion,  
and you will see the good of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life.  
6 Yes, you will see your children's  
children.  
Peace *be* on Israel!

129

A song of ascents

- 1 "From my youth many times they have  
afflicted me", may Israel now say,  
2 "From my youth many times they have  
afflicted me;  
yet they have not prevailed against me.  
3 The plowmen plowed on my back;  
they made their furrows long."  
4 The LORD *is* righteous.  
He has cut in two the cords of  
the wicked.  
5 Let all those who hate Zion be put to

shame and turned back.

- 6 Let them be like the grass *on*  
the housetops,  
which withers before it grows up,  
7 With which the reaper does not fill  
his hand,  
or he who binds sheaves, his arms.  
8 And may those who go by not say,  
"The blessing of the LORD *be* on you.  
We bless you in the name of  
the LORD."

130

A song of ascents

- 1 Out of the depths I have cried out to you,  
O LORD.  
2 Lord, hear my voice.  
Let your ears be attentive to the voice  
of my supplications.  
3 If you, LORD, should watch for sins,  
O Lord, who could stand?

**128:5** "Zion" – 9:11; 20:2; 135:21.  
"Jerusalem" – prosperity to the capital city  
here means prosperity to the whole country.  
**128:6** See 125:5.  
**129 Title:** See psalm 120.  
**129:1** From Ps 128 some people might get  
the false impression that the fear of the  
Lord always produces a prosperous and  
trouble-free life. This psalm should correct  
such an idea. The history of Israel reveals  
that afflictions often follow God's people.  
"From my youth" is a reference to the  
afflictions experienced in Egypt when they  
began to be a numerous people and nation  
(Exodus chapter 1), and to the troubles with  
surrounding nations all through their  
history.  
**129:2-4** A great many enemies tried to de-  
stroy Israel completely, but none succeeded.  
The New Testament church has the same  
promise (Matt 16:18). Israel was not pre-  
served because of their own righteousness  
but because of God's. Their deliverance was  
not their work but the Lord's.  
**129:3** Satan would like to pierce us, slice us,  
and break us up with his plow. But if God  
permits us to be plowed up it is because He  
means to have a harvest from us. He will  
sow His Word in the furrows, lay His healing  
hand on the pain, and bring fruitfulness out  
of our affliction.  
**129:4** The Lord was righteous in permitting  
all the affliction Israel experienced, and right-  
eous when He came to their deliverance.  
**129:5** To hate Zion was to hate the people of  
God, and to hate God who then dwelled in His  
temple there. Such haters of Zion deserved  
nothing but shame, dishonor, and destruction.  
For such prayers see note at 35:8.

**129:6,7** In other words, let such people be  
soon destroyed and little remain of them.  
**129:8** Compare Ruth 2:4. How can people  
who hate Zion expect to have the blessing  
of God who loved Zion and chose it for His  
dwelling place? They may imagine they have  
God's blessing, but in the end it will prove a  
delusion.  
**130 Title:** See psalm 120. This psalm takes  
us from the depths of depression to the  
heights of assurance and hope. It is indeed  
a psalm of ascents.  
**130:1** "Depths" – dark, difficult, depressing  
experience, the depths of a sad and  
struggling heart (compare 40:2; 69:2).  
Judg- ing from vs 3,4 the cause of his pain  
was his deep conviction of sin as in psalms  
32 and 51.  
"O LORD" – he did not simply cry to his  
friends or complain about his condition. He  
did the one thing needful in all depths of  
trouble – he lifted his heart and voice to God.  
**130:2** See 27:7; 28:2,6; 31:22; 86:6;  
2 Chron 6:40; 1 John 5:14,15.  
**130:3,4** See 143:2; 1 Sam 6:20; Ezra 9:15;  
Nahum 1:6; Rev 6:17. For one sin Adam  
and Eve lost paradise and all their offspring  
became sinners. For one sin Achan lost his  
life, and Saul lost his kingdom. If God took  
our innumerable sins into account and held  
them against us, far from standing, we would  
partake of eternal darkness and destruction.  
But if we are true believers, if we are in Christ,  
there is no condemnation (Rom 8:1), our  
sins are not counted against us (32:1,2;  
Rom 4:8; 8:33; 2 Cor 5:19), we are freely  
and fully forgiven (notes on forgiveness at  
Matt 6:12,14,15; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-35;  
Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9).

- 4 But *there* is forgiveness with you,  
that you may be feared.
- 5 I wait for the LORD;  
my soul waits, and in his word  
I hope.
- 6 My soul *waits* for the Lord more than  
those who watch for the morning;  
*I say, more than* those who watch for  
the morning.
- 7 Let Israel hope in the LORD,  
for with the LORD *there* is mercy,  
and with him *is* abundant  
redemption.
- 8 And he will redeem Israel from  
all his sins.

Some think that God's grace in forgiving sins will lead to more sin. Their view is that people will not fear so merciful a God, but will do as they please thinking they can always get forgiveness when they want it. This whole view of things is a large error. Verse 4 teaches that God's forgiveness leads to the fear of God. He forgives only when there is real repentance, and the forgiven sinner rejoices in God's goodness and learns to honor, love, and reverence God (Rom 2:4,5; 6:1-4; 2 Cor 5:17). The fact is, only those who are forgiven know what the fear of God really is. Notes on this fear at 34:11-14; 111:10; etc.

**130:5** "Wait" - 27:14; Isa 8:17; 26:8; 30:18; 49:23. It is the duty of believers to wait for God's time and way of answering prayer. The writer waits for God to act, to answer, to draw near, to lead him again to happy fellowship with God.

"Hope" - 119:74. In times of gloom and trouble and conviction of sin we should search out some of God's precious promises and put our faith and hope in them. God will never reject those who hope in His Word.

**130:6** The watchman longs for the dawn when the loneliness and possible dangers of the night will be past and he can return to his home for rest and refreshment. Just so the writer longed to come out of the spiritual darkness that he had been experiencing.

**130:7,8** Out of the depths the author cried and has now reached the heights of hope and assurance. So may we in any depths we experience if we do as he did.

**130:7** "In the LORD" - we must put our hope there and nowhere else if we want to avoid disappointment. Notes on redemption at 78:35; Matt 20:28. At the cost of the life of His Son the God of the Bible has provided full, complete, eternal redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ for all who will have it (Heb 9:12).

**130:8** Matt 1:21; Luke 1:68.

**131 Title:** See psalm 120. Here is a small psalm with big thoughts on the proper character and conduct of a believing pilgrim. It points the way to ascent in the spiritual life. Humility is the key thought.

**131:1** See 101:5; Prov 6:16,17; Isa 2:12;

# 131

A song of ascents by David

- 1 LORD, my heart is not haughty,  
nor my eyes lofty;  
nor do I concern myself with  
great matters,  
or with things too exalted for me.
- 2 Surely I have calmed and quieted myself,  
like a weaned child with his mother;  
my soul within me *is* like a weaned child.
- 3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from this  
time on and forever.

Rom 12:16; Jam 4:6. Not everyone who says he is humble is really so, and they who think they are not may be. Was David revealing pride in speaking of his humility? No. He wrote these words by the inspiration of God's Spirit and spoke them to God, not to men. David's conduct throughout his life proves the truth of his words here, and in this matter is an example to us all as to how to conduct ourselves.

"Great matters" - David did not strive after position and authority. He was not trying to be "big" (compare Jer 45:5). Also he recognized that the mysteries of God's being, plans, and actions were too profound for his intellect to grasp. He was willing to simply trust in the God who had revealed Himself to Israel (compare 139:6; Eccl 8:17; Isa 40:14,28; 55:8,9; Rom 11:33,34).

**131:2** David, though he was a mighty warrior, a successful king, and a great poet compared himself to a child. He was taught by God's Spirit a truth the Lord Jesus later put in words - Matt 18:3,4; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:16,17. But David disciplined himself to be a *weaned* child. An unweaned child is all taken up with his own desires. He selfishly clamors for the satisfaction and comfort his mother gives. He wants only his own will to prevail. A weaned child is beginning to learn discipline and self-control. He is learning that the mother's will is best for him. And he starts appreciating her for herself and not merely for what she can give him. And he has left a milk diet for stronger food. We should apply all this to a believer's relationship with God (Heb 5:11-14; 1 Cor 3:1,2; 14:20).

**131:3** God's people must learn not to hope in themselves, in their own intellect or strength. Jehovah must eternally be the object of our faith and hope (2 Cor 1:9; 3:4,5).

**132 Title:** See Psalm 120. This psalm was probably written by Solomon or by some poet or prophet in Solomon's day. It was probably written for the bringing of the ark of God into the temple Solomon built (1 Kings 6:37,38; 8:1-6,62,63).

# 132

A song of ascents

- 1 LORD, remember David, *and* all his afflictions,
- 2 And how he swore to the LORD, *and* made a vow to the mighty *God* of Jacob:
- 3 "Surely I will not go into a room of my house, or get into my bed,
- 4 *And* I will not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids,
- 5 Until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling for the mighty *God* of Jacob."
- 6 Look, we heard of it at Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the woods.
- 7 We will go into his tabernacle. We will worship at his footstool.
- 8 Arise, O LORD, into your resting place, you, and the ark of your strength.
- 9 Let your priests be clothed with righteousness,

and let your saints shout for joy.  
10 For the sake of your servant David do not turn away the face of your anointed.

- 11 The LORD has sworn *in* truth to David, *and* he will not turn from it:  
"I will set on your throne *one* of the fruit of your body.
- 12 If your children keep my covenant and my testimony,  
which I will teach them,  
their children will also sit on your throne forevermore."
- 13 For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling.
- 14 "This *is* my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
- 15 I will abundantly bless her provisions. I will satisfy her poor with bread.
- 16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints will shout aloud for joy.
- 17 There I will cause the horn of David to grow. I have appointed a lamp for my anointed.
- 18 I will clothe his enemies with shame;

**132:1** Wanting God to hear his prayer, he pleads David's name and afflictions. Believers now have a much higher name to plead in prayer – David's Son and David's Lord, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We cannot approach God in our own merit, but we can pray, "O God, remember Jesus and all His afflictions."

**132:2-5** 2 Sam 7:1,2; 1 Chron 28:2. David, living in his palace, thought it not right that the ark, which was the symbol of God's presence with Israel, should remain in a tent. This vow is not recorded in the historical record of David. Here it is recorded to show how David loved God, and was zealous for God's dwelling place among His people. How many sleepless nights have we experienced for the sake of God's work?

**132:6** "Heard of it" probably means heard concerning the ark of God.

"Fields of the woods" – in Hebrew "fields of Jaar." Jaar can also be taken as a proper name here. According to some scholars Jaar is Kiriath Jearim, the place where the ark of the covenant had been since the days of Samuel. **132:7** "Tabernacle" – or "dwelling place" – the temple in Jerusalem (5:7; 122:1,2).

"Footstool" – in Israel God was said to be enthroned over the cherubim of the ark, and the ark itself was like His footstool (80:1; 99:1; 1 Chron 28:2).

**132:8** Num 10:35,36. This suggests the taking of the ark into the Most Holy Place in the temple in Solomon's time – 1 Kings 8:6.

**132:9** Isa 61:3,10; Zech 3:4; Mal 3:3; Eph 6:14. This is what God desires for all His servants and believers. True righteousness brings true joy. Sin brings grief and misery.

**132:10** Verse 1. The anointed one here is probably Solomon anointed to be king in

David's place, but the words could also refer to all the kings who came after him.

**132:11,12** David, loving God, made vows to Him. God, loving David, made promises to him. The spiritual life is mutual love between God and His children. Notes on God's covenant with David at 89:3,4,19-37; 2 Sam 7:11-16. The Lord Jesus was born on earth in David's royal line and is the heir to the throne of David – Luke 1:32,33.

**132:13** It was not buildings or hills that caused the Lord God to choose Zion. It is people God is most concerned about, not places.

**132:14** God's resting place forever is with His people. The whole Bible is the story of His desire to dwell with them. See note at Ex 25:8. God actually forsook the literal Jerusalem and gave it up to the enemy (Ezekiel chapter 10 describes God's glory departing, and Jeremiah chapter 52 records the fall of Jerusalem). But God has never forsaken His people. And judging from this verse, and others like it, the literal Jerusalem still figures in God's plans for the future (Ezek 48:35; Zech 14:16-21).

**132:15** See 23:1; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19.

**132:16** Verse 9. In this New Testament era all believers are priests. Note at Ex 28:1.

**132:17** "Horn" – 75:4,5; 89:17; 92:10. Here horn symbolizes one with authority and power, a king. See Luke 1:69 where the word refers to the Lord Jesus.

"Lamp" – 1 Kings 11:36; 15:4. Lamp here indicates the continuance of the royal house of David. David is a type of the Lord Jesus, the light of the world. Compared to Him David's lamp was but a dim, flickering light in the surrounding darkness (Luke 1:78; 2:32; John 8:12; Rev 21:22,23).

**132:18** "Shame" – 6:10; 35:26; 44:7;

but his crown will gleam on himself."

133

A song of ascents by David

- 1 See how good and how pleasant  
*it is* for brethren to dwell together  
in unity!
- 2 *It is* like the precious oil on the head  
running down on the beard,  
on Aaron's beard, running down to the  
collar of his garments.
- 3 *It is* like the dew of Hermon,  
*the dew* descending on the mountains  
of Zion;  
for there the LORD commanded the  
blessing, even life forevermore.

134

A song of ascents

- 1 See that you praise the LORD,

53:5; 71:13. What a contrast between clothing with shame and clothing with righteousness and salvation (vs 9,16).  
"Crown" – Heb 2:9; Rev 19:11,12.

**133 Title:** See Psalm 120.  
**133:1** Unity among God's people is good and pleasant because it is the result of God's love, God's will, and God's working, and because its fruit is sweet fellowship, peace, and strength. It is an exceedingly important thing for New Testament churches to have and to maintain. See Eph 4:1-6. So church leaders must be on the lookout lest serious heresy or sin in the church or proud individuals cause divisions (Acts 20:30,31; Rom 16:17,18; Heb 12:15,16).  
**133:2** Unity is compared to the oil used to anoint and consecrate Aaron to the priesthood (Ex 29:7-9). It was a special oil, holy, and sweet smelling, an oil that signified full dedication to God. See Ex 30:22-33. So good and precious is unity which has so sweet a smell to God, that so clearly speaks of dedication to His service, that is an indicator of holy lives in a holy church, that speaks of the Holy Spirit of God who anoints believers now.  
**133:3** "Dew" – Prov 19:12; Isa 18:4; 26:19; Hos 14:5. Unity is as cooling, refreshing, life-giving dew coming down quietly, constantly on the church. It is a gift of heaven to be treasured by God's people.  
"Zion" – God's blessing is to be found in the midst of God's people, united in love and truth. There God appoints the flow of His grace which results in eternal life.  
**134 Title:** See Psalm 120. This is the last of the songs of ascent which began with 120. The pilgrim set out on his journey, arrived

- all *you* servants of the LORD,  
who stand at night in the house  
of the LORD.
- 2 Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary and  
praise the LORD.
- 3 The LORD who made heaven and earth bless  
you from Zion!

135

- 1 Praise the LORD!  
Praise the name of the LORD;  
praise *him*, you servants  
of the LORD,
- 2 You who stand in the house  
of the LORD,  
in the courts of the house  
of our God,
- 3 Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good.  
Sing praises to his name,  
for *this is* delightful.
- 4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself,  
Israel as his special treasure.

in Jerusalem, admired the city of God, offered his offerings and prayers, learned again the lessons of humility, hope, faith, and unity, and now sets out for home. Verses 1,2 give his parting word of exhortation and encouragement to the priests in the temple; probably v 3 is the response of the priests giving the blessing of Zion to the departing pilgrim.  
**134:1** "Praise the LORD" – note at 104:35. There were duties in the temple at night also (1 Chron 9:33). And the ministry of praise should never cease day or night. Remember that in the New Testament all believers the world over are the priests. Note at Ex 28:1.  
**134:2** See 28:2; Titus 2:8.  
**134:3** See 124:8; Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27. If in our pilgrimage through life we have the blessing of the Maker of heaven and earth, what can we lack of any real importance?  
**135:1** "Praise the LORD" (also vs 3,21) – note at 104:35. Praising the name of the Lord is not a mere repetition of a name, but speaking or singing, with understanding, of His nature, attributes, and deeds. Note on praise at 33:1.  
**135:2** Who should praise God more than those who have the great privilege of being full time in His service?  
**135:3** "Good" – 118:1. The first of five reasons the writer gives for praising the LORD (Jehovah) God.  
"Delightful" – praising God is both good and pleasant. This is not true of many activities of life.  
**135:4** Ex 19:5; Deut 7:6; Mal 3:17; Titus 2:14. The third reason we should



- 5 For I know that the LORD *is* great,  
and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods.
- 6 Whatever the LORD pleased, *that* he did in  
heaven and on earth,  
in the seas and all deep places.
- 7 He causes the vapours to ascend from the  
ends of the earth.  
He makes lightnings for the rain.  
He brings the wind out of his treasures.
- 8 He struck down the firstborn of Egypt,  
both of man and beast.
- 9 He sent signs and wonders into your midst,  
O Egypt, on Pharaoh and on all his servants.
- 10 He struck great nations,  
and killed mighty kings,
- 11 Sihon king of the Amorites,  
and Og king of Bashan,  
and all the kingdoms of Canaan,
- 12 And gave their land as a heritage,  
a heritage to Israel his people.
- 13 Your name, O LORD, *continues on* forever,  
*and* the remembrance of you, O LORD,  
throughout all generations.
- 14 For the LORD will judge his people,  
and he will have compassion on his  
servants.
- 15 The idols of the nations *are made of*  
silver and gold,  
the work of men's hands.
- 16 They have mouths, but they do not speak.  
They have eyes, but they do not see.
- 17 They have ears, but they do not hear;  
nor is there *any* breath in their mouths.
- 18 Those who make them are like them;  
*so is* everyone who trusts in them.
- 19 Praise the LORD, O house of Israel.  
Praise the LORD, O house of Aaron.
- 20 Praise the LORD, O house of Levi.  
You who fear the LORD,  
praise the LORD.
- 21 Blessed be the LORD from Zion,  
who dwells in Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

# 136

- 1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD,  
for *he is* good;  
for his mercy *continues on* forever.
- 2 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever.

praise God – His electing love. He did not choose Jacob and his descendants because they were good or faithful or meritorious in any way. His choice was all of grace, and it was for the benefit of the whole world. Note at Gen 12:1-3.

**135:5** "Great" – the fourth reason why we should praise God – some people are good but not great, some are great but not good. Jehovah is both supremely good and supremely great. We should recognize this and praise Him.

"I know" – He was fully convinced by God's revelation of Himself in His Word and in history, and by his own experience.

"gods" – vs 15-18.

**135:6** See 115:3; 96:5; 97:7; Dan 4:35. This is how great the LORD is. No one can prevent Him from doing just what He wants to do. Those called gods by men can do nothing at all.

**135:7** He is in absolute control of His creation and the forces of nature. There is not one god of the rain, another of the wind, another of the sky. The one true God alone controls everything.

**135:8** This was in perfect justice and avenged the Egyptian treatment of God's children – Ex 1:15-22; 4:23; 12:12.

**135:9** Ex 7:9,17; 8:5,16,24; 9:2,8,9,22; 10:12,21.

**135:10,11** Num 21:21-33; Josh 12:7-24; 24:12.

**135:12** Deut 26:1; Josh 11:23.

**135:13** Ex 3:15. God's nature and attributes are eternal and unchangeable – Mal 3:6;

Heb 13:8.

**135:14** The fifth reason he gives for praising God – though God's people will experience injustice on every hand in this world, God will fulfill His good purpose toward them.

**135:15-20** See 115:4-11.

**135:21** See 128:5; 134:3.

**136:1** "Give thanks" – 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18. This is a psalm in praise of the grace and love of God. They flow from His goodness (v 1). They come from the great eternal God and Ruler of the universe (vs 2,3). They are revealed in creation (vs 4-9), in the redemption of His people from Egypt (vs 10-15), in shepherding His people in the desert (v 16), in giving them the promised inheritance (vs 17-22), in compassion on the lowly (v 23), in deliverance from enemies (v 24), and in sustaining the life of His creatures (v 25). In New Testament terms we can say the grace and love of the almighty Creator redeems His people from sin's bondage, leads them through life's pilgrimage to their heavenly inheritance, rescues them from their great enemy Satan and all his hordes, and preserves them in their life on earth and forever.

"Good" – 100:5; 106:1; 118:1; 145:9.

"Forever" – 2 Chron 5:13; Ezra 3:11.

There has never been and never will be any break, any interruption in the flow of God's grace and love. They flow from His unchangeable nature (1 John 4:8,16).

**136:2** See 135:5,15; Deut 10:17. Jehovah, the God of the Bible, is far above all

- 3 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords;  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
4 To him who alone does great wonders,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
5 To him who by wisdom made the heavens,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
6 To him who stretched out the earth over  
the waters,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
7 To him who made great lights,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
8 The sun to rule by day,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
9 The moon and stars to rule by night,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
10 To him who struck Egypt in their firstborn,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
11 And brought Israel out from among them,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
12 With a strong hand, and with an  
outstretched arm,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
13 To him who divided the Red Sea in two,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
14 And caused Israel to pass through the  
midst of it,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in  
the Red Sea,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
16 To him who led his people through the

- wilderness,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
17 To him who struck down great kings,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
18 And killed famous kings,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
19 Sihon king of the Amorites,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
20 And Og the king of Bashan,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
21 And gave their land as an inheritance,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
22 An inheritance to Israel his servant,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
23 Who remembered us in our low estate,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
24 And rescued us from our enemies,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever;  
25 Who gives food to all that has flesh;  
for his mercy *continues on* forever.  
26 Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven,  
for his mercy *continues on* forever.

137

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down;  
yes, we wept, when we remembered Zion.  
2 We hung our harps on the willows in the  
midst of it.  
3 For there those who carried us away

that men call gods. In reality they are not gods at all – see 96:5; 115:4-11.  
**136:3** See 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16. He is the supreme ruler, governor, and master of the universe.  
**136:4** See 77:14; 107:27; Job 9:10; Dan 4:3; 6:27. He alone does great wonders, and He does them alone. He needs no assistance from anyone.  
**136:5-9** Here are wonders in creation. See Genesis chapter 1. God’s grace and love were displayed in making the earth habitable for men and other creatures.  
**136:10-15** Here are wonders and grace displayed in the deliverance of His people from Egypt. But if God is so loving and gracious why did He slay all the firstborn of Egypt and destroy its army in the sea? Because He is a God of justice too, and He avenges cruelty and punishes the hardness of heart and pride which reject His grace (2:4,5; Rom 2:4,5; 2 Thess 1:6-9; Heb 2:1-3).  
**136:16** What great wonders and grace God displayed in the desert! The story begins in Exodus chapter 15 and concludes at the end of Deuteronomy.  
**136:17-20** Num 21:21-35.  
**136:21,22** See 78:55; Josh 12:1; 14:1. God has prepared for believers an eternal inheritance in heaven (1 Pet 1:4), and will

destroy all those who would try to prevent them from obtaining it.  
**136:23** See 78:39; 103:14; 1 Sam 2:8; Luke 1:47,48. God delights to give grace to the poor, the humble, the lowly.  
**136:24** See 107:2; Deut 6:18,19; 33:27; Josh 21:44. Note on enemies at Ps 3:7.  
**136:25** Gen 1:30; Matt 6:26.  
**136:26** This is a common name for God in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. It indicates God’s transcendence and universal rule. Let us give Him thanks (34:1; Eph 5:4,20; Col 3:17; 1 Thess 5:18; Heb 13:15). Since there is no interruption in the flow of His grace, let there be no interruption in the flow of our thanksgiving.  
**137:1** “Babylon” – this was written after the events described in 2 Kings chapter 25. The mighty nation of Babylonia conquered Judah, destroyed Jerusalem and God’s temple, and took the people captive to their land. The rivers Tigris and Euphrates with their many canals flowed there. Zion was destroyed and in the hands of idolaters and cruel oppressors – reason enough for weeping.  
**137:2-4** Their joy was completely gone. Their oppressors tried to make sport of them, demanding that they sing when their hearts were broken. Compare Jud 16:23-25. This only added to their sorrow and no doubt

captive required a song from us,  
and those who tormented us *demand*  
merry making, *saying*,  
"Sing us *some* of the songs of Zion."  
4 How shall we sing the LORD's song in a  
foreign land?  
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand forget its skill.  
6 If I do not remember you,  
if I do not prefer Jerusalem above  
my chief joy,  
let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth.  
7 Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom  
on the day of Jerusalem's *fall*,  
who said, "Raze *it*, raze *it* to its  
*very* foundation!"  
8 O daughter of Babylon,  
*you* who are to be destroyed,  
happy *will he be* who repays you as you  
have dealt with us.  
9 Happy shall *he be* who takes your little  
ones and dashes *them* against the stones.

138

A Psalm of David

1 I will praise you with my whole heart;

was intended to do so.  
**137:5,6** Jerusalem was in their hearts because it was the city of God, the place of Jehovah's temple, the dwelling place of heaven's King.  
**137:7** Lam 4:21,22. The Edomites were descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob, and so were related to the Jews (Gen 25:24-34). Instead of helping them against the Babylonians they rejoiced in their defeat.  
**137:8,9** This language seems very harsh today to those who have believed the gospel of the Lord Jesus. But all we have here is a cry for justice – "do to them as they have done to us." The Babylonians doubtless had done to the infants of Israel what he now wishes someone would do to their infants. He longed to see God's retribution coming on a nation which had cruelly oppressed his people. If it was right for God to avenge them, it was also right for God to inspire a hope in their heart that He would indeed do so. This is in accordance with God's law of retribution clearly expressed in the Bible (18:25,26; Num 31:1-3; Deut 32:35,41,43; Gal 6:7). But see the notes at 35:8; 139:19; etc.  
**138:1** Jehovah God had all his heart. He would not bow down to any of the many gods of the nations round about Israel, but when in those areas where they were would sing the praises of the one true God. On "gods" see 96:5; 97:7; 115:4-11; 1 Cor 8:4-6.

over against the gods I will sing  
praise to you.  
2 I will worship toward your holy temple,  
and praise your name for your loving  
kindness and for your truth;  
for you have exalted your word above  
all your name.  
3 In the day that I cried out you  
answered me, *and* made me bold *with*  
strength in my soul.  
4 All the kings of the earth will praise you,  
O LORD,  
when they hear the words of  
your mouth.  
5 Yes, they will sing of the ways  
of the LORD;  
for great *is* the glory of the LORD.  
6 Though the LORD *is* exalted,  
yet he regards the lowly;  
but the proud he knows at a distance.  
7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you will revive me.  
You will stretch out your hand against  
the wrath of my enemies,  
and your right hand will save me.  
8 The LORD will perfect *what* relates to me.  
Your mercy, O LORD, *continues on* forever.  
Do not forsake the works of your  
own hands.

**138:2** "Temple" – 5:7; 1 Kings 8:29. This was an acknowledgment of God's presence there.  
"Name" – 74:21; 97:12; 135:1; Ex 3:15; 34:5-7. God's name means His nature and attributes.  
"Word" – see how highly God values His word. This means His revelation in the Bible. Let those who neglect or criticize it take these words to heart. It is possible to translate the last phrase of this sentence "you have exalted your name, your word above all things."  
**138:3** "Answered" – 18:6; 30:2; 99:6; 116:4; 118:5; 1 John 5:14,15. See one of God's names in 65:2.  
"Bold" – 28:7; Prov 28:1; Acts 4:29,31.  
**138:4,5** See 72:11; 102:15; 117:1; Rev 21:24. This is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled.  
**138:6** "Lowly" – 113:6; 136:23.  
"At a distance" – pride is so obvious to God that He does not need to come near to recognize it. Also He does not want even to get close to the proud, so much is pride an abomination to Him.  
**138:7** See 7:6; 20:6; 23:4; 41:1,2; 60:5; 108:6.  
**138:8** Believers are the special work of God, more precious to Him than all of creation (Isa 43:6,7; 60:21; Eph 2:10). He has begun His work in all of them and He will finish it (Phil 1:6). If we are believers this should be our confidence.

# 139

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

- 1 O LORD, you have searched me,  
and known *me*.
- 2 You know my sitting down and my  
getting up.  
You understand my thought at a distance.
- 3 You discern my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted *with* all my ways.
- 4 For *there is* not a word on my tongue,  
*but*, see, O LORD, you know it altogether.
- 5 You have hemmed me in,  
behind and before,  
and laid your hand on me.
- 6 *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me.  
It is high; I cannot attain it.
- 7 Where can I go from your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?
- 8 If I ascend into heaven, you *are* there.  
If I make my bed in the realm of the dead,  
see, you *are there*.
- 9 *If* I take the wings of the morning,

- and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
- 10 Even there your hand will lead me,  
and your right hand will hold me.
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will  
cover me,"  
even the night will become light  
around me.
- 12 Yes, the darkness will not give concealment  
from you;  
but the night will shine like the day.  
The darkness and the light *are* both  
alike *to you*.
- 13 For you have formed my inner being.  
You have knit me together in my  
mother's womb.
- 14 I will praise you, for I am fearfully *and*  
wonderfully made.  
Your works *are* marvellous,  
and *that* my soul knows very well.
- 15 My frame was not hidden from you when  
I was made in secret,  
*and* skillfully knit together in the  
lower parts of the earth.
- 16 Your eyes saw my incomplete body,  
and in your book all *the days* ordained

**139:1** In this psalm David in beautiful language expresses the truth of God's omniscience and omnipresence – God is everywhere and knows everything. He is not a cold, impersonal, uncaring, unseeing influence. He is the personal, loving Creator concerned with even the smallest details of His people's lives. We may divide the psalm as follows:

God knows everything about us (vs 1-6);  
He is everywhere and there is no escape  
from His presence (vs 7- 12);  
He is the Creator of human beings  
(vs 13-16);

His thoughts are a source of delight to  
His people (vs 17,18);

David's stand against wickedness and for  
truth and righteousness (vs 19-24).

**139:1** "Known" – 7:9; 17:3; 1 Kings 8:39;  
Job 7:17,18; Jer 12:3; John 2:24,25;  
6:64; 13:11; Rom 8:27.

**139:2** Not only does God know all of our  
outer actions He knows our innermost  
thoughts – 94:11; Deut 31:21; Prov  
24:12; Matt 9:4; 12:25; Luke 6:8;  
9:47; 11:17; Heb 4:12.

**139:3** See 33:13-15; 2 Kings 19:27;  
2 Chron 16:9; Job 31:4; 34:21; Prov  
5:21; Jer 32:19; 16:17; Dan 5:23.

**139:4** Heb 4:13. Notice that God does not  
simply know this, but knows it perfectly.

**139:5** See 32:10; 34:7; 125:2; Job 1:9.

**139:6** See 131:1; Isa 55:9; Rom 11:33.

**139:7** Acts 17:27,28. David does not mean  
by these words that he wanted to get away  
from God's presence. He is only supposing  
a case to bring out the truth of God's

omnipresence.

**139:8** Jer 23:24.

"Realm of the dead" – "Sheol" – note at  
Gen 37:35.

**139:9** East or west, as far as a man might  
go, God is there before Him. How foolish  
then was Jonah's attempt to escape (Jonah  
1:3), or any attempt we might make.

**139:10** David is confident that wherever he  
is, God's purpose toward him is good – it is  
to guide and keep him.

**139:11,12** Job 12:22; 34:22; Jer 23:24; Dan  
2:22. Men prefer to commit their abomina-  
tions in the dark. Do they vainly imagine that  
because men cannot see them God cannot?

**139:13** David did not believe he came into  
existence by the mere processes of nature.  
He says that God had a direct hand in it all  
(compare 119:73; Job 10:8-12; 119:73; Isa  
44:2,24; 49:5; Jer 1:5). Abortion is inter-  
fering with the work of God and so is sin.

**139:14** "Made" – man's body, soul, and  
spirit, and the way they are mysteriously  
united to form individual persons should  
produce in all of us a reverence and awe at  
God's wonderful work in creating us. The  
more we understand how we are made the  
more wonderful the Maker will seem. And  
the more terrible will seem the destruction  
of helpless human life by abortion.

"Well" – 77:14; 136:4; Job 9:10. Here  
is a fact David knew very well and so many  
so-called wise men do not know at all.

**139:15** "Secret," "of the earth" – these ex-  
pressions here mean the womb (v 13).

**139:16** God not only made us but planned  
the length of our lives (39:4; 90:12; Job  
14:5). He knows best when we should come

*for me were written down before  
there was any of them.*

# 140

17 How precious also are your thoughts  
to me, O God!

How great is the sum of them!

18 *If* I could count them,  
they would be more in number than  
the sand.

When I awake, I am still with you.

19 Surely you will slay the wicked,  
O God.

So depart from me, you bloodthirsty men!

20 For they speak against you wickedly,  
*and* your enemies take *your name* in vain.

21 Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate you?  
And do I not feel a loathing for those  
who rise up against you?

22 I hate them with perfect hatred.

I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart.  
Test me, and know my thoughts;

24 And see if *there is any* offending way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.

To the chief musician, a Psalm of David

1 Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man,  
protect me from the violent man,  
2 Who plot evil things in *their* heart;  
they continually gather together *for* war.  
3 They have sharpened their tongues like a  
serpent's.

The poison of vipers is under their lips.

*Selah*

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the  
wicked,  
protect me from the violent man,  
who intends to overthrow my footsteps.  
5 The proud have hidden a snare for me,  
and cords;  
they have spread a net by the wayside;  
they have set traps for me.

*Selah*

6 I said to the LORD, "You *are* my God."  
Hear the sound of my supplications, O LORD.

into the world and when we should leave it.

**139:17,18** David was delighted that God was constantly thinking about him and was so intimately concerned with all he was and all he did (40:5; 92:5; Jer 29:11). The reason for his delight was he had chosen the side of righteousness, holiness, and truth, and had renounced all wickedness. This appears in the following verses.

**139:19** "Slay" – note at 35:8. In the Old Testament God taught His people to expect the destruction of wicked enemies – Deut 7:1,2; 28:7; 32:35,41-43. For God to destroy the wicked was a perfectly just act. But the New Testament teaches we should pray for them, for their conversion, though they are no less offensive to God now, no less an affront to His holiness.

"Depart" – 6:8; 59:2. David could not stand to be around men who were bent on evil.

**139:20-22** David would not be friends with those who were God's enemies (compare Jam 4:4). In fact, he counted God's enemies his own enemies. His emotions, thoughts, and will were altogether on God's side. Evil men are an abomination to God – 5:6; 78:59; Lev 20:23; 26:30; Deut 32:19; Prov 22:14. So they were to David also. Is this consistent with the love which believers should have for their enemies (Matt 5:44)? It can be. It is possible to loathe the character, opinions, purposes, and acts of wicked men and yet desire and pray for their highest good, and be delighted when they are converted and made new people in Christ.

**139:23,24** It is not enough to condemn evil in others. We must learn to condemn it in ourselves. We must be on God's side, not merely outwardly, but inwardly. David has

already said God searched him and knew him. His words here mean that he wanted to cooperate with God in this searching and to put away anything that was offensive to God's holy nature. Compare 2 Cor 6:14 to 7:1. There is also the suggestion that he is not capable himself to see all that is in his own heart and that he needs God to show him (Jer 17:9,10).

**139:24** The everlasting way is God's one way to eternal life and peace. It is the way of grace on God's part and sincere faith on man's part. It is a way of holiness, righteousness, and truth. From the beginning there has been just one way that leads to God and heaven and there will never be another. This way is Jesus Christ Himself (John 14:6).

"Offending" – the KJV has "wicked" here, but this is probably too strong a word to translate the Hebrew word. David certainly did not want any wickedness to be in his heart, but beyond that he also did not want anything there which could offend God in any way.

**140 Title:** This is similar to such psalms as 7, 10, 11, 17, 58, 64, 71, etc. David was often troubled by evil men and often prayed about them.

**140:1** See 17:13; 25:21; 59:2; 71:4; 86:2; 142:6; 143:9.

**140:2** See 36:4; 52:2; Prov 6:14; 16:27; Isa 59:4; Hos 7:15.

"War" – 120:7.

**140:3** See 57:4; 58:4; Rom 3:13; Jam 3:8. This signifies slander and the stirring up of others to attack him.

**140:5** See 31:4; 38:12; 119:110.

**140:6** See 16:2; 31:14; 118:28. The LORD (Jehovah) is our God if He has chosen us



7 O God the Lord, the strength of  
my salvation,  
you have shielded my head in the day  
of battle.

8 O LORD, do not grant the desires of the  
wicked.  
Do not further his *wicked* plan,  
or they will exalt themselves.

9 *As for* the head of those who  
surround me,  
let the evil of their own lips cover  
them.

10 Let burning coals fall on them.  
Let them be thrown into the fire,  
into deep pits,  
so that they will not get up again.

11 Do not let a slanderer be established in  
the earth.  
Let evil hunt down the violent man  
to overthrow *him*.

12 I know that the LORD will maintain  
the cause of the afflicted,  
*and* the right of the poor.

13 Surely the righteous will give thanks  
to your name.  
The upright will dwell in your presence.

*Selah*

141

A Psalm of David

1 LORD, I cry out to you.  
Come quickly to me.  
Give ear to my voice, when I cry out to you.

2 Let my prayer be set out before you  
*like* incense,  
*and* the lifting up of my hands  
*be like* the evening sacrifice.

3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth.  
Keep watch over the door of my lips.

4 Do not incline my heart to *any* evil thing,  
to practice wicked works  
with men who are evildoers;  
and do not let me eat of their delicacies.

5 Let the righteous strike me;  
*it is* a kindness; and let him rebuke me;  
*it is* an excellent oil;  
my head will not refuse it.  
For my prayer *will be there* in  
their distresses.

6 When their judges are thrown down at the cliffs,  
they will hear my words;  
for they are sweet.

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth,

and we have chosen Him. If He is our God we may safely trust Him to take care of us.

**140:8** "Desires" – 10:2,3; Eph 2:3; 4:19.  
"Exalt themselves" – they may even imagine that God is with them and blessing them because their crooked ways bring success. This is a mistake that many people make.

**140:9-11** He prays that perfect justice will fall on these violent and wicked slanderers. See 137:8,9.

**140:12** 72:2,4,12-14; Isa 11:4; Jer 22:3,16. The God of the Bible is always on the side of the poor and afflicted and persecuted among His people. At the proper time He will punish those who oppress them, and bring justice to work on their behalf.

**140:13** This will be the result of God's work on behalf of the afflicted – 7:17; 11:7; 32:11; 35:28; 54:6,7; 58:11.

**141:1** "Quickly" – 22:9; 38:22; 70:5. David was being persecuted by wicked enemies and in grave danger – vs 7-9.  
"Give ear" – 4:1; 5:1,2; 27:7; 143:1.

**141:2** "Incense" – Luke 1:9; Rev 5:8; 8:3. Prayer is like incense in certain clear ways. Incense was commanded by God. In order for it to be acceptable it had to be offered in accordance with God's instructions. Then it was holy and sweet smelling to the Lord (Ex 30:7,8,34-38). David wanted his prayers to be acceptable to God.

"Sacrifice" – sometimes prayer can consist of bodily movement without spoken words – kneeling, lifting hands or eyes to

God. These sorts of prayers can be as acceptable to God as the evening sacrifice He once commanded (Ex 29:38-41).

**141:3** David knew that the mouth that prayed could also say bitter, unwise, unholy words. He knew too how difficult it is to control the tongue (see Jam 3:2-12). So he prays for God Himself to be a watchman at the door of his mouth.

**141:4** When the wicked are in positions of leadership and prospering, the righteous may be tempted to compromise with them. And the wicked may offer inducements ("delicacies") to corrupt the righteous. When standards of morality are low, and everyone seems to be practicing certain evils, God's true servants may also get entangled. At such times we would do well to pray as David did.

**141:5** Far better to be flogged by the righteous than to be feasted by the wicked. Far better to be rebuked by a good man than flattered by a bad one. David realized that what the righteous did or said to him was for his correction, and he welcomed it (compare Prov 27:6).  
"In their distresses" – or "against their evils."

**141:6** This was probably written when David was being pursued by Saul in the desert. He believed that Saul and his helpers would fall and that the people would then welcome his words.

**141:7** In other words, David and his men were only a step from death (6:4,5; 9:13; 143:3).

as when one plows and breaks up  
the ground.  
8 But my eyes are on you, O God the Lord.  
My trust is in you.  
Do not leave my soul destitute.  
9 Keep me from the snares *which* they have  
laid for me,  
and the traps of evildoers.  
10 Let the wicked fall into their  
own nets, while I escape.

142

A maskil of David;  
a prayer when he was in the cave

1 I cried out to the LORD with my voice;  
with my voice I made my supplication  
to the LORD.  
2 I poured out my complaint before him.  
I declared my trouble in his presence.  
3 When my spirit was overwhelmed  
within me, then you knew my path.  
They have secretly laid a snare for  
me in the road where I walk.  
4 I looked to *my* right and considered,  
but *there was* no man who was willing  
to know me.  
Refuge failed me.  
No one cared for my soul.

"Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at  
Gen 37:35.

**141:9** See 38:12; 64:5; 140:4.

**141:10** A prayer that perfect justice will  
prevail (7:15; 35:8; 57:6. See Esther  
7:10; Dan 6:24).

**142 Title:** See 1 Sam 22:1; 24:3. Maskil  
was probably a literary or musical term.

**142:1,2** This is the prayer of a lonely,  
desperate man. It teaches us what to do if  
we are ever in such a state. The first and  
most important thing is to lay our troubles  
before the Lord. There may be no human  
being we know who can help us, but He will  
hear us with sympathy and compassion. It  
is far better to pour out our complaint to  
the Lord than to men (3:4; 30:8; 34:6;  
50:15; 62:8; Phil 4:6,7; 1 Pet 5:7).

**142:3** David was a man of exceptional  
courage and faith, as his history shows. But  
he knew times of great spiritual weakness  
and depression – 6:2; 38:8,17; 61:2;  
143:4. But God knew all about it and had  
compassion on him.

**142:4** "Right" – the place of a helper or  
intimate friend.

"No man" – Job 16:10; 19:13-19; Jer  
30:17. Many since Job and David and  
Jeremiah have felt they were utterly  
friendless in a hostile world. The next verse  
teaches us what to do in such a case.

**142:5** A person without help or safety can

5 I cried out to you, O LORD.  
I said, "You *are* my refuge *and* my  
portion in the land of the living.  
6 Be attentive to my cry, for I am brought  
very low.  
Deliver me from my persecutors,  
for they are stronger than I.  
7 Bring my soul out of prison,  
that I may praise your name.  
The righteous will be all around me,  
for you will show goodness to me."

143

A Psalm of David

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD,  
give ear to my supplications.  
In your faithfulness *and* in your  
righteousness, answer me.  
2 And do not enter into judgment with your  
servant, for in your sight no man  
living is righteous.  
3 For the enemy has persecuted my soul.  
He has crushed my life to the ground.  
He has made me dwell in darkness,  
like those who have long been dead.  
4 Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed  
within me.

take the Lord Himself for a refuge (7:1;  
9:9; 37:39; 46:1; 61:3), and the per-  
son without a friend or a possession can go  
to the Friend of the friendless and find an  
eternally satisfying portion (16:5; 73:26).

**142:6** See 25:20; 43:1; 71:2; 116:4.  
God is the strength of those who learn they  
have not enough of their own (18:1; 31:4;  
59:17; 62:17; Hab 3:19; 2 Cor 12:9).

**142:7** David was not in a literal prison. The  
cave he was in, the surrounding enemy  
forces seemed like a prison to him. God  
heard David's prayer in this psalm and David  
did praise God for his deliverance.

**143:1** A prayer that can honestly appeal to  
both God's faithfulness, to His promises and  
to His righteousness is sure to succeed, for  
it is in accordance with God's nature and will  
(89:1,2; 71:2; Ex 34:6; 1 John 1:9;  
5:14,15). We cannot expect God to answer  
a prayer contrary to His Word and His  
righteous nature. Observe other grounds for  
prayer in vs 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

**143:2** David is coming before God's mercy  
seat, God's throne of grace, not God's  
judgment seat. He well knows that there  
was so much fault in himself that he could  
not stand before God in his own merit  
(14:3; 51:5; 130:3; Eccl 7:20; Rom  
3:20,23; Gal 2:16).

**143:3** See 141:7.

**143:4** See 142:3.

- My heart within me is desolate.  
 5 I remember the days of old.  
 I meditate on all your works.  
 I ponder on the work of your hands.  
 6 I stretch out my hands to you.  
 My soul *thirsts* for you like a  
 thirsty land.
- Selah
- 7 Answer me quickly, O LORD.  
 My spirit wastes away.  
 Do not hide your face from me,  
 so that I do not become like those  
 who go down into the pit.  
 8 Cause me to hear your loving kindness  
 in the morning, for in you I trust.  
 Cause me to know the way in which I  
 should walk,  
 for I lift up my soul to you.  
 9 Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies;  
 I flee to you to hide me.
- 10 Teach me to do your will, for you *are*  
 my God.  
 Your Spirit *is* good; lead me in the  
 land of uprightness.  
 11 Revive me, O LORD, for your name's sake.  
 For the sake of your righteousness  
 bring my soul out of trouble.  
 12 And in your mercy cut off my enemies,  
 and destroy all those who afflict  
 my soul; for I *am* your servant.

**143:5** See 77:6; David's purpose here was to encourage himself and strengthen his faith.

**143:6,7** More than mere deliverance from trouble David longed for God Himself. Without God's fellowship he felt lost and plunged in grief – 42:1,2; 63:1; 84:2.

**143:8** "Morning" – desperate need longs for quick response from God.

"Trust" – David appeals to God on the grounds that he trusts Him – surely a strong basis for prayer.

"Cause me to know" – v 10; 25:45; 27:11; 119:12.

**143:9** Observe the basis for this prayer.

**143:10** What greater good can God's Spirit do than to teach us to do God's will and lead us so we do not stumble? This He will do if we are believing, willing, and obedient.

**143:11** This prayer was more for the sake of God's name and righteousness than for David's sake – another sure ground in prayer.

**143:12** Is it not the master's business to look after his servants? When foes are implacable their destruction may be necessary to deliver the righteous from them. Note on enemies at 3:7.

**144:1** Note on "Rock" at Deut 32:4. This psalm is very similar to psalm 18. David lived in a time when the people of God fought physical battles against human enemies. Skill in battle was highly desirable. No doubt

# 144

A Psalm of David

- 1 Blessed *be* the LORD my rock,  
 who trains my hands for war,  
 and my fingers to fight.  
 2 *He is* my merciful *one*, and my fortress,  
 my high tower, and my deliverer,  
 my shield, and *the one* in whom I trust,  
 who subdues my people under me.  
 3 LORD, what is man, that you acknowledge  
 him?  
*Or* the son of man, that you concern  
 yourself with him?  
 4 Man is like a vapour.  
 His days *are* like a shadow that passes away.  
 5 Bow your heavens, O LORD, and  
 come down!  
 Touch the mountains and make them smoke!  
 6 Hurl out lightning bolts and scatter them!  
 Shoot out your arrows and destroy them!  
 7 Send down your hand from above.  
 Rescue me, and deliver me out of great  
 waters,  
 from the hand of foreigners,  
 8 Whose mouth speaks vanity, and whose  
 right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.
- 9 I will sing a new song to you, O God.

David had natural ability and practiced much with sword and bow. But he does not attribute his skill to himself, but to God. In this New Testament age the great battles of God's people are spiritual (Eph 6:10-18). God who taught David will teach us how to fight these battles if we are willing and obedient. If we gain some success we should attribute this to God and not vainly imagine that it is our own ability or goodness that has gotten us the victory (1 Cor 4:7).

**144:2** "Fortress" – 18:2. "Subdues" – 2 Sam 2:1-4; 3:1; 5:1-5.

**144:3,4** See 8:4; Job 14:1,2; Heb 2:6; Isa 2:22. David included himself in this description of man. He knows that it is God alone who has made him strong, skillful, and successful, and it fills him with praise that the great God should care for puny man.

**144:5-8** In all his danger David knows that safety and deliverance depend on God alone. Compare 18:7-15. David prays that God will do as He did before.

**144:5** See 18:8; 104:32; Isa 64:1.

**144:6** See 68:1; 18:14; 7:12,13; Hab 3:11; Zech 9:14.

**144:7** See 18:16,17.

**144:8** See 12:2; 36:3; 41:6.

**144:9** See 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 149:1. New deliverances call for new songs, and every answer to prayer should bring forth

I will sing praises to you on a lyre  
*and* a ten-stringed instrument,  
 10 *you* who give salvation to kings,  
 who deliver his servant David  
 from the deadly sword.  
 11 Rescue me, and deliver me from the hand  
 of foreigners,  
 whose mouth speaks vanity,  
 and whose right hand *is* a right  
 hand of falsehood,  
 12 So that our sons *may* be like plants  
 grown up in their youth,  
 that our daughters *may* be like pillars,  
 carved like palace *carvings*.  
 13 *And that* our barns *may be* full,  
 furnishing all kinds of provisions,  
*and that* our sheep may give birth  
 to thousands and ten thousands  
 in our fields,  
 14 *That* our oxen *may* be strong  
 to labour,  
*and that there be* no breaking in,  
 or going out,  
*that there be* no outcry in our streets.  
 15 Happy *are the* people who are in such  
 a condition;  
*yes, happy are* the people whose God  
*is* the LORD.

# 145

David's Psalm of praise

1 I will exalt you, my God, O king,  
 and I will extol your name  
 forever and ever.  
 2 Every day I will praise you,  
 and I will praise your name  
 forever and ever.  
 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be  
 praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.  
 4 One generation will praise your works  
 to another,  
 and will proclaim your mighty acts.  
 5 I will speak of the glorious honour of  
 your majesty,  
 and of your wonderful works.  
 6 And *men* will speak of the power of your  
 awesome acts;  
 and I will declare your greatness.  
 7 They will pour forth the memory of your  
 great goodness and sing of your  
 righteousness.  
 8 The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion,  
 slow to get angry, and great in mercy.  
 9 The LORD *is* good to all,

new thanksgiving.  
**144:10** See 18:50; 2 Sam 8:14.  
**144:12-14** David does not pray for victory  
 just for his own sake. He is thinking of all  
 the people of God. He desires their  
 prosperity and peace.  
**144:12** "Plants" – 92:12-14; 128:3.  
 "Pillars" – the word signifies stability,  
 usefulness, and beauty.  
**144:15** Deut 28:3. Notes on blessing at 1:1;  
 Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; etc. Blessed  
 indeed are those who have the one true God  
 as their God. There can be no blessing  
 higher than this. And even though we live  
 in poverty or deadly danger we are still  
 blessed indeed if this God is our God.  
**145 Title:** There is praise to God in nearly  
 every psalm, but this is the only one that is  
 named a psalm of praise. Here David does  
 not mention his enemies or troubles of any  
 kind. He is completely taken up with the  
 greatness, goodness, and righteousness of  
 God. In Hebrew the verses begin with the  
 successive letters of the alphabet with one  
 letter (nun) omitted.  
**145:1** See 5:2; 47:2; 95:3. David the king  
 knows his king is in heaven (see Eph 6:9).  
**145:2** He is resolved to praise God and  
 repeats his resolution four times in these  
 two verses. Not only so, he resolves to praise  
 God every day, regardless of circumstances,  
 whether well or sick, in comfort or in trouble,  
 in sadness or in joy (see 1 Thess 5:18).

Not only so, he is confident that he will praise  
 God forever (see 23:6; 37:18; 41:12).  
**145:3** The one true God is worthy of the  
 greatest praise possible for men to give,  
 the most sincere and wholehearted, the most  
 intelligent and spiritual praise. It will take  
 all eternity to understand all His greatness  
 and to praise Him as He ought to be praised.  
**145:4** See 22:30; 102:18.  
**145:5** See 44:1; 71:16; 75:1; 77:12;  
 96:6; 105:2; 107:8,15; 148:13. This  
 verse could be translated "I will meditate  
 on the glorious splendor of your majesty  
 and on your wonderful works."  
**145:6** See 65:5; 66:3; 106:22; Deut  
 7:21; 10:21.  
**145:7** "Goodness" – 23:6; 27:13; 31:19;  
 33:5; 52:1; 107:8; Ex 33:19; 2 Chron  
 6:41; Rom 11:22.  
 "Righteousness" – 7:9; 19:9; 145:17;  
 John 17:25; Rom 3:21,22; Phil 3:9;  
 2 Tim 4:8; 1 John 2:1; Rev 16:5,7.  
 Righteousness is one of the glorious at-  
 tributes of God. Because He is absolutely  
 just and righteous, believers can be sure  
 that the future will turn out perfectly well.  
**145:8** See 86:5,15; 103:8; Ex 34:6,7;  
 Matt 9:36; John 1:16,17; 1 John 4:8.  
**145:9** See 103:13,14; 136:1; Matt 5:45;  
 Rom 2:4. All things God has made display  
 God's wisdom and skill. His dealings with  
 men reveal His justice, love, grace, patience,  
 and other attributes. God will be honored

and his tender mercies are over all  
his works.  
10 All your works will praise you, O LORD,  
and your saints will speak your praise.  
11 They will speak of the glory of your  
kingdom, and talk of your power,  
12 To make known to the sons of men his  
mighty acts,  
and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.  
13 Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,  
and your dominion *continues on*  
throughout all generations.  
14 The LORD upholds all who fall,  
and lifts up all *those who are*  
bowed down.  
15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give  
them their food in due season.  
16 You open your hand and satisfy the  
desire of every living thing.  
17 The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways,  
and holy in all his works.  
18 The LORD *is* near all those who call  
to him,  
to all who call to him in truth.  
19 He will fulfil the desire of those who

fear him;  
he will also hear their cry and save them.  
20 The LORD preserves all those who love  
him,  
but he will destroy all the wicked.  
21 My mouth will speak the praise of  
the LORD; and may all flesh extol  
his holy name forever and ever.

146

1 Praise the LORD!  
Praise the LORD, O my soul.  
2 While I live I will praise the LORD.  
I will sing praises to my God while  
I have being.  
3 Do not put your trust in princes,  
*or* in a son of man,  
in whom *there is* no help.  
4 His spirit goes out;  
he returns to his ground;  
in that very day his plans perish.  
5 Blessed *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob  
as his help,

by everything, even the wrath of men (76:10). But of all creation His believing people will be the means of the greatest glory to Him (Eph 1:6,12,14).  
**145:11-13** Here are glorious themes for believers to speak about. So many people have never yet heard of God's kingdom, glory, and mighty acts recorded in the Bible. Telling others gets the truth to them, glorifies God, and encourages ourselves. God's kingdom is so rich a subject that if we speak of it our whole life long we will not tell a small part of what can be told (22:28; 66:7; 103:19; Dan 4:34,35; Matt 6:33; 13:11; 25:31-34; Mark 1:14,15; 9:47; John 3:3; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 14:22; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 6:9,10; 15:50; Rev 12:10).  
**145:14** See 37:17,23,24; 146:8. God is great in power and glory, the majestic king of eternity, yet He is great in compassion and kindness also.  
**145:15,16** See 104:14,27; 111:5; 136:25; Gen 1:30; Job 38:41; Matt 6:26.  
**145:17** Perfect justice combined with perfect grace are revealed in the King of the universe.  
**145:18** This great King hears prayer - 65:2; 102:17; Prov 15:8,29; Matt 7:7,8,11; 1 John 5:14. But our prayers must be sincere and according to His will - 17:1; Isa 29:13; Matt 6:5-8; Jam 1:5-7.  
"Near" - 46:1; 119:151; Deut 4:7; Isa 55:6; Acts 17:27.  
**145:19** "Fulfil" - 37:4. Note on fear of the Lord at 34:11-14; 111:10; Gen 20:11.  
"Save" - 7:10; 34:18; 1 Sam 10:19.  
**145:20** "Preserves" - 31:23; 37:28;

97:10; John 10:28,29.  
"Destroy" - 9:5; 37:38; 73:18,19; 94:23; 2 Thess 1:8,9. God destroys the wicked because it is perfectly just to do so. They do not desire or seek His mercy and forgiveness, but delight in wickedness.  
**145:21** Those who heartily praise God want everyone else to do the same. They delight to hear God magnified, exalted, and praised (103:20-22; 150:6).  
**146:1** "Praise the LORD" (also v 10) - note at 104:35. In this and in the remaining four psalms there are no requests, no complaints, no cries for help, no grief, no tears, no shame, no depression. All is praise and joy in God, a foretaste of heaven. The author exhorts others to praise the LORD (Jehovah), and then exhorts himself. He will not get others to do what he will not heartily do.  
**146:2** See 63:4; 104:33; 145:1,2.  
**146:3** See 60:11; 108:12; 118:9; Isa 2:22.  
**146:4** "Ground" - 103:14; Gen 3:19; Job 7:21; Eccl 12:7. They who trust in men are leaning on a pile of dust.  
**146:5** "Blessed" - In Hebrew the same word as in 1:1 and 119:1.  
"God of Jacob" - this name of God appears 24 times in the Old Testament. Thinking of why God chose to link His glorious holy name with Jacob can teach us some good lessons. Jacob was not the greatest of saints. He failed in many ways. A study of his history and the history of his descendants, the nation of Israel, reveals what is meant by the name "God of Jacob." He is the God who chooses individuals



## 147

- whose hope *is* in the LORD his God,  
 6 Who made heaven and earth, the sea and  
 all that *is* in it,  
 who preserves truth forever,  
 7 Who executes justice for the oppressed,  
 who gives food to the hungry.  
 The LORD sets the prisoners free.  
 8 The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind.  
 The LORD lifts up those who are  
 bowed down.  
 The LORD loves the righteous.  
 9 The LORD watches over the foreigners.  
 He gives relief to the fatherless  
 and widow,  
 but the way of the wicked he turns  
 upside down.  
 10 The LORD will reign forever,  
 your God, O Zion, to all generations.  
 Praise the LORD.

- 1 Praise the LORD!  
 For *it is* good to sing praises to our God;  
 for *it is* pleasant *and* praise is  
 beautiful.
- 2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem.  
 He gathers together the exiles of Israel.
- 3 He heals the brokenhearted  
 and binds up their wounds.
- 4 He counts the number of the stars;  
 he calls them all by *their* names.
- 5 Great *is* our Lord and mighty in power.  
 His understanding *is* infinite.
- 6 The LORD lifts up the meek.  
 He hurls the wicked down to the ground.
- 7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving.  
 Sing praise on the harp to our God,

and a whole people according to His own good pleasure, not because He sees some merit in them (Rom 9:10-13; Eph 1:4; Deut 7:6-8).

He is the God of grace who saves people apart from their good works, or attempts to be righteous, or any such thing (Rom 11:5; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:3-5; etc).

He is the God who keeps His promises even when there is failure and sin on the part of His people (89:1,2; Gen 28:15; Rom 11:29; Titus 1:2; Heb 13:5).

He is the God who displays great patience (Ex 34:6; 2 Pet 3:15).

He is the God who transforms sinners into saints (Gen 32:24-28; Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; 5:17; 1 John 3:2).

We see all of these divine attributes displayed in the case of Jacob, and indeed toward every individual who will ever reach heaven. Blessed indeed is he who has the God of Jacob for his help!

**146:6-10** These verses give the reasons why they are blessed who have the God of Jacob as their help.

He is the almighty Creator who is completely faithful and who cannot be hindered from fulfilling His promises to His people (v 6; 18:25; 108:4; 117:2; Deut 7:9).

He is on the side of the hungry, the poor, the oppressed (v 7; 103:6; 74:21; Isa 42:6,7; Luke 4:18,19).

He shows infinite compassion especially toward the righteous, the needy and helpless (vs 8,9; 10:18; Ex 22:22; Lev 19:34; 10:18; Matt 9:29,30; 12:22; Luke 13:10-13; 2 Cor 4:4-6; Jam 1:27).

And He is the eternal King. Earth's princes go to the dust and their thoughts perish, but not God and His thoughts (v 10; 33:11). His thoughts will stand forever. Happy indeed are those who have this God, the God of Jacob, the one true God, as their God.

**147:1** "Praise the LORD" (also v 20) – note at 104:35. This is a psalm of praise to God

for His greatness as the God of creation (vs 4, 5, 8, 9, 15-18), and for His grace and kindness to His people (vs 2, 3, 6, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20). The writer praises God for what He has done, is doing, and can do.

"Pleasant" – 135:3.

"Beautiful" – 33:1. Since it is fitting to praise Him, not to praise Him is unfitting.

**147:2** "Builds" – men labored to build but the inspiration, strength, and will came from God (127:1).

"Gathers" – this may refer to the return of the people Israel from the Babylonian captivity. But the words would also be suitable to express the gathering of David and his men after the persecutions of Saul. Now God is building His Church and gathering those exiled from His presence by sin (Matt 16:18; John 11:52; 2 Cor 5:20,21; Eph 2:17-22).

**147:3** See 6:2; 30:2; 34:18; 38:3-8; 41:3; Isa 61:1; Ezek 34:16; Rev 21:4. One name for God in the Old Testament is Jehovah Ropheka – "The LORD who heals you" (Ex 15:26). Especially He loves and heals those who have hearts broken in repentance for their sins (51:17).

**147:4** God can gently lay one hand on a wounded heart and with the other hold far distant galaxies. The one who has regard for the lowly is so great He can name every star in the universe. Though there are only a few thousand stars visible to the naked eye, beyond the visible stars there are multiplied billions, crores upon crores, a host so vast that man can hardly even estimate the number. God knows them all, made them all.

**147:5** "Great" – 145:3; Jer 32:17,27; 33:3.

"Understanding" – Isa 40:28; Rom 11:33.

**147:6** "Meek" or "humble" – 146:8,9; 2 Chron 16:9; Jam 4:6. Stars do not occupy all the attention of the Almighty. He is concerned with men and is active in their affairs.

"Ground" – 37:9,10; 145:20.

**147:7** See 27:6; 30:4; 33:3; 42:4; 98:5.

- 8 Who covers the heavens with clouds,  
who prepares rain for the earth,  
who makes grass grow on the mountains.
- 9 He gives to the beast its food,  
*and* to the young ravens which cry out.
- 10 He does not delight in the strength of  
the horse;  
he does not take pleasure in the legs  
of a man.
- 11 The LORD takes pleasure in those  
who fear him,  
in those who hope in his mercy.
- 12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!  
Praise your God, O Zion!
- 13 For he has strengthened the bars of your  
gates.  
He has blessed your children within you.
- 14 He makes peace *in* your borders,  
*and* fills you with the finest of  
the wheat.
- 15 He sends out his command *on* earth;  
his word runs very swiftly.
- 16 He gives snow like wool;  
he scatters the frost like ashes.
- 17 He hurls out his hail like fragments;  
who can stand before his cold?
- 18 He sends out his word and melts them.  
He causes his wind to blow,  
*and* the waters flow.
- 19 He declares his word to Jacob,  
his statutes and his judgments to Israel.
- 20 He has not done so with any *other* nation;

"Thanksgiving" – 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**147:8,9** After creating the world God did not withdraw to some distant place. Clouds and rain do not come merely because of some natural laws. God is active in nature (104:10-15; 135:6,7; 148:8).

**147:10,11** Verses 16-18; 33:16-18; 103:11; 1 Sam 16:7; Heb 11:6. For fear of God see notes at 34:11-14; etc. God delights in good inward qualities that He produces in individuals, not in outward appearance or physical strength.

**147:12-14** See 48:1. Who was there in all the earth to praise the LORD (Jehovah) if Jerusalem did not? No other people had received such blessings as Israel. Now it is the duty and privilege of believers in Christ to praise Him, for now we are the people blessed by the Lord of heaven and earth.

**147:15** See 33:9; Job 37:12; Isa 55:11. God can and does give commands to any part of His creation (1 Kings 17:2-4,9; Mark 4:39-41). Only sinful men and Satan disobey Him.

**147:16-18** Verses 8,9; Job 37:12; 38:22,29.

**147:19** See 78:5,47; 148:8; Ex 20:1; Deut 33:4; Josh 1:8; 2 Kings 22:8; Rom 3:2; 9:4. Far better than the breeze, the

and *as for his* judgments, they have not known them.  
Praise the LORD!

148

- 1 Praise the LORD!  
Praise the LORD from the heavens.  
Praise him in the heights.
- 2 Praise him, all his angels.  
Praise him, all his hosts.
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon.  
Praise him, all you stars of light.
- 4 Praise him, you heavens of heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.
- 5 May they praise the name of the LORD,  
for he commanded and they were created.
- 6 He has also established them  
forever and ever;  
he has made a decree which will not pass away.
- 7 Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters, and all depths,
- 8 Fire and hail, snow and vapours,  
stormy wind fulfilling his word,
- 9 Mountains and all hills,  
fruitful trees and all cedars,
- 10 Beasts and all cattle,  
creeping things and flying birds,
- 11 Kings of the earth and all people,  
princes and all judges of the earth,

clouds, and the rain is the Word of God sent down from heaven to bless men forever.

**147:20** Deut 4:7,8,32-34. Then the people of Israel were a repository for the Word of God as Christ's church is now.

**148:1** "Praise the LORD" (also v 14) – note at 104:35. Psalm 146 is one of individual praise. Psalm 147 is the praise of the people of God. This one is a psalm of universal praise. It begins in the highest heavens, then goes to the deepest deeps, ascends to inanimate and then animate things of earth, and finishes with all people everywhere.

**148:2** See 103:20; Luke 2:13,14; Rev 5:11-13.

**148:3** The sun and moon have no personality and no life. In this respect they are like snow, hills, and clouds which the writer also exhorts to praise God – vs 8,9. This is poetry. The writer is merely setting forth a truth that delights him – all things were created by God and for the glory of God, and that because of them praise comes to God.

**148:4,5** Deut 10:14; Gen 1:7; Isa 40:26.

**148:6** Jer 31:35,36; 33:25.

**148:7-10** All creation on earth, animate and inanimate, are for the glory of God, and because of them all He receives praise.

**148:11,12** He comes now to humanity. On the grounds that God has created them all

- 12 Both young men and maidens,  
old men and children.  
13 May they praise the name of the LORD,  
for his name alone is exalted.  
His glory *is* above the earth and  
the heavens.  
14 And he exalts the horn of his people.  
*He is* the praise of all his saints,  
of the children of Israel,  
a people close to him.  
Praise the LORD!

149

- 1 Praise the LORD!  
Sing to the LORD a new song,  
his praise in the congregation of the saints.  
2 May Israel rejoice in him who made him;  
may the children of Zion be joyful  
in their King.  
3 May they praise his name with the dance;  
may they sing praises to him with the  
tambourine and harp.

and preserves them all and is good to all, all should praise Him.  
**148:13** All men should praise Jehovah God alone, for He is the only God there is, and He is a splendid God, glorious in every way (Isa 42:8; 44:6; 45:22).  
**148:14** "Horn" – 75:4,5; 89:17; Luke 1:69. God did a special thing for His special people and so they should offer special praise.  
**149:1** "Praise the LORD" (also v 9) – note at 104:35. This is a psalm of joyful praise to God as Maker and Saviour of His people (vs 1-5), and as avenger of wickedness (vs 6-9).  
"New song" – 40:3; 96:1; Rev 5:9. God's mercies are new every morning (Lam 3:22,23), so there are daily reasons for making new songs of praise for all the saints to sing.  
**149:2** "Who made him" – that is, Israel should rejoice in God who made them into a nation when they had been but slaves in Egypt.  
"King" – not the earthly but the heavenly one (10:16; 47:6; Zech 9:9; Rev 19:16).  
**149:3** Ex 15:20; 2 Sam 6:14,15. Sometimes believers have such joy in God that the body too becomes involved in the expression of it.  
**149:4** "Pleasure" – 147:11. Here is a reason for great joy and praise. Though we are poor and sinful the Lord delights in us, not for what we are in ourselves but for what He is making us to be in Christ (Eph 2:10; Phil 1:6). He saves us from the ugliness of sin and gives us the holy beauty of salvation and begins the work of sanctification

- 4 For the LORD takes pleasure in his people.  
He will beautify the meek with salvation.  
5 May the saints be joyful in glory.  
May they sing aloud on their beds.  
6 *May* the high praises of God *be*  
in their mouth,  
and a two-edged sword in their hand,  
7 To execute vengeance on the nations,  
*and* punishment on the peoples,  
8 To bind their kings with chains,  
and their nobles with fetters of iron,  
9 To execute on them the written  
judgment.  
All his saints have this honour.  
Praise the LORD!

150

- 1 Praise the LORD!  
Praise God in his sanctuary.  
Praise him in his mighty firmament.  
2 Praise him for his mighty acts.  
Praise him according to his surpassing  
greatness.

which will result in fullness of beauty (see Eph 5:25-27). God's people are God's masterpiece and He delights in them.  
"Meek" or "humble" – 9:12; 10:17; Prov 16:19; Isa 57:15; Matt 18:4; Jam 4:6,10.  
**149:5** What an honor it is to be the people of the one true God, made beautiful with His salvation! No one has more cause for joy and song.  
**149:6-9** Israel in the Old Testament was an instrument in God's hand to inflict God's vengeance on wicked people. See Num 31:2; Deut 7:1,2. In these New Testament days the weapons of our warfare are not physical but spiritual (2 Cor 10:4; Eph 6:17). We fight wickedness by proclaiming the Word of God, by faith and by prayer. At the end of this age Christ will appear to take vengeance on God's enemies (2 Thess 1:5-10; Rev 19:11-16). At that time His people will be with Him and share in His judgment of the earth (1 Cor 6:2,3).  
**150:1** "Praise the LORD" (also v 6) – note at 104:35. He is filled with praise to God and wants the whole universe to sound and resound with praise. The first and last psalm each has only six verses. The first has blessing as its subject and the last has the result of blessing – praise to God.  
"Sanctuary" – 68:24-26; 73:17; 102:19. Praise should begin where God is best known and truly worshiped.  
"Firmament" or "Expanse" – see Genesis 1:6-8.  
**150:2** "Mighty acts" – 106:2; 145:12; Deut 3:24.

- 3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet.  
Praise him with the lyre and harp.
- 4 Praise him with the tambourine and dance.  
Praise him with stringed instruments  
and flutes.

- 5 Praise him with the loud cymbals.  
Praise him with the high sounding cymbals.
- 6 May everything that has breath praise  
the LORD.  
Praise the LORD!

“Greatness” – 47:2; 48:1; 86:10; 95:3; 145:3; 1 Tim 6:15,16.  
**150:3-5** See 45:8; 57:8; 149:3; 2 Sam 6:5; 1 Chron 13:8; 15:24; 16:42. Praise God with all the musical instruments available, with all joyous sounds.  
“Flutes” – organs (KJV) had not yet been

invented when this psalm was written.  
**150:6** He is so convinced of the fitness of praise by all created beings that he longs to hear every breathing thing joining the mighty chorus. This is what heaven will be like (Rev 4:8-11; 5:8-14; 7:9-12; 14:1-3; 15:2-4; 19:1-8).

# PROVERBS

## Authors:

Solomon wrote most of the proverbs in this book, but others wrote some of them. See 1:1; 22:17; 24:23; 30:1; 31:1. See also 1 Kings 4:32.

## Date:

Solomon reigned 970-930 BC, so most and possibly all of these proverbs were written down during that time.

## Themes:

Solomon himself gave the reasons why he wrote down his proverbs, and so indicated the themes. See 1:2-6. He wanted people to know how to live in this world, how to behave in the various circumstances they face. In 1:7 he gives a very important theme – the fear of the LORD. Throughout the book there is a vivid contrast between wise people and fools. The wise are those who fear God and follow His ways; fools are those who do not fear God, and follow their own ways. True wisdom results in righteousness; foolishness leads to sin. In fact, we may say that wickedness is foolishness, true righteousness is wisdom.

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- 1 The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel:
- 2 To know wisdom and instruction;  
to discern words of understanding;
- 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom,  
justice, and judgment, and fairness;
- 4 To give shrewdness to the simple,  
knowledge and discretion to the young
- 5 (A wise *person* will hear and increase learning,  
and a man of understanding will attain  
to wise counsels);
- 6 To understand a proverb, and the  
interpretation,  
the words of the wise, and their riddles.
- 7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning  
of knowledge,  
*but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- 8 My son, hear the instruction of your father,  
and do not forsake the law of your mother;

- 9 For they *will be* an ornament of grace  
to your head,  
and necklaces around your neck.
- 10 My son, if sinners entice you,  
do not consent.
- 11 If they say, "Come with us.  
Let us lie in wait for blood.  
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent  
without cause.
- 12 Let us swallow them up alive like the grave,  
and whole, like those who go down into the pit.
- 13 We will get all *kinds of* valuable stuff.  
We will fill our houses with plunder.
- 14 Throw in your lot among us.  
Let us all have one purse."
- 15 My son, do not walk in the way with them.  
Keep your foot from their path.
- 16 For their feet run to evil,  
and hurry to shed blood.
- 17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the

**1:1** Altogether Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs (1 Kings 4:32). There are less than 1000 proverbs in this book and not all of them were written by Solomon (30:1; 31:1), so many of his proverbs are lost. Only those God wanted to remain have remained. Solomon had more practical wisdom and discernment than any man who ever lived (except for the Lord Jesus), because they were a special gift from God (1 Kings 3:10-12). The proverbs recorded in this book were chosen from Solomon's proverbs by God's Spirit for our instruction.

**1:2-6** Here are the several reasons why Solomon wrote his proverbs and why the Holy Spirit has included them in the Bible. The principal reason is that we might gain practical wisdom and know how to conduct ourselves in the various affairs of life. But knowledge alone is not enough – it must be put into practice. Unfortunately Solomon himself did not always do so (1 Kings 11:1-6).

**1:4** "Simple" – Ps 19:7; 119:130; Prov 8:5. In the Bible, the Word of God, we have a great storehouse of wisdom and understanding. But we need to believe it, receive it into our heart, meditate on it, and practice it.

"Young" – even the young can attain to wisdom by God's Word. Much of this book of Proverbs is addressed to the young (1:8,10; 2:2; 3:1; 4:1; etc).

**1:7** "Fear" – Solomon comes to the main point right away. Without a reverential awe and fear of God there is no true wisdom. Without it one cannot even begin to be what God calls wise. See notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; 130:3,4. Without this fear of God men may be educated, intellectual, and brilliant, and may even know much of the Bible, but they will not be wise. The phrase "fear of the LORD" (Jehovah) is used 14 times in Proverbs and

is a key thought. Observe carefully how different the wisdom the Bible presents is from the wisdom that philosophy speaks about.

"Fools" – the word is used 61 times in this book, far more than in any other book of the Bible. It does not mean people who are uneducated, or lacking in brains or ability. It indicates those lacking in morals, those who are perverse and disobedient to righteous standards, those who do not know God and who try to live without Him their lives. See also Ps 14:1. Fools are not interested in learning the fear of God and the wisdom which comes from it. They follow their own thoughts. They want only to satisfy their desires and behave as they please. In this book fools are everywhere contrasted with the wise. The fools are the wicked; the wise are the righteous. To sin is foolishness; to live righteously is wisdom.

**1:8** It is the duty of parents to properly teach their children how to live in this world (Gen 18:19; Deut 6:7; Prov 13:24; 22:6; Eph 6:4). If they do not, they should not be surprised if their children turn out badly.

**1:9** 3:21,22; 4:7-9.

**1:10-16** It is possible for the children of even good parents to fall into the companionship of evil men. When this happens they are on the slippery path that may lead to violence, robbery, and crime (compare 22:24,25; 1 Cor 15:33). Everyone, and especially the young, must be very careful about making friends, for friendships have a powerful effect on our behavior, and can lead either to great good or to much evil.

"Grave" (v 12) – in Hebrew "Sheol" – Gen 37:35.

**1:16** Isa 59:7; Rom 3:15.

**1:17** A hunter used nets to catch birds, but if the birds were watching him start to work they would fly away (6:5; 7:23; Ps 91:3). If we are alert to the plans and tricks of evil

sight of any bird.

18 And they lie in wait for their *own* blood!

They lurk secretly for their *own* lives!

19 Such *are* the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain.

It takes away the life of its owners.

20 Wisdom cries out in the *public* square;  
she utters her voice in the streets;

21 She cries out in the principal thoroughfares,  
at the entrance of the gates of the city  
she utters her words, *saying*,

22 "How long, you simple ones,  
will you love simple ways?

And the scorners delight in their scorning,  
and fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn at my rebuke.

See, I will pour out my spirit to you,  
I will make my words known to you.

24 "But since I have called, and you refused;  
I have stretched out my hand,  
and no one paid attention,

25 But you have ignored all my counsel,  
and were not willing for any of my rebuke,

26 I also will laugh at your calamity.

men we can escape.

**1:18** An evil man will be caught in his own schemes to catch others (26:27; Ps 7:15; 35:7,8; 40:2; 94:13). By becoming ensnared in his own net he shows he has not as much sense as birds.

**1:19** 4:14-17; 11:19; 1 Tim 6:6-10.

**1:20,21** There are two principal voices calling to men – the voice of wisdom which is the Word of God (8:12,22-31), and the voice of folly which is the counsel of the wicked (9:13; Ps 1:1). The one we obey will determine the nature of our life on earth and our eternal state.

**1:22** The voice of wisdom is heard until the end of this chapter. Indeed, the voice of wisdom is heard all through the Bible and wherever the Bible has gone and wherever God speaks to men. Most are unwilling to listen to the voice of wisdom, and so show themselves to be foolish. It is a strange but true thing that foolish people love their foolish ways and delight to mock at wisdom and hate knowledge (Ps 50:17). Hence the terrible warning which follows.

"Simple" – in Hebrew this word in Proverbs does not mean someone who is innocent and uncomplicated. It usually indicates a person who does not have good sense in the area of morals, a person who is likely to run after the wrong things.

**1:23** This is what God longs to do for people if only they will respond to Him. For this reason He gave the Bible to mankind. Our whole lifetime should be spent in learning more and more of God's heart and God's thoughts.

**1:24,25** Isa 65:12; 66:4; Jer 7:13; 26:5; 35:17; 36:31; Heb 12:25. The most

I will mock when your fear comes.

27 When your fear comes like desolation,  
and your destruction comes like a whirlwind,  
when distress and anguish come on you.

28 Then they will call on me,  
but I will not answer.

They will seek me early,  
but they will not find me,

29 For they hated knowledge, and did not  
choose the fear of the LORD.

30 They would *have* none of my counsel.

They despised all my rebuke.

31 Therefore they will eat the fruit of  
their own way, and be filled with  
their own schemes.

32 For the turning away of the simple will kill them,  
and the prosperity of fools will destroy them.

33 But whoever listens to me will dwell in safety,  
and will securely rest from fear of disaster."

**2** My son, if you will receive my words,  
and store up my commands with you,

2 So that you turn your ear to wisdom,  
and apply your heart to understanding,

3 Yes, if you cry out after knowledge,

foolish, arrogant, and dangerous thing any human being can do is to refuse to listen to the voice of wisdom, the voice of God. Compare 2 Thess 2:10,11.

**1:26-32** Here are the sad results of refusing wisdom's voice.

**1:26,27** Ps 2:4; Deut 28:62,63.

**1:28** There is such a thing as calling too late for help. When justice demands punishment and is already in the process of executing it, men may call in vain (Deut 1:45; 1 Sam 8:18; Isa 1:15; Jer 11:11; Hos 5:6). For example, once Noah and his family were in the ark and the judgment of the flood had begun it was too late to call for mercy.

**1:29** Verse 7. The fear of the Lord is something which must be *chosen by men*. It must also be cultivated and practiced.

**1:31** 2 Chron 36:16; Ps 18:25,26; Prov 14:14; 22:8; Jer 6:19; 21:14; 30:15; 34:17; Gal 6:7.

**1:32** Men destroy themselves by their wickedness and folly. Let them not blame God for something they do themselves.

"Prosperity" – or "complacency."

**1:33** Num 24:21; Deut 33:28; Ps 23:4; 112:8; Isa 32:17,18.

**2:1-4** Wisdom and understanding are not gained by the careless or the lazy or the worldly. It must be valued according to its worth, and sought as some people seek for riches (Job 28:12-28; Ps 19:9,10; 119:72; Prov 8:10; 1 Cor 1:30; Col 2:2,3). How sad it is when men spend their whole lives in the pursuit of riches, and go to their graves in their folly, without that priceless wisdom they might have had if they had sought it. Whatever else we may or may

- and* lift up your voice for understanding,  
 4 If you seek her as *for* silver,  
 and search for her as *for* hidden treasures,  
 5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,  
 and find the knowledge of God.  
 6 For the LORD gives wisdom.  
 Out of his mouth *come* knowledge and  
 understanding.  
 7 He stores up sound wisdom for the righteous.  
*He is* a shield to those who walk uprightly.  
 8 He guards the paths of justice,  
 and preserves the way of his saints.  
 9 Then you will understand righteousness  
 and justice and fairness,  
 yes, every good path.  
 10 When wisdom enters your heart and  
 knowledge is pleasant to your soul,  
 11 Discretion will preserve you,  
 understanding will keep you,  
 12 To deliver you from the way of the evil *man*,  
 from the man who speaks perverse things,  
 13 Who leave the right paths to walk in  
 the ways of darkness,  
 14 Who rejoice in doing evil *and* delight  
 in the perversity of the wicked,  
 15 Whose ways *are* crooked,  
 and who are devious in their paths.  
 16 *It will* save you from the strange woman,

not seek for, let us seek for wisdom with diligence and zeal!

**2:5** Here is the reward that comes to those who search diligently for wisdom. They gain the highest, brightest, and best treasure men can ever have – the knowledge of God.

**2:6** But we must seek wisdom where it is – not in books of philosophers, nor in writings of men about their gods, not in some so-called *jnana marg* but in the LORD (Jehovah), the God of the Bible, the only living and true God. He alone gives wisdom.  
**2:7,8** Gen 15:1; Deut 33:29; 2 Sam 22:3,31; Ps 3:3; 7:1; 18:25; 97:10. Observe that after speaking of wisdom he turns our attention to our way of living. True wisdom is always practical, always related to morality and ethics and holiness of life.

"Wisdom" (v 7) – or "success."  
**2:10** 14:33.

**2:11-17** True wisdom protects from all evil – evil words (v 12), evil ways (v 13), evil deeds (v 14), evil temptations (v 16).

**2:13** 4:19; John 3:19.

**2:14** 10:23; 15:21; Rom 1:32; 2 Thess 2:12.

**2:15** Ps 125:5; Prov 21:8; Isa 59:8; Matt 7:13.

**2:16,17** "Strange woman" – used several times in Proverbs to indicate an immoral woman. Adultery is one of the most terrible of sins. God repeatedly warns against it in His Word (Ex 20:14; Lev 18:20; 20:10; Num 5:12,13,29; Prov 6:29,32; 1 Cor 6:9,10,18;

from the stranger *who* flatters with her words,  
 17 Who forsakes the guide of her youth,  
 and forgets the covenant of her God.

18 For her house goes down to death,  
 and her paths to the dead.

19 None who go to her return again or  
 reach the paths of life.

20 Thus you may walk in the way of good *men*,  
 and keep to the paths of the righteous.

21 For the upright will live in the land,  
 and the blameless will remain in it.

22 But the wicked will be cut off from the earth,  
 and transgressors will be uprooted from it.

**3** My son, do not forget my law,  
 but let your heart keep my commands,  
 2 For they will add to you length  
 of days and long life, and peace.

3 Do not let mercy and truth leave you.  
 Bind them around your neck,  
 write them on the tablet of your heart.

4 So you will find favour and good  
 understanding in the sight of God  
 and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
 and do not lean on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge him,  
 and he will direct your paths.

Eph 5:3; Col 3:5,6; Rev 21:8). That is why the wise father here counsels his son against it, as all wise fathers should do.

**2:18** 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; Eccl 7:26; Rom 6:23; 1 Tim 5:6.

**2:19** Adultery is a sin that so captures those engaging in it, so overpowers their reason and conscience, that escape is exceedingly difficult. Those who practice it will never, in their own strength, arrive in the path of life and holiness. But God in His mercy can bring them there if they repent and turn to Him (1 Cor 6:9,11).

**2:20-22** Compare Ps 37:9-11,20,27-29,35-38.

**3:1** The peril of forgetting God's truth is often pointed out in the Bible (Deut 4:23,24; Ps 78:11; 106:13; Heb 12:5; 2 Pet 1:9).

**3:2** Though the rewards of the righteous are given in the next world, even in this world they will benefit from good behavior.

**3:3** Deut 6:6; Prov 6:21; 7:3; 2 Cor 3:3; Col 3:16; Heb 8:10. If the Word of God is not written on our hearts, if it does not become the inner spring for our behavior, it is useless to have it on our lips, or to profess to be pious.

**3:4** 1 Sam 2:26; Luke 2:52.

**3:5,6** Here are three essentials to a walk directed by God – full trust, renunciation of one's own wisdom, and acknowledging God in everything. Such a walk is contrasted in Proverbs with "dark ways" (2:13), stumbling (4:11,12), wickedness (11:5), and foolishness (15:21). So David prayed that God

- 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes.  
Fear the LORD and depart from evil.
- 8 It will be health to your navel,  
and marrow to your bones.
- 9 Honour the LORD with your possessions,  
and with the firstfruits of all your harvests;
- 10 Then your barns will be filled with plenty,  
and your winepresses will burst open  
with new wine.
- 11 My son, do not despise the discipline  
of the LORD,  
nor be weary of his correction,
- 12 For whom the LORD loves he corrects,  
as a father the son *in whom* he delights.
- 13 Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom,  
and the man *who* gets understanding.
- 14 For profit from it *is* more valuable  
than the profit of silver,  
and its yield *better* than fine gold.
- 15 She *is* more precious than rubies,  
and all the things you can desire are  
not to be compared to her.
- 16 Length of days *is* in her right hand,  
*and* in her left hand are riches and  
honour.
- 17 Her ways *are* pleasant ways,  
and all her paths *are* peace.
- 18 She *is* a tree of life to those who take  
hold of her;  
and happy *is everyone* who retains her.
- 19 By wisdom the LORD founded the earth,  
by understanding he established the heavens.
- 20 By his knowledge the depths are broken open,  
and the clouds let drop the dew.
- 21 My son, keep sound wisdom and discretion,  
not letting them depart from your eyes.
- 22 So they will be life to your soul,  
and grace to your neck.
- 23 Then you will walk in your way in safety,  
and your foot will not stumble.
- 24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid;  
yes, you will lie down and your sleep  
will be sweet.
- 25 Be not afraid of *something causing*  
sudden terror,  
or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes.
- 26 For the LORD will be your confidence,  
and will keep your foot from being captured.
- 27 Do not withhold good from those to  
whom it is due, when it is in the  
power of your hand to do *it*.
- 28 Do not say to your neighbour,  
"Go and come again",  
and "Tomorrow I will give",  
when you have it with you.
- 29 Do not plot to do evil against your  
neighbour, living securely near you.
- 30 Do not strive with a man without cause,  
if he has done no harm to you.
- 31 Do not envy the oppressor,  
and do not choose any of his ways.
- 32 For the perverse *man is* an abomination to  
the LORD,  
but his secret *is* with the righteous.

would lead him in a straight way (Ps 27:1). So should we all. A straight way is a way of integrity and uprightness. It is a way full of God's blessing. It is a way that will lead to the right goal – God Himself.

"And He will direct your paths" – or it could be translated "and he will make your paths straight."

**3:7** "Own eyes" – 26:12; Isa 5:21; 47:10; Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 3:18-20. This is a fault of many men. They are so wise in their own eyes they will not listen to God's Word. Their pride keeps them from the truth, shut up in ignorance.

"Fear" – notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; etc.

**3:8** Compare Ps 38:3. See Prov 4:20-22.

**3:9,10** Ex 22:29; Deut 26:1-15; Mal 3:10-12; Luke 6:38. If we offer nothing to God and His service we are dishonoring Him and cannot have His full blessing in our lives.

**3:11,12** See Job 5:17; Ps 73:14; Heb 12:5,6 (where these words are quoted).

**3:13-18** 1:7,33; 2:1-6. Once again the value and fruits of true wisdom are placed before us. Remember that this wisdom has nothing to do with the so-called wisdom of

philosophy, or of Advaita Vedanta. The Bible presents the true wisdom, far more valuable than anything one can gain on earth. The principal fruit of wisdom is found in v 18. That wisdom which is a knowledge of the true God and awe and reverence for Him results in eternal life and blessing (John 17:3). On blessing or blessed see notes at Gen 12:3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1,2; 119:1; Matt 5:3-10; etc.

**3:18** "Tree of life" – 10:11; Gen 2:9; Rev 2:7.

**3:19,20** 8:27-29; Gen 1:31; Ps 136:5-9.

**3:21-26** Here are more fruits of true wisdom – a life that is gracious, secure, upright, fearless, restful. True wisdom will cause us to trust the Lord God, not ourselves (v 26).

**3:27-32** True wisdom will cause us to behave righteously and compassionately in this world.

**3:27** Jam 4:17.

**3:28** Lev 19:13; Deut 24:15; Luke 10:25-37.

**3:29** Zech 8:17.

**3:31** Ps 37:1; 73:2,3.

**3:32** "An abomination" – note at Ps 5:5.

- 33 The curse of the LORD *is* on the house  
of the wicked,  
but he blesses the home of the just.  
34 Surely he scorns the scorners,  
but he gives grace to the lowly.  
35 The wise will inherit glory,  
but fools will be held up to shame.

- 4** Hear, you children, the instruction of a father,  
and pay attention *so as* to find  
understanding.  
2 For I give you good teaching.  
Do not forsake my law.  
3 For I was my father's son, tender  
and the only *one* in the sight of my mother.  
4 And he taught me, and said to me,  
"Let your heart retain my words.  
Keep my commands, and live.  
5 Get wisdom, get understanding.  
Do not forget *it* or turn away from the  
words of my mouth.  
6 Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you.  
Love her, and she will keep you.  
7 Wisdom *is* the principal thing.  
*Therefore* get wisdom, and with all  
your getting get understanding.  
8 Exalt her, and she will set you on high.  
She will bring you to honour,  
when you embrace her.  
9 She will give an ornament of grace for  
your head;  
she will provide a crown of glory to you."  
10 Hear, O my son, and receive my words,  
and the years of your life will be many.

- 11 I have taught you in the way of wisdom;  
I have led you in right paths.  
12 When you walk, your steps will not be  
cramped,  
and when you run, you will not stumble.  
13 Take firm hold of instruction.  
Do not let *her* go.  
Keep her, for she *is* your life.  
14 Do not enter the path of the wicked,  
and do not go in the way of evil *people*.  
15 Avoid it. Do not travel on it.  
Turn from it and pass on.  
16 For they do not sleep unless they  
have done evil,  
and their sleep is taken away,  
unless they cause *someone* to fall.  
17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,  
and drink the wine of violence.  
18 But the path of the just *is* like the  
shining light, that shines more and  
more to the perfect day.  
19 The way of the wicked *is* like darkness.  
They do not know what they stumble at.  
20 My son, pay attention to my words.  
Turn your ear to what I say.  
21 Do not let them depart from your eyes.  
Keep them in the center of your heart.  
22 For they *are* life to those who find them,  
and health to their whole body.  
23 Keep your heart with all watchfulness,  
for out of it *come* the issues of life.  
24 Put a crooked mouth away from you,  
and put perverse lips far from you.

**3:33-35** One of many examples in this book of the contrast between the reward of the righteous and of the wicked. God's curse or blessing, His scorn or His grace, honor or shame are dependent on our state before God.  
**3:33** See Deut 11:26-28 and 28:1-68 for this principle at work for a whole nation.  
**3:34** To some extent at least God, in perfect justice, acts toward people as they act toward Him and others. Note at Ps 18:25,26.  
**4:1,2** 1:8; 19:20.  
**4:3-9** Father and mother were David and Bathsheba (1 Kings 1:28-30). Solomon was the son who was to succeed David on the throne of Israel.  
**4:4** 7:2; Deut 30:15-20; 32:45-47.  
**4:5** 2:12; 3:13-18.  
**4:6** True wisdom has such influence because God is behind it working with it.  
**4:7** Since wisdom is far more precious than wealth, then one must be willing to give all one's wealth to get it. It is hardly obtained otherwise (compare Matt 13:44-46; Mark 10:21-25; Luke 14:33). If there is something we will not give our wealth for, then it is plain that we value our wealth more than that thing. And why should God give us

something we value so little?  
**4:9** 1:8,9.  
**4:10** Under the old covenant God promised long life to those who obeyed Him (9:11).  
**4:11,12** 3:6; Ps 5:8.  
**4:13** 3:18,22; 4:4.  
**4:14,15** 1:15; Ps 1:1.  
**4:16,17** Wickedness is so natural to some people that it is like their food and drink, and trying to sleep without it is useless.  
**4:18** Ps 18:28; 37:6.  
**4:19** 2:13; John 3:19,20; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 John 2:11.  
**4:20-22** 3:8,18; 4:13.  
**4:23** Here is one of those gem-like maxims of profound meaning which appear frequently in this book. Our hearts are like storehouses and what is in them will come out some time, some way (Matt 12:34,35). They are like gardens which will produce a good crop if the seed and water and care are good, but which will produce evil weeds if left to themselves (24:30,31). Our hearts are like fountains and will pour our sweet living water or bitter deadly water, depending on what we have in them.  
**4:24** Eph 5:4; Col 3:8.



- 25 Let your eyes look right ahead,  
and let your eyelids look straight before you.  
26 Consider the path of your feet,  
and let all your ways be established.  
27 Do not turn to the right hand or to the left.  
Turn away your foot from evil.

- 5** My son, give attention to my wisdom,  
and turn your ear to my understanding,  
2 That you may regard discretion and  
that your lips may keep knowledge.  
3 For the lips of a strange woman drip  
like a honeycomb,  
and her mouth is smoother than oil,  
4 But the result with her is as bitter as wormwood,  
sharp as a two-edged sword.  
5 Her feet go down to death;  
her steps hold to the path of the grave.  
6 Lest you should ponder the path of life,  
her ways are unstable,  
so that you cannot understand them.  
7 Therefore, listen to me now,  
O you children, and do not depart from the  
words of my mouth.  
8 Keep your way far from her,  
and do not come near the door of her house,  
9 Lest you give your honour to others,  
and your years to those who are cruel,  
10 Lest strangers be filled with your wealth,  
and your labours be for the house of a  
stranger,  
11 And you mourn at the last,  
when your flesh and your body are consumed,  
12 And say, "How I hated instruction!  
And my heart despised rebuke!  
13 And I have not obeyed the voice of  
my teachers,

- or turned my ear to those who instructed me!  
14 I was almost in total misery in  
the midst of the congregation  
and assembly."  
15 Drink water out of your own cistern,  
and running water out of your own well.  
16 Should your springs flow outside and be like  
rivers of water in the streets?  
17 Let them be only your own,  
and not strangers sharing with you.  
18 Let your fountain be blessed,  
and rejoice with the wife of your youth.  
19 Let her be like a loving doe and graceful deer;  
let her breasts satisfy you at all times,  
and always be captivated by her love.  
20 And why will you, my son,  
be captivated by a strange woman,  
and embrace the bosom of a stranger?  
21 For the ways of man are before the  
eyes of the LORD,  
and he ponders all his goings.  
22 The iniquities of the wicked will capture him,  
and he will be held by the cords of his sins.  
23 He will die without instruction,  
and in the greatness of his folly he will  
go astray.

- 6** My son, if you act as security for your friend,  
if you have struck your hand in pledge  
with that of a stranger,  
2 You are ensnared by the words of your mouth,  
you are captured by the words of your mouth.  
3 Do this now, my son, and rescue  
yourself, when you have come into  
your friend's hands:  
go, humble yourself, and make sure

**4:25** If we do not do so we may stumble and fall.

**4:27** Deut 5:32; 17:11,20; 28:14; Josh 1:7; 1 Kings 15:5; 2 Kings 22:2. Going to right or left means to go out of the path of complete obedience to God's Word. Out of the straight and narrow way there is only sin.  
**5:1,2** Verse 7; 1:8; 4:1,20.

**5:3-23** He returns to the theme of adultery which he referred to in 2:16-19 and which he takes up again in 6:23-35 and 7:6-27. He shows it for what it is – one of the most dangerous and deadly of sins. It may seem sweet in the beginning (v 3), but the end will be bitterness and death (vs 4,5), and condemnation by one's own thoughts, by others, and by God (vs 11-14,21).  
**5:3** 7:5.

**5:4** Eccl 7:26.

**5:5** 2:18; 7:27. "Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – Gen 37:35.

**5:6** 9:13; 30:20; Eph 4:17-19.

**5:9-14** The practice of adultery will bring a person to utter ruin. Even if he (or she)

seems to escape in this life the deserved punishment, escape will not be forever (1 Cor 6:9,10; Heb 13:4; Rev 21:8).

**5:15-19** Each verse here exhorts the son to be satisfied with his own wife and not to go looking for pleasures forbidden outside the marriage relationship.

**5:20** Since adultery leads to ruin and destruction why even consider engaging in this deadly sin?

**5:21** Men may not find out the sin of the adulterer or punish him, but God will (Jer 29:23; Heb 4:13).

**5:22** Num 32:23; Ps 7:15,16; 9:16. If we sin we are creating bonds that will hold us in slavery. See John 8:34; Rom 6:16.

**5:23** If false ways that lead to death are the result of a lack of instruction how we should welcome and value instruction in our lives. See Ps 25:4,5.

**6:1-5** This refers to taking the responsibility of paying someone else's debts if he should fail to do so, or any other obligation of a similar nature. The wise man says this

- your friend.
- 4 Do not give sleep to your eyes,  
or slumber to your eyelids.
  - 5 Rescue yourself like a roe from the  
hand of the *hunter*;  
and like a bird from the hand of the fowler.
  - 6 Go to the ant, you lazy one.  
Consider its ways, and be wise.
  - 7 It has no guide, overseer, or ruler,
  - 8 *But* arranges for its provisions in the summer,  
and gathers its food in the harvest.
  - 9 How long will you sleep, O lazy one?  
When will you arise from your sleep?
  - 10 *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to sleep,
  - 11 So your poverty will come like a traveller,  
and your scarcity like an armed man.
  - 12 A worthless person, a wicked man,  
walks about with a perverse mouth.
  - 13 He winks with his eyes,  
he speaks with his feet,  
he teaches with his fingers.
  - 14 Perversity *is* in his heart.  
He plots evil continually.  
He sows discord.
  - 15 Therefore his calamity will come suddenly.  
Suddenly he will be broken without remedy.
  - 16 These six *things* the LORD hates,  
yes, seven *are* an abomination to him:
  - 17 A proud look, a lying tongue,  
and hands that shed innocent blood,
  - 18 A heart that devises wicked schemes,  
feet that are swift in running to evil,
  - 19 A false witness *who* speaks lies,  
and he who sows discord among brethren.

- 20 My son, keep your father's command,  
and do not forsake the law of your mother.
- 21 Bind them continually on your heart,  
and tie them about your neck.
- 22 When you go about, it will lead you.  
When you sleep, it will keep you,  
and *when* you wake up, it will talk with you.
- 23 For the command *is* a lamp,  
and the law *is* light, and the rebukes of  
instruction *are* the way of life,
- 24 To keep you from the evil woman,  
from the flattery of the tongue of a  
strange woman.
- 25 Do not lust in your heart for her beauty,  
nor let her take you with her eyelids.
- 26 For through a prostitute *a man is*  
*brought* to a piece of bread,  
and the adulteress will hunt for the  
precious life.
- 27 Can a man take fire to his chest,  
and his clothes not be burned?
- 28 Can one go on hot coals,  
and his feet not be burned?
- 29 So *is* he who goes in to his neighbor's wife.  
Whoever touches her will not be free  
from punishment.
- 30 *People* do not despise a thief,  
if he steals to satisfy his soul when he  
is hungry;
- 31 But *if* he is found out, he must restore  
sevenfold, *even though* he must give  
all the resources of his house.
- 32 *But* whoever commits adultery with a  
woman lacks understanding.  
He *who* does it destroys his own soul.
- 33 A wound and dishonour *is what* he will get,

is a foolish thing to do (17:18), and could result in complete poverty (11:15; 22:26,27), and bondage. Striking hands was a sign of agreement.

**6:6-11** There is much about laziness in Proverbs. We learn the character of the lazy man and the results of his laziness. See 10:26; 13:4; 15:19; 19:24; 20:4; 22:13; 24:30-34; 26:13-16. Even small and insignificant creatures like ants have more sense than the lazy man (v 6).

**6:12-15** This particular kind of scoundrel tries to destroy others by hypocrisy, deceitfulness and plots. His end will be in accordance with perfect justice. Note at Ps 18:25,26.

**6:16-19** Let us write these words on our hearts and read them there daily. It is a terrible folly to practice what is detestable to God, or to love what He hates.

**6:17** "Proud" - Ps 10:4,5; 18:27; 101:5; Isa 2:10-17; 13:11.

"Lying" - see 12:22; 19:22; Ps 58:3; 62:4; 63:11; 101:7; John 8:44; Col 3:9; Rev 21:8. A very common sin and

very detestable to the God of truth (Ps 31:5) who is the only God there is.

"Blood" - Deut 19:10; Prov 1:16; Isa 1:21; 59:7.

**6:18** "Heart" - 24:2; Isa 32:6; 65:2; Gen 6:5. "Feet" - 1:16; Isa 59:7; Rom 3:15.

**6:19** "Lies" - 12:17,18; 25:18; Ex 20:16. God hates seven things and two of them are telling lies. So emphatically is lying condemned in the Bible.

"Discord" - 15:18; Zech 8:17; 1 Cor 3:3; Gal 5:19,20; Phil 2:2; Ps 133:1. **6:20** 1:8; 3:21.

**6:21** 6:8; 3:3; 7:1-3; Deut 6:8.

**6:22** 4:11.

**6:23** 10:17; Ps 19:8; 119:105.

**6:24-35** See 5:9-21.

**6:25** "Lust" - Ex 20:17; Matt 5:28; 2 Pet 1:4.

**6:26** 5:10; 7:22,23.

**6:32** 7:7; 9:4,16; 1 Cor 6:18. An adulterer breaks the law of God, rushes into danger of disgrace and punishment by both man and God, and sins against his own body, all for a brief passing pleasure. Is he not a fool?

and his disgrace will not be wiped away.

- 34 For jealousy *is* the rage of a man;  
therefore he will not spare in the day  
of vengeance.  
35 He will not show regard for any compensation,  
nor will he rest content, though you  
give many gifts.

**7** My son, keep my words, and store up  
my command with you.

- 2 Keep my command and live,  
and *keep* my teaching as the apple of  
your eye.  
3 Bind them on your fingers.  
Write them on the tablet of your heart.  
4 Say to wisdom, "You *are* my sister",  
and call understanding *your* relative,  
5 That they may keep you from the adulteress,  
from the stranger *who* flatters with her  
words.  
6 For at the window of my house  
I looked out through my lattice,  
7 And I saw among the simple ones,  
I discerned among the youths, a young  
man lacking understanding,  
8 Passing through the street near her corner;  
and he went along the way to her house,  
9 In the twilight, in the evening,  
in the black and dark night.  
10 And then a woman met him, dressed *like*  
a prostitute,  
and with a cunning heart.  
11 (She *is* loud and stubborn.  
Her feet do not stay in her house;  
12 Now *she is* in the *public square*,  
now in the streets,  
and lurks at every corner.)  
13 So she took hold of him,  
and kissed him,  
*and* with a brazen face said to him,  
14 "I *have* peace offerings with me.  
Today I have paid my vows.  
15 Therefore I came out to meet you,

to seek your face earnestly;  
and I have found you.

- 16 I have spread my bed with coverings,  
with coloured linen from Egypt.  
17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,  
aloes, and cinnamon.  
18 Come, let us take our fill of love until  
the morning.  
Let us delight ourselves with love.  
19 For the man *is* not at home,  
he has gone on a long journey.  
20 He has taken a bag of money with him,  
*and* will come home on the appointed  
day."  
21 With her great persuasiveness she  
enticed him,  
with her flattering lips she drew him on.  
22 Suddenly he goes after her,  
as an ox goes to the slaughter,  
or like a fool to the correction of the stocks,  
23 Till an arrow pierces through his liver,  
like a bird hurrying into the snare,  
and does not know that it *is*  
*at the risk of* his life.  
24 Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children,  
and be attentive to the words of my mouth.  
25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways.  
Do not go astray in her paths.  
26 For many are the wounded she has  
thrown down;  
yes, many strong *men* have been killed by her.  
27 Her house *is* the way to the realm of the dead,  
going down to the chambers of death.

- 8** Does not wisdom call out,  
and understanding raise her voice?  
2 She stands on the top of heights,  
beside the way where the paths meet.  
3 She cries out at the gates,  
at the entrance of the city,  
at the entry of the doors:  
4 "To you, O men, I call, and my voice  
*is* to the sons of men.

**7:1-4** 1:8; 3:3; 4:4; 6:21; Deut 6:8; 32:47.  
**7:5-27** 5:9-21; 6:24-35.

**7:5** 2:16; 6:24.

**7:7** 1:22; 6:32.

**7:14** Those who give themselves to the deadly sin of adultery may try to give offerings to God. Prostitutes sometimes profess to be pious, and rascals are often religious (Rom 2:21-24).

**7:14-21** Sin appears in beautiful colors to deceive the unwary and the foolish.

**7:22,23** 5:11,14,22,23; 6:26-29.

**7:26** Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands, but who can number the countless victims of adultery?

**7:27** 2:18; 5:5; 1 Tim 5:6.

"Realm of the dead" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – see Gen 37:35.

**8:1-3** Job 28:12; Prov 1:20,21. Solomon here emphasizes the availability of wisdom to all who will seek for it. It is not remote and unattainable.

"On the top the heights" – where all can see and hear.

"Where the paths meet" – where changes of direction are possible and decisions must be made.

"At the gates" – where city leaders met for discussion and making judgments.

**8:4-11** Several important things are said

- 5 O you simple *ones*, obtain wisdom!  
And you fools, obtain an understanding heart!
- 6 Listen, for I will speak of excellent things,  
and right things *will come from* the  
opening of my lips.
- 7 For my mouth will speak truth,  
and wickedness *is* an abomination to my lips.
- 8 All the words of my mouth *are* in  
righteousness.  
*There is* nothing crooked or perverse in them.
- 9 They *are* all plain to the one who understands,  
and right to those who find knowledge.
- 10 "Receive my instruction, and not silver;  
and knowledge rather than choice gold.
- 11 For wisdom *is* better than rubies,  
and all the things that may be desired  
are not to be compared with it.
- 12 I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,  
and am the discoverer of knowledge  
and discretion.
- 13 "The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil.  
I hate pride and arrogance and the  
evil way and the perverse mouth.
- 14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound judgment.  
I *am* understanding. I have strength.

- 15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.
- 16 By me rulers govern, and nobles,  
all who judge righteously.
- 17 I love those who love me,  
and those who search for me will find me.
- 18 Riches and honour *are* with me,  
*yes*, lasting riches and righteousness.
- 19 My fruit *is* better than gold, *yes*,  
than fine gold;  
and my revenue *is better* than choice silver.
- 20 I lead in the way of righteousness,  
in the midst of the paths of justice,
- 21 That I may bestow riches on those  
who love me;  
and I will fill their treasuries.
- 22 "The LORD possessed me in the  
beginning of his way,  
before his works of old.
- 23 I was established from everlasting,  
from the beginning, before the earth was.
- 24 When *there were* no depths,  
I was brought forth,  
when *there were* no springs abounding  
with water.
- 25 Before the mountains were settled,  
before the hills, I was brought forth,
- 26 While he still had not made the earth,

about wisdom here. It can be gained by anyone, even by the simple and foolish (vs 4,5). Wisdom is related to the right, the true, the holy, the just (vs 6-9), and everything contrary to these is foolishness. Wisdom is more precious than any material possession a man may gain (vs 10,11).

In the Bible the way to gain wisdom is to turn from evil to God, meditate on His Word, obey His instructions, and seek Him for it (Jam 1:5-8). The believer in Christ is at the source of all true wisdom, and no one else in the world is. For Christ is the wisdom of God, and He is in believers, and He is made to them wisdom, and they are complete in Him (1 Cor 1:24,30; Col 2:3,8-10). They who believe Christ and know Christ have the true enlightenment, the true wisdom of God. What they need to do is to look to Christ, yield to Christ, and learn from Christ. They who are now unbelievers can also obtain true wisdom if they will humble themselves, repent, turn to God and believe in the Lord Jesus.

**8:12-21** Further facts about the nature and fruits of wisdom. Wisdom is not some philosophical speculation or impractical thing dealing with matters which do not concern our daily lives. Wisdom is closely related to an understanding of how to behave in this real world (vs 12-16). Wisdom (as all lovers do) will rush to the one who loves it (v 17). Wisdom sometimes may lead to material wealth (vs 18,21), but gives something far better than such wealth (vs 19,20). They

who have true wisdom will lay up treasures in heaven, not on this earth (Matt 6:19-21).

**8:13** See notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10. Wisdom hates evil, pride, and crookedness because God hates them, and because they ruin and destroy men.

**8:15,16** If kings, leaders, and others in authority do not have God-given wisdom they will be bad rulers. So king Solomon prayed for wisdom above everything else (1 Kings 3:7-9; 2 Chron 1:8-10).

**8:17** "Find" – Matt 7:7-11; Jam 1:5-8. Should we not seek earnestly for something so valuable when it is attainable?

**8:22** "The LORD possessed me" – or "the LORD brought me forth."

**8:22-31** Wisdom speaks as if it were a person, as it does also in 1:20-33; 3:15-18; 9:1-12. Some scholars think Christ is meant here, other scholars think that Solomon is speaking in poetic language of an attribute of God. It is not right to be dogmatic about doubtful things, but it certainly seems possible that Christ is meant. In 1 Cor 1:24 Christ is called the wisdom of God, and we are told that all creation was made through Him (John 1:3,10; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:8).

**8:23-26** Micah 5:2; John 1:1. Christ is eternal. Wisdom, as an attribute of God, is also eternal. There was never a moment when God did not have wisdom. Therefore the expression translated "I was brought forth" (v 24) cannot be taken to mean

- or the fields,  
or the first dust of the world.
- 27 When he prepared the heavens,  
I *was* there.  
When he drew a circle on the face of  
the deep,
- 28 When he established the clouds above,  
when he firmly set the springs of the deep,
- 29 When he appointed to the sea its  
boundary, that the waters would not  
pass over his command,  
when he marked out the foundations  
of the earth,
- 30 Then I was beside him, *as* one brought  
up *with him*,  
and I was daily *his* delight,  
rejoicing always in his presence,
- 31 Rejoicing in the inhabited world, his earth,  
and my delight *was* in the sons of men.
- 32 Now, therefore, listen to me, you children!  
For blessed *are those who* keep my ways.
- 33 Listen to instruction, and be wise,  
and do not refuse it.
- 34 Blessed *is* the man who hears me,  
watching daily at my gates,  
waiting at the posts of my doors.
- 35 For whoever finds me finds life,  
and will obtain favour from the LORD.
- 36 But he who sins against me harms his  
own soul.

literally came into existence.

**8:27-31** All of God's works were created with the utmost skill and wisdom (Gen 1:9,12,18,25,31; Ps 104:24; 136:5), and they were all a reason for great rejoicing. In Job 38:4-38 we see God describing His works with joy. All was good – until man fell into sin and brought grief to God's heart (Gen 6:5-7).

**8:32-36** Wisdom is still speaking and saying that men may, and should, partake of God's wisdom. Man was made in the image of God, and men are capable of great things if they will gain wisdom.

**8:32** "Blessed" – notes at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1,2.

**8:34** Gaining wisdom is not a once and for all event but a continuing process.

**8:35** 9:6.

**8:36** "Harms his own soul" – 15:32; Isa 3:9; 2 Pet 2:1. Ignorance will keep us from Christ, from spiritual life, from God's blessings, from heaven itself (Eph 4:18). So it is a great destroyer of people. They who hate wisdom are hating heaven and God's blessing and Christ who is the wisdom of God, and such people really love only death. Hating God's wisdom is spiritual suicide.

**9:1** This chapter gives the great contrast between wisdom and folly. Both have prepared something for men, both call out the

All those who hate me love death."

- 9 Wisdom has built her house;  
she has hewn out its seven pillars.
- 2 She has slaughtered her animals;  
she has mixed her wine;  
she has also set her table.
- 3 She has sent out her maidens.  
She calls out on the highest places of  
the city:
- 4 "Whoever *is* simple, let him turn in here!"  
*As for the one* who lacks understanding,  
she says to him:
- 5 "Come, eat my bread, and drink the  
wine *which* I have mixed.
- 6 Forsake folly, and live,  
and go in the way of understanding."
- 7 He who corrects a scorner gets  
contempt for himself,  
and he who rebukes a wicked *man gets*  
an insult for himself.
- 8 Do not rebuke a scorner, lest he hate you.  
Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.
- 9 Give *instruction* to a wise *man*,  
and he will be even wiser.  
Teach a just *man*, and he will increase  
in learning.
- 10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning  
of wisdom,  
and the knowledge of the holy *is*

same invitation (vs 4,16). But the one calls to life, to understanding, and to righteousness. The other calls to sin and death. Both call from the highest point of the city where all can see and hear them. Every person will answer the call of one or the other of these. Wisdom's house with its seven pillars is large and perfect (seven is the Biblical number of perfection and completeness). Folly's house is just a house (v 14) – no perfection, no completeness will ever be found there, unless it be the completeness of utter foolishness.

**9:2** Luke 14:16-23.

**9:3** 1:20; 8:1-3.

**9:4-6** This calling to the simple means that the way is open for them to become wise. And life, eternal spiritual life, comes to those who abandon their ignorant ways and receive Christ the wisdom of God.

**9:7** 23:9; Matt 7:6.

**9:8** Willingness or unwillingness to take a rebuke reveals something of a man's character. The wise man, unlike the foolish mocker, knows a rebuke is for his correction, for his good (Ps 141:5).

**9:9** 1:5; 12:15; 13:10; 14:6; 15:31; 19:25.

**9:10** "Fear" – 1:7.

"The holy" – or, "the Holy One." What men need above all is the knowledge of the holy God – not a theoretical knowledge, but



understanding.

- 11 For by me your days will be multiplied,  
and the years of your life will be increased.
- 12 If you are wise, you will be wise for  
your *benefit*,  
but *if* you scorn, you alone will bear *it*.
- 13 The woman Folly *is* loud.  
*She is* a simpleton, and knows nothing.
- 14 And she sits at the door of her house,  
on a seat on the heights of the city,
- 15 To call to those who pass by,  
going straight on their ways:
- 16 "Whoever *is* simple, let him turn in here!"  
And *as* for the one who lacks  
understanding, she says to him:
- 17 "Stolen water is sweet,  
and bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant."
- 18 But he does not know that the dead *are* there,  
and *that* her guests *go* to the depths of hell.

**10** The proverbs of Solomon.  
A wise son makes a glad father,  
but a foolish son *is* the heaviness of  
his mother.

the knowledge that comes from experiencing God. This is eternal life (John 17:3), and this is the only way to a holy life. Note on "holy" at Lev 20:7.

**9:11** This was an Old Testament promise often repeated to those who feared God (Deut 5:16; 11:9,21; Prov 3:2; 10:27). It is not much emphasized in this New Testament age when to depart and be with Christ is often the longing of believers (Phil 1:21-24). But in any age the fear of the Lord will lead to clean, disciplined living which will tend to produce longer life than self-indulgence and sinful ways will do.

**9:12** "Benefit" – 3:16-18; 4:22; 8:35; 14:14.

"Scorn" – wisdom will scorn those who scorn her (1:22,26) and God will act toward them as they deserve (Ps 18:25,26; Gal 6:7).

**9:13-16** "Loud" – 7:11. Foolishness will always make more noise than wisdom, and can make a great show to attract people to her. To deceive people she uses some of the same words wisdom uses.

**9:17** Compare 9:2,5. Wisdom has food of her own. Folly must steal it. Wisdom wants people to leave their foolish ways (v 6). Folly wants them to plunge further into them by sins done in secret. She does not give them the truth of 20:17.

**9:18** 2:18; 7:26,27; Rom 6:23. By nature we are all the "guests" of folly (Titus 3:3; Eph 2:3; Rom 3:9). If we have escaped from its house to wisdom's palace it is all because of God's grace.

"Hell" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – Gen 37:35. **10:1** 15:20; 17:21; 19:13; 23:22-25; 27:11; 29:3.

- 2 Treasures wickedly obtained profit nothing,  
but righteousness delivers from death.
- 3 The LORD will not let the righteous go hungry,  
but he thrusts aside the craving of the  
wicked.
- 4 He who works *with* a slack hand becomes poor,  
but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
- 5 He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son,  
*but* he who sleeps in harvest *is* a son  
who causes shame.
- 6 Blessings *are* on the head of the just,  
but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.
- 7 The remembrance of the just *is* blessed,  
but the name of the wicked will rot.
- 8 The wise in heart will accept commands,  
but a chattering fool will fall.
- 9 He who walks uprightly walks securely,  
but he who perverts his ways will be found out.
- 10 He who winks the eye causes trouble,  
and a chattering fool will fall.
- 11 The mouth of a righteous person *is* a  
fountain of life,  
but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.
- 12 Hatred stirs up strife,

**10:2** "Profit nothing" – 21:6; Ps 49:10-12; Eccl 5:15; 1 Tim 6:6-9.

"Delivers" – v 16; 11:4,19; 12:28. The righteousness of Christ freely given by God to all who trust in Him delivers from eternal death (Rom 3:22; 5:21; 2 Cor 5:21; etc).

**10:3** "Righteous" – Ps 37:19,25; 111:5; Matt 6:25-27.

"Wicked" – 13:25; Num 11:33,34; Ps 112:10.

**10:4** "Slack hand" – 6:6-11.

"Diligent" – 12:24; 21:5.

**10:6** "Blessings" – Ps 1:1.

**10:7** "Remembrance" – Ps 112:6; Phil 1:3,4; 2 Tim 1:4,5; Hebrews chapter 11; 13:7.

"Rot" – Gen 17:4; Job 18:17; Ps 9:6; 34:16.

**10:8** "Commands" – 9:8,9; Deut 4:5,6. The wise know something of the value of God's commands and will keep them especially.

**10:9** "Securely" – 2:7; Gen 15:1; Ps 7:10; 37:23,24; Ps 91.

"Found out" – Num 32:23; Matt 10:26; 2 Tim 3:9.

**10:10** "Winks" – 6:13; Ps 35:19.

**10:11** "Life" – vs 20,21; 3:18; 11:30; 13:14. The righteous teach others the way of the good life here on earth and eternal life with God hereafter.

**10:12** "Strife" – 6:14,19.

"Covers" – Jam 5:20; 1 Pet 4:8. Love will lead the sinner to God who covers and forgives his sin (note at Ps 32:1). Also love will not want to expose the sins of others unless there is a very good reason for doing so. Sometimes when the word of God is hindered or God's people endangered it must be done (compare Joshua chapter 7;

- but love covers all sins.
- 13 In the lips of him who has understanding wisdom is found, but a rod *is* for the back of him who lacks understanding.
- 14 Wise *men* store up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish *is* near destruction.
- 15 The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city; the ruin of the poor *is* their poverty.
- 16 The labour of the righteous *tends* to life; the fruit of the wicked to sin.
- 17 He who heeds instruction *is in* the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray.
- 18 He who hides hatred *with* lying lips, and he who utters a slander, *is* a fool.
- 19 In the multitude of words sin *is* not lacking, but he who refrains his lips *is* wise.
- 20 The tongue of the just *is like* choice silver; the heart of the wicked *is of* little worth.
- 21 The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.
- 22 The blessing of the LORD is what makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.
- 23 Doing evil *is* like sport to a fool, but a man of understanding has wisdom.
- 24 What the wicked fear will come on him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted.
- 25 When the whirlwind passes, the wicked *is* no *more*; but the righteous *has* an everlasting foundation.
- 26 Like vinegar to the teeth,

and like smoke to the eyes,  
*so is* the lazy one to those who send him.

- 27 The fear of the LORD prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened.
- 28 The hope of the righteous *will be* joy, but the expectation of the wicked will perish.
- 29 The way of the LORD *is* a stronghold to the upright, but destruction to evildoers.
- 30 The righteous will never be shaken, but the wicked will not inhabit the earth.
- 31 The mouth of the just brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut out.
- 32 The lips of the righteous know what is suitable, but the mouth of the wicked *speaks* perversity.

- 11** A false balance *is* abomination to the LORD, but a just weight *is* his delight.
- 2 *When* pride comes, then comes shame; but with the lowly *is* wisdom.
- 3 The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perverseness of transgressors will destroy them.
- 4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.
- 5 The righteousness of the blameless will direct his way, but the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.
- 6 The righteousness of the upright will rescue them, but transgressors will be caught in *their own* greed.

Acts 5:1-11; 2 Cor 11:13; 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 1:15; 4:14,15).

**10:13** "Rod" – 14:3; 19:29; 26:3; Deut 25:2.

**10:14** "Store up" – Luke 6:45. A wise man will want to learn all he can about everything – except, of course, the experience of sinning (1 Cor 14:20).

**10:15** Wealth brings a certain amount of worldly power which the poor cannot have (18:23; 22:7). But they should recognize that real security depends on God alone (18:2; Ps 52:1-7).

**10:16** See 11:18,19; Deut 30:15,16; 32:46,47; Rom 6:23.

**10:17** 6:23; 15:5; Heb 12:5-11. Because we are sinful by nature and ignorant of God's holy ways, correction and discipline are very important. We ignore them to our peril.

**10:18** Ps 31:18.

**10:19** Jam 1:19; 3:2-12.

**10:22** Gen 24:34,35; Ps 1:3; 128:1,2; Matt 6:19-21.

**10:23** 2:14; 15:21; Eph 4:19; Phil 3:19; 2 Thess 2:12.

**10:24** "Fear" – Isa 66:4; Ezek 11:8. Whatever, in their more rational moments, they fear regarding God's punishment for their

deeds will come on them and more besides.

"Desire" Ps 37:4; 145:17-19; Matt 7:7-11; John 15:7.

**10:25** "Wicked" – 12:7; Ps 37:10,35,36; Matt 7:24-27.

**10:26** 26:6.

**10:27** Verse 11; 9:10,11; Deut 11:9.

**10:28** 11:7; Job 8:13; Ps 112:10.

**10:29** So we should earnestly pray the prayers of Ps 25:4,5; 27:11; 119:12.

**10:30** Ps 37:9,28,29.

**10:31** Verse 13; 15:2; Ps 52:2-5.

**10:32** 2:12; Eccl 10:12; Ps 59:7.

**11:1** Lev 19:35,36; Deut 25:13-16; Amos 8:5; Micah 6:11. Any kind of dishonesty or crookedness is an abomination to God.

**11:2** 3:34; 16:18; 18:12; 29:23; Jam 4:6.

**11:3** Verse 5. A person who is upright and has unmixed motives, and wants to walk in the right path, will be able to know what the right path is. The wicked will fall into the trap he has made for others (5:22; Ps 9:16).

**11:4** "Riches" – Ps 49:5-15; Rev 6:15-17; 18:9-17.

"Day of wrath" – Rom 2:5.

"Righteousness" – 10:2.

**11:6** Greed brings people into the bondage

- 7 When a wicked man dies,  
his expectation perishes,  
and the hope of unjust *men also* perishes.
- 8 The righteous is rescued from trouble,  
and the wicked meets it instead.
- 9 A hypocrite with *his* mouth destroys  
his neighbour,  
but through knowledge the just will be rescued.
- 10 When it goes well with the righteous,  
the city rejoices;  
and when the wicked perish,  
there is joyful shouting.
- 11 By the blessing of the upright the city  
is exalted,  
but it is overthrown by the mouth of  
the wicked.
- 12 He who lacks wisdom despises his neighbour,  
but a man of understanding keeps silent.
- 13 A talebearer reveals secrets,  
but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.
- 14 Where there *is* no counsel,  
the people fall;  
but *having* many counsellors *promotes* safety.
- 15 He who puts up security for a stranger  
will suffer *for it*,  
but he who hates putting up security is safe.
- 16 A gracious woman wins honour;  
and strong *men* gain riches.
- 17 The merciful man does good to his own soul,  
but *he who is* cruel brings harm on himself.
- 18 The wicked earns deceitful wages,  
but to him who sows righteousness *will*  
come a sure reward.
- 19 As righteousness *tends* to life,  
so he who pursues evil *pursues it* to

- his own death.
- 20 Those who are of a perverse heart  
*are* abomination to the LORD,  
but *those who are* upright in *their* way  
*are* his delight.
- 21 *Though* hand *join* in hand, the wicked  
will not be unpunished,  
but the offspring of the righteous will  
be rescued.
- 22 *Like* a gold jewel in a pig's snout,  
*is* a beautiful woman who is without  
discretion.
- 23 The desire of the righteous *ends* only in good,  
*but* the expectation of the wicked in wrath.
- 24 There is that which scatters,  
and yet increases;  
and *there is* that which withholds  
more than is right,  
but it *results* in poverty.
- 25 The generous soul will be made prosperous,  
and he who waters will also be watered himself.
- 26 The people will curse the one who  
withholds grain,  
but blessing *will be* on the head of the  
one who sells *it*.
- 27 He who diligently seeks good gains favour,  
but he who searches for evil,  
will *have* it come to him.
- 28 He who trusts in his riches will fall,  
but the righteous will flourish like a branch.
- 29 He who troubles his own house will  
inherit the wind,  
and the fool *will be* servant to the wise  
of heart.
- 30 The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life,

of sin (John 8:34; Rom 6:16; Jam 1:14,15).  
**11:7** 10:28; 11:23. Though there may be  
riches, fame, and pleasure in a wicked life,  
it is a vain and empty life which comes to  
nothing.  
**11:8** An example of this is found in Esther  
5:14; 7:10.  
**11:9** Slander is a very evil thing. It is an  
attempt to destroy the name, reputation, and  
usefulness of another person (Ps 101:5).  
**11:10** 28:12; 29:2; 2 Kings 11:20; Isa  
30:32; Nahum 3:19; Rev 19:1-4.  
**11:11** 14:34; 29:8.  
**11:12** 14:21; Matt 22:37-40; Rom 13:9;  
Jam 2:8.  
**11:13** 20:19.  
**11:14** 2 Sam 15:34; 16:23; Prov 15:22;  
20:18; 24:6.  
**11:15** Note at 6:1-5.  
**11:16** Respect is better than wealth – 22:1.  
**11:17** 14:14; Matt 5:7; Luke 6:37,38;  
Gal 6:7-10.  
**11:18** Ps 126:5,6; 1 Cor 15:58; Heb 6:10.  
**11:19** Deut 30:15-18; Ezek 18:30-32;

Rom 5:17.  
**11:20** "Abomination" – 3:32; 6:16-19.  
"Delight" – 12:22; 15:8; Ps 16:3; Jer  
9:24. The wise person will try to do those things  
that God delights in, not the things He hates.  
**11:21** "Not be unpunished" – Lev 26:18,24;  
Isa 13:11; 26:20,21; Hos 4:9; Matt  
25:46; 2 Thess 1:9; Heb 10:29.  
**11:23** "Good" – Rom 8:28.  
"Wrath" – Rom 2:8,9.  
**11:24,25** 22:9; Mal 3:10; Matt 7:2; Luke  
6:38; 2 Cor 9:6-11. Here is a principle we  
should never forget. Why should God give  
His blessings to us if we will not give any-  
thing to Him and to others? Note and  
references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.  
**11:28** "Fall" – Ps 52:5-7; 62:10; Jer 9:23;  
Luke 16:19,22,23; Jam 5:1-3.  
"Flourish" – Ps 1:3; 52:8; 92:12-14.  
**11:30** "Tree of life" – 3:18; Gen 2:9; 3:24;  
Rev 2:7. Through the efforts of God's  
righteous people others are brought to God  
and receive eternal life through Christ.  
"Wise" – Dan 12:3; Jam 5:20. Here is

and he who wins souls *is* wise.

- 31 See *that if* the righteous get their due on the earth,  
much more the wicked and the sinner.

**12** Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge,  
but he who hates correction *is* stupid.

- 2 A good *man* obtains favour from the LORD,  
but he will condemn a man who devises evil.  
3 A man will not be established by wickedness,  
but the root of the righteous will not be shaken.  
4 A virtuous woman *is* a crown to her husband,  
but she who makes *him* ashamed *is*  
like rottenness in his bones.  
5 The thoughts of the righteous *are* right,  
*but* the counsels of the wicked *are* deceitful.  
6 The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood,  
but the mouth of the upright will rescue them.  
7 The wicked are overthrown,  
and *are no more*,  
but the house of the righteous will stand.  
8 A man will be commended according to  
his wisdom,  
but he who has a perverse heart will be despised.  
9 *He who is* despised and has a servant  
*is* better off than he who honours  
himself and lacks bread.  
10 A righteous *man* has regard for the  
life of his beast,  
but the tender mercies of the wicked  
*are* cruel.  
11 He who tills his land will have an  
abundance of bread,

but he who follows vain *things* lacks  
understanding.

- 12 The wicked desires the plunder of evil *men*,  
but the root of the righteous yields *fruit*.  
13 The wicked is ensnared by the  
transgression of *his* lips,  
but the just will come out of trouble.  
14 A man will be satisfied with good by  
the fruit of *his* mouth,  
and the reward of a man's hands will  
be given to him.  
15 The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes,  
but he who listens to counsel *is* wise.  
16 A fool's wrath becomes known at once,  
but a prudent *man* conceals dishonour.  
17 *He who* speaks truth declares what is right,  
but a false witness deceit.  
18 There is speaking that pierces like a sword,  
but the tongue of the wise *brings* health.  
19 The truthful lip will be established for ever,  
but a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.  
20 Deceit *is* in the heart of those who plan evil,  
but joy *is in* the counsellors of peace.  
21 No harm happens to the just,  
but the wicked will be filled with trouble.  
22 Lying lips *are* detestable to the LORD,  
but they who deal truly *are* his delight.  
23 A prudent man conceals knowledge,  
but the heart of fools proclaims foolishness.  
24 The hand of the diligent will rule,  
but the lazy will be under forced labour.  
25 Anxiety in the heart of man weighs it down,  
but a good word makes it glad.  
26 The righteous finds *the best way* for  
his neighbour,

a part of wisdom that many seem to be ignorant of.

**11:31** Jer 25:29; 1 Pet 4:18.

**12:1** "Correction" – 6:23; 10:17; Ps 119:67,71. By God's training we learn more of Him, more of ourselves, more of the proper way to behave.

"Stupid" – 1:7; 5:11-14; 15:5,10,12,32.

He is stupid because he is rejecting the way to the knowledge he needs most.

**12:3** See 10:25.

**12:4** 31:10-12.

**12:5,6** So we can tell the difference between the righteous and wicked by their words and plans. We should never take the advice of a wicked person (Ps 1:1,2).

**12:10** 27:23; Deut 25:4. A good man will be kind to man or beast; a wicked person doesn't even know what true kindness is and there will be a mixture of evil in even his best acts.

**12:13** 1:18; 18:7; 29:6; Ps 59:12.

**12:14** Everything a righteous man does will be rewarded – 14:14; Ps 1:3; Matt 10:42.

**12:15** "Right" – 14:12; 16:2,25. This is a tragedy. Fools do not think they need God's light or wisdom or advice. They are

separated from God by their proud ignorance (Eph 4:18). How things would change if only they would earnestly pray David's prayer in Ps 25:4,5!

**12:16** The quality praised here is self-control – 29:11.

**12:18** "Sword" – Ps 55:21; 57:4; 59:7; 64:3.

"Health" – the wise can speak the comforting, healing Word of God to those with wounded hearts.

**12:19** God is a God of truth (Ps 31:5). He will see to it that truth will prevail. Lovers of God's truth will dwell with God forever (Ps 15:1,2). Liars will have their part in the lake of fire (Rev 21:8).

**12:21** "Harm" – 1:33; Ps 91:9-12; 121:7,8; Rom 8:28; Gen 50:20.

**12:22** "Abomination" – 6:16,17. There can be few things the God of truth hates more than lying. Mark it down. Write it on the tablets of your heart. Above all things get truth implanted in your inner man (Ps 51:6), and speak it from the heart (Ps 15:2; Eph 4:15).

**12:24** Note at 6:6-11.

**12:25** 15:13; Ps 94:19; Phil 4:6,7.

- but the way of the wicked seduces them.  
 27 The lazy *man* does not roast what he gets in hunting,  
 but the possessions of a diligent man *are* precious.  
 28 In the way of righteousness *is* life,  
 and in *its* pathway *there is* no death.

- 13** A wise son *listens to* his father's instruction,  
 but a scorner does not listen to rebuke.  
 2 A man will enjoy good by the fruit of *his* mouth,  
 but the soul of transgressors *feeds* on violence.  
 3 He who keeps his mouth keeps his life,  
 but he who opens wide his lips will come to ruin.  
 4 The soul of the lazy man desires but  
*has* nothing,  
 but the soul of the diligent will prosper.  
 5 A righteous *man* hates lying,  
 but a wicked *man* is loathsome  
 and comes to shame.  
 6 Righteousness keeps *him who is*  
 upright in the way,  
 but wickedness overthrows the sinner.  
 7 There is one who pretends to be rich,  
 yet who *has* nothing;  
*there is* one who pretends to be poor,  
 yet who *has* great riches.  
 8 A man's riches *may be* the ransom for his life,  
 but the poor hears no threat.  
 9 The light of the righteous rejoices,  
 but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.  
 10 Only by pride comes strife,  
 but with the well-advised *is* wisdom.

- 11 Wealth *gotten* by dishonesty will dwindle away,  
 but he who gathers by labour will increase.  
 12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,  
 but the desire fulfilled *is* a tree of life.  
 13 Whoever despises the word will be destroyed,  
 but he who fears the commandment  
 will be rewarded.  
 14 The teaching of the wise *is* a fountain of life,  
 turning *people* aside from the snares of death.  
 15 Good understanding gains favour,  
 but the way of the transgressor *is* hard.  
 16 Every prudent *man* deals with knowledge,  
 but a fool exposes *his* folly.  
 17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble,  
 but a faithful ambassador *brings* health.  
 18 Poverty and shame *will be to* him who  
 refuses instruction,  
 but he who has regard for correction  
 will be honoured.  
 19 The desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul,  
 but departing from evil *is* an  
 abomination to fools.  
 20 He who walks with wise *men* will become wise,  
 but a companion of fools will be destroyed.  
 21 Trouble pursues sinners,  
 but good will be the reward of the righteous.  
 22 A good *man* leaves an inheritance to  
 his children's children,  
 and the wealth of the sinner *is* stored  
 up for the just.  
 23 Abundant food *is in* the plowed land of  
 the poor,  
 but lack of justice sweeps it away.  
 24 He who does not use his rod hates his son,

**12:27** "Roast" – the meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain.

**12:28** 10:2; Deut 30:15. Eternal life and justification (God's counting men righteous when they believe Him) are intimately connected (Rom 5:18).

**13:1** 1:8,22; 4:1; 9:7,8; 12:1.

**13:2** 12:14.

**13:3** 10:6; 18:7,20,21; 21:23; Matt 12:36,37.

**13:4** Note at 6:6-11.

**13:7** Either sort of pretense, indeed all deception whatever the kind, is wrong and foolish.

**13:8** If the rich get into troubles and dangers, sometimes they can save themselves by paying money.

**13:9** "Light" – Matt 5:14-16; Eph 5:8.

"Lamp" – 20:20; 24:20.

**13:10** "Strife" – how much division among brethren, how many church disputes are caused by nothing but pride.

**13:12** "Life" – v 19. He means a proper, righteous desire. The fulfillment of it brings a revival of hope and strength.

**13:13** "Despises" – v 18; 1:29-31; Num

15:31-36.

"Rewarded" – Ps 19:11.

**13:14** 10:11; 14:27. Such teaching will guide others to God Himself the giver of eternal life, and will produce the fear of the Lord.

**13:15** The last sentence of this verse may also be translated "but the unfaithful does not endure." See note on the Hebrew language at Ps 14:7.

**13:19** Evil is all that fools know or desire. It is their life. Leaving it is the hardest thing they can imagine. Notes on fools at 1:7; Ps 14:1.

**13:20** How careful, then, we should be in the choice of friends (1:10; 2:12,20; 12:26; 16:29; 22:24,25; 1 Cor 15:33).

**13:21** "Pursues" – Gen 4:7; Num 32:23; Ps 7:14-16.

**13:22** "For the just" – Esther 8:2; Eccl 2:26.

**13:24** Without discipline and correction children often grow up to be spoiled, foolish, self-centered, and ignorant of God's ways of dealing with men. Withholding discipline is the same as hating one's children and wanting them to turn out badly. Those who neglect giving discipline to their children love



but he who loves him disciplines him carefully.  
 25 The righteous eats to his heart's satisfaction,  
 but the stomach of the wicked will be in want.

**14** Every wise woman builds her house,  
 but the foolish pulls it down with her hands.

- 2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD,  
 but *he who is* perverse in his ways despises him.
- 3 In the mouth of the foolish *is* a rod of pride,  
 but the lips of the wise will preserve them.
- 4 Where there *are* no oxen the manger *is* clean,  
 but much increase *comes* by the strength of the ox.
- 5 A faithful witness will not lie,  
 but a false witness will utter lies.
- 6 A scorner seeks wisdom but *does not find it*,  
 but knowledge *is* easy to him who has understanding.
- 7 Leave the presence of a foolish man,  
 when you do not see the lips of knowledge *in him*.
- 8 The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way,  
 but the folly of fools *is* deceit.
- 9 Fools make a mock at sin,  
 but among the righteous *there is* good will.

themselves, not their children. Real love *always* gives discipline – 3:11,12; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:15,17; Heb 12:6. **14:1** "Wise" – 24:3; 31:10-31. Her work edifies the family, builds character in her children, and stability in the home.

"Foolish" – the foolish woman is one who does not know the Lord and has no fear of God. She will contribute to the destruction of the character of her family, though she may vainly imagine she is doing good to it. **14:2** "Fears" – 1:7; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10.

"Despises" – devious and deceitful people may not be conscious of this, but it is still a fact (Rom 8:7).

**14:5** "Lies" – 12:17; Ps 12:2. A stream of lies is all that comes from some people.

**14:6** "Scorner" – 1:22. He will never find wisdom because he refuses the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom.

**14:8** "Deceit" – the fool thinks himself clever and wise to be able to deceive others, little knowing that such behavior is his folly and his ruin.

**14:9** "Mock" – in nothing do they show their foolishness more than in this.

**14:10** 1 Sam 1:7-10; 1 Kings 8:38; Matt 26:38,75; Rom 9:2,3.

**14:12** 12:15; 16:25; Matt 7:13,14,22,23. There is only one way which leads to eternal life and heaven. There are many ways that lead to death and hell. Each of those ways

10 The heart knows its own bitterness,  
 and a stranger does not share its joy.

11 The house of the wicked will be overthrown,  
 but the tent of the upright will flourish.

12 There is a way which seems right to a man,  
 but its end *is* the ways of death.

13 Even in laughter the heart *may be* sorrowful,  
 and the end of that joy *may be* grief.

14 The backslider in heart will be filled  
 with his own ways,  
 and a good man *will find satisfaction* with his.

15 The simple believes every word,  
 but the prudent *man* considers his steps.

16 A wise *person* fears and departs from evil,  
 but the fool confidently rushes ahead.

17 *He who becomes* angry quickly deals foolishly,  
 and a man who devises evil is hated.

18 The simple inherit folly,  
 but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

19 The evil will bow before the good,  
 and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

20 The poor is hated even by his own neighbour,  
 but the rich *has* many friends.

21 He who despises his neighbour sins,  
 but happy *is* he who has mercy on the poor.

22 Do those who devise evil not go astray?  
 But those who plan good *will find* mercy

may seem right to the people taking them, because Satan has deceived them, and they are ignorant of the true way (John 12:35; 2 Cor 4:3,4; 1 John 2:11; Rev 12:9). Did Solomon have one particular false way in mind? If so, it was probably the way of the fool who rejects the fear of the Lord and has no heart to walk in God's way. For this is the way that is the basis of all false ways. **14:14** 1:31; Rev 22:12 – a principle found everywhere in the Bible.

**14:15** If people do not have the wisdom the Bible speaks about they are easily deceived. This accounts for the fact of so much false religion in the world.

**14:16** 8:13; Gen 20:11. This is the highest kind of wisdom.

**14:19** This could mean that evil, wicked men will come to ruin and will need to come to the righteous for help. Or it could mean that God will eventually cause this to happen as in Rev 3:9.

**14:20** 19:4. But how false are those friends who are attracted only by money!

**14:21** "Neighbour" – 11:12; Lev 19:17; 1 John 2:9,11; 3:10,15,16.

"Poor" – v 31; 11:25; 19:17; 22:9; Ex 23:11; Lev 19:10; Ps 41:1. Kindness to the poor is a great virtue in God's sight.

**14:22** "Evil" – 3:29; 6:14,18; Micah 2:1.

"Find" – certainly from God, often from men too. The meaning here might be "show" love and faithfulness. There is no

and truth.

- 23 In all labour there is profit,  
but the talk of the lips *results* only in poverty.
- 24 The crown of the wise *is* their riches,  
but the foolishness of fools *is* folly.
- 25 A true witness rescues souls,  
but a deceitful *witness* speaks lies.
- 26 In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence,  
and his children will have a place of refuge.
- 27 The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life,  
turning *people* aside from  
the snares of death.
- 28 A large population *is* the king's glory,  
but a lack of people *is* the ruin of the prince.
- 29 *He who is* slow to get angry *has* great  
understanding,  
but *he who is* quick-tempered exalts folly.
- 30 A sound heart *is* the life of the body,  
but envy the rottenness of the bones.
- 31 He who oppresses the poor insults his Maker,  
but he who honours him has mercy on  
the needy.
- 32 The wicked is overthrown by his wickedness,  
but the righteous has hope in his death.
- 33 Wisdom rests in the heart of him who  
has understanding,  
but the heart of fools becomes known.
- 34 Righteousness exalts a nation,  
but sin *is* a reproach to any people.
- 35 The king *shows* favour to a wise servant,  
but his wrath *is against* him who causes shame.

verb at all here in Hebrew.

**14:23** Eccl 9:10; 11:6; 1 Thess 4:11;  
2 Thess 3:10-12. In the church also there  
are far too many talkers, too few workers.

**14:25** This is most abundantly true regard-  
ing spiritual matters. A witness to God's  
truth saves people from eternal death.

**14:26** He who fears God does not need to  
fear anything or anyone else.

**14:27** It is a fountain of life because by it a  
person turns from evil deeds and false  
paths.

**14:29** "Slow to get angry" – 15:18; 16:32;  
19:11; Jam 1:19.

**14:30** Our state of mind and desires affect  
the health of the body.

**14:31** Verse 21. God is the Maker of both  
poor and rich – 22:2; Jam 3:9. He who  
oppresses the poor oppresses a part of God's  
creation and thus shows contempt for the  
Creator.

**14:34** 11:11. Israel was exalted when it  
stood for justice and right. It fell to ruin  
when it abandoned them.

**14:35** True too of the King of heaven – Matt  
25:21,26; Luke 19:17,22.

**15:1** Verse 18. Examples at Josh 22:9-30;  
Jud 8:1-3; 1 Kings 12:1-19.

**15:3** 5:21; 2 Chron 16:9; Ps 94:9; Jer  
16:17; 32:19; Heb 4:13.

**15** A gentle answer turns away wrath,  
but harsh words stir up anger.

- 2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge  
rightly,  
but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness.
- 3 The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place,  
seeing the evil and the good.
- 4 A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life,  
but crookedness in it crushes the spirit.
- 5 A fool despises his father's instruction,  
but he who has regard for correction  
*is* prudent.
- 6 In the house of the righteous *is* much  
treasure,  
but in the income of the wicked is trouble.
- 7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge,  
but the heart of the foolish *is* not so.
- 8 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an  
abomination to the LORD,  
but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight.
- 9 The way of the wicked *is* an  
abomination to the LORD,  
but he loves him who follows righteousness.
- 10 Correction *is* grievous to him who  
forsakes the way,  
and he who hates discipline will die.
- 11 Hell and destruction *lie open* before the LORD;  
how much more then the hearts of the  
children of men?

**15:4** 3:18; 10:11; 12:18; 18:21.

**15:5** The fool, unlike the wise, does not  
understand that discipline and correction are  
only for his good.

**15:6** Not all righteous people are rich in  
material things, but the house of every one  
of them will contain spiritual treasures not  
found anywhere else on earth.

**15:8** "Wicked" – Ps 51:17; Isa 1:13; Jer  
6:20,21; Micah 6:6-8. Nothing the wicked  
does, and certainly not his religious acts can  
please God (Rom 8:8). God detests their  
sacrifices, their thoughts (v 26), and their  
prayers (28:9). However, this will not keep  
them from offering them.

"Prayer of the upright" – v 29; Ps 145:18;  
John 9:31. God commands His people to  
pray because prayer is one way He has cho-  
sen to bless them and work in and through  
them. He wants to hear them and commune  
with them. So He is delighted when His  
people, who are living uprightly, pray to Him.

**15:9** "Way" – Ps 1:1,6.

"Righteousness" – 11:20; Deut 7:12,13.

**15:10** Verses 5,12; 1:31,32; 5:23; 12:1.

**15:11** 1 Sam 2:3; 16:7; 2 Chron 6:30;  
Ps 44:21; 139:8; Jer 17:9,10; Heb  
4:13; Rev 2:23.

"Hell and destruction" – in Hebrew  
"Sheol" and "Abaddon."

- 12 A scorner does not love one who corrects him,  
nor will he go to the wise.
- 13 A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance,  
but sorrow of heart crushes the spirit.
- 14 The heart of the one who has  
understanding seeks knowledge,  
but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.
- 15 All the days of the afflicted *are* bad,  
but he who has a merry heart *has* a  
continual feast.
- 16 Better *is* little with the fear of the LORD  
than great treasure and  
trouble with it.
- 17 Better a dinner of vegetables where  
there is love than a fattened ox and  
hatred with it.
- 18 An angry man stirs up strife,  
but *he who is* slow to get angry calms strife.
- 19 The way of the lazy *person* is like a  
hedge of thorns,  
but the way of the upright *is* made plain.
- 20 A wise son makes a glad father,  
but a foolish man despises his mother.
- 21 Folly *is* joy to *him who is* destitute of wisdom,  
but a man of understanding walks uprightly.
- 22 Without counsel plans meet with  
disappointment,  
but with many counsellors they are fulfilled.
- 23 A man has joy by the *proper* answer  
of his mouth,
- and how good *is* a timely word!
- 24 The way of life *leads* upward for the wise,  
that he may keep from  
the realm of the dead below.
- 25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud,  
but he will establish the boundary of the widow.
- 26 The thoughts of the wicked *are* an  
abomination to the LORD,  
but the words of the pure *are* pleasing  
*to him*.
- 27 He who is greedy for profit troubles  
his own house,  
but he who hates bribes will live.
- 28 The heart of the righteous studies to answer,  
but the mouth of the wicked pours out  
evil things.
- 29 The LORD *is* far from the wicked,  
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.
- 30 The light of the eyes rejoices the heart,  
*and* good news brings fat to the bones.
- 31 The ear that listens to the correction  
of life abides among the wise.
- 32 He who refuses instruction despises  
his own soul,  
but he who heeds correction gets  
understanding.
- 33 The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction  
of wisdom,  
and before honour *is* humility.

**15:15** "Feast" – the food of happiness, contentment, satisfaction with God's plan, and peace of mind.

**15:16** 16:8; 17:1; Ps 37:16. The person who truly fears the Lord has the beginning of wisdom, has eternal life, has an inheritance in heaven, has the LORD Himself – far, far better than any material wealth. When will we all thoroughly learn this?

**15:17** "Love" – most true when the love is God's love.

**15:19** Everything seems too difficult to the lazy person and he can accomplish nothing. The upright can always make progress toward the goal. Observe that here the contrast is between the lazy and the upright – signifying that the lazy are not upright and the upright are not lazy.

**15:23** "Word" – 24:26; 25:11; Isa 50:4.

**15:24** Verses 19,21.

"Realm of the dead" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – Gen 37:35.

**15:25** 2:22; 12:7; 14:11; Ps 37:35-38; 127:1; Matt 7:26,27.

**15:26** "Abomination" – everything about wicked persons is detestable to God, though He loves them in the sense that He desires their highest good and would save them and make them His own dear children if they would repent and trust in Christ.

"Pleasing" – the sacrifices, prayers, and thoughts of the righteous are pleasing to God (v 8; Rom 12:1; Heb 13:12,13). The God of the Bible, the only God there is, loves righteousness and hates wickedness.

**15:27** "Greedy" – 1:19; Josh 7:24-26; Col 3:5,6; 1 Tim 6:9,10.

"Bribes" – bribes corrupt people and pervert justice – Deut 16:19; 1 Sam 12:3; Ps 26:10; Eccl 7:7; Isa 33:17. See note at Amos 5:12.

**15:29** "Hears" – v 8; Ps 66:2; 145:18,19; Isa 59:1,2; Jer 33:3; John 9:31.

**15:30** 14:30; 25:25.

**15:31** 1:23; 6:23; 9:7-9; 12:1.

**15:32** "Despises his own soul" – 8:36. Rejecting the way to correct and save oneself from ruin is the same as hating oneself.

**15:33** "Fear" – 1:7. There is no other way to learn wisdom. This is why the unbeliever, the wicked person will never gain it, no matter how much education and learning he may gain. The first sentence of this verse may also be translated "Wisdom teaches the fear of the LORD."

"Humility" – 18:12; 22:4; 25:6,7; 29:23; Isa 66:2; Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; 1 Pet 5:6. This is true of the honor God gives – which is the only honor worth having.

**16** The plans of the heart *belong* to man,  
but the answer of the tongue *is* from  
the LORD.

- 2 All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes,  
but the LORD weighs the spirits.
- 3 Commit your works to the LORD,  
and your thoughts will be established.
- 4 The LORD has made all *things* to  
answer *for his purpose*;  
yes, even the wicked for the day of disaster.
- 5 Everyone *who has* a proud of heart *is* an  
abomination to the LORD;  
*though* hand *join* in hand, he will not  
be unpunished.
- 6 By mercy and truth wickedness *is* atoned for,  
and by the fear of the LORD *people*  
depart from evil.
- 7 When a man's ways please the LORD,  
he makes even his enemies to be at  
peace with him.
- 8 Better *is* a little with righteousness  
than great income without right.
- 9 A man's heart plans his way,

but the LORD directs his steps.

- 10 A divine sentence *is* in the lips of the king;  
his mouth must not transgress in judgment.
- 11 A just weight and balance *are* the LORD's;  
all the weights in the bag *are* his business.
- 12 *It is* an abomination for kings to  
commit wickedness,  
for the throne is established by righteousness.
- 13 Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings,  
and they love him who speaks the right thing.
- 14 The wrath of a king *is like* messengers  
of death,  
but a wise man will pacify it.
- 15 In the light of the king's countenance *is* life,  
and his favour *is* like a cloud of spring rain.
- 16 How much better *it is* to get wisdom than gold!  
And to get understanding *is* to be  
chosen rather than silver!
- 17 The highway of the upright *is* to  
depart from evil;  
he who keeps his way preserves his soul.
- 18 Pride *appears* before destruction,  
and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- 19 *It is* better *to have* a humble spirit  
with the lowly,

**16:1** Verse 9; 19:21; 20:24; Jer 10:23.  
A person plans what he wants to do but with-  
out God's working he cannot even utter  
those plans, let alone fulfill them.

**16:2** "Clean" – 12:15; 14:12; 30:12;  
Jer 17:9. This is one reason why it is so  
difficult to turn people from false ways.

"Spirits" – God sees the inward intentions  
and desires of a man which are the source  
of his actions (20:27; 2 Chron 6:30; 21:2;  
Jer 17:10; Luke 16:15; 1 Cor 4:4,5).

**16:3** 3:5,6; 2 Chron 20:20; Ps 1:3; 20:4;  
37:5,6; 90:17. Only God can give true  
and lasting success, and bring about the  
fulfillment of our plans and hopes. This verse  
makes it clear what we must do to see this.

**16:4** There is no purposeless activity with  
God. He infallibly fulfills His plans including  
the eventual punishment of the wicked.

"To answer to his purpose" – in Hebrew  
there is just one word here, meaning  
answer.

**16:5** 6:16; 11:20,21; Ps 40:4. Then surely  
anything that humbles us is for our good.

**16:6** "Atoned" – notes at Ex 25:17; 29:33.  
By mercy and truth God provided a way for  
guilty men to be forgiven. And mercy and  
truth are the qualities which will enable us  
to lead others to God for this forgiveness.

"Fear" – notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28;  
Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; etc.

**16:7** 3:17; Gen 39:21; 2 Chron 14:6,7;  
17:10; Rom 12:18; Heb 12:14. Such a  
person will be seeking peace with others and  
will find it. But with some kinds of enemies  
this will not be easy (compare Matt

10:21,22,34-36; John 15:18-21).

**16:8** 10:2; 15:16; 17:1; Ps 37:16; Eccl  
4:6. There are things far more important  
than prosperity and wealth – things such as  
honesty, integrity, purity, just and wise  
behavior, and the fear of God.

**16:9** God can and does control the activities  
of men to fulfill His will. The freedom of  
individuals and whole nations is only within  
the bounds of God's purposes.

**16:10** Rulers are appointed by God, and in  
some measure are His representatives  
(Rom 13:1-5). They should be very careful  
in giving judgments that affect the people  
(17:7).

"Divine sentence" – or "oracle," that is, a  
pronouncement from God.

**16:11** 11:1; Deut 25:15; Ezek 45:10;  
Amos 8:4-6.

**16:12** Righteousness and justice are the  
foundation of God's throne – Ps 97:2. He  
will bring down any throne based on  
unrighteousness and injustice. History shows  
this again and again.

**16:13** "The right thing" – certainly the King  
of heaven values such a man (Ps 15:1-3;  
51:6).

**16:14** 19:12; 19:12; 20:2; Matt 22:7;  
Luke 19:27.

**16:16** 3:13,14; 8:10; Ps 19:10; 49:20;  
119:72.

**16:17** 15:19; 19:16; 22:5.

**16:18** 11:2; 1 Sam 17:41,42,48,49;  
2 Chron 26:16; 32:25; Jam 4:6.

**16:19** "Better" – why? Because God is with  
the lowly and will eventually bless and exalt

than to divide the plunder with the proud.

20 He who handles a matter wisely will find good,  
and happy *is* the one who trusts in the LORD.

21 The wise in heart will be called discerning,  
and sweetness of speech increases  
persuasiveness.

22 Understanding *is* a fountain of life to  
him who has it,  
but the instruction of fools *is* folly.

23 The heart of the wise teaches his mouth,  
and adds learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb,  
sweet to the soul,  
and health to the bones.

25 There is a way that seems right to a man,  
but its end *is* the ways of death.

26 A labourer's appetite works for him,  
for his hunger urges him on.

27 An ungodly man digs up evil,  
and his lips *are like* a burning fire.

28 A perverse man sows strife,  
and a talebearer separates chief friends.

29 A violent man entices his neighbour  
and leads him into a way *that is* not good.

30 He shuts his eyes to plot perverse things;  
moving his lips he causes evil to take place.

31 The gray head is a crown of glory,  
*if* it is found in the way of righteousness.

32 *He who is* slow to get angry is better  
than the mighty,  
and he who rules his spirit than he who

takes a city.

33 The lot is cast into the lap,  
but each one of its decisions *is* from the LORD.

**17** Better *is* a dry crust, and quietness with it,  
than a house full of *feasting from*  
sacrifices *with* strife.

2 A wise servant will rule a son who causes shame,  
and will have part of the inheritance  
among the brothers.

3 The refining pot *is* for silver and the  
furnace for gold,  
but the LORD tests the hearts.

4 An evildoer pays heed to false lips,  
*and* a liar listens to a slandering tongue.

5 Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker,  
*and* he who is glad at calamities will  
not be unpunished.

6 Children's children *are* the crown of old men,  
and the glory of children *is* their fathers.

7 Fine talk is not fitting for a fool;  
much less are lying lips for a prince.

8 A bribe *is like* a charm in the eyes  
of the one who has it;  
wherever he turns, he succeeds.

9 He who conceals a transgression seeks love,  
but he who repeats a matter separates  
*close* friends.

10 A rebuke goes more deeply into a  
wise man than a hundred lashes into a fool.

11 An evil *person* seeks only rebellion;

him (3:34; Isa 57:15; Matt 5:3). He is  
against the proud and will destroy him  
(v 18). Both the humble circumstances of  
the one and the ill-gotten gain of the other  
are only temporary.

**16:20** "Happy" – 3:3-5; Ps 1:1,2; 2:12.

**16:22-24** 24:13,14; Ps 19:10. Certain types  
of instruction should be given in a pleasant  
manner rather than in a stern, forbidding one.

**16:25** 14:12.

**16:27** Jam 3:6.

**16:28** 6:14; 11:13; 14:9.

**16:30** 6:13.

**16:31** 3:1,2,16; Lev 19:32.

**16:32** "Slow to get angry" – 14:29; 15:18;  
19:11.

"Rules" – conquering oneself is the most  
difficult of all things and far more rewarding  
than conquering cities.

**16:33** "Lot" – in Old Testament days the lot  
was often used to make decisions, and  
nothing is said against it anywhere in the  
Bible (18:18; Num 26:53,55; Josh 13:6;  
1 Sam 14:41,42; 1 Chron 26:13; Neh  
11:1; Ps 22:18; Jonah 1:7; Acts 1:26).  
God had no problem in causing the right  
decision to be made by that method.

**17:1** 15:16,17; 16:8.

"Sacrifices" – probably indicates an abun-  
dance of meat after animals had been  
sacrificed.

**17:2** 11:29.

**17:3** Note at Ps 66:10-12. God's purpose  
toward us is to make us pure, and His test-  
ing can be like fire (Isa 1:25; Mal 3:2-4).

**17:5** "Maker" – 14:31.

"Not be unpunished" – 24:17; Ezek  
25:6,7; Ps 35:26. To be happy at another's  
sorrow, to rejoice when the poor meet dis-  
aster, shows one of the qualities of Satan.

**17:7** "Prince" – 16:10; 12:22.

**17:8** "Bribe" – this is not a recommenda-  
tion for bribery, but only a statement of how  
things are in this fallen sinful world. Every-  
where the Bible condemns taking or giving  
bribes with a view to pervert justice and truth.  
Note at 15:27.

**17:9** "Conceals" – this does not mean cov-  
ering one's own offense, but keeping quiet  
about someone else's offense instead of  
spreading the news of it to others. Com-  
pare 28:13.

"Love" – 10:12; 1 Cor 13:4-7; Jam  
5:19,20; 1 Pet 4:8.

"Separates" – 16:28.

**17:10** 9:8,9; Ps 141:5.



- therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him.
- 12 Let a bear robbed of her cubs meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.
- 13 Whoever repays evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.
- 14 The beginning of strife *is like* letting out water; therefore break off before the quarrel begins.
- 15 He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of these *are* abomination to the LORD.
- 16 Why *is there* a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, since *he has* no heart *for it*?
- 17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
- 18 A man lacking understanding strikes hands *in pledge*, and puts up security in the presence of his friend.
- 19 He who loves quarreling loves transgression, and he who exalts his gate seeks destruction.
- 20 He who has a crooked heart finds no good, and he who has a perverse tongue falls into trouble.
- 21 He who begets a fool *does so* to his sorrow, and the father of a fool has no joy.
- 22 A merry heart does good *like* a medicine; but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.
- 23 A wicked *person* accepts a bribe from the bosom to pervert the ways of justice.
- 24 He who has understanding *has* wisdom before him, but the eyes of a fool *are* on the ends of the earth.

**17:12** A fool is more dangerous than an enraged bear. A bear can only hurt people physically, but a fool can injure them in many ways.

**17:13** 1 Sam 19:4; Ps 35:12; 38:20; 109:5; Jer 18:20. Repaying evil for good is devilish. Repaying good for evil is divine and the only proper behavior for a Christian (Luke 6:27-31,35,36; Rom 12:21). So we know which of these wise people will practice.

**17:14** Matt 5:25,26. Quarrels are much easier to start than to stop.

**17:15** 18:5; 24:23-25; Ex 23:6,7; Ps 94:21; Isa 5:23; Matt 12:7.

**17:16** No matter how much money a fool has he is still a fool, so his money will be spent foolishly.

**17:17** John 15:13-15; Heb 2:11,12.

**17:18** 6:1-5.

**17:19** "Transgression" – quarreling is sin in itself and will lead to other sins (1 Cor 3:3; Gal 5:20). "His gate" – indicates pride (compare Gen 11:4,8; Dan 4:28-32. See Isa 2:12-18).

**17:22** 14:30; 15:13,30; 18:14; Ps 32:3,4; 51:8.

- 25 A foolish son *is* a grief to his father, and bitterness to her who gave him birth.
- 26 *It is* also not good to punish the righteous, or to strike princes *for their* integrity.
- 27 He who has knowledge is sparing with his words, and a man of understanding has a rare spirit.
- 28 Even a fool is considered wise if he keeps quiet; and he who keeps his lips shut *is regarded* as a man of understanding.

- 18** A man who separates himself seeks to fulfil his own *desire*; he bursts out against all wisdom.
- 2 A fool has no delight in understanding, but only in displaying his *own* heart.
- 3 When the wicked comes, contempt also comes, and with disgrace *comes* reproach.
- 4 The words of a man's mouth *are* deep waters, and the fountain of wisdom *is* a flowing brook.
- 5 *It is* not good to show favoritism to the wicked, to deprive the righteous of justice.
- 6 A fool's lips bring contention, and his mouth invites blows.
- 7 A fool's mouth *is* his ruin, and his lips *are* the snare of his soul.
- 8 The words of a talebearer *are* like wounds, and they go down into the inmost parts of the body.
- 9 He who is lazy in his work is a brother to him who is a great waster.
- 10 The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower; the righteous runs into it, and is safe.

**17:23** Verse 8; 15:27 (note).

**17:24** "Ends of the earth" – the grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence. The fool is not willing to face reality and get on with the job at hand.

**17:27,28** 10:19; 14:29; 16:32; Job 13:5.

**18:1** A man who is interested only in his own advantage will not be likely to form true and close friendships.

**18:4** 20:5. Who can tell what strange things may lurk in the unseen depths of men's sinful hearts? On the other hand, true wisdom is always springing up with new sparkling clean water, becoming a flowing stream, producing life wherever it flows.

**18:5** 17:15,26.

**18:7** 10:14; 12:13; 13:3; Ps 64:7,8.

**18:8** 26:22. Gossip becomes a part of those who hear and believe it.

**18:9** See 6:6-11; Eccl 9:10. This is true in the things of this world, and true also in the Lord's service.

**18:10** The name means the person. "Tower" – Ps 61:3; 144:2.

- 11 The rich man's wealth *is* his stronghold and like a high wall, in his own imagination.
- 12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour *is* humility.
- 13 He who answers a matter before he hears *it*, *it is* folly and shame to him.
- 14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?
- 15 The heart of the prudent gets knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
- 16 A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.
- 17 The first one *to present* his case *seems* right, *until* another comes forward and examines him.
- 18 *Casting* the lot ends disputes, and decides between the mighty.
- 19 A brother offended *is harder to win* than a strong city, and disputes *are* like the bars of a castle.
- 20 A man's stomach will be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, *and* with the harvest of his lips he will be filled.
- 21 Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue, and they who love it will eat its fruit.
- 22 *He who* finds a wife finds good, and obtains favour from the LORD.
- 23 The poor man uses entreaties, but the rich man answers roughly.
- 24 A man *who has* friends may be broken, but there is a friend *who* sticks closer than a brother.
- 19 Better *is* the poor man who walks in his integrity than *he who is* perverse in speech and is a fool.
- 2 Also *it is* not good for the soul *to be* without knowledge, and he who makes haste with *his* feet misses the way.
- 3 The foolishness of a man perverts his way, and his heart frets against the LORD.
- 4 Wealth makes many friends, but the poor man is separated from his neighbour.
- 5 A false witness will not be unpunished, and *he who* speaks lies will not escape.
- 6 Many will beg favours from the prince, and every man *is* a friend to the one who gives gifts.
- 7 All the brothers of the poor man hate him; how much more do his friends keep their distance from him!  
He pursues *them with* words, *but they are* not there *for him*.
- 8 He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who has regard for understanding will find good.
- 9 A false witness will not be unpunished, and *he who* speaks lies will perish.
- 10 Luxury *is* not fitting for a fool; much less for a servant to rule princes.
- 11 A man's discretion makes him slow to get angry, and *it is* his glory to overlook a transgression.
- 12 The king's wrath *is* like the roaring of a lion, but his favour *is* like dew on the grass.
- 13 A foolish son *is* the calamity of his father,

"Safe" – 14:26; 29:25; Ps 18:2; 20:1; 27:5; 32:7; 2 Tim 4:18. In the Lord Himself is the only safe place in the entire universe. There is no security anywhere else either for time or for eternity, but there is perfect security there.

**18:11** So they think they do not need the Lord. But see 17:19.

**18:12** 11:2; 15:33; 16:18.

**18:14** 15:13; 17:22.

**18:16** Gen 32:13; 43:11; 1 Kings 10:1,2.

**18:18** Note at 16:33.

**18:20** 12:14.

**18:21** "Death and life" – we must be careful what we say. Words can kill reputations, can stir up quarrels which result in fighting and killing, can pronounce death sentences, and false words about God and salvation can cause eternal death (separation from God). Other kinds of words can reverse the effect of killing words, can result in life, even eternal life (10:11; 13:14; 15:4). In the end, God will judge us all by the words we have spoken (Matt 12:37).

**18:22** "Good" – (12:4; 19:14; 31:10; Gen 2:18), but not best in every time and in every case (Jer 16:1,2; 1 Cor 7:1,2,8,38).

**18:24** "Closer" – Jesus does. John 15:15.

**19:1** 28:6; 16:8; 15:16. Blamelessness will receive an eternal reward. Everything of this world is passing away – 1 John 2:17.

**19:3** In other words, he blames God for what he has brought on himself by his own folly or wickedness. This is the tendency of human nature since the fall of Adam (Gen 3:12; 4:5; Isa 8:19-21; Rev 16:10,11). **19:5** Verse 9; 21:28; Deut 19:19; Isa 29:20,21; Rev 21:8.

**19:7** The meaning of the Hebrew for the last sentence of this verse is uncertain.

**19:8** "Loves" – such a person has sought the most valuable thing for himself. Contrast with 8:36; 15:32.

**19:11** "Slow to get angry" – 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; Eccl 7:9.

"Overlook" – Gen 45:4-7; 50:19-21; 2 Sam 1:17-19; 16:5-7,11,12; Matt 5:39-41; 1 Cor 13:5.

- and the quarrels of a wife *are* a continual dripping.
- 14 House and riches *are* the inheritance of fathers,  
and an understanding wife *is* from the LORD.
- 15 Laziness casts into a deep sleep,  
and an idle soul will suffer hunger.
- 16 He who keeps the commandment keeps his own soul,  
*but* he who despises his ways will die.
- 17 He who is generous to the poor lends to the LORD,  
and he will repay him what he has given.
- 18 Discipline your son while there is hope,  
and do not let your soul remove it because of his crying.
- 19 A man of great anger will pay the penalty;  
for if you rescue *him*, yet you must do it again.
- 20 Listen to advice and receive instruction,  
so that you may be wise in the end of your *days*.
- 21 *There are* many plans in a man's heart;  
nevertheless the counsel of the LORD *is* what will stand.
- 22 What is desirable in a man *is* his kindness,

- and a poor man *is* better than a liar.
- 23 The fear of the LORD *leads* to life,  
and *he who has* it will rest satisfied,  
untouched by evil.
- 24 A lazy *man* buries his hand in the dish,  
and will not so much as bring it back to his mouth.
- 25 Strike a scorner and the simple will beware,  
and rebuke one who has understanding,  
*and* he will understand knowledge.
- 26 He who despoils *his* father *and* chases *his* mother away *is* a son who causes shame and brings disgrace.
- 27 My son, stop listening to the instruction *that causes one* to stray from the words of knowledge.
- 28 An ungodly witness scorns justice,  
and the mouth of the wicked feeds on evil.
- 29 Judgments are prepared for scorners,  
and blows for the back of fools.

- 20** Wine is a mocker, strong drink rages,  
and whoever is deceived by it is not wise.
- 2 The fear of a king *is* like the roaring of a lion;  
*whoever* provokes him to anger wrongs his own soul.
- 3 *It is* an honour for a man to avoid strife,

**19:14** Verse 13; 12:4; 18:22.  
**19:15** 6:6-11.  
**19:16** 13:13; 15:10; 16:17.  
**19:17** 14:21,31; Deut 24:19-22; Ps 41:1. We may be sure that God will pay his "debts", and with good interest! And those who give to the poor will be laying up treasures in heaven (Matt 6:19,20. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15).  
**19:18** 13:24; 23:13,14. Discipline is one means of keeping children from evil ways which lead to death. So refusing to discipline children is the same as agreeing to their destruction.  
"Crying" – the Hebrew word means "to die" and the meaning seems to be "Do not be responsible for your son's premature death by refusing to discipline him."  
**19:19** Inability to control anger will get men into trouble again and again.  
**19:20** 4:1; 9:8,9.  
**19:21** 16:1,9; Ps 33:11; Isa 8:10; 14:24,27; 46:10; 55:11. God is working His purposes out on earth no matter what men may plan to do. To accomplish His will He uses men's plans, or overturns them as He wishes.  
**19:22** "Kindness" – or the Hebrew could also be translated "What a man desires is unfailing love" – or even "a man's greed is his shame." But is it possible that the same Hebrew words can give such widely different meanings? In this case, the answer is, yes. The Hebrew word translated here "kindness" also means love, goodness, and faithfulness. But it also means reproach or shame. So it could be translated "greedily desires" or "lusts"

or "greed" (what a person greedily desires or lusts after may be called his greed). See the note on some of the difficulties encountered in translation at Ps 14:6,7.  
"Better to be a poor man than a liar" – 15:16; 16:8; 28:6 – a thousand times better! A liar sins against God, is doing something God hates, and is in danger of terrible punishment (Rev 21:8). The poverty of a poor man who trusts in Christ is only temporary, and at death he will enter into an eternal rich inheritance with God. Many are placed in positions where this choice between poverty and lying must be made. Alas that then so many start practicing lying and deception to get money. We should tremble for the future of such persons.  
**19:23** "Fear" – 1:7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:27.  
"Satisfied" – 1:33; Phil 4:11; 1 Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5. How much better this is than lying and deceiving to get uncertain gain.  
**19:24** 6:6-11. "Dish" – the KJV has "bosom", which is an unlikely translation of the Hebrew.  
**19:25** 9:9; 21:11; Ps 141:5.  
**19:26** Ex 20:12.  
**20:1** "Mocker", "rages" – the Bible frequently speaks about over-indulgence in alcoholic beverages. It leads to folly, wickedness, and punishment (23:20,21,29,30; 31:4,5; Gen 9:21; Ps 69:12; Isa 28:7; Hab 2:5; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:18). Far better not to touch them at all than to run the risks involved in indulging.  
**20:3** 6:14; 17:14,19; 18:6.

- but every fool will quarrel.
- 4 The lazy man will not plow because of the cold; *therefore* he will beg in harvest, and *have* nothing.
- 5 Counsel in the heart of man *is like* deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.
- 6 Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?
- 7 The just *man* walks in his integrity; his children *are* blessed after him.
- 8 A king who sits on the throne of judgment dispels all evil with his eyes.
- 9 Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"
- 10 Varying weights *and* varying measures, both of them alike *are* abomination to the LORD.
- 11 Even a child is known by his actions, whether his deeds *are* pure and right.
- 12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD has made both of them.
- 13 Do not love sleep, so that you do not come to poverty; open your eyes, *and* you will have *enough* food to be satisfied.
- 14 "*It is* nothing, *it is* nothing!" says the buyer, but when he has gone his way, then he boasts.
- 15 There is gold, and an abundance of rubies, but the lips of knowledge *are* a precious jewel.
- 16 Take the garment of the one who puts up security *for* a stranger, and take a pledge from him for a strange woman.
- 17 Bread *obtained* by deceit *is* sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth will be filled with gravel.
- 18 Prepare plans by *getting* counsel, and make war through good advice.
- 19 He who goes around *as* a talebearer reveals secrets; therefore have nothing to do with him who flatters with his lips.
- 20 Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.
- 21 An inheritance *may be* quickly obtained in the beginning, but in the end it will not be blessed.
- 22 Do not say, "I will repay evil," but wait on the LORD, and he will save you.
- 23 Varying weights *are* an abomination to the LORD, and a false balance *is* not good.
- 24 Man's steps *are directed* by the LORD; how then can a man understand his own way?
- 25 *It is* a snare for a man *to* rashly dedicate *what is* holy, and after vows to reconsider.
- 26 A wise king winnows the wicked, and drives the *threshing* wheel over them.
- 27 The spirit of man *is* the lamp of the Lord,

**20:4** 6:6-11.

**20:5** 16:1,2; 18:4.

**20:6** Ps 12:1; Eccl 7:28,29; Micah 7:2. There is one who is eternally faithful – Deut 7:9; Ps 36:5; 89:1; 92:2; Isa 11:5; 25:1; Lam 3:23; 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 2:17; 1 Pet 4:19; 1 John 1:9; Rev 19:11. And God can and does make His people faithful – Num 12:7; Neh 7:2; Matt 25:21; Luke 16:10; 1 Cor 4:2; 7:25; Eph 1:1; Col 1:2,7; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 2:2; Rev 2:10; 17:14. **20:7** 13:22; 14:26; Ps 26:1; 37:25,26; 112:2.

**20:9** The Lord Jesus alone of all who ever lived on earth could truthfully claim to be sinless (John 8:46; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22,24; 1 John 3:5). All the rest of us are born with a sinful nature and have sinned (Job 14:4; Ps 14:2,3; 51:5; Rom 3:9,23). But God can cleanse us from sin and make us pure in His sight (Ps 51:2,7,10; Isa 1:18; Zech 13:1; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:9), and can enable us to live the blameless life mentioned in v 7. See notes on psalms 14 and 15.

**20:10** Verse 23; 11:1; 16:11.

**20:11** Matt 7:16; 12:33-35; Luke 6:43-

45; 1 John 2:3-6; 3:10.

**20:12** Ps 94:9; 14:1.

**20:15** 3:14,15; 8:10,11.

**20:16** 6:1-4; Deut 24:10-13.

**20:17** The pleasures of sin are only for a little while.

**20:19** 11:13.

**20:20** 19:26; 30:11,17; Ex 20:12; 21:17; Lev 20:9.

**20:21** Compare Luke 15:11-16.

**20:22** Deut 32:35,43; Ps 94:1; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30.

**20:23** Verse 10.

**20:24** 16:9; 21:1; Jer 10:23. God's ways are beyond tracing out (Rom 11:33). He makes man's way also past tracing out. No man understands very much of what he really is and why he does what he does, and what the whole meaning of his life is, and how it is all interwoven with God's purposes. But God understands it all (Jer 17:9,10).

**20:25** Perhaps a translation just as good as, or possibly better than this would be "It is a snare for a man *to say rashly* 'This is dedicated' and after vows to reconsider it."

**20:26** See notes on psalm 101.

**20:27** 1 Cor 2:11. The Lord uses this "lamp" to search men and make them

searching all the inmost being.

- 28 Mercy and truth preserve the king,  
and his throne is upheld by mercy.  
29 The glory of young men *is* their strength,  
and the beauty of old men *is* the gray head.  
30 Blows that wound cleanse away evil;  
*just so* beatings *cleanse* the inmost being.

**21** The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD;  
like streams of water, he turns it  
wherever he will.

- 2 Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes,  
but the LORD weighs the hearts.  
3 Doing what is right and just *is* more  
acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.  
4 A haughty look and a proud heart,  
*and* the plowing of the wicked, *are* sin.  
5 The plans of the diligent surely *lead* to profit,  
but *those* of everyone *who is* hasty  
surely *leads* to poverty.  
6 Getting treasures by a lying tongue  
*is* a fleeing vapour,  
*pursued* by those who seek death.  
7 The violence of the wicked will  
destroy them,  
because they refuse to act justly.  
8 The way of the perverse man *is* devious;  
but *as for* the pure, his behaviour *is* upright.  
9 *It is* better to live in a corner of the housetop,  
than in a house with a quarrelsome woman.  
10 The soul of the wicked desires evil;  
his neighbour finds no favour in his eyes.

conscious of what goes on in their inner being.

**20:29** 16:31.

**20:30** A hearty welcome to all blows that produce such good results! See Ps 141:5; 66:10-12.

**21:1** 16:1; 19:21; 20:24. Kings are no more difficult for God to direct than anyone else. Bible history shows that He often worked in the hearts of kings to fulfill His purposes (kings of Egypt – Gen 41:1; 14:15,41; Ex 7:3-5; 9:16; kings of Babylon – 2 Chron 36:17; Dan 2:1,25,26,48; kings of Persia – 2 Chron 36:22; Isa 45:1-3. See also 1 Kings 11:14,23; 1 Chron 5:26; 2 Chron 21:16; Rev 17:12,17). God does the same thing now.

**21:2** Notes at 14:12; 16:2.

**21:3** 1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:11-17; Hos 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Matt 9:13.

**21:6** 10:2; 19:22; Ps 37:16; 39:6; 49:5-9. Many there are who lie and deceive to gain money. In the end will such wealth be worth what they will have to pay for it?

**21:8** 2:15. They use crooked ways to gain their object, and then must use other crooked ways to cover up these first crooked ways. Like this they are caught in a downward spiral.

- 11 When the scorner is punished,  
the simple is made wise;  
and when the wise is instructed,  
he gains knowledge.

- 12 The righteous *person* wisely considers  
the house of the wicked,  
*but* God overthrows the wicked for  
*their* wickedness.

- 13 Whoever shuts his ears at the cry of  
the poor, will also cry out himself,  
but will not be heard.

- 14 A gift in secret pacifies anger,  
and a bribe in the bosom strong wrath.

- 15 Justice done is a joy to the righteous,  
but *like* destruction to evildoers.

- 16 The man who wanders out of the way  
of understanding will settle down in  
the company of the dead.

- 17 He who loves pleasure *will become* a poor man;  
he who loves wine and oil will not become rich.

- 18 The wicked *will be* a ransom for the righteous,  
and the transgressor for the upright.

- 19 *It is* better to live in the wilderness,  
than with a quarrelsome and angry woman.

- 20 *There is* precious treasure and oil in  
the home of the wise,  
but a foolish man consumes it.

- 21 He who follows righteousness and mercy finds  
life, righteousness, and honour.

- 22 A wise *man* scales *the wall of* the  
city of the mighty,  
and casts down the stronghold in which  
they trust.

**21:9** 19:1; 12:4.

**21:12** 10:25; 12:7; 14:11; Matt 7:26,27.

**21:13** See Ex 1:14; 2:23 with its results in Ex 11:6; 12:30. Note at Ps 41:1; Prov 1:25-28; 14:21; 28:27.

**21:14** Notes at 15:27; 17:8.

**21:15** There is going to be great joy for some, great terror for others, for justice is exactly what is going to be done to the world and to every individual (Ps 89:14; 98:9; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:2,5-11; 2 Thess 1:6,7; Rev 15:3,4; 16:5-7; 20:11,12; 22:12). **21:16** 2:18; 5:23; 8:36; 9:18; Deut 30:15,19; Ezek 18:30:30-32.

**21:18** See Isa 43:3-6. Persia showed kindness to the people of Israel and let them return to their own land (Ezra 1:1-4). In return God enabled Persia to conquer Egypt, Cush, and Seba. Perhaps there is an important principle here in God's dealings with nations.

**21:21** 15:9; Matt 5:6; 6:33; John 12:26; Rom 2:7,10.

**21:22** This is true in the spiritual realm also. God's wisdom enables His servants to demolish the refuge of false philosophies and religious ideas that others trust in. See 2 Cor 10:4.



- 23 Whoever guards his mouth and his tongue keeps his soul from troubles.
- 24 Proud *and* haughty scorner *is* his name, who acts with arrogant pride.
- 25 The desire of the lazy kills him, for his hands refuse to work.
- 26 He greedily covets all day long, but the righteous gives unsparingly.
- 27 The sacrifice of the wicked *is* abomination; how much more *when* he brings it with a wicked mind?
- 28 A false witness will perish, but the man who listens speaks to the end.
- 29 A wicked man puts on a bold face, but *as for* the upright, he directs his way.
- 30 *There is* no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the LORD.
- 31 The horse *is* prepared for the day of battle, but safety *is* from the LORD.

**22** A good name *is* more to be desired than great riches, *and* loving favour rather than silver and gold.

- 2 The rich and poor have this in common: the LORD *is* the maker of them all.
- 3 An understanding *man* foresees disaster and hides himself, but the simple pass on, and are punished.
- 4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *are* riches and honour and life.
- 5 Thorns *and* snares *are* in the way of the perverse; he who guards his soul will be far from them.

**21:23** 10:19; 12:13; 13:3; 18:21; Ps 39:1; 141:3; Matt 12:37.

**21:24** 1:22. Scorning God's word is the result of pride and ignorance (Matt 27:27-29,41; 2 Pet 3:3-5; Jude 10).

**21:25** 6:6; 13:4.

**21:26** Lev 25:35; Deut 15:8; Ps 37:21,26; 112:9; Luke 6:35; 2 Cor 9:7.

**21:27** Note at 15:8.

**21:28** References at 19:5. The Hebrew of the second phrase is difficult and this is only one of possible translations. It may mean "but the words of an obedient man [one who listens] will live on." Or "the obedient man will always speak *the truth*" (the words "the truth" being added).

**21:29** 14:8; Lam 3:40; Hag 1:5,7; 2:15.

**21:30** Ah. 2 Chron 13:12; Job 5:13; Prov 16:4,9; 19:21; Isa 8:10; 1 Cor 1:25; 3:19,20.

**21:31** 1 Sam 17:47; Ps 3:8; 20:7; 33:16-19; Hos 1:7; Zech 4:6.

**22:1** 3:4; 10:7; Eccl 7:1.

**22:2** 29:13; Job 31:15.

**22:4** "Fear" - 1:7; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14.

"Riches" - 3:2; Ps 1:3.

**22:5** Verse 8; Ps 9:16; 69:22. Thorns and snares here signify evils and difficulties which

- 6 Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

- 7 The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower *is* a servant to the lender.

- 8 He who sows wickedness will reap trouble, and the rod of his anger will fail.

- 9 He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives of his food to the poor.

- 10 Drive out the scorner, and contention will go out, yes, strife and insult will cease.

- 11 He who loves purity of heart *and* whose speech is gracious, *will have* the king *as* his friend.

- 12 The eyes of the LORD see that knowledge is preserved, and he overturns the words of the transgressor.

- 13 The lazy *person* says, "There is a lion outside; I will be killed in the streets."

- 14 The mouth of strange women *is* a deep pit; he who is abhorred by the LORD will fall into it.

- 15 Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child, *but* the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

- 16 He who oppresses the poor to increase his *riches*, *and* he who gives to the rich, *will surely come* to poverty.

- 17 Turn your ear and listen to the words

will hurt them and capture them.

**22:6** A great encouragement in the training of children. But parents themselves must know the right way (Gen 18:19; Deut 4:9,10; 6:7; Josh 24:15; Eph 6:4).

**22:7** Debt is a great burden and difficulty in a person's life. Therefore Rom 13:8.

**22:9** 11:25; Deut 14:29; 15:10; Ps 37:26; Luke 6:38. Notes and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

**22:10** 21:24.

**22:11** The King of heaven will also be his friend - Ps 24:3,4; Matt 5:8.

**22:12** 19:21; 21:30.

**22:13** 6:6-11. The lazy man will seek any excuse not to work.

**22:14** 5:3-5; 23:27.

**22:15** Alas, we all come into the world with a nature that is bent toward sin and foolishness (note at Ps 51:5). And every child needs much discipline and correction. 3:11,12; 13:24; 19:18. Compare 1 Kings 1:6.

**22:16** The oppression of the poor is everywhere condemned in the Bible (v 22; 14:31; 17:5; Deut 24:14; Ps 10:2,8,9; 12:5; 35:10; 37:14; 109:16; Isa 3:14).

**22:17-21** These verses are an introduction

- of the wise,  
and apply your heart to my knowledge.
- 18 For *it will be* pleasant if you keep them within you *so that* they are ready for your lips.
- 19 So that your trust may be in the LORD,  
I have taught you today, even you.
- 20 Have I not written to you excellent things,  
*words* of counsel and knowledge,
- 21 So that I might cause you to know the certainty of the words of truth,  
that you might give truthful words in answer to those who send to you?
- 22 Do not rob the poor because he *is* poor,  
nor oppress the afflicted in the gate,
- 23 For the LORD will plead their cause,  
and plunder the soul of those who plunder them.
- 24 Make no friendship with an angry man,  
and do not go with a hot-tempered man,
- 25 So that you do not learn his ways,  
and get a snare to your soul.
- 26 Do not be *one* of those who strike hands *in pledge*,  
or who put up security for debts.
- 27 If you have nothing *with which* to pay,  
why should he take away your bed from under you?
- 28 Do not remove the ancient boundary stone which your fathers have set.
- 29 Do you see a man diligent in his work?  
He will stand before kings;  
he will not stand before obscure *men*.
- 23** When you sit down to eat with a ruler,  
carefully consider what *is* before you,  
2 And put a knife to your throat,
- if you *are* a man given to appetite.
- 3 Do not desire his delicacies,  
for it *is* deceptive food.
- 4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich.  
Cease from your own wisdom.
- 5 Will you set your eyes on it?  
It is no longer there, for surely *riches*  
make wings for themselves;  
they fly away like an eagle in the sky.
- 6 Do not eat the food of *him whose* eye  
*is* evil, or desire his delicacies.
- 7 For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.  
"Eat and drink", he says to you,  
but his heart *is* not with you.
- 8 The morsel you have eaten you will vomit up,  
and waste your compliments.
- 9 Do not speak in the ears of a fool,  
for he will despise the wisdom of your words.
- 10 Do not remove the ancient boundary stone and encroach on the fields of the fatherless,
- 11 For their redeemer *is* mighty.  
He will plead their cause with you.
- 12 Apply your heart to instruction,  
and your ears to the words of knowledge.
- 13 Do not withhold correction from the child;  
for *if* you beat him with the rod,  
he will not die.
- 14 You beat him with the rod,  
and rescue his soul from hell.
- 15 My son, if your heart is wise,  
my own heart too will rejoice.
- 16 Yes, my inmost being will rejoice  
when your lips speak right things.
- 17 Do not let your heart envy sinners,

to a new section of the book which ends at 24:22. This section can be divided into thirty sayings – six of them are of one verse; eighteen are of two verses; four are of 3 verses; one is of 4 verses; and one is of 7 verses. These sayings were probably collected by Solomon. Their purpose is to encourage trust in God (v 19), and to equip us with wise words and ready answers (vs 18,21). The New Testament also speaks of being ready to give answers to others (Col 4:6; 1 Pet 3:15).

**22:22,23** Verse 16. The God of the Bible, the only God there is, is always on the side of the oppressed poor, and He will pay back oppressors in their own coin.

**22:24,25** 1 Cor 15:33.

**22:26,27** 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18.

**22:28** Deut 19:14; 27:17.

**22:29** See examples of this in Gen 39:3,4; 1 Sam 16:21-23; 1 Kings 7:14; 11:28. God the King also looks for those who will do their work well.

**23:1-3** He means, perhaps, that if a ruler asks us to dine with him he may be planning to use us for his own purposes and those purposes may be deceptive and evil. "What" – or "who."

**23:4,5** 28:20; 1 Tim 6:9,10,17; Heb 13:5. "Fly away" – Jer 17:11; Luke 12:20,21.

**23:6-8** Seeing insincerity and hypocrisy makes an honest man sick.

**23:7** The first phrase might possibly be translated "for as he puts on a feast, so he is."

**23:9** 1:7,22; 9:7; 12:1.

**23:10,11** 22:23,28. Redeemer here is a translation of the Hebrew word "goel." See notes at Ruth 2:20; Ps 78:35.

**23:12** 2:2; 22:17.

**23:13,14** 3:12; 13:24; 19:18; 22:18; 2 Sam 7:14.

**23:15,16** Verse 24; 27:11; 29:3. So God the Father rejoices in His children if they are wise and honest – Ps 15:1,2; 147:11; 149:4; Zeph 3:17.

**23:17,18** "Envy" – 2:1,19; Ps 37:1; 73:3.

- but *be* in the fear of the LORD all day long.
- 18 For surely there is a future,  
and your hope will not be cut off.
- 19 Listen, my son, and be wise,  
and guide your heart in the way.
- 20 Do not be with those who drink too much wine,  
with those who are gluttons in eating meat,
- 21 For the drunkard and the glutton will  
come to poverty,  
and drowsiness will clothe *a person* with rags.
- 22 Listen to your father who begot you,  
and do not despise your mother when  
she is old.
- 23 Buy the truth and do not sell *it*;  
*also* wisdom and instruction and  
understanding.
- 24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice,  
and he who begets a wise *child* will  
have joy in him.
- 25 Your father and your mother will be glad,  
and she who gave you birth will rejoice.
- 26 My son, give me your heart,  
and keep your eyes on my ways.
- 27 For a prostitute *is* a deep ditch,  
and an adulteress *is* a narrow pit.
- 28 She also lies in wait like a robber,  
and increases the transgressors among men.
- 29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow?  
Who has strife? Who has babbling?  
Who has wounds without cause?  
Who has redness of eyes?
- 30 Those who linger long at the wine,  
those who go in search of mixed wine.
- 31 Do not look at the wine when it is red,  
when it sparkles in the cup,  
*when* it goes down smoothly.
- 32 At last it will bite like a serpent,

- and sting like a viper.
- 33 Your eyes will see strange things and  
your mind will utter perverse things.
- 34 Yes, you will be like one lying down  
in the middle of the sea,  
or like one who lies down on the top of a mast.
- 35 "They hit me", *you will say*,  
*"but* I am not hurt! They have beaten me,  
*but* I didn't feel *it*!  
When will I wake up?  
I will look for another *drink*."

- 24** Do not be envious of evil men,  
or desire to be with them.
- 2 For their heart plots violence,  
and their lips talk of trouble.
- 3 Through wisdom a house is built,  
and by understanding it is established,
- 4 And by knowledge its rooms will be  
filled with all precious and  
pleasant treasures.
- 5 A wise man *is* strong; yes, a man of  
knowledge increases strength.
- 6 For by wise counsel you should wage war,  
and in many counsellors *there is* safety.
- 7 Wisdom *is* too high for a fool.  
He does not open his mouth in the gate.
- 8 He who plots to do evil will be called  
a schemer.
- 9 The thought of foolishness *is* sin,  
and the scorner *is* an abomination to men.
- 10 *If* you faint in the day of adversity,  
your strength *is* small.
- 11 If you refrain from rescuing *those who*  
*are* being led away to death and  
*those who are* about to be killed,
- 12 If you say, "Look, we didn't know it,"  
does not he who weighs the heart

"Fear" – note at 1:7.

**23:19-21** Wisdom should guide us in what we eat and drink and how much. Drunkenness and gluttony are condemned in the Bible and will face God's anger and punishment – 23:2; 28:7; Rom 13:13,14; 1 Cor 6:10; Gal 5:21.

**23:22-25** Verse 15,16; 4:5,7; Ezek 35:15; Obadiah 1:12.

**23:26-28** "Give me your heart" – what any real father desires from his son. But he should be worthy of such a gift. This is what God the Father desires from His children. He will be satisfied with nothing less. And He is wonderfully worthy of this gift. A heart not given where it should be given will go after the attractions of the world and may fall prey to sexual immorality.

**23:29-35** A striking warning against drunkenness. Strong drink may seem pleasant at first (v 31), but it is poison (v 32), and

has very bitter fruits. One of these is that the drunkard when he recovers a little wants to indulge again and again in the same thing that is ruining his life.

**24:1,2** Verses 19,20; 23:17,18; Ps 37:1; 73:3.

**24:3,4** 9:1; 14:1. To establish a family as God wants it established requires wisdom which God alone can give.

**24:5,6** 21:22; 20:18; 11:14; Luke 14:31.

**24:7** Judges and city officials met for business at the main gates of cities (Gen 19:1; 23:10; Deut 22:15; Josh 20:4; Ruth 4:11).

**24:8,9** In Proverbs foolishness is not lack of sense, it is lack of moral sense; everything that flows from it is sinful.

**24:10** Jer 12:5; Isa 40:31.

**24:11,12** Ps 82:4; Isa 58:6,7. For men to profess ignorance of injustice and oppression will not work with God. Nor is it enough merely to feel compassion for those

- consider *it*?  
 And he who keeps your soul,  
 does he *not* know *it*?  
 And will he *not* repay *every* man in  
 accordance with his deeds?
- 13 My son, eat honey, because *it is* good,  
 and the honeycomb, *which is* sweet to  
 your taste;
- 14 So *will* the knowledge of wisdom *be* to  
 your soul.  
 When you have found *it*, then there will  
 be a reward,  
 and your hope will not be cut off.
- 15 Do not lie in wait, O wicked *man*,  
 at the house of the righteous;  
 do not plunder his resting place;
- 16 For a righteous *person* falls seven  
 times and rises again,  
 but the wicked will fall into trouble.
- 17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,  
 and do let not your heart be glad when  
 he stumbles,
- 18 Or the LORD will see *it*, and it will displease him,  
 and he will turn his wrath away from him.
- 19 Do not fret because of evil *people*  
 or be envious of the wicked,
- 20 For there will be no future for the evil *person*;  
 the lamp of the wicked will be put out.
- 21 My son, fear the LORD and the king,  
*and* do not associate with those who  
 are changeable,
- 22 For their calamity will rise suddenly;  
 and who knows the ruin of both of them?
- 23 These also *are sayings* of the wise:  
*It is* not good to show partiality in judgment.

in trouble, the poor, the needy, or the innocent falsely condemned. God will judge us, not according to what we feel, but according to what we actually do or do not do (Matt 25:31-46; Rom 2:6; Jam 4:17). **24:13,14** 16:24; Ps 119:103. The sweetness of honey remains in the mouth but a moment, but the sweetness of true wisdom will remain in the mind forever. **24:15,16** Though a righteous person may fall seven times, God enables him to rise again (see notes at Ps 34:19; 37:24; Rom 8:37). The case of the wicked is quite different – 6:15; 11:3,5. **24:17,18** 17:5 (note); Ezek 35:15; Obadiah 1:12. **24:19,20** Verses 1,2. This is often repeated in the Bible because envy is a great danger to the spiritual life (Ps 73:2,3). In any case, how foolish to envy those who have no future hope! **24:21,22** Eccl 8:2-5; Rom 13:1-5; 1 Pet 2:17. **24:23-34** An addition of five sayings to the thirty sayings in the previous section. There is no reason to think Solomon did not

- 24 He who says to the wicked,  
 “You *are* righteous”, him the people  
 will curse, him nations will abhor;
- 25 But to those who rebuke *him* will be delight,  
 and a good blessing will come on them.
- 26 Giving a right answer *is like* a kiss on the lips.
- 27 Prepare your outside work, and make  
 it ready for yourself in the field,  
 and after that build your house.
- 28 Do not be a witness against your  
 neighbour without cause,  
 and do *not* deceive with your lips.
- 29 Do not say, “I will do the same to him  
 as he has done to me.  
 I will repay the man in accordance with his deed.”
- 30 I went by the field of the lazy,  
 and by the vineyard of the man  
 lacking understanding,
- 31 And, look, it was all overgrown with thorns,  
*and* nettles had covered its surface,  
 and its stone wall was broken down.
- 32 Then I gazed *and* considered *it* well;  
 I looked at *it* and received instruction:
- 33 *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber,  
 a little folding of the hands to sleep,
- 34 Just so your poverty will come *like*  
 a highway robber,  
 and your scarcity like an armed man.

**25** These also *are* proverbs of Solomon,  
 copied by the men of Hezekiah,  
 king of Judah:

- 2 *It is* the glory of God to conceal a matter,  
 but the honour of kings *is* to search out  
 a matter.
- 3 The heavens for height, and the earth

collect these.  
**24:23-25** 17:15; 18:5; 28:21; 31:8,9;  
 Lev 19:15; Ps 72:2.  
**24:26** 16:13. To speak the truth to people  
 is to show them love. Lips which flatter and  
 deceive are hateful.  
**24:27** In other words, put first things first  
 and plan carefully.  
**24:28,29** 3:30; 6:19; 20:22; Matt 5:38-41;  
 Rom 12:17. It is not our business to seek  
 revenge on others for what they have done.  
 God will see to that in His own time and way.  
**24:30-34** Note at 6:6-11. Laziness or care-  
 lessness in spiritual things too has disastrous  
 consequences (Matt 25:14,15,24-26,30).  
**25:1** 1:1; 10:1. King Hezekiah reigned  
 more than two hundred years after Solomon  
 and brought a revival of true religion to  
 Judah (see 2 Chronicles chapters 29-31).  
**25:2** 2:4; Deut 29:29; Isa 55:8,9; Rom  
 11:33-36; Matt 13:44. Men get honor from  
 discovering the truth.  
**25:3** This is true to some extent of all men.  
 We are mysteries to ourselves and to

- for depth;  
and the heart of kings *is* unsearchable.
- 4 Take away the dross from the silver,  
and out comes a vessel from the silversmith.
- 5 Take away the wicked *from* the king's  
presence,  
and his throne will be established in  
righteousness.
- 6 Do not put yourself forward in the  
presence of the king,  
and do not stand in the place of great *men*;
- 7 For *it is* better that it be said to you,  
"Come up here",  
than that you should be put lower in  
the presence of the prince whom  
your eyes have seen.
- 8 Do not go out hastily to argue,  
or *you may not know* what to do in the end,  
when your neighbor puts you to shame.
- 9 Debate your case with your neighbor *himself*,  
and do not reveal the secret of another,
- 10 Or he who hears *it* may put you to shame,  
and your bad reputation not pass away.
- 11 A word fitly spoken *is like* apples of  
gold in pictures of silver.
- 12 Like an earring of gold and an  
ornament of fine gold,  
*is* a wise reprover to an obedient ear.
- 13 Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest,  
is a faithful messenger to those who send him,  
for he refreshes the soul of his masters.
- 14 Whoever boasts of his gifts falsely *is  
like* clouds and wind without rain.
- 15 Through patience a ruler is persuaded,  
and a soft tongue breaks the bone.
- 16 Have you found honey?  
Eat *only* what is sufficient for you,  
lest you be filled with it, and vomit it.
- 17 Let not your foot be too often in
- your neighbour's house,  
or he may tire of you and hate you.
- 18 A man who bears false witness against  
his neighbour *is* a club and a sword  
and a sharp arrow.
- 19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in  
time of trouble *is like* a broken tooth,  
and a sprained foot.
- 20 Like one who takes away a garment in  
cold weather,  
*and like* vinegar on soda, *is* one who  
sings songs to a sad heart.
- 21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat,  
and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;
- 22 For you will be heaping coals of fire on his head,  
and the LORD will reward you.
- 23 The north wind drives away rain;  
so *does* an angry countenance a  
backbiting tongue.
- 24 *It is* better to live in the corner of  
the housetop,  
than share a house with a quarrelsome woman.
- 25 As cold water to a thirsty soul,  
so *is* good news from a far country.
- 26 A righteous man giving way to the  
wicked *is like* a muddied spring,  
and a polluted well.
- 27 *It is* not good to eat too much honey;  
so *for people* to look out for their own  
glory *is not* glory.
- 28 He who does not rule his own spirit  
*is like* a city *that is* broken down and  
without walls.

**26** Like snow in summer and like rain in  
harvest,  
so honour is not fitting for a fool.

2 Like the flitting bird, like the flying swallow,

others (20:24). But God searches and knows all things (Jer 17:9,10; John 2:24,25; Heb 4:13).

**25:4,5** This truth was at the heart of David's resolutions in Ps 101. God is always at work refining His people (Ps 66:10-12) and the King of heaven, when He comes again, will do a complete work of establishing a righteous reign (Isa 11:1-5).

**25:6,7** Luke 14:7-11.

**25:8-10** Better to end a dispute before it gets to court (Matt 5:25,26).

**25:11** 15:23. See what wisdom says in 8:19.

**25:12** 15:31; Ps 141:5.

**25:13** 10:26; 13:17.

**25:14** In other words, big words, no action.

**25:15** Patience and gentleness often can accomplish far more than haste and roughness.

**25:16,17** That is, honey and visits from neighbors have one thing in common – too much is too much.

**25:18** 12:18; Ps 5:9.

**25:21,22** Matt 5:44; Rom 12:20.

**25:24** 19:12; 21:9,19.

**25:25** 15:30.

**25:26** Evil can taint all the springs of action and pollute that which should be clean, clear, and life-giving.

**25:27** 27:2; Matt 23:12.

**25:28** Into a city with broken down walls may easily enter any unclean animal, any cruel beast, any evil man, any invading army. So the evils of the world, the influences of Satan enter the unguarded, undisciplined, unwatchful human heart.

**26:2** If we live righteously and honestly before God we need fear no curse or anything that men may say or do against us.



- so the curse does not come without cause.
- 3 A whip for the horse,  
a bridle for the donkey,  
and a rod for the fool's back.
- 4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly,  
lest you also become like him.
- 5 Answer a fool according to his folly,  
lest he be wise in his own eyes.
- 6 He who sends a message by the hand  
of a fool is cutting off the feet,  
and drinking damage.
- 7 The legs of the lame are not equal,  
like a proverb in the mouth of fools.
- 8 Like one who ties up a stone in a sling,  
*is* he who gives honour to a fool.
- 9 *Like* a thorn piercing the hand of a drunkard,  
*is* a proverb in the mouth of fools.
- 10 The great *God* who formed all *things*  
both pays the fool,  
and gives transgressors their wages.
- 11 As a dog returns to his vomit,  
*so* a fool returns to his folly.
- 12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?  
*There is* more hope for a fool than for him.
- 13 The lazy *person* says,  
"*There is* a lion in the road!  
A lion *is* in the streets!"
- 14 As the door turns on its hinges,  
*so* the lazy one *turns* on his bed.
- 15 The lazy *person* buries his hand in the dish;  
it is a weariness to him to bring it back  
to his mouth.
- 16 The lazy person *is* wiser in his own  
eyes than seven men who can give  
a reason.
- 17 He who is passing by *and* meddles with

- strife that does not *pertain* to him,  
*is like* one who takes a dog by the ears.
- 18 Like a madman who hurls fire brands,  
arrows, and death,
- 19 *Is* the man *who* deceives his neighbor  
and says, "I was just joking!"
- 20 Where there is no wood, the fire goes out;  
*so* where *there is* no talebearer,  
the strife ceases.
- 21 *As* charcoal is to burning embers and  
wood to fire,  
*so is* a quarrelsome man to kindle strife.
- 22 The words of a talebearer *are* like wounds,  
and they go down into the inmost parts  
of the body.
- 23 Burning lips and a wicked heart *are*  
*like* an earthen pot covered with  
silver dross.
- 24 He who hates, disguises *this* with his lips,  
and stores up deceit within him;
- 25 When he speaks graciously, do not  
believe him;  
for *there are* seven abominations in his heart.
- 26 The wickedness of the one *whose*  
hatred is covered by deceit will be  
revealed before the *whole* congregation.
- 27 Whoever digs a pit will fall in it,  
and the one who rolls a stone,  
it will come back on him.
- 28 A lying tongue hates *those* it harms,  
and a flattering mouth works ruin.

- 27** Do not boast about tomorrow,  
for you do not know what a day may  
bring forth.
- 2 Let another man praise you and not  
your own mouth,  
a stranger and not your own lips.

**26:3-12** These proverbs are all concerned with fools – that is, with those who are moral delinquents lacking the wisdom that comes from God (see note at 1:7).

**26:4,5** Sometimes it is better not to try to answer fools at all. Sometimes they must be answered to reveal their foolishness, but this must be done wisely and carefully.

**26:10** The Hebrew of this sentence is very difficult and obscure and many translations have been offered. Literally it is, "The Great One [the word 'God' is not here in Hebrew] who has brought forth everything hires the fool and hires the transgressor." The possible meaning is, God uses them for his own purposes.

**26:11** 2 Pet 2:22; Ps 85:8. The fool returns to folly because it is more appealing to him than wisdom and righteousness. A sinful nature is attracted to sinful things.

**26:12** Verse 5. Being wise in one's own eyes is to be in a worse condition than a fool. It

is the error that the lazy man (v 5) and the rich (28:11) have in common. We are warned against it in 3:7 because such a conceit shuts out the fear of the Lord which is the only way to wisdom.

**26:13** 22:13; 6:6-11.

**26:15** 19:24.

**26:20** One of the evils of gossip. See also 11:13; 18:8; 20:19; Lev 19:16.

**26:23-26** Ps 28:3; 55:21; Jer 9:8; Matt 26:47-49. The hypocrite has a full number of abominations in his heart (6:16-19). See the abominations in the hearts of the hypocrites living when Jesus was on earth (Matthew chapter 23).

**26:27** Ps 7:15; 35:7,8; 141:10. Attempts to harm others will eventually bring harm to oneself. This is a law of God strikingly displayed in the case of Haman (Esther 3:5,6; 5:14; 7:9,10).

**27:1** 16:9; Jam 4:13-16.

**27:2** 25:27.

- 3 A stone *is* heavy and the sand weighty,  
but a fool's wrath *is* heavier than both of them.
- 4 Wrath *is* cruel and anger *is* overwhelming,  
but who *is* able to stand before envy?
- 5 Open rebuke *is* better than love concealed.
- 6 Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend,  
but the kisses of an enemy *are* deceitful.
- 7 The full soul loathes a honeycomb,  
but to the hungry soul every bitter  
thing is sweet.
- 8 As a bird that wanders from her nest,  
so *is* a man who wanders from his place.
- 9 Oil and perfume rejoice the heart;  
so *does* the sweetness of a man's  
friend through hearty counsel.
- 10 Do not forsake your own friend and  
your father's friend,  
or go into your brother's house on the  
day of your calamity.  
*For better is a neighbour who is near  
than a brother far off.*
- 11 My son, be wise and make my heart glad,  
that I may answer him who insults me.
- 12 A prudent *man* sees disaster *coming*  
*and* hides himself,  
*but* the simple go on *and* pay the penalty.
- 13 Take the garment of the one who puts  
up security for a stranger,  
and take a pledge from him for a  
strange woman.
- 14 He who blesses his friend with a loud voice,  
early in the morning,  
it will be regarded as a curse to him.
- 15 A continual dripping on a very rainy  
day and a quarrelsome woman are alike.
- 16 Whoever restrains her *can* restrain  
the wind and grasp oil with his right hand!
- 17 Iron sharpens iron;  
so a man sharpens the countenance

- of his friend.
- 18 Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit;  
so he who waits on his master will  
be honoured.
- 19 As in water face *reflects* face,  
so the heart of man *reflects* man.
- 20 Hell and destruction are never full,  
so the eyes of man are never satisfied.
- 21 The refining pot *is* for silver  
and the furnace for gold;  
so *is* a man *tested* by the praise he *receives*.
- 22 Though you pound a fool in a mortar  
with a pestle along with wheat,  
*still* his foolishness will not leave him.
- 23 Be careful to know the state of your flocks,  
and look after your herds well.
- 24 For riches *are* not forever,  
*and* the crown does *not last* to every  
generation.
- 25 The hay appears, and the tender grass  
shows itself,  
and herbs of the mountains are gathered in.
- 26 The lambs *are* for your clothing,  
and the goats *are* the price for the field.
- 27 And *you will have* goats' milk enough  
for your food,  
for the food of your household,  
and *for* the maintenance of your maidens.

- 28** The wicked flee when no man pursues,  
but the righteous are bold as a lion.
- 2 Because of the transgression of a land,  
it *has* many rulers,  
but by a man of understanding *and*  
knowledge *it* will endure.
  - 3 A poor man who oppresses the poor *is*  
*like* a driving rain which leaves no food.
  - 4 They who forsake the law praise the wicked,  
but those who keep the law oppose them.

**27:4** Matt 27:18. Envy is one of the worst and most destructive passions that can possess men.  
**27:5,6** Let us, like David (Ps 141:5), understand the value of rebukes. Far better to be pierced by a friend than petted by a foe.  
**27:11** 10:1; 23:15,16.  
**27:13** 20:16.  
**27:15,16** 12:4; 18:22; 19:13,14; 21:9,19.  
**27:17** Our contacts with others, especially with those who are close to us, can help shape our character and make us better instruments in God's service.  
**27:18** Matt 25:21; Luke 12:42-44; John 12:26.  
**27:19** A man is what he is inwardly, not what he seems to be outwardly.  
**27:20** 1 John 2:16. It is the nature of fallen man always to want more than he has, never

to be satisfied.  
"Death and Destruction" - in Hebrew "Sheol and Abaddon."  
**27:21** Praise tests whether a man is proud, or hungry for praise, or foolish enough to accept flattery, or humble, or desirous of seeing only God praised.  
**27:23-27** Jesus' instruction not to worry about the future (Matt 6:25-34) does not mean that care and thought should not be taken to provide for one's household.  
**28:1** Lev 26:7,8,14,17,36; Deut 32:30; Ps 3:6; 18:33-40; 138:3; Acts 4:13,31.  
**28:3** 14:21,31.  
**28:4** Will anyone praise the wicked? See Rom 1:32. Such is the fallen world we live in. Those who follow the teachings of the God of holiness and truth must stand against evil. Examples - Ex 32:26-29; Ps 101;

- 5 Evil men do not understand justice,  
but they who seek the LORD  
understand all *things*.
- 6 Better *is* the poor who walks in his integrity,  
than *he who is* rich but perverse *in his* ways.
- 7 Whoever keeps the law *is* a wise son,  
but he who is a companion of gluttons  
shames his father.
- 8 He who increases his possessions by  
usury and dishonest gain  
will gather it for him who has pity on the poor.
- 9 *As for the one* who turns his ear away  
from hearing the law,  
even his prayer *will be* an abomination.
- 10 Whoever causes the righteous to go  
astray in an evil way will himself  
fall into his own pit,  
but the upright will have a good inheritance.
- 11 The rich man *is* wise in his own eyes,  
but the poor who has understanding  
sees through him.
- 12 When righteous *people* rejoice,  
*there is* great honour,  
but when the wicked rise up,  
a man hides himself.
- 13 He who covers his sins will not prosper,  
but whoever confesses and forsakes  
*them* will have mercy.
- 14 Happy *is* the man who always fears  
*the LORD*,

but he who hardens his heart will fall  
into trouble.

- 15 *Like* a roaring lion and a charging  
bear *is* a wicked ruler over a poor people.
- 16 The ruler who lacks understanding *is*  
also a great oppressor,  
*but* he who hates covetousness will  
prolong *his* days.
- 17 A man who does violence to the blood  
of *any* person is fleeing to the pit.  
Let no one support him.
- 18 Whoever walks uprightly will be rescued,  
but *he who is* perverse *in his* ways will  
fall at once.
- 19 He who tills his land will have plenty of food,  
but he who follows vain *persons* will  
have poverty enough.
- 20 A faithful man will have abundant blessings,  
but he who makes haste to be rich  
will not be innocent.
- 21 To show favoritism *is* not good,  
because for a piece of bread a man  
will transgress.
- 22 He whose eye is evil hastens to be rich,  
and does not consider that poverty  
will come on him.
- 23 He who rebukes a man will find more  
favour afterwards than he who  
flatters with the tongue.
- 24 Whoever robs his father or his mother,  
and says, "*It is* not wrong,"  
that person *is* a companion of one who  
destroys.

Eph 5:11; 6:11; etc.

**28:5** God's justice is one of the very great themes of the Bible (Deut 32:4; Ps 89:14; 97:2; Rom 3:25,26; Rev 15:3). It is understood and appreciated only by those who seek God, fear God, and so receive the wisdom that comes from God (2:9; Ps 14:2; 82:5; 92:6; 119:97-104; Dan 12:10; Hos 14:9).

**28:6** See 15:16; 16:8; 19:1,22; Ps 37:16.

**28:7** Verse 4; 23:19-21; 1 Cor 15:33.

**28:8** "Usury" - Ex 22:25; Lev 25:35-37; Deut 23:19,20.

"For him" - 13:22; Job 27:13,16,17.

**28:9** 15:8; 21:27; Ps 66:18; 109:7; Isa 1:13-17; 59:1,2. A wicked man will not listen to God, so all his religion, his worship, and all he does is hateful to God.

**28:10** 26:27.

**28:11** 26:5; 26:16; Luke 12:16-21.

**28:12** Verse 28; 11:10; 29:2; 1 Kings 18:13; 2 Kings 11:2,3,20.

**28:13** Gen 3:8; Josh 7:11,12,20,21,25,26; Ps 32:1-5; Isa 55:6,7; Hos 14:1,2; 1 John 1:9. All of men's sins will eventually be revealed (Ps 90:8; Matt 10:26; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 4:12,13; Rev

20:12). It is impossible to hide them from God. How foolish to try, when by confessing and forsaking them they can be forgiven and blotted out forever. Observe that forsaking one's sins is as important as confessing them. Compare Ex 9:27.

**28:14** "Happy" - note at Ps 1:1,2.

"Fears" - 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; 23:17; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 112:1.

"Hardens" - Ex 7:13; Ps 95:8; Rom 2:5; Heb 3:13,15.

**28:15** Some rulers have been (and some still are) as bad as cruel, ravenous beasts. The final world ruler will be the most awful example of this (Rev 13:1-8).

**28:17** Gen 4:14.

**28:18** 10:9; 11:5. There is no real, no permanent security except in the true God Himself.

**28:19** 27:23-27.

**28:20** "Blessings" - Ps 1:1-3.

"Rich" - v 22; 20:21; 23:4; 1 Tim 6:9,10; Jam 5:1-5.

**28:21** It is better to die of starvation than to do wrong.

**28:23** 27:5,6.

**28:24** 19:26; Ex 20:12; Matt 15:4-6.

- 25 He who has a proud heart stirs up strife,  
but he who puts his trust in the LORD  
will prosper.
- 26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,  
but whoever walks wisely will be rescued.
- 27 He who gives to the poor will not lack,  
but he who hides his eyes *from them*  
will have many a curse.
- 28 When the wicked rise up,  
men hide themselves,  
but when they perish, the righteous increase.

**29** He who shows himself stubborn  
after many rebukes will suddenly  
be destroyed,  
and that without remedy.

- 2 When the righteous are in authority  
the people rejoice,  
but when the wicked rule,  
the people mourn.
- 3 Whoever loves wisdom brings joy to his father,  
but he who associates with prostitutes  
squanders *his* wealth.
- 4 The king gives stability to the land by justice,  
but he who accepts bribes overthrows it.
- 5 A man who flatters his neighbour  
is spreading a net for his feet.
- 6 In the transgression of an evil man  
*there is a snare*,  
but the righteous sing and rejoice.
- 7 The righteous are concerned with the

- cause of the poor,  
*but* the wicked do not consider *it*.
- 8 Scornful men bring a city into a snare,  
but wise *men* turn away wrath.
- 9 *If* a wise man argues with a foolish man,  
whether he rages or laughs,  
*there is* no rest.
- 10 The bloodthirsty hate the upright,  
but the righteous seek to make his soul *secure*.
- 11 A fool utters everything in his mind,  
but a wise *person* holds it back until later.
- 12 If a ruler listens to lies,  
all his servants *become* wicked.
- 13 The poor and the oppressor have this  
in common:  
the LORD gives light to the eyes of both.
- 14 *As for* the king who judges the poor  
with truth,  
his throne will be established forever.
- 15 The rod and correction give wisdom,  
but a child left *to himself* brings his  
mother to shame.
- 16 When the wicked are multiplied,  
transgression increases,  
but the righteous will see their fall.
- 17 Correct your son and he will give you comfort,  
yes, he will give delight to your soul.
- 18 Where *there is* no vision,  
the people perish,  
but he who keeps the law, happy *is* he.

**28:25** 29:25; Ps 2:12; 37:40; 40:4; 125:1.  
**28:26** These two verses (25,26) reveal a  
choice that will have profound results in all  
aspects of our life on earth and into eter-  
nity. The wise man trusts in God, the fool  
trusts himself, his own opinions, his intellect,  
his reasoning power, etc.

**28:27** 14:21; 22:9; Deut 24:19; Ps  
41:1; Matt 25:42. Again the importance  
of helping the poor is emphasized. God  
sees the poor and He sees what we do or  
do not do to help them.

**29:1** 6:15; 24:22; Lev 26:14-17,23-25;  
Deut 28:15,20; 2 Chron 36:15-17; Ps  
64:7; Isa 47:11; Jer 19:15; 36:31;  
1 Thess 5:3; Heb 2:2,3; 12:25.

**29:3** 10:1; 23:15,16.

**29:4** 15:27 (note); 16:12.

**29:5** 26:28; Ps 55:21. A person who  
flatters another is out to accomplish some  
selfish purpose of his own.

**29:6** "A snare" – 1:18; 5:22; 22:5; 26:27;  
Gen 4:7; Num 32:23; John 8:34.

"Rejoice" – Ps 4:7; 32:11; 64:10;  
97:11; Isa 35:10.

**29:7** 28:27; 31:8,9; Ps 41:1; 82:2-4.

**29:8** 16:14; Jam 3:17,18; Num 16:46-  
48; 25:3,7,10-13. Jesus who is the wisdom  
of God, sacrificed Himself and turned away  
the holy anger of God from sinful men who

put their trust in Him.

**29:10** Verse 27; Gen 4:8; 1 Sam 18:10;  
Est 3:8,9; Ps 11:2; 57:4; 64:2-4; Dan  
3:19,20; John 15:18,19; 1 John 3:12. The  
world is a battlefield where the righteous and  
the wicked are involved in a very important  
conflict. It has been such from the days of  
Cain and Abel, and will be to the end of this  
age. The righteous God and His righteous  
people are at war with wickedness, and the  
wicked are at war with righteousness. In  
this struggle there is no such thing as non-  
alignment or neutrality. See Judges 5:23.  
**29:11** 16:32.

**29:12** If a leader does not want the truth he  
will surround himself with wicked people who  
tell him pleasant lies (see 1 Kings 22:1-8).

**29:14** See 16:12; 28:27; Ps 72:1-5;  
Isa 9:7.

**29:15** See 13:24 (note).

**29:16** 10:25; 14:11; 21:12. The righteous  
will eventually see the downfall of the whole  
evil world system and all its wickedness.  
This will be the final result of the struggle  
mentioned in vs 10,27. See Ps 1:6.

**29:17** Discipline will help to form character  
and train children in the way they should  
go. This is the reason God Himself  
disciplines His children – Heb 12:6-11.

**29:18** Vision here means revelations from

- 19 A servant will not be corrected by *mere* words,  
for though he understands he will not respond.
- 20 Do you see a man *who is* hasty in his words?  
*There is* more hope for a fool than for him.
- 21 He who pampers his servant from  
childhood at length will have him  
become *his* son.
- 22 An angry man stirs up strife,  
and a furious man commits many  
transgressions.
- 23 A man's pride will bring him low,  
but the humble in spirit will obtain honour.
- 24 Whoever is partner with a thief hates  
his own soul;  
he hears the oath but tells nothing.
- 25 The fear of man brings a snare,  
but whoever puts his trust in the LORD  
will be safe.
- 26 Many seek the ruler's favour,  
but a man's justice *comes* from  
the LORD.
- 27 An unjust man *is* an abomination to the just,  
and *he who is* upright in the way *is* an  
abomination to the wicked.

**30** The words of Agur the son of Jakeh,  
the oracle.

The man spoke to Ithiel,  
yes, to Ithiel and Ucal:

- 2 Surely I *am* more stupid than *any* man,  
and do not have the understanding of a man.
- 3 I have not learned wisdom,

God given in visions, which was one way God revealed His truth in those times (note at Gen 15:1). Without God's revelation of truth people will do as they please (Jud 21:25; 1 Sam 3:1; Lam 2:9).

"Perish" – the literal meaning of the Hebrew word is "unrestrained", "wild."

"Happy" or "blessed" – 8:32; 28:14; Deut 28:1,2; Ps 1:1,2; 119:1,2.

**29:20** 26:12; Jam 1:19.

**29:22** 15:18; Ps 4:4; Eph 4:26.

**29:23** 15:33; 16:18; 18:12.

**29:24** Lev 5:1.

**29:25** "Fear of man" – 1 Sam 15:24; Isa 5:12,13; John 12:42,43. Fear of man may keep people from doing what they know is right to do. Such fear need have no place in those who trust in the Lord. They are safe forever (Ps 23:4; 27:1; 34:7; 49:5; 56:4; Matt 10:26,28).

**29:26** If we get any justice in this world it will be God who causes it to happen.

**29:27** Verse 10; Ps 97:10; 119:104; 139:21,22 (note).

**30:1** We know nothing of Agur or Ithiel or Ucal except what we have in this chapter. They are not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. The word "oracle" usually denotes a revelation given through a prophet

nor do I have the knowledge of the holy.

- 4 Who has ascended into heaven,  
or descended?  
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?  
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?  
Who has established all the ends of the earth?  
What *is* his name, and what *is* his  
son's name, if you can tell?
- 5 Every word of God *is* pure.  
He *is* a shield to those who put their  
trust in him.
- 6 Do not add to his words,  
lest he rebuke you,  
and you are found to be a liar.
- 7 Two *things* I have asked of you, *LORD*;  
do not refuse *them* to me before I die:
- 8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me;  
give me neither poverty nor riches, *but*  
feed me with my allotted portion of food,
- 9 Or I may become full, and deny *you*,  
and say, "Who *is* the LORD?,"  
or if I am poor *I may* steal and bring  
dishonour to the name of my God.
- 10 Do not accuse a servant to his master,  
lest he curse you,  
and you be found guilty.
- 11 *There is* a generation *that* curses its father,  
and does not bless its mother.
- 12 *There is* a generation *that is* pure in  
its own eyes,

(Isa 13:1; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zech 9:1; Mal 1:1).

**30:2,3** The way to wisdom is to know one's ignorance. God does not reveal His wisdom to those proud of their knowledge (1 Kings 4:7; Jer 1:6; 1 Cor 1:19-21; 8:2; Jam 4:6). What wisdom Agur had was not his own; it was given from heaven – an oracle.

**30:4** Agur here uses questions such as God asked Job (Job chapter 38) to show man's ignorance. We now know from the revelation in the New Testament who has gone up to heaven and come down and who the "son" is (John 3:13; Eph 4:7-10; Rom 1:2-4; Rev 19:12,16).

**30:5** Ps 12:6; 18:30; Gen 15:1.

**30:6** Deut 4:2; 12:32; Rev 22:18,19.

**30:7-9** See the importance Agur gives to honesty and integrity. All those whom God used to write the Bible had the same view. Here is a searching question – if we had only two requests to make to God what would they be? Compare 2 Chron 1:7-12; Ps 27:4. No wise man would ask for wealth or power or position in this world, unless his only motive was to serve God with them.

**30:8** Matt 6:11; 1 Tim 6:6,8; Heb 13:5.

**30:11** 20:20; Ex 20:12; 21:17; Lev 20:9.

**30:12** 12:15; 16:2; Jer 2:35; Luke



- and *yet* is not washed from its filthiness.
- 13 *There* is a generation – oh, how haughty are their eyes!  
And their eyelids are raised *in disdain*.
- 14 *There is* a generation whose teeth *are like* swords,  
and whose jaw teeth *are like* knives,  
to devour the poor from the earth,  
and the needy from *among* men.
- 15 The leech has two daughters, *crying*,  
“Give, give.”  
There are three *things that* are never satisfied,  
*yes*, four *things* never say, “Enough”:
- 16 The grave, and the barren womb,  
the earth *that* is not filled with water,  
and the fire *that* does not say,  
“Enough.”
- 17 The eye *of him who* mocks at *his* father,  
and scorns obedience to *his* mother,  
will be plucked out by the ravens of  
the valley,  
and the young eagles will eat it.
- 18 There are three *things which* are too wonderful for me,  
*yes*, four which I do not understand:
- 19 The way of an eagle in the air,  
the way of a serpent on a rock,  
the way of a ship in the middle of the sea,  
and the way of a man with a maiden.
- 20 *This is* the way of an adulterous woman:  
she eats, and wipes her mouth,  
and says, “I have done nothing wrong!”
- 21 Under three *things* the earth shakes,

- and under *these* four it cannot hold up:
- 22 Under a servant when he reigns,  
and a fool when he is filled with food,
- 23 Under an unloved *woman* when she is married,  
and a maidservant who supplants her mistress.
- 24 There are four *things which are* little on the earth,  
but they *are* exceedingly wise:
- 25 The ants *are* not a strong folk,  
yet they prepare their food in summer;
- 26 The conies, *are only* a feeble folk,  
yet they make their houses in the rocks;
- 27 The locusts have no king,  
yet they all go out in ranks;
- 28 The spider takes hold with its hands,  
and is in kings’ palaces.
- 29 There are three *things* which go at a stately pace,  
*yes*, four are stately when they move:
- 30 A lion *which is* mighty among beasts  
and does not turn aside for anything;
- 31 A strutting rooster; also a he-goat;  
and a king, against whom *there is* no rebellion.
- 32 If you have done foolishly in exalting yourself,  
or if you have plotted evil,  
*lay* your hand on your mouth.
- 33 Surely the churning of milk produces butter,  
and the wringing of the nose brings out blood;  
so the churning of wrath produces strife.

**31** The words of King Lemuel,  
the oracle that his mother taught him.

2 “What, my son?  
And what, the son of my womb?  
And what, the son of my vows?

18:11; 1 John 1:8-10.

**30:13** 6:17; Ps 10:4,5; 18:27; 101:5; Isa 13:11.

**30:14** Ps 3:7; 14:4; 57:4; Amos 8:4; Micah 2:2; 3:2,3.

**30:16** Isa 5:14; Hab 2:5.

“Grave” – in Hebrew “Sheol.”

“Barren” – Gen 30:1; 1 Sam 1:6,10,11.

**30:17** Verse 11.

**30:20** Verse 12.

**30:23** Gen 16:1-6; 29:31,32.

**30:24-28** Practical lessons can be learned and spiritual applications can be made from observing animals. Here are four lessons gained from four weak and insignificant creatures – providing for the future (6:6-8; 27:23-27; Matt 6:19,20), finding refuge (Ps 2:12; 7:1; 11:1; Heb 6:18), united effort (Acts 4:32; 1 Cor 1:10; Eph 4:3), and finding a home in the king’s palace (John 14:2-6; Rev 3:12).

“Conies” – probably the creatures known as rock badgers.

**30:31** The last sentence of this verse could also be translated “and a king secure against revolt.”

“Rooster” – the exact meaning of the obscure Hebrew word is not known. The literal meaning is “one that girds the hips.” Some versions have “greyhound.”

**30:32** “Mouth” – Job 40:4; Rom 3:19. If we have sinned let us repent and not make any effort to defend ourselves.

**30:33** 6:14; 15:1; 29:22.

**31:1** Lemuel was never king in Israel, so he was of some other nation or city. He is not referred to anywhere else in the Bible. His name means belonging to God or devoted to God.

“Oracle” – note at 30:1.

“Mother” – who can estimate the value of a godly mother who dedicates her children to God and teaches them the truth of God? See Deut 6:6,7; 1 Sam 1:21-28; 2 Tim 1:5; 3:15.

**31:2** 1 Sam 1:11.

- 3 Do not give your strength to women,  
or your ways to that which destroys kings.
- 4 *It is* not for kings, O Lemuel,  
*it is* not for kings to drink wine,  
or for rulers *to imbibe* strong drink,
- 5 Or they may drink and forget the law,  
and pervert the judgment of some of  
the afflicted.
- 6 Give strong drink to him who is about  
to perish,  
and wine to those who have heavy hearts.
- 7 Let him drink and forget his poverty,  
and remember his misery no more.
- 8 Open your mouth for the dumb,  
in the cause of all *who are*  
facing destruction.
- 9 Open your mouth, judge righteously,  
and plead the cause of the poor and needy."
- 10 Who can find a virtuous woman?  
For her worth *is* far above rubies.
- 11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her,  
so that he will have no need of plunder.
- 12 She will do him good and not evil  
all the days of her life.
- 13 She looks for wool and flax,  
and works willingly with her hands.
- 14 She is like the merchants' ships;  
she brings her food from a distance.
- 15 She also rises while it is yet night,  
and gives food to her household,  
and a portion to her maidens.

- 16 She considers a field, and buys it;  
from the produce of her hands she  
plants a vineyard.
- 17 She goes to work with vigor,  
and strengthens her arms.
- 18 She sees that her business *is* good;  
her lamp does not go out at night.
- 19 She puts her hands to the spindle,  
and her hands hold the distaff.
- 20 She stretches out her hand to *help* the poor;  
yes, she extends her hands to the needy.
- 21 She is not afraid for her household  
*when the snow falls*,  
for all her household *are* clothed with scarlet.
- 22 She makes for herself coverings of tapestry;  
her clothing *is* silk and purple.
- 23 Her husband is known in the gates,  
when he sits among the elders of the land.
- 24 She makes fine linen and sells *it*,  
and delivers sashes to the merchant.
- 25 Strength and honour *are* her clothing,  
and she rejoices in the future.
- 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,  
and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
- 27 She looks well to the ways of her household,  
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;  
her husband *also*, and he praises her.
- 29 Many daughters have done virtuously,  
but you excel them all.
- 30 Charm *is* deceitful and beauty *is* vain,

**31:3** 5:1-14; Deut 17:17; 1 Kings 11:3.  
**31:4,5** 20:1; Eccl 10:16,17; Isa 5:22.  
Drunkenness causes men to forget righte-  
ousness and brings them under the power  
of their sinful natures.  
**31:6,7** Ps 104:15; Matt 27:34; 1 Tim  
5:23. Wine should not be misused but used  
very wisely, if used at all.  
**31:8,9** 16:10; 24:23; 28:27; 29:7; Ps  
82:3; Isa 1:17.  
"Who are facing destruction" - literally,  
"sons of destruction."  
**31:10** In other words, such women, though  
rare, are well worth searching for. Her good  
qualities are far more valuable than any  
dowry that could be offered. They will be  
great blessings in both practical and spiri-  
tual ways to their husbands and children.  
Such a woman is what she is because she  
fears the Lord (v 30). Without the fear of  
the Lord there is no truly noble character,  
no real spirituality, no wisdom worthy of the  
name.  
"Virtuous" - the Hebrew word literally  
means "strong" or "able" or "efficient."  
**31:11,12** 12:4.  
**31:13-27** She is hard-working (vs 13,15,  
17,27),  
Shows good business sense (vs 16,18, 24),  
Has compassion on the poor (v 20),

Plans for the changing seasons  
(v 21,22,25),  
Is an honor to her husband (v 23),  
Has strength of character (v 25),  
Has the wisdom to instruct her children  
and to advise others (v 26),  
And can well manage the affairs of her  
household (v 27).  
If it is God's will for you to marry, search  
for such an one! Do not consider lesser  
things. If one like this is found, all your  
efforts will be well rewarded. How sad it is  
that when looking for a wife so many people  
(including many Christians) think mainly of  
how much the (illegal) dowry will be, or what  
her caste is, or what her job qualifications  
or degrees, or some other such considera-  
tion which means nothing in God's eyes  
and should mean nothing in ours.  
**31:28** Such a wife is blessed by God and a  
source of blessing to others.  
**31:29** Women who have big careers, who  
accomplish much in society or government  
or some field of science or art may gain  
praise and fame, but in God's eyes such  
are not the equal of this kind of woman,  
unless they have her qualities. Let us learn  
to look at matters as God sees them.  
"Virtuously" - see v 10.  
**31:30** 1 Pet 3:3-5. If only young women

<i>but</i> the woman <i>who</i> fears the LORD, she will be praised.	31 Give her the product of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.
would give up vain pursuits and seek the really important things, the noble character described in the preceding verses could become theirs. Proverbs closes as it opens with emphasis on the fear of the LORD	(1:7). <b>31:31</b> She has earned the reward of respect and praise. They who fear the Lord should be honored by men, and will certainly be honored by God.

# ECCLESIASTES

**Author :**

The book itself does not give us the name of the author, but most of the indications point to King Solomon. See 1:1,12,16; 2:4-9; 12:9.

**Date :**

Solomon reigned 970-930 BC. He wrote this book probably toward the end of his life.

**Theme :**

What is good in this world? Is it possible to make life meaningful? What is the purpose of this life we must live? These are the kinds of questions that stirred Solomon to search for the truth about life. God decided to show that the total of what is known to men is very little. He wanted to make known to them how empty and meaningless life is for those who are at a distance from Himself. He determined to have this truth written down and included in the Bible. He chose the individual who should reveal this truth through his own researches and experiences and write it down. He made that individual wiser than any other man who ever lived, wiser than Socrates or Buddha or Confucius or anyone else who ever gained a reputation for wisdom (except, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ who is more than a mere man and is Himself the "wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24,30; Col 2:2,3,9). Also God made that individual richer than any other person on earth. He gave him the opportunities and the abilities to experience everything than men can experience. Also God gave him an intellect that wanted to inquire into everything, the kind of mind that could thoroughly examine evidence and weigh it carefully, and a powerful desire to discover the meaning of life. The man God chose is Solomon. One of the results of God's choice is this little book of Ecclesiastes. We can learn from it that man's wisdom, thoughts and efforts are not enough to discover the truth about life and its meaning. For that we need the Word of God. In that alone we can find a foundation for a satisfying and meaningful life, and a happy eternity.

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**1** The words of the teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 Vanity of vanities, says the teacher, vanity of vanities. All *is* vanity.

3 What profit does a man have from all his labour which he undertakes under the sun?

4 *One* generation passes away and *another* generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

5 The sun also rises, and the sun goes down and hurries to its place where it rose.

6 The wind goes toward the south and turns around to the north; it swirls about continually, and the wind returns again on its circuits.

7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full. To the place from which the rivers come, there they return again.

8 All things *are* wearisome; man cannot utter *it*. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, or the ear filled with hearing.

9 The thing that has been, *is* what will be; and what has been done *is* what will be done; and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

10 Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this *is* new?" It has already been in olden

times, which were before us.

11 *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; nor will there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come by *those* who will come afterwards.

12 I, the teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom everything that is done under heaven; this unhappy task God has given to the sons of man to be occupied with.

14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, look, all *is* emptiness and chasing the wind.

15 *What is* crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.

16 I spoke in my own heart, saying, "Look, I have amassed and acquired more wisdom than all *those* who have been before me in Jerusalem; yes, my heart has had great experience in wisdom and knowledge."

17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly; I have come to see that this also is striving for wind.

18 For in much wisdom *is* much grief; and he

**1:1** We see in 12:9,10 what Solomon did as a "teacher" – he searched for knowledge, tried to find the best words to express it, and taught the people with righteous and true words. The Hebrew word here translated "teacher" could also be translated "preacher" or "guru." In Solomon's case much of his teaching was done, it seems, by writing rather than speaking. Ecclesiastes, Song of songs, and most of Proverbs are from his pen (and from God who inspired him to write).

**1:2,3** Solomon did not mean that the fear of God, and obedience to God's Word are vain (see 12:1,13. See too Paul's words in 1 Cor 15:58). He meant that all of man's activities "under the sun" – that is, on his own and apart from God – are vain. This key phrase "under the sun" occurs 29 times in this book. A similar phrase "under heaven" occurs 3 times. The word "vanity" occurs 35 times. This is very remarkable in so small a book. At the end Solomon indicates that man can be what he ought to be, can escape from the vanity of life under the sun, only by having a right relationship to God and those things which are *above* the sun.

"Vanity" – the Hebrew word literally means a breath, or a breeze, a vapour or mist or darkness. From that it came to mean something that was empty or futile.

**1:4-11** Solomon now begins to give his reasons for saying all is vanity under the sun. Though the earth permanently remains, all men must die and leave it (v 4). In Ecclesiastes death is a dark shadow cast over all of life (2:16,18,21; 3:2,18-20; 5:15,16; 6:12; 7:2; 8:8; 9:2-6,12; 12:5-8). A brief existence that is taken up only with the things of earth must be meaningless. If this life is all there is for the individual,

then life is a tiresome burden and not worth living. There can never be any permanent satisfaction in studying the ceaseless cycles of nature which do not change (vs 5-8); there can be no hope that something really new will come along that can give men ultimate satisfaction in this world (vs 9,10); achievements that bring name and fame are also vain, even if people remember them, and they won't remember them for long (v 11).

**1:12-14** Solomon did not reach his conclusion about the vanity of life on earth through ignorance or superficial examination. He made the most thorough search of this subject that was possible to him, perhaps the most thorough search any man ever made.

**1:14** "Chasing the wind" – this phrase occurs 9 times. It signifies completely useless, fruitless effort.

"Chasing" – or "grasping for." The Hebrew word does not mean "vexation." "wind" – or breath or spirit.

**1:15** He gives here two further reasons for the uselessness of human effort – much is crooked and wrong in man's existence on earth, but man cannot make it right; and there are so many things lacking for a fully satisfying life that man cannot even know all of them, let alone supply the lack.

**1:16** Who but Solomon could truly say this? (1 Kings 3:12; 4:29-31).

**1:17,18** "Madness and folly" – is this a partial explanation of 1 Kings 11:1-8? Solomon did not leave any stone unturned in his search for meaning in life. He investigated matters it is better for men in general to leave alone. In his explorations he went into realms of foolishness and darkness (2:3,8,10,12; 7:25). He wanted to experience whatever it was possible to

who gains more knowledge gains more sorrow.

**2** I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; so enjoy pleasant *things*; and, look, this also *was* emptiness.

2 I said of laughter, "*It is* madness!", and of pleasure, "What does it accomplish?"

3 I sought in my heart to give myself to wine, *while* my heart was still guiding *me* with wisdom, and to lay hold on folly, until I could see what *was* good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their life.

4 I undertook great works. I built houses for myself. I planted vineyards for myself.

5 I made gardens and orchards for myself, and in them I planted trees *bearing all kinds of* fruit.

6 I made pools of water for myself, with which to water a forest of growing trees.

7 I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves born in my house. I also had great possessions of large and small cattle, more than all who were in Jerusalem before me.

8 I also gathered silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and of the provinces. I obtained male and female singers for myself and things delightful to the sons of men, musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

9 So I was great, and increased more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

experience to see if there was any sense to any of it. He is not an example to us in this. We need not enter those depths where he went. His experiences and conclusions are set forth by God in this His Word to teach us important lessons so that we might avoid the way he went. Solomon came back from the realms of foolishness and darkness and declares to us that there is nothing there but useless, fruitless, vain activity. Even the pursuit of human wisdom apart from God is an empty thing and in the end brings only sadness.

**2:1-10** In his search for meaning in life Solomon turns to pleasures, even mad and foolish pleasures. He declares his purpose in v 3. He is tormented by the supreme question every man should ask. In our brief life on earth what should we be doing? Is there anything really worthwhile? Is there some good that men should pursue? Observe that he does not here go to the one place men should go for the answers to such questions – the Word of God. As the source of information he puts his own thoughts and experimentations. Notice 1:16; 2:1,15; 3:18; etc – "I said in my heart."

**2:4** Some of Solomon's great projects are recorded in 1 Kings chapters 6-10.

**2:9** These words could have been spoken truly only by King Solomon (1 Kings 10:7,23; 1 Chron 29:25; 2 Chron 1:1,12.)

10 And I did not refuse my eyes whatever they desired. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased in all my labour, and this was my reward for all my labour.

11 Then I looked at all the works that my hands had done, and at the labour that I had undertaken to do, and, see, all *was* emptiness and chasing the wind, and *there was* no profit under the sun.

12 And I turned to look at wisdom, and madness, and folly; for what *can* the man *do* who succeeds the king? *Only* what has already been done.

13 Then I saw that wisdom excels folly, as much as light excels darkness.

14 The wise man's eyes *are* in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And I saw also that one event happens to them all.

15 Then I said in my heart, "It will happen to me just as it happens to the fool, and why was I then more wise?" Then I said in my heart that this also *is* emptiness.

16 For *there is* no more permanent remembrance of the wise than of the fool, since what now is will be forgotten in days to come. And how does the wise *man* die? Like the fool.

17 Therefore I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun *brings* sadness to me; for all *is* emptiness and chasing the wind.

18 Yes, I hated all *the results of* my labour which I had done under the sun, because I would

**2:10** He was in a condition where he could have anything he wanted and he denied himself nothing. He indulged himself in every pleasure of the flesh, the senses, and the mind (compare this with the words of the Lord Jesus in Luke 9:23,24).

**2:11** Solomon experienced some satisfaction in his work for a little while, but when it was all over this was his conclusion – nothing was worth doing. He had not found the secret of a meaningful life. He found no joy in wealth and pleasure.

**2:12-17** So he takes up again thoughts of wisdom and folly. For man's brief stay on earth he concludes that wisdom is far superior to folly. But since all must die even this superiority comes at last to nothing. Since death destroys all these distinctions he thinks that life is meaningless.

**2:17** Life without meaning is painful, hateful, intolerable. Let us understand from this what God wants us to understand, namely, that without God, without heavenly purpose, without life eternal that comes through the Lord Jesus, life is empty and futile.

**2:18-23** Solomon sees that there is no permanent value in all the great works he has accomplished, in the vast possessions he has acquired. He knows that he must die and leave all of it behind (see also Ps 39:6; 49:10; Luke 12:20,21,33; 1 Tim 6:6-10).

leave it to the man who succeeds me.

19 And who knows whether he will be a wise *man* or a fool? Yet he will have the control of all *the results* of my labour for which I have worked, and in which I have displayed my wisdom under the sun. This *is* also emptiness.

20 Therefore I utterly despaired *in* my heart of all the labour which I had done under the sun.

21 When there is a man who has laboured with wisdom, and with knowledge, and with skill, still he will leave his portion to a man who has not worked for it. This also *is* emptiness and a great wrong.

22 For what does a man have for all his labour, and for his hearty striving, with which he has laboured under the sun?

23 For all his days *are* painful and grievous; yes, his heart cannot rest at night. This is also emptiness.

24 *There is* nothing better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* his soul should find pleasure in his work. I also saw that this *is* from the hand of God.

25 For who can eat, or who else can hasten *to it*, more than I?

26 For to a man who *is* pleasing in his sight *God* gives wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and collecting, so that he may give *it* to *the one who is* pleasing in God's presence. This also *is* emptiness and chasing the wind.

**3** To everything *there is* a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:

2A time to be born and a time to die;  
a time to plant and a time to uproot  
*what is* planted.

3A time to kill and a time to heal;  
a time to break down and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn and a time to dance;

5 A time to throw stones away,  
and a time to gather stones;  
a time to embrace  
and a time to refrain from embracing;

6A time to get and a time to lose;  
a time to search and a time to give up;

7 A time to tear and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silent and a time to speak;

8 A time to love and a time to hate;  
a time of war and a time of peace.

9 What profit does the worker have from that in which he labours?

10 I have seen the task which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised with.

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has set eternity in their heart, yet no man can find out the work that God has done from beginning to end.

12 I know that *there is* nothing better for them than for *a man* to rejoice, and to do good in his life,

13 And also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good *results* of all his labour; *it is* the gift of God.

14 I know that whatever God does, it will be forever; nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken away from it; and God does *it* so that *men* will fear in his presence.

15 That which has been, still is, and that which is to be has already been; and God requires what is past.

16 And, moreover, under the sun I saw the place of judgment, *that* wickedness *was* there; and the place of righteousness, *that* iniquity *was* there.

17 I said in my heart, "God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for *there is* a time there for

**2:24-26** Solomon thinks that all anyone can do is to make the best of a bad situation and try to find some little happiness in this brief life by submitting to God. Verse 25 is very obscure in Hebrew and so there is a variety of translations.

**3:1-9** Solomon turns from thoughts of his own works and experiments to the world outside. Is there anything there to give life meaning? No. There is only a meaningless cycle of activities. What is done in one time is undone in another. He is not saying each man should do or will do all the things in this list; only that this is the general course of life on earth. And in all of it put together he cannot see anything of permanent value (v 9).

**3:10-15** Any satisfaction in life he can get now comes from thoughts of God. God's works are beautiful and beyond man's understanding (v 11), perfect and permanent (v 14). But man cannot understand what

God has done and is doing, so it is better, he says, to stop being concerned about it and try to find some happiness in his own works (vs 12,13. Also v 22 and 1:24).

In v 11 there is this significant phrase – "He has set eternity in their heart." This is one reason why the things of time, all that is passing and impermanent fail to satisfy our heart.

**3:14** The fear of the Lord is a theme he often wrote about (5:7; 7:18; 8:12,13; 12:13; Prov 1:7; 9:10; 15:33). To produce it in men is one basic reason for God's actions in the world. It is of supreme importance in a life pleasing to God (notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; 130:3,4). In Solomon's eyes it is one thing that is not meaningless, for it has to do with Him who is above the sun.

**3:15** "God requires what is past" – or it might also be translated "God calls back the past."

**3:16,17** Injustice in the world is a fact that

every purpose and for every work."

18 I said in my heart concerning the matter of the sons of men, that God tests them that they might see that they are *like* beasts.

19 For what happens to the sons of men happens to beasts; the same thing happens to them. The one dies just as the other dies; yes, they all have the same breath, so that a man has no advantage over a beast; for all *is* emptiness.

20 All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all return to dust again.

21 Who knows the spirit of man which goes upward, and the spirit of the beast which goes downward to the earth?

22 Therefore I saw that *there is* nothing better than that a man rejoice in his own works; for that *is* his lot. For who will bring him to see what will be after him?

**4** So again I considered all the acts of oppression that are done under the sun, and saw the tears of *those being* oppressed; and they had no comforter, and the power *was* on the side of their oppressors; but they had no comforter.

2 Therefore I praised the dead who have already died more than the living who are still alive.

3 Yes, better off than both of them *is the one* who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

4 Again I considered all labour and all successful achievement, that it comes from man's envy of his neighbour. This *is* also emptiness and chasing the

wind.

5 The fool folds his hands together, and consumes his own flesh.

6 Better *is* a handful *with* quietness, than both hands full *with* labour and chasing the wind.

7 Then again I looked at emptiness under the sun.

8 There is someone without another; also, he has neither child nor brother; yet *there is* no end to all his labour, nor is his eye satisfied with riches, nor *does he say*, "For whom do I labour, and deprive my soul of good *things*?" This *is* also emptiness; yes, it *is* a sorry business.

9 Two *are* better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour.

10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls, for he has no one else to help him up.

11 Again, if two lie down together, then they have warmth; but how can one be warm *alone*?

12 And while one can overpower him who is alone, two can withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

13 Better *is* a poor and a wise youth than an old and foolish king who will no longer accept advice.

14 For he may come out of prison to reign, even though he *may have been* born poor in his kingdom.

15 I saw that all the living under the sun side with the second youth who takes his place.

16 *There is* no end to all these people, to all who were before them; also those who come later

troubled the minds of many thoughtful persons in the Bible (Job 24:1-12; Ps 10:1-12; 13:1,2; 73:2-12; Hab 1:2-11). Solomon knew that the only answer for man's injustice is God's just judgments overturning the false judgments of men. But he did not know when or how this will take place. (Christians now know – Matt 16:27; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:2-11.)

**3:18-21** Observe carefully his words in v 18 (also 2:1,15) – "I said in my heart." These verses (and some others in this book) are not a revelation God gave him but how things appeared to him with his human wisdom. We must not get our doctrine from what Solomon thought, but from what God has revealed through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Solomon himself learned the truth of his question in v 21 and stated it in 12:7. But man with his unaided reasoning can never find the answer to what happens after death. God must reveal it. We have this revelation in the Bible, to some extent in the Old Testament, fully in the New Testament (see Job 10:21,22; Ps 16:9-11; 49:15; Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2,3; 2 Tim 1:10). **4:1** Solomon looks about the world again and finds it hard to practice the principle he lays down for others in 1:24; 2:24; 3:12,13,22. He is utterly depressed by what he sees – the senseless cruelty (vs 1-3),

achievement produced by envy (v 4), foolishness (vs 5,6), lonely and dissatisfied toil (vs 7-12), and the meaninglessness of high position and popularity (vs 13-16). It is all a vain and empty show. All of man's activities are pointless and fruitless. There is nothing in any of them to admire, nothing that points to the good thing that a man should do all the days of his life.

Solomon saw something at least of what John put so clearly in his first letter:

*"For all that is in the world – the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and its desires with it; but whoever does the will of God lives forever"* (see 1 John 2:15-17).

Solomon concludes that life in this kind of world is so bad that death is better, and not being born at all is the best of all (vs 2,3. See notes at Job 3:1,20-22).

How thankful we should be for the revelations of the New Testament! There we see the eternal value and meaning of human activity performed for Christ's glory (Matt 10:42; John 12:26; 1 Cor 15:58). A true Christian need never despair because of what he experiences or sees in this world. God has a wonderful purpose and will fulfill it (Rom 8:18-30).

will not rejoice in him. Surely this also *is* emptiness and chasing the wind.

**5** Guard your steps when you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.

2 Do not be rash with your mouth, and do not let your heart be hasty to speak anything in God's presence; for God *is* in heaven, and you on earth, so let your words be few.

3 For a dream comes through the abundance of business, and a fool's voice *is known* through the abundance of words.

4 When you make a vow to God, do not be slow in paying it, for *he has* no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed.

5 *It is* better for you not to vow than that you vow and not pay.

6 Do not let your mouth cause your body to sin, nor say before the *temple* messenger that it *was* a mistake. Why should God be angry at your words, and destroy the work of your hands?

7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there is* also emptiness; but your *must* fear God.

8 If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violation of judgment and justice in a province, do not be surprised at the matter; for one *official* has a higher one watching over *him*; and *there are* higher ones than they.

9 Moreover the produce of the earth is for all; the king *himself* is served by the fields.

10 He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver, nor he who loves wealth with *his* income. This also *is* emptiness.

11 When goods increase, those who eat them increase; and what benefit *is there* to their owners, except to fix his eyes *on them*?

12 The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet,

**5:1-7** Solomon now turns to the matter of religion. It is the one thing he does not think is vain, the thing that men should have above everything (note on 3:14). But he sees very little of it that seems real to him. Most people dream of prosperity and success and are willing to make even foolish vows, and speak many empty words to God. In other words, what passes for religion with most people is a vain, empty, worthless thing. See notes at Ps 50:7-21; Isa 1:11-17. Compare Matt 15:8,9; 23:2-32. **5:8-17** Society is full of corruption and self-seeking. Men struggle for wealth which is meaningless. In v 8 Solomon tells us not to be surprised at what happens. He has learned that corruption in society comes from greed and injustice in men's hearts. Corrupt human beings cannot produce satisfactory societies (7:20; 9:3).

**5:10-12** Instead of bringing satisfaction, more and more wealth produces more and

whether he eats little or much, but the wealth of the rich will not allow him to sleep.

13 There is a grievous evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, riches being hoarded by their owners to their hurt.

14 But those riches are lost through a bad venture, and *when* he becomes the father of a son *there is* nothing in his hand.

15 As he came naked out of his mother's womb, so he will depart as he came, and take nothing from his labour which he can carry away in his hand.

16 And this also *is* a grievous evil, *that* he will go just as he came; and what profit does he have who has laboured for the wind?

17 Also all his days he eats in darkness, and *he has* much sorrow and wrath and sickness.

18 See what I have seen: *it is* good and proper *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for this *is* his lot.

19 Also *concerning* every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and has given him power to partake of it, and to accept his lot and to rejoice in his labour, this *is* the gift of God.

20 For he will not reflect much on the days of his life, because God keeps *him* occupied with the gladness in his heart.

**6** There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it *is* common among men:

2 *There is* a man to whom God has given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he lacks nothing of all his soul desires, but God has not given him power to partake of it, and a stranger consumes it. This *is* emptiness, and it *is* a grievous affliction.

3 If a man becomes the father of a hundred *children*, and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, and his soul is not filled with more worry. These words were written, not by a poor man who envied the rich, but by one of the richest persons who ever lived.

**5:13-16** Riches are not lasting even in this world, and nothing can be taken out of the world when a man dies (2:18-23). The only riches we can keep forever are those we give away. See Matt 6:19,20; Luke 12:33; 18:22). Selfishness will end in self-destruction and the loss of everything the selfish man pursues for himself.

**5:17** This is the result of a life lived for the things of this world. God has made us for Himself, not for anything less. If we live for those lesser things our lives will end in misery.

**5:18-20** Solomon returns to the thoughts expressed in 2:24-26 and 3:12-14. If there is any happiness for man on earth it is the gift of God.

**6:1-6** Solomon has said it is good for men to find satisfaction and happiness in their work. But he well knows that many are never



good, and also he does not have a *proper* burial, I say *that* a still-born child *is* better off than he.

4 For it comes in with emptiness, and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness.

5 Moreover it has not seen the sun, or known *anything*. This one has more rest than the other;

6 Yea, even though he lives twice a thousand years, but has seen no good. Do not all go to one place?

7 All the labour of man *is* for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not satisfied.

8 For what has the wise more than the fool? What *benefit* does the poor have who knows how to walk before the living?

9 Better *is* what the eyes see than the wandering of the desire. This *is* also emptiness and chasing the wind.

10 What has been is already named, and it is known what man *is*; no one can contend with him who is mightier than he.

11 Since there are many things that increase emptiness, what *is* man the better?

12 For who knows what *is* good for man in *this* life, all the days of his futile life which he spends like a shadow? For who can tell a man what will come after him under the sun?

**7** A good name *is* better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

2 *It is* better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that *is* the end of all men; and the living should take *it* to his heart.

able to do this. The meaninglessness of life finds them out. Again he says that it is better for such people if they had never been born (4:2,3).

**6:6** "One place" – he here means the grave, not what may happen beyond the grave.

**6:7-9** Man continually tries to find satisfaction in the world, but never can. Both the rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish are victims of their desires.

**6:10,11** God knows all about man and everything else. He is the Almighty and no one can win an argument with Him. The more one multiplies words in his argument the more he says what is meaningless (compare Job 9:1-4; 38:1,2; 40:1-5; 42:1-6).

**6:12** Solomon admits failure to find in the world what he set out to find (2:3). The wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 3:12) confesses his ignorance. See also 7:23,24; 8:17.

**7:1-6** Solomon is convinced of the meaninglessness of his own life (v 15). Still he is sure that wisdom is better than folly and that there is a wise way of looking at things, and a wise way of living this brief life. He now sets out to describe what he thinks is the way of wisdom. He continues this theme

3 Sorrow *is* better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

4 The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools *is* in the house of pleasure.

5 *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

6 For the laughter of fools *is* like the crackling of thorns under a pot. This also *is* emptiness.

7 Surely oppression makes a wise man foolish, and a bribe destroys the heart.

8 Better *is* the end of a thing than its beginning, *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.

9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit to anger, for anger rests in the bosom of fools.

10 Do not say, "Why is *it* that former days were better than these?" For you are not asking wisely concerning this.

11 Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance, and those who see the sun *will have* benefit *from it*.

12 For wisdom *is* a defense, *and* money *is* a defense, but the excellence of knowledge *is that* wisdom gives life to those who have it.

13 Consider the work of God; for who can straighten what he has made crooked?

14 Be happy in the day of prosperity, but in the day of adversity consider. God has made the one as well as the other, so that man should not discover *what comes* after him.

15 I have seen everything in the days of my futility. There is a just *man* who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked *man* who

to the end of the book.

**7:1** 4:2,3; 6:3.

**7:2** The wise man will not reject the thought of death but will face it and learn much needed lessons from it.

**7:3-6** It is far more important for the heart to become wise than for men to go into empty pleasures which, for a time, bring laughter to the face. Sorrow can teach important lessons nothing else can teach.

**7:5** Ps 141:5; Prov 13:18; 15:31,32.

**7:7** Ex 23:8; Lev 19:15; Deut 10:17; Ps 26:10; Prov 6:35; 15:27; 17:8.

**7:8** Prov 14:29; Jam 1:4.

**7:9** Prov 16:32; 17:14; 1 Cor 13:4,5.

**7:11-14** 1:15. What God does man cannot undo. And what God may do no one can tell (3:11; 8:17; Rom 11:33). God creates either good times or bad according to His perfect knowledge of what is just, right, and fitting for a people and a place. God wants men to consider their ways, turn to Him, recognize Him as the giver of all good things, and come to revere, trust, and love Him alone.

**7:15-18** Verse 15 gives a truth that Job knew and Job's friends refused to consider (Job

prolongs *his life* in his wickedness.

16 Do not be too righteous; neither be overly wise. Why should you destroy yourself?

17 Do not be too wicked; neither be foolish. Why should you die before your time?

18 *It is* good for you to grasp the one, and not to let your hand go from the other; for he who fears God will depart from all *extremes*.

19 Wisdom strengthens the wise more than ten mighty *men* who are in the city.

20 For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good and who does not sin.

21 Also do not take heed to every word that is spoken, or you may hear your servant curse you;

22 For also your own heart knows that you yourself have often cursed others.

23 All this I have tested by wisdom. I said, "I will be wise", but it *was* far from me.

24 Who can discover what is far off and exceeding deep?

25 I applied my heart to know and to search and to seek out wisdom, and the reason *of things*, and to know the wickedness of folly, and of foolishness *and* madness;

26 And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart *is* snares and nets, *and* her hands *like* chains. Whoever pleases God will escape from her, but the sinner will be taken by her.

27 Look, I have discovered this, says the

21:4-34). The wise man Solomon knew very well that sometimes the good die young and the wicked live on to a ripe old age. He probably means that some righteous people perish at the hands of the wicked.

**7:16-18** It is not easy to see exactly what Solomon meant by his words in v 16. Possibly he was warning against self-righteousness and pride of wisdom. Perhaps he is making a false conclusion from his own worldly wisdom. Remember, this book gives Solomon's thoughts about what is best for men, not what God may think. All he says must be tested by the revelation God has given through Christ and His apostles.

Possibly Solomon means this: In a meaningless and wicked world for a man to try to push righteousness too far is to make himself an object of hatred and may cost him his life (compare Isa 59:15). If men do not desire righteousness it is useless and dangerous to force it on them. See Matt 7:6. We must be as righteous in our personal lives as it is possible to be, but we are not to be the accusers, prosecutors and judges of others who care nothing for our righteous principles. Of course great wickedness and foolishness are even more dangerous (v 17). It may bring the wrath of God as well as the wrath of men. The man who truly fears God will be able to discern the right course to follow (v 18).

**7:19** 2:13; Prov 8:14; 21:22.

**7:20** 2 Chron 6:36; Ps 14:3; Prov 20:9;

teacher, *adding one thing* to another, to find out the explanation 28 which my soul is still seeking, but have not found: I have found one *good* man in a thousand, but I have not found a woman among all those.

29 Look, I have found only this: God has made man upright, but they have sought out many devices.

**8** Who *is* like the wise *man*? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom makes his face shine, and the sternness of his face will be changed.

2 I *counsel you* to keep the king's command, because of the oath before God.

3 Do not be in a hurry to go out of his sight. Do not stand up for an evil thing, for he will do whatever pleases him.

4 Since the word of a king *has* power, who may say to him, "What are you doing?"

5 Whoever keeps the *king's* command will experience no harm; and a wise man's heart will discern both the *proper* time and procedure.

6 Because for every matter there is a time and procedure, though the misery of man *is* heavy on him.

7 For he does not know what will be, so who can tell him when it will be?

8 *There is* no man that has power over the spirit

Eccl 9:3; Rom 3:23. A truth known by every truly wise man.

**7:23** 1:17. Since he could not attain wisdom some of his conclusions were less than wise. See also 6:12; 8:17.

**7:24** Job 28:12-28; 1 Cor 1:19-25; 2:4-8.

**7:25** 1:17.

**7:26** Prov 2:16-19; 5:1-6.

**7:27** This was the great search of his life.

**7:28** A word that came out of much experience (1 Kings 11:1-4). But Solomon, it seems, went after the wrong sort of women and it is not surprising that what he found was poor quality. We should not think this is a divine revelation concerning all women.

**7:29** Gen 1:26,27,31; 3:1-7. Since man's fall into sin all men seek how to get satisfaction in their own way without God.

**8:1** In this chapter Solomon continues to give out some matters his wisdom has taught him.

**8:2-5** See Rom 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13,14. A wise man knows that disobedience to the rulers God has appointed will bring even more misery to men. Of course, men's supreme obedience must be to God the heavenly King. If earthly rulers command things contrary to God's commands we are at liberty to disobey them (Acts 4:18-20; 5:29).

**8:7** Jam 4:13-16.

**8:8** "Over the spirit to retain the spirit" -

to retain the spirit; neither *has anyone* power over the day of *his* death. And *there is* no discharge in war; nor will wickedness deliver those who practice it.

9 All this I have seen, and have applied my mind to every deed that is done under the sun. *There is* a time when one man rules another to his own hurt.

10 And so I saw the wicked buried, those who had gone in and out of the holy place, and they were forgotten in the city where they had done so. This also *is* emptiness.

11 Because sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men among them is fully set on doing evil.

12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and his *days* are prolonged, yet I know definitely that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear in his presence,

13 But it will not be well with the wicked, nor will he prolong *his* days, *which are* like a shadow; because he does not fear in God's presence.

14 There is an empty thing which is done on earth; there are righteous *people* to whom things happen in accordance with the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked *people* to whom things happen in accordance with the work of the righteous. I said that this also *is* emptiness.

15 Then I commended pleasure, because a man

has no better thing under the sun than to eat and to drink and to be merry, for this will remain with him in his labour *during* the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done on the earth (and *one's* eyes may not see sleep day or night),

17 Then I saw all the work of God, *and* that a man cannot discover the work that is done under the sun. Because though a man labours to search *it* out, yet he will not find *it*; yes and though a wise *man* may think *he* knows, yet he will not be able to discover *the truth about it*.

**9** For I considered all this in my heart to declare all of this: the righteous and the wise, and their deeds, *are* in the hand of God. No man knows whether *there will be* love or hatred *in* all *that* awaits him.

2 All *things come* alike to all. The same event *comes* to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean and to the unclean, to him who offers sacrifice and to him who does not offer sacrifice; *as it is* to the good, so to the sinner, *and* to him who takes an oath *as to him* who fears *to take* an oath.

3 This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* the same event to all.

this could also be translated "over the wind to retain the wind" (the same Hebrew word means both wind and spirit).

"Nor will wickedness deliver those who practice it" – sin is more powerful than the strongest person and brings people into bondage (John 8:34; Rom 6:16; 7:18). Those who begin to practice sin and then try to get free of it will find out how powerful it is. There is a war going on continually on earth. It is between evil and good, and evil will never willingly let go its captives as long as this war is going on. Only Jesus can free the captives – Luke 4:18; John 8:36.

**8:9** "One man rules another" – this may bring harm both to those who do it and to those who have to suffer it (compare 1 Pet 5:1-3; Matt 20:25-27).

**8:11** When there is no punishment for wrong doing people may think they can get away with anything. So God has appointed those who bear the sword (Rom 12:3,4).

**8:12,13** He knew what all truly wise men know. But he did not know how and when it would go better with God-fearing men. The New Testament reveals it fully (e.g. Matt 25:31-46; John 5:28,29).

**8:14** This shows that what Solomon said in vs 12,13 was a matter of faith, not of observation.

**8:15** He returns to a previous conclusion (2:24; 3:12,13; 5:18,19). But there is a better way for men to live. That is to deny themselves for the sake of others and find

their joy in Christ. See Luke 9:23; 14:27,33. **8:16,17** This wisest of men again confesses his ignorance (7:23,24. See Deut 29:29).

**9:1** Solomon admitted that no one can understand what is going on in the world (8:17), but this did not keep him from considering matters and reaching some conclusions. Notice again that what follows gives his thoughts, not God's teaching. God revealed to us what Solomon thought but He did not put His stamp of approval on all of Solomon's thoughts.

**9:2-6** He means that all die, all go to the grave. He does not know what may happen after death but he thinks the dead remain in silence and ignorance. Compare Job 10:20-22. Apart from God's revelation men may come to this conclusion, but the teaching of the New Testament is different (2 Cor 5:6-8; Phil 1:22,23; Heb 12:22-24; Rev 6:9-11; 7:9,10,13-17). It is far, far better to be a dead Christian believer than a living unbeliever.

**9:3** 7:20; Mark 7:20-23; Rom 1:29-32. A sinful life is like insanity. Men live as they please without God and without hope, violating God's laws and their own consciences, seemingly not caring about God's judgment and the punishment that awaits them. They are like men recklessly playing foolish games in a building burning and ready to collapse on their heads. In the light of the truth of the Bible, to run after the empty things of the world, to be filled with illusions

Moreover, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and afterwards *they go* to the dead.

4 For to him who is joined to all the living there is hope; for a live dog is better off than a dead lion.

5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead do not know anything, nor do they any longer have a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

6 Also their love and their hatred and their envy have now perished; nor do they have any more share forever in anything that is done under the sun.

7 Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works.

8 Let your garments be always white, and do not let your head lack oil.

9 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love, all the days of the life of your futility which he has given you under the sun, all the days of your futility; for that *is* your lot in *this* life, and in your labour which you toil at under the sun.

10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with your might; for *there is* no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.

11 Again, I saw under the sun that the race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; nor *is* bread to the wise or riches to men of understanding or favour to men of skill, but time and chance happens to them all.

12 Also man does not know *when* his time *will come*; like fish caught in a harmful net and like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men *are* ensnared in a bad time, when it suddenly falls on them.

13 Also I have seen this wisdom under the sun, and it *seemed* great to me:

14 *There was* a little town and few men in it; and there came a great king against it and besieged it, and built great siege works against it.

15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man,

and delusions of their worth, to chase after the wind and live for vanity is madness. Literal insanity means to be out of touch with reality. Spiritual insanity is to be out of touch with spiritual reality. The spiritually insane are deluded and regard their fantasies about the spiritual world as reality and reality as fantasy.

**9:7-10** Here are more conclusions of the natural mind of Solomon unaided by divine revelation. He thinks that since death ends men's brief and meaningless life and they lie down in silence and ignorance, the best he can do is to work hard and enjoy life if he can. Solomon returns to this view again and again for he cannot see anything more worthwhile (2:24; 3:12,13; 5:18,19; 8:15).

and by his wisdom he delivered the city. But no one remembered that poor man.

16 Then I said, "Wisdom *is* better than strength." Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *was* despised, and his words were not heeded.

17 The words of wise *men* in quiet *are to be* heard more than the shout of the one who rules over fools.

18 Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroys much good.

**10** Dead flies cause the ointment of the perfumer to stink; *so does* a little folly him who has a reputation for wisdom *and* honour.

2 A wise man's heart *moves* toward his right, but a fool's heart toward his left.

3 And even when the one who is a fool walks in the way, his wisdom fails *him*, and he says to everyone *that he is* a fool.

4 If the spirit of the ruler rises up against you, do not leave your place; for submission pacifies great offenses.

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, like an error *that* proceeds from the ruler:

6 Folly is given a very high place, and the rich sit in a low place.

7 I have seen servants on horses, and princes walking like servants on the ground.

8 He who digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever breaks through a hedge, will be bitten by a serpent.

9 Whoever quarries stones will be hurt with them, *and* he who splits wood will be endangered by it.

10 If the iron *axe* is dull, and he does not sharpen the edge, then he must exert more strength. And wisdom *has* the advantage of success.

11 If the serpent bites before being charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer.

12 The words of a wise man's mouth *are* gracious, but the lips of a fool consume him.

"Grave" (v 10) – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**9:11,12** He thinks man is a victim of chance and circumstance and has no control over his destiny.

**9:13-18** He still considers wisdom a desirable thing, but he has no hope that the world will remember and reward the wise man.

**10:1-20** Solomon thinks that even in a meaningless existence wisdom is superior to folly, and in this chapter he gives some proverbs to illustrate this truth.

**10:8** When people try to do evil to others they themselves may be harmed the most (7:14-16; 9:16; Ps 57:6; Prov 5:22).

**10:11** Ps 58:4,5.

**10:12,13** Prov 10:6,32; 14:3; 5:2; 18:7.

13 The beginning of the words of his mouth *is* foolishness, and the end of his talk *is* wicked madness.

14 A fool is also full of words. A man cannot tell what will happen, and who can tell him what will happen after him?

15 The labour of the fool wearies him; he does not *even* know how to go to the city.

16 Woe to you, O land, when your king *is* a youth, and your princes eat in the morning!

17 Blessed *are* you, O land, when your king *is* the son of nobles, and your princes eat at the proper time, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

18 By much laziness the building sags, and through idleness of the hands the house leaks.

19 A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes *life* merry, but money *has the answer for* everything.

20 Do not curse the king, not even in your thoughts; and do not curse the rich in your bedroom; for a bird of the air will carry the voice, and that which has wings will tell the matter.

**11** Cast your bread on the waters, for you will find it after many days.

2 Give a portion to seven and also to eight, for you do not know what disaster will come on the earth.

3 If the clouds are full of rain they empty *themselves* on the earth, and if the tree falls toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will be.

**10:14** 6:12; 9:1.

**10:16** "Youth" – or "child."

**10:18** 4:5; Prov 20:4; 24:30-34.

**11:1** This truth appears in other places in the Bible – Ps 41:1,2; Prov 11:24; 14:21; 19:17; 22:9; Luke 6:35,38; 2 Cor 9:6-9; Gal 6:9,10; Heb 6:10. Cast your bread upon the waters means to give of what you have to help others. It may seem like a complete loss to you, even a foolish use of what you have (like literally casting bread on the waters). But God will see to it that you are rewarded.

"After many days" – it may be that our reward will not come to us until the second coming of Christ (Luke 14:14; Rev 22:12). Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

**11:2** In other words, if you help others when you can, they may help you later when you are in need, or God will see to it that *someone* helps you.

**11:3** If God has filled our lives with good things we should pour them out to others. Once the tree of our life falls there will be no change in its direction, in its place.

**11:4-6** Solomon is saying that we should get on with our work and leave with God things beyond our control and the

4 He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who considers the clouds will not reap.

5 Just as you do not know the path of the spirit, *or* how the bones *grow* in the womb of the pregnant woman, even so you do not know the works of God who makes everything.

6 In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not let your hand be idle, for you do not know whether this or that will prosper, or whether they *will* both alike *be* good.

7 Truly the light *is* sweet, and *it is* a pleasant *thing* for the eyes to see the sun,

8 But if a man lives many years, *and* rejoices in them all, still he should remember the days of darkness; for they will be many. All that comes *is* emptiness.

9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart and in the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these *things* God will bring you into judgment.

10 Therefore expel sorrow from your heart, and put away trouble from your body, for childhood and youth *are* emptiness.

**12** Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

2 Before the sun or the light or the moon or the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain;

3 In the day when the keepers of the house

unanswered questions. "Spirit" – or "wind".

**11:7-10** He says that in spite of the meaninglessness of life there is some joy to be found especially for the young. But dark clouds rise over the horizon (last part of v 8), and God's judgment is coming (v 9). This is the last of the five times Solomon advises us to enjoy life (2:24; 3:12,13; 5:18,19; 8:15). But the grounds he gives for the enjoyment of life are feeble. He never says in this book that we should find our joy in God alone, not in the things He gives. He never says that our happiness should be to serve God and even to suffer for His sake. Probably at this point in his life, and with the knowledge he had, he could not say such things.

**12:1-7** A moving appeal to the young in beautiful poetic language to turn to God the Creator before inevitable deterioration, old age, and death bring them down to the dust. Eyesight, nerves, strength, hearing, courage and vitality will all fail (vs 2-5). The cord that binds soul to body will snap, the bowl of our earthly existence will shatter, the vessel of our life will spill its water on the ground, and there will be no chance of drawing more from the well (v 6). Observe



tremble, and the strong men bow, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look out of the windows grow dim,

4 And the doors are shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of the bird, and all the daughters of music are brought low;

5 And *when* they are afraid of high *places*, and fears *are* in the way, and the almond tree blossoms, and the grasshopper is burdensome, and desire fails; because man goes to his everlasting home and the mourners go around in the streets.

6 *Remember him* before the silver cord is loosened, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

7 Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

8 "Vanity of vanities", says the teacher, "all *is*

vanity."

9 And moreover, because the teacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge. Yes, he pondered, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs.

10 The teacher searched to find acceptable words; and *what was* written down *was* upright, *and* words of truth.

11 The words of the wise *are* like goads, and like nails hammered *in by* the masters of collected *proverbs*, *which* are given by one Shepherd.

12 And further, my son, be warned by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and much study *is* a weariness to the body.

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.

14 For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it is* good or evil.

that he believed the spirit of man returns to God (v 7). He had stated his ignorance of this in 3:18-21.

**12:8** He ends as he began (1:2). All his study, all his learning, all his wisdom, all his deep research into the meaning of life has come to this. He thinks there is no meaning in life that the fact of inevitable death does not destroy.

**12:9** See 1:1; 1 Kings 4:32.

**12:10** Solomon is sure that he has written with complete sincerity. He has bared his soul. He has hidden nothing. He declared things as he thought they are.

**12:11** By "Shepherd" here he probably means God Himself. God-inspired words of the wise are to give stability to thought (firmly embedded nails) and also to prod us on to truths which lie ahead (goads). This is one main purpose of Ecclesiastes. It gives us the fixed truth of the utter emptiness of life and all its activities "under the sun," apart from God. And it is meant by God to prod us forward to find the meaning of life, and a higher kind of life, somewhere else (in the Lord Jesus Christ). In this way this book (like the whole law and the whole Old Testament) is meant to lead us to Christ (Gal 3:24). Just as Old Testament hopes of sal-

vation lead to Christ, so the quest for life's meaning finds its fulfillment only in Christ. Christ alone redeems His people from a vain and meaningless life (1 Pet 1:18).

**12:13,14** Solomon's conclusion is as far as he could go as a man under the law, without further revelation from God. If there is to be meaning in life it must be found in reverence and obedience to God. These two things are everywhere emphasized in the Old Testament:

"Fear" - Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; 130:3,4; Prov 1:7.

"Keep" - on obedience see Ex 19:5; 20:6; Deut 30:15-18; 32:45-47; 1 Sam 15:22; Ps 119:1,2; Isa 1:19.

Without these two things there is no wisdom, no meaning, no hope, either for the present or for the future. These two are the heart of what man ought to be. Solomon did not say how man (whom he describes in 7:20 and 9:3) can be what he ought to be, but he knew that man is *responsible* for his acts and must face God's judgment. On judgment see 3:17; 8:12,13; 11:9; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:9,10; Rev 20:11,12. How man can be what he ought to be is clearly revealed in the New Testament - John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; Rom 6:11-18; 8:4; Eph 4:22-24; etc.

# SONG OF SONGS

## Title:

This name suggests that this is the most excellent of all songs.

## Author:

Judging from 1:1 the author was Solomon, but it should be noted that the Hebrew here could also mean "concerning Solomon."

## Date:

If Solomon wrote it, which seems likely, then it was written sometime during his reign – 970-930 BC. However, many scholars believe that it was written sometime after the exile of Judah in Babylon, in the 5th century BC.

## Theme:

Commentators on this book do not agree about the theme, or even about the principal characters in the story. Some teach that the book is a mere poetic description of the love between King Solomon and his bride. Some modern commentators teach that it is the story of the love between an unknown shepherd and his bride and that King Solomon is the villain in the story who tries to take the shepherd's bride for himself (this interpretation is unlikely. If we take the Song as an allegory which speaks of the heavenly King and His people, the allegory would be most meaningful if the literal bridegroom in the Song were a king himself). Some commentators teach that this story is not an allegory about the love that exists between God and believers, but others teach that this is the main theme of the book. The author of these notes believes that the principal characters in this story of love are King Solomon and his bride, but that the story is full of symbolic, spiritual meanings, is an allegory depicting the love that exists between Jesus Christ the King of kings and His redeemed people, or individual believers. The reasons for this belief are as follows:

1 Its title, given in the first verse, is as much a part of the inspired Scriptures as any other. And if the writer by the inspiration of the Spirit of God calls this the chief, the best, the greatest of all songs (and this is the meaning of "song of songs") there must be good reasons for it. If it were merely a love story about Solomon and his bride how could it be called the best of all songs? In such case would it be greater than some of the marvelous songs of David the sweet singer of Israel? Would it be greater than psalm 22 or 45 or 69 or 119? How could it be the greatest of all songs if Christ is not in it? If Christ is absent from this song, the title is an empty boast.

2 We have the analogy of other Scriptures such as psalm 45; Isa 54:5; Jer 3:14; 31:32; Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23; Hosea 2:7, 16, etc; Matt 22:1,2; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-32; Rev 19:6-9. Since God is called the "husband" of the nation Israel, and since the church is called the "bride" of Christ, it is no surprising thing that a book of the Bible would set forth in the human language of love the love that ought to exist, and does exist, between Christ and His people. The above Scriptures should be read in connection with the study of this book. They set forth one of the great themes of the Bible.

3 We have the example of other subjects in Scripture where there are spiritual meanings beyond the physical. See notes on the tabernacle, priests, sacrifices, and other matters in Exodus and Leviticus. Those things were real and literal but they were much more than that – they were types, shadows, pictures of spiritual realities. And see Paul, by the inspiration of the God's Spirit, calling the story of Sarah and Hagar an allegory (Gal 4:21-27)! Surely there is as much reason to find an allegory in this Song of songs as in the history of Sarah and Hagar. We do not deny that this song refers to a literal bride and bridegroom any more than we would deny the literal existence in history

of Sarah and Hagar. King Solomon and a woman called the Shulamite are here. But it seems clear that here is also a parable of heavenly love full of spiritual meaning for those who have eyes to see it. See also the example of Hosea and his wife in the book of Hosea. They were literal people, but we see in their story the love God had for his fallen people Israel.

4 We have the statements of Scripture like Luke 24:27 and 2 Tim 3:16,17. Can we say that Christ is everywhere in the Old Testament Scriptures except in this one book? Should we try to see Him everywhere else and then try not to see Him in this song? How would this song help make the man or woman of God thoroughly equipped for every good work, if there is no Christ in it and no lessons of a spiritual, heavenly character?

5 There are expressions and scenes in this book which seem to require an allegorical or spiritual meaning. It is hard to imagine that the literal bride of king Solomon wandered alone at night about the streets looking for him (3:2-4), or that while doing so on a second occasion the watchmen beat her and took away her cloak (5:6,7). Or that she literally came up from the desert leaning on Solomon (8:5).

6 We have the interpretation of many spiritual commentators for many centuries both before and after Christ. The Jews thought it set forth the relationship between Jehovah and Israel, and Christians found in it Christ and His Church. This interpretation is not our invention or a recent novelty.

If these reasons do not seem adequate to the reader, he is at liberty to reject them and try to understand this song on the mere level of human love. Our views and interpretations of Scripture are not infallible. But we are convinced that by studying this book by the aid of the Holy Spirit we can get a vivid impression of how Christ loves believers and how they should love Him. And we believe that experience will be the best teacher of this book. Only those who know Christ's love can understand what is here.

Love is what this book is all about, and we see the arrangement of it something like this:

Love affirmed .....	1:2-4
Love's anxiety .....	1:5-7
Love in fellowship .....	1:9 - 2:7
Love longed for and invited .....	2:8 - 3:1
Love tested and proved .....	3:1-5
Love conveyed in splendor .....	3:6-11
Love's delight in the loved one .....	4:1-16
Love's satisfaction .....	5:1
Love weak, failing and reviving .....	5:2-8
Love confident .....	6:1-3
Love praises the loved one .....	6:4-13
Love conversing .....	7:1 - 8:4
Love's strength .....	8:6,7
Love's concern .....	8:8-12
Love's longing .....	8:13,14

1

- 1 The song of songs, which *is* Solomon's.
- 2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:  
for your love *is* better than wine.
- 3 The fragrance of your oil is pleasing;  
your name *is like* oil poured out,  
therefore the virgins love you.
- 4 Draw me after you. We will run!  
The king has brought me into  
his chambers.

Friends

We will be glad and rejoice in you;  
we will remember your love more than wine.  
The upright love you.

1:1 The expression "song of songs" means the greatest of all songs, just as King of kings means the greatest of all kings and Lord of lords means the greatest of all lords. How could this be the greatest of all songs in the Bible (or out of it) if Christ is not in it? That song will be the greatest which has the greatest theme for its subject and which expresses that theme in high and holy language. There is no greater theme in the Bible or out of it than Christ's love for His people. This is a far more excellent theme than the love of a man and his wife – which is all that some think they see in this song.

1:2 In the Hebrew there are no headings (Bridegroom, Friends, Bride). They have been inserted to make clear to the reader who is speaking in each case. The use of "Bride," and "Bridegroom" in these headings is determined primarily on the basis of the gender of the pronouns in the Hebrew text. The words of others are marked "Friends." In some cases the divisions and headings are open to debate.

In this verse the speaker represents all of Christ's own people. She speaks out their deepest longings – to enjoy the nearness of Christ, the manifestation of Christ's love. His love is more stimulating, more delightful to the mind and spirit than wine (or any other physical stimulant) could ever be to the body.

1:3 In the Bible "name" often indicates the character and attributes of a person. The name of the LORD (Jehovah) in the Old Testament and of Jesus in the New Testament is a perfume poured forth from heaven to earth and filling the whole world with fragrance. Compare Ex 30:22-38; Ps 45:8; Matt 26:6-13. The spiritually pure (here signified by "virgins") will love God above all and everything.

1:4 If the heavenly King Himself does not come to us and draw us into secret communion with Himself we will never arrive there (John 6:44). The work is all His. But on our part there must be a willingness that is ready and

Bride

- 5 I *am* black but lovely,  
O daughters of Jerusalem, like the  
tents of Kedar,  
like the curtains of Solomon.
- 6 Do not stare at me because I *am* black,  
because the sun has looked on me.  
My mother's children were angry with me.  
They made me watch over the vineyards,  
*but* my own vineyard I have not watched.
- 7 Tell me, O you whom my soul loves,  
where you *graze your sheep*,  
where you make *your flock* rest at noon;  
for why should I be like someone who  
turns aside by the flocks of your  
companions?

eager to enter into His loving fellowship.  
"Me", "we" – sometimes believers are regarded as a unit – the bride; sometimes as a group of individuals. Compare Ps 45:14,15; Rev 19:6-9.

"You" – the Hebrew is the masculine single form of the pronoun.

"Love you" – no more fitting thing can be imagined than for believers to love the King of heaven.

1:5 The daughters of Jerusalem are probably the "virgins" of v 3 and the "friends" who speak in v 4, but we cannot be dogmatic about this.

"Black" – Kedar is mentioned in Gen 25:12,13. Their tents were woven of black goat's hair. Believers in Christ are both sinners and saints. God made man in His own image (Gen 1:26), and so with spiritual beauty. Believers know that they came into the world with a nature corrupted by sin, that any spiritual beauty they now possess is because of their union with Christ. All their beauty is a gift of God (Isa 61:10; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 4:22-24). In the words of the bride here is there an element of anxiety? She will learn that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18).

1:6 "Black" – life "under the sun" (Eccl 1:3,14, etc.) has made our natures dark (Gen 8:21; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9-19). Believers, knowing this, do not feel there is anything in them worthy to be gazed at or admired. The beauty they have is not their own but Christ's reflected beauty.

"Angry" – Isa 66:5; John 15:17; etc.

"Vineyard" – here signifies the believer's personal life. It is possible to be so taken up with other work that our communion with God is neglected and our spiritual lives become like an untended garden.

1:7 Believers wish to experience always Christ's nearness and love. He never leaves them or forsakes them (Heb 13:5; John 14:16-18; Matt 28:20). But their experience of His nearness and love ebbs and flows and sometimes He seems to be gone altogether. This is especially the case if we

Bridegroom

- 8 If you do not know,  
O you most beautiful of women,  
follow the tracks of the flock,  
and pasture your young goats beside  
the shepherds' tents.
- 9 I compare you, O my love, to a  
company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.
- 10 Your cheeks are lovely with rows of *jewels*,  
your neck with chains of *gold*.
- 11 We will make ornaments of gold for  
you with studs of silver.

Bride

- 12 While the king *sits* at his table,  
my spikenard sends out its aroma.
- 13 My beloved *is* to me *like* a bundle  
of myrrh which lies all night  
between my breasts.
- 14 My beloved *is* to me like a cluster  
of henna blossoms in the vineyards  
of Gedi.

Bridegroom

- 15 How beautiful you *are*, my love!

neglect to keep our own "vineyard." When such is the case we should seek Him with our whole heart (Hos 10:12; Jer 29:13).

**1:8** If we search we can see where Christ has led His flock and can follow in the footsteps of the saints. In the fellowship of the church's pastors and under shepherds, appointed by Christ, and in feeding Christ's sheep we will find Him anew (John 21:15-17; 14:21). The bride is called the "fairest among women" (see also 1:15; 2:14; 4:1,7; 6:4; 7:1,6; Ps 45:11). Christ's church is the most beautiful thing in the world to Him. He sees her with the eyes of love; He sees what she will yet be by His grace (Eph 5:26,27). He sees the beauty God has given her. Believers are in Christ, united to Him, and all He has they have.

**1:9-11** Egypt's horses were the best, the most beautiful, the most expertly trained of all. They were imported to other countries (1 Kings 10:28,29). The king of Egypt would have the best of the best and the most beautifully decorated. Compare Prov 1:19; Isa 61:1-3; Ezek 16:9-14; 1 Tim 2:9,10; 1 Pet 3:3,4.

**1:12** Believers sit at the table of the heavenly King (Rev 3:20; 1 Cor 10:16,17). Believers in communion with Christ are a sweet fragrance to Him.

**1:13,14** But much more Christ is a sweet fragrance to believers. What the best perfumes on earth are to the body, that His presence is to the spirit.

**1:15** "Beautiful" – v 8. "My love" – v 9; 2:2; 4:1,7; 7:6. The language of love, the endearing terms in this song suggest Christ's great love for the church and for each believer (John 13:1; 14:21; 15:9; chapter 17; Rom 5:8; Gal 2:20; Eph

How beautiful you *are*!  
You *have* doves' eyes.

Bride

- 16 How handsome you *are*, my beloved!  
Yes, delightful. And our bed *is* green.

Bridegroom

- 17 The beams of our house *are* cedar,  
*and* our rafters of fir.

2

Bride

- 1 I *am* the rose of Sharon,  
*and* the lily of the valleys.

Bridegroom

- 2 Like the lily among thorns,  
*so is* my love among the daughters.

Bride

- 3 Like the apple tree among the trees  
of the woods,  
*so is* my beloved among the sons.

5:1,2,25; 1 John 3:16; 4:16). The whole relationship of the believer and Christ is one of mutual love and self-giving and delight in the other.

"Dove's eyes" – the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit of God (Matt 3:16). The symbol speaks of holiness, heavenliness, innocence, and spiritual beauty. The Holy Spirit should shine through the eyes of believers. This is the only way they can really have "dove's eyes."

**1:16** Believers surely have more reason to see beauty in Christ than He in them (Ps 45:2).

"Green" – Ps 23:2; Isa 51:3.

**1:17** There is shelter for believers from all that could harm them (Ps 121:5,6). And in that shelter the eternal God's delight is to dwell with them (note at Ex 25:8).

**2:1** It is unclear from the Hebrew whether the speaker here is the bride or the bridegroom. Since in the next verse the bridegroom says to the bride, "you are a lily" it seems likely that the speaker in this verse is the bride. Believers in themselves are as fragile, as prone to wither and fade as flowers (Isa 40:6-8; 1 Pet 1:24). They are lowly like the flowers of plains and valleys, but they have a beauty and a fragrance to God that He has given them.

**2:2** "My love" – among men the only thing of beauty and fragrance to the Son of God is His Church. All others on earth are like thorns and briars – painful, ugly, harmful (Num 33:55; Jud 2:3; 2 Sam 23:6; Isa 27:4,5; 33:12; Matt 7:16; Luke 8:14; Heb 6:8; Rom 8:7,8).

**2:3** "Tree" – Christ is no mere flower to wither and fade. He is a fruitful tree who grew up on earth from the root of Jesse



- I sat down under his shade with  
great delight,  
and his fruit *was* sweet to my taste.
- 4 He brought me to the banqueting house,  
and his banner over me *was* love.
- 5 Sustain me with raisins, refresh me  
with apples,  
for I *am* sick with love.
- 6 His left hand *is* under my head,  
and his right hand embraces me.
- 7 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
by the gazelles and by the deer of the field,  
not to arouse or awaken *my* love,  
till he pleases.
- 8 The voice of my beloved! Look!  
He comes leaping on the mountains,  
skipping on the hills.
- 9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.  
See, he stands behind our wall,  
he looks out the windows,  
peering through the lattice.
- 10 My beloved spoke and said to me,  
"Rise up, my love, my beautiful one,  
and come away.
- 11 For, see, the winter is past,  
the rain is over *and* gone,

- 12 The flowers appear on the earth,  
the time of the singing of *birds* has come,  
and the voice of the turtledove is  
heard in our land.
- 13 The fig tree puts forth its green figs,  
and the vines *with* the tender grapes  
give a *good* smell.  
Arise, my love, my beautiful one,  
and come away."
- Bridegroom
- 14 O my dove in the clefts of the rock,  
in the secret *places* of the steep ledges,  
let me see your face, let me hear your  
voice;  
for your voice *is* sweet and your face  
*is* lovely.
- 15 Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes,  
that spoil the vines;  
for our vines *have* tender grapes.
- Bride
- 16 My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his.  
He grazes *his* flock among the lilies.
- 17 Until the day breaks and the shadows  
flee away, turn, my beloved,  
and be like a gazelle or a young stag  
on the mountains of Bether.

(Isa 11:1,10; 53:2; Rom 15:12). For His people He is the "shade" (Ps 91:1; 121:5; Isa 25:4; 32:2). He is the tree of life and His "fruit" is eternal salvation, joy and satisfaction forever. Has our desires been so corrupted by the evil fruits of the world that His fruit is not sweet to our taste?

**2:4** "Banqueting house" – Ps 23:5; Rev 3:20. Imagine, if you can, the sort of feast the Son of God is able to prepare.

"Banner over me was love" – banner speaks of something proudly displayed, clearly manifested (compare Rom 5:8; Gal 2:20). Love is written large over all Christ's dealings with His people.

**2:5-7** The full experience of Christ's love can be too much for human nature to bear. Such experiences cannot be produced by the efforts of others (daughters of Jerusalem). They can come only in Christ's time and way.

**2:8,9** This is the experience of the bride. The divine lover is present, then He is gone off to the mountains, but comes rushing back. No reason here is given for this, but if our communion with Christ is broken we should look for the fault in ourselves, not in Him (Isa 59:1,2; Hos 5:6), if indeed there is any fault at all (it may be that He is testing us). Believers do not always enjoy His nearness as they would desire. One glimpse of Him fills them with expectation and longing.

**2:10-13** Jer 31:3; Deut 4:37. The bridegroom uses the language of love and poetry to woo His bride away from everything else that might attract her, and He calls her

into beauty, into songs of joy, into the deepest fellowship with Himself. At last He will call her to enjoy eternal dwellings in His presence (John 14:2,3; 17:24; 1 Thess 4:16-18).

**2:14** Christ's church is like a dove, born of the Holy Spirit, hiding in Christ the Rock of ages (Ex 33:21,22; Deut 32:4). Believers are so dear to Him He longs to see their face, to hear their voice. Is not this one reason behind all those divinely inspired Scriptures which urge us to pray and praise?

**2:15** 1:6. Believers must guard against everything that would spoil their life in Christ and their fellowship with Him, against all sins of either commission or omission. They may be considered "small" sins, but can that be called small which works so much damage?

"Vineyard" – Ps 80:15; Isa 5:1-5; Jer 12:10; Luke 20:9-16 (so terribly may a vineyard be ruined).

**2:16** 6:3; 7:10. Believers can and should have the sweet assurance that they belong to Christ and Christ to them forever (John 17:6; Rom 7:4; 8:38,39; 1 Cor 3:21-23). They are not to spend their lives wondering whether it is so.

**2:17** If Christ seems to depart again and again to some far off hills, the believer longs for Him and prays for His return. What else can satisfy him once he has tasted of the sweetness of Christ's love?

"The mountains of Bether" – or "The rugged mountains." Bether means rugged. It is difficult to know whether a proper name is meant here.

3

- 1 At night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loves.  
I sought him, but I did not find him.
- 2 I will arise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the squares I will seek him whom my soul loves.  
I sought him but I did not find him.
- 3 The watchmen who go around the city found me. *I said to them* :  
“Have you seen him whom my soul loves?”
- 4 Scarcely had I passed on from them when I found him whom my soul loves.  
I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother’s house, and into the chamber of her who conceived me.
- 5 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and by the deer of the field,  
not to arouse or awake *my* love, till he pleases.
- 6 Who *is* this coming from the desert like pillars of smoke,  
perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powdered *spices* of the merchant?

**3:1-3** When God seems to be at a distance, when Christ’s fellowship is withdrawn, the believer is tested. What will he do? He should seek Christ again (Job 23:3; Ps 6:1-4; 13:1-3; 28:1,2; 38:21,22; 42:1-3; 63:1; 77:1-9; 105:4; 143:6,7; Hos 5:6,15; Amos 5:4,8). Sometimes Christian experience is similar to wandering in dark and lonely streets. But God has placed watchmen – faithful ministers to point the way to Christ.

**3:4** “Found” – Ps 9:10; 22:26; 69:32; 70:4; 105:3; Jer 29:13; Isa 45:19; Matt 7:7,8. “Not let him go” – Gen 32:26; Ps 27:9; Luke 24:28,29.

**3:5** 2:7.

**3:6-11** The speaker here is either the “bride” or the “friends.” The words bring us back to the literal Solomon and his bride who signify the heavenly truths of this book. It seems in these verses that Solomon has come in royal magnificence to bear his bride a way (compare 8:5) and this is surely not without spiritual significance to believers.

We should notice that a striking feature of this book is the sudden shift of scenes. The bride is looking for the bridegroom in the shepherds’ fields (1:7,8); the bridegroom is near (1:9-11); afterwards they are together in the house of the king (1:12-17); suddenly the bridegroom is away in the hills but comes quickly to the house and calls his bride away (2:8-15); again he

- 7 See, it *is* Solomon’s palanquin!  
Sixty valiant men, of the valiant of Israel, surround it.
- 8 They all hold swords, *being* expert in war.  
Every man *has* his sword at his side, because of fear in the night.
- 9 King Solomon made the carriage for himself from the wood of Lebanon.
- 10 He made its posts *of* silver,  
its bottom *of* gold, its covering *of* purple, its interior being lovingly fitted by the daughters of Jerusalem.
- 11 Go out, O daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding,  
and on the day of the gladness of his heart.

4

Bridegroom

- 1 How beautiful you *are*, my love!  
How beautiful you *are* !  
You *have* doves’ eyes behind your veil.  
Your hair *is* like a flock of goats that appears from mount Gilead.
  - 2 Your teeth *are* like a flock *of sheep just shorn*,
- is on the hills and she is left alone (2:16-3:3); they are together in her mother’s house (3:4,5); now he comes from the desert in beauty and splendor. The book continues in similar fashion.
- In other words, the book does not give a regular story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Instead we have various and brief pictures that set forth the relationship of bride and bridegroom. The spiritual purpose is to show various experiences through which believers may go in their life in Christ, and to reveal something of His beauty, magnificence, and tender love for His Church.
- In these verses we see something of His glory and might (compare Ps 45:3-5). Believers (whether or not they are aware of it) are riding through the world in a heavenly carriage with the King of glory at their side. Though there is still danger at night (v 8), there is full protection for the bride in this journey with the King (John 10:28).
- 4:1** “Beautiful” – 1:5,8,9-11,15 – this whole chapter (except for the last verse) is spoken by the bridegroom to show His delight in the bride. Everything about her pleases Him because He looks with the eyes of love.
- “Doves” – 1:15.
- “Goats” – goats with long black hair moving down one of the rounded hills of the Gilead range suggest her black tresses.
- 4:2** Her teeth – white, sparkling, perfectly

which come up from the washing,  
each of which bears twins,  
and none of them *is* barren.

3 Your lips *are* like a strip of scarlet,  
and your mouth *is* lovely.  
Your temples *are* like a piece of a  
pomegranate behind your veil.

4 Your neck *is* like the tower of David  
built as an armoury,  
where hang a thousand shields,  
all shields of mighty men.

5 Your two breasts *are* like two fawns  
that are twins,  
which feed among the lilies.

6 Until the day breaks and the shadows  
flee away,  
I will go to the mountain of myrrh,  
and to the hill of frankincense.

7 You *are* altogether beautiful, my love.  
*There is* no blemish in you.

8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* bride,  
*come* with me from Lebanon.  
Look from the top of Amana,  
from the top of Shenir and Hermon,  
from the lions' dens,

from the mountains of the leopards.

9 You have ravished my heart, my sister,  
*my* bride.  
You have ravished my heart with one  
*glance* of your eyes,  
with one strand of your necklace.

10 How beautiful is your love, my sister,  
*my* bride!  
How much better is your love than wine!  
And the fragrance of your oils than  
all spices!

11 Your lips, O *my* bride, drip *like* the honeycomb.  
Honey and milk *are* under your tongue,  
and the fragrance of your garments  
*is* like the fragrance of Lebanon.

12 A garden locked up *is* my sister, *my* bride;  
a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

13 Your plants *are* an orchard of  
pomegranates, with choice fruits,  
henna with spikenard,

14 Spikenard and saffron, calamus and  
cinnamon,  
with all the trees of frankincense,  
myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.

15 *You are* a garden fountain, a well of

matched.

**4:4** In other words, her neck is straight and ornamented with necklaces – 1:10.

**4:6** 2:17; 1:13; 3:6.

**4:7** "No blemish" – a wonderful thing to say! In itself the church is full of flaws, and individual believers have to make the same confession as Paul (Rom 7:18), and James (3:2), and John (1 John 1:8). Yet even now the righteousness which God puts to the believer's account is perfect and flawless (Isa 61:10; Jer 33:16; Rom 3:21-24; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9); the beauty they have is God's perfect beauty (Ps 45:13,14; Ezek 16:14); and the result of God's work in the church and in the believer will result eventually in a perfection only God can produce (Rom 8:29; Eph 5:25-27; Heb 10:14; 1 John 3:2).

**4:8** The bridegroom says he will go to the mountain of myrrh and incense (v 6). The bride should be with him. But suddenly the bride seems to be somewhere among the mountain peaks on the northern borders of Israel, a place of rugged beauty and danger. He calls her away. The spiritual application is not difficult to make. There are high places in the world that have their beauties and attractions but are dangerous to believers. Christ calls us away from them to Himself.

**4:9** 6:5. Does Christ love His church so much? Does one glance of love from her move His heart like this? Yes, He has proved once and for all the intensity of His infinite love by laying down His life for the church. His love passes knowledge (Eph 3:19).

"Sister" – the Lord Jesus is the bride-

groom, the Lord, the Head of the Church. But He is also called the "brother" of believers (Heb 2:11,12). He is their Kinsman-Redeemer (note at Ruth 2:20).

**4:10** The Lord delights in His people (Ps 147:11; 149:4; Zeph 3:17).

**4:11** The words of love we speak to the Lord from loving hearts are very sweet to Him. Our fellowship to Him is like the fragrance of flowers and green forests. He wants always to be with us. When we come to Him in prayer we must not think He is reluctant to receive us.

**4:12-14** In Ps 1:3 believers are compared to a fruitful tree. In Ps 80:8 they are compared to a vine. Here they are called a whole garden (see also Isa 58:11; Jer 31:12). The true church is Christ's garden of Eden where He comes to walk and talk with men and delight in their fellowship (Gen 3:8). Only from believers will Christ get any fragrance or fruit. Apart from His church the whole world is like a desert to Him.

Notice that this garden is enclosed or "locked up." In other words, believers are Christ's garden alone. No one else is to walk there. They are His possession (Rom 14:7,8; 1 Cor 6:19,20); they are for His delight. He puts a wall about them to keep out enemies and to prevent the world from trampling them underfoot. They are to be separate, holy, completely dedicated to Him (John chapter 17; Rom 12:1,2; 2 Cor 6:14-18). And they are to bear the fruits which please Him (John 15:8,16; Rom 7:4; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 5:9; Col 1:6,10).

**4:15** The true church is also like a "fountain" and "well" and water flowing from

living waters,  
and streams from Lebanon.  
16 Awake, O north wind, and come,  
you south *wind!* Blow on my garden  
*so that the fragrance of its spices*  
may spread out.

Bride

Let my beloved come into his garden,  
and eat his choice fruits.

5

Bridegroom

1 I have come into my garden, my sister,  
*my* bride.  
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.  
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey.  
I have drunk my wine with my milk.  
Eat, O friends!  
Drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved!

Bride

2 I sleep, but my heart *is* awake.  
*It is* the voice of my beloved  
who knocks, saying,  
"Open to me, my sister, my love,

mountain heights – a source of great satisfaction to Christ. This fountain is sealed – that is, kept for Him alone (2 Cor 11:2). The true church is not like a tank or pond in which the water may stagnate or dry up altogether. The church which is Christ's body has the deep fountains of the Holy Spirit in it, springing up eternally (John 4:14; 7:37-39).  
**4:16** This is the bridegroom still speaking for he says "my" garden. Wind makes a fine symbol of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8 – the words for wind, breath, and spirit in both Hebrew and Greek are identical). Only if God's Spirit is blowing through the church will its fragrance spread.  
"My beloved" – the bride speaks and welcomes Him with a loving heart – the only proper response.  
**5:1** Isa 65:24. And what sweetness and satisfaction He finds in her fellowship! The Lord Jesus comes to commune with those who want Him and who are prepared for Him (John 14:23). And He wants others whom He here calls "friends" and "beloved ones" to share with Him in the church.  
**5:2-6** Another scene, another time. She is somewhere alone at night and the bridegroom comes and calls to her. He has come from a distance, or else has been standing outside for some time, for his head is wet with dew. In either case his love is clear. She is excited at his coming but reluctant to get up and open the door (v 3). She delays. When she does get up at last

my dove, my undefiled,  
for my head is drenched with dew,  
*and* my locks with the moisture  
of the night."  
3 I have taken off my robe.  
How can I put it *back* on?  
I have washed my feet.  
How can I soil them *again*?  
4 My beloved put his hand in through  
the hole *in the door*,  
and my inmost being was moved for him.  
5 I got up to open to my beloved,  
and my hands dripped *with* myrrh,  
and my fingers with sweet smelling  
myrrh, on the handles of the lock.  
6 I opened to my beloved;  
but my beloved had turned away  
*and* gone.  
My soul had gone out when he spoke.  
I looked for him, but I could not find him.  
I called to him, but he gave me no answer.  
7 The watchmen who went around the city  
found me.  
They struck me; they wounded me.  
The guards of the walls took my veil  
away from me.  
8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

she is more occupied with herself than with him (v 5) – a fault seen in her before (1:5,12; 2:1). Her delay and evident lack of eagerness for his presence grieves him and he departs (v 6).  
Christ will not give His fellowship where He is not wanted. In the believer's spiritual life with the Lord Jesus, if fellowship is broken it will not be His fault. He will come far for it; He will patiently wait for some time. But carelessness and reluctance to open to Him (which show a loss of first love) will grieve Him. And occupation with self rather than with Him will make it impossible to enjoy His fellowship. The Lord Jesus in His love does not call us to slothfulness and self-admiration. God's grace, God's gifts to us are not so we might look at self and applaud self. Those who want more of His fellowship and show that they want it will have it. Any lover wants the beloved to love as he loves (8:6,7; Matt 22:37). The most important thing to us should be not our own convenience or pleasure but to love Him so much we want to please only Him.  
**5:7,8** The watchmen now act differently toward her than they did in 3:3. Perhaps the scene in chapter 3 suggests a test of the genuineness of her love. Here she is at fault and must suffer for it. The words of God's faithful watchmen can be like blows to the one who has lost fellowship with Christ by one's own fault. Their words strip the sinning believer of his veil – thus exposing her true countenance and enabling her to

if you find my beloved, will you not  
tell him that I *am* sick with love?

Friends

- 9 What *is* your beloved more than  
*another* beloved,  
O you most beautiful of women?  
What *is* your beloved more than *another*  
beloved, that you charge us so?

Bride

- 10 My beloved *is* radiant and ruddy,  
the chief among ten thousand.  
11 His head *is like* the most fine gold.  
*The locks of his hair are* bushy,  
black as a raven.  
12 His eyes *are like the eyes* of doves by  
the streams of water,  
washed with milk *and* fitly set.  
13 His cheeks *are like* a bed of spices,  
*like* sweet flowers.  
His lips like lilies, dripping sweet  
smelling myrrh.  
14 His hands *are like* gold rods set  
with beryl.  
His waist *is like* bright ivory  
inlaid *with* sapphires.  
15 His legs *are like* pillars of marble,  
set on sockets of fine gold.  
His face *is like* Lebanon,  
excellent as the cedars.  
16 His mouth *is* very sweet.  
Yes, he *is* altogether delightful.  
This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend,  
O daughters of Jerusalem.

# 6

Friends

- 1 Where has your beloved gone,  
O most beautiful of women?  
Which way did your beloved turn?  
*Tell us* so that we may seek him with you.

Bride

- 2 My beloved has gone down into  
his garden, to the beds of spices,  
to graze *his flock* in the gardens,  
and to gather lilies.  
3 I *am* my beloved's,  
and my beloved *is* mine.  
He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

Bridegroom

- 4 You *are as* beautiful, O my love,  
as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem,  
awesome as *an army* with banners.  
5 Turn your eyes away from me,  
for they have overcome me.  
Your hair *is like* a flock of goats that  
appears from Gilead.  
6 Your teeth *are like* a flock of sheep  
which goes up from the washing,  
each one of which bears twins,  
and *there is* not one barren among them.  
7 Like a piece of a pomegranate *are*  
your temples behind your veil.  
8 There are sixty queens, and eighty  
concubines,  
and virgins without number.  
9 My dove, my undefiled is unique.

see more clearly.

"Sick with love" – 2:5; Ps 84:2; 119:81.  
**5:10-16** Now the bride is fully occupied with the lover! Her experiences recorded in vs 2-8 have taught her something. This is the only place in this book where she attempts to describe him. The spiritual beauty of the Lord Jesus can only be hinted at by human descriptions, not revealed. It is interesting that in the Gospels there is nothing said about what the Lord Jesus looked like – as if it were entirely unimportant, as indeed it is. All the emphasis is on His character, His acts, His motives, His attributes.  
**5:16** We cannot even begin to describe all of Christ's beauty, but we know that He is the altogether beautiful and perfect one.  
"Friend" – see John 15:15.

**6:1** Our longings for Christ's fellowship, our praise of His qualities, will stir others up to seek Him.  
**6:2** She suddenly realizes where her lover will be, and ceases her fruitless wanderings about the city's streets.  
**6:3** See 2:16; 7:10.  
**6:4-9** Throughout the Song of songs we see

that he is far more taken up with her than she is with him. She gets distracted by other things but he does not. Christ's love for His church in this world is far more fervent and real than the church's love for Christ. His love is the example of what ours should be.  
**6:4** "Tirzah" – the word means "pleasure," "beauty." The town was later chosen as the first capital of the northern kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 14:17; 15:21,33; 16:6,23). Evidently it was a place famous for beauty.  
"Jerusalem" – Ps 48:2; 50:2.  
"Army" – the church is also a mighty spiritual army.  
**6:5-7** Similar to 4:1-3. Her look of love stirs up such love in Him that He can hardly bear it (v 5. Also 4:9).  
**6:8,9** "Unique", "blessed" – Israel in the Old Testament and Christ's church in the New Testament are absolutely unique in the whole history of man (Ex 19:5,6; Deut 7:6; Ps 135:4; John 17:6,9; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9,10). Though there be thousands of tribes, peoples, societies, organizations in the world, the church is the only bride of Christ. Blessed indeed!



She *is* the *only* one of her mother,  
the favorite of the one who bore her.  
The daughters saw her, and called her  
blessed;  
yes, the queens and the concubines,  
and they praised her.

10 Who *is* she *who* appears like the dawn,  
fair as the moon, bright as the sun,  
and awesome as *an army* with banners?

Bride

11 I went down into the garden of  
nut trees to see the fruits of the valley,  
and to see whether the vine flourished,  
and the pomegranates budded.

12 Before I was aware, my soul set me  
*among* the chariots of Amminadab.

Friends

13 Come back, come back, O Shulamite!  
Come back, come back, that we may  
gaze at you.

Bridegroom

What do you see in the Shulamite?  
As it were the the dance of two camps.

7

1 How beautiful are your sandaled feet,  
O prince's daughter!  
The curve of your thighs *are* like jewels,  
the work of the hands of a skillful

craftsman.

2 Your navel *is like* a round goblet,  
not lacking mixed wine.  
Your waist *is like* a heap of wheat  
encircled with lilies.

3 Your two breasts *are* like two young  
gazelles *that are* twins.

4 Your neck *is* like a tower of ivory.  
Your eyes *are like* the pools in Heshbon,  
by the gate of Bath-Rabbim.  
Your nose *is* like the tower of Lebanon  
which looks toward Damascus.

5 Your head *crowns* you like Carmel,  
and the hair of your head *is* like purple;  
the king *is* held *captive* by *its* tresses.

6 How beautiful and how pleasing  
you are, O love, with *your* charms!

7 Your stature is like a palm tree,  
and your breasts like clusters *of grapes*.

8 I said, "I will go up to the palm tree,  
I will take hold of its boughs."  
Now may your breasts be like clusters  
of the vine,  
and the fragrance of your breath like apples,

9 And the roof of your mouth *is* like  
the best wine for my beloved,  
that flows gently over the lips of those  
who are asleep.

Bride

10 I *am* my beloved's,  
and his desire *is* for me.

<p><b>6:10</b> The true church is as beautiful and majestic in Christ's eyes as the most beautiful things in creation. The grace and glory of God rest on her.</p> <p><b>6:11,12</b> Who is speaking? Judging from v 13 it is the bride whom the friends call back. The Hebrew of v 12 is obscure, so both the literal meaning and the spiritual application are equally so. Verse 11 shows her concern that her garden grow and produce fruit (compare 1:6). If we do not care about our garden, which really belongs to Christ, we show that we do not care much about Christ whose garden we are.</p> <p><b>6:12</b> "Among the chariots of Amminadab", or "among the royal chariots of my people" or "among the chariots of my willing people." Amminadab may or may not be a proper name here.</p> <p><b>6:13</b> We cannot be certain why the bride is called "Shulamite" here. The name was possibly derived from the Solomon's name in Hebrew – Shlomo. Shulamite could be the feminine form of that name and may indicate one who belonged to Solomon. Or it may possibly be derived from a town called Shulam (or, possibly, Shunem). The first part of this verse evidently is spoken by the friends or virgins who long to gaze on the grace and beauty of the bride. The second part of the verse is spoken by the</p>	<p>bridegroom. It is in the form of a question but he knows very well her beauty and why others would gaze on her.</p> <p>"Dance of two camps" – or "company of two armies". The language here suggests a sacred dance of joy. Compare Ex 15:20; 2 Sam 6:14,15; Ps 30:11; 149:3; 150:4; Jer 31:13. The Hebrew word for two camps or armies is Mahanaim. See Gen 32:1,2. It may suggest here the nearness of heavenly hosts.</p> <p><b>7:1-9</b> 4:1-15; 6:4-9. The true church is a "prince's daughter", perfectly formed (1 Cor 12:14-27; Eph 4:15,16). Every part (person) is placed carefully by God in the Body to contribute to the beauty and usefulness of the whole. He loves to gaze on her and to describe her loveliness in His eyes. The relationship between husband and wife is the most intimate in the world, and this is the relationship that the Holy Spirit has used a number of times in the Bible as a symbol of that loving, intimate, spiritual relationship between God and His own special people. There is no deeper love, no more intimate fellowship, no greater delight than in this relationship between God who is Spirit with His spiritual people. This is suggested by the language of this passage.</p> <p><b>7:10</b> See 2:16. In the closing words of v 9 and in this verse she expresses her full</p>
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- 11 Come, my beloved, let us go out into the field.  
Let us spend the night in the villages.
- 12 Let us get up early to the vineyards.  
Let us see if the vine flourishes,  
*whether* the tender grape appears,  
*and* the pomegranates bud.  
There I will give you my love.
- 13 The mandrakes give a fragrance,  
and at our gates *are* all kinds  
of choice *fruits*, new and old,  
*which* I have stored up for you,  
O my beloved.

8

- 1 O that you *were* like a brother to me,  
who nursed at the breasts of my mother!  
*When* I found you outside,  
I would kiss you.  
Yes, I would not be despised.
- 2 I would lead you, *and* bring you into  
my mother's house, *who* instructed me.  
I would have you drink spiced wine  
from the juice of my pomegranate.
- 3 His left hand *would be* under my head,  
and his right hand would embrace me.

- 4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,  
not to arouse or awaken *my* love,  
until he pleases.
- Friends
- 5 Who is this who comes up from the desert,  
leaning on her beloved?
- Bride
- I awakened you under the apple tree.  
There your mother brought you forth.  
There she *who* bore you brought  
you forth.
- 6 Set me like a seal over your heart,  
like a seal on your arm.  
For love *is* strong as death;  
Jealousy *is* severe as the grave;  
its coals *are* coals of fire,  
*with* a very fierce flame.
- 7 Many waters cannot quench love,  
not can the floods drown it.  
If a man were to give all the wealth  
of his house for love,  
it would be utterly despised.
- Friends
- 8 We have a little sister, and she has  
no breasts.  
What shall we do for our sister in

assurance that the wine of her love is acceptable to him, that they are one in heart. **7:11,12** In 2:1-13 He calls her into the fields. Here she invites him. If the fields and villages speak of God's work in the world we can learn from these two references that Christ first calls us to this work, then His love in our hearts moves us to desire it and to pray that He go with us.

**7:13** When there is love there is a desire to give gifts and to give oneself to the loved one. This is what love between two persons is all about – mutual self-giving. Our love for Christ, or lack of it, will be measured by what we give Him or what we withhold from Him. Believers are not to store up for themselves but for Christ. What they would keep for themselves they will lose. What they store up for Christ they will keep and enjoy with Him forever. Out fruit should be all for Him (John 15:1,2; Rom 7:4).

**8:1** In this fallen world those who love Christ and are loved by Him often become an object of scorn and hatred to godless men (John 15:18-21; 16:33; 1 Pet 4:12-16). The bride here wishes that circumstances were different. But has she forgotten the bridegroom's words in 4:9,10,12; 5:1,2 – where he calls her "sister" five times?

**8:2** 7:13. A heart that wants to give is the surest mark of love.

**8:3,4** 2:6,7.

**8:5** "Desert" – 3:6. Israel came from Egypt through the desert and into the land of Canaan leaning on the strong arm of

Jehovah. The church moves from the desert of this world toward the heavenly Jerusalem leaning on Christ.

**8:6** "Seal" – this may refer to a jewel having the name of the loved one engraved on it. Compare Ex 28:9-12,17-21; Isa 49:16. The spiritual meaning may be this: the loved one wants herself (or himself) permanently impressed on the affections of the one who loves as a seal leaves an impression on wax.

"Death" – death, man's enemy, is very powerful and holds its victims fast. God's love, man's greatest friend, is no less powerful. God's love will never let His own go (Rom 8:38,39).

"Jealousy" – or "ardor" or "zeal" – Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24. The greater the love the greater the jealousy concerning all that might turn the loved one away.

"Grave" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

**8:7** God's love is such a fire that the mightiest floods can not quench the tiniest spark of it. There is nothing on earth that remotely approaches it in value. It is also supreme among all spiritual graces and virtues (1 Corinthians chapter 13).

**8:8,9** The speakers here may be the "friends," the daughters of Jerusalem, or the "brothers" mentioned in 1:6. The spiritual meaning would be the same in any case. Some commentators think the little sister indicates the New Testament church. Some think she represents any persons who are

the day when she is spoken for?

9 If she *is* a wall, we will build a  
palace of silver on her,  
and if she is a door, we will enclose  
her with panels of cedar.

Bride

10 I *am* a wall, and my breasts are  
like towers.  
Then I was in his eyes like one who  
found peace.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-Hamon.  
He let out the vineyard to caretakers.  
For its fruit each one was to bring a

thousand *pieces* of silver.

12 My vineyard, which is mine, *is* before me.  
The thousand *shekels are* for you,  
O Solomon, and two hundred for  
Those who watch over its fruit.

Bridegroom

13 O you who dwell in the gardens,  
companions listen to your voice.  
Cause me to hear *it*.

Bride

14 Hurry, my beloved, and be like a  
gazelle or a young stag on the  
mountains of spices.

not yet converted to Christ but who will be. A wall is for the purpose of keeping out that which should be outside. A door is to let in those who are prepared to come inside.  
**8:10-12** She already is what her little sister may become – mature and able to enter into the marriage relationship. She is no longer under the control of her brothers (1:6). The language of verses 11,12 bring to mind the parables of the Lord Jesus about vineyards (Matt 20:1-16; 21:33-40), and speaks to us of the responsibility

of Christians as tenants in God's vineyard. "Thousand shekels" – about 11:5 kilo-grams.  
**8:13** This is the last request of the bridegroom in this book.  
**8:14** Here is the last request of the bride. It is similar to the last prayer of the Bible – Rev 22:20. It brings us back to an early chapter – 2:17. Our longings for Christ should not diminish with the passage of time and we should always endeavor to keep His coming as the object of our hope.

# ISAIAH

**Author:**

Isaiah the prophet. His name means "Jehovah is salvation" or "Jehovah saves." Isaiah was a member of an influential family in Judah. It seems that he was a well-educated man. Apparently he lived in or near Jerusalem (6:1-4; 37:2; 38:4). He was married to a woman called a "prophetess," by whom he had at least two sons (7:3; 8:3). According to tradition, during the reign of King Manasseh he was killed by being sawn in two. Some modern critics teach that this book was not written by one man named Isaiah, but by two or more men writing at different times. The author of these notes has seen no satisfactory evidence for this theory. The Bible itself speaks of one and only one Isaiah.

**Date:**

Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1:1), that is, 740 - 700 BC. He lived on until at least 681 BC, for the event he wrote about in 37:38 happened then.

**Themes:**

God's judgments on human wickedness; God's grace toward those who turn to him in faith; God's salvation given freely through the Lord Jesus Christ. More than any other prophet, Isaiah gives us a detailed picture of the then future coming and deeds of the Lord Jesus – His birth, His sufferings and death, and His still future glorious reign over the earth. Isaiah begins with the corrupt nation of Israel (1:2-17) and moves steadily on to the new heavens and earth where there will be no more corruption ever (65:17; 66:22-24). Some very wonderful verses and chapters in this book are 1:18; 2:1-5; 6:1-8; 7:14; 9:6,7; 11:1-9; 25:4-9; 32:1-5; 35:1-10; 40:1-31; 41:17-20; 43:1,2,25; 45:22-25; 49:6; 52:13-15; 53:1-12; 55:1-13; 57:15; 61:1-3; 64:1-12; 65:17; 66:2. Of course, this is far from being an exhaustive list. The whole book of Isaiah (indeed, the whole Bible) is very wonderful, being inspired by God Himself.

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- 1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.
- 2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the LORD has spoken:  
"I have reared and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.
- 3 The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not consider."
- 4 Alas, sinful nation, a people weighed down with wickedness, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they have gone away backward.

- 5 Why should you be struck again? You revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.
- 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head *there is* no soundness in it, *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. They have not been closed, or bound up, or soothed with ointment.
- 7 Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire. Strangers devour your land in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.
- 8 And the daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a garden of cucumbers, like a besieged city.
- 9 Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom,

1:1 Vision here means a revelation from God. Note at Gen 15:1. This revelation came on different occasions over a long period of time and refers to the whole book of Isaiah. We know nothing about Isaiah's father Amoz. He is not, of course, the prophet Amos.

"Kings" – these kings ruled Judah for more than a hundred years (792 - 686 B.C.). It is not said here that Isaiah prophesied from the beginning of Uzziah's reign to the close of Hezekiah's, only that God's revelation came to him at various times during their reigns. It may be that Isaiah started prophesying toward the end of king Uzziah's reign, but we can't be sure of this. The vision of chapter 6 may have come to him some years after he had begun his ministry. See 6:1.

1:2 "Hear" – Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 32:1. Isaiah is sure that God's revelation to him is of the greatest importance. He wants all the earth, all the universe to hear what God speaks, and to be witness of His charges against His people. The message is that the special people of the Creator of the universe turned their backs on Him and ignorantly and wickedly went their own way. Compare Ps 95:10; Isa 53:6; Jer 8:5-6. The children referred to here are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 4:22; Deut 32:6; 2 Sam 7:24; Isa 64:8; etc).

1:3 Men in rebellion against their Creator, the God of the universe, can be more senseless than ignorant beasts. And the nations of Israel and Judah were no better or wiser than any other (Deut 32:28; Jer 4:22; 8:7). The ox and the donkey are not the most clever of animals but in a very important matter they were wiser than the people of Israel. Those people had a Master but they tried to remove themselves from

His love and care.

1:4 This one verse exposes the terrible moral and spiritual condition of Judah and Jerusalem. This was God's evaluation, not man's. And it is a picture not merely of Judah but of the world (Ps 14:2,3; Rom 3:9-18).

"Holy One of Israel" appears 26 times in Isaiah and only 6 times in the rest of the Old Testament. The book of Isaiah lays special emphasis on God's holiness. It is in the light of God's holiness that man's behavior appears so exceedingly sinful. Note on holiness at Lev 20:7.

1:5-9 Here are some of the results of their rebellion against God. (The Bible continually points out that sin has fearful consequences – Gen 2:17; Lev 26:14-22; Num 32:23; Ezek 18:20; Rom 1:18; 6:23; Heb 2:2). The prophet (and God is speaking through the prophet) asks the nation why they wish to continue in their sins when the results are so painful. As a body experiences the harmful effects of a disease, so the entire nation has experienced the destructive effects of their rebellion against God. This destruction came about by invasions of foreign armies. Compare 2 Chron 28:5-8; 16:21; 32:1,2,9. God often uses the armies of one country to punish another country for their wickedness. See 7:20; 10:5,6; Jer 50:15,23; 51:1,20-23; Hab 1:6; Rev 17:16,17.

1:8 Daughter of Zion means the city and people of Jerusalem. It stood alone in the midst of hostile nations.

1:9 Rom 9:29. If God had not been merciful to that rebellious people the city and nation would have been entirely obliterated from the earth as Sodom and Gomorrah had been (Gen 19:23-25).

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

and we would have been like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers  
of Sodom!

Give ear to the law of our God,  
you people of Gomorrah!

11 "To what purpose *is* the multitude of  
your sacrifices to me?" says the LORD.  
"I have had enough of the burnt offerings of  
rams, and the fat of fed cattle;  
and I do not delight in the blood of bulls,  
or of lambs, or of male goats.

12 "When you come to appear before me,  
who has required this at your hand,  
this trampling of my courts?

13 Bring no more meaningless offerings!  
*Your* incense is an abomination to me.  
The New Moon *festivals* and Sabbaths,  
the calling of assemblies,  
I cannot endure.

Even the solemn meeting *is* wickedness.

14 Your New Moons and your appointed  
feasts my soul hates;  
they are a burden to me;  
I am weary of bearing *them*.

15 And when you spread out your hands,  
I will hide my eyes from you;  
yes, even though you utter many prayers,  
I will not hear.  
Your hands are full of blood.

16 "Wash yourselves!  
Make yourselves clean!  
Put away the evil of your actions from  
before my eyes!

Cease to do evil!  
17 Learn to do good!  
Seek justice, relieve the oppressed!  
Show justice to the fatherless,  
plead for the widow!

**1:10** Isaiah speaks to the rulers and people of Judah and Jerusalem as if they were the rulers of Sodom and Gomorrah. He considers Jerusalem and Judah as corrupt and worthy of destruction as those destroyed cities.

**1:11-17** This is a very important passage on worship, showing what is acceptable to God and what is not. See also Ps 50:7-23; Jer 7:1-11; John 4:21-24; Jam 1:26,27. If there is no humility, no obedience to God, no sincerity, no right motives, no purity of heart, no ongoing spiritual life, then worship is an empty and vain thing and God will not accept it.

**1:11** Ps 40:6; 50:9; Jer 6:20; 1 Sam 15:22.

**1:12** True religion is of the heart. Without inner love and reverence for God, going to places of worship is useless and unacceptable to Him.

**1:13,14** Not only is such worship unacceptable to God it is positively hateful to Him. Men with their vain and hypocritical worship may think they are pleasing God but instead they are provoking Him to disgust and anger. Compare Luke 16:15. Observe in v 13 that the meeting of God's people for worship may be, in His eyes, evil assemblies.

**1:15** God will not answer the prayers of those living in sin and rebellion against Him. Such people may have the forms of worship and make many prayers, but God turns away from such (59:1,2; Ps 66:18; John 9:31; Jam 4:3). We should not expect God to answer our prayers if we do not love Him, obey Him, and serve Him, and if we want answers only for selfish reasons.

"Blood" – they were guilty of bloodshed and the murder of the helpless (v 21; 59:3; Ps 106:38; Jer 2:34). Yet they wanted God to answer their prayers! Such is man's ignorant depravity.

**1:16-19** In spite of their detestable

spiritual and moral condition there was hope for forgiveness and blessings – if they would repent. This hope is held out everywhere in the Bible (55:7; 2 Chron 7:14; Ezek 18:27,28,32; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:38,39). **1:16** "Wash. . .make. . .clean" – compare Jam 4:8; 2 Cor 7:1. David prayed that God would wash him (Ps 51:2). Men wash themselves from their uncleanness when they turn to God in repentance, confession, and faith, and use His power to conquer the sins in their lives. Since this is also God's work in their hearts this process is God washing them, as well as their washing themselves. But we should not expect God to wash us if we are not willing to wash ourselves from all evil.

"Cease" – a simple command that, if obeyed, will result in great good. But if we do not rely on God's power to do this we will find it impossible to do (Jer 13:23). So a command to stop doing wrong is, in a way, an instruction to seek our strength in God (40:31; Ps 29:11; 105:4; 138:3; Eph 6:10). **1:17** "Good" – Ps 34:14; 37:27. Men do not need to learn to do wrong. It is as natural to them as breathing (see Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Jer 17:9; Matt 15:19,20). They need to learn to do right. This can be accomplished only by turning to the one true God and by studying and obeying God's Word. Without God's Word men frequently will not even have an idea of what is right (compare 5:20). The more we know God's Word the more we know what the right is. Learning to do right is a process that never ceases in the lives of God's people as long as they are on earth.

"Justice. . .widow" – learning to do right will result in our standing for righteousness, and in helping the poor and helpless (Ex 22:22-24; Deut 10:18; 14:29; 24:19-21; 26:12,13; 27:19; Ps 68:5; 82:1-4; Micah 6:8; Jam 1:27).

- 18 "Come now, and let us reason together,  
says the LORD.  
Though your sins are like scarlet,  
they will be as white as snow;  
though they are as red as crimson,  
they will be like wool.
- 19 If you are willing and obedient,  
you will eat the good of the land.
- 20 But if you refuse and rebel,  
you will be devoured by the sword;  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*."
- 21 How the faithful city has become a prostitute!  
It was full of justice; righteousness  
*once* lodged in it, but now murderers!
- 22 Your silver has become dross,  
your wine mixed with water.
- 23 Your rulers *are* rebellious,  
and companions of thieves.  
Each one loves bribes, and chases after  
rewards.  
They do not show justice to the fatherless.  
The cause of the widow does not come  
before them.
- 24 Therefore the Lord, the LORD of hosts,  
the mighty One of Israel, says,  
"Ah, I will get relief from my adversaries,  
and avenge myself on my enemies.

**1:18** See 43:26; Lam 3:40; Hag 1:5,7. God is a God of reason and He has made man with a mind and ability to reason. He wants men to stop and think about Him, about themselves, about their course in life, especially about any argument that is going on between themselves and Him. God's desire is for peace and harmony. He wants the dispute that is brought on by sin to be settled. He longs to forgive, restore and bless a repenting people (Ezek 18:30-32). **1:19,20** The contrast in these verses is seen everywhere in the Bible – Lev 26:3-35; Deut 28:1-68; 30:15-20; Isa 66:24. Obedience to God's word brings great blessing. Continual rebellion brings death, destruction and eternal condemnation.

**1:21** "Prostitute" – Jerusalem had become unfaithful to God (v 4) and worshiped other gods (2:8). In the Bible this is compared to adultery and prostitution (Lev 20:5; Jer 2:20; 3:1,6,8,9; 13:27; Ezek 16:17,28; 23:5,8,19; Hos 2:5; 4:15; 5:3,4).  
"Murderers" – v 15.  
**1:22** Because the hearts of the people had become corrupted everything else had become corrupted.  
**1:23** "Rulers" – compare Jer 1:18,19; 2:8; Ezek 34:1-6. For the kind of leaders God wanted see v 26, psalm 101, etc.  
"Bribes" – note and references at Ps 26:10.

"Widow" – v 17.

**1:24** Leaders and people who behave as those described in the preceding verses are

- 25 And I will turn my hand against you,  
and thoroughly purge away your dross,  
and take away all your alloy.
- 26 And I will restore your judges as at the first,  
and your counsellors as at the beginning.  
Afterward you will be called,  
The City of Righteousness,  
The Faithful City.
- 27 "Zion will be redeemed with justice,  
and her repentant ones with righteousness.
- 28 And the destruction of the  
transgressors and of the sinners *will*  
*be* together,  
and those who forsake the LORD will be consumed.
- 29 For you will be ashamed of the *sacred*  
oaks which you have desired,  
and you will be disgraced because of  
the gardens that you have chosen.
- 30 For you will be like an oak whose leaf fades away,  
and like a garden that has no water.
- 31 And the strong will be like tinder,  
and his handiwork like a spark;  
and they will both burn together,  
and no one will quench *them*."

**2** The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

God's enemies and He knows how to deal with them (Deut 32:40,41; etc).

**1:25-31** All these verses are spoken concerning the city of Jerusalem. In spite of the corruption of its inhabitants God continued to have a high and holy purpose toward the city. He was determined to purge it and to restore justice and righteousness to it. This would mean suffering to the city and destruction to the rebellious.

**1:25** "Purge" – 4:4; Ps 66:10-12; Mal 3:3.  
**1:26** He means judges who would guide and lead as Samuel, for example, did.  
"Faithful City" – v 21; Zech 8:3.

**1:27** "Repentant" – only those who turn heartily to God will be spared and partake of God's blessings to Zion.

**1:28** Ps 9:5; Isa 66:24; Jer 16:4; 2 Thess 1:8-9.

**1:29** This refers to places of idolatry and, possibly, sexual immorality (65:3).

**1:30** Contrast with 5:7; Ps 1:3; Song of Songs 4:12.

**1:31** 9:8,19; 10:17; 24:6; 26:11; 33:27,33; 66:15,16; Mal 3:2; 4:1; Matt 25:41; 2 Thess 1:7; Heb 12:29; Rev 21:8.

**2:1-4** There are several others passages in Isaiah that speak of this same period of time (9:7; 11:1-16; 12:1-6; 24:21-23; 32:1-5; 40:1-11; 54:1-17; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:8-10,17-25; 66:7-13,19-21). All of these, together with this one here in chapter 2, have been interpreted in the following ways –

(1) There has been no fulfillment of them

- 2 And it will come about in the last days,  
that the mountain of the LORD's house  
will be established on the top of the  
mountains,  
and will be raised above the hills,  
and all nations will stream to it.
- 3 And many people will go and say,  
"Come and let us go up to the mountain  
of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
and he will teach us his ways,

and there never will be.

(2) They have been fulfilled in Israel's past.

(3) They are being, at least partially, fulfilled now in this Church age, and their fulfillment will be completed in the eternal ages.

(4) They will be fulfilled only in the eternal ages after the end of the world.

(5) They will be fulfilled, at least for the most part, in a literal reign of Christ on earth (the thousand year reign of Rev 20:4-6).

(6) There has been a partial spiritual fulfillment of some of these things in this Church age, but they will have a more literal fulfillment in the millennium and an eternal fulfillment in the ages to come after that (see note on 60:1-22).

Because Isaiah was writing the truth of God by the inspiration of God's Spirit, the first interpretation is totally impossible – God does not say things will happen which will never happen (Matt 5:17,18). The second interpretation is impossible to maintain unless we ignore the plain meaning of words – they simply have never been fulfilled in the history of the nation Israel. The third view is favored by a large number of scholars. However, it seems to the author of these notes that this view is possible to maintain only if we ignore many of the details of these prophecies – a thing he believes should not be done. The fourth interpretation also has its great difficulties – we can hardly think that some of the things prophesied here will exist when time is swallowed up in eternity.

The last two interpretations seem far more likely to the author of these notes. Some of the things prophesied will scarcely fit anywhere else than in a literal reign of Christ on earth. See the notes on all the passages in Isaiah listed above.

Isaiah "saw" what follows because God revealed it to him as in 1:1; 6:1. Very often in the prophets we read of God showing dreams and visions and speaking words of explanation (compare Jer 1:11-16; 24:1-10; Ezek 1:1; 10:1; Dan 7:1; 8:1; Zech 1:8; 3:1; 5:1). In the verses that follow here we have only the words of prophecy God revealed. The words announce a very important theme in Isaiah – the complete establishment of God's kingdom. In verses 2-4 we see its establishment, in verses 6-21 the events that lead up to it. Observe that the following

and we will walk in his paths."  
For out of Zion the law will go forth,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

- 4 And he will judge among the nations  
and rebuke many people.  
And they will beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,  
nor will they learn war any more.
- 5 O house of Jacob, come and let us  
walk in the light of the LORD.

prophecy concerns the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, and that there is no hint that these words should not be taken in their literal sense.

2:2 Verses 2-4 with only minor changes are found in Micah 4:1-3.

"The last days" – this phrase is indefinite in meaning. It may mean simply sometime in the more or less distant future. In the Bible the phrase sometimes means this present era of the Church (Acts 2:17; Heb 1:2. Compare 1 Pet 1:20; 1 John 2:18). In this use of the phrase it means that this era is the last before the return of the Lord Jesus from heaven. The last days could include the actual return of Christ and the results that flow from that. His return will occur at the last days of the last days. The phrase here in Isaiah could be translated "at the end of the days."

"Mountain" – Mount Zion (11:9; 27:13; 56:7; 57:13; 65:25; 66:20). It signifies the city of Jerusalem (v 3).

"Raised above the hills" – if we take this prophecy at what it plainly seems to suggest we will think that Jerusalem and the nation Israel will have political supremacy in the world while the prophecy is being fulfilled. See also Zech 14:10, which indicates a physical raising of Jerusalem.

"All nations" – Ps 102:15; 117:1; Jer 3:17; 16:19; Zech 14:16; Rev 21:26. The reason for this is in the next verse.

2:3 At last the nations of earth will learn that the God of Israel is the true and only God and will want to learn His ways. On God as teacher see Ps 25:4; 71:17; 94:10,12; 119:102; Isa 54:13; Matt 5:2; Mark 6:34; John 6:45; 14:26. Note on God of Jacob at Ps 146:5.

2:4 "Judge" – Ps 96:13; 98:9. When God Himself acts as judge to the nations of earth, perfect justice will prevail. And the effect of perfect justice will be universal peace (32:17).

"War any more" – the whole course of this age of the Church has been quite different from this. There have been, and still are, many wars going on somewhere in the world, and at present the huge armament industries of the nations are not turning out plowshares. Contrast this verse with Joel 3:10; Matt 24:6,7. Since this prophecy of Isaiah has not yet taken place we look for a future fulfillment.

2:5 "Light" – Ps 43:3; 89:15; 118:27;



- 6 For you have forsaken your people the house of Jacob, because they are filled with eastern ways, and *they are* soothsayers like the Philistines, and they are pleased with the children of foreigners.
- 7 Their land is also full of silver and gold, and *there is* no end of their treasures. Their land is also full of horses, and *there is* no end of their chariots.
- 8 Their land also is full of idols. They worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made;
- 9 And *the common* man bows down, and the great man abases himself. Therefore do not forgive them.
- 10 Go into the rocks, and hide yourself in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.
- 11 The lofty looks of man will be humbled, and the haughtiness of men will be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
- 12 For the day of the LORD of hosts *will come* on everyone *who is* proud and lofty,

- and on everyone *who is* lifted up; and he will be brought low;
- 13 And on all the cedars of Lebanon, *that are* high and lifted up, and on all the oaks of Bashan,
- 14 And on all the high mountains, and on all the hills *that are* lifted up,
- 15 And on every high tower, and on every fortified wall,
- 16 And on all the ships of Tarshish, and on all beautiful vessels.
- 17 And the loftiness of man will be brought down, and the haughtiness of men will be made low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.
- 18 And the idols he will utterly abolish.
- 19 And they will go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD and for the glory of his majesty, when he arises to shake terribly the earth.
- 20 In that day a man will throw his silver idols and his gold idols, which *each of* them made for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats,

John 1:4,9; 8:12; 12:35; Eph 5:8; 1 John 1:5,7; Rev 22:5. Isaiah makes an appeal based on the wonderful truth revealed in the preceding verses. The nations who knew not God will come and learn of Him who is in a special sense the God of Jacob. Should not, then, the house of Jacob itself cease from rebellion and walk in His light?

**2:6** Isaiah returns to a description of the pathetic state of the people of Israel. They were guilty of three evils which caused God to reject them. Instead of trusting the word of the true and living God they believed the superstitions of other nations, especially those from the east. Here this probably means Syria and Babylonia. They also practiced sorcery which God had clearly forbidden in His Word (Deut 18:9-13). And they refused to keep themselves a separate and holy people as God instructed them to be (Ex 19:5,6; Lev 20:7,8; Deut 7:6; 14:2). They preferred the ways of other nations with their false gods and religions, and sinful practices. In all this there is instruction and warning for Christians today. Superstitions, sorcery, and the powerful influences of people who do not know God are everywhere in the world. Believers must not yield to such things but be careful to obey such verses as 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**2:7** They had wealth but what was the use of it? God's anger was soon to come on them. (Compare Ps 49:10; 73:12,18,19; Luke 12:16-21; Jam 5:1-3.)

**2:8** They willfully refused to obey God's Word which forbids all idolatry (Ex 20:1-6,22,23; Deut 13:6-18; 29:17,18).

**2:9** Idolatry is intolerable to the one true God, and because of it men will be brought low and perish in their sins (vs 20,21; 13:11; 45:16; Lev 26:30; Jer 7:5,6; Ezek 6:4; 1 Cor 6:9; Rev 21:8; 22:15).

**2:10-21** These verses all refer to a time in the future called in v 12 "the day of the LORD." This means a time Jehovah has appointed. This time is referred to in many places in the Bible. For example, see 13:6-13; Joel 1:15; 1 Thess 5:2; Rev 6:15-17.

**2:10** Verses 19,21; Rev 6:15-17. No refuge will be sufficient for sinful men when God arises in majesty to judge the world.

**2:11-17** Haughtiness and other words indicating pride and arrogance are used eight times in these few verses. Man's arrogance is hateful to God (Prov 6:16,17; 21:4; Ps 18:27; 101:5; Jam 4:6), and He is determined to eradicate it from the face of the earth. The Day of the LORD will be especially against proud men and all they take pride in.

**2:12** "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**2:16** "Every ship of Tarshish" – Tarshish was famous in that day for merchant ships and trade by sea.

**2:18** Idols are a result of man's proud defiance of the one true God and His words. When man's pride is broken and destroyed, idols will disappear.

**2:19** At the end of this age God will shake the whole earth (24:19,20; Heb 12:26-29; Rev 6:14; 16:17-20).

**2:20** At last men will see how useless their idols are. They will learn what believers in the true God have always known –

- 21 To go into the crevices of the rocks,  
and into the crags of the ragged rocks,  
for fear of the LORD and for the glory  
of his majesty,  
when he arises to shake terribly the earth.
- 22 Cease from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils;  
for of what account is he?

- 3** For, look, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,  
is taking away from Jerusalem and  
from Judah  
the supply and the support,  
the whole supply of bread,  
and the whole supply of water,
- 2 The mighty man, and the warrior,  
the judge, and the prophet,  
and the diviner, and the elder,
- 3 The captain of fifty,  
and the honourable man,  
and the counsellor, and the skillful craftsman,  
and the eloquent orator.
- 4 And I will make children their princes,  
and babes will rule over them.
- 5 And the people will be oppressed,  
each one by another, and each one  
by his neighbour.  
The child will be insolent against the elder,  
and the base against the honourable.
- 6 When a man takes hold of his brother  
from the house of his father,  
*saying*, "You have clothing;  
you be our ruler, and *let* these ruins  
*be* in your charge",

- 7 In that day he will protest, saying,  
"I am no healer; for in my house *is*  
neither bread nor clothing.  
Do not make me a ruler of the people."
- 8 For Jerusalem is ruined,  
and Judah has fallen,  
because their tongue and their actions  
*are* against the LORD,  
provoking the eyes of his glory.
- 9 The look on their face testifies against them,  
and they declare their sin like Sodom;  
they do not hide *it*.  
Woe to their soul!  
For they have brought evil on themselves.
- 10 Tell the righteous that *it will be* well with him,  
for they will partake of the fruit of their  
actions.
- 11 Woe to the wicked!  
*It will go* badly with him,  
for he will be paid back for *what* his  
hands *have done*.
- 12 *As for* my people, children *are* their  
oppressors,  
and women rule over them.  
O my people, those who lead you cause  
*you* to go astray and destroy the  
way of your paths.
- 13 The LORD stands up to plead,  
and stands up to judge the people.
- 14 The LORD will enter into judgment  
with the elders of his people and its rulers;  
for you have eaten up the vineyard.

Ps 115:2-8.  
**2:21** The time is coming when the proud and arrogant will no longer defy God, but will run from His anger and crawl to hiding places.  
**2:22** In the light of the above truth, however trustworthy individual men may be, it is foolish to trust in man in general (Ps 118:8; 146:3; Jer 17:5). Isaiah chapter 1 and 2:6-9 show what mankind is like. Chapter 2:10-21 shows what will happen to mankind. In the light of this is mankind to be trusted? Absolutely not.  
**3:1** "Judah" – the revelation in this chapter does not have to do with the future "Day of the Lord", but with Isaiah's own time, and it refers only to Judah and Jerusalem. God was about to bring punishment on that land and city. It would be a time of famine (v 1), defeat (vs 2,3), destruction (v 6), and despair (v 7).  
**3:4** Verse 12. No strong leaders would be left in the country.  
**3:5** The result would be anarchy and chaos, with everyone trying to get the best of everyone else.  
**3:6,7** Usually, alas, men are all too eager to rule others. But in the day of Jerusalem's destruction they would avoid responsibility.

**3:8-17** God gives the reasons why He had to so severely punish His people. Justice demanded that they reap what they sowed (vs 9,11. See Ps 18:25-26; Gal 6:7,8).  
**3:8** Because of this rebellion against God they were at the point of utter collapse.  
**3:9** "Sodom" – 1:9,10. They did many shameful things, but had no shame because of them. So God would put them to shame.  
**3:10,11** In the middle of prophecies of disaster here is a wonderful encouragement for God's true servants. Let us take it to heart when we find ourselves in the midst of evil men. Everywhere in the Bible we see that the rewards of a righteous life and the results of a wicked life are vastly different. Psalm 37 is a beautiful revelation of all this.  
**3:12** "Cause you to go astray" – 9:16; Jer 50:6. It is an awesome responsibility to lead people, and all leaders will have to answer to God for how they have led them (vs 14,15).  
**3:13** Ps 82:1.  
**3:14,15** Besides leading the people astray, the leaders wrecked God's work and oppressed and plundered the poor. God Almighty is concerned for the poor. He sees what happens to them, and He will avenge them (Ps 12:5; 35:10; 37:14,15; 72:12-14).

- The plunder from the poor *is* in your houses.
- 15 "What do you mean *by* crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?" says the Lord God of hosts.
- 16 Moreover the LORD says,  
"Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,  
and walk with stretched out necks and  
wanton eyes,  
walking and mincing as they go,  
and making a tinkling *sound* with their feet,
- 17 Therefore the Lord will bring scabs  
on the crown of the head of the  
daughters of Zion,  
and the LORD will uncover their secret parts."
- 18 In that day the Lord will take away *their* finery,  
*their* tinkling anklets, and *their* headbands,  
and *their* crescent ornaments,
- 19 The pendants, and the bracelets,  
and the veils,
- 20 The headdresses, and the leg ornaments,  
and the scarves, and the perfume bottles,  
and the charms,
- 21 The rings, and nose jewels,
- 22 The fine apparel, and the capes,  
and the cloaks, and the purses,
- 23 The mirrors, and the fine linen,  
and the turbans, and the veils.
- 24 And it will be *like this*:  
Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stink;  
and instead of a sash, a rope;  
and instead of well-set hair, baldness;  
and instead of fine clothing,  
a wearing of sackcloth;  
*and* instead of beauty, branding.
- 25 Your men will fall by the sword,

- and your mighty in the war.
- 26 And her gates will lament and mourn,  
and she will sit on the ground desolate.
- 4 And in that day seven women will  
seize one man, saying,  
"We will eat our own food, and wear  
our own clothes;  
only let us be called by your name,  
to take away our disgrace."
- 2 In that day the Branch of the LORD  
*will be* beautiful and glorious,  
and the fruit of the earth will be  
the pride and splendour for those  
of Israel who have escaped.
- 3 And it will be *that those* left in Zion  
and *those who* remain in Jerusalem,  
will be called holy, everyone who  
is written among the living in Jerusalem,
- 4 When the Lord has washed away the  
filth of the daughters of Zion,  
and has purged the blood of Jerusalem  
from its midst by the spirit of judgment,  
and by the spirit of burning.
- 5 Then the LORD will create above every  
dwelling place of Mount Zion,  
and above her assemblies,  
a cloud and smoke by day,  
and the shining of a flaming fire by night.  
Over all the glory *will be* a canopy.
- 6 And there will be a tent for shade in  
the daytime from the heat,  
and for a place of refuge,  
and for a shelter from storm and from rain.

5 Now I will sing to my loved one  
a song of my beloved concerning

**3:16** We see from 2:11-17 what God thinks of pride, arrogance and haughtiness. Here we see that the women were as guilty of this as the men.

**3:17-24** God will crush haughtiness whenever it is found. It is especially hateful to Him when it appears among His own people, and among those (the women) who should be known for their submission, gentleness, and humility. Compare this passage with 1 Tim 2:9,10 and 1 Pet 3:1-6.

**3:25** See 1:20; 3:2,3.

**3:26** "Mourn" – Ps 137:1; Isa 29:2; Jer 14:2; Lam 1:1-4.

**4:1** "Man" – many of the men would be killed (3:25), and many women left without possibility of marriage.

"Disgrace" – women of that day thought it a disgrace to remain unmarried and childless (Gen 30:23; Isa 54:4; Luke 1:25).

**4:2-4** "Branch" – this is probably a prophecy of the Messiah. Compare 11:1; 53:2; Jer 23:5; Zech 4:12. However some scholars think that branch here may refer to God's

people. In either case, these verses speak of a revival of spiritual life in Israel and Judah.

**4:4** See 1:25; 48:10,11.

**4:5,6** See Ex 13:21,22; 40:38. If these verses are to have a literal fulfillment (and who can say it is impossible?), perhaps it will be in connection with Isa 30:26. Some scholars think this is simply a poetic way of indicating God's protection over His people. It may be so, but when God did something similar in a literal way in the past (Ex 13:21,22), it would not be wise to rule out the possibility of some kind of literal fulfillment of these verses in the future.

"Fire" – note at Ex 3:2.

**5:1-6** Here is a parable regarding the nation of Israel as a whole and the tribe of Judah in particular. Those who thought of themselves as God's people are called a vineyard. Compare Ps 80:8-19; Isa 3:14; 27:2; Jer 2:21; 12:10; Ezek 17:6-8; 19:10-14; Hos 10:1; 14:7; Micah 7:1; Matt 20:1-16; 21:33-44; John 15:1-5.

**5:1** The prophet speaks of God and His

- his vineyard.  
My loved one has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill;
- 2 And he dug it up, and cleared away its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the middle of it, and also made a winepress in it. Then he looked for it to produce grapes, and it produced wild grapes.
- 3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, please judge between me and my vineyard.
- 4 What more could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I looked for it to produce grapes, did it produce wild grapes?
- 5 Come now, I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard. I will take away its hedge, and it will be devoured.  
*And I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down.*
- 6 And I will make it a desolation. It will not be pruned, or dug, but briars and thorns will come up. I will also command the clouds to rain no rain on it."
- 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel,

- and the men of Judah *are* his pleasant plant. And he looked for justice, but saw oppression; for righteousness, but *heard* a cry of distress.
- 8 Woe to those who add house to house, *who* join field to field, until *there is* no space left, so that they may live alone in the midst of the land!
- 9 In my ears the LORD of hosts *said*: "Certainly many great and beautiful houses will be desolate, without inhabitant.
- 10 Yes, ten acres of vineyard will yield *only* one bath, and a homer of seed will yield *only* an ephah."
- 11 Woe to those who rise up early in the morning, *that* they may go after strong drink, *and* who continue until night, till wine inflames them!
- 12 And the harp, and the lyre, the tambourine, and flute, and wine, are in their feasts. But they do not regard the work of the LORD, nor consider the work of his hands.
- 13 Therefore my people go into captivity, because *they have* no knowledge, and their honourable men *are* famished, and their masses are dried up from thirst.
- 14 Therefore hell has enlarged itself,

people Israel. "Sing" here means merely to utter in poetic form. The "fruitful hill" is the land of Israel.

5:2-4 God did all He could possibly do to make the vineyard good, fruitful, and safe. But all he got for His work was bad fruit. In v 3 God Himself begins to speak through Isaiah. Why was it that only bad fruit was produced from such careful effort? Was it the fault of the owner of the vineyard, or the fault of the people who were the vineyard? The answer is so obvious that God calls upon the people of the vineyard themselves to give the answer.

5:5,6 God does not say He will simply depart and abandon His vineyard. He says He will work actively for its destruction. This is because the vineyard is a nation which deserved punishment and which needed drastic correction. God used invading armies to accomplish His purposes.

5:7 The prophet put the matter beyond doubt by explaining the parable. From here to v 25 he points out what is meant by the bad fruit of verses 2 and 4. The good fruit God looked for is stated in two words in v 7 – justice and righteousness. The bad fruits were many. This verse gives two – murder and unjust oppression of the people that made them cry out in pain.

5:8-23 He pronounces a number of "woes"

on the people for their sins (v 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22). These "woes" mean God is denouncing them and will punish them.

5:8-10 The sin here is greed for property. A common and very foolish sin which God hates and forbids (Ex 20:17; Luke 12:15; 1 Tim 6:6-10. For an illustration of greed that was terribly punished see 1 Kings 21:1-19). God punished these greedy people by making their fields unfruitful and by carrying them off from their fine houses.

5:10 "Ten acres" – in Hebrew "ten-yoke" – that is, the land that 10 yoke of oxen could plow in one day.  
"Bath" – probably about 22 liters.  
"Homer" – probably about 6 bushels (220 dry liters).  
"Ephah" – probably about one half bushel (22 liters dry measure).

5:11-17 The sin here is drunkenness and revelry. Those engaging in it did not "consider the work of his hands" (v 12). They thought only of their own pleasures and lusts. The punishment would be exile to a foreign land where, instead of enjoying wine and rich foods, they would die of hunger and thirst (vs 13,14). Observe in this chapter how fitting each punishment is to the crime.

5:14 "Hell" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

and opened its mouth without limit;  
 and their glory, and their masses,  
 and their pomp, and he who rejoices,  
 will descend into it.

15 And the *common* man will be brought down,  
 and the mighty man will be abased,  
 and the eyes of the arrogant will be  
 brought low.

16 But the LORD of hosts will be exalted  
 in judgment,  
 and the holy God will be hallowed in  
 righteousness.

17 Then the lambs will graze as in their pasture,  
 and strangers will eat in the waste  
 places of the rich.

18 Woe to those who drag wickedness along  
 with cords of falsehood,  
 and sin as if with a cart rope.

19 They say, "Let him hurry, *and* hasten his work,  
 so that we can see *it*;  
 and let the plan of the Holy One of  
 Israel draw near and come,  
 so that we can know *it*."

20 Woe to those who call evil good,  
 and good evil;  
 who put darkness for light,  
 and light for darkness;  
 who put bitter for sweet,  
 and sweet for bitter.

21 Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes,  
 and prudent in their own sight.

22 Woe to *those who are* heroes in

drinking wine  
 and champions in mixing strong drink;

23 Who declare the wicked innocent for a bribe,  
 and take away the justice of the  
 righteous from him,

24 Therefore as the fire devours the stubble,  
 and the flame consumes the chaff,  
 so their root will become rotten,  
 and their blossom will go up like dust;  
 because they have cast away the law  
 of the LORD of hosts,  
 and despised the word of the Holy One  
 of Israel.

25 Therefore the anger of the LORD burns  
 against his people,  
 and he has stretched out his hand  
 against them and struck them;  
 and the hills trembled,  
 and their corpses *were* torn in the  
 middle of the streets.

For all this his anger is not turned away,  
 but his hand *is* stretched out still.

26 And he will lift up a banner to the  
 nations from afar,  
 and will whistle to them from the end  
 of the earth;  
 and, look, they come speedily, swiftly!

27 None of them will be weary or stumble.  
 No one will slumber or sleep;  
 nor will the belt around their waist  
 be loosened,  
 nor the strap of their sandals be broken.

5:15 See 2:11-18. Again God reveals His hatred of man's arrogance.

5:16 Observe that God is glorified in His just punishment of sinners and in the display of His righteousness which results in their destruction.

5:17 This speaks of desolation and enemy occupation of land.

5:18-23 Here is a list of sins with threatened "woes." The punishment for all of these sins is described in vs 24-30.

5:18 So much of man's sin has to do with deceit – deceiving others, and often themselves, and trying to deceive God as well. The mention of cords and ropes suggests labor. These people worked hard at their sins.

5:19 These sinners spoke these words in sarcasm. As so many others they did not believe God's threatened judgments would come on them.

5:20 This shows the depths of their depravity. By sin and hardness of heart they had lost the desire, and perhaps even the ability, to distinguish between right and wrong. Compare Rom 1:21; Eph 4:18,19; Heb 5:14.

5:21 Prov 3:7; Isa 47:10; 1 Cor 1:18-21; 3:18-20. To be wise in one's own eyes is to

cut oneself off from God's wisdom and to commit the sin of arrogance.

5:22,23 In verses 11,12, the prophet denounces this sin in general. Here he denounces it in the judges and leaders. In Hebrew these two verses are clearly linked. The judges were "heroes", that is, very capable people, at drinking. But they were corrupt in administration and incapable of just verdicts. On bribery see Ex 23:8; 1 Sam 8:3; Ps 26:10; Prov 15:27; 17:23; Amos 5:12.

5:24,25 None of the classes of sinners described in the preceding verses will escape God's punishment. Observe that the root cause of their evil behavior was the rejection of God's Word as a ruling power in their lives.

5:25 "Stretched out still" – 9:12,17,21; 10:4. He would go on punishing them until the demands of justice were fully met.

5:26-30 These verses speak of invasions by foreign armies. God calls them to come against His own people for their chastisement. In 722 and 701 B.C. Assyria invaded Israel and Judah. Beginning in 605 B.C. Babylon invaded Judah more than once. See 2 Kings 17:1-20; 24:1-25; Jeremiah chapter 52.



- 28 Their arrows *are* sharp,  
and all their bows are bent.  
Their horses' hooves will seem like flint,  
and their wheels like a whirlwind.
- 29 Their roaring *will be* like a lion.  
They will roar like young lions.  
Yes, they will roar, and take hold of the prey,  
and will carry *it* away safely,  
and no one will rescue *it*.
- 30 And in that day they will roar against  
them like the roaring of the sea.  
And if *one* looks toward the land,  
darkness *and* sorrow appear,  
and the light is darkened by its clouds.

**6** In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his *robe* filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphim. Each one had six wings.

**6:1** "Died" – 1:1. We are not told whether the vision Isaiah saw was before or after Uzziah's death, only that it occurred in that year (740 B.C. Uzziah was also called Azariah). A description of his reign is in 2 Kings 15:1-7 and 2 Chron 26:1-23).

"Saw" – God's spiritual essence cannot be seen by men (Ex 34:20; 1 Tim 6:16; John 1:18; 6:46), but men can see a revelation of His glory, or His manifestation in human form, if He chooses to give one (Gen 16:13; 18:22,23; Deut 34:10; Ezek 1:26). Isaiah saw the glory of the Son of God – see John 12:41. Observe in v 5 that Isaiah calls Him "the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts." In other words, Jesus the Son of God is Jehovah. See also Gen 16:7; Ex 3:14; Ps 23:1; 24:7-10; 96:10-13; Zech 12:10; note at Luke 2:11. The hem of His garment reached the temple in Jerusalem.

**6:2** "Seraphim" – the plural of seraph, a word that comes from the Hebrew verb "to burn." It may mean something like "flaming" or "fiery" spirits. See Heb 1:7. They are similar to the "living beings" seen by Ezekiel and John (Ezek 1:5; 10:15; Rev 4:8), but each description varies somewhat from the others. Very little is revealed in the Bible about these mysterious spirit beings.

**6:3** The seraphs are overwhelmed by one aspect of God's being – His holiness (see also Rev 4:8). This is in line with the book of Isaiah, and, indeed, the whole Bible which reveals from beginning to end God's glorious holiness. Note at Lev 20:7.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"Glory" – Num 14:21; Ps 72:19. God's glory is revealed in His creation and in His acts. His glory is everywhere on earth but many people are ignorant of it. The time will come when all men will know it (11:9).

**6:4** Shaking and the appearance of smoke are often connected with God's presence (64:1; Ex 19:18; Ps 18:7,8; 68:8; 104:32; Rev 15:8). They speak of His glory and power and His fiery holiness (Heb 12:29).

With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another, and said,

"Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts! The whole earth *is* full of his glory."

4 And the posts of the door were shaken at the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 Then I said, "Woe *to* me, for I am undone! Because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from the altar, 7 And he touched my mouth *with it*, and said, "See, this has touched your lips, and your guilt is taken away, and your sin is purged."

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

**6:5** "Undone" – the Hebrew word could also be translated "ruined" or "cut off."

"King" – human beings die, the King of heaven rules forever. Isaiah had to take his eyes (and his hopes) away from the kings of his people and place them on God the King. The effect of the vision is what we might expect if we know something of God's holiness and the sinfulness of even the best of men. Probably Isaiah expected to die on the spot. Compare Ex 3:6; 33:20; Jud 13:22; Job 13:11; Ezek 1:28; Dan 8:17,18,27; 10:7-9; Acts 9:3,4; Rev 1:17. In God's presence he became very conscious of his own uncleanness and the uncleanness of the people. It is God's holy presence that awakens men to their sin, guilt and depravity. In His light, we see what we really are like (Luke 5:8; John 16:8; Ps 32:1-5; Eph 5:13; 1 John 1:5-7).

The lips are a door through which the depravity of men's hearts is revealed (Matt 12:34; 15:11; Rom 3:13). How often those who want to please and serve God are convicted of their inner sinful nature by their inability to control their tongues (Ps 39:1-13; Jam 3:2,6,8).

**6:6,7** Isaiah is seeing a vision, and this is a symbolic act. It was given to assure Isaiah that his sins were forgiven. God commanded the priests of Israel to keep fire burning permanently on the brazen altar of sacrifice (Lev 6:12,13). A coal of fire from there would speak of atoning sacrifice. Note on atonement at Ex 29:33. Every servant of God before he enters the ministry should have the assurance that his sins are forgiven, his guilt atoned for. It is a very basic part of the foundation of a ministry successful and pleasing in God's eyes. In Isaiah's case the coal of fire touched his lips – that part of him which made him most conscious of his sin and depravity.

**6:8** God has His work on earth and he wants willing servants to do it. This willingness of men should arise out of God's mercy

- Then I said, "Here *am* I. Send me."  
 9 And he said, "Go, and tell this people,  
 'You listen and listen,  
 but *you* do not understand;  
 and you look and look,  
 but *you* do not perceive.'  
 10 Make the heart of this people dull,  
 and make their ears heavy,  
 and shut their eyes;  
 lest they see with their eyes,  
 and hear with their ears,  
 and understand with their heart,  
 and turn *to me* and be healed."  
 11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?"  
 And he answered,  
 "Until the cities are made a wasteland without  
 inhabitant,  
 and the houses without man,  
 and the land is utterly desolate,  
 12 And the LORD has removed men far away,  
 and the forsaken places in the midst  
 of the land *are* many.  
 13 But yet a tenth *part will be* in it,  
 and *it* will return and be for consuming,  
 like a terebinth tree or an oak.

toward them in making atonement for their sins and blotting out their guilt. Compare Ps 51:1,13,14; Rom 12:1,2.

"Us" – note at Gen 1:26.

"Here am I" – Gen 22:1; Ex 3:4; 1 Sam 3:4,6,8; Acts 22:10.

**6:9,10** Isaiah's ministry in part was to pronounce God's judgment on his nation, to be God's instrument in making them ripe for destruction. The very truth he preached would harden the people because they would not repent and receive it into their hearts. But why would God want the hearts of His people (or any people) hardened? Because the time had come to punish them for their sin and rebellion. God does not delight in punishing, but justice demands it. On hardening see note at Ex 4:21. The Lord Jesus quoted these verses from Isaiah in Matt 13:14,15, and Paul in Acts 28:26,27. He probably referred to them also in Rom 11:25.

"Ears" – those who will not willingly hear God's Word will be deprived of the ability.

"Eyes" – those who love darkness will be deprived of the ability to see spiritual light and truth. Isaiah must have been dismayed at such a commission. He naturally wondered how long he would have to do such disagreeable work and whether there would be some more appealing ministry eventually. God did not promise him a happier work. But he has given His servants in these New Testament days a more glorious ministry (Matt 28:18-20; 2 Cor 3:6-11). Isaiah too was later a prophet to foretell

Its stump *remains* to it when it is cut down.  
 So the holy seed *will be* its stump."

**7** And it came about in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but they could not conquer it. 2 And the house of David was told, saying, "Syria has become an ally of Ephraim." And his heart, and the heart of his people, was shaken like the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.

3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-Jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the road to the Fuller's Field, 4 and say to him, 'Be careful, and be calm. Do not be afraid or faint-hearted because of these two stubs of smouldering firebrands, because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah, 5 because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have made an evil plot against you, saying, 6 "Let us go up against Judah, and trouble it, and let us make a break in its wall for ourselves, and set the son of Tabeal as king over it." 7 Thus says the Lord God, 'It will not stand, nor will it come to pass. 8 For the

the glorious gospel of Christ, though he was not given a promise here that he would be.

These two verses read as follows in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament made by Jewish scholars before Christ was born): "'You will be ever hearing, but never understanding; you will be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' This people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes."

**6:13** Even in the work of hardening and destruction God would preserve a remnant of the people for Himself. This is always God's way.

"Stump" – 11:1.

**7:1** 2 Kings 16:5-18; 2 Chron 28:16-21. This happened probably about 735 B.C.

**7:2** The kings of Judah were all descended from the royal house of David. At this time Ahaz was on the throne. Ephraim was the leading tribe of the northern kingdom of Israel, and that whole kingdom is meant here.

**7:3** Shear-Jashub means "a remnant will return."

**7:4-9** Though Ahaz was a bad king (2 Kings 16:1-4), God sent him a good message. God would deliver the southern kingdom of Judah from these attacks from the north. The two attacking powers were only smoking firebrands, soon to be put out. In 732 B.C. the Assyrians captured Damascus, Syria's capital, and then defeated Israel.

**7:7** "LORD God" – see note at Gen 15:2.

**7:8** "Sixty-five years" – this was literally fulfilled. See 2 Kings 17:5,6,24.

head of Syria *is* Damascus, and the head of Damascus *is* Rezin; and within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, no longer *to be* a people. 9 And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. If you will not believe, surely you will not be established."

10 Moreover, the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 "Ask the LORD your God for a sign for yourself. Ask it *to be* either in the deep, or in the height above."

12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I put the LORD to the test."

13 And he said, "Listen now, O house of David! *Is it* so small a thing for you to weary men, that you will weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin will conceive, and bear a son, and will call his name Immanuel. 15 He will eat curds and honey, when he knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

**7:9** "Remaliah's son" – this was Pekah, a usurper of the throne of Israel.

"Established" – the kingdom of Israel fell because they did not believe and put into practice God's word (2 Kings 17:7-18). Here the Lord warns the nation of Judah and the house of David that unbelief will be their ruin also.

**7:10,11** God is willing to give signs to encourage weak faith in His promises (Ex 3:12; 4:1-9; Jud 6:16-22,36-40). Here God tells Ahaz to ask for a sign. But in Matt 12:38,39 the Lord Jesus said that a wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign. Sometimes asking for signs may be good, sometimes bad. It depends on the circumstances, or the persons, or the motive.

**7:12** Perhaps Ahaz wanted to put on a self-righteous front before Isaiah. As if to say, "I am not the kind of a man who needs any signs or who commits the sin of tempting God" (compare Deut 6:16). But the truth is, Ahaz was a wicked man who did not want any dealings with Jehovah the true God of the universe.

**7:13** God Himself had told him to ask for a sign, so Ahaz was trying God's patience by disobedience and hypocritical self-righteousness.

**7:14** This verse is a clear prophecy concerning the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know this because the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Matthew to say so. See Matt 1:18-25. The name Immanuel, which means "God with us" can apply fully only to the Lord Jesus. He alone is the incarnation of God (Isa 9:6,7; John 1:1,14; etc.). This verse is a wonderful prophecy of a supernatural, miraculous event which took place more than 700 years after it was uttered. This birth of a child to a virgin is called a "sign." A sign from God must be something very striking and remarkable. For a young woman, even an unmarried young woman, to have a child is no striking or remarkable thing. But for one who had never been with a man to have a child would

be a divine miracle. This sign was to be for the whole house of David, not to Ahaz alone (v 13 – in v 14 the plural for "you" is used).

16 For before the child will know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. 17 The LORD will bring the king of Assyria on you, and on your people, and on your father's house, days that have not come from the day that Ephraim broke away from Judah."

18 And it will happen in that day, *that* the LORD will whistle for the fly that *is* in the furthest part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria. 19 And they will come and all of them will settle on the desolate valleys, and in the crevices of the rocks, and on all the thorn bushes, and on all the pastures. 20 In the same day the Lord will shave the head and the hair of the legs with a hired razor, with those beyond the River, with the king of Assyria, and will also remove the beard. 21 And it will happen in that day, *that* a man will keep alive a young cow and two sheep. 22 And

be a divine miracle. This sign was to be for the whole house of David, not to Ahaz alone (v 13 – in v 14 the plural for "you" is used).

Some commentators believe that this verse must have somehow a twofold fulfillment. This is because they argue that the verses which follow deal with the historical situation of Isaiah's day and the virgin's son seemingly was to be a sign to the people then living. It may be so, is probably so, but the Holy Spirit has not revealed how it was fulfilled through the birth of any child in the time of Isaiah. And we are not told that any child was then called Immanuel. But in prophecy sometimes there does seem to be both a near and far fulfillment. Isa 8:18 may be an example of this.

**7:15** The meaning of eating curds and honey is given in verses 22 in the context of verses 20-25. There would be an invasion of the Assyrian army and destruction and desolation in the land. More common food would not be available.

**7:16** "Two kings" – v 1. Their lands were laid waste by the king of Assyria in 732 B.C., about 3 years after God inspired these words.

**7:17** "Ephraim" – the northern kingdom of Israel – had broken away from Judah almost 200 years before (Kings 12:19,20). Ahaz was worried about the invasion of the kings of Israel and Syria. God says a far worse invasion would come on Judah in the future (see 8:7,8; 36:1).

**7:18** "Fly", "bee" – means the soldiers of those countries. They would come like harmful and tormenting insects.

**7:19** The land of Judah would be overrun by foreigners from these countries.

**7:20** For others to forcibly shave off one's beard (and no doubt the hair of the body) was considered a disgrace (2 Sam 10:4,5). It indicated utter defeat. The "River" here means the Euphrates.

**7:21,22** Signifies a time of trouble, when the produce of the fields would not be

it will happen, because of the abundance of milk they give, *that* he will eat curds; for everyone left in the land will eat curds and honey. 23 And it will happen in that day, *that* in every place where there had been a thousand vines worth a thousand silver shekels, there will be *only* briars and thorns. 24 *Men* will come there with arrows and with bows, because all the land will become briars and thorns. 25 And *as for* all the hills that were dug with a mattock, you will not go there for fear of briars and thorns; but it will become *a place* for sending out oxen, and for the sheep walk on.

**8** Moreover the LORD said to me, "Take a large scroll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hashbaz. 2 And I will take for myself faithful witnesses to record *it*, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."

3 And I went to the prophetess; and she conceived, and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Maher-shalal-hashbaz. 4 For before the child has the knowledge to cry out, 'My father'; and 'my mother', the riches of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be taken away in front of the king of Assyria."

5 The LORD also spoke to me again, saying, 6 "Because these people refuse the waters of Shiloah that go softly,

available.

"Everyone left in the land" – this phrase speaks of a time when many would be exiled from the land.

**7:23-25** This will be the result of the exile of the people to other lands.

"A thousand. . . shekels" (v 23) – about 11.5 kilograms.

**8:1,2** Maher-shalal-hash-baz is Hebrew for "swift to the plunder, quick to the spoil." The phrase is a prophecy of defeat of the northern kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Syria by Assyria (v 4; 5:26,30; 7:16). It was given in this striking way to capture the attention of leaders and people. The prophecy was attested by two leading men in Judah before the event.

**8:3** Isaiah named his son Maher-shalal-hash-baz to further impress on the people what God had revealed to him. Isaiah's wife is referred to as the prophetess. Some scholars believe this event is at least a partial fulfillment of 7:14. However, there is no proof for this.

**8:4** "Assyria" – note at 2 Kings 15:19.

**8:6** "This people" – the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

"Shiloah" – probably refers to the most important spring of water in Jerusalem. It is here a symbol of God's peaceful providence. Judah, when faced with their two enemies Israel and Syria, had rejected confidence in God and had looked to Assyria to protect them (2 Kings 16:7-9).

and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son, 7 Now therefore, look, the Lord will bring on them the waters of the River, strong and mighty, the king of Assyria and all his glory; and he will come up over all his channels, and come up over all his banks, 8 And he will pass through Judah. He will overflow and pass over. He will reach up to the neck, and his wings will spread out to fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel." 9 Associate yourselves, O you people, but you will be broken in pieces. And give ear, all you of far countries. Arm yourselves, but you will be broken in pieces; arm yourselves, but you will be broken in pieces. 10 Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing. State the matter, but it will not stand; for God *is* with us. 11 For the LORD spoke thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, 12 "Do not say 'a conspiracy'; about all *that* this people call a conspiracy;

**8:7** God determined to punish Judah for its unbelief and wickedness by the very nation Judah had trusted to save them. The Assyrian armies would come like a flood on the land.

"River" – the Euphrates.

**8:8** "Neck" – the flood of Assyrians would not completely drown Jerusalem and Judah. The "waters" would come only to the neck, not over the head. The Assyrians besieged Jerusalem but departed in panic (chapter 37).

"Immanuel" – 7:16. Immanuel here means the coming Messiah, the Son of God, "God with us." Judah was His land.

**8:9,10** These words are spoken to the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem. "God is with us" in Hebrew is just the one and same word used in 7:14 and 8:8 – Immanuel. If God is with us, if the Messiah is on our side, what can our enemies do? See Ps 56:9; 118:6; Jer 20:11; Rom 8:31-34; Heb 13:6.

**8:11** "Strong hand" – suggests God's presence, control, support, inspiration to one He has appointed – Ezek 1:3; 3:14,22; 37:1; 40:1.

"Not walk in" – it is always easier to move with the crowd than to stand against it. Isaiah needed God's strong hand on him to maintain his stand against an evil and unbelieving generation.

**8:12,13** They who fear God need not fear men. Notes on fear of God at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

- do not fear what they fear, or be afraid.
- 13 The LORD of hosts is the one *you are* to regard as holy; and *let him be* your fear, and *let him be* your dread.
- 14 And he will be as a sanctuary; but as a stone of stumbling and as a rock of staggering to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and as a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
- 15 And many among them will stumble and fall and be broken, and be snared and captured."
- 16 Bind up the testimony, seal up the law among my disciples.
- 17 And I will wait on the LORD, who hides his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18 Look, I and the children whom the LORD has given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells in Mount Zion.

19 And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards", who whisper and mutter,

**8:14,15** The Lord is a safe sanctuary to those who fear and trust Him. To those who will not He will be a cause of falling and capture. Part of this verse is quoted in the New Testament. See Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:8.

**8:16-22** Who is speaking in this passage? It is not easy to determine. The LORD (Jehovah) has been speaking up to v 16. In v 17 the speaker says he will wait for the LORD (Jehovah). Is it then Isaiah speaking about himself? The last word in v 17 and first word in v 18 are applied to the Lord Jesus in Heb 2:13. Then are all these verses spoken by the Messiah using Isaiah as a mouthpiece? Or do these verses have a double fulfillment in both Isaiah's day and Christ's? Very often there is this mystery about prophecies uttered by God's servants in the Old Testament. Their words sometimes seem to refer to themselves, but the Spirit of Christ who inspired them meant the words to apply to Christ. For example, see psalms 16, 40, 41, 69, 72, etc.

**8:16** There are three views as to the speaker of these words – some say God the Father, some say the pre-incarnate Christ, some say Isaiah. In any case the meaning is the same. God's revelation through Isaiah was to be preserved for believers.

**8:17** "Hides his face" – signifies anger and disfavor (1:17; Ps 13:1; 27:9; 30:7; 69:17).

**8:18** These words are true of both Isaiah and Christ, but the primary reference is to Christ, as we know from Heb 2:13. That they may also refer to Isaiah is indicated by 8:3,4 and 7:3. The names of both his sons signified future events.

**8:19,20** A striking contrast between the

should not a people seek their God? *Why consult* the dead in behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them. 21 And they will pass through *the land*, hard-pressed and hungry. And when they are hungry it will happen that they will get in a frenzy, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. 22 And they will look toward the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom and anguish; and *they will be* driven into darkness.

9 Nevertheless the gloom *will* not *be* on her who *was* distressed, as when he first humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards more grievously afflicted *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, on them the light shined.

3 Have you multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy?

whisperings and mutterings of men who try to consult the spirits of dead people, and the pure revelations of the Word of God. On the subject of mediums and wizards see Deut 18:9-15. Any person who speaks contrary to God's word in the Bible has little or no spiritual enlightenment or understanding.

**8:21,22** God's judgments were coming on the land in Isaiah's day, are coming on the world in the future. Those who do not believe and obey God's revelation will fall into the terrible condition described here.

"Curse" – compare Rev 16:9,11,21.

"Darkness" – Matt 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet 2:17; Jude 13. Again we are shown that those who refuse the light of God's word will be punished with utter darkness (Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 13).

**9:1** This looks forward to the time of Christ. See Matt 4:12-16.

"First" – the land of these tribes in the northern kingdom of Israel greatly suffered at the hands of the Assyrian army in 734 and 732 BC, and the whole northern kingdom was destroyed in 722 BC.

**9:2** "Darkness" – spiritual darkness.

"A great light" – means the person and teachings and work of the Lord Jesus (Luke 1:78,79; 2:32; John 8:12; 1 John 1:5; Ps 27:1; 36:9).

"Shadow of death" – indicates very intense spiritual darkness and danger.

**9:3** The Lord Jesus came to greatly enlarge the number of those who would come to the light and become His people. And He came to bring true heavenly joy (61:3; John 15:18; 16:20-24; 17:13; Rom 14:17; 1 Pet 1:8; 1 John 1:4).



- The joy they have in your presence is  
like the joy *men* have when they  
divide the plunder.
- 4 For you have broken the yoke of his burden,  
and the bar *across* his shoulders,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
as in the day of Midian.
- 5 Because every warrior's boot from the  
noisy battle,  
and garments rolled in blood, will be  
for burning *and* fuel for the fire.

**9:4** "You have broken" – in 701 BC the Assyrian army was destroyed. Isaiah foretells this clearly in 10:24-27. If we think of a spiritual fulfillment of this verse we can find it in the work of the Lord Jesus in rescuing His people from the bondage of sin and misery (61:1; Luke 4:18; John 8:34-36; Rom 6:19-22; Gal 5:1).

"The day of Midian" – Judges chapter 7 gives the record of the Lord's victory over the Midianites through Gideon.

**9:5** The work of God will bring peace to individuals now, and eventually universal peace to the whole world. See 2:4.

**9:6** "Is born" – this took place hundreds of years after Isaiah wrote. God's prophet looked into the future and spoke as if the event had already happened. This verse reveals the one through whom the yoke of bondage would be lifted, the one who brings true peace, the great Light who appears in Galilee. Both the humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus are seen here. He is the mighty God, yet is born as a child. Compare 7:14. And the child grows to be the king of the Jews, the king of the whole world (Jer 23:5; Matt 2:2; 27:11; 28:18; Rev 19:16).

"Wonderful" – some scholars have translated the Hebrew word here as an adjective and joined it with the following word Counselor. It seems better to the author of these notes to regard it as a noun and a separate name, and place a comma between "Wonderful", and "Counselor", as it is in the KJV. Jesus is wonderful in His nature, His qualities, His virgin birth, His spotless life on earth, His death for sinners, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to heaven, His work as mediator for His people, His saving grace, in all He is and does.

"Counselor" – 11:2; 28:29; Prov 8:14. The Lord Jesus can counsel us in everything we need to know, say, or do. When He was on earth He always gave perfectly wise answers to those who came to Him for anything. His counsel now is no less wise, for in Him "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). Is it not sad that people go with their problems and questions to everyone under the sun, except to Him, the One who knows all questions and all answers? Let us make a practice of consulting this One who is perfect in wisdom and perfect in counsel, and using His Word (the Bible) which He has given to us as a

- 6 For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given.  
And the government will be on his shoulder;  
and his name will be called Wonderful,  
Counselor, The Mighty God,  
The Father of Eternity,  
The Prince of Peace.
- 7 Of the increase of *his* government  
and peace *there will be* no end,  
on the throne of David,  
and over his kingdom,  
to order it and establish it with

book of counsel.

"The Mighty God" – this is the clearest possible declaration that the Messiah of Israel, the Lord Jesus, is the incarnation of God. Notes at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11; etc.

"The Father of eternity" – a literal translation of the Hebrew, which probably indicates one who is the source of eternity or who possesses eternity, an eternal being. See Micah 5:2.

God is a Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (notes at Matt 3:16,17; 2 Cor 13:14; etc). The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, the Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. The translation "The Everlasting Father" in Isa 9:6 (KJV and many other versions) can lead to confusion. The literal translation "The Father of eternity" does not mean that He is the person in the Trinity called the "Father." In this same verse it is said of Him that "a **son** is given." In the New Testament Jesus, the Son of God, is often distinguished from the Father who sent Him (John 1:1,2; 3:35; 17:1,5; 2 John 3; etc).

We should try to understand the Hebrew idiom used here in Isaiah. The Hebrew translated "The Father of eternity" is Abi-ad. "Ab" means father, and "Ad" can indicate eternity, but when these two words are joined together they may well give a different meaning than "Everlasting Father."

There are a number of individuals in the Old Testament whose names have Abi joined with another word. Consider these:

Abi-Albon (2 Sam 23:31) literally is "Father of strength," but its likely meaning is "One who is strong," or "Powerful one."

Abi-Asaph (Ex 6:24) literally is "Father of gathering", but its meaning is "One who gathers" or, possibly, "Father is gathering."

Abigail (1 Chron 2:16) literally is "Father of exultation", but means "One who exults." This is a woman's name, and shows that often (and maybe always) when these names combine Abi with another word, it may not be wise to translate Abi literally as "father" (unless, of course, the word refers to the father of the person who has it).

"Peace" – the Lord Jesus is the great peacemaker between God and man, and the one who gives peace of mind and heart (Luke 1:79; 2:14; John 14:27; Acts 10:36; Rom 5:1; Eph 2:14,17; Col 1:20).

**9:7** Christ will reign forever. In regard to His human nature He was a descendant of

- justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.
- 8 The Lord sent a message against Jacob, and it has fallen on Israel.
- 9 And all the people will know *it*,  
Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria,  
who say in pride and arrogance of heart,
- 10 "The bricks have fallen down,  
but we will build with cut stones;  
the sycamores are cut down,  
but we will replace *them with cedars.*"
- 11 Therefore the LORD will set up the  
adversaries of Rezin against him,  
and spur his enemies on,
- 12 The Syrians in front,  
and the Philistines behind;  
and they will devour Israel with open mouth.  
Yet for all this his anger is not turned away,  
but his hand *is* stretched out still.
- 13 For the people do not turn to him who  
strikes them,  
nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.
- 14 Therefore the LORD will cut off from  
Israel head and tail,  
branch and reed, in one day.
- 15 The ancient and honourable,  
he *is* the head;  
and the prophet who teaches lies,  
he *is* the tail.

- 16 For the leaders of this people cause  
*them* to go astray,  
and *those who are* led by them *are* destroyed.
- 17 Therefore the Lord will have no joy  
in their young men,  
nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows;  
for everyone *is* a hypocrite and an evildoer,  
and every mouth speaks folly.  
Yet for all this his anger is not turned away,  
but his hand *is* stretched out still.
- 18 For wickedness burns like fire;  
it will devour the briars and thorns,  
and will set the thickets of the  
forest on fire,  
and they will mount upward *like* the  
rising of smoke.
- 19 Through the wrath of the LORD of  
hosts the land is darkened,  
and the people will be like fuel for the fire.  
No man will spare his brother.
- 20 And he will cut down on the right hand,  
but be hungry;  
and he will devour on the left hand,  
but will not be satisfied.  
Each one of them will eat the flesh of  
his own arm.
- 21 Manasseh *will devour* Ephraim,  
and Ephraim, Manasseh;  
*and they will both be* against Judah.  
Yet for all this his anger is not turned away,  
but his hand *is* stretched out still.

King David and inherited David's kingdom.  
See 2 Sam 7:11-16; 23:1-5; Luke 1:32,33; Rom 1:3; Rev 22:16.

"Justice and righteousness" – 11:4; 16:5; 32:1,16; 33:5; 42:1; Ps 72:2; Jer 23:5; 33:4,15; Rev 19:11.

"Zeal" – God's zeal, not man's, will accomplish all the above from beginning to end. Compare 26:11; 37:32; 42:13; 59:17; 2 Kings 19:31; Ps 69:9; John 2:17. God is not a passive being who lets things take their own course. He has a plan of action to establish Christ as earth's king and He will zealously fulfill His plan, in spite of the opposition of His enemies (Ps 2:1-12).

The author of these notes believes that the reign of Christ will be in three phases:

He reigns now over His Church and over the affairs of the world invisibly;

He will reign openly over Israel and the nations during the future thousand year reign referred to in Rev 20:4-6;

and He will reign with God the Father eternally in a new heaven and new earth (Rev 21:1-4).

But the author also believes it is far more important now for God's people to be holy and spiritual and serve God wholeheartedly, and to love God and all their brethren in

Christ, than to be able to interpret all prophecy and know how God will fulfill it.

**9:8** Isaiah turns again to the subject of the Lord's anger on Israel. He continues on this subject up to 10:5.

**9:9** "Ephraim" – represents the whole northern kingdom of Israel (7:2). Samaria was the capital of Israel.

"Pride" – 2:11-18.

**9:10-14** Israel would have no opportunity to rebuild their towns. God's hot anger against their pride and wickedness was not cooled by the destruction wrought by minor enemies. The Lord struck them but they did not turn to Him in repentance. He would strike them again through the Assyrians.

**9:15** "Prophet" – note at Gen 20:7.

"Lies" – Jer 2:8; 5:31; etc.

**9:16** See 3:12.

**9:17** "Everyone" – young and old, leaders and people, men and women all abandoned to depravity as in Gen 6:5,12.

**9:18,19** Wickedness in itself is destructive like fire. Also it brings on those who practice it the fire of God's anger.

**9:20** God had warned them that famine would result from their wickedness (Lev 26:18-20; Deut 28:38-42,53-57). Notes on God's anger at Num 35:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**9:21** Their wickedness would be expressed

- 10** Woe to those who enact unjust laws,  
and who write oppressive *decisions*  
*which* they have prescribed
- 2 To deprive the needy of justice,  
and take away the rights of the poor  
of my people,  
so that widows may be their prey,  
and *that* they may rob the fatherless!
- 3 And what will you do in the day of punishment,  
and in the desolation *which* will come  
from afar?  
To whom will you flee for help?  
And where will you leave your glory?
- 4 Without me they will bow down among  
the prisoners,  
and they will fall under the slain.  
Yet for all this his anger is not turned away,  
but his hand *is* stretched out still.
- 5 "Woe to the Assyrian,  
the rod of my anger,  
and the staff in whose hand is my indignation!
- 6 I will send him against an ungodly nation,  
and I will give him a charge against  
the people of my wrath,  
to take the plunder,  
and to take the prey,  
and to trample them down like the  
mire of the streets.
- 7 But he does not intend this,  
nor does his heart think so;  
but *it is* in his heart to destroy and cut  
off many nations.
- 8 For he says, 'Are not my princes all kings?
- 9 *Is* not Calno like Carchemish?

- Is* not Hamath like Arpad?  
*Is* not Samaria like Damascus?
- 10 As my hand has reached the kingdoms  
of the idols,  
whose carved images exceeded those  
of Jerusalem and of Samaria,
- 11 Shall I not do to Jerusalem and her  
idols as I have done to Samaria and  
her idols?"
- 12 Therefore it will come about,  
when the Lord has completed his  
whole work on mount Zion and on  
Jerusalem, *that he will say*,  
"I will punish the fruit of the arrogant  
heart of the king of Assyria,  
and the glory of his high looks."
- 13 For he says, "I have done *it* by the  
strength of my hand and by my wisdom;  
for I have understanding.  
And I have removed the boundaries of  
the people,  
and have robbed their treasures,  
and like a mighty *man* I have put down  
their inhabitants:
- 14 And like *finding a nest* my hand has  
reached the riches of the people.  
I have gathered the whole earth like  
one gathers eggs *that are* left,  
and there was none that moved the wing,  
or opened the mouth, or peeped."
- 15 Should the axe boast itself against the  
one who cuts with it?  
*Or* should the saw exalt itself against  
the one who handles it?

in hatred and strife among themselves. Oh, what will men not do when they abandon the God of holiness and love! But still worse was to come.

**10:1,2** See 5:8,11,18,20,21,22. How God hates the greed of men that causes them to trample the poor and defenseless – a thing often seen in Bible times and today in the world around us.

**10:3,4** God will see to it that such people pay to the full for their unjust and oppressive behavior. All their ill-gotten riches will be left to their enemies.

**10:5-19** God had said He would use the kings of Assyria to punish His people Israel (7:20; 8:4). Now He says He will punish the king of Assyria.

**10:5,6** Armies marched, battles were fought, towns were destroyed, lands were taken, many were slain, many others greatly suffered. Was this just evil men acting according to their nature, expressing their greed for power and plunder? It was that, of course, but there was more to it than that. The God of the universe was working His purposes out. The King of Assyria was a

club in His hand. He sent him to punish Israel. See 7:20. Compare Jer 50:23; 51:20; Hab 1:6; Rev 17:16,17. On God's anger see Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**10:7,8** The king of Assyria had no idea at all that he was fulfilling God's purpose, that he was only like a stick in God's hand.

**10:9** Calno, Carchemish, Hamath, and Arpad – all places north of Damascus in Syria, and were taken by Assyria in 717 B.C.

**10:10,11** No gods of any people had helped them to withstand the Assyrian army. Would Jerusalem be any different? Isaiah chapter 36, 2 Kings chapter 18, and 2 Chronicles chapter 32 have descriptions of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem. Compare the words of v 11 with Isa 36:18-20.

**10:12-14** God purposed to chastise Jerusalem for its many sins. After that He would deal with the arrogance of the Assyrian king. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.

**10:15** An ax, a saw, a club are mere instruments in the hands of a person and would be unable to do a single thing without the hand that moves them. And so they have nothing to boast about. The king of

- As if the rod could wield those who lift it up,  
or as if the staff could lift up *what is*  
not wood.
- 16 Therefore the Lord, the LORD of hosts,  
will send leanness among his fat ones,  
and under his glory he shall kindle a  
fire like a burning flame.
- 17 And the light of Israel will become a fire,  
and his Holy One a flame,  
and it will burn and devour his thorns  
and his briars in one day,
- 18 And will consume the glory of his forest,  
and of his fruitful field,  
both soul and body;  
and they will be as when a sick man  
wastes away.
- 19 And the rest of the trees of his  
forest will be so few that a child  
may write them down.
- 20 And it shall come to pass in that day,  
*that* the remnant of Israel,  
and those of the house of Jacob who escape,  
will not again depend on him who  
defeated them,  
but will in fact depend on the LORD,  
the Holy One of Israel.
- 21 The remnant, the remnant of Jacob,  
will return to the mighty God.
- 22 For though your people Israel be like  
the sand of the sea,  
*yet only* a remnant of them will return.  
Destruction has been decreed;  
it will overflow with righteousness.
- 23 For the Lord God of hosts will carry  
out the decreed destruction  
throughout the whole land.
- 24 Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts:  
"O my people who live in Zion,
- do not be afraid of the Assyrian  
who will strike you with a rod,  
and lift up his staff against you,  
like Egypt *did*,
- 25 For yet a very little while, and the  
indignation *I have against you* will cease,  
and my anger *will be directed* to their  
destruction."
- 26 And the LORD of hosts will stir up a  
scourge for him.  
*It will be* like the slaughter of Midian  
at the rock of Oreb.  
And his rod *will be* over the sea;  
he will lift it up like *he did* in Egypt.
- 27 And it will happen in that day,  
*that* his burden will be taken from  
your shoulders,  
and his yoke from your neck,  
and the yoke will be destroyed because  
of the anointing.
- 28 He has come to Aiath,  
he has passed on to Migron;  
at Michmash he has stored his *baggage*  
carriages.
- 29 They have gone over the pass;  
they make a lodging place at Geba.  
Ramah is afraid;  
Gibeah of Saul has fled.
- 30 Raise your voice, O daughter of Gallim.  
Cause it to be heard at Laish.  
O poor Anathoth!
- 31 Madmenah has run away.  
The inhabitants of Gebim flee for cover.
- 32 This day he will still stop at Nob.  
He will shake his fist *at* the mount of  
the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.
- 33 See, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,

Assyria was a mere instrument in the hand of God, but was ignorant of this fact.

**10:16-19** God would teach the Assyrians that apart from Him they were nothing and could do nothing. This is a description in poetic language of the crushing defeat of the Assyrian armies at the walls of Jerusalem (37:36-38). The "light" is God Himself. The "thorns and briars" are Assyrian troops. "One day" is all it took to crush the whole army. Verse 19 may refer to the fall of the Assyrian empire at the hands of the Babylonians a little more than a century later. "Sick man" – or "stand and bearer."

**10:20-23** The Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and took most of its people into exile. But among that conquered and shattered people there would be a remnant that would no longer trust in Assyria, but in the living God. Verse 22 is referred to in Rom 9:27. Observe in

v 22 that the destruction God sent on Israel was a righteous destruction, one fully deserved, one that justice demanded. We may be sure that all of God's chastisements and judgments on people are so.

**10:24** In v 5 the Assyrians were a club in God's hands to crush Israel. God did not have this purpose against Jerusalem. The club the Assyrians lifted against Jerusalem was their own club. This is why, doubtless, it came to nothing.

**10:25** See 5:25; 10:4.

**10:26** Jud 7:25; Ex 14:26-28.

**10:27** See 9:4.

**10:28-32** A description of the approach of the Assyrian army to Jerusalem from Aiath, about 16 kilometers north of the city.

**10:32** "Daughter of Zion" – see 1:8.

**10:33,34** The commander of the army of Assyria, the leaders of the nation, the masses of troops, will fall by God's mighty hand (37:36-38).

will lop off the bough *producing* terror;  
and the lofty ones *will be* cut down,  
and the haughty will be brought low.  
34 And he will cut down the  
forest thickets with an iron *tool* ;  
Lebanon will fall before a mighty one.

**11** And there will come forth a Shoot from  
the stock of Jesse,  
and a Branch will grow out of his roots;  
2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear  
of the LORD;  
3 And he will delight in the fear of the LORD.  
And he will not judge by what he sees  
with his eyes,  
or make decisions by what he hears  
with his ears,  
4 But with righteousness he will judge the poor,  
and make fair decisions for the meek  
of the earth.  
And he will strike the earth with the  
rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he will

slay the wicked.  
5 And righteousness will be the belt for  
his loins,  
and faithfulness the belt around his waist.  
6 "And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard will lie down by the  
young goat,  
and the calf and the young lion and the  
fat cattle together.  
And a little child will lead them.  
7 And the cow and the bear will graze;  
their young ones will lie down together.  
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.  
8 And the nursing child will play on the  
hole of the cobra,  
and the weaned child will put his hand  
in the viper's den.  
9 They will neither hurt nor destroy on  
all my holy mountain;  
for the earth will be full of the  
knowledge of the LORD,  
as the waters cover the sea.  
10 "And in that day there will be a Root of Jesse,  
who will stand as a banner for the people.  
Him will the Gentiles seek,

**11:1** In 10:33,34 the prophet spoke of the leaders of Assyria as "lofty trees" which God will bring down. Here he speaks of a small "shoot", a mere "branch." But this "shoot", this "branch" is none other than the Messiah, the child and the Son of 7:14 and 9:6,7, the incarnation of the mighty God, the future ruler of the whole world. Jesse was David's father. The "Branch" is from David's royal house.

"Stock" – see 6:13. David's kingdom was all but destroyed by Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans – the tree gone, but the roots remaining.

"Branch" – 4:2; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12.

**11:2** The Son of God coming as a man was anointed by the Spirit of God – 61:1; Matt 3:16; Luke 4:16-21; Acts 10:37,38. God's Spirit gives to all of God's servants in some measure the helps and powers listed in this verse. He gave them all to Christ in the fullest possible measure (John 3:34). Observe the emphasis in this verse and the first words of the next verse on the fear of the LORD. See notes Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7. Jesus had this kind of fear (reverential awe) in full measure (and no other kind of fear at all). See John 5:30; 8:29; Heb 5:7; Mark 14:36. At the heart of all Jesus said and did was the desire to please and honor God, a reverence for God's name and person, a fear of displeasing Him. So should it be with all who name the name of God.

**11:3** John 2:25; 7:24.

**11:4-16** These verses look beyond Christ's first coming to a reign of righteousness over the whole earth. Nothing like the description in these verses has yet taken place, so fulfillment still awaits the future. For the belief of the author of these notes concerning Christ's reign on earth see note on 2:2-4; 9:7; Rev 20:4-6.

**11:4** Again we see God's concern for the needy and poor.

"Rod" – Ps 2:9; Rev 19:15.

"Breath" – 2 Thess 2:8; 4:9; Isa 30:28,33; 40:24.

**11:5** Rev 19:11.

**11:6-8** Will such descriptions be literally fulfilled? Or are they mere poetic expressions signifying a time of peace and safety on earth? Many of us are sure they will be literally fulfilled during a future literal reign of Christ on earth, and who can prove it will not be so? A similar description is found in 65:25 in the midst of a description of a new heaven and earth God will create (65:17).

**11:9** Waters cover the sea completely, utterly. There has not been a time since Isaiah when the earth was covered like that with the knowledge of the Lord. But there will be in the future (2:2-4).

**11:10** "In that day" – at the time of the appearance and reign of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. He is here called the "Root" of Jesse. Compare v 1. Christ is both the Son of David and his Lord, both the root and offspring of David (Matt 22:41-41; Rev 22:16).

"Him will the Gentiles seek" – some think



- and his *place of* rest will be glorious.
- 11 And *this* will happen in that day:  
the Lord will set his hand again the  
second time to recover the remnant  
of his people who are left,  
from Assyria, and from Egypt,  
and from Pathros, and from Cush,  
and from Elam, and from Shinar,  
and from Hamath, and from the  
islands of the sea.
- 12 And he will set up a banner for the nations,  
and will assemble those driven out of Israel,  
and gather together the dispersed of  
Judah from the four corners of the earth.
- 13 And the envy of Ephraim will depart,  
and the adversaries of Judah will be cut off.  
Ephraim will not envy Judah,  
and Judah will not trouble Ephraim.
- 14 But they will swoop down on the  
slopes of the Philistines toward the west.  
Together they will plunder those of the  
east;  
they will lay their hands on Edom and Moab,  
and the children of Ammon will  
obey them.
- 15 And the LORD will utterly destroy the

tongue of the Egyptian sea,  
and with his mighty wind he will wave  
his hand over the *Euphrates* River,  
and will split it into seven streams,  
and cause *men* to go over dry-shod.

16 And there will be a highway for the  
remnant of his people who are left  
from Assyria,  
as there was for Israel in the day that  
he came up out of the land of Egypt.

- 12 And in that day you will say,  
"O LORD, I will praise you.  
Though you were angry with me,  
your anger is turned away,  
and you comfort me.
- 2 See, God *is* my salvation.  
I will trust and not be afraid,  
for Yah, the LORD, *is* my strength  
and *my* song.  
He has also become my salvation."
- 3 Therefore with joy you will draw water  
out of the wells of salvation.
- 4 And in that day you will say,  
"Praise the LORD, call on his name,  
declare his deeds among the people,

this signifies the conversion of many people throughout the world to the Lord Jesus now in this age. But more likely it refers to the age to come (Rev 21:22-26).

**11:11,12** "In that day" means the time of the appearance and reign of the Messiah. Therefore this regathering of the people of Israel and Judah can hardly refer to their return from Babylon and Assyria beginning in 538 B.C. The language of v 11 indicates a world-wide dispersion of Israel and Judah and the regathering will be from all over the world. These verses probably refer to the same regathering foretold by the prophet Amos (Amos 9:14,15). The Lord said through Amos that the people would never again be uprooted after that regathering. This was not true after the return from Babylon beginning in 538 B.C. The people were uprooted again by the Romans in 70 A.D., and scattered into many countries. Jesus foretold this in Matt 24:2; Luke 19:41-44. So after that another regathering of Israel is required to fulfill these verses in Isaiah.

"Shinar" – Babylonia.

**11:13,14** Though by now Ephraim's jealousy may have vanished, Judah's enemies have still not been cut off. The future domination of Israel and Judah over their neighbors is foretold also in 14:2; 49:23; etc.

"Adversaries" – or, possibly, "hostility."

**11:15,16** These geographical changes have not yet appeared. For something similar see Rev 16:12.

**11:16** "Highway" – 57:14; 62:10. It is clear that this chapter has not been com-

pletely fulfilled in this Church age, and it seems unlikely that the eternal ages are in view. Verses 6-16 speak of vast changes in the animal kingdom and in nature. Will the eternal ages have cobras and vipers? Will there be any need of reclaiming the remnant of His people (v 11)? Surely there will be no plundering of others going on in eternity (v 14). And what need will there be for changes like those in vs 15,16? We can hardly put this passage in Israel's past, the Church's present or eternity future. This leaves the millennium (Rev 20:4-6) as by far the most likely time of its fulfillment. Some scholars may like to ignore the details of this chapter and say this is only a poetic description of a happy condition. But do we have the right to do this with solemn words of prophecy?

**12:1** "In that day" – the phrase that follows seems to refer to the future salvation of all Israel (Rom 11:25-32). But the same language of rejoicing can be used now by any saved individual or by the Church as a whole.

"Anger" – 9:12,17,21. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**12:2** "Salvation" – salvation is one of the major themes of Isaiah – 17:10; 25:9; 33:6; 45:17; 51:5,6; 54:8; 59:16; 61:10; 62:11. Trust is the remedy for fear – 26:3; Ps 112:7. "Yah" is the shortened form of Yahweh (Jehovah).

**12:3** Ps 36:9; Jer 2:13; 17:13; John 4:10; 7:37-39.

**12:4** See 24:15; 25:1; 26:8,13; Ps 80:18; 105:1; Jer 10:7; Zeph 2:11.

- declare that his name is exalted.  
 5 Sing to the LORD,  
 for he has done excellent things.  
 This *is* known in all the earth.  
 6 Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion,  
 for great *is* the Holy One of Israel among you."

- 13** The burden concerning Babylon which  
 Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.  
 2 "Lift up a banner on the high mountain,  
 raise the voice to them,  
 beckon with the hand,  
 so that they may enter the gates  
 of the nobles.  
 3 I have commanded my sanctified ones,  
 I have also called my mighty ones,  
 those who rejoice in my exaltation,  
 to *execute* my anger."  
 4 The noise of a multitude on the mountains,  
 like that of a great people!  
 An uproar of kingdoms, of nations  
 gathered together!  
 The LORD of hosts musters the army  
 for the battle.  
 5 They come from a far country,  
 from the end of heaven,  
 the LORD and the weapons of his  
 indignation,  
 to destroy the whole land.  
 6 Wail, for the day of the LORD *is* at hand!

**12:5** Ex 15:1; Ps 98:1.

**12:6** God delights to be among His redeemed people. Note at Ex 25:8. And they should rejoice in Him and they will (24:14; 48:20; 52:8; Ps 98:4; Jer 31:7-9; Zech 2:10).

**13:1** See 1:1; 2:1. "Burden" – or "oracle" – 14:28; 15:1; 21:1; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zech 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1. Note at Num 23:7. Perhaps these messages from God were called burdens because they weighed heavily on the heart of the prophet who had to utter them, or because they were "heavy" with judgment.

"Babylon" – for other prophesies against Babylon see 21:1-9; 46:1,2; 47:1-15; Jeremiah chapters 50, 51. At the time Isaiah wrote Babylonia was a part of the Assyrian empire and the city of Babylon was one of its two chief cities. So this prophecy against Babylon, which goes on to v 28 of chapter 14 was against a part of Assyria and so against Assyria too. The kings of Assyria sometimes called themselves "king of Babylon."

**13:2-5** God will prepare armies to destroy Babylon. God's wrath which was on Judah will fall on their enemies. These armies were from the Medo-Persian empire (v 17; 45:1; Dan 5:30,31).

**13:3** "My sanctified ones" – here means

It will come as a destruction from the Almighty.

- 7 Therefore all hands will be limp,  
 and every man's heart will melt,  
 8 And they will be afraid.  
 Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them.  
 They will be in pain like a woman in childbirth.  
 They will be amazed at each other.  
 Their faces *will be like* flames.  
 9 Look, the day of the LORD comes,  
 cruel with both wrath and fierce anger,  
 to lay the land desolate;  
 and he will destroy its sinners out of it.  
 10 For the stars of heaven and its  
 constellations will not give their light.  
 The sun will be darkened in its rising,  
 and the moon will not shed its light.  
 11 "And I will punish the world for *its* evil,  
 and the wicked for their iniquity,  
 and I will cause the arrogance of the  
 proud to cease,  
 and will lay low the haughtiness of the  
 terrible.  
 12 I will make a man scarcer than fine gold,  
 a man *rarer* than the golden wedge of Ophir.  
 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens,  
 and the earth will move out of its place  
 at the wrath of the LORD of hosts,  
 and in the day of his fierce anger.  
 14 And it will be like the hunted gazelle,

either angelic forces that would work under God's direction to bring armies against Babylon, or the armies of the Medes and Persians themselves. If the latter the word would merely mean those whom God would set apart to accomplish His purposes. One basic meaning of the Hebrew word sanctify is to set apart for some purpose of God.

**13:4** "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**13:6-13** In this section the phrase "day of the LORD" is used or referred to four times. According to the New Testament the Day of the Lord is still a future event (1 Thess 5:1-3). The language of v 10 is echoed in Matt 24:19, Acts 2:20, and Rev 6:12,13. Verse 13 suggests the time of Heb 12:26,27, and Rev 16:17-21. Verse 11 speaks of the world, not merely of Babylon. For these reasons it can hardly be said that these verses were completely fulfilled at the destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Persians. That event was only a small picture of a much greater event to take place at the end of this age. It is not unusual in the prophets to have a far-off event suddenly thrust into a prophecy of nearer events.

**13:6** "At hand" – see notes at Joel 1:15; Rev 1:3.

"Almighty" – in Hebrew "Shaddai" – note at Gen 17:1.

**13:14-18** These verses seem to apply to

and like a sheep that no man takes up.  
Each man will return to his own people,  
and each one will flee to his own land.

15 Everyone who is found will be pierced  
through,  
and everyone who is captured will fall  
by the sword.

16 Their children also will be dashed to  
pieces before their eyes.  
Their houses shall be plundered,  
and their wives ravished.

17 "See, I will stir up against them the Medes,  
who will have no regard for silver,  
and will have no delight in gold.

18 *And their* bows will mow down the young men,  
and they will have no pity on the fruit  
of the womb.  
Their eyes will not spare children.

19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,  
the beauty of the Chaldeans' excellence,  
will be as when God overthrew Sodom  
and Gomorrah.

20 It will never be inhabited,  
nor will it be lived in from generation  
to generation.  
The Arabian will not pitch tent there,  
nor will the shepherds make their fold there.

21 But wild beasts of the desert will lie there,  
and their houses will be full of howling  
creatures,  
and unclean birds will dwell there,  
and wild goats will leap about there.

22 And hyenas will cry in their strongholds,  
and howling creatures in *their*  
luxurious palaces.  
And her time *is* coming near,  
and her days will not be prolonged.

the destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Persians.  
**13:16** Verse 18; Ps 137:8,9.  
**13:17** The Medes were located in a part of what is now called Iran.  
**13:19-22** The city of Babylon is in view here. It was a beautiful city and a source of great pride to its most powerful ruler. See Dan 4:28-30.  
"Chaldeans" – Chaldea was the southern part of Babylonia. Babylon became like Sodom and Gomorrah, not in the method God used to destroy it, but in its final condition. See Jer 51:29,37-43,62. To this day Babylon is a heap of ruins. It is not certain what birds or animals are meant by the Hebrew words in these verses.  
**14:1,2** Every jot and tittle of not only the law but of the prophets must be fulfilled. It is clear that these verses (especially v 2) were not completely fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylon to their own land. No

**14** For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob,  
and once again will choose Israel,  
and set them in their own land;  
and strangers will be joined with them,  
and they will cling to the house of Jacob.

2 And peoples will take them and bring  
them to their place.  
And the house of Israel will possess  
them as servants and maids in the  
land of the LORD,  
and they will take as captives those  
whose captives they were,  
and will rule over their oppressors.

3 And it will come about in the day  
that the LORD gives you rest from  
your sorrow, and from your fear,  
and from the hard bondage in which  
you were made to serve,

4 That you will take up this proverb  
against the king of Babylon, and say,  
"How the oppressor has come to an end,  
the golden city ceased!

5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,  
*and* the sceptre of the rulers.

6 The one who struck the people in  
wrath with a continual stroke,  
the one who ruled the nations in anger,  
is persecuted, *and* no one hinders.

7 The whole earth is at rest *and* is calm;  
they break forth into singing.

8 Yes, the fir trees rejoice at you,  
*and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*,  
'Since you were laid low,  
no woodsman comes up against us.'

9 "Hell below is stirred up about you to  
meet *you* at your coming.  
It rouses the dead for you,

such power or reign of Israel over their captors and oppressors has been seen to this day. So we judge the complete fulfillment is some time in the future. Notice the words in v 1 – "once again will chose Israel" – as if for a time He had rejected them. See Matt 21:43 and compare it with Matt 19:28; Acts 1:6,7; Rom 11:11,12,15,23-29; Rev 7:1-8.  
**14:3** There are two Babylons described in Scripture – the literal Babylon on the Euphrates river and figurative Babylon of Revelation chapters 17 and 18. The literal one came to an end 2500 years ago. The destruction of the other one is in the future. It does not seem impossible that the verses which follow fit both times of destruction.  
**14:5,6** "Staff" – 10:5,24.  
**14:7** "The whole earth" – if this was true at the fall of the literal Babylon it was true for only a very short time.  
**14:9** "Hell" – the Hebrew has "Sheol" – the unseen realm of the dead. Also verse 15.

- all the chief ones of the earth.  
 It makes all *who were* kings of the  
 nations rise from their thrones.  
 10 All of them will speak and say to you,  
 'Have you also become as weak as we?  
 Have you become like us?'  
 11 "Your pomp is brought down to the grave,  
*and* the sound of your harps.  
 The maggot is spread out under you,  
 and the worms cover you.  
 12 "How you are fallen from heaven,  
 O Lucifer, son of the dawn!  
*How* you, who weakened the nations,  
 are cut down to the ground!  
 13 For you said in your heart,  
 'I will ascend to heaven.  
 I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,  
 and I will sit on the Mount of the Congregation,  
 in the far recesses of the north.  
 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.  
 I will be like the Most High.'  
 15 Yet you shall be brought down to hell,  
 to the lowest depths of the pit.  
 16 Those who see you will stare at you,  
*and* consider you, *saying*,  
 'Is this the man who caused the earth  
 to tremble, who shook kingdoms,  
 17 *Who* made the world like a wilderness

- and destroyed its cities,  
*who* did not allow his prisoners to go home?'  
 18 "All the kings of the nations,  
 all of them, lie in honour,  
 each one in his own place.  
 19 But you are cast out of your grave like  
 a rejected branch,  
*and like* the clothing of those who have  
 been killed, pierced with a sword,  
 who go down to the stones of the pit  
 like a corpse trampled underfoot.  
 20 You will not be joined with them in burial,  
 because you have destroyed your land,  
*and* killed your people.  
 The offspring of evildoers will never be  
 mentioned again.  
 21 Prepare slaughter for his children  
 because of the wickedness of their fathers,  
 so that they do not rise up and possess  
 the land,  
 or fill the surface of the earth with cities."  
 22 "For I will rise up against them",  
 says the LORD of hosts,  
 "and cut off from Babylon *its* name and  
 survivors, and offspring and  
 posterity," says the LORD.  
 23 "Also I will make it a possession of  
 hedgehogs, and watery swamps,

**14:10,11** This is the end of all man's and glory and beauty apart from God. God's saved people will inherit forever with Christ all the glory and beauty of heaven.  
**14:12-15** Some scholars are convinced that these words are spoken only to the king of Babylon. Others are equally sure that they are spoken to the one behind the king of Babylon – Satan himself. (A similar passage is Ezek 28:12-17.) It seems quite possible that both are being addressed (compare Matt 16:23). Behind the king of Babylon's awful arrogance and defiance of heaven was the king of demons.  
**14:12** Luke 10:18; Rev 12:7-9. This verse may refer to the very end of this age.  
 "Lucifer" – or "Daystar." Satan was, no doubt, once a bright and shining being in heaven, and the king of Babylon was a bright "star" among the rulers of earth. But only Christ Himself is the bright Morning Star (Rev 22:16). Perhaps Satan is called a star here (if indeed Satan is being directly addressed – which seems very likely) ironically because he wanted to usurp the place of the Son of God.  
**14:13,14** All Satan (or the king of Babylon) desired was self-exaltation, glory, and power over everyone else. Compare Christ's character as revealed in Phil 2:5-11 and Matt 11:29. Leaders in general may be divided into two groups – those who have the

desire and outlook of Satan and those who have the desire and outlook of Christ.  
 "Mount of the Congregation" – some scholars say this refers to the heavenly mount Zion (as in Heb 12:22. See also Ps 89:5; 1 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6). Others say that it refers to the earthly mount Zion where God reigned in the temple over Israel (Ps 48:1,2; 80:1; 99:1). Still others give another explanation. The first view does not seem unlikely.  
 "I will make myself like the Most High" – Satan and some among men who are his followers, want to be regarded as God Himself. This is the ultimate blasphemy, the extreme limits of wickedness. Compare Matt 4:8,9; 2 Thess 2:3,4; Daniel 11:36,37.  
**14:15** Such will be the end of all self-exalting beings, whether men, or Satan and his hosts.  
**14:16-20** The king of Babylon is again plainly addressed. These words have to do with the earth, not the realm of the dead as in v 9-11. Between 605 BC and 538 BC the Babylonian king was the most powerful man on earth. He held God's people captive until he was overthrown by the Medes.  
**14:19** For a king not to have a proper burial was a thing of great dishonor to him.  
**14:21-23** Both the sons of Babylon's king and his kingdom and people would be destroyed.

and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," says the LORD of hosts.

24 The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying,  
"Surely as I have planned,  
so it will happen;  
and as I have purposed,  
so it will stand.

25 I will break the Assyrian in my land,  
and trample him underfoot on my mountains.  
Then his yoke will depart from them,  
and his burden depart from  
their shoulders.

26 "This *is* the plan that is purposed for  
the whole earth,  
and this *is* the hand that is stretched  
out on all the nations.

27 For the LORD of hosts has formed a purpose,  
and who can cancel *it*?  
And his hand *is* stretched out,  
and who can turn it back?"

28 In the year that king Ahaz died this was the burden:

29 "Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia,  
because the rod of the one who  
struck you is broken;  
for out of the serpent's root will come a viper,  
and its offspring *will be* a fiery flying serpent.

30 And the firstborn of the poor will feed,  
and the needy will lie down in safety,  
but I will kill your root with famine,  
and it will kill your remnant."

31 Wail, O gate! Cry out, O city!  
All you of Philistia, melt away!  
For a smoke will come from the north,  
and there *will be* no deserter from its ranks.

32 What, then, will *one* answer the  
messengers of the nation?  
That the LORD has founded Zion,  
and the poor of his people will find  
refuge in it.

**14:24** This is true of everything God plans (v 27), but He is here speaking of the destruction of the Assyrians, as the following verse makes clear.

**14:25** "My land. . . my mountains" – at least partially fulfilled in 701 BC (37:36,37). "Yoke" – 9:40.

**14:26** In chapters 13-24 God is speaking of a number of nations which represent the known world of Isaiah's day.

**14:27** Verse 24.

**14:28-32** For other prophecies against the Philistines see Jeremiah chapter 47; Ezek 25:15-17; Amos 1:6-8; Zeph 2:4-7.

**14:28** "Ahaz died" – about 715 BC.

**14:29** "Broken" – the rod that struck them was Assyria (20:1. Ashdod was a Philistine

**15** The burden concerning Moab:  
"Because in the night Ar of Moab has  
been laid waste *and* brought to silence,  
because in the night Kir of Moab has  
been laid waste and brought to silence,

2 He has gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon,  
the high places, to weep.  
Moab will wail over Nebo, and over Medeba.  
Baldness *will be* on all their heads,  
*and* every beard will be cut off.

3 In their streets they will wrap  
themselves with sackcloth.  
On the tops of their houses, and in  
their streets,  
everyone will wail, weeping bitterly.

4 And Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out.  
Their voice will be heard as far as Jahaz;  
therefore the armed soldiers of Moab  
will cry out.  
His life will be burdensome to him.

5 "My heart will cry out for Moab.  
His fugitives *will flee* to Zoar *like* a  
heifer three years old;  
for by the ascent of Luhith they will  
go up with weeping;  
for on the road to Horonaim they will  
raise a cry of destruction.

6 For the waters of Nimrim will be desolate,  
for the hay has withered away,  
the grass fails;  
there is no green thing.

7 Therefore the abundance they have gotten,  
and what they have stored away,  
they will carry away to the brook of the  
willows.

8 For the cry is gone all around the  
borders of Moab,  
its wailing to Eglaim, and its wailing to  
Beer-Elim.

9 For the waters of Dimon will be full of blood,  
for I will bring more on Dimon,  
lions on him who escapes from Moab,

city).

"Do not rejoice" – their relief was temporary. Destruction would come to them (vs 30,31).

**14:32** The Assyrians were not able to conquer Jerusalem.

**15:1** For note on Moab see Gen 19:37. For other prophecies about Moab see Jeremiah chapter 48; Ezek 25:8-11; Amos 2:1-3; Zeph 2:8-11. The locations of many of the places in Moab in this chapter are unknown to us.

**15:2** "Baldness", "cut off" – shaving the head and cutting off the beard were indications of mourning (vs 3,4; Jer 48:37).

**15:5** See Jer 48:31 – God's grief for Moab.

**15:9** "Lions" – 5:29; Jer 50:17.



and on the remnant of the land.

**16** "Send the lamb to the ruler of the land from  
Sela to the wilderness,  
to the mount of the daughter of Zion.

2 For it will happen *that* the daughters  
of Moab will be at the fords of the Arnon,  
like a wandering bird thrown out of the nest.

3 "Take counsel, execute judgment,  
make your shadow like night in the  
middle of the day.

Hide those driven out.

Do not betray the fugitive.

4 Let my outcasts stay with you, O Moab.  
Be a shelter to them from the presence  
of the destroyer.

For the extortioner will come to an end,  
Destruction will cease.

The oppressors will vanish from the land.

5 And in mercy the throne will be established;  
and one will sit on it in truth,  
in the tabernacle of David,  
judging and seeking justice,  
and quickly bringing righteousness."

6 We have heard of the pride of Moab,  
of *his* great pride,  
of his haughtiness and his pride and  
his wrath;  
*but* his boasts *are* false.

7 Therefore Moab will wail for Moab,  
everyone will wail.  
You will mourn for the foundations of  
Kir-Hareseh;  
surely *they are* struck down.

8 For the fields of Heshbon,  
*and* the vine of Sibmah, languish.  
The rulers of the nations have broken  
down its choice plants,  
which reached as far as Jazer,  
and wandered *through* the desert.

Her branches were spread out;  
they have gone over the sea.

9 Therefore, with the weeping of Jazer  
I will weep for the vine of Sibmah.

I will water you with my tears,  
O Heshbon, and Elealeh;

for the shouting over your summer  
fruits and for your harvest has failed.

10 And gladness and joy have been taken  
away from the plentiful field.

And in the vineyards there will be no singing,  
nor will there be shouting.

Those who tread out wine will have  
none to tread in *their* presses.

I have put a stop to *their* shouting.

11 Therefore my inner being intones like a harp  
for Moab,  
and my inward parts *lament* for Kir-Hareish.

12 And this will happen:  
when it is seen that Moab is weary on  
the high place,  
he will come to his sanctuary to pray;  
but he will not prevail.

13 This *is* the word that the LORD has  
spoken previously concerning Moab.

14 But now the LORD has spoken, saying,  
"Within three years, as a hired man  
*counts* the years,  
the glory of Moab will be despised  
with all that great multitude;  
and those who remain *will be* very  
few *and* feeble."

**17** The burden concerning Damascus.  
See, Damascus will cease from *being* a  
city,  
and will become a heap of ruins.

2 The cities of Aroer *will be* forsaken.  
They will be for flocks, which will lie down,  
without anyone making

**16:1** Moab did this in former years (2 Sam 7:2; 2 Kings 3:4,5). This is probably advice spoken by the Moabites among themselves.

**16:2-4** The reason for the exhortation in v 1 is the hope of finding refuge from an invading army.

**16:5** The last part of v 4 and this verse speak of better times for both Judah and Moab (see Jer 48:47). God's grace will be displayed in the raising up of a king from David's royal house. The language of this verse suggests the Messiah (compare 9:7; 11:4,5). When He rules Moab will share in the blessings of Zion.

**16:6** Jer 48:29,30. Pride does not need good reasons for its existence – it can create its own reasons. Compare Jer 48:29.

**16:7** "Therefore" – what follows is punishment for Moab's pride. See Jer 48:26,42.

**16:8** "Sea" – the Dead sea.

**16:9-11** Jer 48:31,36; see notes at Jer 48:31-39. Here it is either the prophet who grieves over Moab or the LORD (see the last line of v 10). In Jer 48:36 it is certainly God Himself.

**16:12** The worship and prayer of the people were useless. Just judgment must fall on them because of their pride and wickedness.

**16:13,14** A further message added later (we cannot say when) to the oracle of 15:1 - 16:12.

**17:1** For other prophecies about Damascus see Jer 49:23-27; Amos 1:3-5. Damascus was the capital of Syria, a country that was frequently at war with Israel (2 Sam 8:5; 1 Kings 20:1-3; 2 Kings 6:24). The prophecy of this verse has not yet been fulfilled. Damascus is still there, still the capital of Syria. So this prophecy looks to the end of this age.

- them* afraid.
- 3 Also the fortress will cease from Ephraim,  
and the kingdom from Damascus,  
and the remnant of Syria.  
They will be like the glory of the  
children of Israel,  
says the LORD of hosts.
- 4 And this will happen in that day:  
the glory of Jacob will wane,  
and the fatness of his flesh will become lean.
- 5 And it will be as when the harvester  
gathers the grain,  
and reaps the heads with his hand;  
it will be like one gathering grain in the  
Valley of Rephaim.
- 6 Yet some gleanings will be left in it,  
like when an olive tree is shaken,  
two *or* three olives at the top of the  
uppermost bough,  
four *or* five in its most fruitful branches,  
says the LORD God of Israel.
- 7 At that day a man will look to his Maker,  
and his eyes will have respect for the  
Holy One of Israel.
- 8 And he will not look to the altars,  
the work of his hands,  
nor will he show respect *for* what his  
fingers have made,  
nor the *idolatrous* groves, nor the images.
- 9 In that day his strong cities will be  
like a forsaken bough,  
and an uppermost branch,  
which they left because of the children  
of Israel;  
and there will be desolation.
- 10 Because you have forgotten the God  
of your salvation,

- and have not remembered the Rock of  
your strength,  
therefore you plant pleasant plants,  
and set out foreign seedlings.
- 11 In the day you cause your plant to grow,  
and in the morning you cause your  
seed to flourish;  
*but* the harvest *will be* a heap of ruins  
in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.
- 12 Alas for the uproar of many people,  
*who* make a noise like the noise  
of the seas!  
And *alas* for the rushing of nations,  
*which* make a rushing like the  
rushing of mighty waters!
- 13 The nations will rush like the rushing  
of many waters,  
but *God* will rebuke them,  
and they will flee far away,  
and be chased like chaff on the  
mountains before the wind,  
and like a thing that rolls before the whirlwind.
- 14 And, look, at evening trouble!  
Before morning he *is* no *more*!  
This *is* the portion of those who plunder us,  
*and* the lot of those who rob us.

- 18** Woe to the land of whirring wings,  
which *is* beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,  
2 That sends ambassadors by sea,  
in vessels of bulrushes on the water,  
*saying*, "Go, you swift messengers,  
to a nation tall and smooth-skinned,  
to a people dreaded from their  
beginning to now,  
a nation powerful and oppressive,  
whose land is divided by rivers.  
3 All you inhabitants of the world,

**17:3-6** When Isaiah wrote this the northern kingdom of Israel (here called Ephraim) and Syria were allies against Judah (7:1,2). The glory of Israel passed completely away when Assyria came and conquered it and took the people into exile.

**17:5** "Rephaim" – 1 Chron 11:15 – a place west of Jerusalem.

**17:6** A remnant of Israel would remain.

**17:7,8** Whatever causes men to turn to God is good, even if it is disaster on a country.

**17:8** "Altars" – to false gods.  
"*Idolatrous* groves" – or "Asherah" – note at Jud 3:7.

**17:9** The Israelites drove the Canaanites out of many of their cities in the days of Joshua, and occupied them. Those same cities would now be deserted because Israel would go into exile to Assyria.

**17:10** "Forgotten" – one of Israel's worst sins (Jer 2:32; 3:21). And God was sure to punish it (Deut 8:19,20; Ps 50:22; Jer

13:24,25; 18:15,16).

**17:12-14** See 10:28-34. This probably refers to the invasion of Judah by Assyria's army, and their sudden defeat at Jerusalem (2 Chron 32:1,20,21).

**17:14** How quickly God may deal with the enemies of His people when they trust Him.

**18:1,2** The language of this chapter is very obscure and so interpretation is difficult.  
"Whirring wings" – may mean a land of many insects or may suggest armies ready to fly at the enemy (7:18,19).  
"Ethiopia" – in Hebrew "Cush," a land south of Egypt, including part of present-day Ethiopia. During the time of Isaiah, in 715 BC, Cush and Egypt became united under the leadership of a Cushite. This is perhaps suggested by the words of v 2. In Isaiah's day the two great powers were Egypt (with Cush) on the southwest and Assyria on the northeast.

**18:3** Banners and trumpets indicate war

and dwellers on the earth,  
 look when he lifts up a banner on the  
 mountains;  
 and listen when he blows a trumpet.  
 4 For so the LORD said to me,  
 "I will take my rest, and I will look on  
 from my dwelling place,  
 like bright heat in the sunshine,  
 and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."  
 5 For before the harvest, when the bud  
 is perfect,  
 and the sour grape is ripening in the flower,  
 he will both cut off the shoots with  
 pruning hooks,  
 and remove *and* cut away the branches.  
 6 They will be left together for the  
 birds of the mountains,  
 and for the beasts of the earth;  
 and the birds will spend their summers in them,  
 and all the beasts of the earth will  
 winter in them.  
 7 At that time a present will be brought  
 to the LORD of hosts from a people  
 tall and smooth-skinned,  
 and from a people dreaded from their  
 beginning up to now,  
 a nation powerful and oppressive,  
 whose land is divided by rivers,  
 to the place of the name of the  
 LORD of hosts, Mount Zion.

**19** The burden concerning Egypt:  
 See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud  
 and comes to Egypt;  
 and the idols of Egypt will shake at his  
 presence,

and the heart of Egypt will melt within it.

2 "And I will set Egyptians against Egyptians,  
 and each of them will fight against his brother,  
 and each against his neighbour;  
 city *will fight* against city,  
 and kingdom against kingdom.  
 3 And the spirit of Egypt will fail within it.  
 And I will destroy its counsel,  
 and they will resort to idols,  
 and to enchanter, and to mediums and  
 spiritists.  
 4 And I will hand over the Egyptians to  
 a cruel ruler,  
 and a fierce king will rule over them",  
 says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.  
 5 And the waters will fail from the sea,  
 and the river will become parched and dry.  
 6 And the streams will turn foul,  
 and the brooks of defense will become  
 empty and dried up;  
 the reeds and rushes will wither.  
 7 The plants by the river, by the mouth  
 of the river,  
 and everything planted by the river,  
 will wither, be driven away,  
 and be no *more*.  
 8 The fishermen also will mourn,  
 and all those who cast hooks into the  
 river will lament,  
 and those who spread nets on the  
 water will pine away.  
 9 Moreover, those who work with fine flax,  
 and those who weave linen, will be  
 disappointed.  
 10 And its foundations will be broken;

(5:26-29; 13:2,3; 31:9; Josh 6:20; Judges 3:27). A great movement of armies is suggested by this verse.  
**18:4** "My dwelling place" – Jerusalem (Ps 48:1-3). The Lord will be in absolute control of events and can look calmly on at what is happening.  
**18:5,6** Depicts a sudden destruction of an army. Compare 17:12-14.  
**18:7** "A present" – sometimes brought by people of other nations to Jerusalem after a victory by Judah, or in recognition of the pre-eminence of the God of Israel (16:1; 2 Chron 32:23). Compare Ps 72:8-11; etc. "A people" – v 2.  
**19:1** For other prophecies about Egypt see Jeremiah chapter 46; Ezekiel chapters 29-32. "Cloud" – Ps 18:9,10; 68:4; 104:3; Matt 26:64; Acts 1:9; Rev 1:7.  
 "Idols" – God had judged the gods and idols of Egypt in the days of Moses (Ex 12:12), and had shown that He was the only true God. But the Egyptians still clung to their idols. Learn from this the stubborn depravity of the

human heart, its love of idolatry even when idols prove to be useless.  
**19:2** Indicates struggles for power in Egypt and among its allies.  
**19:3** When plans of nations and peoples come to nothing, be sure that it is God which brings them to nothing.  
 "Spiritists" – Deut 18:9-14. Men in general are willing to try anything and consult anything except the true and living God.  
**19:4** "A fierce king" – possibly the king of Assyria (20:4); possibly the Babylonian king who later conquered Egypt (Jer 43:10-13).  
**19:5-10** The whole economy of Egypt was dependent on the Nile river. Drying up of the river would be a terrible disaster. There is no event in history that literally fulfills these verses. Therefore they either refer to the future, or more likely, use figurative, poetical language to suggest the complete downfall of Egypt.  
 "All the wage earners will be troubled in heart" (v 10) – this probably best brings out the meaning of the Hebrew though it

all the wage earners will be troubled in heart.

- 11 Surely the princes of Zoan *are* fools,  
the counsel of Pharaoh's wise  
counsellors has become stupid.  
How can you say to Pharaoh,  
"I *am* the son of the wise,  
the descendant of ancient kings?"
- 12 Where *are* they?  
Where *are* your wise *men*?  
Let them tell you now, and let them  
know what the LORD of hosts has  
planned against Egypt.
- 13 The princes of Zoan have become fools,  
the princes of Noph are deceived,  
and *those who are* the mainstay of its  
tribes have led Egypt astray.
- 14 The LORD has mingled a perverse  
spirit in its midst,  
and they have caused Egypt to err in  
all of its actions,  
like a drunken *man* staggers in his vomit.
- 15 Nor will there be *any* work for Egypt,  
which the head or tail,  
branch or rush, can do.

16 In that day Egypt will be like women; and it  
will be afraid and in dread because of the moving of  
the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he moves  
over it. 17 And the land of Judah will be a terror to

Egypt, everyone who makes mention of it will be  
afraid in himself, because of the purpose of the  
LORD of hosts, which he has determined *to fulfill*  
against it. 18 In that day five cities in the land of  
Egypt will speak the language of Canaan, and swear  
to the LORD of hosts; one will be called, The City  
of Destruction. 19 In that day there will be an altar  
to the LORD in the middle of the land of Egypt, and  
a pillar to the LORD at its border. 20 And it will be  
as a sign and as a witness to the LORD of hosts in  
the land of Egypt; for they will cry out to the LORD  
because of oppressors, and he shall send them a  
saviour, and a great one, and he will deliver them.  
21 And the LORD will become known to Egypt, and  
the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and  
will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make  
a vow to the LORD, and perform *it*. 22 And the  
LORD will strike Egypt; he will strike and heal *it*;  
and they will return to the LORD, and he will hear  
their plea and heal them.

23 In that day there will be a highway from  
Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into  
Egypt, and the Egyptian *will travel* to Assyria, and  
the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians.  
24 In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt  
and with Assyria, a blessing in the middle of the  
region, 25 whom the LORD of hosts will bless, say-  
ing, "Blessed *be* Egypt my people, and Assyria the  
work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance."

differs from the KJV. See not at Ps 14:7.

**19:11** "Zoan" – an important city of Egypt  
well-known to the Jews (Num 13:22; Ps  
78:12,43). It was the capital of northern  
Egypt for some time.

"Counsel" – v 3. Counselors who do not  
know the true God will not always give good  
advice.

**19:12** See 1 Cor 1:20. There is no wisdom  
or counsel against the Lord.

**19:13** "Noph" – another name for Memphis.  
This city had been a previous capital of  
northern Egypt and was still an important city.

"Mainstay" – leaders, prophets, and priests  
who held the nation together. When such  
people are fools and wicked, the nation is in  
deep trouble (9:15,16; Jer 2:8; etc).

**19:14** "The LORD has mingled" – one way  
God has of judging and punishing a wicked  
nation is to give them up to their folly and  
to see that they fall victim to empty counsel  
and wrong plans (6:9-13; Jer 25:15-26).

"Staggers" – sometimes the nations of  
earth behave as if they were drunk.

**19:15** See 9:14,15.

**19:16-25** This is an obscure and difficult  
passage and at present not all the details  
can be satisfactorily interpreted. The pas-  
sage begins with the words "in that day",  
and the same words appear in vs 18, 19,  
23, 24. The expression is indefinite but  
may look forward to the Day of the LORD  
already referred to by Isaiah (2:20; etc.

Notes on the Day of the LORD at 13:6-13;  
Joel 1:15; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10).

"In that day" (v 16) can hardly mean in  
the days when the Assyrians or Babylonians  
invaded the land in the times of the proph-  
ets of Israel. Certainly not all of the mat-  
ters predicted in these verses happened  
then. What is foretold here is nothing less  
than the conversion of Egypt to the true God,  
and complete peace and harmony between  
Egypt, Israel and Assyria (vs 23,24. These  
nations fought each other for centuries). But  
before that happens God will strike Egypt  
(vs 16,22), and that people will know that  
God has done it and be terrified of both  
God and the people of God (Judah –  
vs 16,17). This will be a means of turning  
Egypt to God and of making that land a  
blessing on earth (v 24), and will bring forth  
from God's lips the wonderful words of v 25.  
It is hard to see how all this can have any  
possible fulfillment except at the return of  
Christ and His reign over the earth in uni-  
versal peace (2:2-4; 9:7; 11:1-16).

**19:18** "City of Destruction" – or, possibly,  
"City of the Sun."

**20:1-6** Ashdod was near the border of  
Judah. Judah and Jerusalem were endan-  
gered by Assyria's armies. Some in Judah  
brought pressure on the king to make an  
alliance with Egypt (v 5; 30:1,2; 31:1).  
God made Isaiah a sign to the people that  
the allied peoples of Egypt and Cush would

**20** In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him) and fought against Ashdod, and took it, <sup>2</sup> at that same time the LORD spoke through Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, “Go and remove the sackcloth from your waist, and take off your sandals from your feet.” And he did so, walking about naked and barefoot.

<sup>3</sup> And the LORD said, “Just as my servant Isaiah has walked about naked and barefoot three years as a sign and wonder against Egypt and against Ethiopia, <sup>4</sup> so the king of Assyria will lead the Egyptians away prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with *their* buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. <sup>5</sup> And they will be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their hope, and of Egypt their glory. <sup>6</sup> And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, ‘See, such *is* our hope, where we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria. And how will we escape?’”

- 21** The burden concerning the desert by the sea:  
 As whirlwinds pass through the south,  
 so this comes from the desert,  
 from a terrible land.
- <sup>2</sup> A grievous vision has been declared to me:  
 the treacherous dealer deals treacherously,  
 and the plunderer plunders.  
 Go up, O Elam! Lay siege, O Media!  
 I have brought to an end all the  
 groaning it has caused.
- <sup>3</sup> Therefore my loins are filled with pain;  
 pangs have taken hold of me,  
 like the pangs of a woman in labour.

themselves be put to shame and led away captive. Victorious armies in those days sometimes stripped conquered enemies and led them away.

**20:1** “Assyria” – note at 2 Kings 15:19.  
**20:2** “Remove” – everywhere in the Bible nakedness is a mark of shame (v 4; 32:11; Ezek 16:39; 23:26; Hos 2:3).  
 “Sackcloth” – usually a sign of mourning (Gen 37:34; Est 4:1; Ps 69:11). Sometimes, as here, the clothing of a prophet (compare garment of hair in 2 Kings 1:8; Zech 13:4; Matt 3:4; 11:8,9). Sackcloth was made of hair – Rev 6:12.  
**20:5** This would include the Philistines who looked to Egypt for help.  
**21:1,2** “Desert by the sea” – Babylon (v 9). This city and kingdom were conquered by the Medes and Persians (Elam was a part of the Medo-Persian empire). A part of Babylonia lay by the Persian gulf, the sea of v 1. Though once very fertile it was to become like a desert (13:19-21; Jer 50:10,12; 51:41-43). In v 2 Elam and Media are called on to attack Babylon

- I writhe at the hearing of it;  
 I am dismayed by seeing it.
- <sup>4</sup> My heart pounds, terror makes me afraid,  
 the twilight I desired he has turned into  
 fear for me.
- <sup>5</sup> Prepare the table!  
 Be on the lookout in the watchtower!  
 Eat, drink! Arise, you princes,  
 and anoint the shield!
- <sup>6</sup> For thus the Lord has said to me,  
 “Go, set a watchman.  
 Have him declare what he sees.”
- <sup>7</sup> And he saw a chariot *with* a pair  
 of horsemen, a chariot of donkeys,  
 and a chariot of camels;  
 and he listened alertly with great care.
- <sup>8</sup> And he cried out *like* a lion,  
 “My lord, I stand continually on the  
 watchtower in the daytime,  
 and I have sat at my post whole nights;  
<sup>9</sup> And, look, here comes a chariot of men,  
 with a pair of horsemen.”  
 And he answered and said,  
 “Babylon has fallen, has fallen!  
 And all the carved images of her gods  
 he has broken to the ground.”
- <sup>10</sup> O my threshing, and the grain of  
 my floor!  
 I have declared to you what I have  
 heard from the LORD of hosts,  
 the God of Israel.
- <sup>11</sup> The burden concerning Dumah:  
 He calls out to me from Seir,  
 “Watchman, what of the night?  
 Watchman, what of the night?”

because of the groaning she (Babylon) caused to other peoples.

**21:3,4** The prophets were sometimes overcome by the visions they saw and the messages they delivered. Thoughts of the destruction, the pains, the miseries they announced caused them deep grief (16:9-11; Jer 4:19-26; Dan 8:27; 10:15-17).

**21:5** Isaiah sees in vision the careless revelry of Babylon's leaders when the enemy was at their gates. Compare Dan 5:1-4,30,31.

**21:6-9** In vision Isaiah looks forward to a time long after his own day and hears the report of messengers or refugees from Babylon telling of the complete destruction of that city.

**21:9** See 13:19; Rev 14:8; 18:2.

**21:10** “What I have heard” – this is what God's prophets always did. They proclaimed no messages, speculations or theories of their own.

**21:11** “Dumah” – is a Hebrew word meaning “silence.” It was also a tribe descended from Ishmael (Gen 25:14; Josh 15:52; 1 Chron 1:30). Here it is probably the name



12 The watchman said,  
 "The morning comes, and also the night.  
 If you will inquire, inquire. Return, come."

13 The burden against Arabia:  
 In the forest in Arabia you will lodge,  
 O you caravans of Dedanim.

14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema  
 brought water to him who was thirsty,  
 with their bread they met him who fled.

15 For they fled from the sword,  
 from the drawn sword,  
 and from the bent bow,  
 and from the stress of battle.

16 For thus the Lord has said to me, "Within a year, as a hired man *counts* the years, all the glory of Kedar will fail, 17 and the remainder of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken *it*."

**22** The burden concerning the Valley of Vision:  
 What troubles you now,  
 that you have all gone up to the housetops?

2 You that are full of uproar,  
 a city full of tumult, a joyous city,  
 your slain *men are* not killed by the sword,  
 or dead in battle.

3 All your rulers have fled together,  
 they are captured by the archers.

of a place in the land of Edom (Seir was a mountain in Edom). For other prophecies about Edom see 34:5-15; Jer 49:7-22; Ezek 25:12-14; Amos 1:11,12, Obadiah. The enquiry about the time of night indicates anxiety and danger.

**21:12** "Morning" – probably means that a time of relief from enemies is coming, to be followed by more danger (night).

"Inquire" – if the Edomites want to know more about their future they are free to ask the prophets of the true God in Judah.

**21:13** "Arabia" – for another prophecy about Arabia see Jer 49:28-33.

"Dedanim" – an Arabian tribe (Ezek 27:20; 38:13).

**21:14** "Tema" – an oasis in northern Arabia mentioned in Job 6:19; Jer 25:23.

**21:15** Both the Assyrians and Babylonians attacked the Arabs at different times.

**21:16** "Kedar" – an important place for the tribes in the Arabian desert. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked Kedar (Jer 49:28,29). The God of Israel is the God of the whole earth, the only true and living God, and He is concerned about every tribe and people and nation in the world.

**22:1** Jerusalem was built on hills and there were hills all around and valleys between them. The Valley of Vision was one of these, but which one we cannot say. This prophecy is about Jerusalem. This can be seen by

all who are found in you,  
*who* have fled from afar,  
 are captured together.

4 Therefore I said, "Look away from me.  
 I will weep bitterly.

Do not attempt to comfort me,  
 because of the plundering of the  
 daughter of my people."

5 For *it is* a day of trouble,  
 and of trampling down,  
 and of perplexity from the Lord God of  
 hosts in the Valley of Vision,  
 a breaking down of the walls,  
 and of crying out to the mountains.

6 And Elam took up the quiver,  
 with chariots of men *and* horsemen,  
 and Kir uncovered the shield.

7 And it will happen *that* your choicest  
 valleys will be full of chariots,  
 and the horsemen will set themselves  
 in array at the gate.

8 And he removes the covering of Judah.  
 And you looked in that day to the  
 armour of The House of the Forest.

9 You have also seen the breaches *in the*  
*wall* of the city of David,  
 that they are many.

And you collected the water of the lower pool.

10 And you numbered the houses of Jerusalem,  
 and broke down the houses to fortify

the mention in v 8 of Judah, of the "House of the Forest" (built by king Solomon – 1 Kings 7:2-6; 10:17,21), of the city of David in v 9 (see 2 Sam 5:6,7,9), and of Jerusalem in v 10.

Isaiah sees a vision of a future enemy siege. Jerusalem has been besieged many times. The two most significant in the days of the prophets were the one by the Assyrians (701 BC – 2 Chron 32:1,2,9,10), and the one by the Babylonians (588 - 586 BC – 2 Kings 25:1-3). In the future lay the siege of the Romans (70 AD). And it seems clear that there will be a siege of Jerusalem at the end of this age (Zech 12:2,3; 14:2). It is not revealed what siege is meant in this chapter.

**22:2** "Uproar", "joyous" – v 13; 5:11,12; 32:13. Though some were dying because of disease or famine, many were careless and continued to seek pleasure.

**22:3** Perhaps this was fulfilled in 2 Kings 25:4-6.

**22:4** See 15:5; 21:3,4; Jer 9:1.

**22:5** "Mountains" – 2:19; Hos 10:18; Luke 23:30; Rev 6:16.

**22:6** "Kir" – 2 Kings 16:9; Amos 1:5 – a place somewhere in the regions of Assyria, and probably near Elam (see 21:2). Soldiers from these places may have fought in the armies of both Assyria and Babylon.

**22:9** "Water" – 2 Kings 20:20.

the wall.

- 11 You also made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool;

but you did not look to its Maker, or have respect for the one who formed it long ago.

- 12 And in that day the Lord God of hosts called for weeping and for mourning, and for shaving the head, and for wearing sackcloth,

- 13 And, look, joy and gladness, slaughtering oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine, and saying "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

- 14 And it was revealed in my hearing by the LORD of hosts, "Surely this wickedness will not be purged from you until you die, says the Lord God of hosts."

- 15 Thus says the Lord God of hosts, "Go, get yourselves to this steward, to Shebna, who *is* over the house, and say,

- 16 'What do you have here? And whom do you have here, that you have cut out a tomb for yourself here, *like* one cutting out a tomb on high for himself, and carving for yourself a resting place in a rock?

- 17 See, the LORD will hurl you down, you mighty man, and will surely seize you.

**22:11** This applies to the majority of the people then, but there were, doubtless, always a few who did look to God, as king Hezekiah did at the time of the Assyrian siege (37:1,2,14-20).

**22:12-14** A time of national disaster when God is commanding repentance and mourning for sin, to be careless and make merry is a great evil in God's eyes.

**22:15-24** Shebna was the highest official in the palace of Judah's king at one time. Evidently he used his position for his own ends. Only three things about him are recorded. He hewed out a tomb from the rock for himself (v 16. 2 Chron 16:13,14; Matt 27:57-60), he obtained splendid chariots (both of which indicate wealth), and he was a disgrace to the king (v 18). This suggests that his life style was extremely objectionable. Shebna is an example of a man who misused his office. He served himself rather than the king and people. God had two punishments for him. He would lose his position to Eliakim (vs 19-21) and he would die in exile far from his grand tomb (v 18).

**22:19** "I will drive" – God puts down one and promotes another as He pleases (1 Sam 2:7; Ps 75:7).

"State" – according to 36:3, at the time of the Assyrian siege in the days of king Hezekiah, Shebna was no longer the chief

- 18 He will certainly turn violently and toss you *like* a ball into a large country. There you will die, and there your glorious chariots *will be* the shame of your lord's house.'

- 19 And I will drive you from your position, and pull you down from your state.

20 "And this will happen on that day: I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, 21 and I will clothe him with your robe, and strengthen him with your belt, and I will commit your authority into his hands. And he will be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. 22 And I will lay the key of the house of David on his shoulder; so he will open, and no one will shut, and he will shut, and no one will open. 23 And I will fasten him as a peg in a sure place; and he will be as a glorious throne to his father's house. 24 And they will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the jars.

25 "In that day, says the LORD of hosts, the peg that is fastened in the sure place will be removed, and be cut off, and fall; and the load that was on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken."

**23** The burden concerning Tyre. Wail, you ships of Tarshish, for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no harbour.

official in the palace; Eliakim was.

**22:20** Eliakim means "God will establish."

**22:21** Eliakim would be a faithful and compassionate administrator in contrast to the self-seeking Shebna.

**22:22** Eliakim would be a powerful palace administrator. He would also be a small picture of the Lord Jesus who would be given the throne of David and have absolute authority, not over a palace, but over the world (Rev 3:7; Matt 28:18; John 17:2).

**22:23,24** What "hangs" on the Lord Jesus who now has the keys of David? The fate of nations and peoples in the whole earth, the eternal destiny of every individual, and the honor of His Father the God of the universe.

**22:25** "That day" – day of future judgment.

"Fall" – Eliakim too would lose his position, unlike the Lord Jesus who is king forever and will never fail either His Father or His people.

**23:1** Other prophecies concerning Tyre are in Ezek 26:1-28:19; Amos 1:9,10. In those days Tyre was a famous city and very important seaport (v 3) on the Mediterranean coast. Part of the city was built on the mainland. This was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in 572 BC. Part of the city was built on two rocky islands about 800 meters from shore. This part was destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332 BC.

From the land of Cyprus it is revealed  
to them.

2 Be still, you inhabitants of the coastland,  
you whom the merchants of Sidon who  
cross the sea, have filled.

3 And on great waters the grain of Sihor,  
the harvest of the river,  
is her revenue;  
and she is a marketplace for the nations.

4 Be ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea has  
spoken, the strength of the sea,  
saying, "I am not in labour,  
nor do I bring forth children,  
nor do I rear young men *or* bring up virgins."

5 When word comes to Egypt,  
they will be in great pain at the report  
about Tyre.

6 Cross over to Tarshish.  
Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!

7 *Is* this your joyous city, city of  
antiquity, of ancient days?  
Her own feet have carried her far away  
to sojourn.

8 Who has taken this counsel against Tyre,  
the crowning city, whose merchants  
are princes,  
whose traders *are* the honourable of the earth?

9 The LORD of hosts has planned it to  
stain the pride of all glory,  
*and* to bring into contempt all those  
honoured in the earth.

10 Overflow through your land like a river,

O daughter of Tarshish;  
*there is* no more strength.

11 He stretched out his hand over the sea,  
he shook the kingdoms.  
The LORD has given a command  
against the merchant city,  
to destroy its strongholds.

12 And he said, "You will no longer rejoice,  
O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon.  
Arise, cross over to Cyprus.  
There also you will have no rest."

13 See the land of the Chaldeans.  
This people did not exist *until*  
the Assyrian founded it for those  
who dwell in the desert.  
They set up its towers,  
they erected its palaces.  
*And* he brought it to ruin.

14 Wail, you ships of Tarshish!  
For your stronghold is destroyed.

15 And it will come about in that day, that Tyre  
will be forgotten seventy years, in accordance with  
the days of one king. At the end of seventy years  
Tyre will sing like a prostitute.

16 Take a harp, go about the city,  
you prostitute who has been forgotten.  
Make sweet melody, sing many songs,  
so that you may be remembered.

17 And it will happen at the end of seventy years  
that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she will return to

"Tarshish" – a city far to the west of Israel, probably in present-day Spain. It was famous for sailing vessels and trade by sea (2:16; 2 Chron 9:21; Ezek 27:12.

"Cyprus" – literally "Kittim", the Hebrew name for Cyprus.

23:2 "Sidon" – another important seaport about 40 kilometers north of Tyre. Both Tyre and Sidon were in the country of the Phoenicians.

23:4 "The strength of the sea" – probably a reference to Tyre. The part of the city built on the rocky islands, being completely surrounded by water, was considered safe from attack. Tyre thought that she was unique and stood alone in the world.

23:5 Egypt would grieve at the loss of a great trading and commercial partner. The river in v 3 speaks of Egypt's River Nile.

23:6 "Cross over" – to escape the destruction of their city.

23:7 "Ancient" – even in Isaiah's day Tyre was at least 1300 years old.

"Far away" – the people of Tyre had founded cities in other parts of the world – for example, Carthage in North Africa.

23:8,9 Who planned it? Nebuchadnezzar? Alexander? Yes, but behind them, working out His purposes, God Himself did the planning. His purpose? The same as we

see in 2:11-18.

23:10 "Daughter of Tarshish" – the city of Tarshish.

23:12 "Virgin daughter of Sidon" – the city of Sidon. Compare 47:1. The phrase does not mean that Sidon was pure, only that it too was a "daughter" of the human race.

"Cyprus" – literally "Kittim", the Hebrew name for Cyprus.

23:13 Before the Babylonians became a powerful kingdom the Assyrians destroyed Babylon (689 BC). Isaiah says the same thing would happen to Sidon.

23:14 Verse 1.

23:15-17 Tyre would be restored to its place as a city of trade and commerce. This happened between the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar and the more complete destruction by Alexander the Great.

23:17 "Prostitute" – in the Bible this word is sometimes used of the people of a city or nation in two different senses. A people that turned from the true God and worshiped other gods or idols is called a prostitute and an adulteress (note and references at Lev 20:5). A great commercial city such as Tyre also is called a prostitute. This is no doubt because its people spent their lives for selfish gain and forgot God for the sake of profit (compare Rev 17:1,5; 18:1-19).

her hire, and act the prostitute with all the kingdoms of the world, on the face of the earth. 18 But her profit and her pay will be set apart for the LORD. It will not be stored up or hoarded. For her profit will be for those who dwell before the LORD, for an abundance to eat, and for fine clothing.

**24** See, the LORD makes the earth empty,  
and lays it waste,  
and turns it upside down,  
and scatters its inhabitants around.

- 2 And it will be *like this*:  
as with the people, so with the priest;  
as with the servant, so with his master;  
as with the maid, so with her mistress;  
as with the buyer, so with the seller;  
as with the lender, so with the borrower;  
as with the creditor, so with the debtor.
- 3 The land will be completely emptied,  
and utterly plundered;  
for the LORD has spoken this word.
- 4 The earth mourns *and* fades away;  
the world languishes *and* fades away,  
the haughty people of the earth languish.
- 5 The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants,  
because they have transgressed the

- laws, changed the ordinance,  
broken the everlasting covenant.
- 6 Therefore the curse has devoured the earth,  
and those who live on it are desolate;  
therefore the inhabitants of the earth  
are burned, and few men *are* left.
- 7 The new wine fails,  
the vine languishes,  
all the merry-hearted sigh.
- 8 The mirth of tambourines ceases,  
the noise of the revelers comes to an end,  
the joy of the harp ceases.
- 9 They will not drink wine with a song;  
strong drink will be bitter to those who drink it.
- 10 The city of confusion is broken down.  
Every house is shut up,  
so that no one comes in.
- 11 In the streets *there is* a crying out for wine.  
All joy becomes gloom,  
the mirth of the land is gone.
- 12 In the city desolation is left,  
and the gate is smashed to ruins.
- 13 When it becomes like this inside the  
land among the people,  
*it will be* like the shaking of an olive tree,  
*and* like the gleanings when grape

**23:18** The Lord commanded that money made by a harlot should not be given to Him (Deut 23:18). However, the wealth of a city doomed to destruction could come into the treasury of the Lord (Josh 6:17,19). The promise here is that the wealth of Tyre would benefit the servants of God. But we are not told how this wealth would come to them. Compare (60:5-11; 61:6).

**24:1** From the beginning of chapter 13 God spoke of the punishment He would inflict on various nations. Now He joins them all together with all other nations and speaks of the destruction He will send on the whole world. This chapter deals with the end of this age, "the day of the Lord", the time when God pours out His anger on a godless world. The wording of 24:4,6,13,16, 19,20,23; 25:6-8; 26:19-21 seems sufficient evidence for thinking this. Those verses speak of events which the New Testament reveals will occur at the end of this age and the beginning of the next. Chapters 25-27 are linked with this chapter and refer to the same events. These chapters are also tied together by the expression "in that day" – 24:21; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1,2,12.

"Makes the earth empty, and lays it waste", etc – 34:1-4; 2 Pet 3:10-12; Revelation chapters 15 and 16.

**24:2** When God punishes the world for its sins He will observe no social distinctions (Rev 6:15-17).

**24:4** The tense of the verbs changes to present and continues so, for the most part,

up to v 21. It is as though Isaiah were caught forward and saw what was happening with his own eyes – as indeed he probably did in vision.

**24:5** Here is the reason for the destruction described in the previous verses. The earth is a part of God's holy creation. Men have defiled it. God gave good and holy laws and covenants for the good of mankind. Mankind despised and violated them. This is the history of the world as God sees it. Compare Gen 6:5,12; Ps 14:2; Rom 1:18-32.

**24:6** "Therefore" – if a people or a land, or the whole world, was unworthy of punishment God certainly would not send it. He sends it because He must to be true to justice and to promote the good of the universe as a whole.

"Curse" – Gen 3:17; 4:11; Deut 11:26; 27:15-26; Prov 3:33; Gal 3:10,13; Rev 22:3.

"Few" – compare the great loss of human life in Rev 6:4,8; 8:11; 9:15,18; 13:15; 19:17,18,21.

**24:7-13** A picture of conditions before the final destruction of earth.

**24:10** "City of confusion" – the city's name is not given. Possibly the destruction of a city such as Jerusalem (or Tyre – 23:1, or Damascus – 17:1) is given as a picture of what will happen to the whole earth. Or possibly the meaning is the city that represents fallen mankind at the end of this age – Babylon (Revelation chapters 17 and 18).

**24:13** Verse 6 – comparatively few of earth's

harvest is ended.  
14 They will raise their voice;  
they will sing;  
because of the majesty of the LORD  
they will cry out aloud from the sea.  
15 Therefore glorify the LORD in the fires,  
the name of the LORD God of Israel  
in the coastlands of the sea.  
16 From the ends of the earth we have  
heard songs,  
"Glory to the Righteous One."  
But I said, "My leanness, my leanness!  
Woe to me! The treacherous deal treacherously;  
yes, the treacherous deal very treacherously."  
17 Terror and the pit and the snare *await*  
you, O inhabitant of the earth.  
18 And it will happen *that* the one  
who flees from the sound of terror,  
will fall into the pit;  
and the one who comes up from inside  
the pit will be caught in the snare.  
For the windows above are open,  
and the foundations of the earth shake.  
19 The earth is violently broken up,  
the earth is splintered,  
the earth is shaken violently.

20 The earth will reel to and fro like a drunkard,  
and will sway like a cottage;  
and its transgression will be heavy on it,  
and it will fall, and not rise again.  
21 And it will come about in that day,  
*that* the LORD will punish the host  
of exalted ones on high,  
and the kings of the earth on the earth.  
22 And they will be gathered together,  
as prisoners are gathered in the pit,  
and will be shut up in the prison;  
and after many days they will be punished.  
23 Then the moon will be abashed and  
the sun ashamed,  
for the LORD of hosts will reign in  
Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem,  
and before his elders gloriously.

**25** O LORD, you are my God.  
I will exalt you, I will praise your name,  
for you have done wonderful *things*.  
Your counsels of old *are* faithfulness *and* truth.  
2 For you have made a city a heap of rubble,  
a fortified city a ruin,  
a citadel of foreigners to be a city no more;  
it will never be rebuilt.

people will remain after the event of v 1.  
**24:14-16** The few who remain after God's judgment will sing for joy to the God of Israel, the only God there is. They will know that it is He who has preserved and saved them from destruction. See Rev 7:1-8.  
"Fires" (v 15) – the Hebrew word here probably means "east."  
**24:16-18** "But I said" – Isaiah, thinking of the future conditions of earth, is pained to his heart (see 15:5; 16:9,11; Jer 9:1; 4:19-26). He thinks particularly of treachery, one of the worst of sins (21:2; 33:1. See also Luke 21:16; John 6:70; 2 Tim 3:4.  
**24:17** Luke 21:34,35.  
**24:18** Compare Amos 5:19.  
"Windows above are open" – Gen 7:11. But the earth will never again be destroyed by a flood (Gen 9:11). Fire will be God's instrument of destruction next time (v 6; 2 Pet 3:7).  
**24:19,20** Haggai 2:6,7; Rev 16:17-20; Ps 46:2; Heb 12:27,28.  
**24:21** "That day" – the day of the Lord. Notes at 13:6-13; Joel 1:15; 1 Thess 5:1-3; etc.  
"Host of exalted ones on high" – Satan and spirit beings who follow him (Eph 6:11,12; Rev 12:7-9). Their day of punishment is coming. And with them the leaders of earth who oppose the living God (Rev 19:19-21).  
**24:22** "Pit" – Rev 20:1-3.  
"Punished" – or "visited." Consider the phrase "after many days" – observe that there is a period of time between being shut up in

prison and being (fully) punished. During this period the Lord Himself will reign in Jerusalem (v 23). Compare Rev 20:7,11-15.  
**24:23** Again the reign of God Himself over a judged and purged earth is brought before us (see 2:2-4; 7:6,7; 11:1-10). In the glory of God and His reign the glory of the sun and moon will be as nothing. It is remarkable how similar this chapter is to chapters 14 to 21 of the book of the Revelation. What we have there in some detail is given in this chapter in great brevity. Here as there we see God's anger coming on all the people of the earth, their utter sinfulness and depravity, the destruction of all they delight in, a remnant of true believers, a terrible shaking of the earth, the punishment of Satan and evil men followed by the reign of God and His Christ.  
"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.  
**25:1** Following the catastrophe described in chapter 24 there are two chapters of praise to God. When God in anger strikes a city, a country, or the earth as a whole, is this a reason for praise? Those in fellowship with God will grieve for the misery that comes to men (24:16-18), but may praise God that He is working His purposes out, faithfully and justly, judging wickedness, and saving and protecting His people in the midst of disaster (4:5. Compare Rev 18:20; 19:1-5). This is what we have here.  
"Wonderful things" – the things described in the previous chapter.  
"Of old" – 14:24,26,27; 23:8,9.  
**25:2** "City" – 24:10-12; Rev 18:21.



- 3 Therefore the strong people will glorify you,  
the city of the terrible nations will fear you.
- 4 For you have been a strength to the poor,  
a strength to the needy in his distress,  
a refuge from the storm,  
a shade from the heat,  
when the blast of the terrible ones was  
like a storm *against* the wall.
- 5 You will subdue the noise of foreigners,  
*which is* like heat in a dry place;  
*like* heat by the shadow of a cloud,  
the song of the terrible ones will be  
suppressed.
- 6 And in this mountain the LORD of hosts  
will make for all people a feast of  
choice things,  
a banquet of aged wines,  
of choice pieces full of marrow,  
of refined aged wines.
- 7 And in this mountain he will remove  
the presence of the covering  
enveloping all people,  
and the veil that is spread over all nations.
- 8 He will swallow up death in victory;  
and the Lord God will wipe away tears  
from all faces;

- and he will take away the rebuke of  
his people from the whole earth;  
for the LORD has spoken *it*.
- 9 And it will be said in that day,  
"See, this *is* our God.  
We have waited for him,  
and he will save us.  
This *is* the LORD.  
We have waited for him;  
we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."
- 10 For in this mountain the hand of the  
LORD will rest,  
and Moab will be trampled down under him,  
like straw is trampled down for the refuse heap.
- 11 And he will spread out his hands among them,  
as the swimmer spreads out *his arms* to swim.  
And he will bring down their pride  
together with the plunder of their hands.
- 12 And he will bring down the fortification  
of the high fort of your walls,  
lay *it* low,  
and bring *it* to the ground,  
to the very dust.

**26** In that day this song will be sung  
in the land of Judah:

**25:3** See 19:19,20,23,24; Ps 72:5-11; Rev 15:3,4; 21:24.

**25:4** God protects His own people in time of disaster, sometimes physically, always spiritually, sometimes both.

"Refuge" – 4:5,6. Note and references at Ps 7:1,2. The phrase "poor and needy" is used often in Psalms to indicate the righteous, God-fearing poor.

**25:5** 13:11; Jer 51:55.

**25:6-8** God has greater purpose for earth than the destruction of wickedness. He is a God of love and grace. In these verses are revealed the wonderful things He prepares for redeemed mankind.

**25:6** "In this mountain" – a mountain in Jerusalem or Jerusalem itself. In Jerusalem, on a hill called Calvary, God, by the death of His Son, laid the foundation for all future blessings to the earth and its people (chapter 53).

"Feast", "banquet" – a symbol of rejoicing and fellowship with God and spiritual blessings (55:1,2; Matt 22:1,2; Luke 14:15,16). In the context the "marriage supper of the Lamb" is suggested (Rev 19:6,7).

**25:7** The "covering", and "veil" that covers all nations probably indicate spiritual ignorance and death. Compare 2 Cor 3:14-16; Eph 4:18. God will destroy the veil and fully enlighten "all people" on this mountain (v 6; 2:14; 11:9).

**25:8** "Death" – 1 Cor 15:54; Heb 2:14; Rev 20:14; 21:4. Death will have no place in the final conditions of earth because sin

which brings death (Rom 5:12; 6:23) will have no place then.

"Victory" – the Hebrew word here means splendour, glory, sincerity, truth, faith, confidence, forever, perfection, completeness.

"Tears" – Rev 7:7; 21:4. God is a loving Father whose own hand will wipe away the tears of His people and eternally remove from them all cause of tears.

"Rebuke" – or "disgrace" – Ps 119:22,39; Matt 5:11; 1 Pet 4:14.

**25:9** "Our God" – v 1. Those who do not have this one true God as their God will not partake of the above blessings.

"Waited for him" – everywhere in the Bible the relationship between trust and salvation is revealed (12:2; 26:4; Ps 2:12; John 5:24; Acts 16:31).

"Rejoice" – 9:3; 35:10; 41:16; 51:3; 66:14; Ps 9:2; Rev 19:7.

**25:10** "Moab" – in the context of chapters 24,25 Moab probably represents all the enemies of God's people. Compare 30:31 and 34:5.

**25:11** "Pride" – 2:11-18; 16:6.

**25:12** Verse 2; 24:10,12.

**26:1** "That day" – 24:21-23; 25:9.

"A strong city" – 14:32. Jerusalem and perhaps the new one of Revelation chapter 21. In some places in Scripture "city" seems to be used as a symbol of the social life of a whole people, or of mankind. From one point of view there are really only two cities – the city of man and the city of God. City here is put in contrast to the city of 24:10,12; 25:2; 26:5.

- We have a strong city.  
*God* will appoint salvation *for* walls and bulwarks.
- 2 Open the gates, so that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may come in.
- 3 You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind rests *on you*, because he trusts in you.
- 4 Trust in the LORD forever; for in Yah, the LORD, *is* eternal strength.
- 5 For he brings down those who dwell on high. He lays low the lofty city, he lays it low, to the ground, he brings it to the very dust.
- 6 The foot will trample it down, the feet of the poor, *and* the steps of the needy.
- 7 The way of the just *is* uprightness. O most upright *One*, you make the path of the just level.
- 8 Yes, *following* the way of your judgments, O LORD, we have waited for you. The desire of *our* soul *is* for your name, and for the remembrance of you.
- 9 With my soul I have desired you in the night; yes, with my spirit in me I will seek you early. For when your judgments *are* in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

"Salvation" – 32:18; 60:18; Zech 2:5; 9:8; 118:19,20; Isa 60:11.  
**26:2** "Open" – 60:11; Ps 24:7; 118:19,20; Rev 21:25.

"Righteous" – Ps 51:1-5; 24:3-6; Rev 21:27; 22:14,15.

**26:3** In any age this is the way to peace of mind – Phil 4:6,7; Ps 37:3-8; 112:6-9.

**26:4** "Eternal" – everything else a person may trust is temporary, passing away in weakness. "Yah" = Yahweh (Jehovah).

**26:5** See 2:11-18; 24:10,12; 25:2; Rev 18:21.

**26:6** Cruel oppressors will not have the upper hand forever.

**26:7** "Level" – or "smooth." 42:16; Ps 26:12; 27:11; 143:10.

**26:8** The second part of this verse can be true of us only if the first part is also true of us.

**26:9-11** In v 9 Isaiah speaks for himself. **26:9** "In the night" – Ps 42:8; 63:6; 77:2; 119:55,62.

"Early" – Ps 42:1-3; 63:1.

"Learn righteousness" – Rev 15:4. Judgments and punishments are severe teachers, but it is far better to learn by them than not to learn at all (compare Ps 119:71).

**26:10** This has been true of all nations from the beginning (Rom 1:20-25), and was true of Israel. God's grace has been shown to men in many ways (Ps 100:1-5; 145:9;

10 If grace is shown to the wicked, *still* he will not learn righteousness. He will deal unjustly in an upright land, and will not perceive the majesty of the LORD.

11 LORD, *when* your hand is lifted up, they will not see; *but* they will see *your* zeal for the people, and be put to shame; yes, the fire *reserved* for your enemies will consume them.

12 LORD, you will establish peace for us, for you have also done all our works in us.

13 O LORD our God, *other* lords beside you have had dominion over us, *but* through you alone we will make mention of your name.

14 *They are* dead, they will not live. *They are* deceased, they will not stand up, for you have punished and destroyed them, and have wiped out all memory of them.

15 You have increased the nation, O LORD, you have increased the nation. You are glorified.

You have extended all the borders of the land.

16 LORD, in trouble they sought you.

They poured out a prayer *when* your correction *was* on them.

17 As a woman with child *who* draws near the time for her delivery is in pain,

Matt 5:45; Acts 14:17; Rom 2:4).

**26:11** "Hand" – 9:12,17,21; Ps 89:13. The wicked do not wish to see God at work and so do not, until God Himself causes them to see.

"Zeal" – 9:7; 37:32; Joel 2:18; Zech 1:14; John 2:17.

"Fire. . . will consume them" – 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 20:15; 21:8.

**26:12-19** Isaiah speaks for the Jews of that future time referred to in v 1.

"You have also done all our works in us" – 1 Cor 3:6,7; 12:6; Gal 2:8; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29; Heb 13:21. This does not mean that God's people are mere puppets without will. They work with God and God works with and in them.

**26:13** "Lords" – foreign rulers at various times in their history, possibly together with their gods and idols. Here is a determination that it shall no longer be so. See 1 Cor 8:5,6.

**26:14** God will rid the earth of all evil rulers, human or supernatural, and will Himself reign over His people.

**26:15** "Increased" – 9:3; 14:2; 54:2,3. **26:16-18** A confession of their weakness and failure. Their prayers were like a mere whisper. They produced nothing by their pains and efforts. They failed in the supreme task God gave them (v 18). Israel was to be the channel of blessing and

- and* cries out in her pains,  
so we have been in your sight, O LORD.
- 18 We have been with child,  
we have been in pain, we have,  
as it were, given birth to wind.  
We have not produced any deliverance  
on the earth;  
nor have the inhabitants of the world  
been born *through us*.
- 19 Your dead will live.  
*Together with* my dead body they will rise.  
Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust!  
For your dew *is like* the dew of the morning,  
and the earth will cause the dead to fall out.
- 20 Come, my people, enter your rooms,  
and shut your doors behind you.  
Hide yourselves as if for a little while,  
until the indignation is past.
- 21 For, see, the LORD comes out of his  
place to punish the inhabitants of  
the earth for their iniquity.  
The earth will also disclose its blood,  
and will no longer conceal her slain.

salvation to the world (John 4:22; Rom 3:1,2; 9:4,5). The Lord Jesus of Israel made up for the failure of the people of Israel. "Been born" (v 18) – or "fallen". **26:19** In the Old Testament there is little teaching about the resurrection of the dead. But here is a clear promise from God to Israel. See also Ps 16:10; Dan 12:2.

"Dew of the morning" – newness and freshness of life after the night (death).

**26:20,21** See 2:10-21; 24:21,22; 66:15, 16. In the Day of the Lord the nation Israel will be preserved (see chapter 27; Rev 7:1-8; 12:13,14).

**26:20** "Enter your rooms", "hide" – where? how? Their "rooms" must mean God Himself. He is the only safety (27:5). No rooms of wood or stone could preserve from God's anger. It is true that some commentators believe that much of chapters 24-26 relates to a time in Israel's history – the Assyrian or Babylonian invasion. The author of these notes believes the final days of this age are meant and that any invasions by Assyrians or Babylonians were only a small picture of the final invasion.

**27:1** See 24:21; 25:9; 26:1.

"That day" – the end of this age. See 24:1.  
"Sword" – Deut 32:41; 31:8; 34:6;  
66:16; Deut 32:41; Ezek 21:3; Rev 19:15.

"Leviathan" – here evidently means some great and wicked kingdom, some oppressive power. Each time the word is used in the Bible it seems to refer to something different. In Job 3:8 it is some sort of sea monster. In Job 41:1 it may mean a huge salt water crocodile. In Ps 74:14 it may refer to Egypt. Here also the meaning may be different. Ancient empires

- 27** In that day the LORD, with his fierce  
and great and strong sword will  
punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent,  
Leviathan that twisted serpent,  
and he will kill the sea dragon.
- 2 In that day sing to her,  
a vineyard *producing* red wine.
- 3 "I, the LORD, keep it.  
I water it every moment.  
I keep it night and day so that *no one*  
will harm it.
- 4 Fury *is no longer* in me.  
Who would set the briars *and* thorns  
against me in battle?  
I would go through them;  
I would burn them up together.
- 5 Or let him take hold of my strength,  
*so that* he may make peace with me;  
*and* he will make peace with me."
- 6 In the coming time he will cause Jacob  
to take root.  
Israel will blossom and bud,  
and fill the face of the world with fruit.
- 7 Has he struck him, as he struck those

like Egypt or Babylon may have been like Leviathan. But if this chapter refers to the end of this age neither of them can be meant. Who will be the great oppressive power "in that day" (v 1)? The answer is, antichrist and his kingdom. This is said to come out of the "sea" (Rev 13:1). It is true that this "beast" is not described as a serpent in Revelation chapter 13, but his nature is like one, and the "dragon" will give the beast his power. Indeed the real ruler behind the throne of antichrist will be the serpent the devil (Rev 12:7-9; 13:2,4).

**27:2-6** This is in complete contrast to 5:1-7. The nation of Israel (v 6 – Jacob) at the end of this age and beginning of a new one will be completely changed. Everything that could hinder fruitfulness (briars and thorns) will be removed.

**27:5** "Him" – He seems to be referring to the enemies of Israel who are like briars and thorns (v 4). God would rather have all such reconciled to Himself than destroyed. Compare 2 Cor 5:19,20.

**27:6** Indicates a complete change for Israel (Rom 11:26). True fruitfulness in place of the sad condition described in 5:2 and 26:18.

"Fruit" – 37:31.

**27:7-11** At times throughout Israel's history God had to "strike" the nation because of its sins (see 10:5,6; Jud 2:10-19; 2 Kings 17:5-20; Jer 52:1-9; Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24). But He did not completely destroy Israel as He did some other nations. Israel exists to this day. Israel will have to endure God's appointed punishment. The evidence that the nation was right with God would be an abandonment of all idolatry and

who struck him?

Or is he killed in accordance with the slaughter of those who are killed by him?

- 8 In measure, you contended with him by exiling him.

With his rough wind he drove him out, on the day of the east wind.

- 9 Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be purged, and this *is* the full fruit of taking away his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altar like chalk stones that are crushed in pieces,

the groves and images will not stand.

- 10 For the fortified city *will be* desolate, a settlement forsaken and left like a wilderness.

There the calf will feed, and there lie down and consume its branches.

- 11 When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off.

The women come *and* set them on fire.

For it *is* a people of no understanding; therefore he who made them will not have mercy on them, and he who formed them will show them no favour.

12 And it will happen in that day, *that* the LORD will thresh from the channel of the River *Euphrates* to the Brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one, O children of Israel. 13 And it will happen in that day, *that* the great trumpet will be

false worship (v 9). Part of Israel's punishment was to be the loss of Jerusalem and exile (v 10).

**27:11** "People of no understanding" – 1:3; 6:9,10; Deut 32:38. The ignorance of Israel was a blameworthy ignorance. They could have had the enlightenment and wisdom God gives if they had wanted them (compare Prov 1:7,22-33).

**27:12,13** "That day" – 24:1; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1; (21:10). God will thresh those enemies.

"Thresh" – Israel's enemies threshed Israel.

"Trumpet" – compare Matt 24:31. Here is a regathering of Israel that would go beyond the return of the exiles from Babylon in Ezra's day. See 11:10-12 (notice in v 11 the words "in that day"); Amos 9:14,15.

**28:1** Chapters 28-35 form another unit. In this section we have descriptions of conditions and events in Isaiah's day and not long afterwards. But here and there, as in earlier chapters (as indeed everywhere in Isaiah) are prophecies of far-off events – of the times of both Christ's first and second comings. Chapters 28-33 have a series of six "woes" – 28:1; 29:1; 29:15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1 (compare 5:11-23).

"Crown" – Samaria the beautiful capital

blown, and those who were about to perish in the land of Assyria, and the exiles in the land of Egypt, will come and worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

**28** Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower, which *is* at the head of the lush valleys of those who are overcome with wine!

- 2 See, the Lord has someone mighty and strong; like a tempest of hail *and* a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty overflowing waters, with the hand he will bring *them* down to the earth.

- 3 The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trampled underfoot,

- 4 And the glorious beauty at the head of the lush valley will be a fading flower, *and* like the first ripe fruit before the summer, which someone looks at and sees; while it is still in his hand he eats it up.

- 5 In that day the LORD of hosts will be as a crown of glory, and as a diadem of beauty,

to the remainder of his people,

- 6 And as a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, and as strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

- 7 But they also have erred through wine,

city of Israel. It was built on a hill as a crown fits on a head.

"Ephraim" – a name sometimes used for the whole northern kingdom of Israel.

"Drunkards" – Amos 6:4-7 was also directed against Samaria. Drunkenness evidently was a common sin in both Israel and Judah (5:11-13). Even their priests and prophets were guilty of it (vs 7,8). Notes on drunkenness at Gen 9:21; Prov 23:29-35. **28:2-4** "Someone mighty" – the king of Assyria – 8:7,8. This foretells his capture of Samaria in 722 B.C.

**28:4** "Fading flower" – all man's glory and pride is only for a little while (40:6,7; 1 Pet 1:24). Is it not foolish to spend one's life for them when we can live for things that last forever? Matt 6:19,20; John 6:27; etc. **28:5** "In that day" – can hardly mean the time of Samaria's capture. See 24:1.

"The LORD of hosts" – men can make their own crowns and take pride in their own glory (v 1). But believers (here called the "remainder") will have the one true God as their crown and glory.

**28:6** "Justice" – 11:2-4.

"Strength" – this verse speaks of victory, not defeat.

**28:7,8** When priest and prophets are

- and through strong drink are out of the way.  
The priest and the prophet have erred  
through strong drink,  
they are swallowed up by wine.  
They are out of the way through strong drink.  
They err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment.
- 8 For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness,  
so *that* no place is clean.
- 9 "Whom will he teach knowledge?  
And whom will he cause to understand  
doctrine?  
*Those who are* weaned from the milk  
*and* drawn from the breasts.
- 10 For precept *must be* on precept,  
precept on precept;  
line on line, line on line;  
here a little, *and* there a little."
- 11 For with stammering lips and a foreign  
tongue he will speak to this people,
- 12 To whom he said,  
"This *is* the rest *with which* you may  
cause the weary to rest,  
and this *is* the refreshing."  
But they would not listen.
- 13 So the word of the LORD was to them  
precept on precept, precept on precept;  
line on line, line on line;  
here a little, *and* there a little,  
so that they might go and fall backward,  
and be broken, and snared, and captured.
- 14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD,  
you scornful men who rule this

- people who *are* in Jerusalem.
- 15 Because you have said,  
"We have made a covenant with death,  
and with hell we are in agreement.  
When the overflowing scourge passes  
through,  
it will not come to us,  
for we have made lies our refuge,  
and have hidden ourselves under falsehood."
- 16 Therefore thus says the Lord God:  
"Look! I lay in Zion a foundation stone,  
a tested stone, a precious cornerstone,  
a sure foundation.  
He who believes will not be hasty.
- 17 And I will make justice the measuring line,  
and righteousness the plumb line;  
and the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,  
and the waters will overflow the hiding place.
- 18 And your covenant with death will be annulled,  
and your agreement with hell will not stand.  
When the overflowing scourge passes through,  
then you will be trampled down by it.
- 19 As often as it goes out it will take you;  
for morning by morning it will pass over,  
by day and by night;  
and understanding the report will bring terror."
- 20 For the bed is so short that *a man*  
cannot stretch himself *on it*,  
and the cover is so narrow that he  
cannot wrap himself *in it*.
- 21 For the LORD will rise up as *in* Mount Perazim.  
He will be angry as *in* the Valley of Gibeon,

drunkards they are certain to lead the people astray.

"They also" – at v 7 Isaiah, it seems, begins to speak of conditions in Jerusalem too (v 14).

**28:9,10** Those drunkard priests and prophets speak sarcastically of Isaiah (see v 14).

**28:11-13** Isaiah answers them. They would not welcome God's message through him. (If they had it would have meant rest to them.) So God would speak to them through foreigners who would destroy them. He probably meant the Assyrians and Babylonians who would teach them a lesson never to be forgotten. The essence of v 11 is quoted in 1 Cor 14:21.

**28:15** Can we think they actually spoke such words? Possibly Isaiah here reveals what the meaning of their actions was. It seems that they were trusting in sorcery and spiritism (see 8:19). Alas, how many there be today also who trust in Satan's lies and have a false sense of security because of sorcery and idolatry.

"Hell" (also v 18) – in Hebrew "Sheol," the realm of the dead – Gen 37:35.

"Falsehood" – in Hebrew this may sometimes indicate "false gods."

**28:16** This "stone" is the Lord Jesus

(1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6). This verse indicates that God would make a new beginning, build a new structure. One does not lay a cornerstone or a foundation to a building already in existence. Is the New Testament Church, then, a completely new thing? Perhaps not entirely. It is built on the foundation of the apostles, but also of the prophets (they too are in the foundation – Eph 2:20). To be in the foundation is to be a vital part of the building. But though the Church may not be an entirely new thing, its structure in this age is different from what we see in Israel in the Old Testament. See note on Church at Matt 16:18.

**28:17** "Justice" – v 6; 11:4.

"Hail" – v 2. God's judgments will reveal the uselessness of the lies and false refuges men trust in (compare 2 Kings 24:1,2,10,12,20; 25:1).

**28:18** "Overflowing scourge" – v 2; 8:7.

**28:19** God's judgments and foreign invasions came repeatedly.

"Terror" – many things in God's word would bring terror to men's hearts if truly understood and believed.

**28:20** Speaks of lack of preparation and absence of any possibility of trust and rest.

**28:21** "Mount Perazim" – 2 Sam 5:20.



that he may do his work,  
his strange work,  
and accomplish his act, his unusual act.  
22 Now, therefore, do not be mockers,  
so your shackles will not become  
stronger;  
for I have heard of a destruction from  
the Lord God of hosts,  
determined against the whole earth.  
23 Give ear and hear my voice;  
listen, and hear my words.  
24 Does the plowman plow all day to sow?  
Does he turn up and break the clods  
of his ground?  
25 When he has made the surface level,  
does he not sow the caraway,  
and scatter the cummin, and plant wheat  
in rows,  
and the barley in its appointed place  
and the rye in its plot?  
26 For his God instructs him *and* teaches  
him the right way.  
27 For the caraway is not threshed with  
a threshing instrument,  
nor is a cart wheel rolled over the cummin;  
but the caraway is beaten out with  
a stick, and the cummin with a rod.  
28 Bread *grain* is ground, so he does not  
continually thresh it  
or smash *it with* his cart wheel  
or crush it *by* his horsemen.  
29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts,  
*who* is wonderful in counsel,  
*and* excellent in working.

"Gibeon" – Josh 10:10-12.  
"Strange work" – sending enemies to  
destroy His own city, temple, and nation.  
28:22 "Mockers" – v 14; 2 Chron 36:15,16.  
"Determined" – 10:22,23.  
28:23-29 The meaning of this parable is  
that in the judgments God sends on Israel  
He has a good purpose toward them.  
Farmers know how to make a field produce  
crops. Threshers of grain know what  
instruments to use and how long to use  
them. God, from whom all wisdom comes,  
knows how to go about making His people  
fruitful. He will not plow them or thresh them  
too long, too harshly.  
28:29 See 9:6; Ps 40:5; 92:5; 139:17;  
Rom 11:33,34.  
"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.  
29:1 "Ariel" is Jerusalem. The word sounds  
like the Hebrew for "lion of God."  
"Feasts" – or "sacrifices be killed".  
29:2 The word Ariel is also similar to the  
Hebrew word for hearth or stove or fire-pit.  
The fire of God's anger would burn there.  
See 31:9. The "I" of verses 2 and 3 is of

29 Woe to Ariel, to Ariel,  
the city *where* David lived!  
Add year to year;  
let the feasts come around.  
2 Yet I will distress Ariel,  
and there will be heaviness and sorrow,  
and it will be like an ariel to me.  
3 And I will camp against you all around,  
and will lay siege against you with a mound,  
and I will raise siege works against you.  
4 And you will be brought down,  
*and* will speak from the ground,  
and your speech will be low out of the dust,  
and your voice shall be like a medium's *voice*,  
out of the ground,  
and your speech will whisper from the dust.  
5 Moreover your many enemies will  
become like small dust,  
and the horde of ruthless ones *will*  
*become* like chaff that passes away;  
yes, it will happen suddenly, in an instant.  
6 You will be visited by the LORD of  
hosts with thunder,  
and with earthquake, and great noise,  
with storm and tempest and the flame  
of devouring fire.  
7 And the hordes of all the nations that  
fight against Ariel,  
all that fight against her and her  
fortress and distress her,  
will be like a dream of a night vision.  
8 It will be as when a hungry *man* dreams,  
and, see, he eats; but he wakes up,  
and he is empty.

course God, not Isaiah.  
29:3 The surrounding of Jerusalem by  
enemies is here said to be God's work.  
29:4 Jerusalem will be weakened and  
humbled to the dust.  
29:5-8 The enemies that come against  
Jerusalem are many (v 5), of "all the  
nations" (vs 7,8). These words indicate that  
the picture in these verses was not fulfilled  
at the Assyrian invasion in 701 BC, or in  
the Babylonian invasion more than a  
century later. The language suggests the  
events foretold in Zech 12:2-9; 14:2-5,  
which, it appears from the context, will take  
place at the end of this age. There, too,  
we read of "all nations" coming against  
Jerusalem, of its distress and humbling,  
and of the Lord's sudden appearance to  
fight against these enemies. Compare also  
v 2 with Zech 12:6.  
29:6 See 28:2; Jud 5:4,5; Ps 18:7-15;  
83:13-15; Isa 31:27; Hab 3:3-7; 2 Thess  
1:7.  
"Visited" – or "punished" – the Hebrew  
word means both.

Or as when a thirsty man dreams,  
and, see, he drinks;  
but he wakes up, and, see, *he is* faint,  
and he still wants *water*.  
Thus will it be with the hordes of all the  
nations that fight against Mount Zion.

9 Stay and be astonished!  
Blind yourselves and be blind!  
They are drunk, but not with wine;  
they stagger, but not from strong drink.

10 For the LORD has poured out on you  
the spirit of deep sleep,  
and has closed your eyes, the prophets;  
and covered your heads, the seers.

11 And the whole vision has become to you like  
the words of a sealed book which *men* deliver to  
one who can read, saying, "Please read this"; and  
he says, "I cannot, for it *is* sealed." 12 And the  
book is delivered to one who cannot read, saying,  
"Please read this"; and he says, "I cannot read."

13 Therefore the Lord said,  
"Since this people draw near *me* with  
their mouth,  
and honour me with their lips,  
but have removed their heart far from me,  
and their fear toward me is *merely*  
rules taught by men;

14 Therefore, see, once more I will do a  
marvellous work among this people,  
a marvellous work and a wonder;  
for the wisdom of their wise *men* will perish,  
and the understanding of their  
intelligent *men* will be hidden."

15 Woe to those who seek to hide their  
counsel deeply from the LORD,  
and whose works are in the dark,  
and who say,  
"Who sees us? And who knows us?"

16 Surely you have turned things upside down,  
regarding the potter  
as the clay.  
For shall the thing made say of him  
who made it, "He did not make me."  
Or shall the thing formed say of him  
who formed it,  
"He had no understanding?"

17 *Is* it not just a very little time  
before Lebanon is to be turned  
into a fruitful field,  
and the fruitful field regarded like a forest?

18 And in that day the deaf will hear the  
words of the book,  
and the eyes of the blind will see out  
of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek also will increase *their* joy  
in the LORD,  
and the poor among men will rejoice  
in the Holy One of Israel.

20 For the terrible one will be brought to nothing,  
and the scornful one will be finished,  
and all who look to do evil will be cut off;

21 Those who, by a word, cause a man  
*to be regarded as* an offender,  
and lay a snare for him who rebukes  
in the gate,  
and turn aside the upright for no

**29:9-12** God now speaks to the people of Jerusalem. Verses 9,10 indicate their spiritual stupor and blindness. God Himself had brought about this condition as a punishment for their unbelief, unfaithfulness and wickedness (see 6:9,10). So they could not understand the prophecies God gave through Isaiah – vs 11,12.

**29:13** The Lord Jesus referred to this verse in Matt 15:8,9 while denouncing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They were typical of many people in every age. There are many people in the world who wish to be considered religious and God-honoring, but whose spiritual condition often denies all their lips say (58:1,2; Jer 12:1,2; Ezek 33:3-32).

**29:14** "A wonder" – vs 17-24.

"Perish" – 1 Cor 1:19. The wonder above all wonders, and that which causes the wisdom of the wise to vanish, is the cross of Christ (1 Cor 1:20-24).

**29:15** "Hide" – 28:15; Gen 3:8; Ps 10:11; 94:7; Isa 47:10; 57:12; Heb 4:13.

**29:16** Here are three errors in the thinking of sinful and perverse men – thinking God is like themselves (see Ps 50:21), denying there is a God at all in spite of evidence everywhere of the work of His hands (see

Ps 14:1), or accusing God of poor or ignorant workmanship when it comes to the human race – not considering that the evil state men are in is a result of their own doing. God pronounces "woe" to all such people.

**29:17-24** Here are other wonders (v 14) God will perform. Verse 17 suggests a great change will occur. See 2:12-17. Compare 32:15. The change in Lebanon is symbolical of the change in conditions among men. The will occur in "a short time" – short in God's eyes (Heb 10:37; 2 Pet 3:8), not necessarily in man's.

**29:18** "In that day" – 24:2; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1,2,12.

"Deaf", "blind" – 32:2; 35:5; 42:7. The beginning of the fulfillment of this was in the days of Christ on earth. He opened both physical and spiritual eyes, and caused both the physically and spiritually deaf to hear. As for Jerusalem and the nation Israel (the subject of this chapter) their blindness will not be removed till the end of this age.

**29:19-21** Indicates a complete reversal of conditions prevailing in Isaiah's day (and, alas, in ours). The humble and the poor will be exalted; cruelty, scorn, evil, and injustice will vanish (11:1-5; 26:5,6; etc).

proper reason.

22 Therefore thus says the LORD,  
 who redeemed Abraham,  
 concerning the house of Jacob,  
 "Jacob will not now be ashamed,  
 nor will his face now become pale.

23 But when he sees his children  
 in his midst, the work of my hands,  
 they will regard my name as holy,  
 and regard as holy the Holy One  
 of Jacob,  
 and fear the God of Israel;

24 And those who err in spirit will come  
 to understanding,  
 and those who complain will learn doctrine."

30 "Woe to the rebellious children,"  
 says the LORD.  
 "They take counsel, but not from me;  
 and they carry out plans,  
 but not by my Spirit,  
 so that they may add sin to sin.

2 They travel down to Egypt,  
 and have not asked my advice;  
 they strengthen themselves in the  
 strength of Pharaoh,  
 and trust in the shadow of Egypt.

3 Therefore the strength of Pharaoh will  
 be to your shame,  
 and trust in the shadow of Egypt *your*  
 humiliation.

4 For his princes are at Zoan,  
 and his ambassadors come to Hanes.

5 They will all be ashamed of a people  
*who* cannot benefit them,

"In the gate" (v 21) – where city or village heads met for discussions and decisions.

29:22 "Redeemed" – note on redemption at Ps 78:35. God redeemed Abraham from an idolatrous society and vain way of life, separated him unto Himself, and brought him into the land of Canaan (Gen 12:1). Now the God who did that promises that something similar will happen to Jacob (the Jewish nation). They will come to the knowledge of God and His holiness (Jer 31:33,34; Rom 11:25-27).

30:1,2 "Children" – 1:2.

"Take counsel" – to go to Egypt – 31:1. In Isaiah's day, Judah's leaders, faced with the threat from Assyria's superior military strength, looked to Egypt for help. God did not lead them to do this. They did not even consult God about it. So God pronounces "woe" to those who were guilty of it. God's people in every age must be careful about the alliances and friendships they form (2 Cor 6:14-18).

30:3-7 Judah's alliance with Egypt would prove to be disastrous. Egypt would be

or be a help or profit,  
 but only a shame and disgrace."

6 The burden concerning the beasts of the south:  
 "They will carry their wealth on the  
 shoulders of young donkeys,  
 and their treasures on the humps of  
 camels into the land of trouble and anguish,  
 from which *come* the young and old lion,  
 the viper and fiery flying serpent,  
 to a people *who* will not benefit *them*.

7 For the Egyptians will help in vain,  
 and to no purpose.  
 Therefore I have said about her,  
 Rahab sits still.

8 Now go, write this on a tablet in  
 their presence,  
 and inscribe it on a scroll,  
 that it may be for the time to come,  
 forever and ever:

9 This *is* a rebellious people,  
 lying children,  
 children *who* will not listen to the law  
 of the LORD;

10 Who say to the seers, 'Do not see,'  
 and to the prophets, 'Do not prophesy  
 to us right things.  
 Speak to us smooth things,  
 prophecy deceitful visions.

11 Get out of the way.  
 Turn aside from the path.  
 Cause the Holy One of Israel no longer  
 to be in our presence."

12 Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:  
 "Because you despise this word,

totally incapable of giving help.

30:6 "The south" – the desert-like region in the southern part of Canaan, called the Negev.

30:7 "Rahab" – here means Egypt (51:9; Ps 87:4; 89:10). The second sentence of this verse, though different from the KJV, seems to bring out the meaning of the Hebrew well.

30:8-11 Here we see the condition of Judah's people that caused them to go to Egypt for help without consulting the Lord.

30:9 Verse 1; 1:2; Ps 78:8,40; Jer 5:23; etc.

"Will not listen" – this was the fault that was mother of so many other faults.

30:10,11 As men in general, they did not want to hear the plain truth. It upset them. Preaching the holy way and the Holy One made them unhappy. They wanted to continue in their own sinful ways. They preferred pleasant lies to unpleasant truth (compare 1 Kings 22:8; Jer 5:30,31; 2 Thess 2:10,11).

30:12-17 "Therefore" – they would have to take the consequences for their foolish and wicked behavior.

- and trust in oppression and perversity,  
and rely on them,  
13 Therefore this evil will be to you like  
a breach ready to collapse,  
bulging out in a high wall,  
which will break suddenly,  
in an instant.  
14 And he will break it like breaking a  
potter's jar that is broken in pieces.  
He will not spare,  
and so among its pieces there will not  
be found a fragment to take fire  
from the hearth,  
or to take water from the cistern."  
15 For thus says the Lord God,  
the Holy One of Israel:  
"In returning and rest you will be saved.  
In quietness and in confidence you will  
have strength;  
and you were not willing.  
16 But you said,  
'No, for we will flee on horses.'  
Therefore you will flee.  
And you said, 'We will ride on swift animals.'  
Therefore those who pursue you will be swift.  
17 One thousand will flee at the threat of one;  
at the threat of five you will flee until  
you are left like a flagstaff on the  
top of a mountain,  
and like a banner on a hill."  
18 And therefore the LORD will wait,  
that he may be gracious to you,

and therefore he will be exalted,  
that he may have mercy on you.  
For the LORD is a God of justice.  
Blessed are all those who wait for him.

19 For the people will dwell in Zion at Jerusalem.  
You will weep no more. He will be very gracious to  
you at the sound of your cry. When he hears it, he  
will answer you. 20 And *though* the Lord gives you  
the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction,  
yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner  
any more, but your eyes will see your teachers,  
21 and your ears will hear a word behind you, say-  
ing, "This is the way; walk in it," whenever you turn  
to the right or whenever you turn to the left.  
22 You will also defile your silver-plated carved im-  
ages, and your moulded gold-plated idols. You will  
throw them away like a menstrual cloth. You will  
say to them, "Away with you!"

23 Then he will give rain for your seed, so that  
you can sow in the ground, and the food, the pro-  
duce of the land, will be rich and plentiful. In that  
day your cattle will graze in large pastures.  
24 Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that  
work the ground will eat clean fodder, which has  
been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.  
25 And on the day of the great slaughter, when  
the towers fall, on every high mountain and on  
every high hill there will be rivers and streams of  
waters. 26 Moreover the light of the moon will be  
like the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will  
be seven times *its usual brightness*, like the light of  
seven days, on the day that the LORD binds up the

"Holy One" – note at 1:4.  
**30:13** "This evil" – their acts of oppression and  
deceit.  
"High wall" – they thought their behavior  
made them safe.  
**30:15** A principle good for all situations, all  
times. Turning to God and resting, trusting  
in Him is the way to salvation, strength and  
security. Observe that repentance comes  
first and then rest and trust (examples:  
2 Chron 13:18; 14:11,12; 20:12,15-  
17,20). If people refuse the way of faith,  
as the people of Judah did, they will expe-  
rience defeat and disaster, as Judah did.  
**30:16** Ps 33:16-19.  
**30:17** The opposite of Lev 26:7,8. This  
would show that God had given them up to  
their enemies (Deut 32:30).  
**30:18** God punishes when justice demands  
it. But punishing is grievous to Him (Jer  
48:31-39). He loves to show mercy  
whenever possible (Ex 34:6,7; Ps 33:5;  
145:8). But if He shows compassion, that,  
too, must not violate justice (5:16).  
"Blessed" – notes at Ps 1:1; 119:1.  
"Wait for him" – 25:9; 40:31; 64:4;  
Ps 27:14.  
**30:19-26** A description of some of the ways  
God will show compassion on, and be

gracious to, the people of Judah.  
**30:19** "Weep no more" – 25:8; 60:20;  
61:3. God will remove all cause of weeping.  
"Answer" – 65:24; Ps 50:15; 86:7;  
Jer 29:12-14; Zech 13:9.  
**30:20-22** God would bring trouble on them  
outwardly, but do an inner work in them that  
would cause them to listen to the teachers  
He would send, and to obey His voice telling  
them the way. They will show obedience by  
casting away all their idols, whether physical  
or mental ones.  
**30:23,24** He will send the blessings  
promised to an obedient Israel (Deut 28:1,  
11,12).  
**30:25** "Slaughter" – 24:1,5,13; 34:2-4.  
"Towers" – 2:12-15.  
"Streams" – v 23; 41:18; Joel 3:18;  
Zech 14:8.  
**30:26** "Moon", "sun" – if this is to be  
fulfilled literally, we may judge from the  
context (v 25), and the nature of the wonder  
itself, that it will be at the end of this age.  
Then there will be strange things happening  
in the heavenly bodies. Sunlight seven  
times brighter than normal would be a  
fearful thing (compare Rev 16:8,9). Would  
this not injure the Jewish remnant? God  
would protect them (compare 4:5,6).

fracture of his people and heals the wound from the blow.

- 27 See, the name of the LORD comes  
from afar,  
burning *with* his anger,  
and *its* burden *is* heavy.  
His lips are full of indignation,  
and his tongue *is* like a devouring fire,  
28 And his breath *is* like an overflowing  
stream reaching up to the neck.  
He *comes* to sift the nations with the  
sieve of destruction.  
And *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws  
of the people,  
causing *them* to go astray.
- 29 You will have a song, as in the night  
*when* a holy festival is kept,  
and gladness of heart,  
as when one walks with a flute to go to  
the mountain of the LORD,  
to the Mighty One of Israel.
- 30 And the LORD will cause his glorious  
voice to be heard,  
and make them see his arm descending,  
with raging anger and *with* the  
flame of a devouring fire,  
*with* cloudburst, and storm, and hailstones.
- 31 For through the voice of the LORD the  
Assyrian, *who* struck with a rod,  
will be beaten down.
- 32 And each place where the rod of  
punishment passes,  
which the LORD lays on him,  
will *resound* with tambourines and harps;

- and in battles, brandishing *his weapons*,  
he will fight against it.
- 33 For Tophet *has* long been ready;  
yes, it is prepared for the king.  
He has made *it* deep *and* large,  
a pyre of fire and much wood.  
The breath of the LORD,  
like a stream of sulfur, causes it to burn.

- 31 Woe to those who go down to Egypt  
for help, and rely on horses,  
and trust in chariots,  
because *they are* many, and in horsemen,  
because they are very strong,  
but who do not look to the Holy One  
of Israel, or seek the LORD!
- 2 Yet he too *is* wise, and will bring disaster,  
and will not call back his words,  
but will arise against the house of evildoers,  
and against those who help the workers  
of iniquity.
- 3 Now the Egyptians *are* men,  
and not God;  
and their horses *are* flesh, and not spirit.  
When the LORD stretches out his hand,  
both he who helps will stumble,  
and he who is helped will fall,  
and they will all perish together.
- 4 For the LORD has spoken to me thus:  
"As the lion and the young lion roaring  
over his prey when a multitude of  
shepherds is called out against him,  
will not be afraid of their voices,  
or disturbed by their noise,

"Binds up", "heals" – 1:5,6; Deut 32:39; Ps 107:20; 147:3; Jer 33:6.

30:27-33 Description of a terrible time for "all nations" (v 28), a time when God's wrath will be poured out in a very striking manner. The words "fire" and "anger" appear several times.

30:27 "Name of the LORD comes" – a manifestation of God Himself. At this event the attribute of God most clearly revealed is His burning holiness, His flaming anger against sin (Heb 12:29).

30:28 "Breath" – 11:4; Ex 15:9,10; 2 Sam 22:16; 2 Thess 2:8.

"Sieve of destruction" – suggests something will remain of the nations.

30:29 "You" – Israel.

"Have a song" – because of deliverance and the just punishment of wickedness (Rev 19:1-4).

30:30 "Voice" – Ps 29:3,4; 68:32,33. Voice could here be connected with Rev 19:15 – the sharp sword coming out of Christ's mouth is the word of God He speaks.

"Fire" – 2 Thess 1:7.

"Hailstones" – Rev 16:17-21.

30:31 Here Assyria probably represents all

of God's (and Israel's) enemies, as Moab seems to do in 25:10, and Edom in 34:5.

30:32 Verse 29. "Tambourines and harps" – compare Ex 15:20,21; 1 Sam 18:6.

30:33 "Tophet" – note at Jer 7:31. Here it probably symbolizes the lake of fire (Rev 19:20).

"The king" – probably refers to the world-wide ruler at the end-time, the antichrist, the "beast" of Revelation chapter 13.

"Breath of the LORD" – this speaks of God's holy wrath. Hell is a place where the fiery anger of God burns against those He judges deserving of it.

31:1 Note at 30:1,2; Jer 17:5.

31:2 See what some leaders in Judah thought about God's wisdom in 29:15,16.

"His words" – Num 23:19.

31:3 30:3,5,7. "His hand" – 5:25; 9:12,17,21; 10:4.

31:4,5 37:35,36 (in the past); Zech 14:2-4 (in the future).

"Like birds" – compare Matt 23:37.

"Passing overhead" – similar words were used concerning Israel in Egypt (Ex 12:13,23).



so the LORD of hosts will come down  
to fight for Mount Zion, and for its hill.

5 Like birds flying, so the LORD of hosts  
will defend Jerusalem,  
and defending *it* will also deliver *it*,  
and passing overhead will preserve *it*.

6 "Turn to *the One from* whom the children of  
Israel have deeply revolted. 7 For in that day  
every man will throw away his silver idols and his  
gold idols which your own hands have made for  
yourselves, as a sin.

8 "Then the Assyrian will fall by a sword  
not of man,  
and a sword not of *mortal* man will devour him;  
but he will flee from the sword,  
and his young men will become  
forced labourers.

9 And from fear he will cross over to his  
stronghold,  
and his princes will be afraid of the  
banner," says the LORD,  
whose fire *is* in Zion,  
and whose furnace *is* in Jerusalem.

**32** See, a king will reign in righteousness,  
and princes will rule with justice.

2 And a man will be like a hiding place  
from the wind,  
and a shelter from the storm,  
like rivers of water in a dry place,

**31:6** "Turn" – Jer 3:12,14; Ezek 33:11; Hos 14:1,2.  
"Revolted" – 1:2,5; etc.

**31:7** See 2:20; 30:22. This did not happen when God saved Jerusalem from the Assyrian army. So this event must refer to some time after that.

"In that day" – see 2:11; 24:1; etc.

**31:8** See 37:36. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.

**31:9** "Stronghold" – their great city Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC, about a hundred years after this prophecy.

"Furnace" – Jerusalem was the center of God's activities against the nations, the place from which His holy anger blazed forth.

**32:1-5** Suddenly again Christ's kingdom on earth is in view (2:1-4; 4:2-6; 9:7; 11:1-16; 24:23).

**32:2** "A man" – probably refers to the king of v 1 and very likely both words signify the only true God-man, Christ Jesus. The use of "man" here suggests His incarnation (7:14; 9:6,7; John 14:1,14).

"Shelter" – 25:4. Could any but Christ be shelter, refuge and shadow to His people? (Ps 2:12; 91:2; Heb 6:18). Or like streams of water? (John 4:13,14; 7:37,39).

**32:3** See 29:18; 35:5,6. Compare 6:9,10.

**32:4** In that day a great change will appear in people both in body and mind.

like the shadow of a great rock in a  
weary land.

3 And the eyes of those who see will not be dim,  
and the ears of those who hear will listen.

4 And the heart of the rash will  
understand knowledge,  
and the tongue of the stammerers will  
be ready to speak plainly.

5 The fool will no longer be called noble,  
or the villain said *to be* generous.

6 For the fool speaks foolishness,  
and his heart is at work on evil to  
practice ungodliness,  
and to speak error against the LORD,  
to keep the hungry unsatisfied,  
and to withhold water from the thirsty.

7 The villain's methods also *are* evil.  
He devises wicked schemes to destroy  
the poor with lying words,  
even when the needy speaks what is right.

8 But the noble man devises noble things,  
and by noble things he will stand.

9 Rise up, you women who are at ease!  
Hear my voice, you careless daughters.  
Give ear to my words.

10 You will be troubled many days and years,  
you careless women;  
for the grape harvest will fail,  
the gathering will not come.

11 Tremble, you women who are at ease!

"Understand" – 11:9; 29:24; 41:20; 60:16; Jer 31:33,34.

**32:5** In the Bible "fool" often refers to those who lack moral and spiritual sense, not necessarily to those who are unintelligent. Note at Ps 14:1; Prov 1:7. In those days many such "fools" and "villains" were highly regarded by others. Nor is it any different now. In Christ's coming kingdom this lack of discernment, this high regard for "fools" will vanish.

**32:6** As good a description of the "fool" as any in the Bible. He speaks foolishly (see 29:15,16; Ps 14:1). He thinks foolishly. He acts foolishly, and is foolish also in what he does not do (compare Matt 25:31-33,41-46).

**32:7** The scoundrel is even more foolish, if possible, than the fool. He vainly imagines he can behave as he does in God's world and escape God's judgment.

**32:8** Just as the fool and scoundrel, the noble man is revealed by his plans and actions (Matt 7:16-20; etc).

"Stand" – Ps 15:5; 16:8; 55:22.

**32:9** See 3:16-26.

**32:10** This probably refers to the invasion of the armies of Assyria in 701 B.C. For a time they controlled the countryside around Jerusalem and took or destroyed what they wanted.

**32:11-13** A warning that there would be

- Be troubled, you careless ones!  
Strip yourselves, and make yourselves bare,  
and tie *sackcloth* on *your* waists!
- 12 Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine!
- 13 On the land of my people thorns *and* briars will come up;  
yes, on all the happy homes *in* the city of joy.
- 14 Because the palaces will be forsaken,  
the populous city abandoned.  
The forts and towers will become permanent dens,  
the delight of wild donkeys,  
a pasture for flocks,
- 15 Until the Spirit is poured on us from on high,  
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,  
and the fruitful field is counted as a forest.
- 16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,  
and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.
- 17 And the work of righteousness will be peace,  
and the effect of righteousness  
quietness and assurance forever.
- 18 And my people will live in a peaceful dwelling place, and in secure houses,  
and in quiet resting places;
- 19 Though hail comes down on the forest,  
and the city be laid completely low.
- 20 Blessed *are* you who sow beside all waters,  
who send out freely the feet of the ox  
and the donkey.

**33** Woe to you who plunder,  
though you *were* not plundered,  
and who deal treacherously,  
though they did not deal

- treacherously with you!  
When you stop plundering,  
you will be plundered,  
*and* when you finish dealing treacherously,  
they will deal treacherously with you.
- 2 O LORD, be gracious to us.  
We have waited for you.  
Be their arm every morning,  
and our salvation in the time of trouble.
- 3 At the noise of the tumult the people flee.  
When you rise up the nations scatter.
- 4 And your plunder will be gathered *like*  
caterpillars gather;  
*men* will rush onto it like locusts rushing about.
- 5 The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high.  
He has filled Zion with justice and  
righteousness.
- 6 And wisdom and knowledge will be the  
stability of your times,  
*and the* strength of salvation;  
the fear of the LORD *is* his treasure.
- 7 See, their valiant ones will cry outside;  
the ambassadors of peace will weep bitterly.
- 8 The highways are deserted, men have  
stopped travelling.  
He has broken the covenant;  
he has despised the cities,  
he regards no man.
- 9 The earth mourns *and* languishes.  
Lebanon is ashamed *and* withers.  
Sharon is like a wilderness,  
and Bashan and Carmel shake off *their* fruits.
- 10 "Now I will rise", says the LORD,

great cause for mourning and weeping.

**32:13** "City of joy" – 5:11,12,22; 22:12,13.

**32:14-20** This seems to look far beyond anything that happened at the time of the Assyrian invasion. None of the events described here occurred then.

**32:14** The Assyrian invasion was a warning of what would one day happen.

**32:15** "The Spirit" – 44:3; Ezek 37:9-14; Joel 2:28-32.

**32:16** Verse 1; 9:7; 11:4.

**32:17** Ps 85:10; 119:165; Rom 5:1; etc. Peace on earth, peace of mind, and in the heart quietness and confidence toward God – these things do not, and cannot, result from man's schemes and efforts.

**32:18** Hardly true of Israel from that day to this. But it will be fulfilled eventually (vs 1,2).

**32:19,20** Compare Ps 46:1-30.

"City" – 24:10,12; 25:2; 26:5.

"Blessed" – notes at Ps 1:1-3; 119:1. Here prosperity, security and enjoyment are in view. "Sow" – Ps 126:5,6.

**33:1** This verse probably refers to Assyria (10:5-7). But the words of this verse would be suitable for many other treacherous,

destroying powers (see 21:1,2; 24:16,17; Dan 8:23-25).

"They will deal treacherously with you" – another example of reaping what is sown (see Jer 30:16; etc).

**33:2** A general prayer suitable for the people then, or for any now facing troubles and distress.

"Arm" – God Himself is the strength of His people (Ps 18:1; 19:14; 27:1).

"Salvation" – God Himself is the salvation of His people 12:2; Ex 15:2; Ps 35:3; 62:2).

**33:3,4** See 30:30,31; Num 10:35; Ps 46:6; 68:1,32,33.

"Nations" – more than the Assyrians seem in view here.

**33:5** "Righteousness" – 1:21; 32:1,16.

**33:6** Observe here what God considers riches – the fear of the Lord. See notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:1-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**33:7-9** Describes conditions during an enemy invasion, possibly the one by the Assyrians, possibly the Babylonian one.

**33:10-14** God rises in judgment against the

- "Now I will be exalted.  
Now I will lift up myself.  
11 You will conceive chaff,  
you will give birth to straw.  
Your breath will devour you *like* fire.  
12 And the people will be burned to lime.  
They will be burned in fire *like*  
thorns cut up.  
13 You *who are* far off, hear what I have done;  
and you *who are* near, acknowledge my might."  
14 The sinners in Zion are afraid.  
Fear has gripped the ungodly.  
Who among us can dwell with the  
devouring fire?  
Who among us can dwell with  
everlasting burnings?  
15 He who conducts himself righteously  
and speaks uprightly,  
he who despises the gain of extortion,  
who shakes out his hands,  
*refusing* to take bribes,  
who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed,  
and shuts his eyes from seeing evil,  
16 He will dwell on high.  
His place of defense *will be* the fortress  
of the rocks.  
Food will be given him.  
His water *will be* sure.  
17 Your eyes will see the King in his beauty;

- they will see the land of far distances.  
18 Your heart will ponder on the *former* terror:  
"Where *is* the scribe?  
Where *is* the receiver?  
Where *is the* one who counted the towers?"  
19 You will not see a fierce people,  
a people of obscure speech,  
unintelligible,  
of a stammering tongue *that you can*  
not understand.  
20 Look at Zion,  
the city of our festivals.  
Your eyes will see Jerusalem,  
a quiet habitation,  
a tent *that* will not be taken down.  
Not one of its stakes will ever be removed,  
nor will any of its ropes be broken.  
21 But there the majestic LORD *will be*  
for us a place of broad rivers  
*and* streams,  
in which no galley with oars will move,  
no mighty ship will pass.  
22 For the LORD *is* our judge;  
the LORD *is* our lawgiver;  
the LORD *is* our King. He will save us.  
23 Your rigging is loosened;  
they could not strengthen their mast,  
they could not spread the sail.  
Then the prey of great plunder is

"sinners in Zion." In the Assyrian invasion Jerusalem was saved, so this probably refers to another time, possibly to the destruction of the city at the hands of the Babylonians. Or perhaps to the end of this age (Zech 14:2,3).

**33:12** "Burned" – 1:31; 9:18,19; 30:27.  
**33:13** See 1:2; 34:1.

**33:14** "Sinners" – 1:27,28; 3:8-11; 5:18,19.

"Everlasting burnings" – those sinners seeing some of God's flaming judgments against themselves and probably hearing some of Isaiah's words (see v 12), say this. In the light of Heb 12:29 it is a question all may well ask.

**33:15,16** This seems to be the answer to the questions of v 14. Only those who are righteous before God can dwell with the God of fiery holiness who hates all unrighteousness. Compare Ps 15:1-5; 24:3-6. God fits all true believers to dwell in His holy presence (Eph 1:3-6; 5:25-27; etc.).

**33:17-24** Looks forward to the kingdom of Christ. Certainly it is practically impossible to see in the past the fulfillment of some of the expressions in this passage – for example, v 20. Jerusalem has rarely known peace from Isaiah's day to ours, and has been pulled down more than once. Verse 24 will not be fulfilled as long as conditions in this world continue as they have since

Adam fell into sin.

**33:17** "The king in his beauty" – what king could this be other than the great King from heaven seen in other places in Isaiah (6:5; 9:6,7; 11:1-9; 24:23; 32:1)?

"Land of far distances" – or it could be translated "the distant land" – 9:3; 14:2; 26:15; 54:2,3.

**33:18,19** The leaders of the invading armies.

"Tongue" – 28:11.

**33:20** "Not be taken down", etc – if we let this verse have its full meaning, we will not think these prophecies have already been fulfilled.

**33:22** Here we see four things the Lord is to His people:

Judge – 2:4; 11:4; John 5:22,23; Acts 10:42

Lawgiver – 2:3; 51:4; Jam 4:12

King – v 17; 9:7; 24:23; 32:1

Saviour – 19:20; 25:9; 45:22.

**33:23** "Your" – probably refers to enemy forces which are compared to a ship unable to conquer Jerusalem. In the previous verse Jerusalem's people expressed confidence that God would save them. He does so by defeating the enemy's "ship."

"Plunder" – verse 4; Ezek 39:9,10. When God defeats the enemy coming against Jerusalem, plunder will be so abundant and so easily obtained that even the

divided; the lame take the prey.

24 And the inhabitant will not say,  
"I am sick."

The people who live there *will be*  
forgiven *their* iniquity.

**34** Come near, you nations, to hear;  
and listen, you people.

Let the earth hear,  
and all that is in it,  
the world, and all things that come out of it.

2 For the anger of the LORD *is* upon all nations,  
and *his* fury upon all their armies.

He has utterly destroyed them,  
he has delivered them to the slaughter.

3 And their slain will be thrown out,  
and their stench will rise from their corpses,  
and the mountains will be drenched  
with their blood.

4 And all the *starry* host of heaven will  
be dissolved,  
and the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll,  
and all their host will fall,  
as the leaf falls from the vine,  
and as a falling *fruit* from the fig tree.

5 "For my sword will be drenched in the heavens.  
See, it will come down on Edom for judgment,  
and on the people *whom* I *have put*  
*under a curse*."

6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood,  
it is covered with fat, and with the  
blood of lambs and goats,  
with the fat of the kidneys of rams;  
for the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah,  
and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

7 And the wild oxen will fall with them,  
and the young bulls with the strong bulls;  
and their land will be soaked with blood,  
and their dust saturated with fat.

8 For *it is* the day of the LORD's vengeance,  
*and* the year of retribution for the  
cause of Zion.

9 And its streams will be turned into pitch,  
and its dust into sulfur,  
and its land will become burning pitch.

10 It will not be quenched night or day;  
its smoke will go up forever.  
From generation to generation it will lie waste.  
No one will pass through it forever and ever.

11 But the cormorant and the bittern  
will possess it,  
and the owl and the raven will dwell in it.  
And he will stretch out over it the  
measuring line of chaos and the  
plumb line of emptiness.

12 They will call its nobles to the kingdom,  
but no one *will be* there,  
and all its princes will be nothing.

13 And thorns will come up in its palaces,  
nettles and brambles in its fortresses,  
and it will be a habitation of jackals,  
*and* a home for owls.

14 And desert animals will meet with the hyenas,  
and the wild goat will bleat to its companion.  
The screech owl also will rest there,  
and find for itself a place of rest.

15 There the great owl will make its nest,  
and lay *eggs*, and hatch *them*,  
and gather *its young* in its shadow.  
There the vultures will also be  
gathered, each one with its mate.

16 "Search the book of the LORD, and read.  
Not one of these will fail,  
not one will lack its mate;  
for my mouth has commanded it,  
and his Spirit will gather them.

17 And he has cast the lot for them,

lame will be able to get a portion without difficulty.

**33:24** "Sick" – this looks to the time of  
verses 17,20,21; 11:1-9; 65:20-25.

"Forgiven" – 43:25; 53:5,6; Jer 31:34;  
33:8; Micah 7:18-20; Rom 11:26,27.

**34:1** See 1:2; 33:13; Ps 49:1.

**34:2** "All nations" – this looks beyond any  
invasion of Judah by Assyrians or  
Babylonians. The words of v 4 indicate the  
"Day of the LORD", the time of the outpour-  
ing of God's wrath on the whole world at the  
end of this age. Compare Matt 24:29,30;  
Rev 6:12-16. Note on day of the Lord at  
26:20,21; 30:27-30; 66:14-16; etc.

"Fury" – Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**34:3** See 63:3-6; Ezek 38:22; 39:11,12;  
Rev 14:17-20; 19:17-21.

**34:4** See 13:10,13; Joel 2:31; Matt  
24:29,30; Rev 6:12-14.

**34:5** "Edom" – Jer 49:7-22; Ezek 25:12-14;

35:1-15; Amos 1:11,12; Obadiah. Here  
Edom is named as one of the "all nations"  
of v 2. Perhaps much of the slaughter of  
that future great battle will take place in the  
territory once known as Edom. See 63:1-6.  
**34:6** "Sword of the Lord" – Deut 32:41,42;  
Jer 12:12; 47:6; Ezek 21:5.

"Bozrah" – a city in Edom (Idumea).

**34:8** "Vengeance" – 1:24; 35:4; 47:3;  
61:2; 63:4; Deut 32:3; Jer 51:56;  
Rom 12:9; Rev 16:5,6; 19:2.

**34:9-15** For similar descriptions about other  
places see 13:20-22; Jer 50:39,40; 51:37.  
"Cormorant. . . bittern" – it is not clear  
what birds are indicated by the Hebrew words.

**34:16** "Book" – the written record of the  
prophecies just given.

"These" – the animals and birds of  
vs 13-15.

**34:17** There is no promise concerning the  
restoration of Edom as there is about Moab

and his hand has divided it for them by  
a measuring line.  
They will possess it forever,  
from generation to generation they  
will dwell in it."

**35** The wilderness and the dry lands  
will be glad for them,  
and the desert will rejoice and blossom  
like the rose.

2 It will blossom abundantly, and rejoice  
with gladness and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,  
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon.  
They will see the glory of the LORD,  
and the splendour of our God.

3 Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make the feeble knees firm.

4 Say to those *who are* of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong. Do not fear.  
See, your God will come *with* vengeance,

and Ammon in the same general area (Jer 48:47; 49:6).

**35:1-10** Compare this chapter with similar passages in Isaiah such as 11:6-9; 32:15,16; 49:8-11; 51:3. There is a strong difference of opinion about how this chapter should be interpreted. Some think it is a description of spiritual conditions in the land of Judah after the Babylonian exile. Some think it describes New Testament times. Some think it describes this whole age of grace. Some think it refers to the immediate aftermath of Christ's second coming, the beginning of a thousand-year reign on earth. Some think it refers to conditions in the new heaven and earth. Some seem sure that this chapter has nothing to do with the literal land and people of Israel. Others are convinced it has to do with them alone.

The author of these notes believes that this chapter describes events after the second coming of Christ, probably refers to the Millennium, and that Israel is concerned in it. This belief is based on the evidence available. I also believe that some of the figurative expressions here may suggest, to some extent, what happens anytime in any era, in human hearts when Christ does His work of salvation in them.

I believe also that, though it is important to interpret prophecy correctly, it is more important to live holy lives of love to God and man (1 Cor 13:2), and that it does not make us better people if we choose to believe a particular one of the above interpretations, or worse people if we reject it and believe another one. While trying to understand the meaning of the prophet's words about the future let us try to learn also spiritual, practical lessons that will help us in the present to live as God wants us to live.

**35:1** "Wilderness", "desert" – the language of this chapter seems to indicate the land

God *with* retribution.

He will come and save you.

5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

6 Then the lame *man* will leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the dumb will sing;  
for water will gush out in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert.

7 And the parched ground will become a pool,  
and the thirsty land springs of water.  
In the habitat of jackals, where each lay,  
*there will be* grass with reeds and rushes.

8 And a highway will be there, and a road,  
and it will be called The Way of Holiness.  
The unclean will not pass over it;  
but it *will be* for those who travel on it.  
Fools will not wander *onto* it.

9 No lion will be there, nor will *any*  
ravenous beast go up on it;  
it will not be found there.  
But the redeemed will walk *there*,

of Israel. What will happen there is in complete contrast to what will happen in Edom as seen in the preceding chapter.

"Blossom" – 27:6; 51:3.

**35:2** "Glory", "splendour" – 4:5; 6:3; 59:19 (to be seen when v 1 is fulfilled).

**35:3,4** Heb 12:12 – the meaning is, endure what must be endured, be strong and courageous in times of trouble and danger.  
"God will come" – could refer to the coming of Christ, the incarnation of God.

"Vengeance" – notes at Num 31:2; Ps 94:1. If the coming of Christ is meant it must be His second coming, not His first. At His first coming He came to save men's lives, not destroy them, and He took vengeance on no one. At His second coming He will take vengeance (2 Thess 1:5-10).

**35:5** "Eyes", "ears" – 29:18; 32:3; 33:24; 42:7.

**35:6,7** "Tongue" – 32:4.

"Streams" – 30:25; 41:18; 43:19.

**35:8** "Highway" – 11:16; 19:23; 40:3; 49:11; 57:14; 62:10.

"There" – the land of Judah.

"Way of Holiness" – this "highway" will be only for the holy, only for the redeemed (v 9). This seems to indicate that the time spoken of is that time when the nation of Israel will be turned back to God and enter the narrow way that leads to life (Matt 7:14; Rom 11:26,27). The people will be holy and walk in holiness. See 4:3; 62:12; Zech 14:20,21. This is in great contrast to Israel's spiritual condition in the days Isaiah wrote this (1:2-4), and the present condition of that people.

"Fools will not wander onto it" – only the foolishness of wickedness will keep anyone from that way, not lack of intelligence. This phrase could also be translated "the foolish will not go astray on it."

**35:9** "Beast" – 11:6-9; 65:25.



10 And the ransomed of the LORD will return,  
and come to Zion with songs,  
and everlasting joy on their heads.  
They will obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

**36** Now it happened in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, *that* Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them. 2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem to King Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool by the highway to the Fuller's Field. 3 Then Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder, came out to him.

4 And Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, What *is* this hope you are trusting in? 5 I say *that you speak of having* counsel and strength for war, but *they are only* empty words. Now in whom are you trusting, that you rebel against me? 6 Look, you are trusting in the staff of that broken reed, on Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand, and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. 7 But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God', *is he* not the one whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar'? 8 Now therefore I urge you to give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, if you be able on your part to put riders on them! 9 How then can you turn away the face of one of the least of the captains of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? 10 And have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'"

11 Then Eliakim and Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in the Syrian language, for we understand *it*, and do not speak to us in the Jews' language in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

12 But Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me *only* to your master and to you to speak these words? *Has he* not sent me to the men who sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and

drink their own urine with you?"

13 Then Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, "Listen to the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. 14 Thus says the king, Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to rescue you. 15 And do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, 'The LORD will surely rescue us. This city will not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria.'"

16 "Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria, Make *peace* with me *by* a present, and come out to me, and every one of you eat from his vine, and each from his fig tree, and everyone drink the water from his own cistern, 17 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

18 "*Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, 'The LORD will deliver us.' Has any of the gods of the nations rescued his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 19 Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they rescued Samaria from my hand? 20 Among all the gods of these lands, which *are those* who have rescued their land from my hand, that the LORD should rescue Jerusalem from my hand?"

21 But they kept silent and did not answer him a word, for the king's command said "Do not answer him."

22 Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, *who* was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

**37** And it came about, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he tore his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2 And he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders among the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3 And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy; for the children have come to the *point of* birth, and *there is* not strength to deliver them. 4 It may be the LORD your God will hear the words of

**35:10** "Will flee away" – it is always and ever true that the way to joy and singing in God's presence is the way of holiness and redemption (25:8; Ps 126:1-3; Rev 7:17; 14:1-5; 21:4).

**36:1** Chapters 36-39 are about the invasion of Judah by the armies of Assyria in the days of King Hezekiah. Except for 38:9-20 all of this material is found in 2 Kings chapters

18-20, usually in the very same words Isaiah used. See notes there on these important historical events. The growing power of Assyria, its invasion of Judah and its destruction are themes often seen in Isaiah (7:17,18; 8:4-8; 10:5-12; 14:24,25; 30:31; 31:8). Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.

**36:2-22** 2 Kings 18:17-37.

**37:1-38** Notes at 2 Kings 19:1-37.

Rabshakeh, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to insult the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left."

5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6 And Isaiah said to them, "You must say this to your master: Thus says the LORD, 'Do not be afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7 See, I will put a spirit in him, and he will hear a rumour and return to his own land. And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'"

8 So Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah; for he had heard that he had departed from Lachish.

9 And he heard *someone* say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to make war with you." And when he heard *it*, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 "You must tell Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, 'Do not let your God, in whom you trust, deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.'" 11 Look, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, completely destroying them. And will you be rescued? 12 Have the gods of the nations rescued those which my fathers have destroyed, *like* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezech, and the children of Eden who *were* in Telassar? 13 Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?"

14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it. And Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it out before the LORD. 15 And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying, 16 "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, who dwells *between* the cherubim, you *are* God of all the kingdoms of the earth, you alone. You have made heaven and earth. 17 Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear. Open your eyes, O LORD, and see. And hear all the words of Sennacherib, who has sent *messengers* to insult the living God.

18 "It is a truth, LORD, that the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, 19 and have thrown their gods into the fire; for they *were* not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they have destroyed them. 20 Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you *are* the LORD, you only."

21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent *word* to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Because you have prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, 22 this *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

The virgin daughter of Zion despises you, *and* laughs you to scorn. The daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head at you.

23 Whom have you insulted and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised *your* voice, and raised your eyes on high?

Against the Holy One of Israel.

24 Through your servants you have insulted the Lord, and have said, 'By my many chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and I will cut down its tall cedars, *and* its choice fir trees.

And I will enter the height of its border, and the forest of its Carmel.

25 I have dug and drunk water, and with the sole of my feet I have dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.'

26 "Have you not heard? Long ago I made it. From ancient times, I formed *this plan*. Now I have brought it to pass, that you should be for causing the crash of fortified cities *into* heaps of ruins.

27 Therefore their inhabitants *had* little power. They were dismayed and put to shame. They were *like* the grass of the field and the green plant, *like* the grass on housetops and *vegetation* scorched before it has grown up.

28 But I know your dwelling place, and your going out, and your coming in, and your rage against me.

29 Because your rage against me and your uproar have come up into my ears, therefore I will put my hook in your nose, and my bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back the way by which you came.

30 "And this *will be* a sign to you, *Hezekiah*:

You will eat *this* year what grows by itself; and the second year what springs up from it; and in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.

31 And the remnant that has escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

32 For out of Jerusalem a remnant will go out,  
and those who escape from mount Zion.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

33 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the  
king of Assyria:

He will not come into this city,  
nor shoot an arrow there,  
nor come before it with shields,  
nor cast up a siege mound against it.

34 He will return by the way that he came,  
and will not come into this city,  
says the LORD.

35 For I will defend this city to save it  
for my own sake,  
and for the sake of my servant David."

36 Then the angel of the LORD went out, and  
struck a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the  
camp of the Assyrians. And when *people* arose  
early in the morning, see, there *were* all *the* dead  
bodies. 37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria with-  
drew and went away. And he returned and lived at  
Nineveh. 38 And it so happened that as he was  
worshipping in the house of his god Nisroch, his  
sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down  
with the sword; and they escaped into the land of  
Armenia. And his son Esarhaddon reigned in his  
place.

**38** In those days Hezekiah was sick to *the*  
*point* of death. And Isaiah the prophet,  
the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him,  
"Thus says the LORD: Set your house in order, for  
you will die, and not live."

2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the  
wall, and prayed to the LORD, 3 and said, "Re-  
member now, O LORD, I beg you, how I have  
walked before you in truth and with a perfect heart,  
and have done *what is* good in your sight." And  
Hezekiah wept bitterly.

**38:1-8** Notes at 2 Kings 20:1-11.

**38:9** The only writing we have of good King  
Hezekiah. It is similar to some of the  
psalms. The psalms were known to  
Hezekiah (2 Chron 29:30). He may have  
begun this writing while he was ill and  
completed it after his recovery.

**38:10** At the time of his illness Hezekiah  
was only 39 years old. He may have  
compared this brief span of life with the  
usual span mentioned in Ps 90:10.

"Grave" (also v 18) – in Hebrew "Sheol"  
– note at Gen 37:35.

**38:11** He believed he was going to die and  
had no hope of recovery.

**38:12** "Tent" – compare 2 Cor 5:1,4.

"Loom" – he regards his life as a cloth or  
garment made by a weaver, the weaver  
being himself. He thinks God is cutting him

4 Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah,  
saying, 5 "Go and tell Hezekiah, Thus says the  
LORD, the God of your father David: I have heard  
your prayer, I have seen your tears. Now I will add  
fifteen years to your days. 6 And I will deliver you  
and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria,  
and I will defend this city. 7 And this *will be* a sign  
to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this  
thing that he has spoken: 8 See, I will bring back  
the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down  
on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So  
the sun went back ten degrees that it had gone  
down on the sundial.

9 The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when  
he became sick and recovered from his sickness:

10 "I said, In the prime of my life  
I will go to the gates of the grave;  
I am deprived of the remainder of my years.

11 I said, I will not see the LORD,  
the LORD in the land of the living.  
I will no longer see man among the  
inhabitants of the world.

12 My dwelling is gone, removed from me  
like a shepherd's tent.  
I have rolled up my life like a weaver.  
He will cut me off from the loom.  
From day to night you make an end of me.

13 I considered *this* until morning.  
Like a lion, he will break all my bones.  
From day to night you make an end of me.

14 I chatter like a crane *or* a swallow;  
I mourn like a dove.  
My eyes fail *from looking* upward.  
O LORD, I am oppressed.

Undertake for me.

15 What will I say?  
He has both spoken to me, and he  
himself has done *it*.  
I will walk carefully all my years in  
the bitterness of my soul.

from the loom before he has had a full span  
of years to finish the work.

"Day to night" – may mean very sud-  
denly, in the space of a single day.

**38:13** "Lion" – compare Job 10:16; Lam  
3:10,11; Hos 13:7.

"Bones" – Job 16:12; Ps 6:2; 32:3;  
51:8; Lam 3:4.

**38:14,15** All he can do is make mournful  
sounds, look upward and cry to God. But  
this was enough. God heard him. God saw  
his tears. God answered him (v 5). See  
Ex 2:23,24; Ps 34:4,6,18; 103:13,14;  
147:3. His mourning is turned to praise  
(v 15). He wonders how he can best  
express his great gratitude to God.

"Carefully" – or softly, quietly or humbly.  
He resolved not to be as he was before this  
experience. Yet see 2 Chron 32:24-26.

- 16 O Lord, by these *things men* live,  
and in all these *things is* the life of my spirit.  
So you restore me, and cause me to live.
- 17 See, for peace I had great bitterness;  
but in love for my soul you have  
*delivered it* from the pit of corruption,  
for you have cast all my sins behind your back.
- 18 For the grave cannot thank you,  
death cannot praise you.  
Those who go down into the pit cannot  
hope for your truth.
- 19 The living, the living praise you,  
as I *do* this day.  
The father will make known your truth  
to the children.
- 20 The LORD *was willing* to save me.  
Therefore we will sing my songs for  
stringed instruments all the days  
of our life in the house of the LORD."
- 21 For Isaiah had said, "Let them take a lump of  
figs and apply *it* as a poultice on the boil, and he  
will recover."
- 22 And Hezekiah had said, "What *is* the sign  
that I will go up to the house of the LORD?"

**39** At that time Merodach-Baladan, the son of  
Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and  
a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had  
been sick and had recovered. 2 And Hezekiah was  
pleased with them, and showed them his treasure  
house, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and  
the precious oil, and the whole of his armory, and  
all that was found among his treasures. There was

**38:16** Man's life is entirely dependent on  
God's will and merciful activity (Deut 32:39;  
1 Sam 2:6; Job 12:10; Dan 5:23; Acts  
17:28). And so Ps 103:1-5.

**38:17** "Pit" – Ps 28:1; 30:3; 40:2;  
55:23; 69:15; 86:13; Prov 1:12. Here  
probably means the grave or the unseen  
realm of the dead.

"Back" – Hezekiah was aware of his sins,  
probably thought his disease and near death  
were a punishment for them. But he came  
to know that God had put them out of His  
sight. Compare 43:25; Ps 103:12; Mic  
7:18-19; 1 John 1:9.

**38:18,19** Ps 6:5; 30:9; 88:10,11;  
115:17,18. In Hezekiah's time little was  
known about the state of men after death.

"To the children" – Deut 6:7; 11:18,19;  
Ps 78:2-4; 145:4; Jer 32:19.

**38:20** Ps 33:1-3; 51:14,15; 63:3,4;  
116:12-14.

**38:21,22** Note at 2 Kings 20:7,8.

**39:1-8** Note at 2 Kings 20:12-19.

**39:8** This concludes the first part of Isaiah.  
Chapters 1-35 were spoken and written  
before the Assyrian invasion of Judah, and  
much of what is in those chapters was  
written with that event in view. Chapters 36

nothing in his house or in his whole realm that  
Hezekiah did not show them.

3 Then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah,  
and said to him, "What did these men say? And  
where did they come from to you?"

And Hezekiah said, "They came to me from a far  
country, from Babylon."

4 Then he said, "What did they see in your  
house?"

And Hezekiah answered, "They saw everything  
that *is* in my house. There is nothing among my  
treasures that I did not show them."

5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word  
of the LORD of hosts: 6 'See, the days are coming  
when all that *is* in your house and what your  
fathers stored up until this day, will be carried to  
Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD.  
7 And they will take away some of your sons who  
will issue from you, whom you will beget, and they  
will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of  
Babylon.'"

8 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of  
the LORD which you have spoken *is* good." He also  
said, "For there will be peace and truth in my days."

**40** "Comfort, comfort my people",  
says your God.

- 2 "Speak compassionately to Jerusalem  
and cry out to her,  
that her warfare is ended,  
that her wickedness is pardoned;  
for she has received from the LORD's  
hand double for all her sins."

and 37 record the crushing defeat suffered  
by the Assyrians at Jerusalem. In chapter  
39 a new threat appears – the invasion of  
Judah by the Babylonians. They would not  
fail as the Assyrians had, but would capture  
Jerusalem and take the people into exile.  
Chapters 40-66 were written with that in view.  
Isaiah prophesies of the fall of Babylon, of  
the return of the people from there, and of  
the future glory of Jerusalem. And he brings  
before us very clearly the one on whom the  
eternal salvation of Jews and other peoples  
depends – the Messiah, the Lord Jesus  
Christ.

**40:1,2** In 12:1-3 there is a picture of  
comfort received "in that day", after the  
appearance of the "Branch" (the Messiah –  
11:1) to reign. The picture here is similar.  
The reason there and here for comfort is  
salvation experienced and God's anger  
turned away. True comfort from God is  
connected with forgiveness, and the experi-  
ence of His presence. Jerusalem – the literal  
city, the capital of Israel, here represents  
that nation. For the eventual restoration of  
Jerusalem see also 1:26; 2:1-4; etc.

"Double" – Jerusalem's troubles and  
punishments are often set before us in

- 3 The voice of one who cries out in the wilderness:  
"Prepare the way of the LORD;  
make straight in the desert a highway  
for our God.
- 4 Every valley will be exalted,  
and every mountain and hill will be  
made low,  
and the crooked *places* will be made straight,  
and the rough places a plain;
- 5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,  
and all flesh will see *it* together;  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*."
- 6 The voice said, "Cry out!"  
And he said, "What shall I cry out?"  
"All flesh *is* grass, and all its beauty *is*  
like the flower of the field.
- 7 The grass withers, the flower fades,

- because the Spirit of the LORD blows on it.  
Surely the people *are* grass.
- 8 The grass withers, the flower fades,  
but the word of our God will stand forever."
- 9 O Zion, *you* who bring good tidings,  
go up onto the high mountain!  
O Jerusalem, *you* who bring good tidings,  
lift up your voice with strength!  
Lift *it* up; do not be afraid.  
Say to the cities of Judah,  
"See your God!"
- 10 See, the Lord God will come with strong *hand*,  
and his arm will rule for him.  
See, his reward *is* with him,  
and his wage accompanies him.
- 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd.  
He will gather the lambs with his arm,

Isaiah. See 3:1-26; 5:3-6,25-30; 7:18-25; 8:5-8; 22:1-13; 29:1-4. No city in the world has experienced the repeated disasters, troubles, and destruction that Jerusalem has. There was more to come when Isaiah wrote. And there is still more to come at the end of this age – Zech 12:2,3; 14:2; Matt 24:15-22. But the day is coming when its troubles will be over. **40:3** "The voice of one who cries out in the wilderness: Prepare" – or it could be translated "The voice of one who cries out: 'in the wilderness prepare.'" This depends on where we put the punctuation (in Hebrew there were no punctuation marks). This voice is the first of three mentioned in this chapter (vs 3,6,9). This one is the voice of John the Baptist (Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23) who came 700 years after Isaiah wrote. John announced the one through whom alone true and lasting comfort could come to Jerusalem, or to us (Mark 1:7,8; John 1:29). Observe that when John prepared the way for the Lord Jesus he was preparing the way for God Himself.

"Prepare" – it was common in that day (as it is in our day in many countries) to repair the highway when a ruler visited a city. John was preparing the way for the King from heaven.

**40:4** See 26:7; 49:11. The meaning seems to be that all hindrances to the coming of the King should be removed, and full preparation made for welcoming Him.

"Crooked" – or "rugged."

"Straight" – or "smooth."

**40:5** The glory of the LORD was seen by some people in some measure in the Old Testament (Ex 33:18-23; 40:34; Deut 5:24). Here there is promise of a further revelation of God's glory, and all people will see it. To some extent this was fulfilled at Christ's first coming (John 1:1,14; 11:40; 2 Cor 4:6; Heb 1:3). There will be a further display of God's glory in Christ at His second coming (Matt 16:27; 24:30; 25:31; Rev 1:7). Then indeed every eye will see it.

Verse 3 looks forward to Christ's first coming. This verse looks to the end of this age for its complete fulfillment.

**40:6-8** "Cry out" – cause men to know the truth which follows. There is a contrast in these verses with both the preceding and following verses. God's great glory is mentioned in v 5. Man's glory is a frail, temporary thing, hardly worthy of the name of glory. And man is weak and withering as grass, totally incapable of bringing salvation and comfort to Jerusalem (or to anyone). So God must come to do what man cannot.

"Grass" – 37:27; 51:12; Jam 1:10; 1 Pet 1:24,25.

**40:7** "Blows" – Ps 103:15,16.

**40:8** "Withers. . . fades" – the whole of mankind's history and all its pride, pomp, and glory are in these words. But as generations come and go there is something that never will pass away – God's Word (Ps 119:89; Matt 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Pet 1:25). The truth of the Bible is the only permanent thing in all the world for a person to hold on to.

**40:9-11** "Good tidings" – in the context this good news includes verses 2,5,8 and the verses of this section (9-11).

**40:9** "Mountain" – this is a symbolic way of saying that God wants all the land to hear. Voices could be better heard from the tops of hills.

"Do not be afraid" – do not hesitate because of the fear of man, or the grandness and solemnity of the message.

"See your God" – 25:9. Compare the question of Ps 42:3,10. The coming of Christ means the coming of God.

**40:10** These words indicate that the manifestation of God in v 9 is at the second coming of Christ (62:11; Matt 16:27; 25:19-21,31-34; Rev 22:12).

**40:11** "Shepherd" – true of God's people in every age, at all times (Gen 48:15; Ps 23:1; 28:9; 78:52; 80:1; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:12-16,23,31; John 10:11-16).



- and carry *them* in his bosom,  
and will gently lead those who have young.
- 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,  
and marked off the heavens with the span,  
and calculated the dust of the earth  
in a measuring basket,  
and weighed the mountains in scales,  
and the hills in a balance?
- 13 Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,  
or *as* his counsellor has taught him?
- 14 With whom did he take counsel,  
and *who* instructed him,  
and taught him in the path of judgment,  
and taught him knowledge,  
and showed him the way of understanding?
- 15 Look, the nations *are* like a drop in a bucket,  
and are regarded like fine dust on the balance.  
See, he lifts up the islands like a very little thing.
- 16 And Lebanon *is* not sufficient for burning,  
nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.
- 17 All nations before him *are* as nothing,  
and they are regarded by him as  
less than nothing, and emptiness.
- 18 To whom then will you liken God?  
Or with what likeness will you compare him?
- 19 *As for* an idol, the craftsman puts it in a mold,  
and the goldsmith overlays it with gold,  
and molds silver chains.

- 20 He who *is* too poor for *such* an offering  
chooses a tree *that* will not rot.  
He seeks for himself a skillful  
craftsman to prepare a carved image  
*that* will not totter.
- 21 Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the  
foundations of the earth?
- 22 He *it is* who sits above the circle of the earth,  
and its inhabitants *are*  
like grasshoppers.  
He stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.
- 23 He brings the princes to nothing.  
He makes the judges of the earth worthless.
- 24 Even as they are planted,  
even as they are sown,  
even as their stock takes root in the ground,  
he merely blows on them, and they wither,  
and the whirlwind takes them away  
like stubble.
- 25 "To whom then will you compare me,  
or who is my equal?"  
says the Holy One.
- 26 Lift up your eyes on high, and see who  
has created these *things*,  
who brings out their *starry* host by number.  
He calls them all by name, by the  
greatness of his might.

"Arm", "bosom" – indicates their weakness, His tenderness and love. How dear believers are to Him! The context here suggests that this will be true of the nation Israel at the second coming of Christ.

**40:12-31** A description of the greatness of the God whose coming is seen in verses 3,9 and 10. It is exceedingly important for us to know the one true God and to have right views of His character and attributes, His power and glory. This chapter is of great value when used for this purpose.

**40:12** Job 28:25,26; 38:3-5,8-11,18; Prov 30:4.

**40:13** Rom 11:34-36; 1 Cor 2:16.

**40:14** Job 12:13; 21:22; 36:22; Col 2:3; Isa 55:9.

**40:15** See 2:22; Ps 62:9. As a tiny speck of dust is to a giant, as an atom is to a scientist, so is the whole physical earth to God. It is so light in God's hand that it seems to have no weight at all.

**40:16** Lebanon had large forests of cedar trees. If one made a fire of them all and placed all its animals together on the fire as a sacrifice to God it would not show God's worth or greatness. Compare 1 Kings 8:27; Ps 50:8-15; Acts 17:24,25.

**40:17** God has no difficulty whatever in controlling nations, peoples and events. For there is nothing on earth that has the power

to overturn His plans. All through Isaiah we see God using the nations for His purpose, and destroying them according to His plans, as if they had no strength or size at all – vs 23,24.

**40:18-20** In the light of this supreme greatness of God we see the folly of trying to make an image to represent Him. God has His own image to represent Him – see 2 Cor 4:4; Heb 1:3.

**40:21** Verse 28; Ps 19:1; Acts 14:15-17; Rom 1:18-23.

**40:22** "Circle" – Job 22:14; Prov 8:27.  
"Stretches out" – 42:5; 44:24; 51:13; Ps 104:2.

**40:23,24** Verse 6-8,17; 34:12; 41:2; 43:13; Prov 21:1; Dan 4:35.

**40:25** Verse 18.

**40:26** God wants men to look thoughtfully at His creation and let it speak to them. This could change their whole outlook on life and start them on the road to God. Ps 19:1-4. God is saying to all of us, Look at the stars! Think!

"By number" – scientists estimate that there are at least 10,000 crores (100 billions) of stars in our own galaxy, though only a very few thousands are visible to the naked eye. And there are a great many crores of galaxies. God made them all, knows them all, sustains them all.

Because *he is* strong in power not one fails.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak,  
O Israel, "My way is hidden from  
the LORD, and my just claim is  
passed over by my God?"

28 Have you not known, have you not  
heard *that* the everlasting God, the LORD,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth,  
neither grows faint nor becomes weary?  
*There is* no searching of his understanding.

29 He gives power to the faint,  
and he increases the strength of *those*  
*who have* no might.

30 Even the youths will grow faint and  
be weary,  
and the young men will utterly fall,

31 But those who wait on the LORD will  
renew *their* strength.  
They will rise up with wings like eagles.  
They will run and not be weary,  
*and* they will walk and not faint.

**41** "Keep silence before me, O coastlands,  
and let the people renew *their* strength.  
Let them come near, then let them speak.  
Let us come near together for judgment.

**40:27** This verse brings us back to the condition of the Jews in Isaiah's time. Some thought they could do as they pleased without God taking notice (29:15), others were skeptical and unbelieving about God's concern for them (49:14).

**40:28** "The LORD [Jehovah]" – if no one else knew this the Jews should have. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the only God that exists (43:10; 44:8; 45:5; Ps 18:31).

"Weary" – He who is capable of what is described in v 26 will not be worn out in accomplishing His work in the earth and in His people.

"No searching of his understanding" – 55:8,9; Ps 147:5; Rom 11:33.

**40:29** "Strength" – Ex 15:2; Ps 18:1,32-36; 68:35; 73:26; 119:28; 2 Cor 12:9,10; Eph 1:18,19; 3:16.

**40:30** The young also come under the description of verses 6-8. Also of Gen 8:21. And in spiritual matters youth will not have strength for the long race, the hard battle of life, unless they find it in God.

**40:31** For a holy walk in a fallen world, for strength to finish our earthly course with joy, for ability to serve God acceptably, we need a strength not our own. We must learn to exchange our poor and frail strength for the strength God gives (v 28,29). See in Eph 1:18-21 what great strength is available to believers in Christ). This can be done only by looking to Him in faith. We must learn to trust God to do for us and in us what we cannot do for and in ourselves. Another word to the weary, young or old, is Matt 11:28-30.

2 Who raised up *one* from the east,  
*and in* righteousness called him to his feet?  
*Who* gave the nations to him,  
and made *him* rule over kings?  
He made *them* like dust with his sword,  
*and* like driven stubble with his bow.

3 He pursued them *and* moved on safely  
by a way *that* he had not gone with  
his feet.

4 Who has done this and accomplished *it*,  
calling the generations from the beginning?  
I, the LORD, the first and with the  
last. I *am* he.

5 The coastlands saw *it*, and feared;  
the ends of the earth were afraid,  
drew near and arrived.

6 Each of them helped his neighbour;  
and *each one* said to his brother,  
"Be courageous!"

7 So the craftsman encouraged the goldsmith,  
*and* he who smooths *with* the hammer  
*urges on* him who struck the anvil,  
saying, 'It *is* ready for soldering.'  
And he fastened it with nails,  
*so that* it would not totter.

8 "But you, Israel, *are* my servant,

**41:1** Jehovah speaks here. The meaning seems to be, let other peoples, wherever they are with their many idols, many gods, consider what God says in chapter 40; let them get their strength as they can and come and dispute with God, if they will.

"Coastlands" – or "islands."

**41:2** "East" – east of Israel. The person from the east is Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians (v 25; 44:28; 45:1,13; 46:11). The above translation, though differing from the KJV here, seems better to express the meaning of the Hebrew.

"To his feet" – God can and does use the rulers of the earth for His righteous purpose, whether those rulers are righteous or not, or whether they are aware of it or not. God's purpose, according to this verse, was to make Cyrus the ruler of many nations. God used Cyrus also to send His people back to Israel from the Babylonian exile (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3-5). The second phrase may also be translated "whom victory meets at every step."

**41:3** In 546 BC Cyrus conquered all the lands from Persia to the west coast of present-day Turkey.

**41:4** Behind the victories of Cyrus stood the one who controls events on earth.

**41:5-7** At the approach of Cyrus and his armies the nations in his path would be greatly agitated. They would try to encourage one another. They would turn to their gods and idols for help. But all their efforts would come to nothing.

**41:8** "My servant" – the nation of Israel is contrasted with all other nations. Individuals in

Jacob whom I have chosen,  
the offspring of my friend Abraham.  
9 I have taken *you* from the ends of the earth,  
and called *you* from its farthest parts,  
and said to you, *You are* my servant.  
I have chosen you,  
and not rejected you.  
10 Do not fear, for I *am* with you.  
Do not be dismayed, for I *am* your God.  
I will strengthen you;  
yes, I will help you;  
yes, I will uphold you with my  
righteous right hand.  
11 See, all those who raged against you  
will be put to shame and disgraced.  
They will be as nothing;  
and those who strive with you will perish.  
12 You will seek those who fought with you,  
and will not find them;  
those who wage war against you will be  
as nothing,  
and as a non-existent thing.  
13 For I, the LORD your God, will hold  
your right hand, saying to you,  
Do not fear; I will help you.  
14 Do not fear, you worm Jacob,  
you men of Israel.  
I will help you, says the LORD,  
and your redeemer,  
the Holy One of Israel.

15 See, I will make you a new sharp  
threshing instrument having teeth.  
You will thresh the mountains,  
and beat *them* small,  
and will make the hills like chaff.  
16 You will winnow them,  
and the wind will carry them away,  
and the whirlwind will scatter them;  
and you will rejoice in the LORD,  
and glory in the Holy One of Israel.  
17 *"When* the poor and needy seek water,  
and *there is* none,  
and their tongue fails for thirst,  
I the LORD will hear them;  
*I*, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.  
18 I will open rivers in high places,  
and fountains in the middle of the valleys.  
I will make the desert a pool of water,  
and the dry land springs of water.  
19 In the wilderness I will plant the cedar,  
the acacia tree, and the myrtle,  
and the olive tree.  
In the desert I will set the fir tree, and  
the pine, and the box tree together,  
20 That they may see, and know,  
and consider, and understand together,  
that the hand of the LORD has done this,  
and the Holy One of Israel has created it.  
21 *"Present your case, says the LORD.*

other nations might be servants of God, but only one nation was God's servant, His chosen one (42:19; 43:10; 44:1,21; 45:4; Ps 135:4; 136:22; Deut 4:20; 7:7,8; 14:1,2).  
"My friend Abraham" – 2 Chron 20:7; Jam 2:23.  
41:9 "Not rejected you" – this would be a great comfort (40:1) to them when they would be exiled in Babylon (39:5-7) and when Cyrus was beginning his conquests.  
41:10 "Do not fear" – this command was not given to the wicked and unbelieving in Israel, but to the true Israel in the midst of a rebellious nation (compare Rom 2:28,29; 9:6). God never tells the wicked and unbelieving not to fear. Believers are not to fear because they belong to God. In the not distant future the Babylonians would come and destroy Jerusalem and the temple and take the people into exile because of the sin of the nation. But God would be with them to preserve them. Of course, there is truth here that all who trust God may apply to themselves.  
"With you" – 43:2; Josh 1:9; Ps 27:1; 56:4; Matt 1:23; Rom 8:31; Heb 13:5,6.  
"Strengthen you" – 40:29-31.  
41:11,12 No people, no nation will be able to destroy Israel. All who try will be destroyed themselves (17:14; 29:5-8; 60:12; etc.). Compare Matt 16:18.  
41:13 Verse 10.

41:14 "Worm" – God did not chose that people because they were beautiful and strong and noble and worthy. They were the opposite of all those things, as indeed we all are.  
"Redeemer" – notes at Ps 78:35; Matt 20:28.  
41:15,16 See what God can do with a "worm." This is more than God merely protecting His people. In His hand (vs 10,13) they will become a powerful instrument to crush their enemies. This is an example of the weak finding their strength in God (40:31). And Israel will acknowledge this and glory in God, not in themselves. As for the time of fulfillment compare 11:12-14; 14:2; 49:23. As far as the record shows, this has not been fulfilled up to the present.  
41:17,18 See 30:19; 35:7; 43:20; 44:3; Ps 42:1,2; John 7:37-39.  
41:19 See 32:15,16; 35:1,2; 51:3; 55:13. God literally transforms good land to deserts and deserts to good land (Ps 107:33-35). And He may again do so in Judah. But sometimes in Scripture descriptions of physical changes suggest spiritual changes also.  
41:20 God's work in Israel (whether in the land or in the people or both) will instruct other peoples of the world.  
41:21-23 These verses look back to v 1. The Lord says that if the nations think their

- Bring forth your strong *arguments*,  
says the King of Jacob.
- 22 Let them bring *them* forth,  
and show us what will happen.  
Let them tell what the former things *were*,  
that we may consider them, and know  
their outcome,  
or declare to us things to come.
- 23 Tell the things that are coming hereafter,  
that we may know that you *are* gods.  
Yes, do good or do evil, that we may  
be dismayed and see *it* together.
- 24 Look, you *are* nothing,  
and your work is nothing.  
*He who* chooses you chooses an abomination.
- 25 "I have raised up *one* from the north,  
and he will come.  
From the rising of the sun he will call  
on my name.  
And he will come against princes as  
*against* mortar,  
and as the potter tramples the clay.
- 26 Who has declared from the beginning,  
that we may know?  
And beforehand, that we may say,  
*He is* righteous?  
Certainly *there is* no one who tells;

idols are useful and can explain the past or predict the future let them come forward and prove it (see also 43:9). God knows they will be unable to do so. In 42:9 and 46:10 God says He does what idols cannot do. Here in vs 23,24 it seems God is speaking directly to the people's idols.

41:24 "Nothing" – v 29; 37:19; 1 Sam 12:21; Ps 115:3-8; Jer 10:5,8,14; 1 Cor 8:4.

"Abomination" – Jer 16:18; Ezek 7:20; Mal 2:11.

41:25 Verse 2. Cyrus was from the east of Israel, but conquered much territory to the north. It was the God of Israel who stirred him up to come, and the idols of the nations in his path could neither do such a thing, nor predict it, nor prevent it.

"Call on my name" – Cyrus used Jehovah's name (in Ezra 1:1-4) and prayed to Him, but he, at least at first, had no experiential knowledge of Him (45:4,5).

41:26,27 Who foretold the rise of Cyrus to power? None of the idols of the nations. Only the true God, the God of Israel.

"Good tidings" – Cyrus was the messenger of good tidings (Ezra 1:1-4).

41:28,29 "Them" – the idolaters of verses 21-23.

42:1-9 "Servant" (v 1) – He is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. See also 49:1-7; 50:4-10; 52:13-15. In 41:8 the nation Israel is called God's servant. But Israel was a poor servant, weak, sinful, and rebellious, and could not fulfill God's plan for themselves and for the earth

certainly *there is* no one who declares;  
certainly *there is* no one who hears your words.

- 27 *I was* the first to say to Zion,  
'Look, see them!'  
And I will give to Jerusalem one who  
brings good tidings.
- 28 For I looked among them,  
and *there was* no man,  
and *there was* no counsellor who,  
when I asked them, could answer a word.
- 29 See they *are* all worthless.  
Their works *are* nothing.  
Their cast metal images *are* wind and  
confusion.

- 42 "See my servant, whom I uphold;  
my chosen *one*, in *whom* my soul delights.  
I have put my Spirit on him.  
He will bring justice to the Gentiles.
- 2 He will not shout or raise his voice  
or cause *it* to be heard in the street.
- 3 A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not put out.  
He will faithfully bring forth justice.
- 4 He will not fail or be discouraged  
until he has established justice on the earth;  
and the islands will wait for his law.

(vs 18-25). So God speaks of another servant who is of Israel and who would be strong, holy, and obedient, and who would completely fulfill God's plans. This servant is Christ. The Lord Jesus is called a servant in Acts 3:26; Rom 15:8. He said that He had come to serve, not to be served (Matt 20:28; Luke 22:27). Verses 1-4 are applied to Christ in Matt 12:18-21.

42:1 "Delights" – Matt 3:17.

"My Spirit" – 11:2; 61:1; Mark 1:9,10; John 1:32-34; 3:34.

"Justice" – 9:7; 11:4; 16:5; 32:1,16; 33:5.

"Gentiles" – non-Jewish peoples.

42:2 When He comes He will not fulfill God's purpose by noisy endeavor, but quietly and gently.

42:3 "Bruised reed" signifies weakness from some sort of blow or crushing. A smoldering wick speaks of a spark which could be fanned to a flame. The meaning is that the coming Messiah would deal mildly, compassionately with people in fulfilling God's purpose. Christ's way is not the way of hardness and violence. He came to save men not destroy them – John 10:10.

42:4 Nothing will turn Him from doing God's work and finishing it. This work has to do with the whole earth (v 1) and not with the one small nation of Israel. Establishing justice on earth indicates removal of injustice, a just and righteous kingdom that will take in the whole world (v 1; 11:3-5). This is something God's people long to see, have never seen, but will one day see.

5 Thus says God the LORD, he who  
 created the heavens and  
 stretched them out,  
 he who spread out the earth and what  
 comes out of it,  
 he who gives breath to the people on it,  
 and spirit to those who walk on it:  
 6 I the LORD have called you in righteousness,  
 and I will take your hand and keep you,  
 and give you as a covenant for the people,  
 as a light for the Gentiles,  
 7 To open blind eyes, to bring prisoners  
 out of prison,  
 and those who sit in darkness out of  
 the dungeon.  
 8 I *am* the LORD.  
 That *is* my name, and I will not give  
 my glory to another,  
 nor my praise to carved images.  
 9 "See, the former things have taken place,  
 and I declare new things.  
 Before they spring forth I tell you about them."  
 10 Sing to the LORD a new song,  
 and his praise from the end of the earth,  
 you who go down to the sea, and all  
 that is in it,  
 the islands and their inhabitants.  
 11 Let the wilderness and its cities,  
 the villages *where* Kedar lives,

raise *their voice*;  
 let the inhabitants of the rock sing,  
 let them shout from the top of the mountains.  
 12 Let them give glory to the LORD,  
 and declare his praise in the islands.  
 13 The LORD will go forth like a mighty man,  
 he will stir up *his* zeal like a warrior.  
 He will cry out, yes, roar *a battle cry*.  
 He will prevail against his enemies.  
 14 "I have kept silent for a long time.  
 I have been still *and* restrained myself.  
 Now I will cry out like a woman in childbirth;  
 I will both gasp and pant.  
 15 I will lay waste mountains and hills,  
 and dry up all their plants,  
 and I will make the rivers islands,  
 and dry up the pools.  
 16 And I will bring the blind by a way  
 they did not know.  
 I will lead them in paths they  
 have not known.  
 I will make darkness light before them,  
 and crooked places straight.  
 These things I will do for them,  
 and not forsake them.  
 17 Those who trust in carved images will  
 be turned back,  
 they will be put to great shame,  
 those who say to cast metal images,  
 'You *are* our gods.'

"Islands" – or "coastlands."  
 "Wait for his law" – 2:2-4.  
 42:5 Gen 1:1; 2:7; Ps 102:25; Isa 40:22; Acts 17:24.  
 42:6 "You" – the Messiah of vs 1-4.  
 "As a covenant" (49:8) – in other words,  
 he will be one who makes a covenant, one  
 who mediates between God and man on the  
 basis of a covenant, one who embodies a  
 covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Matt 26:27,28;  
 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15).  
 "Light" – 49:6; Luke 2:32; John 8:12.  
 42:7 29:18; 32:3; 35:5; 49:9; 61:1.  
 42:8 See 48:11. "The LORD" (Jehovah) –  
 note at Ex 3:14,15. Fallen men continually  
 refuse to give God the glory due to Him,  
 and instead would put something else in  
 God's place and praise it (compare Rom  
 1:22,23). And they may like to think that  
 when praising idols or other gods that they  
 are praising God. But the true God will have  
 no part in it. He will not share anything with  
 dumb idols. Men must choose either Him  
 or them. They cannot have both (2:6-9;  
 Ps 78:58,59; 106:36-41; Jer 7:9-11;  
 8:19; Ezek 5:11; 6:6; 14:7,8. Note  
 also at 1 Kings 18:21).  
 42:9 God, who knows the future as well as  
 He does the past has no difficulty declaring  
 things to come (46:10). Much of what we  
 have in Isaiah and the other prophets is just  
 that (2 Pet 1:21). This is part of the glory

He will not share with idols (41:21-23).  
 42:10 "To the LORD" – not to idols who could  
 never do anything like what we read of in  
 vs 1-7.  
 "A new song" – indicates a new revela-  
 tion of His character or a new truth or work  
 or a new understanding (33:3; 40:3; Ps  
 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Rev 5:9; 14:3).  
 Here all parts of the world are urged to sing  
 because God's work through His servant in  
 verses 1-7 will affect all of them (v 4).  
 42:11 "Kedar", "the rock [in Hebrew 'Sela']"  
 – 21:16; 16:1. Places in Edom and Arabia.  
 42:13 "Warrior" – Ex 14:14; 15:3; Ps  
 18:34,35; 144:1; Eph 6:10-13.  
 "Enemies" – 66:14; Deut 32:40-41. All  
 who oppose God. There are many such both  
 in the unseen world of spirits and among  
 men on earth.  
 42:14 God speaks in the language of men  
 to convey something to men He could not  
 otherwise convey. The picture is of anger  
 suppressed for a long time until at last it  
 painfully bursts forth (compare 63:3,4).  
 42:15 As punishment on His enemies  
 (compare 24:1,4).  
 42:16 "Blind" – in v 9 God tells us who they  
 are. He means the nation of Israel.  
 "Light" – 9:2.  
 "Not forsake them" – 41:9; 49:14-16;  
 54:8.  
 42:17 Ps 97:7; Jer 10:14-16.



- 18 Hear, you deaf; and look, you blind,  
that you may see.
- 19 Who *is* blind, but my servant?  
or deaf, as my messenger *whom* I sent?  
Who *is* blind as *he who is* at peace,  
and blind as the LORD's servant?
- 20 You see many things,  
but you do not observe *them*;  
*his* ears are open, but he does not hear."
- 21 The LORD was well pleased for his  
righteousness' sake to make the law  
great and honourable.
- 22 But this *is* a people robbed and plundered.  
All *of them* are snared in holes,  
and hidden in prisons.  
They are for prey, and no one rescues *them*;  
for plunder, and no one says, "Restore."
- 23 Who among you will give ear to this?  
Who will hear and pay attention for  
the time to come?
- 24 Who gave Jacob as plunder,  
and Israel to the robbers?  
Was it not the LORD, the one against  
whom we have sinned?  
For they would not walk in his ways,  
nor were they obedient to his law.
- 25 Therefore he has poured on him the  
fury of his anger,  
and the strength of battle;  
and it has set him on fire all around,

but he did not understand;  
and it burned him, yet he did not lay  
*it* to heart.

- 43** But now thus says the LORD who  
created you, O Jacob,  
and he who formed you, O Israel:  
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you,  
I have called *you* by your name;  
*you are* mine.
- 2 When you pass through the waters,  
I *will be* with you;  
and through the rivers, they will not  
flow over you.  
When you walk through the fire,  
you will not be scorched,  
nor will the flame burn you.
- 3 For I *am* the LORD your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.  
I gave Egypt *as* your ransom,  
Ethiopia and Seba for you.
- 4 Since you were precious in my sight,  
you have been honoured,  
and I have loved you.  
Therefore I will give men for you,  
and people for your life.
- 5 Fear not, for I *am* with you.  
I will bring your descendants from the east,  
and gather you from the west.
- 6 I will say to the north, 'Give *them* up',  
and to the south, 'Do not restrain *them*.'

**42:18,19** Israel was the blind servant (6:10; 29:9,10; 41:8,9; 43:8). The time will come when the nation will have its eyes opened (29:18; 35:5).

**42:20** See 43:8; Jer 5:21; 6:10.

**42:21** "Law" – the Hebrew word also means teaching or instruction (Ps 138:2; 2 Cor 3:7).

**42:22** The Assyrians had taken the northern kingdom into exile, and plundered Judah (8:7,8; 10:5,6). The Babylonians later took Judah into captivity (39:5-7).

**42:23** "Give ear to this" – not just the preceding verse, but all God's message to them in these chapters.

**42:24** See 47:5,6; Jer 1:14-16.

**42:25** See 5:25; 9:12,17,21; 51:17; 2 Kings 22:13.

"Did not understand" – 1:3-9; 6:10-12. If God chastises us for our sins let us try to understand what He is doing and why He is doing it (Lam 3:39,40).

**43:1** This chapter states God's relationship to the people of Israel. He is their Creator (v 1), their Redeemer (v 1,14), their Saviour (v 3), their King (v 15), and Protector (v 2), one who loves them (v 4), and who will restore them (vs 5,6), and forgive them (v 25). Israel failed to do what they should have done (vs 22-24), and God had to punish them for it (v 28), but He would not fail (v 25). The people of

Israel on their side of the relationship were to be witnesses (vs 10,12) and glorifiers of God (v 21). There is sweet truth in this chapter for all who trust the God of Israel as their God and Savior.

"Formed you" – the nation of Israel was a special creation of God for a special purpose (vs 7,21).

"Fear not" – note at 41:10.

"Redeemed you" – note at Ps 78:35.

**43:2** This truth was sometimes fulfilled literally in the times of God's people (Ex 14:21,22; Josh 3:14-17; Dan 3:19-27), but was more often fulfilled in spiritual trials and rescue from spiritual dangers (Ps 66:10-12). If God is with us nothing can ever really harm us (though in our lack of understanding we may think some things do).

**43:3,4** When love is deep and strong it is willing to give up anything for the sake of the loved one. God's love is like that. We are not told in what sense He gave Egypt and the other nations and peoples for Israel. Some commentators have suggested that it was in allowing Persia to conquer them in return for that nation's kindness to Israel (Ezra 1:1-4).

**43:5-7** "Fear not" – captivity and exile were certain (39:5-7), but release and return were equally certain (11:11,12; 27:12,13; 49:22; 56:8).

- Bring my sons from afar,  
and my daughters from the ends of the earth,
- 7 Each one who is called by my name;  
for I have created him for my glory;  
I have formed him, yes, I have made him."
- 8 Bring out the blind people who have eyes,  
and the deaf who have ears.
- 9 Let all the nations be gathered together,  
and let the people be assembled.  
Who among them can declare this,  
and tell us former things?  
Let them bring forth their witnesses,  
that they may be vindicated;  
or let them listen, and say,  
"*It is the truth.*"
- 10 "You *are* my witnesses, says the LORD,  
and my servant whom I have chosen,  
that you may know and believe me,  
and understand that I *am* he.  
Before me there was no God formed,  
nor will there be after me.
- 11 I, yes, I *am* the LORD, and besides me  
*there is* no saviour.
- 12 I have declared, and have saved,  
and I have proclaimed,  
when *there was* no foreign *god* among you.  
Therefore you *are* my witnesses,  
says the LORD, that I *am* God.
- 13 Yes, from the *first* day I *am* he,  
and *there is* no one who can deliver  
out of my hand.  
I will work, and who can reverse it?"

43:8 See 42:16,18,19.

43:9-13 God speaks here as if the earth were a courtroom and truth were on trial. Compare 41:1,21-23. The point of dispute is this question: Who has shown proof that He is the true God by foretelling the future and controlling events? Idolatrous nations are asked to bring forth their witness (v 9). God's witness was His people Israel (v 10,12). It was through them that God wanted the truth established, the truth that He alone is God and that there can be no other. In the same way Christ's people in this New Testament age are to be His witnesses (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 2:32; 4:20; 5:32; 13:31).

43:10,11 See 44:6,8; 45:5,6,18,21,22; 46:9. Since Jehovah the God of Israel is the one true God, those who worship other gods are not worshipping God at all (42:8). And those who hope for salvation from some other god will hope in vain, for Jehovah is the only salvation (compare Acts 4:12).

43:12 "Among you" – the most grievous sin of Israel, the one above all others that marred their witness to the true God, was idolatry (Deut 32:15-17).

43:13 See 14:27; Deut 32:39; Job 9:12;

- 14 Thus says the LORD, your redeemer,  
the Holy One of Israel:  
"For your sake I will send to Babylon,  
and bring down all their nobles, and  
the Chaldeans, whose shout *is* in  
the ships.

15 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One,  
the Creator of Israel, your King.

- 16 Thus says the LORD, who makes a  
way in the sea,  
and a path in the mighty waters,  
17 Who brings out the chariot and horse,  
the army and the power.  
They will lie down together,  
they will not rise.  
They are extinguished,  
quenched like a wick.

18 "Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.

19 See, I will do a new thing.  
Now it will spring forth. Do you not know it?  
I will even make a way in the wilderness,  
*and* rivers in the desert.

20 The beast of the field will honour me,  
the jackals and the owls,  
because I give water in the wilderness,  
*and* rivers in the desert,  
for my people, my chosen, to drink.

21 This people I have formed for myself.  
They will show forth my praise.

22 "But you have not called on me, O Jacob,  
and you have been weary of me, O Israel.

4:35.

43:14 "For your sake" – another example of the truth of vs 3,4. The Chaldeans (Babylonians) who had made exiles of God's people would themselves flee from their enemies. In this way God freed His people from Babylon.

43:15 "Holy One" – see 1:4.  
"King" – 6:5; 41:21; 44:6; Deut 33:5; 1 Sam 8:7; Ps 2:4-6; 44:4.

43:16,17 Ex 14:21-28.

43:18-20 God is saying here that His power was not confined to past events, and His people need not dwell on the past as if God no longer could or would act on behalf of His people. Compare Phil 3:13,14.

43:19 "A new thing" – 42:9; Jer 16:14,15; 23:7,8; Rev 21:5.

"Desert" – 30:25; 35:7; 41:18.

43:21 A reason (similar to the one in v 10) why God created Israel as a nation. When Israel at its best (as in David's time) fulfilled this purpose it produced the book of Psalms. Now in this age declaring the praise of God is one of the chief responsibilities of the Church (1 Pet 2:9).

43:22-24 On the whole, Israel was a failure both as a witness and declarer of God's

- 23 You have not brought me the sheep for  
your burnt offerings,  
nor have you honoured me with your sacrifices.  
I have not burdened you with offerings,  
or wearied you with incense.
- 24 You have bought me no sweet cane  
with money,  
nor have you satisfied me with the fat  
of your sacrifices;  
but you have burdened me with your sins,  
you have wearied me with your evil deeds.
- 25 I, yes, *I am* the one who blots out your  
transgressions for my own sake,  
and will not remember your sins.
- 26 "Remind me –  
let us argue *the case* together.  
State your *position*, so that you may be  
vindicated.
- 27 Your first father sinned,  
and your teachers have transgressed  
against me.
- 28 Therefore I will profane the princes of  
the sanctuary,  
and give Jacob to the curse,  
and Israel to insults.

**44** "Yet listen now, O Jacob my servant,  
and Israel, whom I have chosen.

2 Thus says the LORD who made you  
and formed you from the womb,  
*who* will help you:

praise. They did not pray as they ought;  
their worship was half-hearted and displayed  
no love for God, no sense of the greatness  
and wonder of His calling them. In their  
history they either brought no offerings at  
all or sometimes brought their poorest things  
in an unacceptable way (1:11-17; 29:13;  
Amos 5:25,26; Mal 1:6-13).

**43:24** "Burdened", "wearied" – oh, what a  
burden, what a weariness Israel's sins (and  
ours) have been to God (Jer 44:22).  
Compare 53:5; Gen 6:5,6; Eph 4:30;  
John 1:29. Men's sins may be a pleasure  
to them, but to God they are pain and grief.

**43:25** "Blots out" – 40:2; 44:22; Jer 50:20.  
"My own sake" – God's love, God's glory  
are tied up with His people Israel. He  
cannot, will not let them be eternally  
destroyed because of their sins. They will  
yet completely fulfill v 21.

"Not remember your sins" – Jer 31:34;  
Heb 10:17.

**43:26** In vs 9-12 the world is like a  
courtroom for the nations. Here Israel is  
called to the courtroom, not as a witness  
but as a defendant. Compare 1:18.

**43:27** Both the father of the human race  
(Adam), and the father of the nation Israel  
(Abraham – 51:2) were sinners. Adam –  
Gen 3:6; Rom 5:12; Abraham – Gen

- Do not fear, O Jacob, my servant,  
and you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
- 3 For I will pour water on him who is thirsty,  
and floods on the dry ground.  
I will pour my Spirit on your descendants,  
and my blessing on your offspring;
- 4 And they will spring up among the grass,  
like willows by the water courses.
- 5 One will say, '*I am* the LORD's,'  
and another will call *himself* by  
the name of Jacob,  
and another will write *on* his hand,  
'The LORD's',  
and name *himself* by the name of Israel.
- 6 "Thus says the LORD the King of Israel  
and his redeemer, the LORD of hosts:  
*I am* the first, and *I am* the last,  
and besides me *there is* no God.
- 7 Then who *is* like me?  
*Let him* speak and declare it,  
and set it out in order before me,  
from the time I appointed the ancient people.  
And let them tell them the things that  
are coming, and will come.
- 8 Do not fear or be afraid.  
Have I not told you from that time  
and declared *it*?  
You *are* my witnesses.  
Is there a God besides me?  
Indeed, *there is* no *other* God.  
I do not know *any*.

12:10-19; 20:1-6,9. See also Rom 3:9,23.  
"Spokesmen" – or mediators or  
representatives – the leaders of the people.

**43:28** The truth of v 25 did not change God's  
mind about the necessity of chastising  
Israel for its sins. Forgiveness does not  
mean that the guilty will not have to endure  
some of the consequences of their sins.  
Note at Num 14:20-23.

**44:1** Verse 21; 41:8,9.

**44:2** See 41:10,13,14; 43:1,5.

"Jeshurun" – a symbolic name for Israel.  
It means "Upright one."

**44:3** "Water" – 30:25; 32:2; 35:6,7.

"Spirit" – it seems there will be an  
outpouring of God's Spirit on Israel at the  
end of this age, at the time of the day of  
the Lord (32:15,16; Joel 2:28-3:2; Ezek  
39:29; Zech 12:10-14). There was a partial  
fulfillment of this at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-  
21). Any individual in this age may receive  
the fullness of God's Spirit by going to Christ  
in faith (John 7:37-39).

**44:4,5** Here are some of the results in  
Israel of the outpouring of the Spirit.

**44:6** "King", "redeemer" – 41:21; 43:1,15.  
"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"Last" – 41:4; Rev 1:8,17; 2:8; 22:13.

**44:7** See 41:22,23,26; 43:9.

**44:8** "Witnesses" – 43:10,12.

- 9 All of those who make a carved image  
are nothing,  
and their precious things will not profit;  
and they *are* their own witnesses.  
They do not see or know, to their shame.
- 10 Who has formed a god, or cast a carved  
image *that is* useful for nothing?
- 11 See, all his companions will be put to shame.  
The workmen *are mere* men.  
Let them all be gathered together,  
let them stand up;  
yet they will be afraid *and* together will  
be put to shame.
- 12 The blacksmith works with the tongs  
in the coals,  
and shapes it with hammers and works  
it with the strength of his arms.  
Yes, he becomes hungry,  
and his strength fails;  
he does not drink water and becomes faint.
- 13 The craftsman stretches out *his*  
measuring line;  
he sketches one with a marker;  
he shapes it with planes, marks it out  
with a compass,  
and makes it like the figure of a man,  
according to the beauty of a man,  
that it may remain in a house.
- 14 He cuts down cedars for himself,  
and takes the cypress or the oak,  
which he secures for himself among  
the trees of the forest.  
He plants a pine and the rain makes *it* grow.
- 15 Then it will be for a man to burn;  
for he will take part of it and warm himself.  
Yes, he burns *it* and bakes bread;  
then he makes a god and worships *it*.  
He makes a carved image from it,

- and prostrates *himself* before it.
- 16 He burns part of it in the fire;  
with part of it he eats meat;  
he roasts meat, and is satisfied.  
Yes, he warms *himself*, and says,  
'Ah, I am warm, I have seen the fire.'
- 17 And with the rest of it he makes a god,  
his carved image.  
He falls down before it and worships *it*  
and prays to it, and says,  
'Deliver me, for you *are* my god.'
- 18 They have not known or understood,  
for he has shut their eyes,  
that they cannot see,  
*and* their hearts,  
that they cannot understand.
- 19 And no one considers in his heart,  
nor *is there* knowledge or  
understanding to say,  
'I have burned part of it in the fire,  
and I have baked bread on its coals.  
I have roasted meat and eaten *it* ;  
and will I make an abomination from  
the rest of it?  
Will I fall prostrate before a block of wood?'
- 20 He feeds on ashes.  
A deceived heart has turned him aside,  
so that he cannot rescue his soul,  
or say, '*Is this* in my right hand not a lie?'
- 21 "Remember these *things*,  
O Jacob and Israel,  
for *you* are my servant.  
I have formed you; you are my servant.  
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.
- 22 I have blotted out your transgressions  
like a thick cloud,  
and your sins like a cloud.

44:9-20 The folly of idolatry. See also 40:18-20.

44:9 "Nothing" – 37:19; Ps 115:3-8; 1 Cor 8:4.

"They do not see or know" – many otherwise intelligent and educated men defend idolatry. This is God's estimate of such men.

44:10,11 The makers of idols and gods are men, so what they make cannot be God, cannot in a true way represent God – v 20.

44:12 A piece of metal, no matter how well a craftsman may shape it, cannot represent the true God.

44:13-20 A tree made by God cannot be made into God.

44:15 "Worships it" – vs 15,17,19. We must worship God Himself, not the things God has made or that man can make (see Rom 1:21-25; John 4:24).

44:17 "Deliver me" – can that which a person has made from a block of wood hear him? See Ps 135:17. Even if it could hear

him could it save him? See Isa 45:20; 46:7; 47:15.

44:18-20 No one who worships idols has any spiritual wisdom. They become like their idols (Ps 115:8; 135:18).

44:19 "Abomination" – see again that idolatry is detestable to the true God.

44:20 "Ashes" – the idolater is devoted to something that is the opposite of spiritually nourishing.

"Deceived heart" – Jer 17:9.

"Lie" – 10:14; 51:17; Rom 1:25. An idol is a lie because it cannot do what its creators say it can do. Also because it completely misrepresents what the true God is like.

44:21 The people of Israel were to be a witness to the true God. It was absolutely essential that they understand and remember the above truth.

"Forgotten" – 49:15,16; Jer 31:20.

44:22 See 40:2; 43:25 – these verses seem to look forward to the cross of Christ. It was

Return to me, for I have redeemed you.”

23 Sing, O heavens!  
For the LORD has done it.  
Shout, you lower parts of the earth!  
Break out into singing, you mountains,  
you forest and every tree in it!  
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,  
and glorified himself in Israel.

24 Thus says the LORD, your redeemer,  
the one who formed you from the womb:  
“I *am* the LORD who made all *things*,  
who alone stretched out the heavens,  
who spread out the earth by myself,

25 Who frustrates the omens of the liars,  
and makes fools of diviners,  
who turns wise *men* backward and  
makes their knowledge foolishness,

26 Who confirms the word of his servant,  
and carries out the purpose of his  
messengers,  
who says to Jerusalem, ‘You will be inhabited’;  
and to the cities of Judah, ‘You will be built’;  
and I will raise up its ruined places’;

27 Who says to the deep, ‘Be dry!’  
and ‘I will dry up your rivers’;

28 who says of Cyrus, ‘*He is* my shepherd  
and will accomplish all my pleasure’;  
and saying to Jerusalem, ‘You will be built’;  
and to the temple, ‘Your foundation  
will be laid.’

**45** “Thus says the LORD to his anointed,  
to Cyrus, whose right hand I have

grasped,  
to subdue nations before him  
(and I will loosen the armour of kings,  
to open the double doors before him;  
and the gates will not be shut):

2 I will go before you,  
and make the rough places level.  
I will break the gates of bronze in pieces,  
and cut the bars of iron in two.

3 And I will give you the treasures of darkness,  
and hidden riches of secret places,  
that you may know that I, the LORD,  
who *call* you by your name,  
*am* the God of Israel.

4 For the sake of my servant Jacob and  
Israel my chosen,  
I have also called you by your name.  
I have named you, even though you  
have not known me.

5 I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.  
*There is* no God besides me.  
I girded you *with armour*, even though  
you have not known me,

6 So that from the rising of the sun and  
from the west they may know that  
*there is* no one besides me.  
I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.

7 “I form the light, and create darkness.  
I make peace, and create disaster.  
I the LORD do all these *things*.

8 Rain down, you heavens, from above,  
and let the skies pour down righteousness.  
Let the earth open up, and let them

there alone that God did away with the sins of  
all His people and made forgiveness possible.  
“Redeemed” – note at Ps 78:35.

**44:23** The forgiveness, the redemption of  
Israel brings great joy to God’s heart. He  
wants all nature to share this joy. And it will.  
See 35:1,2; 49:13; 55:12,13; Rom  
8:19-21; 11:12.

“Glorified” – 4:2; 40:5; 46:13; 49:3;  
55:5; 60:9,21; 61:3.

**44:24** “Stretched out” – 40:22; 51:13.

**44:25** “Liars” – false prophets or anyone  
who says he gets messages from God by  
other means than God has appointed. See  
Deut 13:1-4; 18:10-14,21,22; Jer 14:14.  
There will be many who like to think of  
themselves as prophets, and whom others  
regard as prophets, who are false. They  
may give signs that deceive many people  
(Matt 24:11,24). But God will show in His  
time and way who is true and who is false.

“Wise men” – note at 29:14. So much  
of what the world regards as wisdom is only  
ignorance in disguise. In good time God  
will fully reveal this also.

**44:26-28** “Servant”, “messengers” – the  
prophets of the Bible. God shows they are  
true prophets by fulfilling their words. God

here gives predictions through Isaiah. By  
fulfilling them He showed Isaiah was a true  
prophet. These verses look beyond the  
destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by  
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

**44:27** Ex 14:21,22; Jer 50:38; 51:36.

**44:28** “Cyrus” – Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3-5. The  
return of Judah’s exiles and the rebuilding  
of the temple meant that Jerusalem would  
be rebuilt and Judah occupied again.

“Shepherd” – God used Cyrus to help His  
people return to their land. Cyrus, called  
God’s servant and a shepherd, here seems,  
in this one regard, to be a picture or type of  
the Lord Jesus. Cyrus destroyed Babylon’s  
power and restored Israel to its homeland.

**45:1-7** A prophecy that God would enable Cyrus  
to conquer and plunder many lands, and cities.  
Through him God would bring disaster to some  
countries (such as Babylon), prosperity to others  
(Medes and Persians) – v 7. In doing this  
God had three purposes. He wanted Cyrus to  
know that the God of Israel was the one who  
was behind his victories (v 3); He wanted to  
raise up a helper for Israel (v 4); and He wanted  
men everywhere to know that He was the one  
true God (v 6).

**45:8** “Righteousness” – v 13; 41:2. Cyrus



- bring out salvation,  
and let righteousness spring up with *it*.  
I the LORD have created it.
- 9 Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker!  
*Let* a piece of pottery *quarrel* with  
earth's pieces of pottery.  
Will the clay say to the one who  
forms it, 'What are you making?'  
Or your handiwork say,  
'He has no hands?'
- 10 Woe to him who says to *his* father,  
'What have you begotten?'  
Or to the woman,  
'What have you given birth to?'
- 11 Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel and  
his Maker:  
"Do you question me about things to come  
concerning my sons?  
And will you command me concerning  
the work of my hands?"
- 12 I have made the earth,  
and created man on it.  
I, *with my own* hands,  
have stretched out the heavens,  
and I have given commands to all their  
*starry* host.
- 13 I have raised *Cyrus* up in righteousness,  
and I will direct all his ways.  
He will build my city, and he will let  
my captives go, not for price or reward,  
says the LORD of hosts."
- 14 Thus says the LORD:  
"The labour of Egypt, and merchandise  
of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans,  
men of stature,

will come over to you,  
and they will be yours.  
They will walk behind you.  
They will come over in chains,  
and they will fall down before you.  
They will plead with you, *saying*,  
'Surely God *is* in you, and no one else;  
*there is* no other God.'

15 Truly you *are* a God who hides yourself, O  
God of Israel, the Saviour. 16 They will be put to  
shame and disgraced, all of them; those *who are*  
makers of idols will go away in disgrace together.  
17 *But* Israel will be saved in the LORD with an  
everlasting salvation. You will not be put to shame  
or disgraced world without end. 18 For thus says  
the LORD who created the heavens, God himself  
who formed the earth and made it, who estab-  
lished it, who did not create it in vain, who formed  
it to be inhabited:

- "I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.  
19 I have not spoken in secret,  
in a dark place of the earth.  
I did not say to the offspring of Jacob,  
'Seek me in vain.'  
I, the LORD, speak righteousness;  
I declare things that are right.  
20 Assemble yourselves and come;  
draw near together, you *who have*  
escaped from the nations.  
Those who set up the wood of their  
carved image,  
and pray to a god *which* cannot save,  
have no knowledge.  
21 Speak and bring forward *your case*.  
Yes, let them take counsel together.

was an instrument in God's hand to fulfill  
His righteous purposes toward Israel.  
Through Cyrus He released Israel from  
captivity in Babylon.

**45:9-13** There are always men who will  
quarrel with God's ways. In those days some  
might have said, "Why should God use a  
godless nation like Babylon to punish  
Israel, and then use another godless nation  
like Persia to set Israel free?" Here is God's  
answer to man's impious and ignorant  
questioning. He is the maker of mankind  
and of Israel (vs 9,11). He is perfectly holy  
(v 11). He is the Creator of the starry  
universe (v 12). Obviously, He knows better  
than man (who is like a broken piece of  
pottery – v 9) what should be done and how  
to do it. See 29:16; Jer 18:5-9; Rom  
9:20,21.

**45:11** "And will you command me. . .?" –  
the KJV has "command ye me", but in the  
context (and in the light of the whole Bible)  
this meaning seems unlikely. Also the  
Hebrew verb here for "command" is not in

the form of the verb used to express a  
command (the imperative mood). It seems  
better to put this sentence (and the pre-  
ceding one) in the form of a question.

**45:13** "Cyrus" – in Hebrew "him."

**45:14** See 11:14-16; 14:1,2; 49:23;  
54:3; 60:11-14; Zech 14:16-19.

**45:15** God is always at work in the earth  
fulfilling His purposes, but it is all obscure  
and mysterious to men (55:8,9; Ps 139:6;  
145:3; Eccl 8:17; Rom 11:33). Especially  
He hides Himself from the sinful,  
disobedient and unbelieving – 1:15;  
57:17; 59:2; Deut 31:17; Hos 5:6,7.

**45:16** See 42:17; 44:9-11.

**45:17** "Saved" – Jer 23:6; Rom 11:26.

"Everlasting" – 54:8; Jer 33:16-26.

**45:18** See 40:21,22; Ps 19:1-4.

**45:19** God openly proclaimed His truth  
through His servants – 48:16; John 18:19-  
21. Truth has nothing to hide.

"I did not say. . . Seek me in vain" – Deut  
4:29; 2 Chron 15:2; Jer 29:12-14.

**45:20,21** "Nations" – 41:1,21,22; 43:9-13.

Who has declared this from ancient time?  
*Who* has been declaring it from that time?  
*Have* not I, the LORD?  
 And *there is* no other God besides me.  
 I *am* a just God and Saviour.  
*There is* no one besides me.

22 Look to me and be saved, all *you* ends  
 of the earth;  
 for I *am* God, and *there is* no other.

23 I have sworn by myself;  
 this word has gone out of my mouth *in*  
 righteousness, and will not return:  
 To every knee will bow,  
*by me* every tongue will swear;

24 He will say, "surely they will say,  
 'In the LORD alone I have righteousness  
 and strength.

To him men will come; and all who have  
 raged against him will be ashamed.

25 In the LORD all the descendants of  
 Israel will be justified,  
 and will glory."

**46** "Bel bows down, Nebo stoops.  
 Their idols are *loaded* on beasts,  
 and on cattle;  
 your carriages *are* loaded heavily;  
*they are* a burden to the weary *beast*.

2 They stoop, they bow down together.  
 They could not deliver the burden,  
 but have gone into captivity themselves.

3 "Listen to me, O house of Jacob,

"Cannot save" – 44:17-19; Jer 2:28.

**45:22** God will save Israel (vs 17,25). But  
 His salvation is for all the nations of earth.  
 Their gods and idols can't save them (v 20).  
 Their only hope is in Jehovah the God of  
 Israel, the only God there is. The words of  
 verse 22 are more than an invitation, they  
 are a prophecy (2:2-4; etc).

**45:23** "Sworn" – Heb 6:13. A very solemn  
 way of speaking which indicates the  
 importance of what follows.

"Every knee will bow" – Rom 14:11; Phil  
 2:10,11.

**45:24** Men will acknowledge that of all that  
 they have called God the only one who is  
 completely righteous and powerful is  
 Jehovah.

**45:25** "All" – Rom 11:26.

"Will be justified" – they will be declared  
 righteous in Christ (Jer 23:6; Acts  
 13:38,39; 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:9).

"Glory" – Rom 5:1,2; Gal 6:14.

**46:1** Bel and Nebo were gods of Babylon.  
 "Bel" means "lord." This god was similar to  
 the god Baal worshiped by the nations  
 around Israel and sometimes by Israel  
 itself.

**46:2** Another way of saying that the  
 Babylonians will go into captivity. Their gods

and all the remnant of the house of Israel,  
 who are borne *by me* from birth,  
 who are carried from the womb:

4 *Even* to *your* old age, I *am* he,  
 and *even* to gray hairs I will carry *you*.  
 I have made *you*, and I will bear *you*;  
 I will carry *you*, and will rescue *you*.

5 To whom will you liken me,  
 and make *me* equal, and compare me,  
 so that we may be alike?

6 They pour gold out of the bag,  
 and weigh silver in the balance,  
 and hire a goldsmith;  
 and he makes it *into* a god.  
 They prostrate themselves,  
 yes, they worship.

7 They bear it on the shoulder;  
 they carry it and set it in its place,  
 and it stands.

It will not move from its place;  
 yes, *someone* will cry out to it,  
 but it cannot answer,  
 or save him out of his trouble.

8 Remember this, and show yourselves men.  
 Recall *it* to mind again,  
 O you transgressors.

9 Remember the former things, *things* of old.  
 For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.  
 I *am* God, and *there is* no one like me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning,  
 and from ancient times *the things*  
 that are not *yet* done, saying,

would not be able to save them.

**46:3** "Listen" – God speaks.

"Carried" – as a father carries a small  
 child.

**46:4** They should not fear God would  
 forsake them, that He would be as weak  
 and useless as the gods of Babylon.

**46:5-7** God is not like the gods made by  
 men (40:18-20; 44:9-20).

**46:7** "It will not move" – Ps 115:7.

"It cannot answer" – 1 Kings 18:26; Ps  
 115:5.

"Or save" – 44:17; 45:20.

**46:8** "Transgressors" – or "rebels" –  
 1:2,20,23; 30:1; 57:4. Israel rebelled  
 against God and ran after the gods of the  
 nations around them. That is one reason  
 why in chapters 40-46 God repeatedly  
 condemns idolatry and declares the  
 uselessness of gods.

**46:9** "Former things" – God means things  
 like His judgments on the gods of Egypt  
 and His power displayed in the salvation of  
 His people at that time (Ex 12:12; 14:13,14).

"No other" – 43:10,11; Deut 4:35.

**46:10** "Things that are not yet done" –  
 41:22; 42:9; 43:9,18; 48:3.

"Stand" – it will stand toward Babylon (Jer  
 51:12,29), and in everything (Ps 33:11;

- My counsel will stand, and I will do  
all *that* I please,  
11 Calling a bird of prey from the east,  
the man from a far country who  
carries out my purpose.  
Yes, I have spoken *it* ;  
I will also cause it to happen.  
I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.
- 12 "Listen to me, you stubborn in heart,  
who *are* far from righteousness.  
13 I am bringing my righteousness near.  
It will not be far away, and my  
salvation will not be delayed.  
And I will place salvation in Zion for  
Israel my glory.

**47** "Come down and sit in the dust,  
O virgin daughter of Babylon.  
Sit on the ground. *There is* no throne,  
O daughter of the Chaldeans.  
For you will no longer be called tender  
and delicate.

- 2 Take the millstones, and grind flour.  
Remove your veil; tie up the skirt;  
uncover the leg, cross the rivers.  
3 Your nakedness will be uncovered;  
yes, your shame will be seen.  
I will take vengeance, and I will not  
meet *you as a man would.* "

- 4 *As for* our redeemer,  
the LORD of hosts *is* his name,  
the Holy One of Israel.

115:3; Dan 4:35; Eph 1:11; Heb 6:17).  
**46:11** This refers to Cyrus – 41:2; 45:1.  
He would come swiftly on Babylon and other  
lands to take plunder.

**46:12** "Righteousness" – v 8; 1:4,15;  
29:13; 64:6,7.

**46:13** "Near" – 41:2; 45:8.

"Israel my glory" – or possibly "my glory  
to Israel" – 35:2; 40:5; 44:23; 49:3.  
Probably looks forward to the defeat of  
Babylon, and the return of the Jews to  
Israel.

**47:1-15** Other prophecies concerning  
Babylon at 13:1-14:23; 21:1-9; Jer 50:1  
– 51:64. Here Babylon is pictured as a  
daughter of the human family. Because of  
Babylon's wickedness she will lose her  
kingdom (v 1), be put to shame (vs 2,3),  
no longer be queen (v 5), see her people  
destroyed (v 8), and be utterly disappointed  
in her sorcerers, astrologers and wise men  
(vs 10-15).

**47:1** "In the dust" – 3:26; 29:4; Job 2:13.  
"Chaldeans" – Babylonians.

**47:2** "Grind" – not the usual work for a queen!  
**47:3** Nah 3:5. She will be unable to defend  
herself.

"Vengeance" – 13:17-19. Shows how God

- 5 "Sit silently, and go into darkness,  
O daughter of the Chaldeans;  
for you will no longer be called,  
'The Lady of kingdoms.'  
6 I was angry with my people.  
I have profaned my inheritance,  
and given them into your hands.  
You showed them no mercy.  
On the elderly you have laid your very  
heavy yoke.  
7 And you said, 'I will be a lady forever'  
so that you did not lay these *things*  
to your heart,  
or remember their coming end.  
8 Therefore now hear this, *you who are*  
given to pleasures,  
who live carelessly,  
who say in your heart,  
'I *am*, and there is no other besides me;  
I will not sit *like* a widow,  
nor will I know the loss of children.'  
9 But these two *things* will come to you  
in a moment, in one day:  
the loss of children, and widowhood.  
They will fully come on you because  
of your many sorceries  
*and* because of the great abundance  
of your *magic* spells.  
10 For you have trusted in your wickedness.  
You have said, 'No one sees me.'  
Your wisdom and your knowledge have  
perverted you,  
and you have said in your heart,  
'I *am*, and there is no one else besides me.'

would take vengeance on Babylon. The  
reason for God's vengeance is clear from the  
rest of the chapter. God's vengeance is al-  
ways righteous judgment. Note at Num 31:2.

**47:4** "Redeemer" – note at Ps 78:35.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"Holy One of Israel" – note at 1:4.

**47:5** Babylon was a beautiful and a powerful  
city.

**47:6** "My people" – 42:23-25; 2 Chron  
36:15-17. This verse speaks of a future  
event as if it had already happened. This  
is not uncommon in prophecy. Now God's  
anger would come on Israel's oppressors.  
Note at Jer 50:33,34.

**47:7,8** Reveals the arrogance and ignorance  
of Babylon (Jer 50:31). Compare Ps 49:11.  
See Rev 18:7.

**47:9** "In one day" – indicates the sudden-  
ness of Babylon's capture (v 11).

"Many sorceries" – v 12. Babylon was a  
center of idolatry, sorcery, and astrology in  
the ancient world. They learned that none  
of these could help when God rose in anger  
to punish them.

**47:10** "No one sees me" – 29:15; Heb 4:13.  
"Wisdom" – Babylon was noted for its wise  
men, but their so-called wisdom contributed

- 11 Therefore disaster will come on you.  
You will not know from where it rises.  
And calamity will fall on you.  
You will not be able to avert it;  
and desolation will come on you  
suddenly, *which* you will not understand.
- 12 Stand now with your spells,  
and with your many sorceries,  
in which you have laboured from your youth.  
See if you will be able to profit,  
if you may succeed.
- 13 You are wearied by your many counsels.  
Now let the astrologers,  
the stargazers who make monthly  
predictions, stand up and save you from  
*these things* that will come on you.
- 14 See, they will be like stubble;  
the fire will burn them;  
they will not rescue themselves from  
the power of the flame.  
*There will not be* a coal to warm  
*oneself* at, or a fire to sit before!
- 15 Those with whom you have laboured  
from your youth, your merchants,  
will be like this to you.  
Each one of them will wander to his quarter.  
No one will save you.

- 48** "Hear this, O house of Jacob,  
you who are called by the name of Israel,  
who have come from the waters of Judah,  
who swear by the name of the LORD,  
and invoke the God of Israel,  
*but* not in truth or in righteousness.
- 2 For they call themselves after the holy city,  
and lean on the God of Israel;  
the LORD of hosts *is* his name.
- 3 I have declared the former things long ago;

to their destruction.

**47:12,13** Spoken ironically. There was no possibility that their sorcerers would bring success.

"Astrologers" – were common in Babylon (Dan 2:2,10). But they would fail as Babylon's crisis hour approached, as they always fail. For it is impossible to predict accurately the future of a people or an individual by the stars. Astrology is an ancient superstition without the slightest basis in reality. See note on Gen 25:24.

**47:14,15** The sorcerers and astrologers would not be able to save either Babylon or themselves. For an account of their helplessness and ignorance on the very night of Babylon's capture see Daniel chapter 5. On astrology see notes at Gen 25:24; Dan 2:2. **48:1** Even when they ran after idols (v 5), even when their spiritual condition was as described in 1:2-17, they liked to continue with the forms of their religion.

- and they went out of my mouth,  
and I declared them.  
Suddenly I acted, and they took place.
- 4 Because I knew that you *are* obstinate,  
and your neck *is* an iron sinew,  
and your brow bronze,
- 5 I declared *it* to you long ago.  
Before it happened I declared *it* to you,  
so that you could not say,  
'My idol has done them, and my carved  
image and my cast metal image has  
commanded them.'
- 6 You have heard; look at all this.  
And will you not declare *it*?  
From this time I tell you new things,  
hidden things that you have not known.
- 7 They are created now, and not long ago;  
and before this day you have not heard  
them, so that you cannot say,  
'See, I knew them.'
- 8 You certainly did not hear;  
you certainly did not know;  
from that time your ear certainly was  
not opened;  
for I knew that you would deal very  
treacherously,  
and that you were called a transgressor  
from the womb.
- 9 "For my name's sake I will delay my anger,  
and for my praise I will restrain *it* from you,  
so that I do not cut you off.
- 10 See, I have refined you,  
but not as silver;  
I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction.
- 11 For my own sake, yes, for my own sake,  
I will do *it*;  
for why should *my name* be profaned?  
And I will not give my glory to another.

"Not in truth" – 29:13. Compare John 4:24. **48:2** "Holy city" – Jerusalem (52:1).

**48:3-6** God can do what sorcerers and astrologers and idolaters cannot do. This is one of the leading themes of chapters 41-48 (41:21-29; 42:8,9; 43:9-13; 44:6-9; 45:19-21; 46:8-10; 47:13).

**48:3** Ex 32:9; Jer 6:28; Ezek 3:7; Acts 7:51.

**48:8** "Did not know" – 1:3; 6:9,10.

**48:9** See 1 Sam 12:22; Ps 78:38; Isa 37:35. If God did not restrain His anger who would not be cut off? Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18. **48:10** Jer 9:7; Ezek 22:17-22; Ps 66:10-12. Many of God's people through the centuries have been tested in this furnace (1 Pet 1:6,7; 4:1,12).

**48:11** Verse 9. If God completely destroyed the nation Israel, if He did not continue to work in them to bring them back to Himself and make them what they ought to be, if He did not keep His promises toward them,

- 12 Listen to me, O Jacob and Israel,  
my called *people*;  
I *am* he; I *am* the first,  
I *am* also the last.
- 13 And my hand has laid the foundation  
of the earth,  
and my right hand has spanned the heavens.  
When I call to them, they stand up together.
- 14 All of you, assemble yourselves and listen.  
Who among them has declared these *things*?  
The LORD loves him; he will carry out  
his pleasure on Babylon,  
and his arm *will be against* the Chaldeans.
- 15 I, I *myself*, have spoken;  
yes, I have called him.  
I have brought him, and he will make  
his way successful.
- 16 Come near to me; listen to this.  
From the first I have not spoken in secret.  
From the time that it happened,  
I *am* there.  
And now the Lord God, with his spirit,  
has sent me.
- 17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,  
the Holy One of Israel:  
I *am* the LORD your God who teaches  
you to *your* benefit,

- who leads you in the way *that* you should go.
- 18 "O that you had listened to my commandments!  
Then your peace would have been like a river,  
and your righteousness like the waves  
of the sea,
- 19 And your descendants would have  
been like the sand,  
and the offspring of your body like its grains;  
his name would not have been cut off  
or destroyed from my presence."
- 20 Go out of Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans.  
With a voice of singing declare, tell this, send it out  
to the ends of the earth, saying, "The LORD has  
redeemed his servant Jacob."
- 21 And they did not thirst *when* he led  
them through the deserts.  
He caused water to flow out of the rock  
for them.  
He also split the rock,  
and water gushed out.
- 22 "*There is* no peace", says the LORD,  
"for the wicked."

**49** Listen to me, O islands,  
and pay attention, you peoples far away!  
The LORD called me from the womb;

His name would be dishonored. Compare Ex 32:9-14; etc.

**48:12** "First. . .last" – 44:6.

**48:13** "Heavens" – 40:21,22; 42:5; 51:13.  
"Together" – all creation obeys God. Only men together with Satan and his demons disobey.

**48:14,15** "Who. . .has declared" – see note at vs 3-6.

"These things" – probably refers to Cyrus' conquest of Babylon (41:2; 45:1-3,13).

"Chaldeans" – Babylonians (also v 20).

**48:16** See 45:19. In the last words of the verse the speaker is probably Isaiah. He refers to his appointment and empowering as a prophet (6:9; 2 Pet 1:21).

**48:17** "Redeemer" – Ps 78:35.

"Holy One" – 1:4.

"Who teaches" – notes at Ps 25:4,5. How great a teacher God is! How great the sinful, stubborn, and willful ignorance of people who cannot learn from so great a teacher!

**48:18** "Peace. . .righteousness" – two words which sum up much of what God desires for His people (Rom 14:17). They result from obedience to God (Ps 119:9,165) just as restlessness and evil result from disobedience.

"Waves" – both rivers and waves move on without ceasing.

**48:19** "Like the sand" – Gen 15:5; Deut 1:10. If Israel had been obedient they would have been far more numerous than they were. God's judgment had cut off many of them and was about to take away more.

**48:20** God speaks to the remnant as though they were already in Babylon and as if Babylon were destroyed. He who knows the end from the beginning may (and does) speak so (46:10). This foretells Israel's release from captivity and the joy they would experience because of it.

**48:21** A reminder of what God did once before in desert regions (Ex 17:6; Num 20:11; Deut 8:15; Ps 78:15,16). The reminder was to assure Israel of God's care and provision for them during the return from Babylon. See also 32:2; 35:6; 43:19; 49:10. Of course, there is spiritual truth here for believers now too as they journey through the desert of this world to the heavenly Mount Zion.

**48:22** See 3:11; 57:20,21. The wicked in Israel would not share in the redemption and joy of v 20. How can there be peace for the wicked when God has set His face against all wickedness and will take vengeance on it? But even the wicked may have what seems to be peace – temporarily (Ps 73:3-12,16-20; Rom 2:4-6).

**49:1-7** In this section God tells the world that He chose the nation Israel for special purposes (v 2,3). They failed in these purposes (v 4) and went away from God (v 5). But One would rise out of Israel who would bring Israel back to God and be a source of salvation to the whole world (vs 5,6). This is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**49:1** "Listen" – 1:1; 41:1.

"From the womb" – if an individual is meant it would be Jacob who here repre-



- from the body of my mother he  
made mention of my name.
- 2 And he has made my mouth like a sharp sword.  
He has hidden me in the shadow of his hand,  
and made me a polished arrow.  
He has hidden me in his quiver,
- 3 And said to me, "You *are* my servant,  
O Israel; in you I will be glorified."
- 4 Then I said, "I have laboured in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nothing, in vain.  
*Yet* surely justice for me *is* with the LORD,  
and my reward *is* with my God."
- 5 "And now the LORD who formed me  
from the womb *to be* his servant to  
bring Jacob back to him says  
(even though Israel is not gathered,  
yet I will be honoured in the eyes of the  
LORD, and my God will be my strength),
- 6 Yes, he says, 'It is too small a thing for  
you to be my servant to raise up  
the tribes of Jacob,  
and to restore the preserved *ones* of Israel.  
I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles,  
that you may be my salvation to the  
ends of the earth.'
- 7 Thus says the LORD,  
the Redeemer *and* Holy One of Israel,  
to him whom man despises,  
to him whom the nation abhors,  
to a servant of rulers,  
"Kings will see and arise;

- princes also will worship,  
because of the LORD who is faithful,  
*and* the Holy One of Israel,  
and he will choose you."
- 8 Thus says the LORD,  
"In an acceptable time I have heard you,  
and in the day of salvation I have helped you.  
And I will keep you, and give you as a  
covenant for the people,  
to restore the earth,  
to assign the desolate inheritances,
- 9 That you may say to the prisoners, 'Go out!  
to those who *are* in darkness,  
'Show yourselves!  
They will feed along the paths,  
and their pastures *will be* in all the  
high places.
- 10 They will not hunger or thirst,  
nor will the heat or sun strike them,  
for he who has mercy on them will lead them,  
and will guide them by the springs of water.
- 11 And I will make a road of all my mountains,  
and my highways will be raised up.
- 12 See, these will come from afar, and,  
*lo and behold*, these from the north  
and from the west,  
and these from the land of Sinim."
- 13 Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth!  
Break out into singing, O mountains!  
For the LORD has comforted his people,  
and will have mercy on his afflicted.
- 14 But Zion has said,

sents the whole nation – Gen 25:21-26. However, birth here may mean the birth of the nation as in 44:1,2, and not the birth of an individual.

**49:2** "Sword" – Israel was given the word of God, and its prophets spoke the word of God which is a sword (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; Rev 2:12,16; 19:15).

"Shadow" – this indicates protection.

"Arrow" – Israel was an instrument of judgment in God's hand on wicked nations.

**49:3** "Servant" – 41:8,9. The whole nation was to serve God on earth and do His will.

"In you I will be glorified" – the highest purpose for which God called Israel. God will fulfill this purpose. See also 43:21. The glory of His character and attributes and works will yet be displayed in that nation.

**49:4** The nation admits their efforts to fulfill God's purposes came to nothing. But in hope they leave their future in God's hands.

**49:5** "Servant" – note at 42:1-9. The future hope of Israel, the purposes for which God called them, will be fulfilled. Here an individual – the Messiah – comes into view who represents Israel and who will do what the nation failed to do.

"Honoured. . . strength" – all the honor and strength of the Lord Jesus came from God the Father (John 5:19,30; 8:50,54;

17:1,5).

**49:6** "Jacob" – the Lord Jesus will do this (Zech 12:9-14; Rom 11:25-29; Rev 17:1-8).

"The ends of the earth" – God's purposes of grace are both for Israel as a nation and for all the world (Luke 2:30-32; Acts 3:19-21; Rom 15:8-10).

**49:7** "Despises" – 53:3. The nation as a whole despised the only one who could turn them back to God (53:3; Matt 27:22; John 15:24; Acts 7:52).

"Servant" – the Lord Jesus was a servant to all (Matt 20:28; Rom 15:8). The time is coming when all kings will bow the knee before Him (Ps 72:8-11).

**49:8** "The day of salvation" – this looks forward to this New Testament age (2 Cor 6:2).

"Covenant" – note at 42:6.

"Earth" – 44:26. This looks to the end of this New Testament age. Because a prophecy is partly fulfilled now does not mean it is completely fulfilled now.

**49:9** See 42:7; 61:1.

**49:10** See 48:21; Ps 121:6; Rev 7:16.

**49:11** See 11:16; 26:7; 35:8; 62:10.

**49:12** See 11:11; 43:5,6; 60:4.

"Sinim" – or "Syene." This indicates Aswan, located in the south of Egypt.

**49:13** Note at 44:23; 54:7-10.

**49:14** An example of the depression that

- "The LORD has forsaken me,  
and my Lord has forgotten me."
- 15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child,  
so that she does not have compassion  
on the son of her womb?  
Yes, they may forget, but I will not forget you.
- 16 See, I have engraved you on the  
palms of *my* hands.  
Your walls *are* continually before me.
- 17 Your children will make haste;  
your destroyers and those who laid you  
waste will go away from you.
- 18 Lift up your eyes and look all around;  
all these assemble together *and* come to you.  
As I live, says the LORD, you will  
surely put them all on as an ornament,  
and fasten them *on you*, as a bride *does*.
- 19 For your waste and desolate places,  
and your destroyed land,  
will now be too small for the inhabitants,  
and those who swallowed you up will  
be far away.
- 20 The children whom you will have,  
after you have lost the others,  
will say again in your ears,  
'This place *is* too small for me.  
Give me a place where I can live.'
- 21 Then you will say in your heart,  
'Who has begotten these for me,  
since I have lost my children,  
and been desolate, a captive,  
and going here and there?  
And who brought these up?  
See, I was left alone.  
As for these, where *have* they *been*?'"

sometimes comes when God chastises His people (Ps 13:1; 44:24; Lam 5:22; Heb 12:12).

**49:15,16** From this verse to the end of the chapter God speaks to the city of Jerusalem. How can we ever imagine that God will not fulfill His word to the nation of Israel? That the literal Zion is here meant is clear from the context (v 5,6,19,22). Of course the spiritual truth is applicable to all believers in every age.

"Engraved you on the palms of my hands" – compare Ex 28:9-12. Who can blot out names engraved on the hands of God?

"Before me" – compare Deut 11:12.

**49:17,18** "Your children" – the exiles from Jerusalem shall return there.

"Ornament" – indicates the joy and pride Zion will feel at the return of her exiles.

**49:19,20** This was not fulfilled when the exiles returned from Babylon. A comparatively small number returned then. See Ezra 2:64.

**49:21,22** Jerusalem itself will be astonished at the number of her sons who return. That literal Jews are meant seems clear from

22 Thus says the Lord God:

"See, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles,  
and set up my banner for the peoples;  
and they will bring your sons in *their* arms,  
and your daughters will be carried on  
*their* shoulders.

23 And kings will be your foster fathers,  
and their queens your nursing mothers.  
They will bow down to you with *their*  
face toward the ground,  
and lick up the dust of your feet.  
And you will know that I *am* the LORD;  
for those who wait for me will not  
be put to shame."

24 Will the prey be taken from the mighty,  
or the lawful captive delivered?

25 But thus says the LORD:

"Even the captives of the mighty will  
be taken away,  
and the prey of the terrible will be rescued.  
For I will contend with him that  
contends with you,  
and I will save your children.

26 And I will cause those who oppress  
you to eat their own flesh,  
and they will be drunk with their own  
blood as with sweet wine.  
And all flesh will know that I, the LORD,  
*am* your Saviour and your Redeemer,  
the mighty One of Jacob."

**50** Thus says the LORD,  
"Where *is* the certificate of your  
mother's divorce with which I sent *her* away?  
Or to which of my creditors have I sold you?

v 22 where Zion's sons are distinguished from Gentiles. In 14:2; 43:6; 60:9 other nations are said to bring Israel back.

**49:23** Jerusalem will become the beloved city, the favorite of the nations – 2:2-4.

"You will know" – v 26; 60:16; Ezek 12:20; 13:9; 36:38.

"Not be put to shame" – 29:22; Rom 10:11.

**49:25** God will restore the captives of Israel, and their plunder – 14:2; etc.

"Contend" – 51:22; Jer 50:34; Gen 12:3; Num 23:8,11; Zech 2:8.

**49:26** God will make Israel's enemies as Israel's enemies made them (Lam 4:10).

"Jacob" – God's dealing with Israel, especially at the end of this age, will cause all mankind to know that He has not abandoned that nation and that city, but saved them.

**50:1-3** In 49:15-26 God spoke to Zion as if that city were a mother. See too vs 17,18,20; 51:17,18. He spoke of her "sons" and "children." Now God speaks to the sons and children, the people of Israel. The words

- See, you have sold yourselves for your wicked deeds,  
and your mother was sent away for your transgressions.
- 2 Why was *there* no man when I came?  
When I called, *why was there* no one to answer?  
Is my hand shortened at all so that it cannot redeem?  
Or have I no power to rescue?  
See, at my rebuke I dry up the sea,  
I make the rivers a desert;  
because *there is* no water their fish stink and die from thirst.
- 3 I clothe the heavens with blackness,  
and I make sackcloth their covering."
- 4 "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned,  
so that I would know how to speak a word in season to the weary.  
He awakens me morning by morning;  
he awakens my ear to hear as the learned.
- 5 The Lord God has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,

- nor did I turn back.
- 6 I gave my back to those who struck *me*,  
and my cheeks to those who plucked off the hair.  
I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.
- 7 For the Lord God will help me;  
therefore I will not be disgraced.  
Therefore I have set my face like a flint,  
and I know that I will not be put to shame.
- 8 *The one* who vindicates *me is* near;  
who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who *is* my adversary?  
Let him come near me.
- 9 Look, the Lord God will help me;  
who *is* the one *who* condemns me?  
See, they will all become old like a garment;  
the moth will eat them up."
- 10 Who among you fears the LORD,  
who obeys the voice of his servant,  
who walks *in* darkness,  
and has no light?  
Let him trust in the name of the LORD,

look beyond Isaiah's day to the time of exile. God says that the exile of the people of Jerusalem and Judah was their fault, not His. He had not "divorced" Zion, the mother (compare 49:15,16). But there was a temporary separation because of Israel's many sins.

"When I came" (v 2) – God came again and again to the people but no one paid any attention (64:7. See Jer 7:13,25; 25:3,4).

"To rescue" – God could have saved them from the Babylonians, but He determined that the nation must be punished for its evil.

"A desert" – 43:16,17; Ex 14:29. The God who did that was not lacking in strength to rescue His people.

50:3 See 13:10; Joel 2:10,31; Rev 6:12,13. Sackcloth in the Bible is a sign of mourning (Gen 37:34; Est 4:1; Ps 35:13).

50:4-9 The servant of the Lord (Christ) now speaks (v 10; 42:1-4; 49:5-7). He is of Israel, represents Israel, and will bring Israel back to God (49:5).

50:4 "Tongue of the learned" – true of Christ (Ps 45:2; Luke 4:22; John 7:16,17; 12:49,50; 14:24). God instructs men's mouths too – 51:16; Ex 4:12; Jer 1:9; Matt 10:19,20; Mark 13:10; Gal 1:1,11,12.

"To the weary" – 40:29; 42:3; Matt 11:28-30. God has compassion on the weary. The servant of the Lord would know what to say to the weary because morning after morning he would get his instructions from God.

50:5 As a servant the Messiah would not be like Israel (42:19,20), or like Jonah (Jonah 1:1-3).

50:6 Bringing Israel back to God (49:5), making Zion a place of holiness and glory

(4:2-6; 52:1; 60:1-3), would be no easy matter. It would mean extreme dishonor and suffering for the Messiah, the servant of the Lord (Ps 22:6-18; Matt 27:26,30,67; Mark 14:65; 15:19; Luke 22:63; John 19:1). 50:7 The Lord Jesus courageously faced everything that came to Him (Luke 9:51; 22:42; John 18:10,11). He knew He would not fail or be disappointed in His work of providing salvation to the world (49:6; Heb 12:2,3).

50:8,9 The Lord Jesus was charged with blasphemy and executed as a criminal with criminals (Matt 26:65,66; 27:35-40). How did God vindicate Him? This passage in Isaiah does not say, but we know from the New Testament that it was by raising Him from the dead and exalting Him to His right hand (Acts 13:28-31; Rom 1:4; Phil 2:9). Will anyone still accuse the Lord Jesus? Will any say He is a madman or a liar or possessed by Satan (as some people did when He was on earth)? Let them come forward! They will find they are fighting against God, and will be destroyed like old clothes that moths devour.

50:10 Isaiah now speaks by God's Spirit about the Servant of the Lord who has spoken in vs 4-9.

"Fears the LORD" – notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"Fears", "obeys", "trust" – these three are essential to the full enjoyment of the salvation the Messiah provides. Days of darkness may come to God's people, days when they do not know what God is doing or what they should do. If they show awe, reverence, and obedience to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ all else they need to do is

and rely on his God.

- 11 Look, all you who kindle a fire,  
who surround *yourselves* with sparks,  
walk in the light of your fire and of the  
sparks you have kindled.  
This is *what* you will have from my hand:  
you will lie down in torment.

- 51** "Listen to me,  
you who follow righteousness,  
you who seek the LORD.  
Look to the rock *from which* you are cut,  
and to the quarry *where* you were dug out.
- 2 Look to Abraham your father,  
and to Sarah *who* bore you.  
For I called him alone, and blessed him  
and increased him."
- 3 For the LORD will comfort Zion.  
He will comfort all her waste places,  
and he will make her wilderness like Eden,  
and her desert like the garden of the LORD.  
Joy and gladness will be found in it,  
thanksgiving and the sound of melody.
- 4 "Listen to me, my people,  
and give ear to me, O my nation.  
For a law will proceed from me,  
and I will make my justice rest as a  
light for the people.
- 5 My righteousness *is* near.  
My salvation has gone forth,  
and my arms will judge the peoples;  
the islands will wait for me,  
and they will trust in my arm.

- 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
and look on the earth below;  
for the heavens will vanish away like smoke,  
and the earth will become old like a garment,  
and those who dwell in it will die in like manner.  
But my salvation will be forever,  
and my righteousness will not be abolished.
- 7 Listen to me, you who know righteousness,  
the people in whose heart *is* my law.  
Do not fear the reproach of men,  
or be afraid of their insults.
- 8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment,  
and the worm will eat them like wool.  
But my righteousness will be forever,  
and my salvation from generation  
to generation."
- 9 Awake! Awake!  
Put on strength, O arm of the LORD!  
Awake, as in days long ago,  
in the generations of old.  
*Are* you not *the arm* which cut Rahab,  
and pierced the serpent?
- 10 *Are* you not *the arm* which dried the  
sea, the waters of the great deep,  
that made the depths of the sea a way  
for the ransomed to cross over?
- 11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD  
will return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
and everlasting joy *will be* on their heads.  
They will obtain gladness and joy,  
and sorrow and mourning will flee away.
- 12 "I, I *myself*, am the one who comforts you.

simply to trust, to lean on God.  
**50:11** "Who kindle a fire" – this could mean one of two things. It could signify those who engage in wicked practices which burn like fire (9:18). Or it could signify those who refuse the light the Lord Jesus will give (42:6), and try to create their own light. Many people try to do this, and God will leave them to it. The end in either case will be torment in the fire that is never quenched – Matt 25:41; Mark 9:43; Luke 16:24; Rev 10:15.  
**51:1-3** This passage looks forward to the time of the Babylonian captivity. God addresses those who would seek God (v 1) and return to Jerusalem (compare Jer 29:10-14). They would be few in number but God tells them to think of the father of their nation. When God called him he had no children at all, but later Israel became a great people (Gen 22:7; Ex 1:7). God promises to make Zion a paradise where, presumably, a great many will have cause for rejoicing.  
**51:4,5** God has in mind more than the blessing of Jerusalem (2:2-4; 9:7; 42:1,4).  
"Is near" (v 5) – 50:8; 2 Pet 3:8,9; Rev 1:3.

"Arms" – power – 40:10; 50:2; 52:10; 59:16; 63:5; Ps 98:1.  
"Islands" – 11:11; 24:15; 41:1,5; 42:4,10,12; 49:1; 59:18; 60:9; 66:19.  
**51:6** See 34:4; 24:4; Heb 1:10-12; 12:25-29.  
"Salvation. . . forever" – v 8; 45:17; Titus 1:2. What then should we choose – a temporary world or an eternal heaven?  
**51:7** "Righteousness" – v 1.  
"Heart" – Deut 6:6; Ps 119:11; Jer 31:33.  
"Reproach" – if they despise and insult the master (49:7; 50:6;) the servants will hardly escape (Matt 10:25; John 15:18-20). But instead of fear believers can have joy (v 12; Rom 5:3; 2 Cor 12:10; 1 Pet 4:12-16).  
**51:8** See 50:9; Mark 9:48.  
**51:9,10** Isaiah inspired by God's Spirit now speaks for the righteous. God has promised great things. He prays for their fulfillment. Let God act again for His people as He did at the Red Sea (Ex 14:21-31).  
"Rahab" – Egypt (Job 9:13; etc).  
**51:11** Note at 35:10.  
**51:12** Again God begins to speak.  
"Comforts" – v 3; 40:1; 49:13.

Who are you, that you should be afraid  
of a man *who* will die,  
and of the son of a man *who* will be  
made *like* grass?  
13 And you forget the LORD your maker,  
who has stretched out the heavens,  
and laid the foundations of the earth,  
and you have been afraid continually  
every day because of the fury of  
the oppressor,  
when *he seemed* ready to destroy.  
And where *is* the fury of the oppressor?  
14 The captive exile will soon be set free,  
and will not die in the dungeon,  
nor will his food fail.  
15 For I *am* the LORD your God who  
divided the sea, whose waves roared.  
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.  
16 And I have put my words in your mouth,  
and I have covered you with the  
shadow of my hand, that I may  
establish the heavens,  
and lay the foundations of the earth,  
and say to Zion: *You are* my people."  
17 Awake! Awake! Stand up,  
O Jerusalem,  
you who have drunk at the hand of the  
LORD the cup of his fury.  
You have drunk the dregs of the cup of  
trembling, *and drained it*.  
18 *There is* no one to guide her among  
all the sons *whom* she has brought forth.  
Nor among all the sons she has  
brought up *is there any* who take  
her by the hand.  
19 These two *disasters* have come to you;

who will mourn for you?  
Desolation and destruction,  
and famine and sword;  
by whom will I comfort you?  
20 Your sons have fainted.  
They lie at the head of every street,  
like an antelope in a net.  
They are full of the fury of the LORD,  
the rebuke of your God.  
21 Therefore, now listen to this,  
you afflicted, and drunk,  
but not with wine:  
22 Thus says your Lord,  
the LORD and your God *who* pleads the  
cause of his people:  
"See, I have taken out of your hand  
the cup of trembling, the dregs of  
the cup of my fury.  
You will not drink it again.  
23 But I will put it into the hands of  
those who afflict you,  
who have said to your soul,  
'Lie down, so that we may walk over *you*.'  
And you made your backs like the  
ground, and like the street,  
to those who walked over *you*."

**52** Awake! Awake!  
Put on your strength, O Zion!  
Put on your beautiful garments,  
O Jerusalem, the holy city!  
For from now on the uncircumcised and  
the unclean will no longer come into you.  
2 Shake yourself from the dust.  
Arise, *and* sit down, O Jerusalem.  
Loose yourself from the shackles on your neck,

"A man who will die" – v 7; Matt 10:26-28.  
"Grass" – 40:6.  
**51:13** Fear of men can make even God's  
people forget His comfort and power.  
**51:15** "Sea" – Job 26:12; Ps 107:24,25;  
Jer 31:35. Can, then, the Babylonians or  
any other enemy of God's people stand  
against Him?  
**51:16** "In your mouth" – v 7; Ex 4:11,12;  
Jer 1:9.  
"Hand" – 49:2; Ps 91:1,2. Surely there  
is safety there!  
"My people" – 41:8-10; 43:1,15;  
44:1,2,21.  
**51:17-23** These verses look beyond Isaiah's  
own day. Jerusalem had to drink the cup of  
God's wrath because of its wickedness. This  
cup meant "desolation, destruction, famine,  
sword" (v 19). The enemy armies would be  
the cause of these. When God determined  
that Jerusalem had been punished enough  
He would comfort her and make her enemies  
drink the cup of punishment. On "cup" see  
Jer 25:15-29; Ezek 23:32-34; Zech 12:2;

John 18:11; Rev 14:10.  
**51:18** "No one" – 64:7; Jer 5:1; Ezek 22:30.  
**51:21** "You afflicted" – Jerusalem.  
**51:22** "Pleads the cause of his people" –  
49:24; Zech 14:3.  
"You will not drink it again" – this is  
evidence that this whole passage looks  
beyond the capture of Jerusalem by the  
Babylonians. For after that Jerusalem once  
again had to drink of the cup of God's wrath  
(Luke 19:41-44; 1 Thess 2:16). And it  
will yet be a cup in the Lord's hands that its  
enemies must drink (Zech 12:2).  
**52:1,2** Jerusalem captured and enslaved  
and lying prostrate in the dust will be set  
free, will rise again. Compare 2:2;  
49:14,22,23.  
"Beautiful garments" – 61:10  
"The uncircumcised and the unclean" –  
those not in covenant relationship with  
Jehovah (Gen 17:9-14), those who remain  
in their sins. The literal meaning is that no  
foreign armies will invade the city again. A  
spiritual application may also be drawn from



- O captive daughter of Zion.
- 3 For thus says the LORD:  
 "You have sold yourselves for nothing,  
 and you will be redeemed without money."
- 4 For thus says the Lord God:  
 "My people went down at first into  
 Egypt to live there.  
*Afterwards* the Assyrian oppressed  
 them without cause.
- 5 Now therefore, what have I here",  
 says the LORD,  
 "that my people are taken away for nothing?  
 Those who rule over them make them  
 wail," says the LORD,  
 "and my name continually every day is  
 blasphemed.
- 6 Therefore my people will know my name;  
 therefore in that day *they will know*  
 that I *am* the one who speaks.  
 See, *it is I.*"
- 7 How beautiful on the mountains are  
 the feet of the one who brings good  
 tidings, who proclaims peace,  
 who brings good tidings of good *things*,  
 who proclaims salvation,  
 who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
- 8 Your watchmen will raise *their* voices;  
 with *their* voices they will sing together,

- for when the LORD restores Zion they  
 will see it with their own eyes.
- 9 Break forth into joy, sing together,  
 you waste places of Jerusalem!  
 For the LORD has comforted his people,  
 he has redeemed Jerusalem.
- 10 The LORD has bared his holy arm in  
 the eyes of all the nations;  
 and all the ends of the earth will see  
 the salvation of our God.
- 11 Depart! Depart! Go out from there!  
 Do not touch any unclean *thing*!  
 Go out of the midst of her!  
 Be clean, you who carry the vessels  
 of the LORD.
- 12 For you will not go out with haste,  
 or leave like fugitives,  
 for the LORD will go in front of you,  
 and the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard.
- 13 "See, my servant will act wisely.  
 He will be exalted and lifted up and  
 be very high.
- 14 Just as many were astonished at you,  
 so his appearance was disfigured  
 more than any man,  
 and his form more than the sons of men.
- 15 So he will sprinkle many nations.  
 Kings will shut their mouths at him,

these words – 35:8; Ps 15:1-5; Ps 24:3-5; Rev 21:27; 22:15.

**52:3** The Lord received nothing by bringing enemies to capture His city – nothing but grief and pain. It would cost Him no money to free the people and bring them back to Jerusalem. But what it cost God to free His people from sin and bring them back to Himself is seen in the next chapter. See also 1 Pet 1:18,19.

**52:4** "Egypt" – Gen 46:6; Ex 1:1-14. "Assyrian" – 8:5-8; 10:5,6.

**52:5** "Now" – the Lord may be referring to the Babylonian captivity or to a literal captivity long after that.

"Blasphemed" – Rom 2:24. Israel's enemies, because they defeated and crushed them, would think the God of Israel was a weak God unable to help them (compare 37:23,24. See also Ezek 36:20-23). Let us learn that anyone who professes to be a worshiper of the true God and lives a wicked life is bringing dishonor to God's name.

**52:6** "Will know my name" – to know God's name here means to know His nature and attributes, to know God Himself. Israel shall enter into this knowledge.

**52:7** "Good tidings" – 40:9. Here the good news is that God reveals His sovereignty and power in releasing Zion from captivity to her enemies and reigns in their midst (9:7; 32:1; 33:17). Spiritual application – Rom 10:5; Eph 6:15. The good news is a

proclamation of three things – peace with God, salvation, and God's kingdom among men.

**52:9** See 40:1; 44:23; 48:20; 49:13.

**52:10** "His holy arm" – 51:5. "Ends of the earth" – 40:5.

**52:11,12** Meaning for Israel in captivity in Babylon – leave Babylon, bearing the vessels for the temple (Ezra 1:7-11), and taking nothing from that accursed city, such as idols, that would be unclean. There is also a meaning in this for those who are in the figurative "Babylon" at the end of this age (Rev 18:4), and always a spiritual application to the Church of the New Testament (2 Cor 6:14-18).

**52:12** Verse 7.

**52:13** "Will act wisely" – or, possibly, "will prosper."

**52:13-15** The servant of God, the Lord Jesus, is brought into view again (see 42:1-4; 49:5-7; 50:4-9). It is through Him alone that the glorious events of this chapter have their fulfillment. Verse 14 describes what would happen to Him at the hands of men (compare 50:6; Ps 22:6-18). Verse 13 describes His behavior and how God exalted Him (see Acts 2:32,33; 3:13; Eph 1:20-23; Phil 2:9-11). Verse 15 states what He would do after God exalted Him.

"Sprinkle" (v 15) – Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, sprinkled others to confirm the covenant with them (Ex 24:7,8).

for they will see what they had not  
been told,  
and consider what they had not heard."

**53** Who has believed our report?  
And to whom has the arm of the LORD  
been revealed?

2 For he will grow up before him like a  
tender plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground.  
He has no *striking* form or majesty,  
and when we see him,  
*there is* no beauty that we should desire him.

Sprinkling signified also consecration and purification (Ex 29:21; Lev 8:30; Num 8:5-7). Three elements were used in sprinkling – blood, oil and water. They speak of atonement, cleansing from sin, and the giving of the Holy Spirit and water of life. Moses sprinkled individuals or one nation – Israel. Jesus sprinkles many nations, signifying that they will receive the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit.

"Shut their mouths" – in astonishment, or as in Job 40:4,5; Rom 3:19. The last part of v 15 is quoted in Rom 15:21. The work of sprinkling is now going on. But it is far from being finished yet.

**53:1** Here is one of the most wonderful chapters in the Bible. It sets forth the sufferings and death of Christ for sinners 700 years before He came into the world. Compare psalm 22. This verse speaks of the unbelief of Israel concerning the message of the Messiah (John 12:38; Rom 10:16). This message in part appears in the last 3 verses of chapter 52.

"Arm of the LORD" – the arm of Jehovah mightily at work was revealed in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, but among the Jews only a few acknowledged that it was the arm of the Lord at work (see Matt 12:24; John 8:48).

"Revealed" – most of the verbs in this chapter are in the past tense, but from the point of view of Isaiah's day the chapter describes events far in the future. It is as though Isaiah were transported forward in time to see these events as history. See note at 55:10,11. God knows the end from the beginning and can reveal events in the future as though they had already happened – so certain is the fulfillment of all that He reveals.

**53:2** "Plant", "root" – 11:1. Several times in the prophets the Messiah is called a Branch, etc. Observe that He grew up in God's presence. His life from beginning to end was totally God-oriented. Dry ground probably signifies the barren spiritual condition of the people of Israel.

"No beauty" – the Lord Jesus came as a poor man, as a servant, as a person of no reputation (Mark 6:3; Luke 9:58; John 9:28,29; Phil 2:7). He did not come with the pomp and splendor of a royal house.

3 He is despised and rejected by men,  
a man of sorrows,  
and acquainted with grief.  
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from him.  
He was despised, and we did not esteem him.  
4 Surely he has borne our griefs and  
carried our sorrows.  
Yet we considered him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.  
5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions,  
*he was* bruised for our wicked deeds;  
the chastisement for our peace *was* on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.

He had no appearance of a king. Here Isaiah experiences the feelings that most Jews in Christ's day would have about Christ. They were expecting in the Messiah a mighty conqueror who would deliver them from the yoke of Rome. See Luke 9:11. But Jesus came not like Solomon in his glory, but like Jeremiah in tears. Men are not attracted by poverty, and sorrow. They prefer pomp and outward show.

**53:3** "Despised" – 49:7; Ps 22:6; John 15:24.

"Rejected" – Matt 26:66; 27:21,22; John 1:11; 19:15,16; Acts 3:13,14.

"Sorrows", "Grief" – Ps 69:7-12,19-21; Luke 12:50; 19:41; John 11:35. We read in the Gospels that Jesus wept, but never that He laughed. Being despised, insulted and rejected by those you are trying to help and save does not produce laughter. Besides this the Lord Jesus felt the awful weight of people's guilt and misery.

"Hid" – many treated Him as if He were an awful sight they could not bear to look at.

"Did not esteem him" – while He lived on earth the leaders, the people, and usually even His disciples failed to see His true greatness, His divine qualities. See references at v 2.

**53:4** "Griefs" – the Hebrew also means "infirmities."

"Carried" – in Matt 8:17 this is said to mean His ministry of healing. But why then does this not say that He healed our infirmities? Possibly to indicate that He did more than heal them – He experienced them like a burden, He was one with sufferers in their pain. See Matt 9:36. Compassion means to "suffer with." Let us understand too that all of Jesus' sufferings were as our substitute, our representative. He was in our place. (See 63:9. Compare Paul's words in 2 Cor 11:28,29).

"Smitten by God" – when Jesus was on earth many in Israel thought that prosperity was a sign of God's favor. Judging from this verse, they assumed that the poverty, sorrows, and sufferings of Christ were God's punishment on Him.

**53:5** "Wounded" – Ps 22:16; John 19:18,34; Zech 12:10. The Hebrew word indicates wounded to death by sharp instru-

- 6 All we like sheep have gone astray;  
each one of us has turned to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him the  
wickedness of us all.
- 7 He was oppressed and he was afflicted,  
but he did not open his mouth.  
He was brought like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.
- 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment;  
and who will declare his generation?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living.

- For the transgression of my people he  
was struck.
- 9 And he made his grave with the wicked,  
and with the rich at his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
and no deceit *was* in his mouth.
- 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him.  
He put *him* to grief.  
When you make his soul an offering for sin,  
he will see *his* offspring,  
he will prolong *his* days,  
and the pleasure of the LORD will

ments, so it could be translated "pierced." Again it is emphasized that all Jesus' sufferings were as our substitute, in our place. He endured what we deserve to endure. Our sins were the reason He had to be pierced and crushed. The word "bruised" suggests the weight of the sins of the whole world that were laid on Him (John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24). The Hebrew word also means "crushed" and "broken."

"Chastisement" – or "punishment." Punishment that brings us peace means that punishment which pays for our sins, which makes it possible for us to be reconciled to God. There can be no peace with God, no peace of God for sinners until sin is removed. The Lord Jesus endured the punishment that our sins deserve. God punished Him in our place. This was to reconcile us to God and bring us peace (2 Cor 5:18-21; Eph 2:13-18; 1 Pet 3:18).

"Healed" – this includes forgiveness but is more than forgiveness. It means also to die to sins and live for righteousness, to come to the Good Shepherd and live under His guidance (1 Pet 2:24,25). It will eventually mean being made sinless, and perfect like the Lord Jesus (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2). The wounding to death of the Lord Jesus have made all this possible.

**53:6** Going astray from God and turning to one's own way is the sin that is the root of all other sins, and all men since Adam have been guilty of it – Gen 3:6 (Rom 5:12); Ps 58:3; 95:10; 119:67,176; Jer 2:13; Rom 3:12; 1 Pet 2:25. Going astray is described as iniquity in the next sentence. All of our iniquities, including going astray, were caused to fall on Christ (compare Lev 16:20-22).

**53:7** Verses 3-6 describe Christ's sufferings. This verse speaks of how patiently He endured them. He did not murmur or complain or defend Himself (Matt 27:12-14; Mark 14:40,61; 15:5; Luke 23:8,9; John 19:8-10; 1 Pet 2:21-23).

"Like a lamb" – Ex 12:3-7; Lev 1:10-13; John 1:29,36; Rev 5:6,12.

**53:8** "Prison" or "arrest" – after He was arrested and judgment was passed on Him He was taken away to the cross.

"And who will declare his generation?" – in some translations this sentence is linked with the following words like this: "And as

for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?" (NASB). This translation is as possible as the one in the text above.

"Struck" – see all the words in this chapter which describe the sufferings and death of Christ – "struck", "stricken", "bruised", "wounded", "oppressed", "afflicted", "slaughter", "cut off."

**53:9** "Made his grave" – His enemies no doubt intended that the dead body of Christ should be treated as the corpses of crucified criminals were treated – cast into a common grave. But another decision was made which resulted in His burial in a rich man's tomb (see Matt 27:57-60).

"No violence and no deceit" – an indication of the pure, meek, and sinless character of the Lord Jesus. Apart from Him there has been at least some deceit found in the mouth of every person born into the world (Ps 12:2; Jer 9:7,8; 17:9; Rom 3:13; etc).

**53:10** From this verse we see that those who afflicted and killed the Lord Jesus were instruments in God's hands. Men made Him suffer and put Him to death, but God was behind them working out His will. See Acts 2:23; 4:27,28; etc. God was thus working through the actions of wicked men in order to make Christ a guilt offering for the sins of men (see Lev 5:14,15; Rom 3:25; 8:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:12-14; 10:14; 1 John 2:4,10). This "pleased" Him, not, of course, in the sense of being happy at Christ's sufferings, but because it was the one way to save human beings. And in all this Christ was not an unwilling victim, but put His Father's will above all else (Matt 26:39; John 10:17,18; Heb 10:5-7).

"Prolong his days" – how can it be said He would prolong His days just after it is said that He was put to death and buried? The answer is in His resurrection from the dead. He thus prolongs His days forever (Rev 1:18; 9:7; Ps 45:6; 72:5; Heb 1:10-12; 13:8). This explains how He can "see His offspring" – His spiritual children born by His Spirit. He can have these "offspring" only because He was made a guilt offering.

"Will prosper in his hand" – He fully accomplished God's will while He was on earth (John 17:4). He will continue to fully accomplish it now that He is in heaven

prosper in his hand.

11 He will see the travail of his soul,  
and will be satisfied.

By his knowledge my righteous servant  
will justify many,  
for he will bear their wicked deeds.

12 Therefore I will allot him a portion  
with the great,  
and he will divide the plunder with the strong,  
because he poured out his soul to death,  
and he was numbered with the transgressors,

and he bore the sin of many,  
and made intercession for the transgressors.

**54** "Sing, O barren one,  
you *who* have not borne a child!  
Break forth into singing,  
and shout aloud,  
you *who* have not travailed with child!  
For the children of the desolate one  
are more than the children of the  
married woman," says the LORD.

(Eph 1:9,10; Isa 42:1-4; Acts 1:1,2; 2:33; Matt 28:18; John 17:2; Col 1:29). The accomplishing of the will of God could not be in better hands. He will successfully complete all that God has given Him to do just as He did in His life and death on earth. **53:11** In this verse and the next Jehovah Himself is speaking about the Messiah.

"He will see of the travail of His soul, and will be satisfied" – there will be great results from Christ's suffering, enough to fill even His large expectations. These results are the glory of God and a multitude of people forever saved and rejoicing (as appears from the rest of the verse).

"His knowledge" – this may mean the knowledge that people will have of Him as in John 17:3. This knowledge involves learning of Him, trusting Him, experiencing Him. Or it may mean the knowledge that the Messiah has of the true God and of people and of the meaning of His sacrifice for them.

"Servant" – 42:1-7; etc. His righteousness is emphasized here for it is only because He is righteous and righteously bore men's sins and paid the full penalty for them that He is able to give righteousness to others.

"Justify" – notes at Rom 3:24,26,28; 4:25; 5:1; 10:10; 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 2:16; Titus 3:7.

"Many" – not every human being; only those who believe in Him. Still there will be an innumerable multitude of those from every nation on earth (Rev 7:9,10; etc).

**53:12** Dividing spoils among the great and with the strong suggests a battle and victory and plunder from the battle. This verse indicates that the preceding verses describe warfare. In His suffering and death the Messiah was fighting for His people against their enemies (Satan and his followers). Compare Col 2:15; Heb 2:14,15; etc. The "great" and the "strong" are those called His offspring in v 10, the justified in v 11, many nations in 52:15. On "strong" compare Matt 11:12. They will be great and strong because He makes them so.

"Divide" – see Rom 8:17.

"Plunder" – what is this plunder? All that is taken away from Satan's control – earth redeemed, restored, made new, and everything in it.

"Death" – this is the reason and the only reason why there is "plunder" to share and why He and others will share in it.

"Numbered with the transgressors" – Mark

15:28. This probably means that He was regarded as one of them.

"Bore the sins of many" – repeated in different words in vs 5,6,8,10,11.

"Intercession for the transgressors" – one of Christ's works before the cross (John chapter 17), on the cross (Luke 23:34), and throughout this age (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1). By intercession He makes sure that His people will share His plunder with Him. But here the intercession may refer primarily to the event on the cross.

**54:1** This verse raises some questions that need to be answered if we wish to interpret this chapter correctly. Who is the "barren one," the "desolate one"? Who is she who has a husband? What was Paul trying to show by quoting this verse in Gal 4:27? The answers to these questions are a bit complicated.

First, the barren and desolate one is Jerusalem or Mount Zion as representing the nation of Israel. We judge this by the context of chapters 49-52 (see 49:14,19-21; 51:17; 52:1) and by vs 6-8 of this chapter. This prophecy of the "barren" one looks far into the future from Isaiah's day (as do most of the prophecies of chapters 40-66).

Second, she "who has a husband" is also Jerusalem representing the nation Israel. The husband was none other than Jehovah God Himself (v 5; 50:1; Jer 3:14). This means that sometime after the giving of this prophecy, Israel, after being forsaken for a while, will be redeemed and made new and will become far more fruitful than the old Israel.

Third, in quoting this verse Paul was showing the difference between law and grace. The nation Israel under the law speaks of bondage and rejection. Israel under grace will mean freedom, acceptance, and fruitfulness. The difference is between the two covenants – the old given through Moses, the new given through Christ. The writer of these notes does not believe that Paul is teaching in Galatians (or anywhere) that the Church of the New Testament is the new Israel. He is teaching that now whether we are Jews or Gentiles we must be saved in the same way, the way of grace, and that the Jerusalem in heaven, God's holy city, is the mother of all believers. In this chapter and in Isaiah as a whole we see that eventually the nation Israel, the Jewish people, will be brought back to God, brought

- 2 "Enlarge the place of your tent,  
and let them stretch out the curtains  
of your dwelling places.  
Do not spare. Lengthen your ropes,  
and strengthen your stakes.
- 3 For you will spread out to the right  
and to the left,  
and your offspring will inherit the Gentiles,  
and cause the desolate cities to be inhabited.
- 4 Do not fear, for you will not be put  
to shame, nor be disgraced,  
for you will not be humiliated.  
For you will forget the shame of your youth,  
and will no longer remember the  
reproach of your widowhood.
- 5 For your Maker *is* your husband.  
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.  
And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel.  
He will be called the God of the whole earth.
- 6 For the LORD has called you,  
a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,

- and a youthful wife when you  
were rejected, says your God.
- 7 For a brief moment I have forsaken you,  
but with great mercies I will gather you.
- 8 With a little wrath I hid my face  
from you for a moment,  
but with everlasting kindness I will  
have mercy on you,  
says the LORD your Redeemer.
- 9 For this *is like* the waters of Noah to me;  
for *as* I swore that the waters of Noah  
would not again flood the earth,  
so I have sworn that I would not be  
angry with you *again*, or rebuke you.
- 10 For the mountains will depart,  
and the hills be removed,  
but my kindness will not depart from you,  
nor will my covenant of peace be removed,  
says the LORD who has mercy on you.
- 11 "O you afflicted, tossed with a tempest,  
*and* not comforted,

into all the blessings of the new covenant;  
that she will be like a wife restored, and will  
become far more fruitful than she was dur-  
ing the long ages of the Old Testament.

"Break forth into singing" – the word is  
given as a prophecy to that future new  
Israel who had not brought forth a child in  
Isaiah's day because she did not yet exist  
as the new Israel. It is no coincidence that  
this instruction to Israel to sing comes  
immediately after chapter 53. In what Christ  
did on the cross there is the foundation not  
only for the salvation of individual believers  
now, but for the making of that future new  
Israel.

**54:2,3** Here is a prophecy that the future  
new Israel will have more territory and more  
power than ever before. See 26:1,15;  
33:20-24. Compare 2:1-3; etc. Is there  
no spiritual application to the New  
Testament Church? We may well think so.  
It is similar to Matt 28:19,20; Mark 16:15;  
Luke 24:45-48; Acts 1:8.

"Gentiles" – non-Jewish peoples.

**54:4-8** For an understanding of these  
verses an understanding of Rom 7:1-6 and  
Rom 11:11-29 is necessary. See those  
portions with their notes.

**54:4** "Shame of your youth" – in those days  
barrenness (v 1) was considered shameful,  
a lack of God's blessing.

"Widowhood" – the nation for centuries  
has been like a woman whose husband is  
dead. But all that will change.

**54:5,6** Jehovah was husband to Israel  
under the law, but because of her sin, He  
rejected her as a nation. The husband was  
as though dead to her. Israel in the future  
will be "remarried" to Jehovah (see Hosea  
chapter 2; 3:5). Eventually God will restore  
the nation to Himself, not as Lawgiver, but  
as Maker and Redeemer. It is very difficult  
to see how verses like these can possibly

refer to the Church of the New Testament  
which is Christ's body. But as elsewhere in  
Isaiah, after making the proper interpreta-  
tion of these verses, we can see spiritual  
truth that may apply to believers now. Since  
God Himself is our "husband", how fruitful  
we should be in proclaiming the Gospel and  
bringing others to experience the new birth!  
"God of the whole earth" – compare  
Ps 47:2.

**54:7** "Moment" – brief compared with the  
eternal salvation Israel will enjoy. Compare  
v 8; Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17; 2 Pet 3:8.  
Observe that the same nation that was God's  
chosen people and abandoned by God, will  
be brought back to God. Can this possibly  
refer to any nation or people other than  
Israel?

"Great mercies" – v 8,10; 14:1; 49:10.  
This is an attribute of God He loves to  
display (Ex 34:5-7; etc).

**54:8** "Wrath" – 9:12,17,21; 60:10; 2 Chron  
36:15,16; John 3:36. Notes on God's wrath  
at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7,11; etc.

"Redeemer" – note at Ps 78:35.

**54:9** The same nation that was an object  
of His anger will no longer (after He restores  
them in the future) taste of it again.

"Noah" – Gen 9:8-11. In this there is a  
spiritual application for believers now – Rom  
5:9; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9. True believers in  
Christ, born of God's Spirit, are forever  
delivered from God's condemning wrath.

**54:10** "Covenant of peace" – 53:5; 55:3;  
Jer 31:31-37; 33:20,21; Eph 2:17,18.  
The new covenant was actually made with  
representatives of the nation Israel, and now  
people of other nations participate in it  
because they are brought into the olive tree  
which is Israel (Matt 26:28; Heb 8:7,8;  
Rom 11:16-24).

**54:11,12** These gems indicate something  
of the future glory of Jerusalem.



- see, I will lay your stones with fair colours,  
and lay your foundations with sapphires.
- 12 And I will make your battlements  
of rubies, and your gates of crystal,  
and all your walls of precious stones.
- 13 And all your children *will be* taught by  
the LORD,  
and great *will be* the peace of your children.
- 14 In righteousness you will be established.  
You will be far from oppression,  
and you will not fear;  
and *far* from terror, for it will not come  
near you.
- 15 See, they will surely attack,  
*but it will* not be from me;  
and whosoever attacks you will fall for  
your sake.
- 16 See, I have created the blacksmith  
who blows the coals in the fire,  
and who brings out an instrument for his work;  
and I have created the destroyer to  
produce ruin.
- 17 No weapon that is formed against you  
will prosper;  
and you will condemn every tongue

*that* rises against you in judgment.  
This *is* the heritage of the servants of  
the LORD,  
and their righteousness *is* from me,"  
says the LORD.

- 55** "Ho, everyone who is thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and he who has no money, come,  
buy and eat;  
yes, come, buy wine and milk without  
money and without cost.
- 2 Why do you spend money for *what is*  
not bread?  
and your labour for *what* does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to me,  
and eat *what is* good,  
and let your soul delight itself in abundance.
- 3 Turn your ear and come to me.  
Hear, and your soul will live,  
and I will make an everlasting  
covenant with you,  
the sure mercies of David.
- 4 See, I have given him *as* a witness  
to the people,

**54:13** "Taught by the LORD" – 30:19-21; Jer 31:34. This is something all of us need to experience now. See Psalm 25:4,5.

"Peace" – 9:7; 66:12.

**54:14** "Righteousness" – 1:26; 4:3; 26:2; 58:8; 62:2.

"Oppression", "terror" – 9:4; 14:34; 33:17-19; Zeph 3:15; Zech 9:8.

**54:15-17** Jerusalem (and the nation it represents) will be absolutely secure and victorious. After their final restoration God will never again send enemies against them as He did before.

**54:16** "I have" – 10:15; Jer 51:1,11,20; Rev 17:16,17.

**54:17** Whether we think the people addressed in this chapter (and similar chapters) in Isaiah means a future new nation of Israel or the present Church of the New Testament has no bearing on the spiritual lessons and practical applications of truth we can learn from them. We may certainly apply a verse like this to ourselves now as believers.

"No weapon. . . will prosper" – Matt 16:18; Rom 8:37; 1 Cor 15:57; Heb 13:6.

"Their righteousness is from me" – 53:11; Acts 13:38,39; Rom 8:33; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21.

**55:1-13** Here is a great chapter full of grace and sweet promises to all who will trust in Christ, whether now or in some future time, whether Jews or Gentiles.

**55:1** "Thirsty" – 44:3; Ps 107:9; John 7:37; Rev 21:6; 22:17.

"Come to the waters" – these waters signifies Christ and the Holy Spirit (John 7:38,39. See Jer 2:13 and 17:13 where

the Lord says that He Himself is the "spring of living water"). What is required to obtain the water of eternal life is simply to come to Christ and drink.

"Buy" – not with money, not with offerings, not with good deeds – we cannot buy the benefits of the gospel of Christ with things like these. We "buy" from Him by coming to Him in faith and giving Him our hearts. Compare Rev 3:18.

"Wine and milk" – these signify other abundant blessings of the Gospel.

"Cost" – the blessing of the Gospel are freely given by God's grace (Rom 3:24; 6:23; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:3-7). The cost of it all was paid by Christ (chapter 53).

**55:2** "Why?" – men continually spend money and labor for that which cannot permanently satisfy. Compare Eccl 1:2; 2:11; Jer 2:13. The world with its pleasures, works, and religions leave men at last empty and lost (1 John 2:16,17).

"Listen" – God wants us to enjoy something fully satisfying. The Gospel of Christ is like a feast of good things, the richest of fare (25:6; Ps 22:26; Matt 22:2; Luke 14:15,16; John 6:27).

**55:3** "Your soul will live" – the Gospel brings new, spiritual life to those who hear and come (John 5:24; 20:31).

"Everlasting covenant" – God promised David a royal line that would go on forever (2 Sam 7:14-16). This will be fulfilled by God's faithful love in the Lord Jesus. In Isaiah we often see Him in prophecy as king (9:6,7; 11:1-9; 32:1-5; 33:17). See also Ps 2:6-9; 45:6; 72:5-11; 89:28,29,35-37; Acts 13:34.

**55:4** "I have given him" – the "him" refers

- a leader and commander to the people.
- 5 See, you will call a nation *that* you do not know, and nations *that* did not know you will run to you because of the LORD your God, and the Holy One of Israel; for he has glorified you."
- 6 Seek the LORD while he may be found, call to him while he is near.
- 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
- 8 "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, and your ways *are* not my ways," says the LORD.
- 9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so *are* my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.
- 10 For *as* the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and does not return there,

- but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater,
- 11 So will my word be that goes out from my mouth; it will not return to me void, but it will accomplish what I please, and it will succeed *in the thing* I send it to *do*.
- 12 For you will go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills will break out in front of you into singing, and all the trees of the field will clap *their* hands.
- 13 Instead of the thorn the fir tree will come up, and instead of the briar the myrtle will come up; and it will be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* will not be cut off."

**56** Thus says the LORD,  
"Preserve justice, and do the right;

to David, mentioned in the preceding verse. He may here represent the Son of David, the Lord Jesus. Compare Ezek 37:24,25; Hos 3:5.

**55:5** "You will call" – who is meant here? Possibly the Messiah, but more likely the nation Israel, redeemed, restored, made new; or possibly Israel together with the Messiah their king (2:2,3; 44:23; 60:2,3; 66:18-21; Jer 3:17; Zech 14:16).

**55:6** "Seek" – Deut 4:29; Jer 29:13,14; Hos 3:5; Amos 5:8; Matt 7:7,8.

"While he may be found" – Ps 32:6; 49:8.

"Call" – Ps 50:15; Isa 65:24; Jer 33:3; Rom 10:12,13.

**55:7** 2 Chron 7:14; Prov 28:13; Ezek 18:27,28. A striking example of this is in 2 Chron 33:1-20.

"Thoughts" – the wicked must forsake evil inwardly as well as outwardly. Men's inner thoughts are the source of their evil actions (Gen 6:5; 8:21; Matt 5:28; 15:19; 2 Cor 10:5). We must repent of our thoughts as well as our deeds.

"Pardon" – 43:25; 44:22; 53:5; Mic 7:18,19; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9.

**55:8** It is not like fallen men to pardon those who sin against them. Their thoughts do not delight in showing mercy to others.

**55:9** Ps 145:3; Rom 11:33-36. Our thoughts can't even begin to understand all God has made, let alone the depths in God Himself. It is not surprising that books like this prophecy of Isaiah, inspired by God and surging with His thoughts and plans, should in places seem to us mysterious and hard to understand.

**55:10,11** Just as surely as the rain and snow

fulfill God's purposes for which they were designed so will God's Word. God's Word came from His mouth into the mouths of His prophets and from there out into the world working God's will (compare 44:26; 46:10; Jer 1:9,10; 25:15-17; Ezek 37:9,10; Matt 4:4; John 6:63). God saying something makes it absolutely certain (for an example of this see Genesis chapter 1). This is why prophecies of the future in God's word may use past tenses of the verbs. When they were uttered it was as if they were fulfilled, though their actual fulfillment might have been many hundreds of years later.

**55:12,13** This is one of the purposes God will accomplish. It is as good as done because God has said it. The picture is Israel redeemed and the land blessed and fruitful – 35:1,2,10; 41:18-20; 44:23; 52:9. Compare Ps 96:11-13; 98:7-9. Joy, peace and song are natural elements of the kingdom of God in all ages (Rom 14:7).

"For a name" – see Jer 33:4-9. The redemption and restoration of Israel will bring eternal glory to God. It will be a marvelous display of grace, love, and faithfulness to His Word.

**56:1** God here speaks in general terms of some great event that was coming. What the event means specifically and when it would take place are not at all clear. Some think this revelation of God's salvation and righteousness refers to His righteous rescue of Israel from Babylon in 538 BC (compare 41:2; 44:28; 45:1-7). Others think it refers to the first coming of the Lord Jesus when salvation and righteousness were

- for my salvation *is* about to come,  
and my righteousness *is ready* to be  
revealed.
- 2 Blessed *is* the man *who* does this,  
and the son of a man *who* lays hold of it,  
who keeps the Sabbath from polluting it,  
and keeps his hand from doing any evil.
- 3 Do not let the son of a foreigner who  
has joined himself to the LORD,  
speak, saying,  
'The LORD has utterly separated me  
from his people';  
nor let the eunuch say,  
'Here I *am*, a dry tree.'
- 4 For thus says the LORD to the eunuchs  
who keep my Sabbaths,  
and choose *the things* that please me,  
and take hold of my covenant:
- 5 To them I will give a place in my house  
and within my walls,  
and a name better than that of sons  
and of daughters.  
I will give them an everlasting name  
that will not be cut off.
- 6 And as for the sons of a foreigner,  
who join themselves to the LORD to  
serve him,  
and to love the name of the LORD,  
to be his servants,

- every one who keeps the Sabbath  
from polluting it,  
and takes hold of my covenant,
- 7 Them I will bring to my holy mountain,  
and make them joyful in my house of prayer.  
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices  
*will be* accepted on my altar;  
for my house will be called a house of  
prayer for all people."
- 8 The Lord God who gathers the exiles of Israel  
says:  
"I will gather still *others* to him,  
besides those who are gathered to him."
- 9 All you beasts of the field, come to devour,  
all you beasts in the forest.
- 10 His watchmen *are* blind.  
They are all ignorant;  
they *are* all dumb dogs;  
they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down,  
loving to slumber.
- 11 Yes, *they are* greedy dogs *which* can  
never have enough,  
and they *are* shepherds *who* cannot  
understand.  
They all look to their own way,  
every one for his gain, from his own border.
- 12 "Come," *they say*, "I will bring wine,  
and we will fill ourselves with strong drink.

revealed in a marvelous way. Still others think it may refer to the second coming of Christ when salvation and righteousness will be revealed and established in all the earth (11:3-9; 32:1-5). In any case the event is used as a basis of appeal to the people in Isaiah's day to live righteous lives. Compare 2 Pet 3:11-14.

**56:2** "Sabbath" – Jer 17:19-27. The Sabbath was a sign of the old covenant God made with Israel (Ex 31:12-18). It was a part of the law of Moses. Here it represents the whole law that Israel was to keep. Believers now under the new covenant are not under the law and there is no command from God anywhere in the New Testament that Christians should keep the Sabbath. It is, in fact, the only one of the ten commandments not repeated to Christians as a principle of behavior. But the principle of one day (whatever the day may be) set apart for rest and worship is certainly of great benefit when practiced. Christians usually set apart Sunday for this purpose when it is possible to do so. See Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2; Rev 1:10.

**56:3** No non-Jew would ever dream of saying such a thing now under the new covenant. But in those days, because of verses like Deut 23:3,7,8 and because of the teaching that Israel was a special people, separate from all others, some foreigners might well have thought like this.

"Eunuch" – Deut 23:1. Here they probably represent all who had some physical defect (see Lev 21:16-23).

**56:4-7** A promise which means that God will not exclude anyone from His temple and His fellowship if they bind themselves to Him and keep His covenant. The mention of the Sabbath in verse 6 indicates that the old covenant is meant. The foreigners would be Jewish proselytes (like Cornelius – Acts chapter 10). "Burnt offerings" and sacrifices (v 7) also suggest the old covenant. They are unnecessary under the new covenant. The Lord Jesus quoted the last part of v 7 (Mark 11:17).

**56:8** "Gathers" – 11:10-16.

"Others" – many more "foreigners" would be gathered to Israel than the comparatively few proselytes of the past (2:2,3; 49:5,6; 55:5; 60:3; Zech 8:2; John 10:16; Rom 11:11-18).

**56:9-12** Verse 9 indicates a coming danger to Israel. Sometimes in the Bible wicked nations are called beasts – lion in Jer 4:7; beasts in Daniel chapters 7 and 8. The leaders, priests and prophets of Israel were all blind and corrupt. Even a dog knows to bark at danger, but these watchmen could bark only for more food for themselves (v 11).

"Shepherds who cannot understand" – Jer 23:1; Ezek 34:1-6.

"Own way" – 53:6.

"His gain" – 57:17; Jer 8:10; 22:17; Ezek 13:19; Mic 3:11; Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 6:9,10.

And tomorrow will be like today,  
and even more so."

- 57** The righteous perishes, and no man takes *it* to heart;  
and merciful men *are* taken away,  
no one understanding that the righteous  
is taken away from evil.
- 2 He will enter into peace.  
They will rest in their beds,  
*each one* having walked *in* his uprightness.
- 3 "But come here, you sons of the sorceress,  
the offspring of the adulterer and the  
prostitute.
- 4 At whom do you mock?  
At whom do you make a wide mouth,  
and stick out the tongue?  
*Are* you not children of transgression,  
descendants of falsehood,
- 5 Inflaming yourselves with idols under  
every green tree,  
slaying the children in the valleys,  
under the clefts of the rocks?
- 6 Among the smooth *stones* of the  
stream *is* your portion.  
They, they *are* your lot.  
To them you have poured out a drink offering,  
you have offered a grain offering.  
Should I relent concerning these things?
- 7 On a lofty and high mountain you have  
made your bed;  
there you went up to offer sacrifice.

- 8 Also behind the *doors* and the door  
posts you have set up your signs.  
*Away* from me you have uncovered  
*yourself*, and have gone up;  
you have made your bed wide,  
and made a *covenant* with those *idols* ;  
you loved their bed where you saw *it*.
- 9 And you went to the king with ointment,  
and increased your perfumes,  
and sent your messengers far away,  
and debased *yourself even* to hell.
- 10 You were wearied by the length of your road,  
*but* you did not say, 'There is no hope'.  
You found your strength revived,  
therefore you were not grieved.
- 11 And of whom have you been afraid  
or feared,  
that you have lied and have not  
remembered me,  
or taken *it* to your heart?  
Is it because I have kept silent that  
you did not fear me?
- 12 I will declare your righteousness,  
and your works;  
but they will not profit you.
- 13 When you cry out, let your collection  
*of idols* deliver you!  
But the wind will carry them all away.  
A breath will take *them away*.  
But the one who puts his trust in me  
will possess the land,  
and will inherit my holy mountain.

**57:1,2** God in mercy took away some of the righteous by death before a time of wrath and judgment. But the wicked who remained did not understand what was happening. They may even have thought that their death was God's judgment on them.

"Peace" – see v 21.

"Rest" – Dan 12:13; Rev 14:13.

**57:3,4** "You sons of the sorceress" – this means the wicked who made up most of the nation as described in 1:2-4,10-17. No doubt they thought they were God's children. Compare Matt 3:7-9; 12:34; 23:33.

"The adulterer" – from what follows it is probable that spiritual adultery is in view (see Jer 2:2; 3:14; 31:32; Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23).

"You mock" – 28:9,14. The wicked in Israel mocked and sneered at all the true prophets of God.

**57:5** "Every green tree" – where idols were placed.

"Slaying the children" – Lev 18:21; Deut 18:10; Ps 106:37,38; Ezek 16:20.

**57:6** "Should I relent" – Jer 5:7-9,29; 9:9.

**57:7** "Your bed" – suggests spiritual adultery (v 3).

"Offer sacrifice" – at shrines on the mountains and hills (Jer 3:6; Ezek 16:16; 22:9).

**57:8** "Signs" – some symbols to remind them of the gods they went after.

"Loved" – worldly allies with their gods, and idols of other nations is what they loved (Jer 3:2; Ezek 16:26; 23:7).

**57:9** "To the king" – this could be translated "to Molech." Molech means king, but he was also a false god. See Lev 18:21; 1 Kings 11:7; Jer 32:35. But probably this verse indicates the alliances with foreign powers Israel frequently tried to make.

"Hell" – in Hebrew "Sheol", world of the dead. Compare 28:15.

**57:10** They thought that foreign alliances had brought them strength. They were hopelessly wrong.

**57:11** They feared foreign powers, and mere men (51:12,13).

"Silent" – 42:14; Eccl 8:11.

"Fear me" – notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**57:12** "Righteousness" – 58:2,3; 64:6.

**57:13** 44:17; Jud 10:13,14. This is the nature of man. He will do what he pleases without God, and when trouble comes cry to God for help.

"Land" – 49:8; Ps 25:12,13; 37:9,22.

**57:14-19** Again God speaks through the prophet about the future.

- 14 And *it* will be said:  
‘Raise *it* up, raise *it* up!  
Prepare the way!  
Take away the stumbling block from  
my people’s path.’
- 15 “For thus says the high and lofty One  
who inhabits eternity,  
whose name *is* Holy:  
I dwell in the high and holy *place*,  
and with him *who is* contrite  
and humble in spirit,  
to revive the spirit of the humble,  
and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
- 16 For I will not contend forever,  
and I will not always be angry;  
for the spirit would grow faint before me,  
and the souls *which* I have made.
- 17 For the sin of his covetousness  
I was angry, and struck him.  
I hid myself, and was angry,  
and he went on turning back in the  
way of his heart.
- 18 I have seen his ways, and will heal him.  
I will also lead him, and restore  
comforts to him and to his mourners.
- 19 I create the fruit of the lips:  
Peace, peace to *the one who is* far away,  
and to *the one who is* near,

- says the Lord;  
and I will heal him.
- 20 But the wicked *are* like the troubled  
sea, when it cannot rest,  
whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”
- 21 “*There is no peace*”, says my God,  
“for the wicked.”

- 58** “Shout aloud! Do not spare!  
Lift up your voice like a trumpet,  
and declare to my people their  
transgression,  
and to the house of Jacob their sins.
- 2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to  
know my ways,  
as *if it were* a nation that acts in  
righteousness,  
and has not forsaken the ordinance of  
their God.
- They ask me for just decisions.  
They take delight in approaching God.
- 3 ‘Why have we fasted,’ *they say*,  
‘And you have not seen it?’  
*Why* have we afflicted our soul,  
and you have paid no attention?’  
Look, on your day of fasting you find pleasure,  
and exploit all your labourers.
- 4 Look, you fast for strife and debate,  
and to strike with the fist of wickedness.

**57:14** “Way” – the way for their unimpeded return (11:16; 35:8-10; 62:10).  
**57:15** “High and lofty One” – 6:1; 52:13.  
“Holy” – note at Lev 20:7.  
“Contrite” – or “crushed” – “humble” – the most high God loves the most lowly of men. He lives in the highest heaven and in the humblest heart, the heart that turns from sin and feels crushed because of its sin and trembles at His Word (66:2; Ps 51:17; Matt 5:3,4). Note on God’s dwelling with men at Ex 25:8. He resists those who think they are high and mighty – 2:10-18; 1 Pet 5:5,6.  
“Revive” – Ps 85:6; 38:7; Hab 3:2. New spiritual life will come to those who humble themselves before God and accept His rule in their lives.  
**57:16** He disputes with men now (3:13,14; Ps 50:21; etc), and is angry with their sin – John 3:36; Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; Rev 19:15. Notes on God’s anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; etc. He will not be angry with every single individual forever. If He were to be, no one could ever have strength to stand before Him (54:9; Ps 103:9-14; Jer 3:12).  
**57:17-19** These verses look forward to the future restoration of the nation Israel. The nation is viewed as an individual (“his”, “him”, “he”). Compare 41:8-16; 42:19-22; 44:1,2; 48:4-11. In spite of experiencing God’s punishments the nation kept on its own sinful way. The root of Israel’s sin is referred to in v 17. In spite of

Israel’s apostasy God says “I will heal him” (see also Deut 32:39; 2 Chron 7:14; Isa 30:26; 32:3-5; 35:5-10).  
“Lead” – 30:21; 42:16; 48:17.  
“Comforts to him” – 40:1; 49:13. This will be all of grace. Israel deserved and deserves nothing but eternal condemnation.  
“Far” and “near” – probably means the whole nation wherever they may be, but it may mean both Jew and Gentile (2:4; 26:3,12; 32:17; Eph 2:17). Healing to the whole earth will come when Israel is healed (Rom 11:12,15).  
**57:20,21** 48:22. Even if all Israel and all the world had peace the wicked would never enjoy peace themselves. Their inward nature makes peace impossible. It seethes with evil thoughts, desires and ambitions (Gen 6:5; 8:21). To have peace men must repent and be changed by God’s power.  
**58:1** When God’s people sin God’s prophets in every era must boldly and openly point those sins out to them.  
**58:2,3** See again what can go along with a life of sin and rebellion – much religious activity and prayer, inner deception, and a conviction that God is not treating them as fairly and graciously as they desire. Jer 17:9 gives the inner cause of such madness of men.  
“Exploit” – 3:14,15; 10:2.  
**58:4-7** Their fasting was not from good motives, nor from an understanding of what God wanted. Fasting (and all religious



- You do not fast as *you do* today to  
make your voice heard on high.
- 5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen?  
*Merely* a day for a man to afflict his soul?  
*Is it* to bow down his head like a bulrush,  
and to spread sackcloth and ashes  
*under him*?  
Will you call this a fast, and an  
acceptable day to the LORD?
- 6 "*Is* not this the fast that I have chosen:  
to loose the bands of wickedness,  
to undo the heavy burdens,  
and to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?
- 7 *Is it* not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and to bring to your house the poor  
who have been thrown out?  
When you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from *those of* your  
own flesh?
- 8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing will spring forth speedily,  
and your righteousness will go before you,  
*and* the glory of the LORD will be your  
rear guard.
- 9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;  
you will cry out, and he will say,  
'Here I *am*'.
- If you take away the yoke from among you,  
the pointing the finger, and speaking evil,
- 10 And *if* you draw out your soul to the hungry,  
and satisfy the afflicted soul,  
then your light will rise in darkness,  
and your dusk will *be* like noonday,
- 11 And the LORD will guide you continually,  
and satisfy your soul in drought,  
and make your bones fat;

activities) with them (and with a great many people since then) was only another means of gaining what they thought was merit and of displaying what they considered their own righteousness – Matt 6:16; Luke 18:10-12.

**58:6,7** God intended fasting to be associated with repentance, with a desire to live justly, with a determination to keep God's instructions, especially as regards the poor and weak and helpless (1:17; Ezek 18:5-9; Matt 25:35,36). This is what God wants to see, not men boasting in their righteousness because they observe a day of fasting. If our religion is not compassionate, does not cause us to help others, it is a vain and useless thing (Jam 1:27).

**58:8-12** If Israel repented, sought God as they ought, and put into practice God's word there would be marvelous results. Believers now also – in the measure they obey God's Word – will enjoy the blessings listed in these verses: light, healing, righteousness

- and you will be like a watered garden,  
and like a spring of water,  
whose waters do not fail.
- 12 And from among you *there will be*  
*those who* build up the old waste places.  
You will raise up the foundations of  
many generations,  
and you will be called,  
'The Repairer of the Breach',  
'The Restorer of Streets to Dwell in'.
- 13 "If you turn away your foot from  
*trampling on* the Sabbath,  
*from* doing your pleasure on my holy day,  
and call the Sabbath a delight,  
the holy *day* of the LORD honourable,  
and will honour him,  
not acting *according to* your own ways,  
or finding your own pleasure,  
or speaking *your own* words,
- 14 Then you will delight yourself in the LORD;  
and I will cause you to ride on the high  
places of the earth,  
and feed you with the heritage of  
Jacob your father;  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken *it*."

- 59** See, the LORD's hand is not so short  
that it cannot save,  
and his ear *is* not so dull that it cannot hear,
- 2 But your iniquities have separated you  
from your God,  
and your sins have hidden *his* face  
from you, so that he will not hear.
- 3 For your hands are defiled with blood,  
and your fingers with wickedness.  
Your lips have spoken lies,  
your tongue has muttered unjust things.

marching before them, God's glory guarding them, answered prayer, guidance, satisfaction, strength, fruitfulness, power to build and restore.

**58:13** "Sabbath" – see 56:2-8.

"Call the Sabbath a delight" – for them this would be the same as delighting in the Lord and His law (Ps 1:2; 37:4; 84:2,10). **58:14** "Delight yourself in the LORD" – Ps 37:4.

"High places" – Deut 32:13; 33:29; Ps 18:33; Isa 33:16.

"Heritage" – the land of Israel (Ps 105:10,11).

**59:1,2** God is neither helpless nor deaf (50:2; Ps 65:2). If He does not hear His people and work on their behalf the fault is not His but theirs. Sin separates us from God's fellowship and is the reason for much unanswered prayer (1:15; Ps 66:18).

**59:3-8** A summary of the evil ways of the people of Israel that had been denounced before.

- 4 No one calls for justice,  
no one pleads for truth.  
They trust in emptiness, and speak lies.  
They conceive mischief,  
and bring forth evil.
- 5 They hatch the viper's eggs,  
and spin the spider's web.  
He who eats any of their eggs dies,  
and *from* one that is crushed  
a viper breaks out.
- 6 Their webs will not become garments,  
nor will they cover themselves with  
their works.  
Their works *are* works of iniquity,  
and the act of violence is in their hands.
- 7 Their feet run to evil,  
and they hurry to shed innocent blood.  
Their thoughts *are* thoughts of wickedness.  
Wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.
- 8 The way of peace they do not know,  
and *there is* no justice in their ways.  
They have made crooked paths for themselves.  
Whoever goes in them will not know peace.
- 9 Therefore justice is far from us,  
and righteousness does not overtake us.  
We wait for light, but see darkness;  
for brightness,  
*but* we walk in the dark.
- 10 We grope for the wall like the blind;

- yes, we grope as if *we had* no eyes.  
We stumble at noonday as in the night.  
*We are* like dead *men* in desolate places.
- 11 We all roar like bears,  
and mourn bitterly like doves.  
We look for justice, but *there is* none;  
for salvation, *but* it is far away from us.
- 12 For our transgressions are multiplied  
before you,  
and our sins testify against us.  
For our transgressions *are* with us,  
and *as for* our evil deeds,  
we know them:
- 13 Transgressing and lying against the LORD,  
and departing from our God,  
speaking oppression and revolt,  
conceiving and uttering from the heart  
words of falsehood.
- 14 And justice is turned back,  
and righteousness stands at a distance;  
for truth has fallen in the street,  
and integrity cannot enter.
- 15 Yes, truth is missing,  
and he *who* departs from evil makes  
himself a prey.  
And the LORD saw *it*, and it  
displeased him that *there was* no justice.
- 16 And he saw that *there was* no *just* man,  
and wondered that *there was* no

**59:5** Their plans are pure poison to others, useless to themselves (1:2,4,15-17,21-23; 5:7,23).

**59:7,8** See Rom 3:15-17 where Paul uses these verses in his general description of the human race as a whole. Verses 1-6 apply equally well to fallen man. As for Israel though this describes the bulk of the people as God saw them, they still thought that God should answer their prayers (58:2,3)!

"Run" – Prov 1:16. This indicates the eagerness with which men commit sin.

"Thoughts" – Gen 6:5; 8:21.

"In their paths" – 53:6; Acts 13:10; Gal 1:7.

"Way of peace" – 57:20,21.

**59:9-15** The prophet Isaiah identifies himself with his people Israel in this confession of the nation's sinful condition. Compare 64:5-7; Ezra 9:6,7; Jer 3:22-25; Dan 9:4-19; Rom 3:9. The prophets and saints of the Bible did not set themselves up as some superior beings, more holy and righteous than others.

**59:9,10** "In the dark" – sin separates men from God who is light (1 John 1:5). In Him there is no darkness at all. In Israel, at the time of these words, there was no light at all. This fulfilled Deut 28:15,28,29. See too Isa 6:9-12. The people of Israel did not see what they were or where they were going or how this darkness of mind and heart and spirit was a punishment for their sin. They

had not wanted God's light and truth. This was the result.

**59:11** "Like doves" – 38:14; Ezek 7:16; Nah 2:7.

**59:12-15** Isaiah makes it very clear why the nation is in darkness. He confesses the nation's sins, first generally, then more specifically. In verses 13-15 it seems almost as if he were speaking of conditions so common in our day.

**59:13** "Transgressing" – or "rebelling" – 1:2; 46:8; 48:8.

"Departing" – 1:4; 2 Chron 29:6; Jer 2:27.

"Oppression" – 3:14,15; 5:7; 30:12.

"Falsehood" – in this chapter notice the emphasis on the sin of lying (vs 3, 4, 13, 14, 15). Men often think lightly of this, one of the worst of sins. Notes on lying at Prov 6:16-19; etc.

**59:14** All through Isaiah there is emphasis on justice and righteousness. The words are used nearly sixty times.

**59:15** Those who stand for righteousness and holiness should be honored, but in a corrupt society they are often opposed, persecuted, and sometimes destroyed. And will the one true God who loves justice, honesty and truth be pleased with that kind of society? Compare Gen 6:5,6.

**59:16** "No *just* man" – 63:5; 64:6; 2 Kings 14:26; Jer 5:1; Ezek 22:30.

"Wondered" – or "was desolate" – 63:4.

intercessor.

Therefore his arm brought victory to him,  
and his righteousness sustained him.

- 17 For he put on righteousness like a  
breastplate,  
and a helmet of salvation on his head;  
and he put on the garments of  
vengeance as clothing,  
and was clothed with zeal like a cloak.
- 18 According to *their* deeds,  
so he will repay:  
fury to his adversaries,  
retribution to his enemies;  
to the islands he will mete out retribution.
- 19 So they will fear the name of the  
LORD from the west,  
and his glory from the rising of the sun.  
When the enemy comes in like a flood,  
the Spirit of the LORD will lift  
up a banner against him.
- 20 "And the Redeemer will come to Zion,  
and to those who turn from  
transgression in Jacob",  
says the LORD.

21 "As for me, this *is* my covenant with them,"  
says the LORD: "My Spirit who *is* on you, and my  
words which I have put in your mouth, will not  
depart from your mouth, or from the mouth of your  
offspring, or from the mouth of your offspring's  
offspring," says the LORD, "from now on and for-  
ever."

**60** "Arise, shine! For your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen  
on you.

- 2 For, see, the darkness will cover the earth,  
and deep darkness the people,  
but the LORD will rise upon you,  
and his glory will be seen over you.
- 3 And the Gentiles will come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.
- 4 "Lift up your eyes all around and look.  
They all assemble, they come to you.  
Your sons will come from afar,  
and your daughters will be nursed  
at *your* side.
- 5 Then you will see, and be radiant,  
and your heart will thrill and

"His arm" – 51:9; 52:10.  
"His righteousness" – there was no  
righteousness whatever in Israel that could  
be a foundation for His work.  
**59:17** "Breastplate" and "helmet" – see Eph  
6:14,17.  
"Vengeance" – v 18; 1:24; 34:2,8;  
35:4; 47:3; 61:2; 63:4.  
"Zeal" – 9:7; 26:11; 37:32; 42:13.  
**59:18** See 65:6,7; 66:6; Rom 2:6; Rev  
22:12.  
**59:19** All nations will realize that Jehovah is  
the one true God and will learn to fear Him –  
2:2,3; 11:10; 40:5; 45:6; 52:10. "He"  
in verse 18 refers to the Redeemer seen in  
verse 20, the Lord Jesus. The last sentence  
of this verse may also be translated "When  
the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit  
of the LORD will put him to flight."  
**59:20** This is a key verse in the  
interpretation of Isaiah. Paul applies this  
verse to the literal Israel in Rom 11:25,26.  
And since all Israel will be saved after the  
fullness of the Gentiles comes in, the time  
points to the time of Christ's second coming.  
It is when Israel is redeemed and restored  
that the nations of the earth will turn to God  
as in v 19 (Rom 11:12,15). To Paul Zion  
meant Jerusalem as representing the literal  
nation of Israel.  
**59:21** "Covenant" – 42:6; 55:3; Jer  
31:31-34.  
"You" – the nation spoken to as if an  
individual.  
"My words. . . in your mouth" – 51:16. It  
indicates a complete change in the nation  
that had cast God's words behind its back.  
Word in the mouth here indicates word in  
the heart also. Compare Matt 12:34.

"Forever" – after Israel's restoration at  
Christ's second coming there will be suc-  
ceeding generations of offspring, so that for  
the fulfillment of this a literal millennium is  
needed.  
**60:1-22** "Your light" – means Jerusalem as  
the representative of the nation Israel – vs  
10,14,15,18,21. Some scholars teach that  
the nation of Israel has no future and that  
this chapter and similar prophecies refer  
exclusively to the Church of the New  
Testament. The author of these notes does  
not deny that spiritual application of these  
passages can be made to the New Testa-  
ment Church, but he does deny that they  
will have no fulfillment in the literal nation  
of Israel. It may well be that Old Testament  
prophecies of God's kingdom can have a  
fourfold reference – to the historical  
circumstances of the prophets themselves;  
to a spiritual or typical fulfillment in the  
Church; to a literal fulfillment in the  
millennium; and to some sort of eternal  
fulfillment in the new heavens and earth.  
**60:1** "Light", "glory" – 4:56; 9:2; 58:8.  
**60:2** Darkness speaks of the spiritual blind-  
ness that results from sin – 9:2; 59:9;  
Eph 4:17,18.  
"The LORD will rise upon you" – the Lord  
Himself is the light that dispels spiritual dark-  
ness (Mal 4:2; John 8:12; 2 Cor 4:3-6).  
**60:3** Verses 5,10-12; 2:2-4; etc. It is  
repeated again and again in Isaiah that the  
salvation and restoration of Israel will mean  
marvelous blessing for the whole earth (Gen  
12:3). The Gentiles mean non-Jewish  
peoples.  
**60:4** See 49:18,22.  
**60:5** "Radiant" – Ps 34:5.

- swell *with joy*.
- For the abundance of the sea will be  
turned to you,  
the riches of the Gentiles will come  
to you.
- 6 A multitude of camels will cover your *land*,  
the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah,  
all those from Sheba will come.  
They will bring gold and incense,  
and they will declare the praises of  
the LORD.
- 7 All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered  
together to you,  
the rams of Nebaioth will serve you.  
They will come up on my altar and be  
accepted,  
and I will glorify the house of my glory.
- 8 Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud,  
and like doves to their windows?
- 9 Surely the islands will wait for me;  
and at first *will come* the ships of  
Tarshish bringing your sons from afar,  
their silver and their gold with them,  
to the name of the LORD your God,  
and to the Holy One of Israel,  
because he has glorified you.
- 10 "And the sons of strangers will build  
up your walls,

- and their kings will minister to you.  
For in my anger I struck you,  
but in my favour I have had mercy  
on you.
- 11 Therefore your gates will be open continually;  
they will not be shut day or night,  
so that *people* may bring to you the  
riches of the Gentiles,  
and their kings led in procession.
- 12 For the nation and kingdom that will  
not serve you will perish;  
yes, *those* nations will be utterly ruined.
- 13 "The glory of Lebanon will come  
to you, the fir tree, the pine tree,  
and the box tree together,  
to beautify the place of my sanctuary;  
and I will make the place of my feet glorious.
- 14 The sons of those who afflicted you  
will also come bending down to you,  
and all those who despised you will  
bow down at the soles of your feet;  
and they will call you,  
'The City of the LORD',  
'The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.'
- 15 "Although you have been forsaken and hated,  
so that no man went through *you*,  
I will make you an eternal excellence,  
a joy for many generations.

"Joy" – 35:2,10; 66:14.  
"Riches" – v 11; 18:7; 23:18; 45:14;  
61:6; 66:12.  
**60:6** "Midian" – Gen 37:28; Num 31:2,3;  
Jud 6:2; Ps 83:9. Ephah was a son of Midian.  
"Sheba" – located in the southern  
Arabian peninsula.  
"Praises" – indicates a complete change  
in the nation. Notice the word "all."  
**60:7** "Kedar" – note at 21:16.  
"Nebaioth" – son of Ishmael.  
"Flocks" and "rams" and "altar" suggest  
offerings. See also 56:6,7. But will there  
be animal sacrifices in the future  
millennium? This is a difficult question.  
See note at Ezek 40:38-43. If God then  
has Israel offer such sacrifices there will be  
a perfectly good reason for it. And if God  
reveals, in such verses as this, that there  
will be such sacrifices, believers now have  
no business denying it.  
**60:9** The answer to the question of v 8. See  
11:11,12. The day is coming when all  
nations will honor the true God. See Rev  
21:24,26.  
"Tarshish" – 2:16; 23:1; 2 Chron 9:21;  
Ps 48:7; 72:10.  
**60:10** It is true that believers of many  
nations now are builders of some sort in the  
New Testament Church (1 Cor 3:10-13), and  
that the Church is now being built (Eph 2:22).  
And even kings have had their part in it.  
But the words which follow obviously refer to

Jerusalem representing the nation of Israel.  
"I struck you" – Lev 26:27-33; Deut  
28:22; Lam 1:12; Isa 1:5; 5:25; Luke  
19:41-44; 20:14-18; 1 Thess 2:16.  
"Mercy" – 54:7,8.  
**60:11** The language is very similar to Rev  
21:24-26. This does not mean there can  
be no fulfillment for the literal city of  
Jerusalem. The city of Rev 21:9-27 was  
never struck and abandoned by God, as the  
literal city of Jerusalem was (54:7). Nor was  
the true Church ever abandoned by God.  
**60:12** Does this not speak again of the  
political supremacy of the nation Israel in the  
future? See 14:2; 49:23; Zech 14:16-19.  
**60:13** "Lebanon" – 35:2; famous for its  
magnificent trees used in constructing  
Solomon's temple (1 Kings 5:10,18).  
During Solomon's reign Israel reached the  
pinnacle of its glory and political power in  
Old Testament times. The glory and power  
will return in greater measure than before.  
**60:14** Verses 10,12; 49:7,23.  
"City of the LORD" – one of several  
names the future Jerusalem will have – 1:26;  
62:4; Ezek 48:35; Zech 8:3. It will be  
an earthly picture of the heavenly city of  
God (Heb 12:22).  
**60:15** "No man went through you" – true  
enough of the literal Jerusalem and Israel  
(6:11,12; 62:4; Jer 30:17; Ps 106:40;  
Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68).  
"Eternal excellence" – Jerusalem will be

- 16 You will also suck the milk of the Gentiles,  
and be nursed at the breast of kings.  
And you will know that I, the LORD,  
am your Savior and your Redeemer,  
the mighty One of Jacob.
- 17 Instead of bronze I will bring gold,  
and instead of iron I will bring silver,  
and instead of wood bronze,  
and instead of stones iron.  
I will also make peace your officials,  
and righteousness your lords.
- 18 Violence will be heard in your land no more,  
nor ruin or destruction within your borders;  
but you will call your walls 'Salvation',  
and your gates 'Praise.'
- 19 By day the sun will be your light no more,  
and the brightness of the moon will not  
give light to you;  
but the LORD will be an everlasting  
light for you,  
and your God your glory.
- 20 Your sun will go down no more,  
and your moon will not withdraw itself;  
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and the days of your mourning will be  
ended.

- 21 And all your people *will be* righteous.  
They will inherit the land forever,  
the branch of my planting,  
the work of my hands,  
that I may be glorified.
- 22 A little one will become a thousand,  
and a small one a strong nation.  
I the LORD will hasten it in its time."
- 61** "The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me to  
preach good news to the meek.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to *those*  
*who are* bound,
- 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,
- 3 To transform those who mourn in Zion,  
to give them beauty in place of ashes,  
the oil of joy in place of mourning,  
the garment of praise in place of  
the spirit of heaviness,  
so that they might be called  
'Trees of Righteousness',

the brightest and best spot on earth, the center of truth and spirituality.

**60:16** "Breast" – vs 5,11.  
"You will know" – 49:26 says all mankind will know. Israel will fully enter into an experiential knowledge of it.

**60:17** "Gold" – another suggestion of Solomon's reign (1 Kings 10:21,27).  
"Peace", "righteousness" – 9:7; 32:17; 48:18; 54:13,14.

**60:18** "Violence" – 14:4; 49:19; 54:14.  
"Salvation", "praise" (26:1) – complete security and praise to the God who accomplished it.

**60:19,20** See 4:5,6; conditions in the millennium. Compare Rev 21:23; 22:5 which gives conditions throughout the eternal ages.

"Mourning will be ended" – 25:8; 35:10; 40:1; 51:11; 65:19; Rev 21:4.

**60:21** "Righteous" – 4:3; 35:8; Rev 21:27.  
"Land" – signifies the land of Israel promised by God to them. The promise was repeatedly confirmed (Gen 12:6,7; 15:18,19; 17:8; 28:13; Ps 37:11,22; Isa 49:8; 61:7).  
"Branch" – this branch is the nation Israel (5:1,2,7; Ex 15:17; Ps 44:2; 80:8-11). They will be planted again – Amos 9:15.  
"Glorified" – 49:3; 61:3. What a glory it will be to God when He takes that stiff-necked, rebellious, unbelieving, sinful nation that rejected and crucified His Son and makes it humble, holy and splendid.

**60:22** "Thousand" – 51:2; 54:3 – speaks of great increase in numbers.  
"Hasten it" – once God starts the work of

restoring Israel it will not take long.

**61:1** Old Testament prophets, priests and kings were those who were anointed. Here the ministry of prophet is in view. In Luke 4:16-21 the Lord Jesus applied these verses to Himself. He is the great prophet foretold in Deut 18:17-19. The Spirit of God had anointed Him for His ministry before that (Luke 3:21,22; Acts 10:38). Jesus, speaking in Nazareth, meant that the fulfillment of Isaiah's words was in progress that day.

"Good news" – Matt 11:4-6; this was part of Jesus's ministry. The good news is defined in the rest of the verse. Fallen men are captives of Satan and servants of sin (John 8:34,44; Rom 6:20; Eph 2:1,2; 2 Tim 2:26). Jesus came and proclaimed the way of release. The last sentence in this verse probably refers to spiritual blindness. The word translated "opening" usually in Isaiah means opening of eyes or ears. And the Septuagint has "the blind" instead of "the prison." So a possible translation is "recovery of sight for the blind."

**61:2,3** After reading the first sentence of verse 2, Jesus stopped reading (Luke 4:18,19). The year of the Lord's favor is not a literal year but the whole time of His favor (2 Cor 6:2). The day of vengeance had not come (34:2,8; 35:4; 63:4), nor had the time to comfort all who mourn in Zion (40:1,2; 49:13), nor to transform those who grieve in Zion. The things mentioned in v 3 – beauty, gladness, praise – signify the complete redemption and restoration of the nation Israel (12:1-6; 26:1-4; 35:1-10; 51:3; etc.). Is there no spiritual application



- 'The Planting of the LORD',  
that he might be glorified.
- 4 "And they will build up the old ruins;  
they will raise up the former desolations,  
and they will repair the ruined cities,  
the desolations of many generations.
- 5 And foreigners will stand and feed your flocks,  
and the sons of aliens *will be* your  
plowmen and your vine dressers.
- 6 But you will be named  
'The Priests of the LORD';  
*people* will call you  
'The Ministers of our God.'  
You will eat the riches of the Gentiles,  
and in their glory you will boast.
- 7 Instead of your shame *you will have*  
a double *amount*,  
and *instead of* disgrace they will  
rejoice in their portion.  
So in their land they will possess a  
double *amount*.  
They will have everlasting joy.
- 8 "For I, the LORD, love justice.  
I hate robbery in the burnt offering;  
and I will direct their work in truth,  
and I will make an everlasting  
covenant with them.
- 9 And their descendants will be known

of these things in this age of grace? Of course there is. The Lord Jesus now gives them to those who turn to Him in trust and obedience. But this does not exhaust the meaning of the passage (note on 60:1-22).

"Trees of Righteousness" – 1:26; 4:3; 26:2; 35:8; 60:21.

"Glorified" – 44:23; 46:13; 49:3; 52:1; 55:5; 60:9,21.

61:4 "Build up" – 49:8; 54:3; 58:12.

61:5 "Foreigners" – 14:1,2; 60:10,11. Israel will be the chief of the nations.

61:6 "Priests" – in the present age all believers are priests. See notes at Ex 28:1; 1 Peter 2:5,9. At the end of this present age believers will be caught up to be with Christ. After that, in the millennium, it seems there will be a priesthood in the hands of Israel, redeemed and restored to be God's representative on earth (66:21; Jer 33:17,18; Ezek 40:44-46). It is not clear just how the outworking of this will be, but not understanding it should not be a reason for denying it.

"Riches" – 60:5,11.

61:7 Zech 9:12. Israel was like God's "firstborn" (Ex 4:22; Jer 31:9). The firstborn among Israelites received a double portion (Gen 25:31; Deut 21:17).

61:8 "Truth", "covenant" – this is the reason why there is a future for Israel as a nation. God made many promises to them and He will keep them. On "covenant" see 55:3; 59:21; Jer 31:35-37; 32:40.

among the Gentiles,  
and their offspring among the peoples.  
All who see them will acknowledge them,  
that they *are* the offspring *whom* the  
LORD has blessed."

- 10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD.  
My soul will be joyful in my God,  
for he has clothed me with the  
garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of  
righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks *himself* with  
ornaments,  
and as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels.
- 11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,  
and as the garden causes what is sown  
in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause  
righteousness and praise to spring  
up before all the nations.

**62** For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
until its righteousness goes forth like brightness,  
and its salvation like a burning lamp.

- 2 And the Gentiles will see your righteousness,  
and all the kings your glory;  
and you will be called by a new name,

**61:9** "Gentiles" – non-Jewish peoples.

"Offspring" – 43:5; 48:19; 59:21.

"Blessed" – 32:20; 44:3; 65:23. Notes on God's blessings at Gen 12:3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1.

61:10 "Rejoice" – 25:9; 35:10; here either Jerusalem, representing the future redeemed people of Israel, or Isaiah is speaking.

"Garments" – v 3; 52:1; Rom 13:14.

"Robe of righteousness" – this is a righteousness God gives, the opposite of man's own (64:6; note at Gen 3:21; Rom 3:21; 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:9). It can be put on only by faith. The words "bridegroom" and "bride" indicate the beginning of something new in the relationship between God and Israel, or the consummation of a progressive relationship. Compare Hos 2:19,20.

61:11 Righteousness and praise will spring out of the earth – 45:8; 55:10,11. This means that God's righteousness will eventually produce righteous people, righteous nations and a righteous world.

62:1-5 "I" – who is speaking? Some think it is Isaiah representing succeeding generations of believers. Others think the speaker is the Messiah as in 61:1, and this seems more likely. The truth revealed is the same in either case. Jerusalem will be filled with righteousness and eternally saved – 4:3,4; 26:1,2; 46:13; 59:20,21; 60:18; Jer 23:5,6.

62:2 "Gentiles" – 2:2; 52:10; 60:3.

"New name" – vs 4,12; 1:26.

- which the mouth of the LORD will name.
- 3 You will also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
- 4 You will no longer be called "Forsaken",  
nor will your land any longer be called "Desolate",  
but you will be called "Hephzibah"  
and your land "Beulah,"  
for the LORD delights in you,  
and your land will be married.
- 5 For as a young man marries a virgin,  
so your sons will marry you;  
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,  
so your God will rejoice over you.
- 6 I have set watchmen on your walls,  
O Jerusalem,  
who will never keep silent, day or night.  
You who make mention of the LORD,  
do not keep silent,
- 7 And give him no rest, until he  
establishes Jerusalem,  
and until he makes it a praise in the earth.
- 8 The LORD has sworn by his right hand,  
and by the arm of his strength,  
"Certainly I will no longer give your grain  
to be food for your enemies,  
and the sons of foreigners will not drink  
your wine, for which you laboured;
- 9 But those who have gathered it will eat it,  
and praise the LORD,  
and those who have brought it together  
will drink it in my holy courts.
- 10 Go through, go through the gates!  
Prepare the way for the people!

Build up, build up the highway!  
Take away the stones!  
Lift up a banner for the people!

- 11 See, the LORD has proclaimed to the  
ends of the earth:  
"Tell the daughter of Zion:  
Look, your salvation is coming;  
look, his reward *is* with him,  
and his wages accompany him."
- 12 And they will call them,  
"The Holy People,"  
"The Redeemed of the LORD",  
and you will be called,  
"Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken."

- 63** Who *is* this who comes from Edom,  
from Bozrah,  
with garments *stained* red?  
This *One who is* glorious in his apparel,  
travelling in the greatness of his strength?
- "I who speak in righteousness,  
mighty to save."
- 2 Why *is* your clothing red,  
and your garments like one who  
treads the winepress?
- 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone,  
and none of the people *was* with me;  
for I have trod on them in my anger,  
and trampled them in my fury,  
and their blood was sprinkled on  
my garments,  
and I have stained all my clothing.
- 4 For the day of vengeance *was* in my heart,  
and the year of my redeemed has come.

**62:3** Compare 28:5; Zech 9:16. Crown speaks of authority and political power.  
**62:4** "Desolate" – Lev 26:43; Isa 5:5,6; 6:12; 54:6,7; 60:15; Jer 30:17. Hephzibah means "my delight is in her." Beulah means "married." Observe that it is the same city and the same land which were deserted and desolate which will experience the wonderful change. What else but a literal Jerusalem and a literal land of Israel could be meant?  
**62:5** This means that the people of Israel will again possess the land, and God will again regard Israel as a wife.  
**62:6,7** The speaker is either the Messiah the Son of God, or the Father. The truth revealed is the same in either case. For watchman see 52:8; 56:10; Jer 6:17; 31:6; Ezek 3:17; 33:7. They should pray unceasingly for the restoration of Jerusalem. For "a praise in the earth" see Jer 33:9; Zeph 3:19,20.  
**62:8,9** The word "sworn" indicates a very solemn and emphatic way of making a

promise. The promise is that after Jerusalem's restoration, oppression from enemies will cease forever.  
"My holy courts" – compare Lev 23:39,40; Deut 14:22-26.  
**62:10** See 11:10,16; 57:14; 48:20; 60:11.  
**62:11** "Your salvation is coming" – since the next words speak of the giving of rewards, this coming is doubtless the second coming of Christ – 40:10; Matt 25:14-19; Rev 11:18; 22:12.  
**62:12** "Holy people" – 4:3; 26:2; 45:25; 52:1; 60:21.  
"Redeemed" – 35:9; 44:23; 51:11. Only after the second coming of Christ will this verse have its fulfillment.  
**63:1** See 34:6. 34:1-8 gives a picture very similar to the first six verses of this chapter. This can refer only to the Messiah. He is pictured as coming to deliver Israel.  
**63:2,3** Rev 14:17-20; 19:15.  
**63:4** See 34:2,8; 35:4; 61:2. The time of vengeance on God's enemies will be the time of redemption for His people.

- 5 And I looked, and *there was* no one to help;  
and I wondered that *there was* no one  
to give support;  
therefore my own arm brought salvation  
for me, and my fury gave me support.
- 6 And I trampled the peoples in my anger,  
and made them drunk with my fury,  
and I brought their strength down to  
the ground."
- 7 I will mention the acts of loving kindness  
of the LORD,  
*and* the praises of the LORD,  
according to all that the LORD has  
granted to us,  
and the great goodness toward the  
house of Israel which he has  
granted to them,  
according to his mercies and according  
to the multitude of his acts of  
loving kindness.
- 8 For he said, "Surely they *are* my  
people, children *who* will not lie."  
So he was their Saviour.
- 9 In all their affliction he was afflicted,  
and the angel of his presence saved them.  
In his love and in his pity he redeemed them,  
and he bore them and carried them all  
the days of old.
- 10 But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.  
Therefore he turned to become their enemy,  
*and* he fought against them.
- 11 Then *they* remembered the days

- of old, Moses, and his people,  
*saying*, "Where *is* the one who brought  
them up out of the sea with the  
shepherd of his flock?  
Where *is* the one who put his Holy  
Spirit within him,
- 12 Who led *them* with his glorious arm,  
by the right hand of Moses,  
dividing the water before them,  
to make himself an everlasting name,
- 13 Who led them through the deep,  
like a horse in the wilderness,  
*so that* they would not stumble?"
- 14 The Spirit of the LORD caused them to rest,  
like cattle going down into the valley;  
so you led your people,  
to make yourself a glorious name.
- 15 Look down from heaven and see from  
your holy and glorious dwelling place.  
Where *is* your zeal and your strength,  
the stirring of your heart and of  
your mercies toward me?  
Are they restrained?
- 16 Doubtless you *are* our father,  
though Abraham was ignorant of us,  
and Israel does not acknowledge us.  
You, O LORD, *are* our father, our redeemer;  
your name *is* from everlasting.
- 17 O LORD, why have you caused us to  
stray from your ways,  
*and* hardened our heart from your fear?  
Return for the sake of your servants,  
the tribes of your inheritance.

**63:5** See 59:16 and note there.

**63:6** "Drunk" – compare Jer 25:15-31.

**63:7-14** A brief look at God's great goodness toward Israel in the past, similar in tone to psalms 105, 106.

**63:8** "Children who will not lie" – the Hebrew here should probably be translated "sons who must not be false to me." God knew in advance that they would be sinful and rebellious.

**63:9** This is the nature of God as revealed in the Bible. He is not distant, uncaring, hard and cold. He feels what His people suffer. He endures it with them, in them. The word "compassion" means to suffer with. The Hebrew expression here is equally strong. In the New Testament see Matt 25:35-40; Acts 9:4.

"Angel" – Ex 14:19; 23:20-23; 33:12,14,15; Num 20:16; note at Gen 16:7.

"Carried" – Deut 1:31; 32:10-12.

**63:10** "Rebelled" – Num 20:10; Deut 9:24; Ps 78:40; 106:40.

"Grieved" – Ps 106:33; Eph 4:30.

"Enemy" – Lev 26:17; Jer 21:5; Ezek 15:7.

**63:11** "Then *they* remembered" – or it could be translated "he remembered."

**63:11-14** The people, remembering the past, ask what has become of the God of such mighty works. Ex 14:22,30.

"Holy Spirit" – vs 10,14; Gen 1:2; Num 11:17,25; Ps 51:11; John 14:17.

**63:12** See 51:9; 52:10; 53:1; Ex 15:16.

**63:14** "Name" – Ex 9:16.

**63:15** Here begins a prayer of Isaiah. He represents the people of Israel. The people felt that God had completely withdrawn from earth to heaven, and is no longer active among them.

"Zeal" – 9:7; 26:11; 42:13.

**63:16** See 64:8; Ex 4:22; Deut 32:6; Jer 3:4; John 8:41. In Israel God was regarded as the Father of the nation. But the people of Israel had fallen so low, were so rebellious against God's will, that if Abraham and his grandson Israel were there they would not be able to recognize them as their descendants.

**63:17** This prayer probably has reference to 6:9,10. Whatever God did to them in this way was a perfectly just punishment for their sins. Note on hardening at Ex 4:21.

"Inheritance" – Ex 6:7; 34:9; Deut 4:20; 7:6; 32:9.

- 18 Your holy people have possessed *it*  
only a little while.  
Our adversaries have trampled down  
your sanctuary.
- 19 We are *yours*.  
You have never ruled over them;  
they have not been called by your name.

**64** Oh, that you would rend the heavens!  
That you would come down!

- That the mountains might tremble at  
your presence,
- 2 As fire makes the brushwood burn,  
as fire causes water to boil,  
to make your name known to your  
adversaries, *that* the nations may  
tremble at your presence!
- 3 When you did awesome things *which*  
we did not look for, you came down,  
the mountains trembled at your presence.
- 4 For since the beginning of the world  
*people* have not heard or perceived  
with the ear,  
nor has the eye seen a God besides

**63:18** See 64:10,11. This had not happened in Isaiah's day. Therefore we may judge that he is looking forward to a future time and making this prayer for a future generation.

**63:19** Here the contrast is between God's people Israel and the enemies mentioned in v 18. This verse may possibly be translated "We are like those you have never ruled, like those never called by your name."

**64:1-12** He continues his prayer which begins at 63:15, a marvelous prayer of confession of sin and of pleading that God might come again in mighty power, and forgive and restore his people.

**64:1,2** He prays that God will come suddenly, powerfully, shaking the earth and the nations, blazing like fire against His enemies. This prayer will yet be fully answered (24:18-20; 30:27,28; 2 Thess 1:7; Heb 12:26-29; Rev 19:11,12).

"Tremble" – closer to the meaning of the Hebrew word than "flow down."

"Name" – 30:27; 59:19.

**64:3** Deut 7:21; 10:21.

"Awesome" – Ps 65:5; 66:3-6; 106:21,22; 145:6.

**64:4** This prayer is directed to the only God who can perform great and awesome deeds – Jehovah. And He is still at work for those who wait confidently for Him – 25:9; 30:18; Ps 27:14; Jer 33:3. Let us continue to look to Him!

**64:5** "Works righteousness" – mere waiting for God to act is not sufficient. If we expect God to work for us we must willingly work for Him.

"We have sinned" – Isaiah well knows why God has ceased to perform wonderful deeds for them (59:1,2). Continuing in sin is what all men do until they are changed

you who acts on behalf of the one  
who waits for him.

- 5 You meet him who rejoices and works  
righteousness,  
*those who* remember you in your ways.  
See, you have been angry,  
for we have sinned.  
We have long *continued* in them.  
And we need to be saved.

- 6 But we are all like an unclean *thing*,  
and all our righteous deeds *are* like  
filthy rags,  
and we all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind,  
have taken us away.

- 7 And *there is* no one who calls on your name,  
who stirs himself up to take  
hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have consumed us because of  
our iniquities.

- 8 But now, O LORD, you *are* our father;  
we *are* the clay, and you *are* our potter,

by God's power. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18. When men anger the only God who can help them, the only God there is, it is a hard matter to gain assurance of salvation. There is a recognition here that they had deserved all God's anger, all that had come upon them.

**64:6** "All like an unclean thing" – if the best works men can do are like filthy rags, what must their worst be like? And what right do men have to present their filthy rags of so-called merit to God and expect salvation in exchange for them? Happy are those who understand what this verse means and go to Christ for His righteousness (Phil 3:9).

"Leaf" – sin blights and kills as disease destroys a leaf.

"Away" – away from truth, away from righteousness, away from God.

**64:7** Men call on their many gods, but none by nature call on the name of the true God. If we call on Him it is because He has stirred us up to do so.

"Consumed us" – or "made us waste away." Isaiah is speaking of Israel, but there is truth here for all. We sin, God hides His face, we fail to pray, and waste away. And our lack of prayer is blameworthy and the cause of more sin.

**64:8-12** Reasons why God should hear this prayer.

**64:8** "Father" – 63:16. The prayer is to one who is intimately concerned with their condition.

"Potter" – 29:16; 45:9; Jer 18:1-6. With such a wise and skillful potter at work with them there is still hope for the nation. Compare Ps 138:8.

"Work of your hands" – compare

- and we all *are* the work of your hands.
- 9 Do not be very angry, O LORD,  
or remember iniquity forever.  
Look and see, we beg you,  
we *are* all your people.
- 10 Your holy cities are a wilderness,  
Zion is a wilderness,  
Jerusalem a desolation.
- 11 Our holy and our beautiful house,  
where our fathers praised you,  
is burned up with fire,  
and all our pleasant things are laid waste.
- 12 Will you restrain yourself for these  
*things*, O LORD?  
Will you keep silent, and afflict us  
very severely?

**65** "I am sought by *those who* did not ask  
for me;

I am found by *those who* did not seek me.  
I said, 'See me, see me',  
to a nation *that* was not called  
by my name.

- 2 I have spread out my hands all day to  
a rebellious people,  
who walk in a way *that is* not good,  
after their own thoughts,

- 3 A people who provoke me to anger  
continually to my face,  
who sacrifice in gardens,  
and burn incense on brick altars,
- 4 Who sit among the graves,  
and spend the night among the tombs,  
who eat swine's flesh,  
and *in* whose pots *is* the broth of  
abominable *things*,
- 5 Who say, 'Keep to yourself;  
do not come near me,  
for I am holier than you.'  
These *are* smoke in my nostrils,  
a fire that burns all day.
- 6 See, *it is* written before me:  
'I will not keep silent,  
but will repay, repay into their bosom
- 7 Your evil deeds, and the evil deeds of  
your fathers together, says the LORD,  
you who have burned incense on the  
mountains, and blasphemed me on  
the hills.  
Therefore I will measure into their  
bosom *repayment* for their  
former deeds."
- 8 Thus says the LORD:  
"As the new wine is found in the

Eph 2:10; Phil 1:6.

**64:9** These requests are based on what God  
had revealed – as our requests must always  
be, if we want our prayer answered.

"Angry" – 54:7,8.

"Iniquity" – 40:1,2; 43:25.

"Your people" – 63:17-19. This was re-  
minding God of their covenant relationship  
with Him (Gen 17:7; Lev 26:40-45; Deut 7:6).

**64:10** Notice "Your" holy cities – an  
appeal to God to look with concern on His  
own property as well as on His own people  
(v 8,9).

"Holy cities" – 48:2. Zion and Jerusalem  
here are regarded as twin cities. The original  
Zion was a part of the larger city that was  
called Jerusalem. But often in the Old  
Testament Zion refers to the entire city.

**64:11** Isaiah was a prophet looking into the  
future and describing things that had not  
yet happened as though they had. Note at  
55:10,11. The temple was not destroyed for  
another hundred years. Another temple  
erected in its place was not destroyed for  
some hundreds of years after Isaiah's day.  
**64:12** "Will you keep silent?" – 62:1,6,7.

"Very severely" – Ezra 9:13; Ps 103:10.  
**65:1,2** God begins to speak in answer to  
the prayer of 63:15 - 64:12. Paul quotes  
these two verses in Rom 10:20,21. See  
note there. God is speaking in v 1 of other  
nations who did not know the God of Israel.  
In pure grace He would turn to them (49:6;  
Matt 28:19; Acts 13:46; 28:28).

**65:2-16** God reveals what He will do to the

nation Israel. He begins by describing their  
character and behavior.

**65:2** "Rebellious" – 1:2-4; 30:1,9.

"Own thoughts" – 59:7; Gen 6:5; 8:21.  
Anyone who follows his own imaginations will  
certainly walk in ways not good.

**65:3** Idolatry provokes God to anger as much  
as anything men can do (Lev 26:30; Deut  
4:25; Jud 2:12,13).

**65:4** "Graves" – 8:19; 57:9; Deut 18:11.

"Swine's flesh" – Lev 11:7,8. Note at Lev  
11:2-23. They had contempt for God's very  
specific instruction to them.

**65:5** These rebels, idolaters, sorcerers,  
eaters of forbidden food, thought they were  
very superior people. They were self-  
righteous hypocrites. Compare Matt 9:11;  
Luke 7:39; 18:9-12.

**65:6,7** "Silent" – 42:14; 57:11; Ps 50:21;  
Hab 1:13.

"Hills" – they had their shrines to other  
gods on high places.

"Repayment" – 59:18; Deut 32:40,41;  
2 Chron 6:23; Rom 12:19.

**65:8-10** God will not completely destroy the  
nation but will preserve a remnant who will  
seek Him – 1:9; 10:20,21,22; 11:11,16;  
46:3. Jacob (v 9) probably signifies the  
northern kingdom that had gone into  
captivity to Assyria.

"My mountains" – represent the whole  
land of Israel. God promised it to Israel  
forever (Gen 17:8; etc). Sharon (v 10) is  
along the Mediterranean Sea, Achor near  
the Jordan river. Those who possess the



- cluster of grapes, and someone says,  
'Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it,'  
so I will act for the sake of my servants,  
that I may not destroy them all.
- 9 And I will bring forth offspring from Jacob,  
and from Judah an heir of my mountains.  
And my chosen ones will inherit it,  
and my servants will live there.
- 10 And Sharon will be a pasture for flocks,  
and the valley of Achor a place for  
herds to lie down in,  
for my people who have sought me.
- 11 But you *are* those who forsake the LORD,  
who forget my holy mountain,  
who prepare a table for Fortune,  
and who furnish a drink offering for Destiny.
- 12 Therefore I will destine you for the sword,  
and you will all bow down to the slaughter;  
because when I called,  
you did not answer;  
when I spoke, you did not listen,  
but did evil before my eyes,  
and chose what I had no delight in."
- 13 Therefore thus says the Lord God:  
"See, my servants will eat,  
but you will be hungry.  
See, my servants will drink,  
but you will be thirsty.  
See, my servants will rejoice,  
but you will be put to shame.
- 14 See, my servants will sing for joy of heart,

- but you will cry for sorrow of heart,  
and will wail for grief of spirit.
- 15 And you will leave your name as a  
curse for my chosen,  
for the Lord God will slay you, and call  
his servants by another name,
- 16 That he who is blessed on the earth  
will be blessed in the God of truth;  
and he who takes an oath on the earth  
will swear by the God of truth;  
because the former troubles will be forgotten,  
and because they will be hidden from my eyes.
- 17 "For, see, I will create new heavens  
and a new earth;  
and the former will not be remembered,  
nor come to mind.
- 18 But be glad and rejoice forever *in*  
what I create,  
for, see, I will create Jerusalem a rejoicing,  
and her people a joy.
- 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem,  
and joy in my people;  
and the voice of weeping no longer  
will be heard in her,  
nor the voice of crying.
- 20 "No longer will there be an infant *who*  
*lives only a few days*,  
or an old man who has not completed  
his days;  
for the child will die a hundred years old;  
but the sinner *being* a hundred years

land will be those who seek God (v 10; 51:1. Compare Jer 29:12-14).

**65:11-16** The happy future belongs to those in Israel (or in any nation) who seek God. The wicked and rebellious should not think they have any part in it.

**65:11** "Fortune" and "Destiny" – the Hebrew words may refer to certain gods of "good fortune" and "good luck." Some Jews mistakenly thought they could combine the worship of those with the worship of Jehovah. Compare Matt 6:24. See 1 Kings 18:21.

**65:12** See 41:28; 50:2; Prov 1:24-32; Jer 7:27.

**65:13,14** The wicked will justly receive the exact opposite of the righteous. Compare Ps 102:8.

**65:15** "Curse" – Jer 29:22.

"Another name" – See 1:26; 60:14; 62:2,4,12; Rev 2:17.

**65:16** After the final restoration of Israel (Amos 9:15) no one there will ever again swear by any false god (such as Baal – see Jer 12:16).

"God of truth" – the literal translation of the Hebrew here is "God of Amen." It means the God who is absolutely faithful to His Word. Note on God of truth at Ps 31:5.

"Will be forgotten" – v 17.

**65:17** "New earth" – Rev 21:1-4.

**65:18-25** These verses can hardly apply to conditions as they will be in the new heaven and earth for they speak of birth and death (death is the result of sin – Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; 6:23, and will have no place in the new heaven and earth where sin will not exist). Yet it will be a time of great blessing for Israel, a time of striking differences from the present. Evidently these verses describe the same time Isaiah wrote about in 2:2-5; 4:2-6; 9:7; 11:1-16; 25:6-9; 26:1-4; 32:1-5; 35:1-10; 40:1,2; 49:8-23; 51:3; 52:1,2; 54:1-17; 60:1-22; 61:3-7; 62:1-12. The New Testament speaks of this future time in Rev 20:4-6.

**65:18** See 54:11-13.

**65:19** See 62:4,5.

**65:20** This speaks of a great change from the present in the length of time people live. Compare Genesis chapter 5.

"The sinner being a hundred years old will be accursed" – in Hebrew this sentence is obscure and difficult. It could be translated "the sinner who reaches a hundred will be considered accursed." The sentence may mean that if someone fails to live at least one hundred years people will think him accursed. Or possibly it means God may permit even the worst of sinners to live to be a hundred.

old will be accursed.

- 21 And they will build houses and live *in them*,  
and they will plant vineyards and eat  
their fruit.
- 22 Others will not live in what they build;  
others will not eat what they plant;  
for the days of my people *will be* like  
the days of a tree,  
and my chosen ones will long enjoy  
the work of their hands.
- 23 They will not labour in vain,  
or bear *children* for trouble;  
for they *will be* the descendants of  
those blessed by the LORD,  
and their offspring with them.
- 24 And it will come about that before they call,  
I will answer;  
and while they are still speaking, I will hear.
- 25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together,  
and the lion will eat straw like a bull,  
and dust *will be* the serpent's food.  
They will not hurt or destroy in all my  
holy mountain," says the LORD.

- 66** Thus says the LORD:  
"Heaven *is* my throne,  
and the earth *is* my footstool;  
where *is* the house that you will build for me?  
And where *is* the place of my rest?"
- 2 For my hand has made all those *things*,  
and so all those *things* came to be,"  
says the LORD,

**65:21** See 62:8,9.

**65:22** "Like the days of a tree" – some trees live for many hundreds of years. Compare with v 20.

**65:23** See 61:9. Notes on blessing and blessed at Gen 12:2,3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1; etc.

**65:24** See 30:19; 58:9; Zech 10:6. Compare 1:15; etc.

**65:25** See 11:6-9.

**66:1-24** God continues to speak through Isaiah. Here He emphasizes what kind of people He wants His people to be, and what the results will be when Israel becomes that kind of people. He reveals also what the end will be for those who refuse Him and His Word.

**66:1,2** 40:21,22; 1 Kings 8:27; Ps 2:4; Matt 5:34,35; Acts 7:48-50; 17:24,25. The God of Israel is the mighty Creator of the universe – 40:26; Gen 1:1. And the whole universe is not big enough for Him. God does not need a material temple. He much prefers a spiritual one – the humble hearts and bodies of a believing people (57:15; 1 Cor 6:19; Eph 2:21,22). "contrite" – or "wounded."

The Hebrew word translated "look" is used in Gen 4:4,5; Ex 2:25; Num 16:15; Jud 6:14; Ps 25:16. It implies both approval

"But to this *person* I will look, to the *one who is* lowly and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word.

- 3 "He who kills a bull *is as if* he killed a man;  
he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he cut  
off a dog's neck;  
he who makes an offering *is as if* he  
offered swine's blood;  
he who burns incense *is as if* he  
blessed an idol.
- Yes, they have chosen their own ways,  
and their soul delights in their abominations.
- 4 So I will choose their hardships,  
and will bring on them what they fear,  
because when I called, no one answered;  
when I spoke, they did not listen,  
but did evil before my *very* eyes,  
and chose *what* I did not delight in.
- 5 Hear the word of the LORD,  
you who tremble at his word.  
Your brethren who hated you,  
who threw you out for my name's sake,  
said, 'Let the LORD be glorified.'  
But he will appear to your joy,  
and they will be put to shame."
- 6 A sound of noise from the city!  
A voice from the temple!  
The voice of the LORD who repays his  
enemies:
- 7 "Before she was in labour, she gave birth.  
Before her pain came,

and affection. For "lowly and contrite" see 57:15; Ps 51:17; Matt 5:3,4; Luke 18:13,14; Jam 4:6. Trembling at God's word means a sense of unworthiness combined with reverence and fear to offend its Giver, and in haste to obey it – Ezra 9:4; Hos 3:5. Compare Ps 2:11; 99:1; 114:7; Jer 5:22. **66:3** Compare 1:11-14. No offering of the wicked is acceptable to God – Prov 15:8; 21:27.

"Their own ways" – 53:6; 57:17. Men are very far gone into depravity when they "delight" in their abominations. Compare Phil 3:18,19.

**66:4** See 65:7,12; Ps 18:25,26.

**66:5** In this world those who tremble in humility at God's word will sometimes be hated even by those who should love them (59:15; Ps 38:20; Micah 7:6; Matt 10:36).

**66:6** "City", "temple" – 64:10,11; Jer 52:12-14. The Lord often uses human instruments to take vengeance or repay His enemies (10:5,6; etc).

**66:7-11** This speaks of the fruitfulness of Zion representing the nation of Israel. Compare 49:14-20; 54:1-8. The "male child" of v 7 is the country, the nation of v 8. So great will be the change in Israel that it will be as though the country and the people were made completely new.

- she delivered a male child.
- 8 Who has heard such a thing?  
Who has seen such things?  
Will the earth be made to give birth in  
one day?  
Or will a nation be born at once?  
For as soon as Zion was in labour,  
she gave birth to her children.
- 9 Will I bring to the *point of* birth,  
and not give delivery?" says the LORD.  
"Will I bring to birth,  
and shut *the womb*?" says your God.
- 10 Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her,  
all you who love her.  
Rejoice and be happy with her,  
all you who mourn for her,
- 11 That you may nurse and be satisfied  
with her comforting breasts,  
that you may drink deeply,  
and be delighted with the abundance  
of her glory.
- 12 For thus says the LORD,  
"See, I will extend peace to her like a river,  
and the glory of the Gentiles like a  
flowing stream.  
Then you will nurse, you will be  
carried on *her* hips and dandled on  
*her* knees.
- 13 I will comfort you like one whom his  
mother comforts;  
and you will be comforted in Jerusalem.
- 14 And when you see *this*, your heart will rejoice,

- and your bones will flourish like grass;  
and the hand of the LORD will be known  
to his servants,  
and *his* indignation to his enemies.
- 15 For, see, the LORD will come with fire  
and with his chariots like a whirlwind,  
to render his anger with fury,  
and his rebuke with flames of fire.
- 16 For the LORD will execute judgment by  
fire and by his sword on all flesh;  
and the slain of the LORD will be many.
- 17 "Those who sanctify and purify themselves  
*to go* into the gardens, following one in the middle  
of those who eat the meat of pigs and the abomi-  
nation and the mouse, will be consumed together,"  
says the LORD.
- 18 "For I *know* their deeds and their thoughts.  
*The time* will come when I gather all nations and  
tongues, and they will come, and see my glory.
- 19 And I will set a sign among them, and I will send  
those of them who escape to the nations, *to*  
Tarshish, Pul, and Lud (who draw the bow), *to* Tubal  
and Javan, *to* the islands far away, who have not  
heard my fame or seen my glory; and they will  
declare my glory among the Gentiles.
- 20 And they  
will bring all your brethren as an offering to the  
LORD out of all nations on horses and in chariots  
and on litters and on mules and on swift animals, to  
my holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "just  
as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean  
vessel into the house of the LORD.
- 21 And I will  
also take some of them as priests *and* as Levites",

Compare 4:2-6; 11:6-16; 27:6; 35:1-10. The change in Israel will take place very suddenly without the travail of birth. See Zech 12:10-13:2; Rom 11:26,27; Rev 1:7. **66:10** See 65:18; Ps 122:6; 137:6. **66:11** Verse 12; 49:23; 60:16. Jerusalem in the millennium will be like a mother. It will at last be a true reflection of the Jerusalem which is above, who is the mother of all who believe (Gal 4:26). **66:12** See 48:18; 60:5. **66:13** God has the tender compassion that a mother has and He will comfort those concerned with the future of Jerusalem (40:1,2; 49:13-16; 54:7,8). **66:14** "Grass" – not as 40:6-8, but as 44:4. "Hand of the LORD" – 53:1; Ezra 7:9; 8:31. Here this means God's power at work to bless His people. **66:15,16** See 2:11,17,20; 26:20,21; 30:27,28; 34:2; 42:25; 2 Thess 1:1,7-10; Rev 19:11-16. **66:17** Is it surprising to see in this grand finishing chapter of the great book of Isaiah any sort of emphasis on eating food forbidden by the law of Moses? See also 65:4. Does this not indicate that literal Israel is in view? The wicked among them

are thus shown as those who have contempt for God's commands. Of all the instructions of the law probably the easiest to keep were the ones about clean and unclean animals. Those who will not keep those will hardly be of a mind to keep any other laws. For notes on meaning of prohibition of certain foods see Leviticus chapter 11. **66:18** "Their thoughts" – 65:2. "All nations" – Joel 3:2; Zeph 3:8; Zech 14:2-5. They will see God's glory in the rescue of His people and the destruction of their foes, as the Egyptians did at the Red Sea (Exodus chapter 14). **66:19-21** Judging from the context, and from other prophecies in Isaiah (and other books of the Bible) these verses probably describe some events in the future millennium. Some of the words here fit the activities of the Church of the New Testament, but others do not. **66:19** "Them" – the Jews. "Pul" – the Septuagint has "Put" which probably signifies Libya. **66:20** See 11:11,12; 49:22; 60:4. **66:21** Note at 61:6. In this New Testament era all believers are priests, not some only (1 Pet 2:5,9). And they are not serving as

says the LORD.  
22 “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, will remain before me,” says the LORD, “so your offspring and your name will remain. 23 And it will happen from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, *that*

all mankind will come to worship before me,” says the LORD. 24 “And they will go out, and look at the corpses of the men who have transgressed against me; for their worm will not die, and their fire will not be quenched; and they will be loathsome to all mankind.”

Levites. <b>66:22</b> See 65:17. “Remain” – 60:20,21; Jer 33:19-26. <b>66:23</b> Notice again the emphasis on “all mankind.” <b>66:24</b> Rebellion is a theme found often in Isaiah (1:2,23; 30:1,9; 60:10; 65:2). The picture here is of those in the city of Jerusalem going and looking into the valley	of Hinnom or Tophet (30:33; Jer 7:31-33; 19:6). This verse gives the destiny of those who rebel against God. In the New Testament Tophet or Hinnom became a symbol for hell, and part of this verse is quoted in Mark 9:48. The only escape from the punishment revealed in this verse is through the suffering servant depicted so clearly in the 53rd chapter of this book.
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# JEREMIAH

## Author:

Jeremiah was a priest from the village of Anathoth. He began his public ministry at the age of 20, during the 13th year of the reign of king Josiah (626 BC), and his service continued for more than 40 years. By nature he was gentle and had a tender heart, but he was very courageous when God asked him to preach harsh messages and warn of coming judgment on the people. So, though loved by God, he became unpopular with men. The whole nation rejected both him and God's message through him. It is no wonder that he is known as "the weeping prophet." Sometimes he found his responsibility as God's prophet very hard to bear, and longed to escape from it (20:9). But in the face of much persecution and sorrow he continued in this ministry, and by the grace of God stood as an "iron pillar" and like "bronze walls" (1:18).

## Date:

Sometime about 580 BC.

## Themes :

In the year 586 before Christ the armies of Babylon came, captured Jerusalem, and took many of its people into exile in Babylon. Up to then Jeremiah, with compassion and tears, had warned the people and pled with them to turn to God in repentance. When they refused to listen, he made God's message known to them: They would be in Babylonia for seventy years and then return to Jerusalem and Judah. He also revealed to them the new covenant that God would make with Israel, and the just judgments that would fall on Babylon and certain other nations. There are many lessons in this book for God's servants today. In many ways Jeremiah was an ideal person to show what a true servant of God should be like. The following verses speak of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: 23:5; 30:4-11; 31:31-34; 33:15-18.

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**1** The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who *were* in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. **2** The word of the LORD came to him in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. **3** It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, up to the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until Jerusalem was carried away into exile in the fifth month.

**4** Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

**5** "Before I formed you in the womb,  
I knew you,  
and before you were born I sanctified you,  
and I ordained you a prophet to the  
nations."

**6** Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Look, I cannot

speak, for I *am* a child."

**7** But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I *am* a child,' for you will go to all to whom I send you, and you will speak whatever I command you. **8** Do not be afraid of their faces, for I *am* with you to defend you," said the LORD.

**9** Then the LORD put out his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Look, I have put my words in your mouth. **10** See, today I have set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."

**11** Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"

And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree."

**12** Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well; for I will watch over my word to fulfil it."

**13** And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I

**1:1** Anathoth was a town about 5 kilometers north of Jerusalem. It was set apart for the priests of Israel (Josh 21:18; 1 Kings 2:26).

**1:2** "The word of the LORD came" – this phrase is very common in the prophets of the Bible (Ezek 1:3; Jonah 1:1; Haggai 1:1; Zech 1:1; etc). It indicates a revelation from God. The prophets spoke and wrote the very words God gave them – v 9. **1:3** The time period covered by vs 2 and 3 was 40 years, between 626 and 586 BC. Afterwards Jeremiah continued to prophesy a few more years. Of the kings mentioned here only Josiah was a good one. A brief history of those years is found in 2 Kings chapters 22-25 and 2 Chronicles chapters 34-36.

**1:5** "Formed" – Ps 139:13; 119:73; Isa 44:24; 49:5.

"Knew" – Ps 139:16; Rom 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet 1:2. The same Hebrew word translated "knew" in this verse is translated "chosen" in Gen 18:19 and Amos 3:2, and may mean that here also.

"Sanctified" – this means that Jeremiah was set apart in God's plan to be a servant of God even before his birth. Compare Isa 49:1,5; Luke 1:13-15; Gal 1:15; Eph 1:4.

"I ordained you" – God has a place and a work for each of His people (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:27-31). What we do we should do because we know it is God's appointment for us. Note on prophet at Gen 20:7. Jeremiah had a very high place in God's plans. He was a prophet not simply to Israel but to the nations of earth – v 10; 25:15-26; chapters 46-51.

**1:6** Jeremiah's response was like that of Moses (Ex 4:10), unlike that of Isaiah (Isa 6:8). He did not think he was capable of being God's spokesman and would gladly have escaped the responsibility.

"LORD God" – see the note at Gen 15:2.

**1:7** When God appoints a man for a task He will accept no excuses he may make to escape from it. Compare Ex 3:10-13;

4:1,10-17.

**1:8** "Afraid" – Gen 15:11; 26:24; Deut 31:6; Josh 1:6-9; 8:1; etc.

"With you" – Gen 26:3; Josh 1:5; Jer 15:20.

"Deliver" – v 19; 15:21; 26:24; 36:26; 42:11.

**1:9** Ex 4:12; Num 22:38; 23:5,12,16; Deut 18:18; Isa 51:16. So the prophets who wrote the Bible could, and did, speak the very words of God without error of any kind. They spoke God's words by the inspiration of God's Spirit (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).

**1:10** It was the Word of God sent by God through Jeremiah that would accomplish these things among the nations. See Isa 55:10,11. Jeremiah's utterances by God's Spirit were to have two effects – one destructive, one constructive. God's word will always have these two results depending on the condition and response of those who hear it. Sometimes for the good to flourish it is necessary to destroy the bad.

**1:11,12** God sometimes used object lessons to bring His message to the prophets (v 13; Amos 7:8; 8:2; Zech 4:2; 5:2). The two He gave in the next few verses are basic to the teaching of the book of Jeremiah. In Hebrew the word for "almond tree" and the word for "watch over" are very similar (sha'ked and sho'ked). Aaron's rod that budded was from the almond tree. See Num 17:1-13.

**1:12** God will fulfill His word, in spite of unbelieving Israel and a world of nations and peoples who do not know Him, and Jeremiah was not to fear that He would not (compare Isa 55:11; Matt 5:17,18). This is God's very first message to Jeremiah after His appointment as prophet. It is one of the first things God wants all of His servants in any time or place to be sure about.

**1:13-16** The second message concerns destruction on Israel. Nations would come from the north, hot and agitated as boiling water, and overflow the land (4:6; 6:1).

said, "I see a boiling pot, and its face *is* toward the north."

14 Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north a disaster will burst out on all the inhabitants of the land. 15 For, see, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, says the LORD,

"And they will come, and each of them will set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its surrounding walls, and against all the cities of Judah.

16 And I will utter my judgments against them concerning all their wickedness, because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.

17 "Therefore make yourself ready, and arise and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be afraid of their faces, so that I do not make you fear before them. 18 For, see, today I have made you a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. 19 And they will fight against you, but they will not prevail against you; for I *am* with you, says the LORD, to deliver you."

**2** Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, **2** "Go and cry out in the ears of

Jerusalem, saying, Thus says the LORD:

"I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown.

3 Israel *was* holiness to the LORD, *and* the firstfruits of his increase. All who devoured him were guilty; disaster came on them, says the LORD."

4 Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel.

5 Thus says the LORD: "What evil did your fathers find in me, that they went away far from me, and walked after emptiness, and became empty?

6 And they did not say, 'Where *is* the LORD who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and pits, through a land of drought and the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no one lived?'

7 And I brought you into a land of plenty,

As far as Jeremiah's lifetime is concerned this happened when Babylon and its allies invaded and conquered Judah. See chapter 39; 2 Kings chapters 24,25; 2 Chronicles chapter 36. Perhaps a more complete fulfillment will come at the end of this age (see Ezekiel chapters 38, 39 and Zechariah chapter 12).

**1:16** The reason for God's judgment is plain. They habitually broke the most important commandment of the law and forsook the Creator to worship things they had made. See Ex 20:1-6; Lev 26:14-39; Deut 27:14-26.

**1:17** This is always the principal responsibility of God's spokesman – to speak His word just as it is, without fear of men. This can be done when there is the fullness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31). The choice is always between fearing men or fearing God (Matt 10:28; Isa 8:12,13).

**1:18,19** Verse 8. Everyone would be against Jeremiah – rulers and people and religious leaders (the very ones who should have stood with him). He was to be alone against the world, but he was to know the truth later recorded in Rom 8:31. See also Ps 118:6; Heb 13:6.

**2:2** "Bridal days" – the nation Israel was the special people of Jehovah, the nation having a special intimate spiritual relationship with Him (the meaning of the

reference to a bride here). This chapter (and the next few chapters) pictures that nation as having become unfaithful and adulterous. In connection with this theme read Isa 54:5; Jer 3:14; 31:32; Ezekiel chapters 16 and 23; Hos 2:7,16; John 3:29; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-27; Rev 19:7-8.

"Wilderness" – refers to events recorded in Exodus and Numbers.

**2:3** "Holiness" – Ex 19:6; 7:6; Note at Lev 20:7.

"Disaster" – refers to the defeat of Israel's enemies recorded in Exodus and Numbers.

**2:4** The great king of the universe surely has the right to demand that His people listen to Him (Isa 1:2,10; Ezek 13:2; Hos 4:1; Amos 7:16; Heb 12:25).

**2:5** God asks this as a faithful husband would ask an unfaithful wife who runs after other men. Israel ran after other gods and thus showed their lack of love for the true God and a contempt for His word (Ex 20:2-6). God's jealousy was aroused just as He said it would be.

"Emptiness" – probably a reference to false gods and idols. Notes at Ps 115:4-8; 135:15-18.

**2:6** They forgot God, something God repeatedly warned them about. See note at Deut 8:1-5.

**2:7** "Land of plenty" – as recorded in Joshua.

to eat its fruit and its goodness.  
But when you entered, you defiled my land,  
and made an abomination of my inheritance.  
8 The priests did not say,  
    ‘Where *is* the LORD?’  
And those who dealt with the law did  
    not know me.  
The leaders also transgressed against me,  
and the prophets prophesied by Baal,  
and followed after worthless *things*.  
9 Therefore I will bring charges against  
    you again”, says the LORD,  
    “and I will bring charges against your  
    children’s children.  
10 For cross over the coasts of Kittim and see;  
    and send to Kedar, and consider carefully,  
    and see if there is such a thing as *this*.  
11 Has a nation changed *its* gods,  
    which *are* not gods?  
    But my people have exchanged their  
    glory for *what* is worthless.  
12 Be astonished, O heavens, at this,  
    and be horribly afraid;  
    be very desolate,” says the LORD.  
13 “For my people have committed two evils;  
    they have forsaken me, the fountain  
    of living waters,  
    *and* dug out cisterns for themselves,  
    broken cisterns that can hold no water.

14 “*Is* Israel a servant?  
    *Is* he a homeborn *slave*?  
    Why is he plundered?  
15 The young lions roared over him,  
    *and* growled, and they laid his land waste.  
    His cities are burned, without inhabitant.  
16 Also the people of Noph and Tahpanes  
    have broken the crown of your head.  
17 Have you not brought this on yourself,  
    by your forsaking the LORD your God,  
    when he led you in the way?  
18 And now why should you go on the  
    way to Egypt to drink the waters of Sihor?  
    Or why should you go on the way to  
    Assyria to drink the waters of the  
    *Euphrates* River?  
19 Your own wickedness will chasten you,  
    and your backslidings will rebuke you.  
    Therefore know and see that *it is* an  
    evil and bitter *thing*,  
    that you have forsaken the LORD your God,  
    and that my fear *is* not in you,”  
    says the Lord God of hosts.  
20 “For long ago I broke your yoke,  
    *and* tore off your bands;  
    and you said, ‘I will not transgress,’  
    when on every high hill and under  
    every green tree you wandered,  
    acting like a prostitute.

“Fruit” – Ex 3:8; Num 13:27; Deut 8:7-9; 11:10-12.  
“Defiled” – 3:9; 7:39; 16:18; Ps 106:34-39; Ezek 11:21; 36:17. In fact, all the world belongs to God, and they who sin are defiling His world (Isa 24:5).  
2:8 There was complete failure by all the leaders of Israel – priests, rulers, prophets. Those who knew God’s law did not know God. Those who were raised up to rule for God rebelled against Him. Those who should have prophesied for God spoke for the false god Baal. Note on Baal at Jud 2:11.  
2:9 25:31; Hos 4:1; 12:2; Mic 6:2. If God Himself brings a case against us how can we stand?  
2:10,11 Israel acted in a more perverted and strange way than any nation to the east (Kedar was the home of nomadic tribes in the Syro-Arabian desert), or to the west (Kittim is Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea). Though the gods of those peoples were false and worthless they remained faithful to them.  
“Exchanged” – Ps 106:20; Rom 1:23. This is the choice the Bible often speaks of – whether to serve the God of eternal glory or to have gods which are not gods at all (Ps 115:4; Isa 37:19; Jer 16:20; Gal 4:8).  
2:12 Israel’s sin was so great that the heavens themselves should feel the horror of it (compare Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; Isa 1:2).

2:13 This two-fold sin is the sin of all humanity. Only God has the eternally satisfying water of spiritual life – in fact, He Himself is the “spring” of it (17:13; Ps 36:9; John 4:13,14; 7:37,38; Rev 22:17). To turn from Him and try to create some other source of satisfaction is wickedness, folly, madness.  
2:14-17 The nation Israel was like a son to God, not a slave (31:9; Ex 4:22); like a wife, not a servant. Then why did disasters come on them? Why were their enemies able to destroy them? Why had Egypt (Memphis, Tahpanhes) been able to humiliate them? The answer is in v 17. They brought all their trouble on themselves by forsaking God (4:18).  
2:18 They will find there is no satisfaction, no safety, no enjoyment anywhere apart from God (2:36).  
“Assyria” – note at 2 Kings 15:19.  
2:19 Wickedness itself will be a rod on the sinner’s back, a knife in his heart, and his own backsliding will be a terrible teacher. God has arranged matters that sin will be shown to be an evil and bitter thing (4:18). Observe here the importance of the fear of God (notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; 130:3,4).  
“Lord God of hosts” – note at 1 Sam 1:3.  
2:20 5:5; Hos 4:16. They behaved like the peoples in Ps 2:3 which did not know God.

21 Yet I had planted you a choice vine,  
a fully right seed.  
How then have you turned against me  
into the degenerate plant of a  
strange vine to me?

22 For though you wash yourself with lye,  
and use much soap,  
*yet* your iniquity is marked before me,"  
says the Lord God.

23 "How can you say, 'I am not defiled,  
I have not gone after the Baals?'  
See your way in the valley, know what  
you have done.  
*You are* a swift she-camel rushing here  
and there,

24 A wild donkey used to the wilderness,  
*that* sniffs at the wind in her desire;  
in her heat who can turn her away?  
Those pursuing her will not tire  
themselves out;  
in her month they will find her.

25 "Keep your foot from being unshod,  
and your throat from thirst.  
But you say, 'There is no hope;  
no, for I have loved foreigners,  
and after them I will go.'

26 As the thief is disgraced when he is  
found out,  
so is the house of Israel disgraced,  
they, their kings, their princes,  
and their priests, and their prophets,

27 Saying to a piece of wood,  
'*You are* my father,' and to a stone,  
'You have given me birth';  
for they have turned *their* backs on me,  
and not *their* face.  
But in the time of their trouble they  
will say, 'Arise, and save us.'

28 But where *are* your gods that you

have made for yourselves?  
Let them arise, if they can save you in  
the time of your trouble;  
for *according to* the number of your  
cities are your gods, O Judah.

29 "Why do you bring charges against me?  
You have all transgressed against me,  
says the LORD.

30 In vain have I struck your children;  
they received no correction.  
Your own sword has devoured your  
prophets, like a destroying lion.

31 O *you of this* generation, see the word  
of the LORD.  
Have I been a wilderness to Israel?  
A land of darkness?  
Why do my people say, 'We are lords;  
we will not come to you any more'?

32 Can a maiden forget her jewels,  
*or* a bride her attire?  
Yet my people have forgotten me days  
without number.

33 How gladly you prepare your way to  
seek love!  
Therefore you have taught even the  
wicked women your ways.

34 Also on your skirts is found the  
lifeblood of the poor innocents.  
I have not found it by secret search,  
but on all these.

35 Yet you say, 'Because I am innocent,  
surely his anger will turn from me.'  
See, I will bring charges against you  
because you say, 'I have not sinned.'

36 Why do you go around so much to  
change your way?  
You will also be ashamed of Egypt,  
as you were ashamed of Assyria.

37 Yes, you will go away from him with

"Prostitute" – those hills and trees were spots where idols of false gods were placed. Forsaking God to go after them was behaving like a prostitute – Ex 34:15; Lev 17:7; 2 Chron 21:11.  
**2:21** Ps 80:8-16; Isa 5:1-7; Ezek 17:1-10; Hos 10:1,2; John 15:1-8.  
**2:22** No effort of sinners to cleanse themselves will be successful. But God can do what man cannot – Ps 51:2; Zech 13:1; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:9.  
**2:23-25** Israel denied that she had fallen as God said she had (see Prov 16:2; 30:12). But she passionately ran after other gods like an animal in heat.  
**2:26** 2:8; 1:18.  
**2:27,28** People of each town turned their backs on the God who made them, and they made their own favorite gods from wood or stone. But in times of trouble they wanted

God's help. Compare Judges 2:10-19. Such is the sad nature of man. People want God to rescue them from danger, but then forget God and do all that God hates after the danger is removed.  
**2:29** As all other people the people of Israel, instead of confessing their great wickedness, wanted to argue with God (v 35).  
**2:30** Isa 1:4-9; Lev 26:18-35. God's punishments were sent in love to correct the people. And all God's words here are in the language of pleading love.  
**2:31** What fault did they find in God that they decided to wander away from Him?  
**2:32-35** Four of the grievous sins of Israel – forgetting God, spiritual adultery, cruelty to the poor, and self-righteousness. They were utterly corrupted by their sins and yet thought and said they were innocent. Such is the spiritual blindness of men in general (Prov



your hands on your head,  
for the LORD has rejected those you trust,  
and you will not prosper by them.

- 3** “They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife,  
and she goes away from him and  
becomes another man’s,  
may he return to her again?  
Would not the land be greatly polluted?  
But you have been the prostitute with  
many lovers;  
yet return to me again,” says the LORD.  
**2** “Lift up your eyes to the barren high  
places and look.  
Where have you not been ravished?  
By the roads you sat for them, like an  
Arabian in the desert,  
and you have polluted the land with  
your prostitution and your wickedness.  
**3** Therefore the showers have been withheld,  
and there has been no latter rain,  
for you had a prostitute’s forehead,  
you refused to be ashamed.  
**4** Even at this time did you not cry out  
to me, ‘My father, you *are* the guide  
of my youth?  
**5** Will he remain *angry* forever?  
Will he maintain *it* to the end?’  
See, you have said *this*, and done what  
evil you could.”

**6** The LORD also said to me in the days of Josiah the king, “Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there has

behaved like a prostitute. **7** And after she had done all these *things*, I said, Return to me. But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw *it*. **8** And when, for all the causes backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away, and given her a certificate of divorce, I saw that her treacherous sister Judah had no fear, but also went and behaved like a prostitute. **9** And it happened through her thoughtless prostitution, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and wood. **10** And in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, says the LORD.”

**11** And the LORD said to me, “Backsliding Israel is less unrighteous than treacherous Judah. **12** Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say:

“Return, backsliding Israel,  
says the LORD,  
and I will not cause my anger to fall on you;  
for I *am* merciful, says the LORD,  
and I will not remain *angry* forever.  
**13** Only acknowledge your guilt,  
that you have transgressed against the  
LORD your God,  
and have scattered your favours to  
foreigners under every green tree,  
and have not obeyed my voice,  
says the LORD.

**14** “Return, O backsliding children, says the LORD, for I am married to you. And I will take you, one from a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. **15** And I will give you shepherds after my heart, who will feed you with knowledge and

30:12; Luke 18:9-12; Isa 65:5; Rev 3:17).

**3:1,2** “Divorces” – 24:1-4.

“Polluted” – Lev 18:25-28.

“Prostitute” – 2:20. God showed incredible grace and love toward this fallen people. **3:3** God punished them by causing drought in the land, but this did not produce the desired result.

**3:4,5** Their prayers were mere empty words. Their hearts were set on evil. They called God “Father” but lived as if Satan were their father. So their prayers went unanswered (Isa 1:15-17; Prov 28:9; Jam 4:3,4).

**3:6-9** About 930 BC, long before the days of King Josiah, the people of Israel had divided into two kingdoms (1 Kings chapter 12). From the beginning the northern kingdom (called Israel) went into spiritual adultery and apostasy and refused to repent. Jehovah God “divorced” Israel and sent her into captivity in 721 BC. The history of all this is recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles. The southern kingdom (Judah) saw all this but did not learn its lesson.

“Stones and wood” (v 9) – idols made of these.

**3:10** There was a revival of religion in King Josiah’s day, but it evidently did not go very deep into the lives of the people. There was much pretense and hypocrisy.

**3:11** Judah had the example of God’s dealings with Israel to learn a lesson. It also had more teaching of the truth, God’s temple, and better kings on the whole than Israel. So by comparison they were worse than Israel. Greater opportunities to know God’s truth means greater responsibilities to practice it.

**3:12** “North” – Israel had been taken captive by Assyria which was to the north. Though God had severely punished His people He had not abandoned them forever.

“I am merciful” – Ex 34:6,7.

**3:13** If they desire forgiveness they must understand, confess, and forsake their sin (Prov 28:13).

**3:14** “I am married to you” – 2:2.

“One”, “two” – only a small percentage of the people would be able to return to Jerusalem.

**3:15** Shepherds after God’s heart instead of the kind they had before (compare 2:8).

understanding. 16 And it will come about in those days, when you are multiplied and increased in the land, says the LORD, they will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD', nor will it come to mind, nor will they remember *it*, nor will they visit *it*, nor will *it* be made again. 17 At that time they will call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD', and all the nations will be gathered to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem; neither will they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. 18 In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

19 "But I said, How can I put you  
among the children,  
and give you a pleasant land,  
the most beautiful inheritance of nations?  
and I said, You will call me,  
'My father' and will not turn away from me.

20 Surely as a wife treacherously departs  
from her husband,  
so have you dealt treacherously with me,  
O house of Israel, says the LORD."

21 A voice was heard on the high places,  
the weeping *and* pleading of the  
children of Israel;  
for they have perverted their way,  
*and* they have forgotten the LORD their God.

22 "Return, you backsliding children,  
*and* I will heal your backslidings."

**3:16-18** Jehovah God speaks here of a time far in the future. A time not yet come, for some of the predictions here remain unfulfilled.

**3:16** This is the last mention in the Old Testament of the ark of the covenant (note at Ex 25:10-16).

"No longer say" – the ark symbolized Christ. When Christ appears there is no further need of that symbol.

**3:17** Does this not still await fulfillment? See note at Isa 2:2-4. Certainly Israel to this day follows the stubbornness of their evil hearts.

"All the nations" – Ps 102:15; Isa 2:2,3; Mic 4:1.

**3:18** 30:3; Isa 11:12; Ezek 37:19-23; Hos 1:11.

**3:19,20** As "sons" Israel had been disobedient; as a "wife" she had been unfaithful to God.

**3:21** Suggests the beginning of repentance.

**3:22** Here is a wonderful promise for backsliders. God promised not merely to receive them but to heal them – Deut 32:19; Ps 41:4; Isa 57:18; Jer 30:17; 33:6; Hos 6:1; 14:1,4. Healing of the sickness of sin is the greatest of all healing. From the middle of this verse to the end of v 25 we have words that express the future confession and

See, we come to you, for you *are*  
the LORD our God.

23 Truly in vain *is* salvation hoped for  
from the hills,  
*and from* the many mountains.  
Truly in the LORD our God *is* the  
salvation of Israel.

24 For *the thing of* shame has devoured  
the labour of our fathers from our youth,  
their flocks and their herds,  
their sons and their daughters.

25 We lie down in our shame,  
and our disgrace covers us,  
for we have sinned against the LORD  
our God, we and our fathers,  
from our youth up to this day,  
and have not obeyed the voice of  
the LORD our God.

**4** "If you will return, O Israel,"  
says the LORD, "return to me.  
And if you will put your abominations  
out of my sight,  
then you will not be moved.

2 And you will swear in truth, in justice,  
in righteousness, 'The LORD lives';  
and the nations will bless themselves  
in him, and in him they will glory."

3 For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah  
and Jerusalem:

"Break up your fallow ground,

repentance of Israel. Neither Israel nor Judah spoke such words in Jeremiah's day. Words like these spoken sincerely are the beginning of the healing God promises.

**3:24** "Thing of shame" – possibly a reference to the false god Baal, or idol worship in general. Israel would finally see what terrible things that had done to them, and what it had cost them. See Lev 26:1,14-35; Deut 27:15; 28:15-68.

**3:25** True enlightenment and the work of God in our hearts will bring us also to this sort of confession. And this is the way to peace with God (see psalms 32 and 51).

**4:1,2** Here we have the response of the LORD (Jehovah) to the confession of Israel in 3:22-25. The meaning is that words alone are not enough. There must be deep and genuine repentance, strong and resolute action. When they obey His word great blessing will result, not merely to Israel, but to all nations. A principle is here for us all – our obedience to God brings blessing to many others (Gen 12:1-3; 22:15-18; Rom 5:18).

**4:3** Hos 10:12; Mark 4:18,19; Heb 6:8. Much of the "ground" of their hearts and lives lay fallow, unused for God's service, producing thorns, briars and weeds which would choke the word of God. It needed breaking up.

- and do not sow among thorns.
- 4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD;  
circumcise your heart, you men of  
Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
so that my fury does not come out like fire,  
and burn so that no one can quench *it*,  
because of your evil deeds.
- 5 Declare in Judah, and proclaim in  
Jerusalem, and say,  
'Blow the trumpet in the land!'  
Cry out, gather together, and say,  
'Assemble yourselves, and let us go  
into the fortified cities'.
- 6 Set up the signal toward Zion.  
Take refuge! Do not delay!  
For I will bring disaster from the north,  
and a great destruction.
- 7 The lion has come out of his thicket,  
and the destroyer of the Gentiles  
is on his way.  
He has come out of his place to make  
your land desolate;  
*and* your cities will be laid waste,  
without an inhabitant."
- 8 Because of this, tie on sackcloth!  
Lament and wail!  
For the fierce anger of the LORD has  
not turned away from us.
- 9 "And it will happen in that day", says the LORD,  
"that the heart of the king will fail,  
and the heart of the princes;  
and the priests will be astonished,  
and the prophets will wonder."

10 Then said I, "Ah, Lord God! Surely you have  
caused this people and Jerusalem to go utterly  
astray, saying, 'You will have peace', while the sword  
reaches for the heart."

11 At that time it will be said to this people and  
to Jerusalem, "A dry wind from the high places in  
the desert *blows* toward the daughter of my people,  
not to fan, or to cleanse, 12 a wind too strong for  
these will come at my command; now also I will  
pronounce judgment against them."

- 13 See, he will come up like clouds,  
and his chariots *will be* like a whirlwind.  
His horses are swifter than eagles.  
Woe to us! for we are plundered.
- 14 O Jerusalem, wash your heart from  
wickedness, that you may be saved.  
How long will your evil thoughts lodge  
within you?
- 15 For a voice declares from Dan,  
and proclaims affliction from  
Mount Ephraim:
- 16 "Make mention to the nations,  
see, proclaim against Jerusalem,  
*that* watchers come from a far country,  
and raise their voice against the cities  
of Judah.
- 17 Like keepers of a field, they are  
against her all around,  
because she has been rebellious  
against me," says the LORD.
- 18 "Your way and your deeds have  
brought these *things* on you.  
This *is* your wickedness.  
How bitter it is!  
How it reaches to your heart!."
- 19 My soul, my soul!  
I am pained to my very heart.  
My heart makes a noise in me.  
I cannot keep silent, because you have  
heard, O my soul, the sound of  
the trumpet, the alarm of war.

**4:4** Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 6:10; 9:25,26; Ezek 44:7,9; Acts 7:51. People cannot, of course, literally circumcise their hearts to make them new and obedient. The meaning is that Judah should turn their hearts to God who could make them new. Circumcision was a symbol of faith and obedience to God's covenant (see Gen 17:10). "Fury" – 21:12; 2 Thess 1:7-9; Heb 12:29. Notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11. **4:5-8** "From the north" – note at 1:13-16. The lion was a symbol of Babylon (Dan 7:4). Concerning Babylon's destructive power see Habakkuk 1:5-11. Observe what God says – "I will bring disaster." The cause of the destruction to come on Judah was "the fierce anger of the LORD" (vs 4,8). **4:9** Rulers, priests and prophets will get what they deserved (2:8). **4:10** How boldly Jeremiah accused God of leading the people astray (the Hebrew word also means "to deceive")! But it was not God

who led them astray by promising peace, but false prophets speaking in God's name. See 6:14; 14:13,14; 23:16,17. **4:11,12** God's coming wind of judgment would be only for the purpose of destruction, not for correcting or refining the people. **4:13-17** The Babylonians (Hab 1:5-8). **4:14** This was the only hope for the people of Jerusalem to escape disaster (compare Isa 1:16; Jam 4:8). They could cleanse their hearts by coming to Him who alone can do so, and by obeying His word (John 15:3; Ps 119:9). Otherwise, "evil thoughts" would control them. **4:19** "Soul" – literally, "bowels". **4:19-26** 8:21; Lam 2:11. In a vision Jeremiah sees the Babylonian destruction of Israel as though it had actually happened (see note at Isa 55:10,11). And he expresses his terrible grief. Can we not say he expresses God's grief as well? (See 48:36-39; Gen 6:6,7; 2 Sam 24:16; Luke

20 Destruction on destruction is announced,  
for the whole land is ruined.  
Suddenly my tents are ruined,  
and my curtains in an instant.

21 How long will I see the standard,  
and hear the sound of the trumpet?

22 "For my people *are* foolish;  
they have not known me;  
they *are* senseless children,  
and they have no understanding.  
They *are* clever in doing evil,  
but to do good they have no knowledge."

23 I looked at the earth, and saw that *it*  
was formless and empty,  
and the heavens, and they *had* no light.

24 I looked at the mountains,  
and saw that they trembled,  
and all the hills moved back and forth.

25 I looked, and saw that *there was* no man,  
and all the birds of the heavens had fled.

26 I looked, and saw that the fruitful  
place *was* a wilderness,  
and all its cities were broken down at  
the presence of the LORD,  
and by his fierce anger.

27 For thus says the LORD,  
"The whole land will be desolate;  
yet I will not make a full end.

28 For this the earth will mourn,  
and the heavens above be black,  
because I have spoken *it*,  
I have purposed *it*,  
and will not repent,  
nor will I turn back from it.

29 "The whole city will flee from the noise  
of the horsemen and archers.

They will go into thickets,  
and climb up on the rocks.  
Every city *will be* forsaken, and not  
a man will live in them.

30 And *when* you *are* ruined,  
what will you do?  
Though you clothe yourself with crimson,  
though you deck yourself with gold ornaments,  
though you enlarge your eyes with paint,  
you will make yourself beautiful in vain;  
your lovers will despise you,  
they will seek your life.

31 For I have heard a voice like a woman  
in labour pains,  
and like the anguish of one who gives  
birth to her first child,  
the voice of the daughter of Zion,  
crying out *for* herself, spreading  
her hands *and saying*,  
'Ah, now woe *to* me! For my soul is worn out  
because of murderers.'

5 "Run to and fro through the streets  
of Jerusalem,  
and look now and understand,  
and seek in its wide squares;  
if you can find a man, if there is  
*anyone* who acts with justice and  
seeks the truth, I will pardon it.

2 For though they say, 'As the LORD lives,'  
they certainly swear falsely."

3 O LORD, *are* not your eyes on the truth?  
You have struck them, but they have  
not grieved;  
you have consumed them, *but* they  
have refused to receive correction.  
They have made their faces harder

19:41-44). God does not punish His people gladly. He is afflicted when they are afflicted (Isa 63:9). In this passage Jeremiah's heart and God's heart are united in suffering.

4:22 God speaks here (5:21; 10:8). The Hebrew word translated "foolish" means lacking moral sense. See Ps 14:1 and Prov 1:7.

"Have not known me" – Isa 1:3; Hos 4:1. When those who are called God's people do not know God, they are ignorant of the one thing above all they should know and are headed for terrible trouble. Such people will not know how to do good but will develop great skill in doing evil. This is the story of mankind. This is what the human heart is like without God (17:9; Gen 8:21; Rom 1:18-23; Eph 4:17-19).

4:23 Jeremiah's vision seems to go beyond the destruction of Israel by the Babylonians.

4:27-29 God would not change His mind unless His people repented, and He knew they would not. Nothing else could avert the coming disaster.

4:30 The nation of Judah may behave like Jezebel (2 Kings 9:30), but will not escape any more than she did.

"Your lovers" – Judah sought the help of foreign countries and lusted after their gods.

4:31 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; Mic 4:10; 1 Thess 5:3.

5:1 In chapter 4 God speaks of the fearful punishment to come on Judah. In this chapter He continues to set forth the reasons why He must send such punishments. The first reason He gives is that there is no honesty, no love of truth whatever in the whole of Jerusalem. Such corrupt conditions whether in Jerusalem or anywhere cry out for God's punishment.

5:2 4:2; Lev 19:12.

5:3-6 Jeremiah, from his experience with both the people and their leaders, is compelled to agree with God's judgment.

5:3 2:30; Lev 26:23. Their faces reflected the state of their hearts (Ezek 36:26; Zech 7:12).

- than a rock;  
they have refused to return.
- 4 Therefore I said,  
"These *are* only the poor.  
They are foolish, for they do not know  
the way of the LORD,  
*or* the justice of their God.
- 5 I will go to the great men, and will  
speak to them;  
for they have known the way of the LORD,  
*and* the justice of their God."  
But they had completely broken the  
yoke *and* torn off the bonds.
- 6 Therefore a lion out of the forest will  
slay them, *and* a wolf from the  
desert will ruin them,  
a leopard will watch over their cities.  
Everyone who goes out will be torn in pieces,  
because their transgressions are many,  
*and* their backslidings have increased.
- 7 "How will I pardon you for this?  
Your children have forsaken me,  
and sworn by *gods who are* not gods.  
When I fed them to the full, then they  
committed adultery, and trooped to  
the houses of the prostitutes.
- 8 They were *like* well-fed lusty stallions;  
each one neighed after his neighbour's wife.
- 9 Will I not give punishment for these  
*things*? says the LORD.  
And will I not avenge myself on such  
a nation as this?
- 10 "Go up on her walls, and destroy.  
But do not make a full end.  
Take away her branches, for they *are*  
not the LORD's.
- 11 For the house of Israel and the house  
of Judah have dealt very treacherously  
against me," says the LORD.
- 12 "They have lied about the LORD and

- said: '*He is saying* nothing.  
No disaster will come on us,  
and we will not see sword or famine.
- 13 And the prophets are but wind,  
and the word *is* not in them.  
Thus it will be done to them."
- 14 Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts:  
"Because you have spoken this word,  
see, I will make my words in your  
mouth a fire, and this people wood,  
and it will consume them.
- 15 See, I will bring a nation against you  
from afar, O house of Israel,"  
says the LORD.  
"It is a mighty nation,  
it *is* an ancient nation,  
a nation whose language you do not know,  
and whose speech you do not understand.
- 16 Their quiver *is* like an open grave;  
they *are* all mighty men.
- 17 And they will eat up your harvest,  
and your bread,  
*which* your sons and your daughters  
should eat.  
They will eat up your flocks and your herds.  
They will eat up your vines and your fig trees.  
With the sword they will destroy your  
fortified cities in which you trust.
- 18 "Nevertheless, in those days," says the  
LORD, "I will not make a complete end of you.  
19 And it will come about that when you say, 'Why  
does the LORD our God do all these *things* to us?'  
then you will answer them, 'Just as you have for-  
saken me, and served foreign gods in your land, so  
you will serve foreigners in a land *that is* not yours.'
- 20 "Declare this to the house of Jacob,  
and publish it in Judah, saying,  
21 Now hear this, O foolish and senseless  
people, who have eyes,

5:5 2:8,20.  
5:6 Lev 26:22. Here these animals may signify hostile invading nations.  
5:7,8 Again God speaks.  
"How will I pardon you?" – the people did not give God any reason at all for forgiving them. There was not the slightest stirring of repentance.  
"Gods who are not gods" – 2:11; 16:20; Gal 4:8.  
"Adultery" – their adultery in spiritual matters resulted in physical adultery and the trampling underfoot of God's laws. When men depart from God they are capable of any evil act.  
5:9 5:29; 9:9. Could anyone find any reason at all why God should not punish them?  
5:10 Signifies permission to Israel's enemies to partially destroy her.

5:12,13 They lied by denying God's predictions in their own scriptures (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68) and God's warnings through the prophets. To them Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc were windbags! They foolishly imagined that denying the truth of God's Word would do away with that Word.  
5:14 Ex 24:17; Deut 4:24; 9:3; Heb 12:29.  
5:15 "Ancient nation" – by then Babylon had already existed for many hundreds of years (Gen 10:10).  
5:18 Mercy and faithfulness in the midst of anger – 4:27; 5:10; Lev 26:44,45.  
5:19 Their asking this question reveals their spiritual blindness and ignorance of God's Word.  
5:20-31 In this part the Lord fully answers the question of v 19.  
5:21 If they had not been so senseless they would have known the answer (Deut 29:4;



but do not see,  
 who have ears, but do not hear:  
 22 Do you not fear me? says the LORD.  
 Will you not tremble at my presence,  
 who have placed the sand as a  
     boundary of the sea by a permanent  
     decree,  
 so that it cannot cross it?  
 And though its waves toss themselves,  
     yet they cannot prevail;  
 though they roar, yet they cannot cross  
     over it.

23 "But this people have a stubborn and  
     rebellious heart.  
 They have revolted and gone.

24 Nor do they say in their heart,  
 'Let us now fear the LORD our God who  
     gives rain, both the former and  
     the latter, in its season,  
 who reserves for us the appointed  
     weeks of the harvest.'

25 Your evil deeds have turned away these *things*,  
 and your sins have withheld good *things*  
     from you.

26 For among my people are found wicked *men*.  
 They lie in wait like one who sets snares;  
 they set a trap, they catch men.

27 As a cage is full of birds, so their  
     houses *are* full of deceit.  
 Therefore they have become great  
     and grown rich.

28 They have grown fat; they are sleek.  
 Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked.  
 They do not plead the cause,  
 the cause of the fatherless; yet they  
     prosper; and they do not cause the  
     needy to get justice.

29 Will I not punish *them* for these  
     *things*?" says the LORD.

Isa 6:9; 42:20; Ezek 12:2; Matt 13:15).  
 5:22 People fear all sorts of things but  
 refuse to fear God who holds their life and  
 eternal fate in His hands. This is evidence  
 of a kind of madness in the hearts of  
 people, the madness Solomon spoke about  
 in Eccl 9:3. Notes on the fear of God at Gen  
 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10;  
 130:3,4.  
 5:23 Everything in the universe follows the  
 laws God has appointed except human  
 beings, Satan and demons.  
 5:25 Ps 84:11. God cannot justly bless  
 people as He would like to do if they refuse  
 His voice and trample underfoot His laws  
 (Ps 78:41).  
 5:26 9:8; Ps 10:8; Mic 7:2.  
 5:27 "Deceit" – they became rich by deceiving  
 others.  
 5:28 "Fatherless", "the needy" – Ex  
 22:21-24; Ps 82:3; Isa 1:23.

"Will I not avenge myself on such a  
     nation as this?"

30 "A shocking and horrible thing is  
     happening in the land:  
 31 The prophets prophesy falsely,  
     and the priests rule on their *own* authority,  
 and my people love *to have it* so.  
 But what will you do in the end?"

6 "O children of Benjamin,  
 gather yourselves to flee out of the  
     midst of Jerusalem,  
 and blow the trumpet in Tekoa,  
 and set up a signal-fire in Beth-Hakkerem;  
 for disaster appears out of the north,  
     and great destruction.

2 I have compared the daughter of Zion  
     to a beautiful and delicate *woman*.

3 The shepherds with their flocks will come to her;  
 they will pitch *their* tents against her  
     all around;  
 each of them will pasture in his place."

4 "Prepare war against her!  
 Arise, and let us go up at noon.  
 Woe to us! for the day passes away,  
     for the shadows of the evening are  
     lengthened.

5 Arise, and let us go by night,  
     and let us destroy her palaces."

6 For thus the LORD of hosts has said:  
 "Cut down trees, and throw up a *siege*  
     mound against Jerusalem.  
 This *is* the city to be punished;  
 she *is* full of oppression to the center.

7 As a fountain pours out its waters,  
     so she pours out her wickedness.  
 Violence and plundering are heard in her.  
 Grief and wounds *are* continually before me.

8 Be instructed, O Jerusalem,

5:29 Verse 9.  
 5:30,31 6:13; 2:8. When God Himself says  
 something is horrible and fearful we may  
 be quite sure it is. Prophets telling lies in  
 God's name and priests ruling arrogantly is  
 bad enough, but it is even worse when God's  
 people love to have it so. To be satisfied  
 with lies brings any people into terrible  
 danger (2 Thess 2:10).  
 6:1 "North" – though Babylon lay to the east  
 of Judah, invasion routes were not from the  
 east across the desert, but the easier route  
 from the north.  
 6:3 "Shepherds" – rulers with their armies.  
 6:4,5 This is the voice of the enemy invaders.  
 6:6 Signifies God's permission to the  
 enemy to attack Jerusalem.  
 6:7 Outwardly Jerusalem may be "beautiful"  
 and "delicate" (v 2), but in God's eyes she was  
 filthy and sick to the point of death.  
 6:8 Ignoring repeated warnings from God

- so that I do not depart from you,  
so that I do not make you desolate,  
a land not inhabited.”
- 9 Thus says the LORD of hosts:  
“They will thoroughly glean the remnant  
of Israel like a vine.  
Put your hand back into the branches  
like a grape gatherer.”
- 10 To whom will I speak, and give  
warning, that they may hear?  
See, their ear *is* not circumcised, and  
they cannot listen.  
See, the word of the LORD is an *object*  
*of* scorn to them;  
they have no delight in it.
- 11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD;  
I am weary of holding *it* in.  
“Pour it out on the children outside,  
and on the young men gathered together;  
for even the husband will be taken with  
the wife,  
the aged with *him who is* full of days.
- 12 And their houses will be turned over  
to others, together *with their*  
fields and wives;  
for I will stretch out my hand on the  
inhabitants of the land,” says the LORD.
- 13 “For from the least of them to the  
greatest of them everyone *is*  
greedy for gain;  
and from the prophet to the priest  
everyone deals falsely.
- 14 They lightly heal the hurt of *the*  
*daughter* of my people, saying,  
‘Peace, peace,’ when *there is* no peace.
- 15 Were they ashamed when they had

- committed abomination?  
No, they were not at all ashamed,  
nor could they blush.  
Therefore they will fall among those who fall.  
At the time *that* I punish them they  
will be thrown down,” says the LORD.
- 16 Thus says the LORD,  
“Stand by the roads and see,  
and ask for the old paths,  
where the good way *is*, and walk in it,  
and you will find rest for your souls.  
But they said, ‘We will not walk *in it*.’
- 17 Also I set watchmen over you, *saying*,  
‘Listen for the sound of the trumpet.’  
But they said, ‘We will not listen.’
- 18 Therefore hear, you nations, and know,  
O congregation, what *is* among them.
- 19 Hear, O earth!  
See, I will bring disaster on this people,  
the fruit of their plans,  
because they have not listened to my  
words, or to my law, but rejected it.
- 20 To what purpose does incense come  
to me from Sheba,  
and sweet cane from a far country?  
Your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable,  
nor your sacrifices sweet to me.”
- 21 Therefore thus says the LORD,  
“See, I will lay stumbling blocks  
before this people,  
and the fathers and the sons will fall  
on them together.  
The neighbour and his friend will perish.”
- 22 Thus says the LORD,  
“See, a people is coming from the north

will bring disaster (19:15; 36:31; Prov 29:1).

**6:9** That is, few of the people would be left.

**6:10** Jeremiah speaks and reveals the sadness of his heart (and of the hearts of all of Christ’s true spokesmen when people will not obey the word of God).  
“Their ear is uncircumcised” – that is, they did not listen to God as those in covenant relationship with God should have done.

**6:11** 15:17; 20:9. In the first part of the verse Jeremiah still speaks. He is experiencing God’s anger against the people and he is filled with an overflowing zeal for God’s name. Then God tells him not to try to hold it in but to speak it out and so pave the way for God’s judgments to follow (v 12).

**6:13** 2:8; 5:27,31.

**6:14** Isa 30:10; 48:22; 57:20,21. Many so-called preachers in order to fill their pockets will tell the people what they want to hear.

**6:15** Their conduct is extremely abominable because they keep people in ignorance and make them ripe for God’s judgment.

**6:16** “Old paths” – 18:15; Deut 32:17. The true worship of God the Creator set forth in the Bible is the most ancient of all ways. It goes clear back to Adam and Eve the first man and woman and the ancestors of us all. It is the “good” way, the way of rest (Matt 11:29), the way without idols, the way of faith and holiness.

**6:17-19** What could God have done to save His people when they repeatedly refused to listen to Him? There remained only just judgment.

**6:20** In spite of their wicked rebellion against God the people kept up some form of religion. But God will not accept such. See 1 Sam 15:22,23; Ps 50:7-23; Isa 1:10-17; Ps 51:17; Mic 6:8. Worship without obedience to His Word, and religion added on to a sinful life are detestable to God.

**6:22** 1:15; 4:6; 6:1.

- country,  
and a great nation is being raised up  
from the ends of the earth.
- 23 They will take hold of bow and spear;  
they *are* cruel and have no mercy.  
Their voice roars like the sea,  
and they ride on horses,  
as men of war set in array against you,  
O daughter of Zion."
- 24 We have heard of its fame.  
Our hands have become feeble.  
Anguish *and* pain have seized us,  
like a woman in labour.
- 25 Do not go out into the field,  
or walk by the road;  
for the sword of the enemy *and* fear  
*are* on every side.
- 26 O daughter of my people, tie sackcloth  
on *yourselves*, and roll in ashes.  
Mourn in most bitter lamentation,  
*as for* an only son,  
for the despoiler will suddenly come on us.
- 27 "I have appointed you *as* a tower *and*  
a fortress among my people,  
so that you may know and test their way.
- 28 They *are* all stubborn rebels,  
going about with slanders.  
*They are* brass and iron.  
*They are* all corrupters.
- 29 The bellows blow fiercely;  
the lead is consumed by the fire;  
the smelter refines in vain,  
because the wicked are not purged out."

30 *People* will call them rejected silver,  
because the LORD has rejected them.

**7** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word and say: 'Hear the word of the LORD, all *you of* Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. 3 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4 Do not trust in lying words, and say, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!" 5 For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly make justice prevail between a man and his neighbour, 6 *if* you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and do not walk after other gods to your harm, 7 then I will cause you to live in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever.

8 "See, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. 9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, 10 and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, "We are delivered" to do all these abominations? 11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? See, I have been watching, says the LORD.

12 "But now go to my place which *was* in Shiloh, where I set my name at first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel.

6:23 4:13; 8:16; Hab 1:6-11.  
6:24 4:31. Words of Judah facing the Babylonians.  
6:26 4:8; 25:34; Ezek 27:30; Job 2:8.  
6:27-30 Here God speaks to Jeremiah. The word of God which Jeremiah spoke was that which tested the people. That word was like a fire – 5:14; 20:9; 23:29. Unfortunately, in this refining process, no true gold, no true silver appeared. The wicked would not repent, the hardened rebels would not melt. The Lord rejected them as something worthless.  
7:2 Observe that the people still came to "worship" the Lord, though they would not obey Him and lived in wickedness. See 6:20.  
7:3-8 Another appeal to the people to repent. See how reluctant God is to punish.  
7:4 The deceptive words were spoken by false prophets and backslidden priests (5:31). They told the people that as long as they continued their forms of worship all would be well, that God was not angry, that He would not punish them.  
7:5,6 5:28. How important these matters are to God! "To your harm" – v 19; 25:7; Ps 16:4. According to the Bible the worship

of all idols and all gods other than the one true and living God will bring great harm to anyone who engages in it. It stirs up the anger of God who has forbidden it (Ex 20:1-6). It helps to keep those who do it in bondage. It contributes to spiritual blindness (as long as men think God is like their idols they will never understand what God is really like). And at last it brings great punishment from God (Rev 21:8).  
7:7 Gen 17:8; Josh 1:6.  
7:8 This is true of the great bulk of mankind in every age and every place. Men in general prefer deceptive words that will let them do as they please. See John 3:19,20; 2 Thess 2:10-12.  
7:9,10 "Baal" – note at Jud 2:11. In v 9 we see that the people willfully and continually broke five of the ten commandments (Ex 20:1-17), and yet thought God didn't care and would keep them safe from their enemies.  
7:11 See Matt 21:13. To them God's temple was like a cave to hide in. Did they think that God was blind? (16:17; 23:24; 29:23; Ps 33:13-15; Prov 5:21; Heb 4:13).  
7:12-15 Shiloh was the place where the

13 And now, because you have done all these deeds, says the LORD, and *because* I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you would not listen; and I called you, but you would not answer; 14 therefore I will do to *this* house, which is called by my name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. 15 And I will hurl you out of my sight, as I have hurled out all your brethren, all the offspring of Ephraim.'

16 "Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, or make intercession to me; for I will not hear you. 17 Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough to make cakes for the 'queen of heaven,' and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, provoking me to anger. 19 Do they provoke me to anger? says the LORD. *Do they* not *provoke* themselves to the shame of their own faces?

20 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: See, my anger and my fury will be poured out on this place, on man and on beast and on the trees of the field, and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn, and will not be quenched."

21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat meat. 22 For in the day that I brought

your fathers out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to them or give commands to them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices, 23 but this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you will be my people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, so that it may be well with you.' 24 But they did not listen or turn their ear *to me*, but walked in the counsels *and* in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. 25 From the day that your fathers came up out of the land of Egypt to this day I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*. 26 Yet they did not listen to me, or turn their ear to me, but hardened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

27 "Therefore you shall speak all these words to them. But they will not listen to you. You shall also call to them. But they will not answer you. 28 But you shall say to them, 'This *is* a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God, or receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. 29 Cut off your hair, *O Jerusalem*, and throw it away, and take up a lamentation on the barren heights, for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.'

30 "For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, says the LORD. They have set their abominations in the house which is called by my

tabernacle was set up in the land of Canaan (Josh 18:1). It was the place where people went to worship (1 Sam 1:3). It was about 30 kilometers north of Jerusalem in the area of Ephraim. From there the ark of God's covenant was taken by the Philistines. Never again was it placed there (1 Sam 4:17; Ps 78:59-61). Shiloh fell into ruins, and Ephraim and the whole northern kingdom went into captivity (2 Kings 17:1-6). God here says that Judah and Jerusalem should learn their lesson from Shiloh.

**7:14** Notice here that the people were not trusting in God but in the temple.

**7:16** God speaks to Jeremiah. People can go so far in sin and rebellion that God will no longer even hear prayer for them (15:1; 1 John 5:16).

**7:17-19** "Queen of heaven" – 44:17-19. This was a goddess worshiped in many countries in that time under different names. The people of Tyre and Sidon called her Ashtoreth, the Babylonians called her Ishtar, the Greeks named her Astarte. She was the goddess of both fertility and war, their so-called "mother" goddess.

**7:20** Verse 29. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**7:21** Burnt offerings were not to be eaten (Lev 1:9). Here God is saying the ones the people were offering were not acceptable to him so the people should eat them.

**7:22,23** God first emphasized obedience to Himself and gave the ten commandments (Ex 19:5; 20:1-7). Later God gave commands about sacrifice (Leviticus chapters 1 through 7).

**7:24** Since they did not obey God their sacrifices were worthless.

"Evil heart" – 3:17; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12. In the writings of Jeremiah there is much about the human heart. It is exposed in all its stubbornness, foolishness and wickedness. A key verse for the whole book is 17:9. But not only is the evil heart of man exposed, God's way of dealing with it is also revealed – see 24:7; 31:33.

**7:25,26** Some people followed their evil hearts because they knew no better way. Israel and Judah did know the true way, so their sin was worse than that of any other people. Sin without the truth is bad; sin against truth is far worse.

**7:27** God knew there had been no change in the people.

**7:28,29** Cutting off the hair in the Bible was a sign of grief and mourning (Job 1:20; Micah 1:16). See Lev 21:5.

**7:30** 4:1; 32:34. How more fully could they have shown their contempt for God and His laws? "Their abominations" – their detestable idols. Though the word "idols" is not in the original, the Hebrew word which means something abominable, a detested

name, defiling it. 31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire. I did not command this, and it did not come into my heart. 32 Therefore, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, that it will no longer be called Tophet, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room left. 33 And the dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the sky and for the beasts of the earth; and no one will frighten *them* away. 34 Then I will put a stop to the sound of joy and the sound of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem; for the land will be desolate.

**8** “At that time,” says the LORD, “they will bring the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves, 2 and they will spread them out before the sun and the moon and all the *starry* host of heaven, which they have loved, and which they have served, and which they have followed, and which they have sought, and which they have worshipped. They will not be gathered, or buried. They will be like refuse on the surface of the earth. 3 And death will be chosen rather than life by the remnant, all those who remain of this evil family, who remain in all the places where I have driven them, says the LORD of hosts. 4 “Moreover you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: Will they fall and not rise? Will he turn away, and not return?

5 Why *then* has this people of Jerusalem slid back in a perpetual backsliding? They hold firmly to deceit; they refuse to return. 6 I listened and heard, *but* they did not speak rightly. No man repented of his wickedness, saying, “What have I done?” Everyone turned to his own course, like a horse rushing into the battle. 7 Yes, the stork in the sky knows its appointed times, and the turtle dove and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But my people do not know the judgment of the LORD. 8 “How do you say, “We *are* wise, and the law of the LORD *is* with us?” See, the lying pen of the scribes has made *it* into a lie. 9 The wise *men* are put to shame, they are dismayed and caught. See, they have rejected the word of the LORD, so what wisdom *is* in them? 10 Therefore I will give their wives to others, *and* their fields to those who will inherit *them*, for everyone from the least to the greatest is greedy for gain, from the prophet to the priest everyone deals falsely. 11 For they have lightly healed the hurt of the daughter of my people, saying, “Peace, peace”, when *there is* no peace. 12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?

thing, here implies idols, as it does also in 4:1; 32:34; Deut 29:17; etc. **7:31** “Tophet” – 19:6,11-14. The Ammonites sometimes offered their children in the fire to their god Molech (Lev 18:21; 20:1-5; 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 16:2,3; 21:1,6). The people of Judah and Jerusalem adopted this abominable practice and built a place for it just outside the walls of Jerusalem. “Valley of Hinnom” in Hebrew is ge-hinnom. It became Geenna in Greek (Gehenna in English) and was used in the New Testament to indicate hell with its eternal fire (Matt 18:9; Mark 9:47,48). **7:32-34** 19:6. Speaks of the slaughter of the people when the Babylonians invade the country. **8:1** The contempt which they deserve will be shown even to their bones. **8:2** They committed the senseless and terrible sin of worshiping and serving creation rather than the Creator (2 Kings 23:5; Jer 19:13; Acts 7:42; Rom 1:25). **8:3** Compare Rev 9:6.

**8:4** Prov 24:16; Mic 7:8; Jer 31:19. **8:5** “Deceit” – they refused to abandon the thing that was destroying them. This is common among the people of the world. **8:6** Isa 53:6; 56:11; 57:17; 7:13. **8:7** 4:22; Deut 32:28; Isa 1:2,3; 5:13; 27:11. Their ignorance was willful and therefore blameworthy. God holds us responsible for not knowing the truth if we could know it and will not bother to do so. **8:8** Their religious teachers misinterpreted the law of God to the people. Compare Matt 15:3-9. Many Jewish commentators on the law, instead of making it clear, twisted and perverted its meaning. **8:9** There is no true wisdom in those who disobey God’s Word. This includes educators, scientists, philosophers, writers and anyone else who ignores the Bible. Men can have much knowledge of various things without having wisdom. Notes on wisdom at Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 1 Cor 1:20,21; 2:6,7; Col 2:3. **8:10-12** 6:12-15.

- No, they were not at all ashamed,  
and they could not blush.  
Therefore they will fall among those who fall.  
In the time of their punishment they  
will be thrown down, says the LORD.
- 13 I will surely consume them, says the LORD.  
*There will be* no grapes on the vine,  
no figs on the fig tree,  
and the leaf will fade;  
and *the things that* I have given them  
will pass away from them."
- 14 Why do we sit still?  
Come together, and let us enter the  
fortified cities,  
and let us be silent there;  
for the LORD our God has put us to silence,  
and given us bitter water to drink,  
because we have sinned against the LORD.
- 15 We looked for peace, but no good came,  
and for a time of health,  
and see trouble!
- 16 The snorting of his horses was heard  
from Dan.  
The whole land trembled at the sound  
of the neighing of his strong ones;  
for they have come and devoured the land,  
and all that is in it,  
the city, and those who dwell in it.
- 17 "For, see, I will send serpents among you,  
vipers which *will not be* charmed,  
and they will bite you," says the LORD.
- 18 *When* I would comfort myself in sorrow,  
my heart *is* faint in me.
- 19 Mark the voice of the cry of the  
daughter of my people because of

those who dwell in a far country:  
"Is the LORD not in Zion?  
Is her king not in her?"

"Why have they provoked me to anger  
with their carved images,  
and with foreign idols?"

20 The harvest is past,  
the summer has ended,  
and we are not saved.

21 Because of the wound of the daughter  
of my people I am wounded;  
I mourn; horror has seized me.

22 *Is there* no balm in Gilead?  
*Is there* no physician there?  
Why then has the health of the daughter  
of my people not recovered?

9 Oh, that my head were waters,  
and my eyes a fountain of tears,  
that I might weep day and night for the  
slain of the daughter of my people!

2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness a  
lodging place for travellers,  
so that I might leave my people,  
and go away from them!  
For they *are* all adulterers,  
an assemblage of treacherous men.

3 "And *like* their bow they bend their  
tongues *for* lies;  
but they are not valiant for truth on the earth,  
for they proceed from evil to evil,  
and they do not know me,"  
says the Lord.

4 "Each one should be careful about his  
neighbour,

**8:13** What God gives He can justly take away. The meaning of the Hebrew for the last sentence of this verse is unclear.

**8:14-16** Looks forward to the invasion of the land by the Babylonians. Jeremiah speaks for the people.

**8:14** Even if the people did not yet know the reason for their punishment Jeremiah did.

**8:17** The Lord says He will do again what He had once done in their history (Num 21:6. See Deut 32:24).

**8:18** Jeremiah cries to the Lord when he thinks of the coming destruction.

**8:19** In the first part of the verse Jeremiah speaks of the people of Judah as though they were already in exile in Babylon. In the second part the Lord speaks and again gives one of the reasons why He punished His people. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**8:20** The people in exile speak of their despair.

**8:21,22** 4:19,20; Lam 2:11. He speaks again and reveals the agony of his heart

for his nation. He completely identified with the people even though they rejected and persecuted him and tried to kill him. Compare Luke 19:41-44; Rom 9:1-3; Ex 32:32; Dan 9:5; etc. "Mourn" – or "am ashen." **9:1** Verse 10; 8:21; 13:17; 14:17; Ps 119:136. For good reason Jeremiah is called "the weeping prophet".

**9:2** He wept for them, but their behavior was so ungodly that he could no longer bear to be around them.

**9:3** "Bow" – v 8; Ps 7:13; 58:7; 64:3.

"Do not know me" – v 6; Jud 2:10; 1 Sam 2:12; Isa 1:3; Hos 4:1; John 16:3. They knew about Jehovah, they called themselves His people, but they did not know Him personally. There are many Christians today in the same sad condition. They have heard many things about Christ, they know something of the Bible, but they have not met Christ in their experience, they do not know Him as one person knows another. And they show they do not know Him by the way they behave.

**9:4** Ps 12:2; Micah 7:5,6; Matt 10:35,36.



- and not trust in any brother;  
for every brother acts deceitfully,  
and every neighbour goes around as  
a slanderer.
- 5 And each one of them deceives his neighbour,  
and does not speak the truth.  
They have taught their tongue to speak lies,  
and wear themselves out doing evil.
- 6 Your dwelling place *is* in the midst of deceit.  
Through deceit they refuse to know me,  
says the LORD."
- 7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts,  
"See, I will refine them, and test them;  
for what will I do for the daughter of  
my people?
- 8 Their tongue *is like* a deadly arrow  
*shot out* ; it speaks deceit.  
*One* speaks peaceably to his neighbour  
with his mouth,  
but in his heart he lies in wait.
- 9 Will I not punish them for these *things*?  
says the LORD.  
Will I not avenge myself on such a  
nation as this?"
- 10 I will take up a weeping and wailing  
for the mountains  
and a lamentation for the dwelling  
places in the wilderness,  
because they are burned up,  
so that no one can pass through *them* ;  
and *people* cannot hear the sound of cattle.  
Both the birds of the heavens and the  
beasts have fled; they are gone.
- 11 "And I will make Jerusalem heaps,  
and a den for jackals,  
and I will make the cities of Judah

desolate, without an inhabitant."

12 Who *is* the wise man who can understand  
this? And *who is the one* to whom the mouth of the  
LORD has spoken, so that he might declare it? Why  
does the land perish, burned like a desert, so that  
no one passes through?

13 And the LORD says, "Because they have  
forsaken my law which I set before them and have  
not obeyed my voice, or walked in the *law*, 14 but  
have walked according to the imagination of their  
own heart, and after the Baals, which their fathers  
taught them, 15 therefore thus says the LORD of  
hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will feed them, this  
people, with bitterness, and give them bitter water  
to drink. 16 I will also scatter them among the  
nations whom neither they nor their fathers have  
known; and I will send a sword after them until I  
have consumed them."

- 17 Thus says the LORD of hosts:  
"Consider, and call for the mourning women,  
that they may come.  
And send for skillful *women*, that they  
may come.
- 18 And let them hurry and take up a  
wailing for us,  
that our eyes may run down with tears,  
and our eyelids pour out water.
- 19 For a sound of wailing is heard  
from Zion, 'How we are ruined!  
We are greatly disgraced, because we  
have forsaken the land,  
because our dwellings have cast us out.'"

20 Yet hear the word of the LORD,  
O women,  
and let your ears receive the word of  
his mouth,

When everyone tells lies, when deceit is rampant, suspicion displaces trust, bonds between friends and relatives strain to the breaking point, God's anger is upon all, and the man of truth suffers.

9:7 6:27-30. "I will refine" – God did this by sending the Babylonians to bring punishment, affliction, and destruction on the people.

9:8 Verse 3; 5:26; Ps 55:21; Prov 29:5. 9:9 5:9,29.

9:10 Verse 1; 4:23-26. Jeremiah speaks as though he was already in that future time of destruction.

9:11 10:22; 26:18; Ps 44:19; Lam 5:18. "Jackals" – there is much question about the meaning of the Hebrew word translated "jackals". The KJV has "dragons" here, a very unlikely translation. It was formerly thought that the word meant "sea monster" or "serpent" or even "crocodile", but many present-day scholars think it probably means "jackals" or, possibly, "wolves."

9:12 Again Jehovah speaks. Why should

God destroy His own land and people? Who can understand it?

9:13-16 The answer to the question in v 12 is very clear. God had to send judgments on His people because of their sins. To allow them to escape would be to pervert justice.

9:14 "Baals" – note at Jud 2:11.

9:16 13:24; 18:17; 30:11; 46:28; Lev 26:27,33; Deut 28:64.

9:17-19 In that time there were mourners for hire for sad occasions such as funerals. God is saying here that there is going to be plenty to wail about. In the Bible God often tells people to wail, to cry out, or to weep – 4:8; 25:34; 48:20; 49:3; Isa 14:31; 16:7; 23:1,6,14; Zeph 1:11; Zech 11:2; Jam 4:9; 5:1.

He tells others to rejoice – Ps 33:1; 97:12; Zech 2:10; 9:9; Matt 5:12; Luke 6:23; Phil 4:4; 1 Thess 5:16; Jam 1:9; 1 Pet 4:13; Rev 12:12; 18:20. We should note who should wail, who should rejoice and the reasons for both wailing and rejoicing.

9:20-22 Jeremiah says there will be such

- and teach wailing to your daughters,  
and each one *teach* lamentation to her  
neighbour.
- 21 For death has come up into our windows,  
*and* has entered our palaces,  
to cut off the children from the streets,  
*and* the young men from the squares.
- 22 Say, "Thus says the LORD:  
Even the corpses of men will fall like  
refuse on the open field,  
and like cut stalks after the harvester,  
and no one will gather *them*."
- 23 Thus says the LORD:  
"Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom,  
nor let the mighty *man* glory in his might;  
let not the rich *man* glory in his riches;
- 24 But let him who glories glory in this:  
that he understands, and knows me,  
that I *am* the LORD who acts with  
loving kindness, justice,  
and righteousness in the earth;  
for in these *things* I delight,  
says the LORD.
- 25 See, the days are coming,  
says the LORD,  
when I will punish all *those who are*  
circumcised with the uncircumcised,
- 26 Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the  
children of Ammon, and Moab,  
and all *who* are in the farthest corners,  
who live in the wilderness.  
For all *these* nations *are* uncircumcised,  
and all the house of Israel *are*  
uncircumcised in heart."

**10** Hear the word which the LORD speaks to  
you, O house of Israel. 2 Thus says the  
LORD:

- "Do not learn the way of the nations,  
and do not be dismayed at the signs  
in the heavens,  
though the nations are dismayed at them.
- 3 For the customs of the peoples *are*  
worthless;  
for *one* cuts a tree from the forest with  
an axe,  
the work of the hands of a craftsman.
- 4 They adorn it with silver and gold;  
they fasten it with nails and with hammers,  
so that it does not totter.
- 5 They *are* upright like the palm tree,  
but do not speak.  
They must be carried, because they  
cannot walk.  
Do not be afraid of them, for they  
cannot do evil,  
and *it is* not in them to do good."
- 6 For *there is* no one like you, O LORD.  
You *are* great, and your name *is* great  
in power.
- 7 Who would not fear you,  
O King of nations?  
For this is your due.  
For among all the wise *men* of the  
nations, and in all their kingdoms,  
*there is* no one like you.
- 8 But they are altogether senseless and foolish;  
their worthless teaching *is about* wooden *idols*.
- 9 Silver hammered into plates is brought

cause for wailing that all should learn how  
best to do it. Death like an enemy soldier  
will get in through the windows of their homes  
and palaces, and pass through all their  
streets. There will be much opportunity for  
mourning but not for burying the dead.

**9:23,24** What do men in general boast  
about? Some about how clever they are.  
Others about their caste or color or religion  
or skill or looks or strength. What should  
God's people boast about? None of the  
above or anything that relates merely to  
self, but in the knowledge of God. This is  
the most important matter there can be in  
a person's life. For causes of boasting see  
Ps 34:2; 44:8; Rom 5:3; 15:17; 2 Cor  
10:17; 12:9; Gal 6:14. See in v 24 the  
things about Himself that God emphasizes  
— compare Ps 11:7; 33:5; 89:14; 99:4;  
103:6,8; 106:1; 145:9; Ex 34:6,7.

**9:25,26** In His anger against sin, in His  
judgments on sinners God will make no  
distinction between peoples. Their religion,  
their rites and ceremonies cannot help them.  
True religion must be of the heart — 4:4;  
Rom 2:12,25-29; John 4:24.

**10:2** "The way of the nations" — a way  
without the true God, the way of many reli-  
gions, many gods, and many superstitions.

"Signs in the heavens" — the nations  
made much of the movements of planets,  
stars, comets, meteors, etc, and all the  
superstitions of astrology. God shows in His  
word the vanity and worthlessness of all that  
(Isa 47:13-15; Dan 2:1-11; 4:18).

**10:3-5** Notes at Ps 115:3-7; 135:15-17;  
Isa 44:9.

**10:6-10** Jeremiah speaks as all the writers of  
the Bible do on the subject of God and idols.

**10:6** Ex 8:10; Ps 86:8; Isa 43:10,11; 44:6,7.

**10:7** "King" — Ps 47:8,9; 96:10. Jehovah is  
no mere tribal deity (Ps 22:28; 47:1-9; 95:3).

**10:8** Ps 115:8; 135:18; Isa 44:18-20;  
Rom 1:21-23.

"Altogether" — the Bible teaches that no  
one who worships an idol has any spiritual  
understanding, no matter how brilliant he  
may be in other matters.

**10:9-16** This is the difference between God  
and gods. The gods are made by men. God  
made the heavens and the earth. The gods  
are useless. God is the eternal King of the

- from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz,  
the work of the craftsman, and of the  
hands of the goldsmith.  
Their clothing *is* of blue and purple;  
they *are* all the work of skillful *men*.
- 10 But the LORD *is* the true God;  
he *is* the living God,  
and everlasting king.  
At his wrath the earth trembles,  
and the nations cannot stand  
before his indignation.
- 11 "Thus shall you say to them:  
The gods that have not made the  
heavens and the earth will perish  
from the earth,  
and from under these heavens."
- 12 He has made the earth by his power,  
he has established the world by his wisdom,  
and has stretched out the heavens by  
his understanding.
- 13 When he utters his voice, *there is* a  
roar of waters in the heavens,  
and he causes the vapours to ascend  
from the ends of the earth.  
He makes lightning flashes with rain,  
and brings the wind out of his treasures.
- 14 Every man is senseless and *without*  
knowledge.  
Every goldsmith is put to shame by  
carved images,  
for his cast metal image *is* a lie,  
and *there is* no breath in them.
- 15 They *are* worthless, *and* the product of error.  
In the time of their punishment they will perish.
- 16 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them;  
for he *is* the maker of all *things*,  
and Israel *is* the tribe of his inheritance.  
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.
- 17 Gather up your goods *to go* out of the  
land, O inhabitant of the fortress.
- 18 For thus says the LORD,  
"See, at this time I will throw out the  
inhabitants of the land,  
and will distress them, that they may  
find *this true*."
- 19 Woe is me for my injury!  
My wound is grievous.  
But I said, "Truly this *is* a grief, and I  
must bear it."
- 20 My tent is ruined, and all my ropes are broken.  
My children have gone away from me,  
and *are no more*.  
There is no longer anyone to stretch  
out my tent, and to set up my curtains.
- 21 For the shepherds have become senseless,  
and have not sought the LORD;  
therefore they will not prosper,  
and all their flocks will be scattered.
- 22 See, the sound of the report has come,  
and a great commotion out of the  
north country,  
to make the cities of Judah desolate  
*and* a den of jackals.
- 23 O LORD, I know that the way of man  
*is* not in himself;  
*it is* not in man who walks to direct his steps.
- 24 O LORD, correct me, but with justice;  
not in your anger, or you will bring  
me to nothing.
- 25 Pour out your fury on the nations that  
do not know you,  
and on the families that do not call  
on your name,  
for they have eaten up Jacob,  
and devoured him, and consumed him,  
and have made his dwelling place desolate.

universe. They are dead and will perish from the world. He is the Immortal One.

**10:10** "Wrath" – Ps 18:7; 76:7; Rev 6:16,17.

**10:11** This is what Jeremiah was commanded to tell the nations which worshiped idols. This verse is not in Hebrew but Aramaic, a language which was more likely to be understood by some of those nations than Hebrew.

**10:12,13** Genesis chapter 1; Ps 104:1-13.

**10:14,15** Verse 8.

**10:16** Deut 4:20; 7:6; 32:9; Ps.74:2; 146:5.

"Portion of Jacob" – the portion of other nations was the false gods of the world, but Jacob had the true God, the Creator of the universe.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**10:19,20** Jeremiah laments for the people of Judah and Jerusalem as if the destruction had already come. He himself

had neither wife nor children (16:2).

**10:21** 22:22; 23:1; 25:34; 50:6.

"Shepherds" – leaders of the people (the flock). They brought great trouble on the people because of their senseless behavior (vs 8,14). One way they show their lack of good sense was by refusing to pray to the true and living God.

**10:22** 1:14; 4:6; 6:22,23; 8:16.

**10:23-25** Jeremiah prays that God will deal justly both with himself and ruined Judah and the nations that have destroyed the country.

**10:23** Ps 37:23; Prov 3:5,6; 16:9; 20:24. A person cannot determine what is going to happen to him, and he should not try to direct his own life without God.

**10:24** Ps 6:1; 38:1; 39:10,11.

**10:25** See Ps 79:6,7. Notes on such prayers at Ps 35:8.

**11** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Listen to the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, 3 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: Cursed *be* the man who does not obey the words of this covenant 4 which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do according to all which I command you; so you will be my people, and I will be your God, 5 so that I may fulfil the oath which I swore to your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as *it is* this day.'"

Then I answered and said, "So be it, O LORD."

6 Then the LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: 'Listen to the words of this covenant, and do them. 7 For I have earnestly warned your fathers in the day *that* I brought them up out of the land of Egypt to this day, rising early and giving warnings, saying, Obey my voice. 8 But they did not obey and did not incline their ear, but each one walked in the imagination of his evil heart. Therefore I will bring on them all the words of this covenant which I commanded *them* to do, for they did not do *them*.'"

9 And the LORD said to me, "A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 They have turned back to the evil deeds of their forefathers who refused to hear my words, who went after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the

house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers. 11 Therefore thus says the LORD: See, I will bring disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to me, I will not listen to them. 12 Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense; but they will not at all save them in the time of their trouble. 13 For the number of your gods is *as many as* your cities, O Judah; and *as many as* the streets of Jerusalem *is* the number of the altars you have set up to *that* shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.

14 "Therefore do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not listen to *them* when they cry out to me in their trouble.

15 "What has my beloved to do in my house, *since* she has performed vile acts with many; and can the consecrated flesh avert *disaster* from you?

When you do evil, then you rejoice.

16 The LORD called your name, 'A green olive tree, beautiful, *and* with good fruit'; with the noise of a great tumult he has set it on fire, and its branches are broken.

17 "For the LORD of hosts who planted you, has proclaimed disaster against you, because of the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves, provoking me to anger by offering incense to Baal."

**11:2** This covenant was the one God made with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, first described in Exodus chapters 19 to 24. It was the basis of their whole existence as a nation, the most important thing to remind them of.

**11:3** "Cursed" – see Deut 11:26-28; 27:15-26; 28:15-20; Gal 3:10.

**11:4** Ex 19:5,6; Deut 6:3; Jer 7:23.

**11:5** Gen 15:18; 17:7,8; Ex 3:8.

**11:6-8** They did not do what God told them to do, so He brought on them the punishment for their sins that He said He would bring on them.

**11:8** Compare with Ex 19:8; Deut 27:26.

**11:9,10** They had agreed together not to follow the reforms brought in by good king Josiah (2 Kings chapter 23). They determined to worship other gods and thus continued to break God's covenant with them.

**11:11** Their deliberate choice for evil was bound to bring God's just judgment on them. It was now too late for them to escape it. Their cry for mercy would not be heard (14:12; Ezek 8:18).

**11:12-28**; Deut 32:38; Jud 10:14; 1 Kings 18:25-29; Isa 44:17,18; 57:13. If we chose the wrong source for help in

trouble let us not be surprised if we receive no help. We should all understand that the failure of idols and gods does not mean the failure of the one true God.

**11:13** "gods" – 2:28. When the one true God is not enough for people, there may be no limit to the number of gods they choose to worship. Baal is here called the shameful god. Sexual rites and sins were common in connection with his worship. Note at Jud 2:11.

**11:14** God speaks to Jeremiah. Compare 7:16; 15:1; 1 John 5:16.

**11:15** "Beloved" – the people of Judah, God's chosen people. Though they were terribly fallen, sinful and disobedient He still calls them "my beloved" (see also 3:1,14; 12:7; Song of songs 8:6,7). But see how the beloved behaved! Temple worship by such people could not avert God's judgment.

**11:16,17** In the Bible individuals are compared to trees (Ps 1:3; 52:8; 128:3). Here the whole nation is called an olive tree, and God warns them that its branches will be broken. However much this might have been fulfilled by the Babylonian invasion the more complete fulfillment came after the Jews rejected Christ when He was on earth. See Rom 11:7-21.

18 And the LORD has given me knowledge of *it*, and I know *it*, for you showed me their deeds.  
19 But I *was* like a gentle lamb *that* is brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, *saying*,

"Let us destroy the tree with its fruit;  
and let us cut him off from the  
land of the living,  
that his name may no longer be  
remembered."

20 But, O LORD of hosts,  
*you* who judge righteously,  
*you* who test the inner being and  
the heart,  
let me see your vengeance on them;  
for to you I have committed my cause.

21 Therefore thus says the LORD: "About the men of Anathoth who seek your life, saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, so that you do not die by our hand,' 22 thus says the LORD of hosts, See, I will punish them. The young men will die by the sword; their sons and their daughters will die by famine, 23 and none of them will remain, for I will bring disaster on the men of Anathoth, the year of their punishment."

**12** *You are* righteous, O LORD,  
when I plead with you.  
Yet let me talk with you of *your* judgments.  
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?  
*Why* are all those who act very  
treacherously at ease?

2 You have planted them;  
yes, they have taken root, they grow;

yes, they produce fruit.  
You *are* near on their lips,  
and far from their inner being.

3 But you, O LORD, know me.  
You have seen me, and tested my heart  
toward you.  
Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter,  
and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

4 How long will the land mourn,  
and the plants of every field wither  
because the wickedness of those  
who dwell in it?  
The beasts and the birds are consumed,  
because they said,  
"He does not see the end we reach."

5 *The LORD said*, "If you have run with  
men on foot,  
and they have worn you out,  
then how can you compete with horses?  
*And if they wore you out* in the land  
of peace, *in which* you trusted,  
then what will you do in the flooding of Jordan?"

6 For even your brothers and the  
household of your father have dealt  
treacherously with you;  
yes, they have called on many *to go*  
after you.  
Do not believe them, though they  
speak smooth words to you.

7 "I have forsaken my house,  
I have left my inheritance,  
I have given my dearly beloved into  
the hand of her enemies.

8 My inheritance is to me like a lion

**11:18-23** The men of Anathoth, Jeremiah's home town, plotted to kill him. They wanted to stop the preaching of the truth. Death was their reward.

**11:19** "Lamb" – Ps 44:22; Rom 8:36.

"Remembered" – it is they who are not remembered.

**11:20** Ps 7:9,11. "Vengeance" – Jeremiah did not take vengeance himself but left it to God. For notes on such prayers see Ps 35:8; 58:6-8; 69:22-28.

**11:23** God has His time for everything He does.

**12:1,2** Gen 18:25; Ps 9:8; 67:4; 75:2; 96:13; 98:9; John 17:25. Jeremiah knows God is just in all His actions, but he is troubled about the prosperity of the wicked. He asks the question that has troubled believers through the ages (Job 21:7-15; Ps 73:3-12; Eccl 7:15; Hab 1:13; Mal 3:15).

**12:2** "Lips", "inner being" – 3:10; Isa 29:13; Mark 7:6. The religion of hypocrites is in word, not deed.

**12:3** Jeremiah knows he is not a hypocrite. "Slaughter" – 11:19,20. They wanted to

slaughter him like a sheep, so he appeals for God's exact justice to be at work toward them. Note at Ps 18:25,26; 35:8.

**12:4** "How long?" – Ps 6:3; 13:2; 35:17; 74:10; 89:46; 94:3.

"Wither" – suggests a drought. God sent droughts during those days of wickedness in Judah (3:3).

**12:5** God does not answer Jeremiah's question, but warns him that even greater difficulties await him in the future. God tells us all we need to know, not necessarily all we want to know.

**12:6** It seems from this that at least some of Jeremiah's relatives participated in the plot to kill him (11:18,19).

**12:7-13** God speaks of "my" house, "my" inheritance, "my" vineyard, "my" field. He means, of course, His temple, His people, His land. But He will give it all into the hands of destroyers. Notice that God calls Israel "my beloved" in v 7 and yet in v 8 speaks of hating. He loved Israel but her ways were so detestable He could not bear them any longer and turned her over to her enemies

in the forest; it roars against me;  
therefore I have hated it.

9 My inheritance *is* to me *like* a speckled bird;  
the birds all around *are* against it.

Come, assemble all the beasts of the  
field, come to devour.

10 Many shepherds have destroyed my  
vineyard,  
they have trampled my portion underfoot,  
they have made my pleasant portion  
a desolate wilderness.

11 They have made it desolate,  
*and being* desolate it mourns to me.  
The whole land has been made desolate,  
because no one takes *it* to heart.

12 The despoilers have come over all the  
desolate heights in the wilderness;  
for the sword of the LORD will devour  
from *one* end of the land to the  
*other* end of the land.

No one will have peace.

13 They have sown wheat, but will reap thorns.  
They have taken pains, *but* will not profit.  
And they will be disappointed about  
the harvest,  
because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

14 "Thus says the LORD against all my evil  
neighbours who touch the inheritance which I have  
caused my people Israel to inherit: See, I will  
uproot them from their land, and uproot the house  
of Judah from among them. 15 And it will happen  
after I have uprooted them that I will return, and  
have compassion on them, and will bring them back,  
each man to his inheritance, and each man to his  
land. 16 And it will come about, if they will diligently  
learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name,  
'The LORD lives'; as they taught my people to swear  
by Baal, then they will be established among my  
people. 17 But if they will not obey, I will fully

uproot and destroy that nation, says the LORD."

**13** Thus the LORD said to me, "Go and get  
yourself a linen sash and put it around your  
waist, but do not put it in water." 2 So I got a sash  
according to the word of the LORD, and put it  
around my waist.

3 And the word of the LORD came to me the  
second time, saying: 4 "Take the sash that you  
bought, which *is* around your waist, and get up  
and go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole  
in the rock." 5 So I went, and hid it by the  
Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

6 And after many days it came about that the  
LORD said to me, "Get up; go to the Euphrates,  
and take from there the sash which I commanded  
you to hide there." 7 Then I went to the Euphrates,  
and dug, and took the sash from the place where I  
had hidden it, and saw that the sash was ruined; it  
was not useful for anything.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to me,  
saying, 9 "Thus says the LORD: In this way I will  
ruin the pride of Judah, and the great pride of  
Jerusalem. 10 This evil people who refuse to hear  
my words, who walk in the imagination of their heart,  
and follow other gods to serve and to worship them,  
will be like this sash which is good for nothing. 11 For as the sash clings to a man's waist, so I  
caused the whole house of Israel and the whole  
house of Judah to cling to me, says the LORD, so  
that they might be my people for a name, and for  
praise, and for glory; but they would not listen.

12 "Therefore you shall speak to them this word:  
'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle will  
be filled with wine.' And they will say to you, 'Do we  
not know for a certainty that every bottle will be  
filled with wine?' 13 Then you shall say to them,  
'Thus says the LORD: See, I will fill all the  
inhabitants of this land, the kings who sit on David's  
throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all

for punishment.

**12:9** Some birds will attack a strange bird  
not of their kind.

**12:10** Shepherds here refer to rulers.

**12:11** "No one takes it to heart" – 5:1; Isa  
64:7; Ex 22:30.

**12:12** "The sword of the Lord" – Ezek 21:1-  
10; Isa 27:1; Deut 32:40-43. Israel's  
enemies would be like a sword in God's hand  
to punish His people.

**12:13** Lev 26:20; Deut 28:38-42.

"Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**12:14-17** God will punish the neighboring  
nations that seize any of Israel's land.  
See 2 Kings 24:2. Observe the word of hope  
in these verses. God is compassionate – Ps  
78:38; 86:15; 111:4; 145:8. But just  
as Israel had learned evil ways from the  
surrounding nations, so later on the nations

must learn good ways from Israel, or else  
face annihilation.

**13:1-11** Another object lesson to illustrate  
a truth (1:11-14; 18:1-6; 24:1-10). The  
people of Israel would be as useless to God  
as a ruined and useless belt (v 10).

**13:4** The Hebrew word here (Pereth – just  
PRH in the original) may indicate either the  
Euphrates River or a town three miles from  
Anathoth called Parah. The River Euphrates  
is 400 kilometers from Jerusalem. It is  
unlikely (but certainly not impossible) that  
Jeremiah went there.

**13:9** Lev 26:19; Prov 6:16,17; Isa 25:11;  
Amos 6:8; Zeph 3:11.

**13:11** See here the reason God chose Israel  
(or any people or any individual) – Isa  
43:21; Eph 1:4-6,12,14; 1 Pet 2:9.

**13:12,13** 25:15-19; Ps 60:3; Isa 51:17-



the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness.  
14 And I will dash them against one another, the fathers and the sons together, says the LORD. I will not take pity, or spare, or have mercy, but will destroy them."

15 Listen, and give ear.

Do not be proud, for the LORD has spoken.

16 Give glory to the LORD your God  
before he causes darkness,  
and before your feet stumble on the  
dark mountains,  
and while you look for light he turns  
it into the shadow of death *and*  
makes *it* dense darkness.

17 But if you will not hear this,  
my soul will weep in secret places  
because of *your* pride,  
and my eyes will weep bitterly,  
and run down with tears,  
because the LORD's flock will be  
carried away captive.

18 Say to the king and to the queen:  
"Humble yourselves, sit lower down,  
for your rule will come down,  
your glorious crown."

19 The cities of the south will be closed up,  
and no one will open *them*.  
All of Judah will be carried away captive;  
it will be completely carried away captive.

20 Lift up your eyes and see those who  
come from the north.  
Where *is* the flock *that* was given to  
you, your beautiful flock?

21 What will you say when he punishes you?  
For you have taught them *to be* leaders  
*and* heads over you.

Will not sorrows seize you like a woman in labour?

22 And if you say in your heart,  
"Why have these things come on me?"  
Because of the greatness of your  
iniquity your skirts will be removed,  
*and* your heels made bare.

23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin,  
or the leopard his spots?  
*Then* you also may do good,  
*you* who are accustomed to doing evil.

24 Therefore I will scatter them like the  
straw that vanishes by the wind  
from the desert.

25 This *is* your lot, your measured  
portion from me," says the LORD,  
"because you have forgotten me,  
and trusted in falsehood.

26 Therefore I will strip off your skirts  
over your face,  
so that your shame may appear.

27 I have seen your adulteries,  
and your neighings, the vileness  
of your prostitution,  
*and* your abominations on the hills,  
in the fields.

Woe to you, O Jerusalem!

Will you not be made clean?

When *will it* ever be?"

**14** The word of the LORD that came to  
Jeremiah concerning the drought:

2 "Judah mourns, and its gates languish;  
they mourn from the ground,  
and the cry of Jerusalem has gone up.

3 And their nobles have sent their  
servants for water;  
they came to the cisterns *and* found no  
water;  
they returned with their vessels empty;

20; Ezek 23:32-34; Rev 14:9,10.

**13:14** God will not remove all pity and  
compassion from His heart. He will not,  
cannot change His nature. But He will not  
let these tender feelings keep Him from the  
necessary work of just judgment.

**13:15** When men speak God's message  
there is always the danger of arrogant  
rejection on the part of those who hear.

**13:16** Repentance is the only thing that can  
avert the coming darkness (1 Sam 2:9; Isa  
8:22; 59:9; Matt 8:12; Jude 13).

**13:17** 9:1; 14:17. Arrogance is always a  
reason for tears.

**13:18** This probably refers to king Jehoiachin  
and his mother Nehushta (2 Kings 24:8-12  
– fulfilled in 597 BC).

**13:19** 20:4.

**13:20** "North" – 1:14; 4:6; 6:22.

"Flock" – the people of Judah.

**13:21** "Woman" – 4:31; 6:24.

**13:22** Verse 25; 2:17; 4:18; 5:8,9,19;

6:19; 2:35.

**13:23** A man is unable to change even an  
outward thing in his nature such as the color  
of his skin. How much more impossible for  
him to change his inner nature and his whole  
course of life (17:9; Ps 51; Rom 7:14,18,  
21). But what a man cannot do for himself  
God can do for him (Rom 8:1-4). This is  
the only hope for any person on earth.

**13:24,25** Ps 1:4; Lev 26:33.

**13:26,27** The people of Jerusalem had be-  
haved like a harlot (2:2,5,20). Now they  
would be publicly disgraced and punished.

**13:27** "Will you not be made clean?" – the  
people could not cleanse themselves but  
they could turn to God and cry for cleansing  
(Ps 51:2,7).

**14:1-6** 3:3; 12:4; 23:10. This was a  
punishment for their sins (Lev 26:19,20).  
They could escape from this trouble only by  
repentance and turning to the true and  
living God.

- they were ashamed and dismayed,  
and covered their heads,  
4 because the ground was parched,  
for there was no rain on the earth.  
The plowmen were disappointed;  
they covered their heads.  
5 Yes, the deer also gave birth in the field,  
and left *it*,  
because there was no grass.  
6 And the wild donkeys stood on the  
high places;  
they sniffed the wind like jackals;  
their eyes failed,  
because *there was* no grass.”  
7 O LORD, though our evil deeds testify  
against us, act for your name’s sake;  
for our backslidings are many.  
We have sinned against you.  
8 O the hope of Israel,  
its saviour in time of trouble,  
why should you be like a stranger in the land,  
and like a traveller *who* turns aside to  
stay for a night?  
9 Why should you be like a man astonished,  
like a mighty man *who* cannot save?  
For you, O LORD, *are* in our midst,  
and we are called by your name.  
Do not leave us.

**14:7-9** Jeremiah speaks on behalf of the people. He knows very well the reason for the trouble they were in.  
**14:8** “Like a stranger” – a sad thing indeed that the true God should be like a stranger in His own land, among His own people (2:8; 4:22; 8:7; 9:3. Compare John 1:10,11). A sad thing too that He should be a stranger to the large majority of the human race. Most people neither know Him nor wish to know Him.  
**14:9** Jeremiah felt that God was still among them but inactive. He was not behaving like their “Saviour in times of trouble” – v 8.  
**14:10** Again and again God had to give the reason for the punishment He sent on the people. He was not lacking in ability to save them, but in His justice determined that He should not.  
**14:11** Evidently Jeremiah forgot God’s instruction to him in 7:16 when he made the prayer of vs 7-9.  
**14:12** We see again that God will not accept some kinds of worship (6:20; 7:21). Compare John 4:23,24. The three words “sword”, “famine”, and “plague” are repeated over and over in Jeremiah. They were the three chief instruments God used in the destruction of Israel (and often no doubt other peoples when He decides to destroy them). See Lev 26:25,26; Deut 28:20-26.  
**14:13** Jeremiah tries to find some excuse for the people. Does he wish to remove from them some of the responsibility for their behavior? But see 5:31.

- 10 Thus says the LORD to this people:  
“Thus they have loved to wander.  
They have not restrained their feet;  
therefore the LORD does not accept them.  
He will now remember their wickedness,  
and punish their sins.”  
11 Then the LORD said to me, “Do not pray for this people for *their* good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they sacrifice burnt offerings and offerings, I will not accept them, but I will consume them by sword and by famine and by plague.”  
13 Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! See, the prophets say to them, ‘You will not see the sword, nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.’”  
14 Then the LORD said to me, “The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I did not send them, and I have not given commands to them or spoken to them. They prophesy to you a false vision and divination, and a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart. 15 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name though I did not send them and who say, ‘There will be no sword and famine in this land’; by sword and famine those prophets will come to an end. 16 And the people to whom they prophesy will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the

**14:14** 23:16,25; 27:14; Ezek 13:2; Matt 7:15; 24:11,24; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1. Notes on prophets at 28:1-17.  
“I did not send them” – 23:21,32; 29:31; Ezek 13:6. Oh, how eager some are to have the name of prophet and how they run and deceive themselves and others! True prophets are often much more reluctant to go and speak (1:6; Ex 4:13). This verse gives three ways in which false prophets get their false messages.  
“False vision” – since God does not give any false vision it is safe to say that sometimes such things come from demons or Satan himself. Sometimes they come in the form of dreams (23:25).  
“Divination and a worthless *thing*” – or “worthless divination” (Deut 18:10-14). False prophets think they get some supernatural message through signs and omens, sometimes by consulting idols or spirits.  
“Deceit of their own heart” – false prophets in their proud hearts may accept their own thoughts and ideas as divinely inspired. Or this may mean that because their hearts are deceitful they knowingly prophesy false things. Through these three ways – false vision, worthless divination, and prophecies from deceitful hearts – much that is false in religion has gone out into the world, and still goes out.  
**14:15** False prophets will get what they deserve, will experience the exact outworking of justice.  
**14:16** People who willingly, gladly listen to

famine and the sword, and will have no one to bury them, *neither* them, *nor* their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters; for I will pour their wickedness on them.

- 17 "Therefore you shall speak this word to them:  
 'Let my eyes run down with tears night  
 and day, and let them not cease,  
 for the virgin daughter of my people  
 has been broken with a great stroke,  
 with a very grievous blow.
- 18 If I go out into the field, then, see,  
 those slain by the sword!  
 And if I enter the city, then, see,  
 those who are sick from the famine!  
 Yes, both the prophet and the priest  
 go away into a land that they do  
 not know."
- 19 Have you utterly rejected Judah?  
 Has your soul loathed Zion?  
 Why have you struck us, and *there is*  
 no healing for us?  
 We looked for peace, but no good *has come* ;  
 and for the time of healing, but see trouble.
- 20 We acknowledge, O LORD,  
 our wickedness,  
*and* the guilt of our fathers,  
 for we have sinned against you.
- 21 Do not abhor *us*, for your name's sake  
 do not disgrace your glorious throne.  
 Remember, do not break your covenant  
 with us.
- 22 Are there *any* among the worthless  
*idols* of the Gentiles that can cause rain?  
 Or can the skies give showers?  
*Are* you not the one, O LORD our God?  
 Therefore we will wait for you,  
 for you have made all these *things*.

false prophets (5:31) are also guilty and will be punished. Their punishment too will fit their crime.

**14:17,18** 8:21; 9:1; 13:17. God told Jeremiah to speak these words because they express the pain in His own heart as well as that of Jeremiah's (note on 4:19-26).

"A land that they do not know" – Babylonia.

**14:19-22** God had twice told Jeremiah not to pray for the people. But they are in his heart and he cannot refrain from praying. How different from some people who will not pray no matter how much the Word of God urges them to do so!

**14:20** Jeremiah is speaking for the people, but they themselves had not yet come to this place of confession.

**14:21** Notice "your" name, "your" throne, "your" covenant. Jeremiah is concerned with God's honor. Compare Ex 32:11-13.

**14:22** Jeremiah was aware of two errors in people's thinking regarding rain – one, gods

**15** Then the LORD said to me, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, *yet* my mind *would* not *be favourable* toward this people. Throw them out of my sight, and let them go. 2 And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where will we go?' that you must tell them, 'Thus says the LORD, Those who *are* for death, to death, and those who *are* for the sword, to the sword, and those who *are* for the famine, to the famine, and those who *are* for captivity, to captivity.'

3 "And I will appoint over them four kinds of *destruction*, says the LORD: the sword to kill, and the dogs to tear, and the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 And I will make them objects of horror to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for *what* he did in Jerusalem.

5 "For who will have pity on you, Jerusalem?  
 Or who will mourn for you?  
 Or who will turn aside to ask how you  
 are doing?

6 You have forsaken me, says the LORD.  
 You have gone backward.  
 Therefore I will stretch out my hand  
 against you, and destroy you.  
 I am tired of relenting.

7 And I will winnow them with a  
 winnowing fan at the gates of the land.  
 I will bereave *them* of children,  
 I will destroy my people,  
*since* they do not turn from their ways.

8 Their widows will increase before me  
 more than the sand of the seas.  
 At midday I will bring a destroyer on them,  
 against the mothers of the young men.  
 I will cause anguish and terror to fall

other than Jehovah God can send it; or two, rain comes by mere natural causes apart from God. And he knew the truth – Lev 26:4; Deut 11:11,14; Job 5:10; 38:28,37; Ps 68:9; 135:7; 147:8.

**15:1** Moses and Samuel were probably the greatest intercessors for Israel in the whole Old Testament (Ex 32:11-14,30-34; Num 14:13-23; Deut 9:18-20; 1 Sam 7:5-9; 12:19-25). See Ps 99:6. But the people had become so wicked and rebellious that even the prayers of such men would not save them from destruction and exile.

**15:2** God knows whom to appoint for what punishment.

**15:4** "All kingdoms" – Deut 28:25; Jer 24:9; 29:18; 34:17. "

"Manasseh" – the most wicked of all Judah's kings until he repented (2 Kings 21:1-16; 23:26,27; 24:3,4).

**15:5-9** The people refused to repent (v 7). God would no longer have pity on them (v 6; 13:14). Destruction was certain.

- suddenly on *the city*.
- 9 She who has given birth to seven will languish.  
She will breathe her last.  
Her sun will go down while *it is* still day.  
She will be put to shame and dismay;  
and I will deliver the rest of them to  
the sword before their enemies,  
says the LORD."
- 10 Woe *to* me, my mother, that you have  
given birth to me,  
a man of strife and contention to the  
whole land!  
I have not lent *money* on usury,  
nor have men lent to me on usury;  
*yet* every one of them curses me.
- 11 The LORD said, "It will certainly be  
well with your remnant.  
I will certainly cause the enemy to treat  
you *well* at the time of disaster and  
in the time of affliction.
- 12 Can anyone break iron,  
the northern iron and the bronze?
- 13 I will give your wealth and your  
treasures to plunder without cost,  
because of all your sins,  
throughout your territories.
- 14 And I will make *you* go with your  
enemies into a land *which* you do not know,  
for a fire is kindled in my anger  
*which* will burn against you."
- 15 O LORD, you understand.  
Remember me, and look after me,  
and avenge me on my persecutors.

- Because of your patience do not take me away.  
Know that for your sake I have  
suffered rebuke.
- 16 Your words were found, and I ate them;  
and your word was to me the joy and  
rejoicing of my heart,  
for I am called by your name,  
O LORD God of hosts.
- 17 I did not sit in the gathering of the mockers,  
or rejoice *with them*.  
I sat alone because of your hand,  
for you filled me with indignation.
- 18 Why is my pain without end,  
and my wound incurable?  
*It* refuses to be healed.  
Will you be to me like a deceptive  
stream *whose* waters fail?
- 19 Therefore thus says the LORD,  
"If you return, then I will restore you,  
*and* you will stand before me;  
and if you take out the precious from  
the vile, you will be as my mouth.  
Let them return to you,  
but do not return to them.
- 20 And I will make you to this people a  
fortified bronze wall;  
and they will fight against you,  
but they will not prevail against you,  
for I *am* with you to save you  
and to deliver you, says the LORD.
- 21 And I will deliver you out of the hand  
of the wicked,  
and I will redeem you from the hand  
of the violent."

**15:10** "Birth" – Job 3:1; 10:18,19; Jer 20:14,15.  
"Contention to the whole land" – Jeremiah should have expected this and refused to be cast down by it (1:18,19). But he had a sensitive, melancholy nature.  
**15:11** "I will certainly cause" – v 20; 1:8,19. God knew Jeremiah needed encouragement (Ps 103:13,14) and so repeated His promise and added another.  
"To treat you well" – see 39:11-14.  
**15:12-14** God now speaks to the people of Judah through Jeremiah.  
**15:13** "Sins" – 4:18; 5:9; 6:19; 17:3.  
**15:14** Deut 32:22. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.  
**15:15** Comforting indeed it is to have a God of tender mercy and patience, who understands completely and loves eternally.  
**15:16** "Ate" – 1:9; Ezek 2:8; 3:3; Rev 10:9,10.  
"Joy and rejoicing" – Ps 1:2; 19:10; 119:72,103.  
"Name" – God's spokesmen belong to Him and bear His name before the world.

**15:17** The true man of God may be called to a lonely life, the whole world seemingly against him and he alone against the world. Jeremiah did not marry and had few friends. He was filled with anger at the sins of the people and the way they had rebelled against the true and living God.  
**15:18** "Pain", "wound" – his ministry of warning and denouncing brought him no joy. He could feel in his own heart the sword that threatened the people of Judah. Yet it was the work God gave him to do and he bowed in obedience to God's will.  
"Waters fail" – compare Job 6:15-20.  
**15:19-21** Did Jeremiah need to repent or turn to God anew? Evidently so. He had a tendency to complain against God's dealings with him, to sink into depression instead of going ahead in living faith. Jeremiah, as all God's servants, as all of Adam's descendants, had a sinful nature. The truth of 17:9 applied to him as much as to anyone else. See also Gen 9:21; 12:13; Ex 32:2-4; Num 20:9-12; 2 Samuel chapter 11; Matt 26:69-75; Jam 3:2.

**16** The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2 "You must not marry, or have sons or daughters in this place. 3 For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and the daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who gave them birth, and concerning their fathers who begot them in this land: 4 They will die of deadly diseases. They will not be lamented, and they will not be buried, *but* will be like refuse on the surface of the ground. They will be consumed by sword and famine, and their corpses will be food for the birds of the sky, and for the beasts of the earth.

5 "For thus says the LORD: Do not enter the house of mourning, or go to lament or mourn them; for I have taken away my peace, loving kindness and mercy from this people, says the LORD. 6 Both the great and the small will die in this land. They will not be buried, and *people* will not lament for them, or cut themselves, or shave their heads for them, 7 And *people* will not break *bread* in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead, and *people* will not give them a comforting cup to drink for their father or for their mother.

8 "You also must not go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink. 9 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, in your sight and in your days I will put a stop to the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

10 "And it will come about, when you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, 'Why has the LORD proclaimed all this great disaster against us?' Or, 'What is our iniquity, or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our

God?' 11 Then you shall say to them, 'Because your fathers have forsaken me, says the LORD, and have followed other gods and served them and worshipped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law; 12 and you have done worse than your fathers, for, see, every one of you follows the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not listen to me. 13 Therefore I will throw you out of this land into a land that you do not know, *neither* you nor your fathers. And there you will serve other gods day and night. There I will not show you favour.

14 "Therefore, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, when it will no longer be said, 'The LORD lives, who brought the children of Israel up out of the land of Egypt,' 15 But, 'The LORD lives, who brought the children of Israel up from the land of the north, and from all the lands where he had driven them.' And I will bring them back into their land that I gave to their fathers.

16 "See, I will send for many fishermen, says the LORD, and they will fish for them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. 17 For my eyes *are* on all their ways. They are not hidden from my face, and their wickedness is not hidden from my eyes. 18 And first I will repay *them* double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land, they have filled my inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols."

19 O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles will come to you from the

**16:1,2** It is not God's will for all to marry (1 Cor 7:1,7,8). It was not good for the man Adam to be alone (Gen 2:18), but it was good for Jeremiah – good because it was God's will for him.

**16:4** 14:12.

**16:5** Ezek 24:16,17,22,23. God would not enter into the common events of the life of His rebellious people anymore, and would not permit Jeremiah to do so (vs 6-9). They deserved only punishment and destruction and that is what He appointed for them.

**16:10** Apart from the full enlightenment of God's Spirit it is impossible for a people or an individual to see sin as God sees it (5:19; Mal 1:6,7; 2:17; 3:7,8). Judah's people sunk so low in wickedness, unbelief, and rebellion, wondered what God had against them to punish them so greatly. This is the spiritual blindness of fallen mankind. People usually tend to think they are far better than they really are.

**16:11-13** A full answer to the people's question. Their ancestors were bad enough. They were worse.

**16:12** "Evil heart" – 3:17; 7:24; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 18:12; Acts 7:51; Rom 2:5. An evil heart is what we all have by nature. Compare 17:9; Matt 7:11; Rom 3:9; 7:18; Eph 2:3.

**16:13** They rejected the true God and chose the gods of other nations, so God would see to it that they got their fill of that.

**16:14,15** Suddenly in denunciation and words concerning punishment and destruction there comes this sweet promise for the future. How like God to do this!

**16:16** The promise of v 15 would not be fulfilled for more than 70 years. Now Judah's people must face God's anger.

**16:17** 32:19; Eccl 12:14; Heb 4:13.

**16:18** Let us learn once and for all what the true God thinks of idolatry.

**16:19,20** Jeremiah speaks.

"Refuge" – Ps 7:1; 18:2; 46:1.

"Gentiles" – non-Jewish nations – 3:17; Ps 45:17; 117:1-3; Isa 2:2,3. The nations will learn at last that the true and living God is Jehovah and that their gods are not God, nor a part of God, nor related to God in any way.

ends of the earth, and will say,  
"Surely our fathers have inherited lies,  
vanity, and profitless *things*."  
20 Will a man make gods for himself?  
But they *are* not gods.  
21 "Therefore, see, this time I will cause  
them to know;  
I will cause them to know my hand and  
my might,  
and they will know that my name *is* the LORD.

**17** "The sin of Judah *is* written with a pen  
of iron,  
*and* with the point of a diamond.  
*It is* engraved on the tablet of their heart,  
and on the horns of your altars,  
2 While their children remember their  
altars and their groves by the green  
trees on the high hills.  
3 O my mountain in the land,  
I will give your wealth *and* all your  
treasures to plunder,  
*together* with your high places because  
of sin throughout all your territory.  
4 And you, *you* yourself, will let go of  
your inheritance that I gave you.  
And I will cause you to serve your

enemies in a land which you do not know.  
For you have kindled a fire in my anger,  
*which* will burn forever."  
5 Thus says the LORD:  
"Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man  
and makes flesh his arm,  
and whose heart departs from the LORD.  
6 For he will be like a bush in the desert,  
and will not see when good comes,  
but will live in the parched places of the desert,  
*in* an uninhabited salt land.  
7 "Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD,  
and who has the LORD as his hope.  
8 For he will be like a tree planted by the waters,  
*which* spreads out its roots by the river  
and does not see when heat comes.  
Its leaf will be green, and it will not  
be anxious in the year of drought,  
and it will not cease yielding fruit.  
9 "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,  
and desperately wicked. Who can know it?  
10 I, the LORD. *I* search the heart,  
*I* test the inner being, to give to  
each one according to his ways,  
*and* according to the fruit of his deeds.

**16:21** "Cause them to know"— God is a great Teacher. See Ps 25:4,5,8; 119:12,26; John 14:26; 16:13. He will teach us His power and might and His true name (Jehovah) and His nature.  
**17:1** This speaks of a permanent record. It would not be effaced from their hearts as long as they lived. Their altars to false gods revealed their sins for all to see.  
**17:2** Their sin was also in their children's hearts.  
"Groves" — or "Asherah poles" — symbols of the goddess Asherah, sometimes worshiped by Israel and Judah.  
**17:3,4** 15:13,14.  
**17:4** "You have kindled a fire" — all that men lose of God's good gifts, all the punishment that comes on them is altogether their own fault; all good things they receive is altogether God's grace.  
**17:5-8** The great contrast between those who trust men and those who trust in Jehovah God.  
**17:5,6** 2 Chron 32:7,8; Ps 108:12; 118:8; 146:3; Isa 10:3; 30:5; 31:3; Jer 2:36; 2 Cor 1:9. The tendency of men is to forget the living God and look to other men for help, strength, and deliverance from trouble. God here pronounces a curse on such.  
**17:7** Here is a key verse about blessedness. Every blessing promised in the Bible comes only in this way. Everywhere in His Word God emphasizes the importance of trusting Him — Ps 32:10; 34:8; 37:4,5; 40:4; Prov 3:5; 16:20; 29:25; Hebrews chapter 11. Notes on "blessed" at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22;

Deut 28:2-14; Ps 1:1-3; 119:1,2; etc.  
**17:8** Ps 1:3; 92:12-15.  
**17:9** Here is the word of God Himself concerning man's heart. See also 5:23; 7:24; 16:12; 18:12. If we have any true wisdom at all we will believe what God reveals about us. Everywhere in the Bible He tells us what we are really like — Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 51:5; Eccl 9:3; Matt 15:19; Rom 1:21; 3:9; 7:18; Eph 2:1-3; 4:22.  
"Wicked" — or "incurably sick". Every human being has a sinful nature, a heart prone to follow evil, a nature spiritually sick. No man fully understands its moral sickness, its deceitfulness, its depravity. Peoples' hearts deceive them into thinking they are not nearly as bad as the above verses declare, and that they can manage to go to heaven without repenting, without asking the God of heaven to forgive and save them. They can think well of themselves even after breaking the most important commands in the Word of God or after committing the worst kind of crimes (see John 16:2,3). How few there are who view things as they really are, as Paul stated it in Rom 3:9. Many people, if they read that verse, in their hearts will want to answer "yes" to the question he asks there, feeling that they are better than a great many others. Such people lack the true enlightenment that comes from God to know what they are and what they need.  
**17:10** God examines the heart and mind and knows all about the inner thoughts, desires and motives of men (1 Sam 16:7;



- 11 As the partridge sits *on eggs*,  
but does not hatch *them*,  
so the one who unjustly gets riches  
will leave them in the middle of his days,  
and at his end will *be shown to* be a fool."
- 12 A glorious high throne from the  
beginning *is* the place of our sanctuary.
- 13 O LORD, the hope of Israel,  
all who forsake you will be put to shame.  
"And those who depart from me will be  
written in the earth,  
because they have forsaken the LORD,  
the fountain of living waters."
- 14 Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed.  
Save me, and I will be saved,  
for you *are* my praise.
- 15 Behold, they say to me,  
"Where *is* the word of the LORD?  
Let it come now."
- 16 As for me, I have not hurried away  
from *being* a shepherd following you,  
and I have not desired the day of  
disaster. You know.  
What came out of my lips was *right* before you.
- 17 Be not a terror to me.  
You *are* my hope in the day of disaster.
- 18 Let those who persecute me be put to shame,  
but do not let me be put to shame.  
Let them be dismayed,  
but do not let me be dismayed.  
Bring on them the day of disaster,  
and destroy them with double destruction.

19 Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, where the kings of Judah come in, and where they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, 20 and say to

them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter in by these gates, 21 thus the LORD said: Take heed to yourselves, and carry no load on the Sabbath day, nor bring *it* in through the gates of Jerusalem, 22 nor carry a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your fathers. 23 But they did not obey or incline their ear, but made their necks stiff, so that they might not hear or receive instruction. 24 And it will come about, if you carefully listen to me, says the LORD, to bring no burden in through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the Sabbath day holy, doing no work in it, 25 then through the gates of this city will enter kings and princes who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city will remain forever. 26 And they will come from the cities of Judah, and from the places around Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices and grain offerings and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, to the house of the LORD. 27 But if you will not listen to me to keep the Sabbath day holy, and not to carry a load, entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it will not be quenched.'

**18** The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear my words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and saw that he doing a work on the wheel.

2 Chron 6:30; Ps 7:9; 17:3; 94:11; 139:23,24; Prov 17:3; Jer 11:20; Ezek 11:5; Matt 9:4; John 2:24,25). Let us listen to Him as He tells us the true state of things.

**17:11** Jeremiah applies the truth of v 10. See Prov 23:5. "Fool" means without moral, ethical sense (Ps 14:1; Prov 1:7).

**17:12** Ps 80:1; 99:1. God was said to sit enthroned over the mercy seat over the ark between the cherubim in the temple in Jerusalem.

**17:13** There was no hope for Israel apart from Jehovah God. To forsake Him was to forsake any possibility of a blessed future. As writing in dust is soon blotted out so would they be. They who forsake God the source of life, should not vainly imagine they are permanently recorded in the book of life (Ps 69:28; Rev 3:6).

"Fountain of living waters" – 2:13; John 4:14; 7:38; Rev 22:17.

**17:14** 15:18; Ps 6:2.

**17:15** "Where"— spoken sarcastically. At this time the people did not regard Jeremiah as a true prophet.

**17:16** Though the people rejected him Jeremiah knew that God had appointed him, and he did not try to escape from his responsibility to be a shepherd to them.

**17:17** Job 6:4; 9:34; 13:21; Ps 88:15,16.

**17:18** Notes on such prayers at Ps 35:8.

**17:19-22** Ex 20:8,10; Deut 5:12,14-16.

**17:23** 7:26; 19:15; Acts 7:51. One of the worst of all their many sins.

**17:24-27** God's commands about the Sabbath would be a test for the people. If they began to obey God in this it would be a sign of their repentance and God would be merciful to them (Isa 58:13,14). If they refused obedience in this, obedience could not be expected in anything, and the judgment of God would come on Jerusalem.

**17:26** "Sacrifices of praise" – or "thank offerings" – note at Lev 7:12,13.

**18:1-10** Another object lesson – 1:11-14;

4 And the pot that he was making of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. So he remade it into another pot, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 6 “O house of Israel, cannot I do with you like this potter? says the LORD. See, as the clay *is* in the potter’s hand, so *are* you in my hand, O house of Israel. 7 *At any* moment I may speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck *it* up, and to pull *it* down, and to destroy *it*. 8 If that nation, against whom I have proclaimed *this*, turns from their evil, I will relent concerning the disaster that I thought to do to them. 9 And *at any* moment I may speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build *it* and to plant *it*. 10 If it does evil in my sight, not obeying my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would bless them.

11 “Now therefore go, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: See, I am preparing disaster against you, and devising a plan against you. Each one of you now turn from his evil way, and make your ways and your deeds good.’” 12 And they said, “There is no hope; but we will follow our own plans, and each one of us will act according to the imagination of his evil heart.”

13 Therefore thus says the LORD:  
“Ask now among the nations,

13:1-11. If a clay vessel is marred in a potter’s hands the fault may be either in the clay or in the potter. If nations or individuals are marred in God’s hands the fault can only be in them (7:13,26; 17:23; Matt 23:37). But though individuals or nations have wills and can resist God’s work, yet He retains control over them and can continue His work either to bring blessing or disaster on them. But here is good hope for anyone who has marred his (or her) life and cannot make it as he thinks it should be. Let us put our poor clay in the hands of the master Potter and let Him make a good vessel for His use.

18:7-10 In some measure God’s working will be according to the obedience or disobedience of individuals or nations to His word (26:13; 36:3; Ex 32:1,4; Ezek 18:30; Jonah 3:1-10). Observe that God as the sovereign of the universe is active in the world uprooting or planting kingdoms, destroying them or building them up.

18:11 The Lord orders that Judah and its capital city apply the above truth to themselves. They should not blame the Potter for what is about to happen to them. But He knew what the people would say and tells Jeremiah in the next verse.

18:12 This is one of the most terrible things a people or an individual could say. Here is complete, willful, conscious abandonment of

who has heard such things?

The virgin of Israel has done a very horrible thing.

14 Will the snow of Lebanon leave the rocky fields?

Or will the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?

15 Because my people have forgotten me, they have burned incense to empty *idols*, and have make themselves stumble in their ways *from* the ancient paths, to walk in pathways, not *on* a way built up,

16 making their land desolate, *and* an *object of* perpetual hissing.

Everyone who passes by it will be astonished and shake his head.

17 I will scatter them before the enemy as with an east wind.

I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.”

18 Then they said, “Come, and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law will not perish from the priest, or counsel from the wise, or the word from the prophet. Come, and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not pay attention to any of his words.”

19 Listen to me, O LORD,  
and hear the voice of those who

themselves to their evil natures, contrary to light, reason and the pleadings of God Himself. Here is human depravity approaching the utmost limits of unbelief, disobedience and despair. It is not a rare thing. Satan would, if he could, gladly bring us all to such a condition. And everyone of us has the tendency in us to go that way and that far. God’s grace alone can preserve us from it. 18:13 5:30,31. What could be more horrible than the actions and words of God’s own nation (here called “virgin”)? Even the wicked city Nineveh did not behave so (Jonah 3:6-9). 18:14,15 Snow and cool waters always remain in the high mountains, but thoughts of God and the water of life He gives did not remain in the people’s minds.

“Ancient paths” – 6:16.

“Pathways” – the worship of idols, of other gods is a by-path taking people out of God’s ancient way of worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

18:16,17 4:11,12; 25:9,10.

18:18 Jeremiah’s enemies thought nothing would be lost if Jeremiah were to be silenced. They did not realize that for those particular days Jeremiah was God’s true spokesman in Jerusalem.

18:19-23 This portion sounds like some of the Psalms – Ps 35:12; 57:6; 63:10; 141:8-10; 142:3. Notes on such prayers at Ps 35:8; 58:6-8; 69:22-28.

contend with me.

20 Will evil be repaid for good?

For they have dug a pit for my soul.  
Remember that I stood before you to  
speak good for them,

and to turn away your wrath from them.

21 Therefore deliver their children to the famine,

and pour out their *blood* by the power  
of the sword,

and let their wives be bereaved of  
their children, and *become* widows,

and let their men be put to death,  
and *let* their young men be slain by the  
sword in battle.

22 Let a cry be heard from their houses,  
when you bring a troop suddenly on them.

For they have dug a pit to capture me,  
and hidden snares for my feet.

23 Yet, LORD, you know their whole plot  
against me to kill *me*.

Do not forgive their iniquity,  
or blot out their sin from your sight,  
but let them be overthrown before you.

Deal *thus* with them in the time of your anger.

**19** Thus says the LORD: "Go and get a potter's earthenware jar, and *take some* of the elders of the people, and *some* of the elders of the priests, 2 and go out to the valley of the son of Hinnom, which *is* at the entrance of the Gate of the Potsherd, and there proclaim the words that I will tell you, 3 and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will bring disaster on this place; the ears of whoever hears of it will tingle, 4 because they have forsaken me, and have made this a foreign place, and have burned incense in it to other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents. 5 They have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire as burnt offerings to Baal. I did not command this, or speak *of it*, nor did *it* enter my

mind. 6 Therefore, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, that this place will no longer be called Tophet, or The Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but The Valley of Slaughter.

7 "And I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of those who seek their lives, and I will give their corpses as food for the birds of the sky, and for the beasts of the earth. 8 And I will make this city desolate, and an *object* of hissing. Everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. 9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and every one of them will eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and distress, with which their enemies and those who seek their lives, will distress them.'

10 "Then you shall break the jar in the sight of the men who go with you, 11 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: Like this I will break this people and this city, as *one* breaks a potter's jar that cannot be made whole again; and they will bury *them* in Tophet, until *there is* no room to bury. 12 I will do so to this place, says the LORD, and to its inhabitants, and *even* make this city like Tophet. 13 And the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, will be defiled like the place of Tophet, because of all the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the *starry* host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods.'"

14 Then Jeremiah came from Tophet, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and he stood in the court of the LORD's house, and said to all the people, 15 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'See, I will bring on this city and on all her towns all the disaster that I have proclaimed against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.'"

**20** Now Pashur the son of Immer, the priest, who *was* also the chief official in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these

**19:1** Another object lesson – 18:1,2; etc.  
**19:2** "Gate of the Potsherd" – it would seem from this that the gate got its name from some broken piece of pottery found there (or perhaps many broken pieces). The KJV has "East gate", but the Hebrew word does not mean east, and the valley of Hinnom was not at the eastern side of Jerusalem.  
**19:2-9** Notes on 7:30-34.

**19:9** Lev 26:29; Deut 28:49-57; Lam 2:20; 4:10 – cannibalism actually occurred during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem.

**19:10,11** God has no more difficulty in smashing a nation than Jeremiah in smashing a clay pot.

**19:12,13** Topheth was defiled by death, and by the action of king Josiah (2 Kings 23:10). Josiah probably leveled the shrines there to the ground. So would God do to Jerusalem.

"*Starry host*" – another command of God the people ignored to their own great harm (Deut 4:14; 2 Kings 17:16; Jer 8:2; Acts 7:42; Rom 1:25).

**19:14,15** Jeremiah was determined, at whatever danger to himself (18:23), to declare God's message to all the people. Compare Acts 20:24; 21:13.

"Hardened" – see Prov 29:1.

**20:1,2** The first of Jeremiah's enemies

things. 2 Then Pashur had Jeremiah the prophet beaten, and put him in the stocks that *were* at the Upper Gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the house of the LORD. 3 And it came about the next day that Pashur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD has not called your name Pashur, but Magor-Missabib. 4 For thus says the LORD: 'See, I will make you a terror to yourself, and to all your friends; and they will fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes will see *it*. And I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will carry them captive into Babylon, and will kill them with the sword. 5 Moreover, I will deliver up all the wealth of this city, and all its products, and all its costly things; and all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hands of their enemies, who will plunder them, and capture them and carry them to Babylon. 6 And you, Pashur, and all who live in your house will go into captivity. And you will come to Babylon, and there you will die and there be buried, you, and all your friends, to whom you have prophesied lies.'"

- 7 O LORD, you persuaded me, and I was persuaded.  
You are stronger than I, and have prevailed.  
I am ridiculed daily,  
everyone mocks me.
- 8 For when I speak, I cry out,  
proclaiming violence and plunder,  
because the word of the LORD has

resulted in reproach and ridicule  
to me, daily.

- 9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of him,  
or speak any more in his name."  
But *his word* was in my heart like a  
burning fire shut up in my bones,  
and I was weary of holding it in,  
and I was not able to *do so*.
- 10 For I heard the whispering of many:  
"Fear on every side!" "Report,"  
*they said*, "and we will report it."  
All my acquaintances watched for my  
stumbling, *saying*,  
"Perhaps he will be enticed, and we  
will prevail against him,  
and take our revenge on him."
- 11 But the LORD *is* with me like a mighty,  
awe-inspiring one;  
therefore my persecutors will stumble,  
and will not prevail.  
They will be greatly ashamed, for they  
will not prosper.  
*Their* everlasting disgrace will never  
be forgotten.
- 12 But, O LORD of hosts, who tests the righteous,  
*and* sees the inner being and the heart,  
let me see your vengeance on them,  
for to you I have presented my cause.
- 13 Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD!  
For he has delivered the soul of the

whose name is given. He was a false prophet (v 6). He was second to the high priest in authority. His job was to keep order in the temple and to expel or punish troublemakers. He evidently considered Jeremiah one such (see 38:4 and 1 Kings 18:16,17). The truth is troubling to those who do not want it, and those who proclaim it are often regarded as troublemakers (Luke 23:4,5; Acts 16:19-24; 17:5-7; 21:28; 24:5). **20:3-6** Unjust punishment did not keep God's prophets from speaking (v 9; Acts 4:3,18-20; 7:52; Heb 11:32-38). Magor-Missabib means "terror on every side".

**20:7-18** Jeremiah's prayer and complaint. God's spokesmen may be bold as lions when speaking to the people, but know their own fears, weakness, and depression when in secret with God. Jeremiah lays bare his soul before the Lord. He did not try to hide anything. Compare Job 10:1,2; Ps 62:8. He did not want to be a prophet (1:6). God compelled him, and Jeremiah is not happy with the result.

"Persuaded" (v 7) – the KJV has "deceived" here. The Hebrew word means both things, but surely we should not translate this "deceived" when there is an alternative which is also accurate. Can we really think that Jeremiah accused God of deceiving him? He probably meant "I was a simple young

man and so you were able to persuade me or entice me to be a prophet."

**20:8** 6:10; 15:10,15; 2 Pet 3:3,4.

**20:9** Sometimes speaking for God seemed to him too much to bear. He was tempted to give up such ministry. It brought him nothing but sorrow. But God had put in his heart a fire, an inner compulsion that would not let him escape. Compare Acts 4:20; 1 Cor 9:16; 2 Cor 5:14; 2 Pet 1:21. God's compulsion, God's fire in the heart make His spokesmen willing to face any insult, any persecution, any danger. They must ease themselves of the Word of God forcing its way out of their hearts.

**20:10** His enemies were mocking him for the name he gave Pashur (v 3). His friends were friends in name only, for he had offended them with his message of God's judgment. Compare Gal 4:16. Betrayal by friends is harder to bear than oppression by enemies.

**20:11** "The LORD is with me" – here was his confidence. This is how he could keep going in his very unpopular ministry.

**20:12** 11:20. "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**20:13** The weeping prophet does not experience much joy in his own heart, but knows God's deliverance and knows, too, that God should be praised for it.

- poor from the hands of evildoers.  
 14 Cursed *be* the day on which I was born.  
 Do not let the day on which my mother  
 gave me birth be blessed.  
 15 Cursed *be* the man who brought news  
 to my father, saying,  
 "A male child is born to you,"  
 making him very glad.  
 16 And let that man be like the cities  
 which the LORD overthrew,  
 without relenting;  
 and let him hear the cry in the morning,  
 and the shouting at noon,  
 17 Because he did not kill me from  
 the womb that my mother might  
 have been my grave,  
 and her womb *have been* always  
 enlarged *with me*.  
 18 Why did I come out of the womb to  
 see labour and sorrow,  
 that my days should be consumed with shame?

**21** This word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to him saying, 2 "Please consult the LORD for us, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is making war against us. Perhaps the LORD will deal with us in accordance with all his wonderful deeds, so that he may depart from us."

3 Then Jeremiah said to them, "This is what you shall say to Zedekiah: 4 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: See, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and *against* the

Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls, and I will gather them in the middle of this city. 5 And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, in anger and in fury and in great wrath. 6 And I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast. They will die from a great plague. 7 And afterwards, says the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah and his servants and the people and those who are left in this city from the plague, from the sword and from the famine, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hands of their enemies, and into the hands of those who seek their life. And he will strike them with the edge of the sword. He will not spare them, or have pity, or have mercy.'

8 "And you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD: See, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. 9 He who stays in this city will die by the sword and by the famine and by the plague, but he who goes out and defects to the Chaldeans who are besieging you, will live, and will be to him like plunder. 10 For I have set my face against this city for disaster and not for good, says the LORD. It will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire.'

11 "And concerning the house of the king of Judah, say, 'Hear the word of the LORD. 12 O house of David, thus says the LORD:

"Administer justice every morning,  
 and rescue *the one who is* plundered  
 out of the hands of the oppressor,  
 so that my fury does not go out like  
 fire and burn so that no one can quench it,  
 because of the evil of your deeds.

**20:14-18** Jeremiah gives in to feelings of pain, sorrow, and despair as Job once did (Job chapter 3; Eccl 4:1-3). But he does not abandon his faith in God or his responsibility as a prophet. It is a great thing to go on trusting and serving God even when one's thoughts bring torture like this.

**21:1** Zedekiah refused to obey the Word of God spoken through Jeremiah. The Pashur in this verse is not the one in 20:1 and the Zephaniah here is not the prophet of that name. The event described here took place when the Babylonian armies had already besieged Jerusalem.

**21:2** King Zedekiah wanted information from the Lord through Jeremiah, but he did not want instruction in righteousness or messages of repentance. Though he did not have the good character and faith of king Hezekiah he was hoping for a miraculous deliverance such as the one that took place in the time of Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:32-36). **21:3-7** Jeremiah was no man-pleaser, no king-pleaser, nor should we be (Gal 1:10). He, being a true prophet, spoke God's

message just as it came to him (see also 1 Kings 22:13,14).

**21:4** Chaldea made up the southern part of the land of Babylon.

**21:5** God says that not only the Babylonians but He Himself would be against them. Many times He had fought for Israel; now He would fight against them (6:12; Lev 26:17,23-25,27,28. Compare Rev 2:16). The Babylonian armies would be a weapon in His hand to bring them down. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**21:6** 14:12.

**21:7** Nebuchadnezzar was the most famous and powerful ruler of the Babylonian empire. He reigned 605-562 BC. He showed no pity to the inhabitants of Jerusalem or to king Zedekiah (see 52:8-16,24-27).

**21:8** Deut 30:15.

**21:9,10** 27:12,13; 38:2,3,17,18.

**21:11,12** Zedekiah had not asked for a word on repentance and righteousness, but that is what he most needed and what God sent him. To us also God sends what we need, not necessarily what we ask for.

13 See, I *am* against you,  
O inhabitant of the valley *and* rocky plain,  
says the LORD, *you* who say,  
"Who will come down against us?  
Or who will enter our dwelling places?"  
14 But I will punish you according to the  
results of your deeds, says the LORD;  
and I will kindle a fire in its forest,  
and it will devour everything around it."

**22** Thus says the LORD: "Go down to the  
house of the king of Judah, and speak there  
this word 2 and say, Hear the word of the LORD, O  
king of Judah, who sits on the throne of David, you  
and your servants and your people who enter by  
these gates. 3 Thus says the LORD: Administer  
justice and righteousness, and deliver those  
plundered out of the hands of the oppressor; and  
do no wrong, no violence to the foreigner, the  
fatherless, or the widow, and shed no innocent  
blood in this place. 4 For if you really do this, then  
kings who sit on the throne of David will enter by  
the gates of this house, riding in chariots and on  
horses, each one with his servants and his people.  
5 But if you will not hear these words, I swear by  
myself, says the LORD, that this house will become  
a desolation."

6 For thus says the LORD to the house of the  
king of Judah:  
"You *are like* Gilead to me *and* the  
summit of Lebanon.  
But I will certainly make you a  
wilderness, *and* uninhabited cities.  
7 And I will prepare destroyers against you,  
every one with his weapons;  
and they will cut down your choice

cedars and throw *them* into the fire.  
8 "And many nations will pass by this city, and  
each man will say to his neighbour, 'Why has the  
LORD done thus to this great city?' 9 Then they will  
answer, 'Because they forsook the covenant of  
the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods,  
and served them.'  
10 "Do not weep for the dead,  
or mourn him,  
*but* weep bitterly for the one who goes  
away;  
for he will not return again or see his  
native country."  
11 For thus says the LORD concerning Shallum the  
son of Josiah king of Judah, who reigned in the  
place of his father Josiah, who has gone out of this  
place: "He will not return here again, 12 but will die  
in the place where they have led him away captive,  
and will see this land no more.  
13 "Woe to him who builds his house  
through unrighteousness,  
and his rooms through wrong,  
*who* uses his neighbour's service  
without wages,  
and gives him nothing for his work,  
14 Who says, 'I will build a spacious  
house and large rooms for myself;  
and cuts out windows for it,  
and panels *it* with cedar,  
and paints *it* with vermillion.  
15 Will you reign, because you enclose  
*yourself* with cedar?  
When your father ate and drank  
and administered justice and righteousness,  
*was it* not well with him?

**21:13,14** Lam 4:12. On three sides of Jerusalem there were valleys, and the city was easy to defend. So the inhabitants thought they were safe. But there can be no safety if God arises in anger.  
**22:1,2** 13:18; 34:2; Matt 10:18. This king was probably Zedekiah (21:1). But this is not certain because the chapters of Jeremiah are not always arranged in chronological order.  
**22:3** 21:12. On the just administration of God's kingdom in accordance with God's law see Ps 72:1-4,12-14; 110:1-7; Isa 9:7; 11:4,5; Jer 23:5,6.  
"Fatherless", "widow" – see note and references at Ex 22:22-24.  
**22:4,5** God will not forever permit wicked rulers who have contempt for His laws to rule over His people and His earth.  
**22:6,7** Gilead and Lebanon were elevated areas of beautiful forests. The cedar beams for the king's palace came from one or the other of these places.  
**22:8,9** Deut 29:24-26; 1 Kings 9:8,9;

Jer 16:10,11.  
**22:10-12** The one who had died was King Josiah (2 Chron 35:23-25). He was a good king and died on the battlefield. His son Shallum, also called Jehoahaz, reigned only 3 months. He was captured by the king of Egypt and taken to that country (2 Chron 36:1-4). He never returned to Israel. The meaning of v 10 is this: Do not weep for the honored dead but for those being punished for their sins.  
**22:13-19** These verses are concerning Jehoiakim (v 18). He was the brother of Jehoahaz, who became king after the exile of Jehoahaz (2 Chron 36:4-8). Apparently he built a new palace for himself and refused to pay the laborers (see Deut 24:14,15). Actually the king should have been seeking God and trying to create a just administration, and not building a palace. Leaders should do what is just and right and not try to outdo one another in erecting splendid buildings for themselves (v 15). In verses 15 and 16 observe what it means



- 16 He *justly* judged the cause of the poor and needy;  
then *it was well with him*.  
Is this not what it means to know me?  
says the LORD.
- 17 But your eyes and your heart *are* for nothing except your greed for gain, and for shedding innocent blood, and for perpetrating oppression and violence.
- 18 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah:
- "They will not lament for him, *saying*,  
'Alas my brother!' or, 'Alas sister!'  
They will not lament for him, *saying*,  
'Alas master!' or, 'Alas his glory!'
- 19 He will be buried with a donkey's burial, dragged away and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.
- 20 Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan, and cry out from the *mountain* passages; for all your lovers are destroyed.
- 21 I spoke to you in your prosperity, *but* you said, 'I will not listen.'  
This *has been* your way from your youth, not obeying my voice.
- 22 The wind will consume all your shepherds, and your lovers will go into captivity. Surely then you will be ashamed and dismayed for all your wickedness.
- 23 O inhabitant of Lebanon, who makes your nest in the cedars, how you will be pitied when pangs come on you, pain like a woman in labour!
- 24 "As I live, says the LORD, though Coniah

the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would uproot you from there. 25 And I will give you into the hands of those who seek your life, and into the hands of *those* whose face you fear, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hands of the Chaldeans. 26 And I will throw you out, and your mother who gave you birth, into another country, where you were not born; and there you will die. 27 And they will not return to the land to which they will desire to return.

- 28 "Is this man Coniah *like* a despised broken idol?  
*Is he* an unwanted vessel?  
Why are they thrown out,  
he and his offspring,  
thrown into a land which they do not know?
- 29 O earth, earth, earth,  
hear the word of the LORD!
- 30 Thus says the LORD:  
Write you this man childless,  
a man *who* will not prosper in his days;  
for none of his offspring will prosper,  
sitting on the throne of David,  
and ruling any more in Judah.

**23** "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who tend my people: You have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them. See, I will punish you for your evil deeds, says the LORD. 3 And I will gather the remainder of my flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and will bring them back to their folds. And they will be fruitful and increase.

to know God (Jam 1:27; Deut 10:12,13; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:8). The true knowledge of God will result in lives of justice and honesty and mercy and obedience. If we say we know God and do not practice these things we are deceived (1 John 2:3,4; 3:6).

**22:19** Jehoiakim was treated as he had treated others (2 Chron 36:5,6. The king of Babylon bound him to take him to Babylon, but it seems he changed his mind and killed him near Jerusalem).

**22:20-23** It is very difficult to determine whether these verses were spoken to king Jehoiakim, or to some other king, or to the people of Israel. In any case, from the language of v 20, we can judge that God wanted the message to be heard widely. And the message was clear (4:31).

**22:24-30** Now God speaks to another king of Judah, the next to the last one before the final destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Babylon. His full name was Jehoiachin but he was also called Jeconiah or simply Coniah (as it is here). See 24:1

and 29:1,2 for the fulfillment of these verses. It seems from v 28 he had children (see also 1 Chron 3:17-19), but God treated him as if he had none. No descendants of Jehoiachin ever became king over Judah. His grandson Zerubbabel later on was governor, not king.

**22:29** How strongly God emphasizes the obedient hearing of His Word! – Deut 11:27,28; 13:4; 27:26; Matt 7:24-27; Heb 12:25.

**23:1,2** The sheep were the people of Judah, the shepherds were their wicked leaders and rulers. God would repay them in full for what they had done to Judah.

"Punish" – or "visit." The Hebrew word means both.

**23:3,4** The prophets often spoke of the return of Israel from exile – Isa 11:10-12; Jer 27:22; 29:10,11; 34:11-16; Ezek 37:20-28; Amos 9:15. Some of their prophecies were fulfilled in the days following the fall of the Babylonian empire (2 Chron 36:20-23; Ezra 1:1-5; etc.). But a more complete

4 And I will raise up shepherds over them who will tend them; and they will no longer fear or be dismayed; and not *one of* them will be missing, says the LORD.

5 “See, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and a King will reign and prosper, and will administer judgment and justice in the earth.

6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely. And this *is* his name, *the one* by which he will be called, The LORD Our Righteousness.

7 “Therefore, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, when they will no longer say, ‘The LORD lives, who brought the children of Israel up out of the land of Egypt,’ 8 But, ‘The LORD lives, who brought up and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the north country,’ and from all countries where I had driven them. And they will live in their own land.”

9 My heart within me is broken because of the prophets. All my bones tremble. I am like a drunken man, and like a man overcome by wine, because of the LORD, and because of his holy words.

10 For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourns.

The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, for their course is evil, and their might *is* not right.

11 “For both prophet and priest are profane. Yes, in my house I have found their wickedness, says the LORD.

12 Therefore their way will be to them like slippery *paths* in the darkness. They will be driven on, and fall in them; for I will bring disaster on them, the year of their punishment, says the LORD.

13 And I saw folly in the prophets of Samaria. They prophesied by Baal, and caused my people Israel to go astray.

14 I have also seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem. They commit adultery and walk in lies, and they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah.

15 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: See, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink bitter water. For from the prophets of Jerusalem godlessness has gone out into the whole land.

16 Thus says the LORD of hosts: Do not listen to the words of the

restoration than that seems required to fulfill the language of the prophets.

**23:5** “Branch” – a name for the Messiah (33:15; Isa 11:1; Zech 3:8; 6:12). As man He was a branch of the royal house of David (Luke 1:30-33; Rom 1:3). His future reign as king is briefly described in several Old Testament Scriptures (Ps 2:6-9; 45:1-7; 72:5-17; Isa 9:6,7; 11:1-9; 32:1-3; Zech 14:9-21; etc). See note at Isa 2:2-4. **23:6** This did not occur at Christ’s first coming.

“The LORD Our Righteousness” – 33:16; see Gen 15:6; 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:8,9. All men are sinners and have no true righteousness of their own (Isa 64:6). God in His great mercy provides the perfect righteousness of Christ to those who turn to Him. This is to be received by faith. When we trust in Him the Lord Himself becomes our righteousness, and so in God’s eyes our righteousness becomes as perfect as His. This is the way God has provided for fallen man to gain righteousness and enter God’s holy heaven (Rom 3:21-26).

**23:7,8** 16:14,15.

**23:9,10** Jeremiah again speaks of his inner pain that came because of what was then

taking place in his land, and the message of destruction the Lord had given.

**23:11** Beginning here and going on to the end of this chapter God speaks of the false prophets who were such a plague in Jeremiah’s day. Neither they nor the priests tried to conceal their wickedness, even in the temple. They were openly contemptuous of both man and God.

**23:12** Deut 32:35. “Year” – 11:23.

**23:13** Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom. God is reminding Judah of the sins of Samaria which brought its destruction (2 Kings 17:7-20).

“Baal” – note at Jud 2:11.

**23:14,15** This is the most severe condemnation imaginable of Jerusalem’s prophets. They said they were God’s spokesmen, but lived for Satan. They were wicked themselves and encouraged wickedness in others. They were no better than the people of Sodom and had no right to expect a better fate (Gen 13:13; 19:24,25; Isa 1:9,10; 2 Pet 2:6). Alas, such people are still with us propagating lies and promoting wickedness in the churches (2 Tim 3:1-7; 2 Pet 2:1).

“LORD of hosts” – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**23:16,17** “Vain hopes” – this is one of the

- prophets who prophesy to you.  
 They give you vain hopes.  
 They speak a vision of their own heart,  
*and* not from the mouth of the LORD.
- 17 They still say to those who despise me,  
 'The LORD has said, You will have peace,'  
 and they say to everyone who follows  
 the imagination of his own heart,  
 'No harm will come on you.'
- 18 For who has stood in the council of the LORD,  
 and has seen and heard his word?  
 Who has paid attention to his word,  
 and heard *it*?
- 19 See, a whirlwind from the LORD has  
 gone forth in fury,  
 a violent whirlwind.  
 It will fall violently on the head  
 of the wicked.
- 20 The anger of the LORD will not return,  
 until he has carried out the  
 thoughts of his heart  
 and until he has performed them.  
 In the last days you will understand  
 it perfectly.
- 21 "I have not sent these prophets,  
 yet they ran.  
 I have not spoken to them, yet they  
 prophesied.
- 22 But if they had stood in my council,  
 and had caused my people to hear  
 my words,  
 then they would have turned them from  
 their evil way,  
 and from their evil deeds.

- 23 *Am* I a God at hand, says the LORD,  
 and not a God afar off?
- 24 Can anyone hide himself in secret  
 places so that I will not see him?  
 says the LORD.  
 Do I not fill heaven and earth?  
 says the LORD.
- 25 "I have heard what the prophets said, those  
 prophesying lies in my name, saying, 'I have  
 dreamed, I have dreamed.' 26 How long will *this*  
 be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies?  
 Yes, *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own  
 heart, 27 who think they can make my people forget  
 my name by their dreams which each one of them  
 tells to his neighbour, as their fathers forgot my  
 name for Baal. 28 The prophet who has a dream,  
 let him tell a dream; and he who has my word, let  
 him speak my word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to  
 the wheat? says the LORD. 29 *Is* not my word like  
 a fire? says the LORD, and like a hammer *that*  
 breaks the rock in pieces?
- 30 "Therefore, see, I *am* against the prophets  
 each of whom steals my words from his neighbour,  
 says the LORD. 31 See, the LORD says, I *am*  
 against the prophets who use their tongues and  
 say, 'He says.' 32 See, the LORD says, I *am* against  
 those who prophesy false dreams, and tell them,  
 and make my people go astray by their lies, and by  
 their recklessness, yet I did not send them or  
 command them. Therefore they will not profit this  
 people at all, says the LORD.
- 33 "And when this people, or a prophet, or a  
 priest, asks you, saying, 'What *is* the oracle of the  
 LORD?' you shall then say to them, 'What oracle? I

terrible things about the teaching of lies. People believe them and acquire false hopes of salvation.

"Own heart" – 14:14. Their lies in v 17 are lies common in the world today. Those who know the Bible know that it will not be well with those who do not love the true God, and that there is no peace to the wicked (Ps 11:7-16; 32:10; Isa 3:10,11; 48:22; Matt 23:33; Rom 2:5-11; 1 Cor 16:22; Heb 2:1-3; Rev 21:8).

**23:18-21** The false prophets were ignorant of God's plans. They were saying that no harm would come to a sinful people. God declared that great harm was on the way. Verses 19,20 are repeated in 30:23,24.

**23:22** This is the work of true prophets of God. It can be accomplished only by those who spend time in God's presence and get God's message.

**23:23,24** Did not the false prophets know how impossible it was to conceal anything from the omnipresent God? (Gen 3:8; Ps 139:7-12; Amos 9:2-4; Heb 4:13).

**23:25-27** Having dreams was one of the ways the false prophets claimed to receive messages from God. For other ways see

14:14. The falsity of their so-called revelations from God is seen in their results (v 27. See Deut 13:1-5; 18:22).

**23:28,29** God did not use force to keep false prophets from speaking their lies ("chaff"). He only encouraged His true spokesmen to speak the truth of His word ("wheat"). God knew that in spite of lying prophets His powerful word would accomplish what His wisdom planned (1:12; Isa 55:11).

**23:30** False prophets were taking from each other false interpretations of God's words, or words that they wrongly supposed came from God.

**23:31** This is not uncommon in our own day. Then and now there are those who are called prophets or God's spokesmen who falsely declare that the words which come out of their own minds are revelations from God.

**23:32** "Recklessness" – the Hebrew word seems to include the idea also of "boasting." False prophets exalt themselves, pass themselves off as great ones and so draw people after them (see Acts 8:9; 2 Pet 2:10,12).

**23:33-40** Terrible punishment awaits those who declare that their own words are

will forsake you, says the LORD.' 34 And *as for* the prophet, and the priest, and the people, who say, 'The oracle of the LORD,' I will punish that man and his household. 35 Thus every one of you will say to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?' 36 And you will not mention the oracle of the LORD any more; for every man's word will be his oracle; for you have perverted the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. 37 Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?' 38 But since you say, 'The oracle of the LORD,' therefore thus says the LORD: Because you say this word, 'The oracle of the LORD,' and I have sent *word* to you, saying, 'You must not say, The oracle of the LORD,' 39 Therefore, see, I, I myself, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you and the city that I gave you and your fathers, *and drive you* from my presence. 40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach on you, and a perpetual shame, which will not be forgotten."

**24** The LORD caused me to see two baskets of figs set in front of the temple of the LORD. *This occurred* after Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. 2 One basket *had* very good figs, like the figs *that are* first ripe, and the other basket *had* very bad figs, which were so bad they could not be eaten.

3 Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

And I said, "Figs. The good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten."

messages revealed by God. Observe carefully in v 36 how widespread this practice was in Jeremiah's day and what the result of it was.

"Oracle" – Num 23:7.

"Perverted the words of the living God" (v 36) – Gal 1:7,8; 2 Pet 3:16. Actually the people then did not really want God's messages spoken by God's true prophet. They preferred to hear the pleasant lies of the false prophets and to think themselves spiritual because they seemed to be inquiring about God's message.

**24:1-3** Other object lessons at 1:11-14; 13:1-11; 18:1-4.

"Jeconiah" – another name for Jehoiachin.

"Carried away" – 2 Kings 24:10-16.

**24:4-10** The exiles who went to Babylon are likened to good figs because they accepted God's dealings with them and submitted to the king of Babylon (21:8,9; 38:2,17,18).

4 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so I will regard as good those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent from this place into the land of the Chaldeans. 6 For I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; and I will build them up and not pull *them* down, and I will plant them, and not uproot *them*. 7 And I will give them a heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD. And they will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with their whole heart.

8 "And like the bad figs, which are so bad they cannot be eaten," the LORD definitely says this, "so I will deal with Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the rest of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who live in the land of Egypt; 9 and I will deliver them up to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for misery, *to be* an *object of* scorn and a proverb, *of* a taunt and a curse, in all the places where I drive them. 10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the plague among them, until they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and to their fathers."

**25** The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, which *was* the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; 2 Jeremiah the prophet spoke this to all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 3 "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, to this day, which *is* the twenty-third year, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking; but you have not listened.

4 "And the LORD has sent to you all his servants

God had a good purpose in sending them away. He would keep them as good fruit should be kept and bring them back.

**24:7** A mind to know God is one of His great and glorious gifts (Jer 31:33,34; John 17:3; 2 Cor 4:6; Heb 8:11).

"My people" – Ex 19:5; Lev 26:12; 2 Cor 6:16-18; Heb 8:10.

**24:8-10** God sorted the people as a man would sort fruit. After sending the good fruit to Babylon, He saw to it that the rebels who were left behind would perish in one way or another.

**25:1-3** Jeremiah had twenty-three years of very difficult and apparently fruitless ministry. Actually he was a success – all through those years he faithfully stood for God and delivered God's messages just as God gave them to him. Success is doing what God tells us to do, not in appearing to be great before men. If the people did not listen it was not Jeremiah's fault.

**25:4-6** He is referring to the prophets who

the prophets, rising early and sending *them*; but you have not listened, or turned your ear to hear. 5 They said, 'Now every one of you turn back from his evil way, and from your evil deeds, and live in the land that the LORD has given to you and to your fathers forever and ever, 6 and do not go after other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no harm.'

7 "Yet you have not listened to me, says the LORD, provoking me to anger with the works of your hands to your own harm. 8 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not heard my words, 9 see, I will send and take all the clans of the north, says the LORD, and my servant Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an *object of astonishment* and of hissing, and a perpetual desolation. 10 Moreover, I will take away from them the sound of joy, and the sound of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. 11 And this whole land will be a desolation, and an *object of astonishment*. And these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

12 "And it will come about when seventy years

are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their sin, says the LORD, and will make it a perpetual desolation. 13 And I will bring on that land all I have spoken and proclaimed against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations. 14 For many nations and great kings will enslave them also; and I will repay them in accordance with their deeds, and in accordance with the works of their own hands.'

15 "For thus said the LORD God of Israel to me: 'Take this wine cup of fury from my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. 16 And they will drink, and be shaken, and go mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.'"

17 Then I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and caused all the nations to whom the LORD sent me to drink it: 18 *namely* Jerusalem and the cities of Judah and its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation, an *object of astonishment*, a hissing, and a curse, as *it is* today; 19 Pharaoh king of Egypt and his servants and his princes and all his people, 20 and all the mixed people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the rest of Ashdod, 21 Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, 22 and all the

came before him (7:25,26).

**25:7** "Not listened to me" – since it was God who sent the prophets, refusing to hear them was the same as refusing to hear Him.

"Works of your hands" – idols.

"Your own harm" – note at 7:6.

**25:8-11** "Therefore" – there are always unpleasant consequences of disobedience.

**25:9** "North" – includes the allies of Babylon.

"My servant" – 27:6. Nebuchadnezzar at that time did not know the true God, but God used him as His instrument to punish Judah and in this sense called him His servant. See also Isa 41:2; 44:28. People may unknowingly be used by God to accomplish His purposes.

**25:11** "Desolation" – Lev 26:31,32; Jer 4:26,27; 12:11,12.

"These nations" – vs 17-26.

"Seventy years" – this was not an arbitrary figure. God commanded Israel in Lev 25:1-6 to let their lands rest every seventh year. They were to plant no crops at all on those years but to live on the abundance God would give every 6th year (Lev 25:20-22). Eventually Israel disobeyed this command as they did the other commands of God. God knew they would disobey and warned them of the consequences in Lev 26:33-35. The captivity of Judah in Babylon fulfilled both this word and the prophecy of Jeremiah (2 Chron 36:21). Evidently God's command about rest for the land had been disobeyed 70 times during the stay of God's

people in Canaan. For every year of disobedience they had to spend a year in exile. In this way God again showed them (and us) the importance of obedience to His word. **25:12** 50:18. God used Babylon to punish Judah and Jerusalem, but this does not mean Babylon was a righteous nation. In fact, they were a very wicked nation, and God, after using them against Judah, punished them too. Observe that Jehovah, the God of the Bible, is the God over all nations and exercises authority over all (27:5). This is a truth the king of Babylon himself learned (Dan 4:34,35).

**25:13** Chapters 50 and 51.

**25:14** "Nations" – the Medes and their allies and successors (51:11,28; and 5:30,31).

"Repay" – Deut 32:41; Rom 12:19.

**25:15,16** The cup of wrath here signifies God's proclamations of judgments against the nations named in verses 18 to 26.

**25:17** See 1:10. Jeremiah's making the nations drink from the cup signifies his proclamation of God's revelation against them. He did not need to go to the nations named, and of course would not have taken a literal cup even if he had gone. He merely declared and wrote God's revelation and thus it became effective (1:12; Isa 55:11). The very speaking of God's words by the prophet made this fulfillment certain. Whenever God spoke through His prophets He purposed to do what He said He would do.

**25:20** Job 1:1.



kings of Tyre, and all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which *are* across the sea, 23 Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all *who are* in the farthest corners, 24 and all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mixed people who live in the desert, 25 and all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, 26 and all the kings of the north, far and near, one with the other, and all the kingdoms of the world which *are* on the surface of the earth; and after them, the king of Sheshach will drink.

27 "Therefore you shall say to them, Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Drink, and be drunk, and vomit, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.' 28 And it will be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, that you must say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: You will certainly drink. 29 For, see, I begin to bring disaster on the city which is called by my name, and should you be completely unpunished? You will not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth, says the LORD of hosts.'

30 "Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them,

"The LORD will roar from on high,  
and utter his voice from his holy  
dwelling place.

He will roar mightily against his habitation;  
he will give a shout, like those who  
trample *grapes*,  
against all the inhabitants of the earth.

31 A noise will come to the ends of the earth,  
for the LORD has a controversy with  
the nations,

he will plead *his case* with all flesh.  
He will give those *who are* wicked  
to the sword," says the LORD.

32 Thus says the LORD of hosts:  
"See, disaster will spread from nation to nation,  
and a great whirlwind will be raised  
up from the ends of the earth.

33 And on that day *those* slain by the  
LORD will be from *one* end of the  
earth even to the *other* end  
of the earth.

They will not be lamented, or gathered,  
or buried.

They will be refuse on the ground."

34 Wail, you shepherds, and cry, and roll  
yourselves *in the ashes*,  
you leader of the flock, for the time  
for your slaughter and for your  
dispersion has come,  
and you will fall like a choice vessel.

35 And the shepherds will have no way to flee,  
or the leader of the flock to escape.

36 A sound of the cry of the shepherds,  
and a wailing of the leader of  
the flock, *will be heard* ;

for the LORD has ruined their pasture.

37 And the peaceful folds are cut down  
because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

38 He has left his lair, like the lion;  
for their land is desolate because  
of the fierceness of the oppressor,  
and because of his fierce anger.

**26** In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim  
the son of Josiah king of Judah this word

**25:26** Verses 18 to 25 list places and peoples not too far distant from Israel. Here the word of God through the prophet reaches out to the ends of the earth. God will punish every country in the world for their sins.

"Sheshach" – 51:41; indicates Babylon.

**25:27** "Drink" – means they will experience the disasters God has revealed against them.

**25:28** No doubt the nations would like to reject God's cup of wrath but none can escape.

**25:29** "City which is called by my name" – Jerusalem. If God punishes His own special people will He let other nations escape? The answer is obvious. Compare 1 Pet 4:17,18.

**25:30-38** The Babylonian conquest of western Asia and Judah, the fall of Babylon a few decades later, and the rise of the Medo-Persian empire ushered in a time of great upheaval among the nations. Invasions, fierce battles with great slaughter, destruction and misery everywhere – these are the themes of these verses. In v 31

the reason for it all is given (and the reason for similar times throughout human history). It was a time of God's judgment on wicked peoples. The tumult of battle is the Lord's roar from heaven, His shout is like those treading grapes (v 30; Isa 63:3; Joel 3:13; Rev 14:19,20). Those slain in battle are "slain by the LORD" (v 33). The destruction brought by armies is His work of destruction (v 36). All is a result of His fierce anger (vs 37,38).

These verses are a small picture of what will happen at the end of this age when God arises in wrath against all the nations of earth (Isa 24:1-6; 26:20,21; Matthew chapter 24; Heb 12:26; Revelation chapters 8-9, 15-19).

**26:1-6** This message was given several years before the Babylonians captured Judah and Jerusalem. At that time God offered the people a way of escape. God would much rather save people than destroy them (Ezek 18:32; 33:11). He will forgive when He sees repentance (18:7,8). He will watch for it and delay His punishments as



came from the LORD, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's house, and speak to all the *people of the cities* of Judah who come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not omit a word. 3 Perhaps they will listen, and each one turn from his evil way, so that I may relent concerning the disaster which I have planned to do to them because of their evil deeds. 4 And you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, 5 to listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent to you, both rising up early and sending *them* (but you have not listened), 6 then I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city an *object of* cursing to all the nations of the earth.'"

7 So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. 8 Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You shall surely die. 9 Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house will be like Shiloh, and this city will be desolate without an inhabitant?'" And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

10 When the officials of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD, and sat down at the entrance of the new gate of the LORD's house. 11 Then the priests and the prophets spoke to the officials and to all the people, saying, "This man deserves to die, for he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears."

long as possible. But if there is no repentance, no obedience there can be no escape (compare Luke 13:1-5; Rom 2:5). **26:2** "All the words" – no word God speaks can lack importance. Every one of them will be fulfilled, and He wants men to know everything He says (Deut 4:2; 6:6-9; Ps 12:6; Prov 30:5,6; Matt 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16,17; Rev 22:18,19).

**26:6** "Shiloh" – note at 7:12-15.

**26:8** Jeremiah was completely faithful to God's instructions in v 2. But see how men would reward him for it. Jeremiah was not the first of God's servants nor the last to be treated like that (Acts 7:52; Heb 11:35-38).

**26:10** These officials came to judge the dispute.

**26:11** The priests and false prophets make their case before the officials. They did not seem at all interested to find out whether Jeremiah spoke the truth. Here is full-grown prejudice and intolerance, and willful ignorance. Compare Matt 26:62-66. Such

12 Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and to all the people, saying, "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that you have heard. 13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will relent concerning the disaster that he has proclaimed against you. 14 As for me, see, I *am* in your hands. Do with me as seems good and right to you. 15 But know for certain, that if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on its inhabitants. For truly the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears."

16 Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and to the prophets, "This man *does* not deserve to die, for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."

17 Then some of the elders of the land got up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying,

18 "Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying,

'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

Zion will be plowed *like* a field,  
and Jerusalem will become heaps,  
and the mountain of the house like the  
high places of a forest.'

19 "Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and seek the LORD? And the LORD relented concerning the disaster which he had proclaimed against them. Thus we might we bring a great disaster against our souls."

20 And there was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah

things are met with in our day also.

**26:12-15** This is Jeremiah's defense. He was interested only in the truth. The matter of living or dying was a much smaller thing in his eyes. This is what God wants in every generation – people who love truth more than life itself. Compare Ps 51:6; Acts 20:24; etc.

**26:16** In this matter at least the officials and people had more regard for truth and justice than the priests and prophets who should have been their greatest defenders.

**26:17-19** Micah's prophecy, uttered about one hundred years previously, was still known in Judah (Micah 3:12). Hezekiah's repentance is mentioned in 2 Chron 32:25,26. The wisdom of these elders reminds us of that exercised by Gamaliel (Acts 5:33-39).

**26:20-23** This material is inserted like a parenthesis in the narrative. It reveals the difference between King Hezekiah and King

of Kirjath-Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land, just like all the words of Jeremiah. 21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the officials, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death. But when Urijah heard it, he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt. 22 And Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt, *namely*, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *some* men *who went* with him to Egypt. 23 And they brought Urijah out of Egypt, and took him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword, and threw his dead body into the burial place of the common people.

24 But the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that he was not given into the hands of the people to be put to death.

**27** In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah this word came from the LORD, speaking to Jeremiah. 2 Thus the LORD said to me: "Make bonds and yokes, and put them on your neck, 3 and send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyre, and to the king of Sidon, by the hand of the messengers who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah; 4 and command them to say to their masters, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; thus you must tell your masters: 5 I have made the earth, the men and the beasts that *are* on the earth, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and I give it to whomever I please. 6 And now I have given all these lands into the hands of my servant Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon; and I have also given him the beasts of the field to serve him. 7 And all nations will serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time for his land comes; and then many nations and great kings will make him their servant.

8 "And this will happen: the nation and kingdom

which will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish with the sword and with the famine and with the plague until I have consumed them by their hand, says the LORD. 9 Therefore do not listen to your prophets, or to your diviners, or to your dreamers, or to your magicians, or to your sorcerers, who speak to you, telling you *that you* will not serve the king of Babylon, 10 for they prophesy a lie to you, *resulting* in your removal far from your land; and I will drive you out, and you will perish. 11 But the nations which bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, those I will still let remain in their own land, says the LORD; and they will till it, and live in it."

12 I also spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah in accordance with all these words, saying, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him and his people, and live. 13 Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the plague, as the LORD has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? 14 Therefore do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you, saying, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon,' for they prophesy a lie to you. 15 'For I have not sent them,' says the LORD, 'yet they prophesy a lie in my name, resulting in my driving you out and your perishing, you, and the prophets who prophesy to you.'"

16 Also I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, saying, "See, the articles in the LORD's house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon," for they prophesy a lie to you. 17 Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon, and live. Why should this city be laid waste?' 18 But if they *are* prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD

Jehoiakim. It shows, too, the mortal danger Jeremiah was in. What prevented Jehoiakim doing to Jeremiah as he did to Uriah? See 1:8,19. This Uriah is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

**26:24** Ahikam served good king Josiah and was the father of Gedaliah who later governed Judah for a time (2 Kings 22:12; 25:22). God here used Ahikam to help save Jeremiah's life. To fulfill His will God uses human means when He chooses to do so (another example – Acts 23:12-24).

**27:1-11** Jeremiah was a prophet to the nations (1:5,10). Here he sends God's message to some of them. Putting on a yoke was a striking way of calling attention to the message. The message is the same as that which he gave to Judah. Speaking to them Jehovah God emphasizes that He is the

great Creator and Governor of the universe (v 5. Note at Ps 47:2). And He warns them against false and harmful messages from other sources (vs 9,10. Compare Deut 18:9-12). In this way God showed His concern for the nations on the borders of Israel, some of which were ancient enemies of His people. **27:12-15** 21:8-10; 38:2,3,17,18. **27:15** 14:14; 23:21.

**27:16** An example of the lies told by the false prophets (28:1-4). Several years before this (in 605 BC) the Babylonians carried off some articles from the temple.

**27:17** Resistance to the king of Babylon would stir up his wrath and cause him to destroy Jerusalem.

**27:18** The mark of a true prophet of God is not the telling of lies but the ability to plead with God.

of hosts, that the articles which are left in the house of the LORD and *in* the house of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem, do not go to Babylon. 19 For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the stands, and concerning the rest of the articles that remain in this city, 20 which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and all the officials of Judah and Jerusalem from Jerusalem to Babylon; 21 yes, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the articles that remain *in* the house of the LORD, and *in* the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem: 22 'They will be carried to Babylon, and they will be there until the day that I visit them, says the LORD. Then I will bring them up, and restore them to this place.'

**28** And it happened the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month, *that* the prophet Hananiah the son of Azur, who was from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, 2 "Thus the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, has spoken, saying, 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. 3 Within two full years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the LORD's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. 4 And I will bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon, says the LORD, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.'"

**27:19-22** These articles were taken to Babylon in 586 BC (52:12-19; 2 Kings 25:13-17).

"Jehoiachin" (vs 20; 28:4; 29:2) – a variant of Jehoiachin.

**27:22** "I will bring them" – fulfilled in 538 BC (Ezra 1:7-11).

**28:1** Hananiah is the second false prophet to be named in Jeremiah (Pashhur was the first – 20:1-6; see also 29:21,31,32). In the Bible people are exposed for what they are, and prophets and apostles informed God's people about false prophets and teachers, or those who opposed God's work, sometimes naming them (Acts 8:18-23; 13:6-11; 2 Tim 2:17; 4:14; 3 John 9). **28:2** Hananiah claimed to be in touch with God and to speak with the same authority as the great prophets of the Bible. He may have been consciously trying to deceive, or may have been totally deceived himself and was persuaded he was really speaking for God.

**28:3** 27:16.

**28:4** Hananiah flatly contradicted the word

5 Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people who stood in the house of the LORD, 6 and the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! May the LORD do so. May the LORD perform your words which you have prophesied, to bring back the articles of the LORD's house, and all who were carried away captive, from Babylon to this place. 7 But listen now to this word that I speak in your hearing, and in the hearing of all the people: 8 The prophets who were before me and you long ago prophesied both against many countries and against great kingdoms, about war and disaster, and plague. 9 The prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of the prophet comes *true*, *then* it will be known that the LORD has really sent that prophet."

10 Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke from the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and broke it. 11 And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Just so I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years.'" And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah *the prophet*, after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 13 "Go and tell Hananiah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: You have broken the wooden yokes, but you shall make iron yokes for them. 14 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put an iron yoke on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they will serve him. And I have given him the beasts of the field also.'"

15 Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the

of God that came through Jeremiah in 22:24-27. This is one way that false prophets can be known – they will inevitably deny some part or other of the Word of God (2 Pet 2:1).

**28:5-9** Such an event as Hananiah foretold was something Jeremiah wished could happen. But he knew very well it would not.

**28:9** False prophets spoke of peace because they thought that was what people wanted to hear. Many so-called Bible teachers suit their message to what people like rather than to what God has revealed (Rom 16:18; Col 2:4; 2 Tim 4:3).

"Comes true" – see Deut 18:22. This is the final test of anyone who is called a prophet. And it is a test Biblical prophets gloriously pass, thus proving the truth of 2 Pet 1:21.

**28:10-17** Here is clearly given the contrast between a false prophet and a true one. Outwardly they may not seem greatly different, but in the heart of the true prophet there is truth, in the heart of the false prophet there is deceit. The one saves men

prophet Hananiah, "Listen now, Hananiah. The LORD has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie. 16 Therefore thus says the LORD: 'See, I will hurl you from the surface of the earth. This year you will die, because you have taught rebellion against the LORD.'"

17 So the prophet Hananiah died the same year in the seventh month.

**29** Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders who had been carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2 *This occurred* after Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, and the craftsmen, and the smiths, had gone from Jerusalem. 3 *He sent it* by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), saying,

4 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who have been carried away as captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 "Build houses for yourselves and live *in them*, and plant gardens, and eat their produce. 6 Marry, and have sons and daughters. And find wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters, so that you may increase there, and not decrease. 7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away as captives, and pray to the LORD for it. For in its peace you will have peace."

8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Do not let your prophets and your diviners,

who *are* among you, deceive you, and do not listen to your dreams which you have *them* dream. 9 For they prophesy falsely to you in my name. I have not sent them," says the LORD.

10 For thus says the LORD: "After seventy years are completed at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, causing you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you," says the LORD, "thoughts of peace, and not of disaster, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call to me, and you will go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek me, and find *me*, when you search for me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found by you," says the LORD. "And I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you," says the LORD, "and I will bring you back to the place where I caused you to be carried away *as captives*."

15 *I write* because you have said, "The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon." 16 *Know* that the LORD has said this concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, *and* concerning all the people who live in this city, and concerning your brethren who have not gone away with you into captivity: 17 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "See, I will send on them the sword, the famine, and the plague, and I will make them like rotten figs, that are so bad they cannot be eaten. 18 And I will pursue them with the sword, with the famine, and with the plague, and will hand them over to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be an *object of* cursing and of astonishment and of hissing and of scorn among all the nations where I drive them, 19 because they have not listened to my words," says the LORD, "which I sent to them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and

by turning them to God and His truth; the other destroys men by getting them to trust in lies (v 15). The end of the true prophet is to have honor with God (John 12:26); the end of the false prophet is dishonor and destruction (2 Cor 11:15; 2 Pet 2:1). See also 14:14,15.

**29:1-14** God had a message to the exiles in Babylon who had been taken there in 597 BC. False prophets had arisen there (vs 21,31) and were confusing them. So God chose Jeremiah to write His message to the exiles. By then many of them, seeing the fulfillment of some of his prophecies, must have regarded him as a true prophet and man of God. The message reveals God's loving concern for His people and gives them practical instruction. The exiles must be prepared to stay in Babylon until the period of 70 years is complete (v 10). They should try to live normal lives and work and pray for the prosperity of the country of their exile

(vs 5-7). They must reject the lies of the false prophets among them (vs 8,9). Verses 10-14 enlarge on the promise that had been given in Judah (16:14,15; 24:4-7).

God promises to bring them back to the land of Israel but He tells them that they will seek Him for this (Dan 9:1-3). This is the relationship between God's promises and men's requests. God means His promises to be claimed and turned into believing prayer.

**29:13** Here is a truth for all men. God can be found, can be known. He hears prayer and answers those who seek with the *whole heart* (Deut 4:29; Hos 10:12; Matt 7:7,8; Luke 11:5-10; 18:1).

**29:14** "Will bring you back from captivity" – or "will restore your well-being." The Hebrew can mean either one. See note at Ps 14:7. **29:15** That is, they may see no need of Jeremiah or his letter. They did not understand that their prophets were liars.

sending *them*. But you would not listen, says the LORD.

20 "So hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon. 21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy a lie to you in my name: See, I will deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he will kill them before your eyes. 22 And because of them a curse will be taken up by all the exiles of Judah who *are* in Babylon, saying, 'The LORD make you like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.' 23 Because they have done vile things in Israel, have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them. I know, and *am* a witness, says the LORD."

24 Tell *this* to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying, 25 "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Because you have sent letters in your name to all the people who *are* in Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, 26 *that* the LORD has made you priest in place of Jehoiada the priest, that you should be the overseer of the house of the LORD, over every madman *who* makes himself a prophet, to put him in prison, and in the stocks. 27 Now therefore *why* have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth, who makes himself a prophet to you? 28 For he sent *word* to us *in* Babylon, saying, 'This *captivity* is long. Build houses for yourself and live *in them*, and plant gardens, and eat their produce.'"

29 And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in

the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet. 30 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 31 "Send *word* to all those of the captivity, saying, 'Thus says the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, though I did not send him, and he caused you to trust in a lie, 32 therefore thus says the LORD: See, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his offspring. He will not have a man to live among this people; nor will he see the good that I will do for my people, says the LORD, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD.'"

**30** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write all the words that I have spoken to you in a book. 3 For, see, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will bring back my people Israel and Judah from captivity, says the LORD, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they will possess it."

4 And these *are* the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 "For thus says the LORD:

We have heard a voice of trembling,  
of fear, and not of peace.

6 Ask now and see whether a man ever  
bears a child?

Why do I see every man with his hands  
on his loins, like a woman in labour,  
and all faces turned pale?

7 Alas! For that day *is* great,  
so that none *is* like it.

So *it is* the time of Jacob's trouble,

**29:20-32** Three false prophets and their end. God has His eye on all the false prophets of the world and will deal with them in His time and in His way.

**30:1** The four chapters 30-33 form a unit. In them God gives repeated promises that He will restore both Israel and Judah to the land of Canaan. In contrast to many other parts of Jeremiah's writing this whole section abounds with words of comfort and hope for the future.

**30:2** We now have the privilege of studying the things Jeremiah wrote down nearly 2,600 years ago. This "book" was in the form of a scroll. See 36:2.

**30:3,4** 16:14,15; 23:3-8; 24:4-7; 29:14. Israel means the northern kingdom taken into captivity by Assyria in 721 BC; Judah means the southern kingdom destroyed finally in 586 BC. What follows concerns people from both kingdoms.

"I will bring back my people Israel and Judah from captivity" – or "I will restore the well-being of my people Israel and Judah."

**30:5-11** From some expressions in this section we may judge that the return of the

exiles of Judah from Babylon in 537-538 BC was only a partial fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecies (if even that).

**30:7** The time (the meaning of "day" here) referred to in verses 5 and 6 will be so terrible that there will never be one like it again. The Lord Jesus also spoke of a time of trouble unequalled in the whole history of the world (Matt 24:21). Since there cannot be two distinct times both of which are unequalled, it is reasonable to think that both Jeremiah and the Lord Jesus refer to the same period of time. The Scriptures sometimes speak of a time of terrible trouble at the end of this age followed by the outpouring of God's wrath. Notes on the great tribulation at Matt 24:21,29; Rev 6:9-17; 7:14. Notes on the Day of the LORD at Joel 1:15; etc.

Though that future time will mean great trouble for Jacob (the Jewish people), this does not mean that others also will not experience this trouble. Verses 9 and 14 of Revelation chapter 7, chapter 16, 19:11-21 and other Scriptures reveal that both the great tribulation and the Day of the Lord will



- but he will be saved out of it.
- 8 "For it will happen in that day,  
   says the LORD of hosts,  
   *that* I will break his yoke off your neck,  
   and will tear off your bonds,  
   and foreigners will no longer make him  
   their servant.
- 9 But they will serve the LORD their God,  
   and David their king,  
   whom I will raise up for them.
- 10 "Therefore do not be afraid, O Jacob,  
   my servant, says the LORD,  
   nor be dismayed, O Israel.  
   For, see, I will save you from afar,  
   and your offspring from the land  
   of their captivity;  
   and Jacob will return, and will be  
   at rest, and be quiet,  
   and no one will make *him* afraid.
- 11 For I *am* with you, says the LORD,  
   to save you.  
   Though I make a full end of all nations  
   where I have scattered you,  
   yet I will not make a full end of you;  
   but I will correct you in measure,  
   and will not leave you altogether unpunished.
- 12 For thus says the LORD:  
   Your injury *is* incurable,  
   and your wound *is* grievous.
- 13 *There is* no one to plead your case,  
   so that you may be bandaged.  
   You have no healing medicines.
- 14 All your lovers have forgotten you.

affect every nation. As for the people of Israel they will not be completely destroyed in that future time but "will be saved out of it."

**30:8** A prophecy of permanent freedom for the people of Israel. Notice the words "foreigners will no longer make him their servant." This certainly was not true of the Jews through the centuries following their return from Babylon. At times during those centuries they endured some of the very worst treatment in their long history. So the words still await the future for their complete fulfillment.

**30:9** "David their king" – here is another indication that this passage did not have a complete fulfillment at the return of the Jews from Babylon. David, of course, had been dead for centuries by then, and God did not raise him from the dead to be king of Israel again. Since it is said they will "serve" God and "David" it is very probable that "David" here means "the Son of David", the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Him has God raised up for them. But as a nation they have rejected Him and do not serve Him – yet.

**30:10** 46:27-28. The promise of "rest" and "quiet", and the words "no one will make

- They are not looking for you.  
 For I have wounded you with the wound  
   of an enemy,  
   with the discipline of a cruel one,  
   for your many evil deeds,  
   *because* your sins had increased.
- 15 Why do you cry for yourself in your affliction?  
   Your sorrow *is* incurable.  
   Because of your many iniquities,  
   *because* your sins had increased,  
   I did these things to you.
- 16 Therefore all those who devour you  
   will be devoured;  
   and all your adversaries,  
   every one of them,  
   will go into captivity;  
   and those who plunder you will be a plunder;  
   and all who prey on you I will give as a prey.
- 17 For I will restore health to you,  
   and I will heal you of your wounds,  
   says the LORD,  
   because they called you an outcast,  
   *saying*, 'This *is* Zion,  
   whom no one seeks.'
- 18 "Thus says the LORD: See, I will bring  
   back Jacob's tents from captivity,  
   and have mercy on his dwelling places;  
   and the city will be built on its own ruins,  
   and the palace will stand in its proper place.
- 19 And out of them will issue thanksgiving  
   and the voice of those who make merry.  
   And I will increase their number,  
   and they will not be few.

him afraid" were not completely fulfilled after the return from Babylon. There were almost constant troubles from that time till the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 and scattered the Jews, and since then there has been trouble wherever they have gone.

**30:11** God will destroy wicked peoples, He disciplines His own people (Prov 3:11,12; Heb 12:5,6).

**30:12-15** The Lord describes the wounds He has had to inflict on His people.

**30:12,13** 8:22; 10:19; Isa 1:5-9; Hos 5:13. There was no human remedy for their wounds.

**30:14** "Lovers" – 22:20; Lam 1:2.  
   "I have wounded" – 4:6; 11:11; 18:11; etc.

**30:15** 2:35; 4:18; 5:9; 6:19.

**30:16** 3:24; 5:17; 8:16; 10:25; 25:26,29.

**30:17** God can heal the wounds that are beyond the help of man (v 12). And He will heal Israel because of the scorn of other nations.

**30:18-22** 16:14,15; 24:4-7; 29:10-14.

**30:18** Nehemiah records the beginnings of this work of rebuilding (see 2:1-9).

**30:19** "Thanksgiving" – Ps 7:17; 50:14,15;



I will also glorify them, and they will not be insignificant.  
 20 Their children also will be as before, and their congregation will be established before me, and I will punish all who oppress them.  
 21 And their nobles will be from among them, and their governor will come from among them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he will approach me.  
 For who *else* would venture to approach me? says the LORD.  
 22 And you will be my people, and I will be your God."  
 23 See, the whirlwind of the LORD goes out with fury, a sweeping whirlwind. It will fall violently on the head of the wicked.  
 24 The fierce anger of the LORD will not go back until he has done it, and until he has carried out the purposes of his heart.  
 In the latter days you will understand it.

**31** "At that time," says the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will be my people."  
 2 Thus says the LORD:

56:12; Lev 7:12,13; 1 Thess 5:18.  
**30:21** "I will cause him to draw near" – a principle that applies to all who ever truly come to God (John 6:44).  
**30:22** 7:23; Ex 6:7; Lev 26:12; 2 Cor 6:16.  
**30:23,24** 23:19,20. God doesn't say when Israel will understand what He has done, only that they will understand eventually. But other references in the Bible make it clear that men can understand God's words, actions, and ways only when their spiritual eyes are opened and they are taught by the Holy Spirit (see notes at Eph 1:17,18).  
**31:1** "Families" – here means the ten tribes of the northern kingdom called Israel and the two tribes of the southern kingdom called Judah. Both kingdoms are in view in this chapter. Verses 4-22 speak of the northern kingdom; verses 23-26 speak of the southern kingdom; verses 27-40 speak of the two kingdoms together.  
**31:2** This may refer to the coming of God's people Israel out of Egypt recorded in Exodus. Or it may be a prophecy of the future using the past tenses of verbs – as though the prophecy were already fulfilled.  
**31:3** This gives the essence of Deut 4:37; 7:7,8; 10:15; Hos 11:4. Believers now have verses such as Eph 1:4-6; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13. The salvation of all who will ever be saved has its source in the eternal love of God.  
 "The LORD appeared to me in the past"

"The people *who* survived the sword, Israel, found grace in the wilderness, when I went to give him rest."  
 3 The LORD has appeared to me in the past, *saying*, "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you."  
 4 I will build you again, and you will be built, O virgin of Israel.  
 You will again be adorned with your tambourines, and will go out in the dances of those who make merry.  
 5 You will yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria.  
 The planters will plant, and will eat *them* like common things.  
 6 For there will be a day *when* the watchmen on Mount Ephraim will cry out, 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion to the LORD our God!'"  
 7 For thus says the LORD:  
 "Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations. Proclaim! Praise! And say, 'O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.'  
 8 See, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the ends of the earth,

– or it could be translated "The LORD appeared to me from afar."  
**31:4-22** It is clear that the ten northern tribes are in view here because of the use of the words Samaria (v 5) and Ephraim (vs 6,9,18, 20). Samaria, the heart of the northern kingdom, was captured in 721 BC. From that time on until our day the people of Israel have not returned to God and possessed Samaria. In our day Israel has occupied Samaria, but as a nation is still in unbelief, rejecting their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Since there has been no complete fulfilment of these prophecies in the past we may assume there will be a future fulfilment. Compare Isaiah chapter 53 with its use of the past tense. See note at Isa 55:10,11.  
**31:6** The people of the northern kingdom, when they broke away from Judah, for the most part stopped coming to Jerusalem to worship (1 Kings 12:25-33). But in the future this will be changed (v 12).  
**31:7** "Chief" – this could refer to Israel or to large nations where they had been scattered. If God is speaking here of Israel as the chief of the nations, it is not because of its size or strength, but because of its importance as a channel for His Word and for the coming of Christ.  
**31:8** "Great throng" – this surely indicates a number far in excess of the few from the northern kingdom probably included in the 42,360 (mostly exiles from the southern kingdom) who

and with them the blind and the lame,  
the woman with child together with  
the one in labour with child.  
A great throng will return there.  
9 They will come with weeping,  
and as *they are making* supplications  
I will lead them.  
I will cause them to walk by the rivers  
of water in a straight way,  
in which they will not stumble.  
For I am a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim *is* my firstborn.”  
10 Hear the word of the LORD,  
O you nations,  
and declare *it* in the islands far away, and say,  
“He who scattered Israel will gather him,  
and keep him, as a shepherd *does* his flock.”  
11 For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,  
and ransomed him from the hand of  
*one who was* stronger than he.  
12 Therefore they will come and sing on  
the heights of Zion,  
and will stream together to the  
goodness of the LORD,  
for wheat and for wine and for oil and  
for the young of the flock and of the herd.  
And their soul will be like a watered garden,  
and they will not grieve any more at all.  
13 “Then will the virgin rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old together.  
For I will turn their mourning into joy,  
and will comfort them,  
and give them joy in place of their sorrow.  
14 And I will satisfy the soul of the  
priests with fatness,  
and my people will be satisfied with

my goodness,” says the LORD.  
15 Thus says the LORD:  
“A voice was heard in Ramah,  
lamentation *and* bitter weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her children refused  
to be comforted for her children,  
because they *were* no *more*.”  
16 Thus says the LORD:  
“Restrain your voice from weeping,  
and your eyes from tears,  
for your work will be rewarded,  
says the LORD,  
and they will come back from the land  
of the enemy.  
17 And there is hope in your future,  
says the LORD,  
that your children will come back into  
their own borders.  
18 I have surely heard Ephraim mourning,  
‘You have disciplined me,  
and I have been disciplined,  
like an ox unaccustomed *to the yoke*.  
Turn me, and I will be turned;  
for you *are* the LORD my God.  
19 Surely after I had turned away, I repented,  
and after I was instructed, I slapped *my* thigh.  
I was ashamed, yes, humiliated,  
because I bore the disgrace of my youth.’  
20 *Is* Ephraim my dear son?  
*Is he* a delightful child?  
For though I have spoken against him,  
I earnestly remember him still.  
Therefore my inmost being yearns for him.  
I will certainly have mercy on him,”  
says the LORD.  
21 “Set up road signs, make guideposts,

returned from Babylon (see Ezra 2:64).  
31:9 Weeping and praying suggest repentance and turning to God, and the following verses speak of the joy of salvation and restoration (vs 10-14).  
“Ephraim” – here stands for the whole northern kingdom.  
31:12 “Not grieve any more at all” – indicates the permanence of their restoration.  
31:15 Ramah was about 8 kilometers north of Jerusalem in the territory of Benjamin. Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, the grandmother of Ephraim, Joseph’s son. Judging from the context and the verses which follow this verse refers primarily to the continuing sorrow concerning the captivity and destruction of Israel. In Matt 2:18 it is applied to the killing of infants in Bethlehem and vicinity after the birth of the Lord Jesus. Old Testament prophecies sometimes seem to have more than one fulfillment, more than one application.  
31:16,17 Weeping will continue only until

the final restoration of Israel.  
31:18 Israel will at last respond to God’s discipline and fully turn to Him. As with Israel so with every one of us – we will turn to God only when He turns us (John 6:44).  
31:19 A picture of full repentance.  
31:20 Ephraim means here the people of Israel. In other places Israel is compared to the bride and the wife of Jehovah (2:2; 4:14; etc.). Here the people are likened to a dearly loved son. No one human relationship can suggest all that God’s people mean to Him. When Jeremiah recorded these words Ephraim had been in captivity for about 130 years. Before the final fulfilment of the prophecies in this chapter many more centuries would elapse. But Israel was still in the heart of God, loved and longed for.  
31:21,22 Israel is not only like a rebellious son, but also like a daughter gone astray. But she will return to her land and God will use her in an altogether new way, which He

set your heart toward the highway,  
the way *which* you went.  
Turn back, O virgin of Israel,  
turn back to these cities of yours.  
22 How long will you gad about,  
O backsliding daughter?  
For the LORD has created a new thing  
in the earth:  
A woman surrounding a man."

23 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "They will once more use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring them back from captivity, 'The LORD bless you, O habitation of justice, *and* mountain of holiness.'  
24 And in Judah itself, and in all its cities, there will live farmers, and those *who* go out with flocks.  
25 For I will satisfy the weary soul, and refresh every sorrowful soul."

26 At this I awoke, and looked around. And my sleep had been sweet to me.

27 "See, the days are coming," says the LORD, "when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the offspring of man, and with the offspring of beast. 28 And it will come about, *that*

does not clearly describe.

"A woman surrounding" – or it could be translated "a woman protecting."

31:23,24 God will restore Judah too. All that is said of Israel in the above verses may fittingly be said of the people of the southern kingdom also.

"Bring them back from captivity" – or "restore their well-being."

"Justice", "holiness" – Ps 48:1,2; Isa 1:21,26.

31:25 Isa 40:29-31.

31:26 It appears from this that this revelation (from 30:1) was given to Jeremiah in a dream. See also Gen 15:12-21; Dan 10:9; Zech 4:1.

31:27 From here to the end of the chapter both Israel and Judah are in view. God uprooted both from the land and sent them into captivity. He will plant them again in the land and prosper them.

31:29 Ezek 18:2. This was a misunderstanding of God's word and God's ways.

31:30 Deut 24:16; Ezek 18:3,20; 33:7-18.

31:31-34 Here is the great prophecy of the new covenant which gives its name to the second part of the Bible. For other references see Isa 61:8; Jer 32:40; 50:5; Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20. It is called "new" in contrast to the covenant made with Israel through Moses at Mt Sinai (notes at Ex 19:5,6).

That old covenant commanded obedience to God's law. Since man is sinful and disobedient by nature, and since God's law cannot make him holy and obedient, the old covenant was certain to fail (see Rom 7:5-25; 8:3; Heb 10:1-4). That it did fail

just as I watched over them to uproot *them*, and to break and throw *them* down, and to ruin and afflict *them*, so I will watch over them, to build and plant *them*, says the LORD.

29 "In those days they will no longer say, 'The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth have been set on edge.' 30 But everyone will die for his own guilt; the teeth of each one who eats a sour grape will be set on edge.

31 "See, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah,

32 Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

This covenant of mine they broke, although I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

33 But this *will be* the covenant that I make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law in their inward parts,

is clear from the whole history of Israel (Jer 11:6-8; 7:25,26; 16:11; 22:9). No one could be saved by the laws or regulations of the old covenant. Indeed, the law brought a curse (Gal 3:10-12). So God promises a new covenant which is not based on man's obedience to law. It is based on what God does. Notice the words "I will" in verses 33,34 repeated five times. This is a covenant of grace which has its foundation, not in man's frail and fallen nature, but in God alone.

31:31 "With the house of Israel", "Judah" – it is not said anywhere in the Bible that this new covenant is made directly with Christ's New Testament Church or with Gentiles or Gentile Christians. These share in the new covenant because they are grafted into the "olive tree" whose root was Abraham and whose branches in the Old Testament were the tribes of Israel (see Rom 11:13-21). The apostles of Christ to whom He gave the new covenant were all Israelites, and for several years all members of the New Testament Church were either Jews or Jewish proselytes. Later more and more Gentiles came into the Church and before long became the vast majority of Christians and began to dominate the Church. However, this does not change the fact that the covenant was made with Israel or that in the future God will fulfil the covenant with that nation as a whole.

31:32 Ex 19:5; 24:8. "A husband" – 2:2; 3:14.

31:33 "Inward parts", "hearts" – under the old covenant God's laws were written on tablets of stone (Ex 31:8; 34:1; 2 Cor 3:7). Under the new covenant God's laws

and write it in their hearts;  
and I will be their God,  
and they will be my people.

34 And no longer will everyone teach his  
neighbour, and everyone his brother,  
saying, 'Know the LORD';  
for they will all know me, from the  
least of them to the greatest of them,  
says the LORD,

For I will forgive their wickedness,  
and I will remember their sin no more.

35 "Thus says the LORD, who gives the  
sun as a light by day,  
and the fixed order of the moon and  
of the stars as a light by night,  
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar,  
the LORD of hosts *is* his name:

36 If this fixed order departs from  
before me, says the LORD,  
then the offspring of Israel will also  
cease from being a nation before me  
forever.

37 Thus says the LORD:  
If the heavens above can be measured,  
and the foundations of the earth  
searched out below,  
I will also cast off all the offspring  
of Israel for all that they have done,  
says the LORD.

38 "See, the days are coming, says the LORD,

when the city will be built for the LORD from the  
Tower of Hananeel to the Corner Gate. 39 And  
the measuring line will yet go out opposite it on the  
hill Gareb, and will go around to Goath. 40 And the  
whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes,  
and all the fields to the Kidron valley, to the corner  
of Horse Gate on the east, *will be* holy to the  
LORD. It will not be uprooted or thrown down any  
more forever."

**32** *This is* the word that came to Jeremiah  
from the LORD in the tenth year of  
Zedekiah king of Judah, which *was* the eighteenth  
year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 For then the king of  
Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah  
the prophet was imprisoned in the courtyard of the  
prison, which *was* at the palace of the king of  
Judah.

3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned  
him, saying, "Why do you prophesy, and say, 'Thus  
says the LORD, See, I will give this city into the  
hands of the king of Babylon, and he will take it,  
4 and Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape out of  
the hands of the Chaldeans, but will certainly be  
delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon,  
and will speak with him mouth to mouth, and his  
eyes will see his eyes, 5 and he will lead Zedekiah  
to Babylon, and there he will be until I visit him,  
says the LORD. Though you fight with the  
Chaldeans, you will not prosper:'"

6 And Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD

are written in the mind and heart (2 Cor 3:3). This indicates a new nature which wants to obey God, a new birth, a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:4,5; etc). It means an inner disposition to have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in them. Without all this there is no evidence that an individual is a partaker of the new covenant. "I will be their God", etc – Lev 26:12; Ezek 37:27; 2 Cor 6:16; Rev 21:3.

**31:34** The eternal forgiveness of sins and the personal knowledge of God – these are two of the supreme blessings of the new covenant. Only God can give these and they are altogether a gift of His grace.

"Know" – 9:23,24; 1 Sam 3:7; Hos 2:20; John 17:3; Eph 4:13; Phil 1:3.

"Forgive" – Lev 4:20; Ps 32:1; 85:2; 86:5; 130:4; Luke 24:45-47; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9.

The word "all" in this verse speaks of a complete national salvation of Israel sometime in the future (compare Rom 11:26).

**31:35-37** God speaks of the absolute faithfulness of His promises to Israel. Israel's continuing existence as a nation is as certain as the laws of nature which God has established. It is as impossible for His purposes toward that people to fail as it is for someone to measure stellar space or penetrate to the core of the earth.

"LORD of hosts" (v 35) – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**31:38-40** To show that He means the literal nation of Israel God speaks of its city of Jerusalem. Certain specific areas in the city will be rebuilt. The most defiled area will become holy. Thereafter the city will remain permanently. Compare Zech 14:9-11,20,21. Because Jerusalem was completely destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD this prophecy looks to a time after that. And since Jerusalem is still in unbelief rejecting their Messiah, the Lord Jesus, the city is still not holy to the Lord as described in Jeremiah and Zechariah. Compare Matt 23:37-39. So we may judge that this prophecy will be fulfilled sometime in the future.

**32:1** This was the year before the Babylonians captured Jerusalem.

**32:2** King Zedekiah had arrested Jeremiah (37:21).

**32:3-5** The answer to Zedekiah's question "why" was obvious. Jeremiah spoke what God told him to say. But this weak and evil king was not interested in the truth. These words of Jeremiah were fulfilled to the letter (52:7-14).

"Chaldeans" – Babylonians.

**32:6-15** God had used object lessons with Jeremiah before (1:11-14; etc). Now He uses Jeremiah himself as an object lesson to the

came to me, saying, 7 See, Hanameel the son of your uncle Shallum will come to you, saying, 'Buy my field that *is* in Anathoth; for the right of redemption *is* yours to buy *it*.'

8 "So Hanameel, my uncle's son, came to me in the courtyard of the prison in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the region of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance *is* yours, and the redemption *is* yours. Buy *it* for yourself.' Then I knew that this *was* the word of the LORD. 9 And I bought the field of Hanameel, my uncle's son, that *was* in Anathoth, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. 10 And I signed and sealed the deed, took witnesses, and weighed out the money *to him* in the balances. 11 So I took the deed of purchase, *both* the one that was sealed *in accordance* with the law and custom, and the one which was open, 12 and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel, my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that signed the deed of purchase, before all the Jews who were sitting in the courtyard of the prison.

13 "And I charged Baruch before them, saying, 14 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, this deed of purchase, both the sealed one, and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, so that they may last a long time.' 15 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Houses and fields and vineyards will be possessed again in this land.'

16 "Now when I had delivered the deed of

purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying, 17 'Ah Lord God! See, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for you. 18 You show loving kindness to thousands, and repay the guilt of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them. The Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, *is* his name, 19 great in counsel, and mighty in work. For your eyes *are* open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the result of his deeds. 20 You set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt to this day, and in Israel, and among *other* men, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day. 21 And you brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror, 22 and gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. 23 And they came in and possessed it. But they did not obey your voice, or walk in your law. Of all that you commanded them to do they have done nothing. Therefore you have caused all this disaster to come on them.

24 "'See the siege mounds. They have come to the city to take it, and the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it, because of the sword and the famine and the plague. And what you have spoken has happened; and now you see *it*. 25 And you have said to me, O Lord God, Buy the field for money, and take

people. God had spoken of the return of Israel from exile (23:3,4; 29:14; 30:10). Now with the armies of Babylon at the gates He orders His prophet to buy a field in Israel. Jeremiah thus demonstrated that he himself believed and obeyed God. All of God's servants must show by their actions that they believe God. If they do not, how can they expect to convince others that they should believe God?

32:7 "Right of redemption" – see Lev 25:25; Ruth 2:20; 4:3.

32:9 "Seventeen shekels" – about 200 grams.

32:11 One reason God gave this record of a kinsman with the right to redeem (buy back) a field, and a sealed scroll containing the deed with its terms and conditions may be this: to help us understand the meaning of the sealed scroll in Rev 5:1-10. The Lord Jesus is man's kinsman-redeemer (see notes at Lev 25:24-31; Ruth 2:20). The title deed of the earth is His to open, the earth is His to claim – which He does in Revelation chapters 6-20.

32:12 Baruch was Jeremiah's closest friend. See 36:4-32.

32:15 Normal life would resume in Israel

after the Babylonian captivity.

32:16 Jeremiah was a man of prayer, an example to us all (8:18,19; 12:1-4; 14:7-9,19-22; 15:15-18; 16:19,20; 17:12-18; 18:19-23; 20:7-18).

32:17 "Arm" – 27:5; 2 Kings 19:15; Ps 102:25.

"Nothing too hard" – v 27; Gen 18:14.

32:18 Ex 20:5,6; 34:7.

32:19 "Great in counsel. . . in work" – Ps 66:5; Isa 28:29; Rom 11:33-36.

32:20 Ex 3:20; 7:3; Ps 78:4,12. God continued to do signs and wonders not simply among Israel but among all peoples.

32:21 Deut 4:34; 26:8.

32:22,23 "Possessed it" – Josh 11:23; Ps 44:2; 78:54,55.

"But they did not obey" – 11:8.

32:24 14:12.

32:25,26 Jeremiah wonders why God asked him to buy the field. He knew the captivity in Babylon would last for 70 years (25:11,12), and he was already an old man who would not live to see the return of Israel. What good, then, would the land be to him? Moreover, he had no children who could inherit it (16:1,2). Evidently he did not clearly understand that what he did was a

witnesses, though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.”

26 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 27 “See, I *am* the LORD, the God of all those living. Is there anything too hard for me? 28 Therefore thus says the LORD: See, I will give this city into the hands of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will take it. 29 And the Chaldeans who are fighting against this city, will come and set fire to this city, and burn it with the houses, on the roofs of which they have offered incense to Baal, and poured out drink offerings to other gods, provoking me to anger.

30 “For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil in my sight from their youth, for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, says the LORD. 31 For this city has been to me a *cause* for my anger and my fury from the day that they built it even to this day, so that I must remove it from in front of my face, 32 because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah which they have done, provoking me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 33 And they have turned *their* backs to me, and not *their* faces. Though I taught them, rising early and teaching *them*, yet they have not listened to receive instruction. 34 But they placed their abominations in the house which is called by my name, defiling it. 35 And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to make their sons and their daughters pass through *the fire* to Molech, though I did not

command them, and it did not come into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

36 “And now, therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, about which you say, ‘It will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon by the sword and by the famine and by the plague’: 37 See, I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in my anger, and in my fury and great wrath, and I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. 38 And they will be my people, and I will be their God. 39 And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their good, and *the good* of their children after them. 40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing good to them, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they will not depart from me. 41 Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

42 “For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great disaster on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. 43 And fields will be bought in this land, about which you say, ‘*It is* desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.’ 44 Men will buy fields for money, and sign deeds and seal *them*, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south. For I will cause them to return from captivity, says the LORD.”

symbolic action to teach a lesson to Israel (vs 42-44).

**32:27** “All” – Num 16:22; 27:16; Job 12:10; Ezek 18:14; Acts 17:28.

**32:29** “Baal” – note at Judges 2:11.

“Other gods” – 7:9,10.

**32:30** 22:21.

**32:31** Before David captured Jerusalem and made it his capital it was in the hands of the idolatrous Jebusites (2 Sam 5:6-9). David’s son Solomon polluted the city with idols (1 Kings 11:7,8), and many kings after him did likewise. God’s wrath against all that was continually increasing until He could justly restrain it no longer. Notes on God’s anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**32:32** 2:8,26-28.

**32:33** 2:27; 7:13; 18:17.

**32:34,35** 7:30,31; 2 Kings 21:4,5; Ezek 8:3-16.

“Pass through the fire” – note at 2 Kings 16:3.

**32:36-44** In the midst of His denunciation of Israel’s sin God again gives His gracious promise of restoration.

**32:39** “One heart” – Ps 86:11; Acts 4:32.

“Fear” – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; etc.

“Forever” – since this is not true of Israel today the complete fulfilment awaits the final turning of Israel to God at the end of this age.

**32:40** The new covenant of 31:31-34 will never be broken, will never fail in its purposes. It is eternal in contrast with the covenant made through Moses (Isa 55:3; Ezek 16:60; 37:26; Heb 8:7,8,13).

“Not depart from me” – another indication that this has not yet been fulfilled toward Israel as a nation. In vs 37 to 42 only one people is in view – the nation Israel, not the Church of the New Testament. **32:41** See how God loves to do good! It delights Him! He will always do all the good He justly can to everyone (note at Ps 78:41). He hates to do harm to anyone; it grieves him to punish and destroy anyone. When He does it, it is because He must do so according to the demands of justice.

**32:42-44** This is an expansion of v 15.

“Cause them to return from captivity” – or “will restore their well-being” (v 44).



**33** Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, when he was still shut up in the courtyard of the prison, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD the maker of *the earth*, the LORD who formed it to establish it; the LORD is his name: 3 Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know. 4 For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah which have been torn down *to use* against the siege mounds and the sword, 5 as they come to fight with the Chaldeans: *it is* only to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I will slay in my anger and in my fury, since I have hidden my face from this city because of all their wickedness.

6 "See, I will bring health and healing to it, and I will heal them, and will reveal to them an abundance of peace and truth. 7 And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will build them up, as at the first. 8 And I will cleanse them from all their wickedness, in which they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, in which they have sinned and in which they have transgressed against me. 9 And it will be for me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which will hear of all the good that I do for them; and they will fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I provide for it.

10 "Thus says the LORD: Again there will be heard in this place, which you say *will be* desolate without man and without beast, *even* in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, 11 the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice

of the bride, the voice of those who will say, 'Praise the LORD of hosts, for the LORD *is* good, for his mercy *continues on* forever,' and the voice of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will restore the captive land, as at the first, says the LORD.

12 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Again in this place, which is desolate without man and without beast, and in all its cities, there will be dwelling places of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down.

13 In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, once more the flocks will pass under the hands of the one counting *them*, says the LORD.

14 "See, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

15 "In those days, and at that time, I will cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up for David; and he will administer justice and righteousness in the land.

16 In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this *is the name* by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.

17 "For thus says the LORD: David will never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, 18 and the priests the Levites will not lack a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to burn grain offerings, and to offer continual sacrifices."

19 And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah,

**33:2** 10:12; 32:17; 51:15.

**33:3** When we pray to Jehovah the God of the Bible, we are praying to the mighty Creator of the universe. Prayer from a believing and upright heart (such as Jeremiah had) will reach His ears, will bring wonderful answers (Gen 18:32; Ps 3:4; 4:3; 18:6; 27:7; 28:1,2; 30:8; 55:17; Matt 7:7; Jam 5:16). Some of the great and unsearchable things God speaks of here are recorded in the rest of the chapter.

**33:5** 32:31.

**33:6** 30:17.

**33:7** 29:14; 30:3. "Will cause. . .to return" – or "will restore the well-being of."

**33:8** 31:34.

**33:9** 3:17.

**33:11** Ps 136:1. Notes on thanksgiving at Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; etc. **33:14** We may be sure that God always fulfils His promises (1 Kings 8:56; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18).

**33:15,16** These verses speak of the Lord

Jesus Christ. Notes at 23:5,6. God's promises to Israel and Judah were not completely fulfilled at the time of the return from Babylon.

"It" (v 16) – or "He."

**33:17** 2 Sam 7:13; 2 Chron 7:18; Ps 89:29-37; Luke 1:31-33.

**33:18** The Lord Jesus as a man was descended from David and so could inherit his throne. It is more difficult to see how Jesus can fulfil the word here, for He was not descended from Levi, and His priesthood is not a continuation of the priesthood of Aaron. Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchisedek (Heb 7:11-22). All believers in the New Testament are called priests (1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6), but they have no connection with Levi. The words of this verse may be fulfilled in ways at present unknown to us (compare Ezek 40:44-46).

"Offerings", "sacrifices" – see notes on Ezek 40:38-43.

**33:19-22** Compare 31:35-37.

saying, 20 "Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day, and my covenant with the night, so that day and night do not exist in their fixed times, 21 *then* my covenant with David my servant may also be broken, so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. 22 As the *starry* host of the heavens cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so I will increase the descendants of my servant David, and the Levites who minister to me."

23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 24 "Have you not considered what this people have spoken, saying, 'The LORD has rejected the two families which he chose?' So they have despised my people; they are no longer a nation, in their sight. 25 Thus says the LORD: If my covenant *is* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, 26 then I will reject the offspring of Jacob, and my servant David, so that I do not take *any* of his offspring as rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for I will cause them to return from captivity, and have mercy on them."

**34** The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth in his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all its cities, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel. Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him the LORD says this: See, I will give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire, 3 and you will not escape from his hands, but will certainly be captured and delivered into his hands. And your eyes will see the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he will speak with you mouth to mouth, and you will go to Babylon.

4 "Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah

king of Judah. The LORD says this about you: You will not die by the sword, 5 *but* you will die peacefully; and *as* in the burning *ceremonies* for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they will burn *spices* for you, and will lament for you, saying, 'Alas, master!' for I have proclaimed the word, says the LORD."

6 Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, 7 when the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah (for these fortified cities remained of the cities of Judah).

8 A word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who *were* at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty to them, 9 so that every man should let his male or female servant *who was* a Hebrew man or woman, go free, that no one should keep *any* of them, *that is*, his brother Jew, in bondage. 10 Now when all the princes and all the people who had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his male or female servant go free, that no one should keep them in bondage any longer, they obeyed and let *them* go. 11 But afterwards they turned *right around* and caused the servants and the maid servants, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into bondage as servants and as maidservants.

12 Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 13 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, 14 At the end of *each* seven years every one of you must release his Hebrew brother who has been sold to you; and when he has served you six years, you shall let him go free from you. But your fathers did not listen or turn their ear to me. 15 And recently you changed and

33:22 Gen 22:17; 26:4; 32:12.

33:23-26 31:35-37; 33:19-22.

33:24 "Two families" – if this looks back to v 22, it means Judah and Levi. Some commentators think it means the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

33:26 The words "offspring of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" suggest their physical descendants. So does the reference to "the two families" in v 24. In the New Testament Gentile believers are the spiritual children of Abraham (Rom 4:11,16,17; Gal 3:7,29), but they are not called the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And the vast majority of Christians now were never a part of either of the two families mentioned in v 24.

"Caused them to return from captivity" – or "restore their well-being."

34:1-5 This is similar to the warning in

21:3-10. Here Zedekiah is promised that he will not die in the capture of Jerusalem but will end his days quietly in Babylon and not without some honor from the people. So God shows mercy even to the wicked.

34:5 2 Chron 16:14.

34:8-10 This was based on instructions in the law (Ex 21:2; Lev 25:10,39-43; Deut 15:12-15).

34:11 Here is another indication of the sad and evil condition of the people in Jerusalem. They very quickly broke their solemn promise to the king, and disobeyed the commands of God's word. The Babylonians temporarily departed from the siege of Jerusalem, and the people thought they were safe again to do as they pleased (34:21).

34:12-16 Could the people imagine that God did not observe their behavior?

did right in my sight, each one proclaiming liberty to his neighbour; and you made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name. 16 But you turned right around and profaned my name, each one causing his servant or his maid servant, whom he had set at liberty at their wish, to return, and brought them into bondage, to be servants and maidservants for you.

17 "Therefore thus says the LORD: You have not listened to me. Each man *has not* proclaimed liberty to his brother and to his neighbour. See, I am proclaiming a 'liberty' for you, says the LORD, to the sword, to the plague, and to the famine, and I will cause you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. 18 And I will give the men who have broken my covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts, 19 the princes of Judah and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, who passed between the parts of the calf, 20 I will give them into the hands of their enemies and into the hands of those who seek their life; and their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky, and for the beasts of the earth.

21 "And I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes into the hands of their enemies and into the hands of those who seek their life and into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, which has gone away from you. 22 See, I will give a command, says the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they will fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire. And I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant."

**35** The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, 2 "Go to the house of the Rechabites, and speak to them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the rooms, and give them wine to drink."

3 Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniyah, and his brethren, and all his

sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites, 4 and I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the room of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdlah, a man of God, which *was* by the room of the princes, which *was* above the room of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the doorkeeper. 5 And I set jars full of wine and cups in front of the sons of the house of the Rechabites, and I said to them, "Drink wine."

6 But they said, "We will drink no wine; for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, 'You shall never drink wine, *neither* you nor your sons. 7 And you shall not build houses, or sow seed, or plant a vineyard, or have *any of these*; but all your days you shall live in tents, so that you may live a long time in the land where you *are* staying.' 8 So we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he commanded us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, and our daughters, 9 and to build no houses for us to live in; and we have no vineyard, or field, or seed. 10 But we have lived in tents and been obedient, acting in accordance with all that Jonadab our father commanded us. 11 But it so happened, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, 'Come and let us go to Jerusalem,' for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and for fear of the army of the Syrians. So we are living in Jerusalem."

12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 13 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, 'Will you not receive instruction to listen to my words?' says the LORD. 14 'The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, commanding his sons not to drink wine, are being performed. For to this day they drink none, but obey their father's command. However I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened to me. 15 I have also sent all my servants the prophets to you, rising up early and sending *them*, saying, Each of you turn now from his evil way, and amend your actions, not following other gods to serve them, and you will live in the

**34:17** God would show them what He thought of their broken promise and disobedience to His commands. He would proclaim a "liberty" for them – a release from life itself. This is in accordance with the principle laid down in various places in the Word of God – men shall reap what they sow (Deut 19:21; Ps 18:25,26; Prov 22:8; Gal 6:7).

**34:18-20** In ancient times when making a solemn covenant sometimes an animal was killed and divided into two parts, and those making the covenant walked between the parts. Compare Gen 15:9-19.

**34:22** The armies of Babylon were under the control of the LORD of hosts, the God of

Israel. Indeed, all armies, all human beings are under His control (Ps 135:6; Dan 4:34,35).

**35:2** The Recabites did not belong to any of the tribes of Israel. They were related to the Kenites (1 Chron 2:55). Moses' father-in-law was a Kenite (Jud 1:16). In this chapter God has Jeremiah test them to reveal their faithfulness to their forefather's instructions (vs 6-10). He then contrasts the Recabites with the unfaithful people of Israel. It is a sad thing that people are much more likely to obey the instructions of men, and to follow traditions, than to obey the commands of God Himself (v 14;

land which I have given to you and to your fathers. But you have not turned your ear to me or listened. 16 Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have done according to the command of their father, which he commanded them, but this people have not listened to me, 17 thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will bring on Judah and on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the disaster that I have proclaimed against them, because I have spoken to them, and they have not listened, and I have called to them, and they have not answered.”

18 And Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Because you have obeyed the command of your father Jonadab, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he has commanded you, 19 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab will not lack a man to stand before me forever.”

**36** And it came about in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 “Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I *first* spoke to you, from the days of Josiah, to this day. 3 It could be that the house of Judah, hearing of all the disaster which I intend to bring on them, will turn, each one *of them*, from his evil way, so that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”

4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and from the mouth of Jeremiah Baruch wrote down on a scroll all the words of the LORD which he had spoken to him. 5 And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, “I *am* locked up. I cannot go into the house of the LORD. 6 Therefore you go and read the words of the LORD from the scroll which you have written from my mouth, in the hearing of the people

in the LORD’s house on a day of fasting. And you shall also read them in the hearing of all Judah who come out of their cities. 7 It could be that they will present their supplication before the LORD, and that each one will turn from his evil way; for great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD has proclaimed against this people.”

8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did everything that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading the words of the LORD in the book, in the LORD’s house. 9 And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast in the presence of the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. 10 Then Baruch read the words of Jeremiah from the book, in the house of the LORD, in the room of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court, at the entrance of the new gate of the LORD’s house, in the hearing of all the people.

11 When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard from the book all the words of the LORD, 12 he went down to the king’s house, into the scribe’s chamber, and there sat all the leaders, Elishama the scribe and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah and Elnathan the son of Achbor and Gemariah the son of Shaphan and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the *other* leaders. 13 Then Michaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard as Baruch was reading the book in the hearing of the people. 14 Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to Baruch, saying, “Take in your hand the scroll from which you read in the hearing of the people, and come.” So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand, and came to them. 15 And they said to him, “Sit down now and read it in our hearing.” So Baruch read *it* in their hearing.

Matt 15:3-9). Shall we not learn the lesson God was teaching through this example (v 13)? If we do not, will not God mark it and take action against us (v 17)?

**35:18,19** Since that family knew what faithfulness was, God would chose some from among them to show that same faithfulness toward Himself. Because of the terrible unfaithfulness of Israel, God is emphasizing here how highly He regards faithfulness (on faithfulness see Matt 24:45; 25:21-23; Luke 16:10-12; 1 Cor 4:2; 1 Tim 1:12; 3:11; 2 Tim 2:2; Heb 3:2). **36:2** 1:1-3.

**36:3** 18:8; 26:3. God is swift to forgive when He can, slow to punish when He must.

**36:4** “Baruch” – 32:12; 43:3,6; 45:1.

**36:5** The ungodly will often try to restrict the activities of God’s spokesmen.

Jeremiah’s messages spoken in the temple were very unpopular with the priests and prophets there (20:1,2). They could not endure the truth so they tried to keep it away. Compare Acts 4:1-3,18; 5:17,18,27,28.

**36:6-8** The word of God which He sends cannot be stopped (1:12; Isa 55:11). If men try to shut it up one way it will come in another. If one spokesmen is silenced God will chose another. Wicked men would gladly keep the truth shut out of the world altogether, and they will try to bind God’s servants, but God’s word cannot be bound (2 Tim 2:9).

**36:9** Verse 6. This was many months after God’s command in v 1. It seems Baruch had to wait this long for a good opportunity. The fast was probably called because of the

16 Now it came about, when they heard all these words, they turned to one another in fear, and said to Baruch, "We will surely tell the king of all these words." 17 And they asked Baruch, saying, "Tell us now, how did you write down all these words from his mouth?"

18 Then Baruch answered them, "He dictated all these words to me with his mouth, and I wrote *them* with ink in the book."

19 Then the officials said to Baruch, "Go and hide, you and Jeremiah, and do not let anyone know where you are."

20 And they went in to the king in the courtyard; but they stored the scroll in the room of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the hearing of the king. 21 So the king sent Jehudi to bring the scroll, and he brought it from the room of Elishama the scribe. And Jehudi read it in the hearing of the king, and in the hearing of all the officials who stood beside the king. 22 Now the king was sitting in the winter house, *it being* the ninth month; and *there was a fire* burning on the hearth in front of him. 23 And it came about when Jehudi had read three or four columns, *that* he cut it off with a scribe's knife and threw *it* into the fire that was on the hearth, until the whole scroll was burned up in the fire on the hearth. 24 Yet they were not afraid, and they did not tear their garments, *neither* the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words. 25 Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had begged the king not to burn the scroll, but he would not listen to them. 26 And the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet; but the LORD hid them.

27 Then, after the king had burned the scroll and the words from the mouth of Jeremiah which

Baruch wrote down, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 28 "Take again another scroll, and write on it all the former words, that were in the first scroll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned up. 29 And you shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus says the LORD: You have burned that scroll, saying, 'Why have you written in it saying that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will bring to an end *both* man and beast here?' 30 Therefore thus says the LORD about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David. And his dead body will be thrown out to the heat of the day and to the frost of the night. 31 And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their wickedness, and I will bring on them, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah, all the disaster that I have proclaimed against them, for they did not listen."

32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah. He wrote on it, from the mouth of Jeremiah, all the words of the scroll which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and to them were added many similar words.

**37** And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned in the place of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. 2 But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, listened to the words of the LORD, which he spoke through the prophet Jeremiah.

3 And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "Now pray to the LORD our God for us."

4 Now Jeremiah came in and went out among

danger from the Babylonian armies.

**36:16** They were afraid that Jeremiah had spoken the truth of God. All his messages written down together made an impact on at least some of the authorities.

**36:18** Baruch was faithful to put down on paper exactly what Jeremiah dictated. All the writers of the Bible faithfully and carefully put down exactly what God revealed to them and inspired them to write (Jer 30:2; Ex 24:4; 34:47; 2 Sam 23:2; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).

**36:19** These authorities knew that in those days to speak the truth was to be in danger (compare 26:20-23).

**36:23-26** There are still those who try to destroy those parts of the Bible they don't like. Do they vainly imagine that by destroying or denying the words written on paper that they can destroy God's truth? Those who attack the truth of God's word will only harm themselves (v 30; 22:18,19).

**36:26** See v 19. God did a better job of hiding them than they could have done.

**36:27-31** Words of truth written on paper may be cut to pieces and burned in the fire, but the truth itself lives on and will prevail and be fulfilled to the letter (Ps 119:89; Matt 5:18; 24:35; 1 Pet 1:25).

**36:32** God has always looked after His Word. If some men try to destroy it, God will use other men to preserve it.

**37:1** "Coniah" – a variant of Jehoiachin.

**37:2** 2 Kings 24:18-20.

**37:3** If people refuse to hear and obey God's word what does their request for prayer amount to? or even answered prayer for them? – Ex 8:8,28; 9:28; 10:17; 21:7; 1 Sam 12:19; 1 Kings 13:6; Acts 8:24. Very often people ask for prayer without a desire for repentance or a new heart because they want God to rescue them from danger or trouble. This is trifling with God.

**37:4-11** No request for prayer by



the people, for they had not yet put him in prison. 5 Then Pharaoh's army came up out of Egypt, and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

6 Then the word of the LORD came to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 7 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: This is what you shall say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me: 'See, Pharaoh's army, which has come out to help you, will return to Egypt to their own land. 8 And the Chaldeans will come back and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire.

9 "Thus says the LORD: Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely depart from us," for they will not depart. 10 For even though you had struck down the whole army of the Chaldeans that fights against you, and there remained *only* wounded men among them, every man of them would *still* rise up in his tent, and burn this city with fire."

11 And it came about when the army of the Chaldeans had withdrawn from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, 12 that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin, to take possession of his *assigned* portion there among the people. 13 And when he was at the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard *was* there, whose name *was* Irijah. *He was* the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah. And he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans."

14 Then Jeremiah said, "*That is* false. I am not defecting to the Chaldeans." But he did not listen to him. So Irijah took Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. 15 Therefore the officials were angry with Jeremiah, and struck him, and imprisoned him in the house of Jonathan the scribe; for they had made that the prison.

16 So Jeremiah went into the dungeon and into a vaulted cell, and Jeremiah remained there many days. 17 Then Zedekiah the king sent and brought him out, and the king questioned him secretly in his house, and said, "Is there *any* word from the

unrepentant, disobedient people can cause God to change what He has purposed to do.

**37:12** Jeremiah's town, Anathoth, was located in the territory of Benjamin.

**37:15,16** Another example of the mistreatment God's servants often encounter in this world (Gen 39:20; Acts 4:4; 12:1-4; 16:22-24; Heb 11:36-38).

**37:17** Evidently King Zedekiah was a weak man, afraid of His own officials. Jeremiah, as usual, told him the plain truth (21:3-7). He would not soften God's message to escape from trouble or danger.

**37:18** 1 Sam 26:18. It is not wrong

LORD?"

And Jeremiah said, "There is. He said, 'For you will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon.'"

18 Moreover Jeremiah said to king Zedekiah, "How have I offended against you, or against your servants, or against this people, that you have put me in prison? 19 Where now *are* your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you, or against this land?' 20 Therefore please listen now, O my master the king. Please let my plea be acceptable to you, so that you do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there."

21 Then king Zedekiah gave a command that they should commit Jeremiah into the courtyard of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread from the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the prison.

**38** Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken to all the people, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD: 'He who remains in this city will die by the sword, by the famine, and by the plague; but he who goes out to the Chaldeans will live; for his life will be like plunder to him, and he will live.' 3 Thus says the LORD: 'This city will certainly be given into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, which will take it.'"

4 Therefore the officials said to the king, "We beg you, let this man be put to death, for in this way he is weakening the hands of warriors who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but *their* harm."

5 Then Zedekiah the king said, "See, he *is* in your hands; for the king cannot do anything against you."

6 Then they took Jeremiah and threw him into the pit of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that *was*

to appeal to rulers against unjust treatment.

**37:19** 14:13,14.

**37:21** A better place than the jail he had been in (v 16).

**38:4** Often in the eyes of ungodly men those who faithfully proclaim God's truth are worthy of death. They misunderstand the ministry and the motives of God's servants (Acts 22:22). Jeremiah's faithfulness to God's word made him seem like a traitor to his nation.

**38:5** Verses 24-26; 37:17.

**38:6** Jeremiah sought the good of the people with his whole heart (8:21 - 9:1; 13:17).



in the courtyard of the prison. And they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And *there was* no water in the pit, only mud. So Jeremiah sank down in the mud.

7 Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the pit. When the king was sitting in the Gate of Benjamin, 8 Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house, and spoke to the king, saying, 9 "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have thrown into the pit. And he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is, for *there is* no more bread in the city."

10 Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take with you thirty men from here, and take Jeremiah the prophet up out of the pit, before he dies."

11 So Ebed-Melech took the men with him, and went into the king's house under the treasury, and took from there old rags and old worn-out clothes, and let them down by ropes into the pit to Jeremiah. 12 And Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Now put *these* old rags and worn-out clothes under the ropes under your armpits." And Jeremiah did so. 13 So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes, and took him out of the pit. And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the prison.

14 Then Zedekiah the king sent *men* and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the LORD; and the king said to Jeremiah, "I am going to ask you something. Do not hide anything from me."

15 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I tell *it* to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you advice, you will not listen to me."

16 So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying, "As the LORD lives, who made these souls of ours, I will not put you to death, and I will not give you into the hands of these men who seek your life."

17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'If you will definitely go out to the officials of the king of Babylon, then your soul will live, and this city will

not be burned with fire; and you and your household will live. 18 But if you will not go out to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they will burn it with fire, and you will not escape from their hands."

19 And king Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have defected to the Chaldeans, that they may deliver me into their hands, and they will mock me."

20 But Jeremiah said, "They will not deliver *you* up. I beg you, obey the voice of the LORD which I speak to you. Then it will be well with you, and your soul will live. 21 But if you refuse to go out, this *is* the word that the LORD has revealed to me: 22 'Now, see, all the women who are left in the house of the king of Judah *will be* brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon, and those *women* will say, "Your friends have misled you, and have prevailed against you. Your feet have sunk in the mud, *and* they have turned away." 23 So they will bring out all your wives and your children to the Chaldeans; and you will not escape from their hands, but will be seized by the hands of the king of Babylon; *and* you will cause this city to be burned with fire."

24 Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Do not let anyone know of these words, and you will not die. 25 But if the officials hear that I have talked with you, and they come to you and say to you, 'Tell us now what you said to the king. Do not hide it from us, and we will not put you to death. *Tell us* also what the king said to you'; 26 then you shall say to them, 'I presented my plea before the king, that he would not make me return to Jonathan's house, to die there.'"

27 Then all the officials came to Jeremiah, and questioned him; and he spoke to them in accordance with all these words that the king had commanded. So they stopped speaking with him, since that conversation had not been overheard.

28 So Jeremiah stayed in the courtyard of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken, and he was *there* when Jerusalem was taken.

This was his reward in this world (compare John 15:18,19; Heb 11:35-38).

**38:7-13** When there was none among the people of Israel to help Jeremiah, God chose an outsider, an Ethiopian, and put compassion in his heart for the prophet. God can send help to His suffering people from the most unlikely sources. Ebed-melech acted as he did because he had faith in the true and living God (39:18).

**38:14-18** If Zedekiah was expecting Jeremiah to change God's message he was disappointed. God's prophets could not and did not pervert the truth to please the

rulers of this world.

**38:19** Verse 5; 37:17. If he had feared God as he ought he would not have feared men. If he had ruled justly and well he would not have feared the Jews who had defected to Babylon.

**38:24-26** Jeremiah's words did not remove Zedekiah's fear of men. Zedekiah's life is an example of the truth of Prov 29:25. We must never let the fear of others prevent us from doing what God tells us to do. What a contrast there is between the king on his throne and the imprisoned prophet! The king was bound by fear wherever he turned;

**39** In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken into. **3** And all the officials of the king of Babylon, Nergal-Sharezzer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabсарis, Nergal-Sharezzer, Rabmag, with all the rest of the officials of the king of Babylon, came in and sat at the Middle Gate. **4** And it came about when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the warriors saw them, *that* they fled and went out of the city at night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls; and he went out on the road to the *Jordan* valley.

**5** But the Chaldeans' army pursued them, and caught up to Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and when they seized him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment on him. **6** Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes. The king of Babylon also killed all the officials of Judah. **7** Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him off to Babylon.

**8** And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. **9** Then Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guard, carried away captive into Babylon the rest of the people who remained in the city, and those who had defected, who defected to him, with the rest of the people who remained. **10** But Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left some of the poor of the people, who had nothing, in the land of Judah, and at the same time gave them vineyards and fields.

**11** Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave a command concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard, saying, **12** "Take him and look after him well, and do him no harm, but do for him just as he tells you." **13** So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard, and Nebu-Shasban, Rabсарis, and Nergal-Sharezzer, Rabmag, and all

the officials of the king of Babylon, **14** sent and took Jeremiah out of the courtyard of the prison, and entrusted him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he lived among the people.

**15** Now the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah when he was shut up in the courtyard of the prison, saying, **16** "Go and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will bring to pass my words on this city for disaster, and not for good; and on that day they will be *fulfilled* in front of you. **17** But I will deliver you in that day, says the LORD, and you will not be given into the hands of the men whom you fear. **18** For I will certainly deliver you, and you will not fall by the sword, but your life will be like plunder for you, because you have put your trust in me, says the LORD.'"

**40** The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard let him go from Ramah, where he had taken him bound in chains among all those of Jerusalem and Judah being carried away captive, who were being exiled to Babylon. **2** And the commander of the guard took Jeremiah, and said to him, "The LORD your God proclaimed this disaster on this place. **3** Now the LORD has brought *it about*, and done just as he said. This thing has come on you because you sinned against the LORD, and did not obey his voice. **4** And now, see, I am loosing you today from the chains which *are* on your hands. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come; and I will look after you well. But if it does not seem good to you to come with me to Babylon, then don't come. See, the whole land *is* before you. Go wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go." **5** Then before he left, *he said*, "Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and live with him among the people; or go wherever it seems convenient to you to go." So the commander of the guard gave him provisions and a present, and let him go.

the prophet was free in spirit to serve God.

**39:1-10** 2 Kings 25:1-21; 2 Chron 36:15-20. This was the sad penalty for Jerusalem's disobedience to God's word. This was also a vindication of Jeremiah as a prophet of God.

**39:11-14** The cruel conquerors showed far more mercy to Jeremiah than his own people had. How far Israel had fallen from God's standards of justice, mercy, fair-dealing, compassion, ethics and morality! Their shame and disgrace at the hands of their enemies was all deserved.

**39:15-18** God was ruling in the affairs of

men, controlling the activities of Babylon's armies, bringing destruction on His own people and city. Yet He did not overlook a single individual who trusted Him, did not forget that one deed of kindness to His prophet. This is a part of the greatness and goodness of God (Heb 6:10; Matt 10:42).

**40:2-6** This officer from a far place and another religion had more understanding of what had been happening than the priests, prophets, and rulers of God's people in Jerusalem! And he treated God's true prophet with far greater kindness than they had (39:11-14).

6 Then Jeremiah went to Mizpah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, and lived with him among the people who were left in the land.

7 Now when all the officers of the army who were in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, and children, and some of the poor of the land, among those who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, 8 then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah. *They were* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite. They and their men *came*. 9 And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, swore to them and to their men, saying, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will be well with you. 10 As for me, look, I will live at Mizpah to serve the Chaldeans, who will come to us. But as for you, you gather wine and summer fruits and oil, and put *them* in your *storage* vessels, and live in your cities that you have taken over."

11 Likewise when all the Jews who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom, and who were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan over them, 12 all the Jews returned from all the places where they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered an abundance of wine and summer fruits.

13 Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army who were in the fields, came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, 14 and said to him, "Are you well aware that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to kill you?" But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them.

15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly, saying, "Please let me go, and I will kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no one will know *it*. Why should he kill you, causing all the Jews who are gathered around you to be scattered, and the remnant in Judah to perish?"

**40:7** Ahikam had served good king Josiah and had shown kindness to Jeremiah (26:24). Gedaliah followed in his father's footsteps.

**40:16** Gedaliah, as so many leaders in every generation, lacked discernment. He rudely rejected the word of the man who was telling the truth and trusted the man who was plotting to kill him. This cost him his life (41:2). The ability to discern the

16 But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said to Johanan the son of Kareah, "You shall not do this thing, for you are speaking falsely about Ishmael."

**41** Now it came about in the seventh month *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family and of the officials of the king, came with ten men to Mizpah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, and there in Mizpah they ate bread together. 2 Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and with the sword struck and killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. 3 Ishmael also killed all the Jews who were with him at Mizpah, *that is*, with Gedaliah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the soldiers.

4 And it so happened on the second day after he had killed Gedaliah, without anyone knowing *it*, 5 that some eighty men from Shechem, from Shiloh and from Samaria, with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, having made cuts on themselves, came with offerings and incense in their hands, to bring *them* to the house of the LORD. 6 And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went along; and it came about when he met them that he said to them, "Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam." 7 And it happened when they came into the middle of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the men who were with him, killed them *and threw them* down into the pit. 8 But ten men were found among them who said to Ishmael, "Do not kill us, for we have hidden stores of wheat and barley and oil and honey in a field." So he refrained and did not kill them with their brethren. 9 Now the cistern where Ishmael had thrown all the dead bodies of the men he had killed because of Gedaliah, *was* the one which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel; and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *those who had been* killed.

10 Then Ishmael took away captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah, the king's daughters and all the people who remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam; and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah took them captive and left to go over to the Ammonites.

character and truthfulness of those we deal with is a gift of God – one we all need to seek. See 1 Kings 3:9-12. Without it we may ignorantly bring much harm to ourselves and to God's work.

**41:1-15** In chapter 24 God revealed to Jeremiah that those left behind by the Babylonians would be like bad figs (24:8). For the most part they were without spiritual life or the fear of God. These verses record

11 But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army who *were* with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, 12 they took all the men and went out to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great pool in Gibeon. 13 Now it happened when all the people who were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah and all the officers of the army who *were* with him, *that* they were glad. 14 So all the people whom Ishmael had taken away captive from Mizpah turned around, came back and went to Johanan the son of Kareah. 15 But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.

16 Then Johanan the son of Kareah and all the officers of the army who *were* with him took all the rest of the people from Mizpah whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, after he had killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the mighty warriors and the women and the children and the eunuchs whom he had brought back from Gibeon, 17 and they departed and stayed at the dwelling place of Kimham, which is near Bethlehem, going on the way to Egypt, 18 because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

**42** Then all the officers of the army, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezeaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest, came near 2 and said to Jeremiah the prophet, "Please let our plea be acceptable to you, and pray for us to the LORD your God, and for this whole remnant (for we remain *only* a few out of many, as you can see), 3 that the LORD your God will show us the way in which we should walk, and the thing that we should do."

what we might expect from such people.

**41:16-18** Running away from trouble is all some people can think of. God did not tell them to go to Egypt. But in any case, as the next chapter reveals, they did not have a mind to do what God said.

**42:1** This whole chapter and the first three verses of the next chapter give an illustration of self-deception in praying for God's will. All the people together with their leaders were involved in this sad affair. They thought they wanted God's will (v 2), they asked for prayer that they might know it (v 3), and evidently they were convinced of their willingness to obey it (v 6). But when God revealed His will they refused to do a single thing He told them. Obviously they hoped that God would tell them to do only what they wanted to do anyway.

**42:4** "I will declare. . . I will keep nothing

4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, "I have heard *you*. See, I will pray to the LORD your God in accordance with your words; and it will be *that* whatever answer the LORD gives you, I will declare *it* to you. I will keep nothing back from you."

5 Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not act in accordance with everything which the LORD your God sends us by you, 6 whether *it* is good or bad, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send you, so that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God."

7 And ten days later it came about that the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. 8 Then he called Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army who *were* with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest, 9 and said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your request before him: 10 If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you up, and not tear *you* down, and I will plant you, and not uproot *you*, for I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought on you. 11 Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid. Do not be afraid of him, says the LORD, for I *am* with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. 12 And I will show mercy on you, so that he may have mercy on you, and cause you to return to your own land.

13 "But if you say, 'We will not live in this land,' disobeying the voice of the LORD your God, 14 saying, 'No! But we will go to the land of Egypt, where we will not see any war or hear the sound of the trumpet, or be hungry for bread; and we will live there,' 15 Then in that case hear the word of the LORD, your remnant of Judah. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: If you definitely set your faces to go into Egypt, and do go to settle

back" – 1:17; Ps 40:10; Acts 20:20,27. This is what the true servant of God must do. If he hides the truth from others because of fear, or the desire for popularity, he will be harming both them and himself. **42:5,6** These words sound very humble, very submissive. But let us compare them with Ex 19:8; 24:3,7, and let us remember Jer 17:9 and apply the lesson of this chapter to ourselves.

**42:7** Jeremiah would not speak until He got God's message, and it took ten days to receive an answer from God. Years may pass before God answers some prayers.

**42:8-18** Nothing could be more plain, more solemn than this message.

**42:12** 1 Kings 8:50. When God has compassion on us He can and will cause men to show compassion toward us, and the compassion they show should cause us to

there, 16 then it will happen *that* the sword, which you fear, will overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, which you fear, will follow you closely there in Egypt; and there you will die. 17 So it will be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to settle there. They will die by the sword, by famine, and by the plague, and none of them will remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring on them. 18 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Just as my anger and my fury were poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will my fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt; and you will become an oath, and an *object of* astonishment and cursing and scorn; and you will see this place no more.

19 "The LORD has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, Do not go to Egypt. Know for a certainty that I have warned you this day. 20 For you dissembled in your hearts when you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, 'Pray for us to the LORD our God. Declare to us all that the LORD our God says and we will act accordingly.' 21 And *now* today I have declared *it* to you, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, or anything which he has sent to you by me. 22 Now therefore know for a certainty that you will die by the sword, by famine, and by the plague, in the place where you desire to go *and* settle."

**43** And it so happened when Jeremiah finished speaking to all the people all the words of the LORD their God, which the LORD their God had sent to them by him, all these words, 2 that Azariah the son of Hoshaiiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, spoke up, saying to Jeremiah, "You are telling a lie. The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to

settle there,' 3 but Baruch the son of Neriah is setting you against us, to deliver us into the hands of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, or carry us away as captives to Babylon."

4 So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army, and all the people, disobeyed the voice of the LORD *telling them* to live in the land of Judah. 5 But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the officers of the army, took the whole remnant of Judah that had returned from all the nations where they had been driven to live in the land of Judah, 6 men, women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah, 7 and they went to the land of Egypt; for they did not obey the voice of the LORD. So they came to Tahpanhes.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, 9 "Take large stones in your hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick kiln which *is* at the entrance of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah, 10 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will send and get Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne on these stones that I have hidden; and he will spread his royal canopy above them. 11 And when he comes, he will defeat the land of Egypt *and deliver* those *who are* for death to death, and those *who are* for captivity to captivity, and those *who are* for the sword to the sword. 12 And I will kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt; and he will burn them, and carry them away as captives. And he will wrap Egypt around himself as a shepherd wraps his garment

recognize God's compassion to us.

**42:19-22** Jeremiah adds his personal loving exhortation to the people. But God has enabled him to discern the true state of their hearts (v 20). All the time they were waiting for God's will to be revealed to Jeremiah they were (possibly unconsciously) determined to have their own way. This is just one more example among a great many in the Bible of what fallen human beings are like. We may think we want to know and do God's will when actually we only want God to tell us to do what we want to do.

**43:1,2** What is in the heart will eventually come out. Men under the control of their sinful nature will usually do what they please regardless of God's promises or warnings, or the pleadings of God's servants.

**43:2** "Proud" – how hard it is for proud people to submit in simple faith to God's word! Pride and a sinful heart are the real reasons for the attacks of critics on the Bible. It is the cause of much unbelief among men with its

resulting disobedience. This is why the Lord Jesus spoke as He did in Mark 10:15.

"You are telling a lie" – they had no evidence for this. The simple fact of the matter is God's word to them was against what they wanted to do, and so they denied that God had spoken. The sinful heart will always try to find a way to deny that God has forbidden what it craves.

**43:3** Perhaps they thought it safer to blame Baruch than Jeremiah.

**43:4-7** They acted on their own just as if God had never spoken.

**43:7** Tahpanhes was probably in the north-east region of Egypt.

**43:8-13** God was revealing to the people that there would be no safety for them in Egypt. In their unbelief and disobedience they were fleeing from one disaster into another. There was no nation on earth at that time able to successfully resist the Babylonian armies.

**43:12** "Wrap Egypt around himself" – this



around himself; and he will depart from there in peace. 13 He will also break the idols of Beth-Shemesh that *are* in the land of Egypt, and burn the temples of the gods of the Egyptians with fire.”

**44** The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews living in the land of Egypt, living at Migdol and at Tahpanhes and at Noph and in the country of Pathros, saying, 2 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You have seen the whole disaster that I have brought on Jerusalem, and on all the cities of Judah; and, see, today they *are* a desolation, and no one lives in them, 3 because of their evil which they did, provoking me to anger by going to burn incense, *and* to serve other gods, which they did not know, *neither* they, *nor* you, nor your fathers. 4 However I sent to you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*, saying, ‘Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!’ 5 But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness, and to burn no incense to other gods. 6 Therefore my fury and my anger were poured out, and burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they became ruined *and* desolate, as at this day.

7 “Therefore now thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Why do you do *this* great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant from Judah, to leave you no one remaining? 8 You are provoking me to wrath by the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to live, causing you to be cut off and to become an *object of* cursing and scorn

probably means that Egypt will be completely in his control to do with as he pleases.

**44:1** “Noph” – another name for Memphis.

“Pathros” – a name for what is called “Upper Egypt”, the southern part of the country.

**44:2** “You have seen” – God wants people to learn lessons from what they see taking place in the world (3:7,10; Deut 3:21,22; Josh 23:3; Luke 21:28).

**44:3** 1:16; 11:17; 19:4; 32:32. Idolatry was the chief cause of God’s anger against them.

**44:4** “Abominable thing” – idolatry (see Deut 7:25,26; 27:15; Isa 44:19). The true and holy God of the Bible hates it utterly, fiercely, eternally. Again and again He pleaded with His people not to engage in it. **44:5** 7:26; 25:4; 35:15.

**44:6** 7:20. Notes on God’s anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:11-14.

**44:7-10** They saw with their own eyes what had happened. Would they not learn their lesson, repent, and turn to God? The evil in human nature is not so easily overcome. See Rom 1:32.

**44:8** “Egypt” – this suggests either that they

among all the nations of the earth. 9 Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 They are not humbled *even* to this day, and they have not been afraid, nor walked in my law or in my statutes that I set before you and before your fathers.

11 “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: See, I will set my face against you for disaster, and to cut off all Judah. 12 And I will take the remnant of Judah that set their faces to go to the land of Egypt to settle there, and they will all be consumed, *and* fall in the land of Egypt; they will be consumed by the sword *and* by famine. They will die, from the least to the greatest, by the sword and by famine, and they will become an oath, and an *object of* astonishment *and* cursing and scorn. 13 For I will punish those who live in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by the plague, 14 so that none of the remnant of Judah, who has gone into the land of Egypt to settle there, will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah, where they desire to return to live; for no one will return except a few refugees.”

15 Then all the men who knew that their wives burned incense to other gods, and all the women who stood by, a great crowd, all the people who were living in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, 16 “*As for* the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you. 17 But we will certainly do whatever comes out of our own mouth,

had been in Egypt for some time before this message came to Jeremiah, or that there were already some Jews living in Egypt who had been engaging in the worship of the gods there.

“Causing you to be cut off” – according to the Bible the worship of idols brings destruction on those who practice it (Ex 22:20; Deut 17:2-5; Hos 13:2,9; Rev 21:8). In the case of the Jews living in Egypt God reveals to them in vs 11-14 just how He will cause this to happen. He had given the same warning in the land of Judah (42:17,18).

**44:15-18** The people leave no doubt that they intend to do just what they please. They loved their idols and after them they would go, regardless of what anyone, including God, said. This reveals again the desperate wickedness of the human heart. Compare Rev 9:20,21 – when the whole world is being punished and is heading for disaster at the end of this age mankind will still not give up its beloved idols.

“Pathros” – v 1.

**44:17,18** They give their reasons for



burning incense to the queen of heaven, and pouring out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our officials, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for *then* had we plenty of provisions, and were well off, and did not see any disaster. 18 But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven, and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything, and have been consumed by the sword and by famine."

19 And *the women added*, "When we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her, without our men?"

20 Then Jeremiah said to all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people who had given him *that* answer, saying, 21 "The incense that you burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, you, and your fathers, your kings, and your officials, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and did it *not* come into his mind? 22 So the LORD could no longer bear it, because of your evil deeds *and* because of the abominations which you committed. Therefore your land is a desolation, and an *object of* astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant; as *it is* to this day. 23 Because you have burned incense, and because you have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD or walked in his law, in his statutes, or in his testimonies, this disaster has happened to you; as *it is* to this day."

24 Moreover Jeremiah said to all the people, and to all the women, "Hear the word of the LORD,

all you of Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt. 25 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You and your wives have spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, 'We will surely perform the vows that we have vowed to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to her.' You will surely fulfil your vows, and surely perform your vows. 26 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who live in the land of Egypt. See, I have sworn by my great name, says the LORD, that my name shall no more be invoked in the mouth of anyone of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, 'The Lord God lives.' 27 See, I will watch over them for disaster, and not for good; and all the men of Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt will be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end of them. 28 Yet a small number who escape the sword will return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, and the whole remnant of Judah, that has gone into the land of Egypt to settle there, will know whose words will stand, mine, or theirs.

29 "And this *will be* a sign to you, says the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that you may know that my words will surely stand against you for disaster: 30 Thus says the LORD, See, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies, and into the hands of those who seek his life, just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life."

**45** The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words from the mouth of Jeremiah in

clinging to idol-worship. It is a reason men everywhere will give. They thought their goddess was giving them prosperity and guarding them from harm. Their worship was rooted in selfishness. They cared nothing for God or for what God said in His word; they were not concerned with truth or the ethics of the matter. And they praised the goddess for what the true and living God Jehovah had done. Little did they realize that it was their worship of her, and not the renouncing of her worship, that would bring death and destruction to them. This story has been repeated again and again even in our days.

**44:19** According to the Bible the husband was to be the head of the house and to be responsible for what took place there. These men knew of the false worship of their wives and did nothing. So they shared their guilt.

**44:20-23** Jeremiah tries to use the facts of their recent history to appeal to their reason. But when people are determined to do as they please facts and reason are as nothing to them.

**44:24,25** Their abominable idolatry was not enough for them. They actually made solemn vows to continue it.

**44:26** Those who reject the truth of God and run after idols have no business swearing by His name.

**44:27** Let us learn from this that God, seeing the behavior of individuals or groups or peoples or even nations, will sometimes determine to do them harm rather than good. This fact alone should bring men to their knees seeking God's mercy.

**44:28,29** "Whose words will stand" – in the world today there is the Bible, the Word of God, and there are innumerable books of men which contain their thoughts, hopes and predictions in opposition to God's word. By fulfilling His word to the letter (Matt 5:18) God will show which will stand – His word or theirs.

**44:30** This was fulfilled in 570 BC. Hophra was killed by rivals for the throne.

**45:1** The smallest chapter in Jeremiah but containing a great lesson for all of us.

"When he had written" – 36:1-4.

a book, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: 3 You said, 'Woe to me now! For the LORD has added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.'

4 "You shall say this to him: 'Thus says the LORD: See, I will break down what I have built, and I will uproot what I have planted, this whole land. 5 And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek *them*. For, see, I will bring disaster on all flesh, says the LORD. But I will give your life to you like plunder every place you go.'

**46** The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles, 2 against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah:

- 3 "Set in array the large shield and the small shield, and draw near to battle.
- 4 Harness the horses; and get up, you horsemen,

and stand forth with *your* helmets.  
Polish the spears, and put on the armour.

- 5 Why have I seen them dismayed *and* turning back?  
And their mighty ones are beaten down,  
and are rapidly fleeing,  
and not looking back,  
*because* fear was all around,  
says the LORD.
- 6 Do not let the swift run away,  
or the mighty man escape;  
they will stumble and fall toward the north at the River Euphrates.
- 7 "Who *is* this coming up like a flood,  
like rivers of surging water?
- 8 Egypt rises up like a flood,  
and like rivers of surging water.  
And he says, 'I will go up *and* cover the earth.  
I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.'
- 9 Come up, you horses, and drive madly,  
you chariots,  
and let the mighty men come out,  
the Ethiopians and the Libyans who  
handle the shield,  
and the Lydians who handle *and* bend the bow.

**45:2,3** Baruch's association with Jeremiah in the ministry brought him much trouble and sorrow. God has never promised an easy, trouble-free life to His prophets and servants – in fact, quite the contrary (Jer 1:19; Matt 10:17; John 15:18-21; 16:33; Acts 9:15,16; 14:22). In this service for God they all learn sooner or later what sorrow, groaning and difficulties are. Judging from v 5 Baruch was tempted to escape from his trouble by seeking a position that would bring him some personal honor and peace. Baruch's brother Seraiah was later an officer in the time of king Zedekiah (51:59), and for all we know, occupied some important position before that. So perhaps Baruch was tempted to quit God's service with Jeremiah and seek some high place through his brother's influence.

**45:4,5** God's just judgments were about to be fulfilled, disaster was coming on the people. It was no time for any of God's servants to be seeking great things for themselves. Actually God's servants should never seek great things for themselves – especially perhaps in our day when there is reason to believe that the end of this age is near, and that God's wrath is soon to bring disaster on the world. God's people selfishly seeking position, money, power, and man's honors is madness. Would it not be madness to be hanging a record of one's honors and greatness on the walls of a house when the house is on fire and the roof is about to collapse? But, alas, it is a madness one sees everywhere. Compare Phil 2:21.

Let us see that God's command to Baruch is for us too, and learn always to be God-seekers, not self-seekers. Let us seek great things for Christ and not for ourselves. And let us learn and apply the truth of Matt 10:38,39. We have reason to think Baruch listened to God's word. He remained Jeremiah's faithful assistant (32:1,12,13; 43:3,6 – both of these events took place many years after the event in chapter 45). **46:1** See 1:10; 25:17; 27:3. In chapters 46-51 Jeremiah is engaged in his ministry as prophet to the nations. He records God's revelation concerning ten places and nations. They were all in a large area from Egypt, southwest of Israel, to Elam east of Israel beyond the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. In these chapters God shows again that He is sovereign over all nations, the great king of the universe (note at Ps 47:2). Throughout history He has been actively working to put down or raise up nation after nation. He still does so.

**46:2** "Egypt" – except for the closing two verses the rest of this chapter is concerning Egypt.

"Carchemish" – in 605 BC at this place the armies of Babylon defeated Egypt's armies. It was one of the most important battles of the ancient world. It broke the power of Egypt in western Asia and made possible the full rise of the Babylonian empire.

**46:3-12** This poetical section in vivid symbolic language sets forth Egypt's crushing defeat.

**46:9** Soldiers from these regions were in

10 For this day *belongs* to the Lord God of hosts;  
*it is* a day of vengeance,  
 that he may avenge himself on his  
 adversaries.  
 And the sword will devour, and it will  
 be sated and made drunk with their blood.  
 For the Lord God of hosts has a  
 sacrifice in the north country by  
 the River Euphrates.

11 "Go up into Gilead and get balm,  
 O virgin, the daughter of Egypt.  
 In vain you will use many medicines,  
 for you will not be cured.

12 The nations have heard of your shame,  
 and your cry has filled the land,  
 for the mighty man has stumbled  
 against the mighty,  
 and both of them have fallen together."

13 The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah  
 the prophet *about* how Nebuchadrezzar king of  
 Babylon would come *and* attack the land of Egypt:

14 "Declare *it* in Egypt, and proclaim *it* in Migdol,  
 and proclaim *it* in Noph  
 and in Tahpanhes; say,  
 'Stand fast, and prepare yourselves,'  
 for the sword will devour all around you.

15 Why are your brave *men* swept away?  
 They did not stand, because the LORD  
 drove them away.

16 He made many fall;  
 yes, one fell on another.  
 And they said, 'Arise, and let us go  
 back to our own people,  
 and to the land of our birth,  
 from the oppressing sword.'

17 They cried out there.  
 Pharaoh king of Egypt *is only* a noise.  
 He has passed by the appointed time.

18 As I live, says the King,  
 whose name *is* the LORD of hosts,  
 as surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains,  
 and as Carmel is by the sea,  
 so he will come.

19 O daughter living in Egypt,  
 prepare yourself to go into captivity,  
 for Noph will become a waste and  
 desolate without an inhabitant.

20 "Egypt *is like* a beautiful heifer,  
*but* destruction is coming.  
 It is coming out of the north.

21 And her mercenaries in her midst *are*  
 like fattened bulls,  
 but they also have turned back *and*  
 fled away together.  
 They did not stand, because the day of  
 their calamity had come on them,  
*and* the time of their punishment.

22 Its sound will move along like a serpent;  
 for they will march with an army,  
 and come against her with axes,  
 like woodcutters.

23 They will cut down her forest, says the LORD,  
 unsearchable though it may be,  
 for they are more than  
 grasshoppers;  
 they *are* innumerable.

24 The daughter of Egypt will be put to shame.  
 She will be delivered into the hands  
 of the northern people."

25 The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, says:  
 "See, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh,  
 and Egypt, with their gods and their kings, Pharaoh,  
 and *all* those who trust in him. 26 And I will deliver  
 them into the hands of those who seek their lives,  
 and into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of  
 Babylon, and into the hands of his servants. And  
 afterwards it will be inhabited, as in the days of  
 old, says the LORD.

27 "But do not be afraid, O Jacob,  
 my servant,  
 and do not be dismayed, O Israel;  
 for, see, I will save you from a distant *place*,  
 and your offspring from the land of  
 their captivity;  
 and Jacob will return, and be at rest  
 and at ease,

Egypt's armies.  
**46:10** Was the battle at Carchemish merely  
 a matter between Egypt and Babylon? Not  
 at all. Jehovah God, the Lord of hosts, was  
 there working out His purposes. He was  
 punishing Egypt for its sins. See also note  
 on 25:30-38.  
**46:13-26** This took place in 568-567 BC,  
 many years after the battle of Carchemish.  
**46:14** "Noph" – another name for Memphis.  
**46:16** "Own people" – the speakers are hired  
 soldiers from other regions (vs 9, 21).  
**46:18** See what God calls Himself here – He is  
 the King. He is the King of the universe, the

real King over all nations. See Ps 47:2. Tabor  
 and Carmel are two mountains in Israel.  
**46:22** "Serpent" – see Ex 4:3.  
**46:25** "Multitude" – or "Amon." Amon was  
 the chief god not only of the city of Thebes  
 (No), but of the whole of Egypt during some  
 of its history. God was about to "punish"  
 Amon and all the other gods of Egypt, that  
 is, put them to shame, reveal their power-  
 lessness and nothingness. Compare Ex  
 12:12.  
**46:26** God did not plan the complete  
 destruction of Egypt.  
**46:27,28** 30:10,11.

and no one will make *him* afraid.  
28 Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant,  
says the LORD, for I *am* with you.  
For I will make a full end of all  
the nations where I have driven you,  
but I will not make a full end of you,  
but will correct you in measure;  
for I will not leave you wholly unpunished."

**47** The word of the LORD that came to  
Jeremiah the prophet against the Philis-  
tines, before Pharaoh struck Gaza.  
2 "Thus says the LORD:  
See, waters are rising up out of the north,  
and will become an overflowing flood,  
and they will overflow the land and  
all that is in it,  
the city and those who live in it.  
Then the men will cry out,  
and all the inhabitants of the land will wail.  
3 At the noise of the stamping hooves of  
his strong *horses*,  
at the rushing of his chariots,  
and at the rumbling of his wheels,  
the fathers will not look back for *their*  
children because their hands will be feeble,  
4 because of the day that is coming to  
destroy all the Philistines,  
and to cut off from Tyre and Sidon  
every helper who remains.  
For the LORD will destroy the Philistines,  
the remainder of the country of Caphtor.  
5 A shaven head has come on Gaza;  
Ashkelon is cut off *with* the rest of their valley.  
How long will you cut yourself?  
6 O sword of the LORD,  
how long *will it be* before you are quiet?  
Put yourself away in your scabbard;

rest, and be still.  
7 How can it be quiet, since the LORD has  
given it a command against Ashkelon,  
and against the seashore?  
There he has appointed it *to work*."

**48** The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, says  
this against Moab:  
"Woe to Nebo! For it is destroyed.  
Kiriathaim has been disgraced and captured.  
Misgab has been disgraced and shattered.  
2 *There will be* no more praise for Moab.  
In Heshbon they have plotted disaster for it:  
'Come, and let us cut it off from *being* a nation.'  
You also will be cut down, O Madmen;  
the sword will pursue you.  
3 A sound of crying *will be heard* from  
Horonaim,  
plundering and great destruction.  
4 Moab is destroyed.  
Her little ones have caused *their* cry to  
be heard.  
5 For in the ascent to Luhith continual  
weeping will rise up,  
for in the descent to Horonaim the  
enemies have heard a cry of destruction.  
6 Flee! Save your lives,  
and be like a bush in the desert.  
7 For because you have trusted in your  
works and in your treasures,  
you will also be captured,  
and Chemosh will go into captivity  
together *with* his priests and his  
officials.  
8 And the destroyer will come on every  
city, and no city will escape.  
The valley too will perish,  
and the plain will be destroyed,  
as the LORD has spoken.

**47:1-7** The Philistines lived along the coast  
of the land of Canaan and were enemies of  
Israel throughout much of their history up  
to the time of the Babylonian invasion. For  
other messages concerning them see Isa 14:  
28-32; Ezek 25:15-17; Amos 1:6-8; Zeph  
2:4-7; Zech 9:5-7. God decided to  
completely obliterate these people from the  
land of Canaan. They have passed out of  
existence. There is no mention of them in  
the New Testament.  
**47:4** Caphtor is probably the island in the  
Mediterranean Sea called Crete today. Tyre  
and Sidon were important cities on the coast  
north of the Philistines.  
**47:5** Gaza and Ashkelon were two of the  
most important Philistine cities.  
**48:1** This whole chapter predicts in poetic  
language the destruction of the land of  
Moab. In it we can learn much about God's  
reign over the earth. Moab was located due

east of Judah and the Dead Sea. Its people  
were descended from Abraham's nephew Lot  
(Gen 19:36,37). The destruction predicted  
here occurred probably during the reign of  
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.  
"Nebo", "Kiriathaim" – both these towns  
at one time belonged to Israel (Num  
32:3,37,38; Josh 13:19). Moab had claimed  
them for itself.  
"Misgab" – the word means "stronghold."  
**48:2** "Madmen" – the name of a town in  
Moab. It sounds like the Hebrew word that  
means "be silenced."  
**48:2-6** Heshbon also had once belonged to  
Israel (Num 32:37; Josh 13:17). The  
locations of these other towns are not known.  
**48:7** Any individual, any people, anywhere,  
anytime, who trust in their own works and  
wealth will come to a sad, hopeless end  
(Ps 52:5-7; Luke 12:15-21).  
"Chemosh" – the national god of Moab,

- 9 Give wings to Moab, that it may flee  
and get away;  
for its cities will be desolate,  
without anyone to live in them.
- 10 "Cursed *be* he who does the work of  
the LORD deceitfully,  
and cursed *be* he who keeps his sword  
back from blood.
- 11 "Moab has been at ease from his youth,  
and he has settled *like wine* on his dregs,  
and not been emptied from vessel to vessel;  
nor has he gone into captivity.  
Therefore his flavour remains in him,  
and his aroma has not changed.
- 12 Therefore, see, the days are coming,  
says the LORD,  
when I will send to him those who tilt *bottles*,  
*and* they will tilt him over and empty  
his jars and break his bottles.
- 13 And Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh,  
as the house of Israel was ashamed  
of Bethel their confidence.
- 14 "How *can* you say,  
'We *are* mighty and strong men for the war?'
- 15 Moab is destroyed, and has gone up  
*out of* her cities,  
and his chosen young men have gone  
down to the slaughter, says the King,  
whose name is the LORD of hosts.
- 16 The calamity of Moab *is* coming soon,  
and his affliction comes quickly.
- 17 All of you around him, mourn for him,  
and all of you who know his name say,  
'How the strong staff is broken,  
the beautiful rod!'
- 18 "You, daughter, who live in Dibon,

pronounced Key-mosh. In 1 Kings 11:7,33 and 2 Kings 23:13 he is called a detestable, vile god. He was very like Molech, the god of the Ammonites (note at Jer 7:31). In the destruction of Moab he was no more able to save himself or the people than they were.

**48:10** "Deceitfully" – or "laxly" or "carelessly". How important it is for every Christian worker to keep this warning in mind whatever his work.

"Blood" – this word refers, of course, only to the destruction of Moab and its people at that time. But always when God uses others as an instrument for punishing individuals or peoples He wants the work done thoroughly. Compare Ex 32:25-29.

**48:11** Moab as a nation had had a comparatively easy time.

**48:13** Verse 7. They will be ashamed because Chemosh will be proved to be a helpless, useless, dead god. The northern kingdom of Israel experienced the same

- come down from *your* glory,  
and sit on the thirsty *ground* ;  
for the destroyer of Moab will come on  
you *and* will destroy your strongholds.
- 19 O inhabitant of Aroer,  
stand by the way, and see!  
Question him who is fleeing and her  
who is escaping, *and* say,  
'What has happened?'
- 20 Moab is put to shame,  
for it is shattered. Wail and cry.  
Tell in Arnon that Moab is ruined,
- 21 And judgment has come on the land of  
the plain, on Holon, and on Jahazah,  
and on Mephaath,
- 22 And on Dibon, and on Nebo,  
and on Beth-Diblathaim,
- 23 And on Kiriathaim, and on Beth-Gamul,  
and on Beth-Meon,
- 24 And on Kerioth, and on Bozrah,  
and on all the cities of the land of  
Moab, far or near.
- 25 Moab's horn is cut off,  
and his arm is broken, says the LORD.
- 26 Make him drunk, for he exalted  
*himself* against the LORD.  
Moab will also wallow in his vomit,  
and become *an object* of derision.
- 27 For was not Israel an *object of* derision to you?  
Was he found among thieves, for you to  
shake your head when you speak of him?
- 28 O you who live in Moab,  
leave the cities,  
and live among the rocks,  
and be like the dove *that* makes her  
nest in the sides of a cave's mouth.
- 29 "We have heard of the pride of Moab

shame regarding their idol at Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-33; Hos 10:15; Amos 5:5,6). The worship of Israel there did not keep them from destruction and exile.

**48:15** "The King" – 46:18.

**48:18** "Dibon" – a town once in Israel's possession, then in Moab's hands.

**48:19,20** Aroer was a town on the banks of the Arnon river.

**48:21** The plateau of Moab is about 3000 feet above sea level.

**48:25** Horn and arm signify authority, power, strength.

**48:26,27** Here are two further reasons why Moab would be destroyed. It defied God and it ridiculed God's people. Moab will be treated as it treated others (Zeph 2:8-10). This is a principle seen in many places in God's Word. The cup of God's anger will make them senseless and fainting (see 25:15-17,21).

**48:29** A further reason for Moab's destruction (Prov 6:16,17; 11:2; 16:18; 18:12;

(he is exceedingly proud),  
his self-exaltation and his arrogance  
and his pride,  
and the haughtiness of his heart.  
30 I know his excessive rage,  
says the LORD, but *it is* useless;  
his lying boasts will not accomplish *anything*.  
31 Therefore I will wail for Moab,  
and I will cry out for all of Moab.  
*My heart* will mourn for the men of Kir-Heres.  
32 O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for you  
like the weeping for Jazer.  
Your branches have gone over the sea,  
they reach *even* to the sea of Jazer.  
The destroyer has fallen on your  
summer fruits and on your vintage.  
33 And joy and gladness has been taken  
from the fruitful field,  
and from the land of Moab;  
and I have caused the wine to fail  
from the winepresses.  
No one will trample *the grapes* with shouting.  
*Their* shouting *will* not be shouts of joy.  
34 "From the cry of Heshbon to Elealeh *and*  
to Jahaz they have made their voice  
heard, from Zoar to Horonaim,  
*like* a three-year old heifer,  
for the waters of Nimrim also will  
become desolate.  
35 Moreover I will put a stop in Moab,  
says the LORD,  
to him who offers on the high places,  
and to him who burns incense to his gods.  
36 Therefore my heart will sound for Moab  
like flutes,  
and my heart will sound like flutes for  
the men of Kir-Heres,

because the riches *that* he has gotten  
have perished.  
37 For every head *will be* shaved bald,  
and every beard cut off.  
There *will be* cuts on every hand,  
and sackcloth around the waist.  
38 *There will be* lamentation everywhere,  
on all the housetops of Moab,  
and in its streets,  
for I have broken Moab like a jar that  
*I have* no pleasure in, says the LORD.  
39 They will wail, *saying*,  
'How it is broken down!  
How Moab has turned *his* back with shame!  
So Moab will be an *object of* derision  
and dismay to all those around him.  
40 "For thus says the LORD:  
See, he will fly like an eagle,  
and will spread his wings over Moab.  
41 Kerioth will be taken,  
and the strongholds will be surprised,  
and in that day the hearts of the  
mighty men in Moab will be like the  
heart of a woman in labour.  
42 And Moab will be destroyed as a people,  
because he has exalted *himself* against  
the LORD.  
43 Fear and the pit and the snare *will be*  
on you, O inhabitant of Moab,  
says the LORD.  
44 He who flees from the fear will fall into the pit,  
and he who gets out of the pit will be  
captured in the snare;  
for I will bring on it, on Moab,  
the year of their punishment,  
says the LORD.  
45 "Those who fled stand under the

29:23; Jam 4:6). Moab's pride was well known (Isa 25:10,11; Zeph 2:8,10). But what reasons for pride did Moab have? The founder of their nation was the offspring of an incestuous relationship (Gen 19:36,37). Their god was vile and they sometimes sacrificed their children in the fire to him; they were never a large or strong or wise or righteous nation. Let us learn from this that human pride does not need any outward circumstances to feed on. People who have least reason to be proud sometimes have more pride than anyone else. And pride, a dark and destructive force, lurks in the hearts of all men until it is dealt with in the presence of God.  
**48:30-39** In this remarkable section God, who was bringing justly deserved destruction on Moab, expresses His great sorrow over them. This was a people other than His people Israel, who were often enemies of Israel. Still God could not see their destruction without pain in His heart. To punish men for their many

sins and great evils God justly causes armies to march on earth and through them brings much bloodshed, destruction, and misery. But He groans when He has to do it (v 31), His compassionate heart makes mournful noises like the sad notes of a flute (v 36 – flutes were often played by mourners at funerals). Compare Luke 19:41-44.  
**48:35** This is the fifth reason why God determined to destroy Moab (the other reasons are in vs 7,26,27,29). They had other gods besides Chemosh. Idolaters do not usually stop at one god.  
**48:37** Signs of mourning (16:6).  
**48:38** Notice the Lord's words "I have broken Moab." He both broke and groaned and lamented at the breaking.  
**48:40** Deut 28:49; Ezek 17:3,12. Nebuchadnezzar and his army.  
**48:42** Verse 26.  
**48:44** "Year of their punishment" – 11:23; 23:12.  
**48:45,46** Num 21:28,29.



shadow of Heshbon without strength;  
but a fire will come out of Heshbon,  
and a flame from inside Sihon,  
and will devour the forehead of Moab,  
and the crown of the head of the  
riotous ones.

46 Woe to you, O Moab!

The people of Chemosh perish;  
for your sons are taken as captives,  
and your daughters as captives.

47 "Yet I will bring back the captives of  
Moab in the latter days, says the LORD."

Thus far the judgment on Moab.

**49** Concerning the Ammonites thus says the  
LORD:

"Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir?  
Why *then* does their king inherit Gad,  
and his people live in his cities?

2 Therefore, see, the days are coming,  
says the LORD,  
when I will cause an alarm of war to  
be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites;  
and it will become a desolate heap,  
and its daughters will be burned with fire.  
Then Israel will be the heir of those  
who were his heirs, says the LORD.

3 Wail, O Heshbon, for Ai is ruined.  
Cry out, you daughters of Rabbah!  
Tie on sackcloth!  
Lament, and run to and fro by the walls!  
For their king will go into captivity,  
together with his priests and his officials.

4 Why do you glory in the valleys,  
your flowing valley,  
O backsliding daughter?  
*You* who trusted in *your* treasures,  
*saying*, 'Who will come to me?'

5 See, I will bring fear on you,  
says the Lord God of hosts,  
from all those who are around you;  
and every one of you will be driven out  
headlong,  
and no one will gather the fugitives.

6 But afterwards I will bring back the  
captives of the children of Ammon,  
says the LORD."

7 Concerning Edom thus says the LORD of hosts:  
"*Is* wisdom no longer in Teman?  
Has counsel perished from the prudent?  
Has their wisdom vanished?

8 Flee! Turn back!  
Live in the deep *places*,  
O inhabitants of Dedan;  
for I will bring on Esau the calamity *due* to him,  
the time *when* I will punish him.

9 If grape pickers came to you,  
would they not leave *some* gleaning  
grapes?

If thieves *came* at night,  
they would destroy only until they  
have enough.

10 But I have made Esau bare.  
I have uncovered his secret places,  
and he will not be able to hide himself.  
His offspring and his brethren and his

**48:47** Moab was destroyed as a nation (v 42). But some of its people survived. The time of the restoration of Moab is not given. This word may be fulfilled during Christ's future reign on earth.

**49:1-6** Other messages concerning the Ammonites are Ezek 25:1-7; Amos 1:13-15; Zeph 2:8-11. The land of Ammon was north of Moab, east of the Jordan river. The Ammonites were related to the Moabites, being descended, as they were, from Abraham's nephew Lot (Gen 19:36-38).

**49:1** "Their king" – or "Malcom", another name for Molech god of Ammon. The Hebrew word means "king", but here it may be taken as a name of a false god, sometimes written "Molech", sometimes "Malcom", sometimes "Milcom." Note at Jer 7:31.

"Gad" – the territory of the Israelite tribe of Gad east of the Jordan river (Josh 13:24-28). After the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel the Ammonites took possession of Gad's territory.

**49:2** Rabbah was the chief city of the Ammonites. Today the capital of the kingdom of Jordan is located in the same place.

**49:3** "Heshbon" – 48:45.

"Ai" – not the city in Joshua chapter 8.  
"King" – or "Molech." This god would prove as worthless and powerless as Chemosh of Moab (48:7).

**49:4** God here calls a people other than Israel "daughter". He uses this same phrase concerning Judah in 31:22.

"Treasures" – 48:7.

**49:6** "Bring back the captives" – or "restore the well-being."

**49:7-22** Other messages concerning Edom are Isa 21:11,12; Ezek 25:12-14; Amos 1:11,12; Obad 1-16; Mal 1:3-5. Edom was located south of Moab, south of the Dead sea. Edom's people were descended from Esau, Jacob's brother (Gen 36:1,9).

**49:7** "Wisdom" – Edomites were famous for worldly wisdom.

"Teman" – one of Edom's important towns. One of Job's friends, Eliphaz, was from there (Job 2:11).

**49:10** "No more" – God determined to leave no survivors whatever among the Edomites, unlike His purpose for the Moabites and Ammonites (Obad 18. For the reason for this severe judgment of God see Ezek 25:12-14; Obad 10-14).

neighbours are ruined, and he *is* no *more*.  
11 Leave your fatherless children;  
I will keep *them* alive.  
And let your widows trust in me.  
12 “For thus says the LORD: See, those who *were* not sentenced to drink from the cup have assuredly drunk; and *are* you the one *who* is to go altogether unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but you will surely drink *it*. 13 For I have sworn by myself, says the LORD, that Bozrah will become a desolation, a reproach, a wasteland, and a curse, and all its cities will be wastelands forever.”  
14 I have heard a message from the LORD,  
and an ambassador has been sent to the nations:  
“Gather together and come against her,  
and rise up for the battle.  
15 For, see, I will make you small among the nations, *and* despised among men.  
16 The terror you *inspire and* the pride of your heart have deceived you,  
O you who live in the clefts of the rock,  
who hold the height of the hill.  
Though you make your nest as high as the eagle,  
I will bring you down from there,  
says the LORD.  
17 And Edom will become a desolation.  
Everyone who goes by it will be astonished,  
and will hiss at all its plagues.  
18 As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbouring *cities*,  
says the LORD, no one will remain there,  
and no son of man will live in it.  
19 See, he will come up like a lion from the flooding of the Jordan against the dwelling place of the strong;  
but I will make him suddenly run away from her.  
And who *is* the chosen *man whom* I may appoint over her?  
For who *is* like me?  
And who will appoint me the time?

And who *is* that shepherd who will stand before me?  
20 Therefore hear the plan of the LORD that he has devised against Edom, and his purposes that he has formed against the inhabitants of Teman. Surely they will draw away the least of the flock;  
surely he will make their pastures desolate by them.  
21 The earth is shaken at the noise of their fall, the noise of their cry is heard at the Red Sea.  
22 See, he will come up and fly like an eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah; and on that day the heart of the mighty men of Edom will be like the heart of a woman in labour.”  
23 Concerning Damascus:  
“Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, for they have heard bad news *and* they are disheartened.  
*There is* trouble on the sea;  
it cannot be quiet.  
24 Damascus has become feeble, *and* has turned around to flee, and fear has seized *her*.  
Anguish and pain have seized *her*, like a woman in labour.  
25 Why has the praised city not been deserted, the city of my joy!  
26 Therefore in that day her young men will fall in her streets,  
and all the men of war will be cut off, says the LORD of hosts.  
27 And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it will consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad.”  
28 Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked:  
“Thus says the LORD:  
Arise, go up to Kedar,  
and despoil the men of the east.

49:12 25:28,29.  
49:13 This Bozrah is not the Bozrah of 48:24, which was in Moab.  
49:14-16 See Obadiah 1-4. Like Moab Edom had much pride with little reason for it.  
49:18 “Sodom” – Gen 19:24,25.  
49:19 God states that He Himself is the one behind the destruction of Edom. The proud rulers of that people would learn that there is no success in resisting the God of Israel, the King of the universe.  
49:22 “Eagle” – 48:40.  
49:23 Damascus was and is the capital city of Syria. Hamath and Arpad were cities north of Damascus. For other messages concerning

Damascus see Isa 17:1-3 and Amos 1:3-5.  
49:25 Damascus even then was an old city (Gen 14:15), famous for beauty.  
49:26 “That day” – we cannot be sure exactly what time is referred to here. Isa 17:1 speaks of a complete destruction of Damascus that has not yet taken place.  
49:27 God Himself will see to the punishment of Damascus.  
“Ben-Hadad” – the king of Damascus in the days of Asa, King of Judah (1 Kings 15:18).  
49:28 Kedar was the home of wandering tribes in the Arabian desert (Isa 21:13-15). A son of Ishmael named Kedar probably

29 They will take away their tents and  
their flocks;  
they will take their *tent* curtains,  
and all their goods,  
and their camels for themselves;  
and they will cry out to them,  
'Fear is on every side.'  
30 Flee! Go far away!  
Live in the deep places,  
O inhabitants of Hazor, says the LORD,  
for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has  
made a plot against you,  
and has conceived of a plan against you.  
31 Arise, go up to the wealthy nation,  
which lives without care, says the LORD,  
which has neither gates nor bars,  
*which* lives alone.  
32 And their camels will become booty,  
and their many cattle plunder;  
and I will scatter to all the winds  
those *who are* in the farthest corners,  
and I will bring their calamity from  
every side of it, says the LORD.  
33 And Hazor will become a den for jackals,  
*and* a desolation forever.  
No man will remain there,  
and no son of man will live in it."  
34 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah  
the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the  
reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying,  
35 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:  
See, I will break the bow of Elam,  
the chief of their might.  
36 And I will bring the four winds from

the four quarters of heaven on it,  
and will scatter them toward all those winds;  
and there is no nation where those  
thrown out of Elam will not go.  
37 For I will cause Elam to be dismayed  
before their enemies,  
and before those who seek their life,  
and I will bring disaster on them,  
my fierce anger, says the LORD;  
and I will send the sword after them,  
until I have consumed them;  
38 And I will set my throne in Elam,  
and will destroy from there the king  
and the princes, says the LORD.  
39 But it will come to pass in the latter days,  
*that* I will bring back the captives  
of Elam, says the LORD."

**50** The word that the LORD spoke against  
Babylon, against the land of the Chaldeans  
by Jeremiah the prophet.  
2 "Declare *it* among the nations,  
and proclaim *it*, and set up a banner.  
Proclaim *it*, and do not conceal *it*.  
Say, 'Babylon is taken,  
Bel has been put to shame,  
Merodach is broken in pieces.  
Her idols have been put to shame,  
her images are broken in pieces.'  
3 For from the north a nation comes up  
against her,  
which will make her land desolate,  
and no one will live in it.  
They will move, they will depart,

gave his name to this tribe and area (Gen 25:13). This Hazor is not the city of the same name north of the sea of Galilee (Josh 11:1), but an area in the Arabian desert near Kedar.

**49:31** The language suggests the people were nomads with no settled towns. There is no promise concerning these people such as we see in 46:26; 48:47; 49:6.

**49:33** "Jackals" – see the note at 9:11.

**49:34** Elam was the name of a region east of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is today the country of Iran.

**49:36** This indicates trouble from every direction. "The four winds" signify forces of destruction sent by God in judgment.

**49:38** "Set my throne" – means He will manifest His power and authority over that people. Compare 1:15.

**49:39** 46:26; 48:47; 49:6; Acts 2:9. "Bring back the captives" – or "restore the well-being."

**50:1** Babylonia was the dominant political and military power during much of Jeremiah's ministry. He had seen the rise of Babylon and had spoken God's word concerning its

victories (20:4-6; 27:3-7; 46:24). In this chapter and the next he prophesies its defeat and fall. See also 25:12-14,26; Isaiah chapter 13; 21:1-9.

"Chaldeans" (also in vs 8,25,35,45) – Babylonians.

**50:2** "Proclaim" – all the nations should know what God is going to do to Babylon. Jeremiah sent the contents of these two chapters to Babylon itself (51:59-64).

"Bel" means Lord. He was the same as Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. Bel was similar to the god Baal worshiped by several nations around Israel and by Israel too at times in their history (7:9; 11:13; 19:5; 23:27). The true God says Bel will be proved as worthless and powerless as the gods of the nations Babylon conquered (48:7; 49:3). Babylon possibly above all nations at that time was a land of many gods and idols (v 38). But all of them put together would be helpless when Jehovah God arose to punish Babylon.

**50:3** "From the north a nation" – in Jeremiah this sometimes means the alliance of the Medes and Persians. This nation captured

- both man and beast.
- 4 In those days, and at that time,  
says the LORD,  
the children of Israel will come,  
they and the children of Judah together,  
walking along and weeping;  
they will come and seek the LORD their God.
- 5 They will ask the way to Zion with  
their faces toward it, *saying*,  
'Come, and let us join ourselves to  
the LORD in a permanent covenant  
*that* will not be forgotten.'
- 6 "My people have been lost sheep.  
Their shepherds have caused them to  
go astray.  
They have turned away *on* the mountains.  
They have gone from mountain to hill.  
They have forgotten their resting place.
- 7 All who found them devoured them,  
and their adversaries said,  
'We are not to blame, because they  
have sinned against the LORD,  
the habitation of justice,  
the LORD, the hope of their fathers.'
- 8 Move out of the midst of Babylon,  
and go out of the land of the Chaldeans,  
and be like the male goats in front  
of the flocks.
- 9 For, see, I will raise up against  
Babylon an assembly of great nations  
from the land of the north,  
and cause them to come;  
and they will set themselves in array  
against her.  
From there she will be taken.  
Their arrows *will be* like *those* of a  
skillful warrior;  
none will return in vain.
- 10 And Chaldea will become plunder.  
All who plunder her will be satisfied,  
says the LORD.
- 11 Because you were glad,  
because you rejoiced,

- O you destroyers of my inheritance,  
because you have grown fat like a  
heifer threshing grain,  
and *you* bellow like bulls,
- 12 Your mother will be greatly disgraced;  
she who gave you birth will be ashamed.  
See, *she will become* the least of the  
nations, a wilderness, a dry land,  
and a desert.
- 13 Because of the wrath of the LORD it  
will not be inhabited,  
but will be completely desolate.  
Everyone who goes by Babylon will be  
astonished,  
and hiss at all her plagues.
- 14 "Put yourselves in array against  
Babylon all around.  
All you who bend the bow, shoot at her,  
spare no arrows,  
for she has sinned against the LORD.
- 15 Shout against her all around.  
She has given her hand *in surrender*;  
her foundations have fallen,  
her walls have been torn down;  
for it *is* the vengeance of the LORD.  
Take vengeance on her.  
Do to her as she has done.
- 16 Cut off the sower from Babylon,  
and the one who handles the sickle  
in the time of harvest.  
Every one of them will turn away to  
his people for fear of the oppressing sword,  
and everyone will flee to his own land.
- 17 Israel *is like* scattered sheep.  
The lions have driven *him* away.  
First the king of Assyria devoured him,  
and at last this Nebuchadnezzar king  
of Babylon has broken his bones.
- 18 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts,  
the God of Israel:  
See, I will punish the king of Babylon  
and his land,  
as I have punished the king of Assyria.

Babylon in 539 BC (Dan 5:28-31).  
50:4,5 3:18; 29:11-14; 30:3; Isa 11:12;  
Ezek 37:19-23; Hos 1:11.  
"Covenant" – 31:31-34; 32:40; 33:20,21.  
50:6 Verse 17; 23:1; Isa 53:6; Luke  
15:3-7. Their true resting place was God  
Himself (v 7; Ps 37:7; 90:1; 91:1;  
116:7; Matt 11:28,29).  
50:7 What Israel's enemies said about them  
was true, but they were still guilty for  
devouring them and must face God's  
judgment. If we are cruel to others God will  
not accept any excuse we make for it.  
50:8-10 51:28,29; Isa 13:4.  
"Chaldea" – Babylonia.

50:11-13 Here is the reason God was send-  
ing destruction on Babylon. That people had  
plundered God's property (Judah), and had  
been very happy about it.  
50:13 Verses 3, 12, 39, 40. Today Babylon  
is a heap of ruins.  
50:14 "Sinned against the Lord" – the  
reason for its downfall.  
50:15 Men were then used to take  
vengeance on Babylon because the Lord was  
using them to take His own vengeance on  
her. Babylon was being repaid in her own  
coin – Ps 137:8; Jer 25:14; Rev 18:6.  
50:17 Verse 6.  
50:18 The capital of Assyria, Nineveh, fell

- 19 And I will bring Israel back to his dwelling place,  
and he will feed on Carmel and Bashan,  
and his soul will be satisfied on  
mount Ephraim and Gilead.
- 20 In those days, and at that time,  
says the LORD,  
the wickedness of Israel will be sought for,  
and none *will be there*,  
and the sins of Judah, and they will not  
be found,  
for I will pardon those whom I keep.
- 21 "Go up against the land of Merathaim,  
against it and against the  
inhabitants of Pekod.  
Lay waste and utterly destroy after them,  
says the LORD,  
and act in accordance with all that I  
have commanded you.
- 22 A sound of battle and of great  
destruction *is* in the land.
- 23 How the hammer of the whole earth is  
cut in two and broken!  
How Babylon has become a desolation  
among the nations!
- 24 I have laid a snare for you,  
and you were also caught, O Babylon,  
and you were not aware of *it*.  
You were found, and also captured,  
because you have fought against the LORD.
- 25 The LORD has opened his armoury,  
and has brought out the weapons of  
his indignation;  
for this *is* the work of the Lord God of hosts  
in the land of the Chaldeans.
- 26 Come against her from the farthest border.  
Open her storehouses.  
Pile her up like heaps of *grain*,  
and completely destroy her.  
Let nothing of her be left.
- 27 Slay all her bulls;  
let them go down to the slaughter.

- Woe to them! For their day has come,  
the time of their punishment.
- 28 The voice of those who flee and  
escape from the land of Babylon  
declares in Zion the vengeance of  
the LORD our God,  
the vengeance concerning his temple.
- 29 "Call together the archers against Babylon.  
All you who bend the bow, camp against  
it all around.  
Let no one belonging to it escape.  
Repay her according to her deeds,  
do to her in accordance with all  
that she has done;  
for she has been proud against the LORD,  
against the Holy One of Israel.
- 30 Therefore her young men will fall in the streets,  
and all her warriors will be cut off  
in that day, says the LORD.
- 31 See, I *am* against you, O most proud,  
says the Lord God of hosts,  
and your day has come,  
the time *when* I will punish you.
- 32 And the most proud one will stumble and fall,  
and no one will raise him up;  
and I will kindle a fire in his cities,  
and it will devour all around him."
- 33 Thus says the LORD of hosts:  
"The children of Israel and the children  
of Judah *were* oppressed together,  
and all who took them captives  
held them fast;  
they refused to let them go.
- 34 Their Redeemer *is* strong.  
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.  
He will thoroughly plead their case,  
that he may give rest to the land,  
but unrest to the inhabitants of Babylon.
- 35 A sword *is* over the Chaldeans,  
says the LORD,  
and over the inhabitants of Babylon,

in 612 BC. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.  
**50:20** This is what God's forgiveness means.  
It makes the guilty as if they had not sinned  
at all. See notes on forgiveness and jus-  
tification at Gen 15:6; Ps 32:1,2; Matt  
6:12; Rom 3:21-26; etc.

**50:21** Merathaim means "double rebellion."  
Because of its rebellion against Him  
(vs 24,29), God may be calling Babylon by  
this name. Pekod means "punishment" in  
Hebrew. In Babylonia it was an area just  
beyond the Tigris River (Ezek 23:23).

**50:23** "Hammer" – Babylon was an  
instrument in God's hands to shatter the  
nations. Now it would be shattered.  
Compare Isa 10:5; Jer 51:20-23.

**50:24** The Medes and Persians captured  
Babylon in a surprise attack.

**50:25** "Weapons" – other nations (Isa  
13:5).

**50:27** Bulls may mean here the soldiers of  
Babylon.

**50:28** "Those who flee" – Jews who escaped  
from Babylon and returned to Judah.

"Vengeance concerning his temple" –  
2 Kings 24:13; Jer 51:11; 52:13.

**50:29-32** Pride was one of the great sins of  
Babylon also (48:29; 49:16). An example  
of it is seen in Dan 4:29,30.

**50:33** Compare Ex 5:2; 7:14; 8:32.

**50:34** Jehovah God was not defeated when  
Israel was defeated. He was not weak  
because they had to weakly submit to their  
enemies (as those enemies might have  
thought). The time to show His strength on  
their behalf was coming.

and over her princes,  
and over her wise *men*.  
36 A sword *is* over the false prophets  
and they will behave like fools.  
A sword *is* over her mighty men,  
and they will be dismayed.  
37 A sword *is* over their horses  
and over their chariots  
and over all the mixed people who  
*are* in her midst,  
and they will become like women.  
A sword *is* over her treasures,  
and they will be robbed.  
38 A drought *is* on her waters,  
and they will be dried up.  
For it *is* the land of carved images,  
and they are crazy about *their* idols.  
39 "Therefore the wild beasts of the  
desert together with jackals will live *there*,  
and the owls will live in it;  
and it will no longer be inhabited, forever;  
it will not be lived in from generation  
to generation.  
40 As God overthrew Sodom and  
Gomorrah and their neighbouring *cities*,  
says the LORD,  
*so* no one will remain there,  
and no son of man will live in it.  
41 "See, a people will come from the north,  
and a great nation and many kings will  
be raised up from the ends of the earth.  
42 They will hold the bow and the lance.  
They *are* cruel, and will not show mercy.  
Their voice will roar like the sea,  
and they will ride on horses,  
*everyone* set in array like men for  
battle, against you,  
O daughter of Babylon.  
43 The king of Babylon has heard the

report about them,  
and his hands have become weak.  
Anguish has seized him, *and* pangs like  
a woman in labour.  
44 See, he will come up like a lion from  
the flooding of the Jordan to the  
dwelling place of the strong;  
but I will make them suddenly run  
away from her.  
And who *is* the chosen *man whom* I  
may appoint over her?  
For who *is* like me?  
And who will appoint me the time?  
And who *is* that shepherd who can  
stand against me?"  
45 Therefore hear the plan of the LORD,  
that he has devised against Babylon,  
and his purposes, that he has formed  
against the land of the Chaldeans:  
Surely the least of the flock will drag  
them away;  
surely he will make *their* dwelling  
place desolate by them.  
46 At the sound of the capture of Babylon  
the earth will shake,  
and the cry will be heard among the nations.

**51** Thus says the LORD:  
"See, I will raise up against Babylon,  
and against those who live in the midst  
of those who rise up against me,  
a destroying wind,  
2 And will send winnowers to Babylon  
who will winnow her and empty her land;  
for in the day of trouble they will be  
against her all around.  
3 Against *him who* bends a *bow* let the  
archer bend his bow,  
and against *him who* lifts himself up  
in his armour;

"Redeemer" – note at Ps 78:35.  
**50:38** No land that gives itself to idolatry as Babylon did can finally prosper. The idolatry that she delighted in was one of the main causes of her downfall.  
"Crazy about their idols" – or "glory in their idols" or "boast about their idols" or "foolish about their idols." However it is translated it reveals the madness in the hearts of those people who prefer a dumb idol to the living God.  
**50:39,40** Verse 13; 51:37,62; Isa 13:19-22. This did not happen immediately after their defeat by the Medes and Persians. The city gradually decayed, completely lost its importance, and was at last utterly abandoned. Only heaps of ruins remain today. Its place became as barren and devoid of human life as Sodom and Gomorrah. Some

Bible teachers think that Babylon will be rebuilt at the end of this age and will become the Babylon of Revelation chapters 17 and 18. The language of Jeremiah and Isaiah seems to make impossible the rebuilding of a literal great city of Babylon.  
**50:41-43** See 6:22-24 where Babylon itself is meant. Here the same words refer to the armies coming against Babylon.  
**50:44-46** See 49:19-21 where the words are spoken against Edom. Here the same words refer to Babylon's fall.  
**51:1** "I will raise up" – v 11; 1 Chron 5:26; 2 Chron 21:16; Isa 13:17; Ezek 23:22; Amos 6:14; Hab 1:6. To fulfill His purposes in the earth God can and sometimes does stir up one nation against another.  
"Those who rise up against me" – here refers to Babylonia.



and do not spare her young men.  
Completely destroy all her army.  
4 Thus the slain will fall in the land of  
the Chaldeans,  
and *those who are* pierced in her streets.  
5 For neither Israel nor Judah *has been*  
forsaken by his God,  
by the LORD of hosts,  
even though their land was filled with  
sin against the Holy One of Israel.”  
6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon,  
and everyone rescue his soul.  
Do not be cut off in her wickedness.  
For this *is* the time of the LORD’s  
vengeance; he will repay her.  
7 Babylon *has been* a golden cup in the  
LORD’s hand,  
that has made the whole earth drunk.  
The nations have drunk of her wine,  
therefore the nations have gone mad.  
8 Babylon has suddenly fallen and been  
destroyed. Wail for her.  
Take balm for her pain;  
perhaps she may be healed.  
9 “We would have healed Babylon,  
but she is not healed.  
Forsake her, and let each of us go to  
his own country,  
for her judgment reaches to heaven,  
and is lifted up to the skies.  
10 The LORD has revealed our righteousness.  
Come, and let us declare in Zion the  
work of the LORD our God.  
11 Make the arrows bright!  
Gather the shields!  
The LORD has raised up the spirit of  
the kings of the Medes,  
for his plan against Babylon *is* to destroy it;  
because it *is* the vengeance of the LORD,

the vengeance concerning his temple.  
12 Set up the banner on the walls of Babylon!  
Make the guard strong!  
Station the watchmen!  
Prepare the ambushes!  
For the LORD has both planned and  
done what he spoke against the  
inhabitants of Babylon.  
13 O you who live on many waters,  
abundant in treasures,  
your end has come,  
and the measure of your covetousness.  
14 The LORD of hosts has sworn by himself,  
*saying*, “Surely I will fill you with men,  
as with locusts;  
and they will raise a shout against you.”  
15 He has made the earth by his power,  
has established the world by his wisdom,  
and has stretched out the heavens by  
his understanding.  
16 When he utters *his* voice,  
*there is* a roar of waters in the heavens,  
and he causes the vapours to ascend  
from the ends of the earth.  
He makes lightning with rain,  
and brings the wind out of his treasures.  
17 Every man is stupid, without knowledge.  
Every metal worker is put to shame by  
the carved image,  
for his cast metal image *is* a lie,  
and *there is* no breath in them.  
18 They *are* worthless, the work of error.  
In the time of their punishment they will perish.  
19 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them;  
for he *is* the Maker of all things,  
and *Israel is* the tribe of his inheritance.  
The LORD of hosts *is* his name.  
20 “You *are* my war club,  
*my* weapons for battle;

51:5 When God acts as He does among  
the nations He always has His people in His  
heart and mind (Zech 2:8).  
51:6 “Flee” – this looks forward many years  
from the time of writing. Rev 18:4 has a  
similar call to come out of figurative Babylon  
at the end of this age.  
“Vengeance” – 50:15; Rev 18:5-8.  
51:7 “In the LORD’s hand” – the Lord used  
Babylon to punish other nations, to make  
them senseless and staggering, to make  
them suddenly fall.  
51:8,9 Jewish (and other) exiles in Babylon  
had lived there long enough to try to heal  
her, to pity her when she fell. In the book  
of Daniel we see something of the witness  
for the true God given in Babylon (2:27;  
3:16-18; 4:24,25; 5:18-23).  
51:10 This is a prophecy that looks forward  
many years. The exiles from Judah and

Jerusalem speak. They have learned many  
lessons in Babylon, have repented, sought  
and found God (29:10-14). Now God brings  
their righteousness to the light (Ps 37:6).  
51:11 “Medes” – v 28; Isa 13:17; Dan  
5:28,31.  
“Temple” – 50:28.  
51:13 “Waters” – the great river Euphrates,  
with the river Tigris not far distant, and a  
very extensive system of canals.  
51:15-19 See 10:12-16. Many peoples of  
that day made the mistake of thinking that  
Jehovah, the God of Israel, was only one  
deity among a great many (just as many  
people today mistakenly think the God of  
Christians is only one of many). Here God  
proclaims to the Babylonians who He really  
is, and how worthless is all worship other  
than the worship of the true God.  
51:20-23 “My war club” – in 50:23 Babylon

for with you I will break the nations in pieces,  
and with you I will destroy kingdoms,  
21 And with you I will break the horse  
and its rider in pieces,  
and with you I will break the chariot  
and its rider in pieces,  
22 With you I will also break man and  
woman in pieces,  
and with you I will break old and young  
in pieces,  
and with you I will break the young man  
and the maiden in pieces;  
23 With you I will also break the shepherd  
and his flock in pieces,  
and with you I will break the farmer  
and his yoke of oxen in pieces,  
and with you I will break captains  
and rulers in pieces.  
24 And I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants  
of Chaldea all their evil that they have done  
in Zion in your sight, says the LORD.  
25 "See, I *am* against you,  
O destroying mountain,  
who destroys the whole earth,  
says the LORD,  
and I will stretch out my hand over you,  
and roll you down from the rocks,  
and will make you a burnt mountain.  
26 And they will not take a stone for a  
corner from you,  
or a stone for foundations;  
but you will be desolate forever,  
says the LORD.  
27 "Set up a banner in the land.  
Blow the trumpet among the nations.  
Prepare the nations against her.  
Call together the kingdoms of Ararat,  
Minni, and Ashkenaz against her.  
Appoint a commander against her.  
Cause the horses to come up like the  
bristling locusts.  
28 Prepare the nations against her,  
with the kings of the Medes,  
its commanders, and all its rulers,

and the whole land of his dominion.  
29 And the land will tremble and writhe,  
for every purpose of the LORD will  
be accomplished against Babylon,  
to make the land of Babylon a  
desolation without an inhabitant.  
30 The mighty men of Babylon have  
stopped fighting.  
They remain in *their* strongholds.  
Their might has failed.  
They have become like women.  
They have burned her dwelling places.  
The bars of her *gates* are broken.  
31 One courier runs to meet another,  
and one messenger to meet another,  
to tell the king of Babylon that his  
city has been captured from end *to end*,  
32 And that the *river* fords are blocked,  
that they have burned the reeds with fire,  
that the warriors are terrified.  
33 "For thus says the LORD of hosts,  
the God of Israel:  
The daughter of Babylon *is* like a  
threshing floor;  
*it is* time to thresh her.  
Yet a little while, and the time of her  
harvest will come."  
34 "Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon,  
has devoured me.  
He has crushed me.  
He has made me an empty jar.  
He has swallowed me up like a monster.  
He has filled his stomach with my delicacies.  
He has thrown me out.  
35 The violence done to me and to my  
flesh *be* on Babylon,"  
says the inhabitant of Zion.  
"And my blood *be* on the inhabitants  
of Chaldea," says Jerusalem.  
36 Therefore thus says the LORD:  
"See, I will plead your case, and take  
vengeance for you;  
and I will dry up her sea,

is compared to a hammer in 50:23 and to a gold cup in 51:7. Now it is called a war club (though some think this means the Medes and Persians). But see whose hand holds this "war club". Though Babylon shattered nations and peoples it was only an instrument which God used.  
**51:24** Nations will be judged according to their behavior to God's people. See Deut 32:10; Zech 2:8; compare Matt 25:31-46.  
**51:25** God used Babylon to destroy others but will in turn destroy it, make it like an extinct volcano (mountain here signifies a

kingdom. Compare Dan 2:35,44,45).  
**51:27** Verse 11. Other kingdoms were allied to the Medes and Persians. These three were located north of Babylon and the land of the Medes. They had come under the power of the Medes (v 28).  
**51:33** "Daughter" – 4:31; 43:11,24; 49:4; 50:42.  
**51:34,35** The exiles from Jerusalem speak. For notes on such prayers against enemies see Ps 35:8.  
**51:36-40** "Therefore" – God will act according to their cries to Him.

and make her springs dry.  
37 And Babylon will become ruins,  
a dwelling place for jackals,  
an *object of* astonishment and hissing,  
without an inhabitant.  
38 They will roar together like lions;  
they will growl like lion cubs.  
39 In their feverish *activity* I will  
make feasts for them,  
and I will make them drunk,  
so that they may rejoice,  
and sleep a permanent sleep,  
and not wake up, says the LORD.  
40 I will bring them down like lambs to  
the slaughter, like rams with male goats.  
41 How Sheshach is captured!  
And how the praise of the whole earth  
is surprised!  
How Babylon has become an *object of*  
astonishment among the nations!  
42 The sea has come up on Babylon.  
She is covered with its many waves.  
43 Her cities are a desolation,  
a dry land, and a wilderness,  
a land where no one lives,  
where no son of man passes by.  
44 And I will punish Bel in Babylon,  
and I will bring out of his mouth  
what he has swallowed up.  
And the nations will no longer go  
streaming to him;  
yes, the wall of Babylon will fall.  
45 "My people, go out of her midst,  
and each one of you rescue his soul  
from the fierce anger of the LORD.  
46 Then do not let your heart faint,  
or fear for the rumour that will  
be heard in the land.  
A rumour will come *one* year,  
and after that, in *another* year,  
a rumour *will come*,  
and violence *will be* in the land,  
ruler against ruler.  
47 Therefore, see, the days come,  
when I will bring judgment on the  
carved images of Babylon,  
and her whole land will be put to shame,

and all her slain will fall in her midst.  
48 Then the heavens and the earth,  
and all that *is* in them,  
will shout for joy over Babylon;  
for the destroyers will come to her  
from the north, says the LORD.  
49 "As Babylon *has caused* the slain of  
Israel to fall,  
so at Babylon will fall the slain of all the earth.  
50 You who have escaped the sword, go away.  
Do not stand still.  
Remember the LORD from afar,  
and let Jerusalem come into your mind."  
51 "We are ashamed because we have  
heard reproach.  
Shame has covered our faces,  
for foreigners have come into the  
sanctuaries of the LORD's house."  
52 "Therefore, see, the days are coming,  
says the LORD,  
when I will judge her carved images;  
and through all her land the wounded  
will groan.  
53 Even though Babylon mounts up to heaven,  
and though she fortifies her high stronghold,  
*yet* destroyers will come from me to  
her, says the LORD."  
54 A sound of a cry *comes* from Babylon,  
and great destruction from the land  
of the Chaldeans;  
55 Because the LORD has destroyed Babylon,  
and silenced her loud voice,  
when her waves roared like great waters,  
*and* the noise of their voice sounded out,  
56 Because the destroyer has come on her,  
on Babylon,  
and her mighty men are captured.  
Every one of their bows is broken.  
For the LORD God of retribution will  
certainly repay.  
57 "And I will make her princes and her  
*wise men* drunk,  
also her captains and her rulers,  
and her mighty men;  
and they will sleep a permanent sleep,  
and not wake up, says the King,

51:37 "Jackals" – see note at 9:11.  
51:41 "Sheshach" – 25:26. Indicates Babylon.  
51:42 "Sea" – probably used here symbolically for enemy armies (v 55; compare 46:7,8; Isa 17:12).  
51:44 "Bel" – note at 50:2.  
51:47 "Judgment" – v 52. Compare Ex 12:12.  
51:48 Compare Rev 19:1-3. The fall of a

cruel, blood-stained, God-defying system will be a cause of great joy.  
51:49 Verses 5, 10, 24; Zech 2:8.  
51:50 "Remember" – 29:10-14; Ps 137:6.  
51:51 The exiles of Judah and Jerusalem speak. Nebuchadnezzar's army had defiled the temple in Jerusalem.  
51:56 "God of retribution" – Deut 32:35,40-43; Ps 54:5; Rom 12:19.  
51:57 "Drunk" – v 39; 25:15,16,26.

whose name *is* the LORD of hosts."

58 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"The broad walls of Babylon will be utterly broken down,  
and her high gates will be burned with fire;  
and the people will labour in vain,  
and the nation, because of the fire;  
and they will be faint."

59 *This is* the word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And *this* Seraiah *was* a quiet officer. 60 So Jeremiah wrote in a book the whole disaster that would come on Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. 61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon, and see *it*, and read all these words, 62 then you shall say, 'O LORD, you have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that nothing remains in it, whether man or beast. It will be desolate forever.' 63 And it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, *that* you will tie a stone to it, and hurl it into the middle of the Euphrates; 64 and you shall say, 'Babylon will sink like this, and will not rise from the disaster that I will bring on her; and they will be faint.'"

Thus far the words of Jeremiah.

**52** Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, *who was* the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 2 And he did *what was* evil in the eyes of the LORD, in accordance with all that Jehoiakim had done. 3 For through the anger of the LORD this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out of his presence.

And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

4 And it came about in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem and encamped against it and built siege works against it all around. 5 So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

6 And in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, the famine was severe in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.

7 Then the city was broken in, and all the warriors fled, and went out of the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls, which *was* by the king's garden, though the Chaldeans *were* surrounding the city, and went away on the road to the plain. 8 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army scattered from him.

9 Then they took the king, and led him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath. There he gave judgment on him. 10 And the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah in front of his eyes. Also at Riblah he killed all the officials of Judah. 11 Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah. And the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and took him to Babylon, and put him in prison until the day of his death.

12 Now in the fifth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, which *was* in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, commander of the guard, serving the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem, 13 and burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house. And he burned with fire all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great *men*. 14 And all the army of the Chaldeans that *was* with the commander of the guard, broke down all the surrounding walls of Jerusalem. 15 Then Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard took away captive *some* of the poor people and the rest of the people who remained in the city, and those who had defected, who had gone over to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen. 16 But Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left *some* of the poor of the land as vineyard workers and farmers.

17 Also the Chaldeans broke up the bronze pillars that *were* at the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that *were* at the house of the LORD, and carried away all their bronze to Babylon. 18 They also took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the bowls and the spoons, and all the bronze articles with which *the priests* ministered. 19 And the commander of the guard took away the basins and the firepans and the bowls and the pots and the lampstands and the spoons and the cups, what *had been made* of gold as gold, and what *had been made* of silver as silver, 20 *and* the two pillars, one sea, and the twelve bronze bulls that *were* under the stands, which

51:58 "Burned with fire" – how often this is true of the great works of men, and even of the effort of some servants of Christ (1 Cor 3:12-15).

51:59 Seraiah was the brother of Baruch, Jeremiah's colleague.

51:61 Compare 36:5,6.

51:63,64 Rev 18:21.

"Thus far the words of Jeremiah" – it seems, then, that chapter 52 was added by another servant of God.

52:1-27 This is found almost word for word in 2 Kings 24:18-25:21. See notes there. The Jeremiah in verse 1 here is not, of

king Solomon had made at the house of the LORD. The bronze of all these articles was beyond weighing. 21 And *concerning* the pillars: the height of each pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and its circumference *was* twelve cubits, and its thickness *was* four fingers; *it was* hollow. 22 And a capital of bronze *was* on it, and the height of one capital *was* five cubits, with a network and pomegranates all around the capitals, all *of* bronze. The second pillar also and the pomegranates *were* like these. 23 And there were ninety-six pomegranates on each side; *and* all the pomegranates all around on the network *were* a hundred.

24 And the commander of the guard took away Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. 25 He also took away from the city an officer in charge of the warriors, and seven of the king's advisors who were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the army who mustered the people of the land, and sixty of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city. 26 So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 27 And the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath.

Thus Judah was carried away captive from his own land.

28 These *are* the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand and twenty-three Jews; 29 in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive eight hundred and thirty-two persons from Jerusalem; 30 in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadrezzar, Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried away captive seven hundred and forty-five of the Jews; altogether these people *were* four thousand six hundred.

31 And it happened in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the twenty-fifth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the *first* year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him out of prison, 32 and spoke kindly to him, and appointed his throne above the thrones of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon, 33 and changed his prison garments; and *Jehoiachin* ate food regularly in his presence all the days of his life. 34 And *as for* his provisions, there was a permanent ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

course, Jeremiah the prophet.  
52:21 "Cubits" – a cubit is about 18 inches.  
52:31-34 This is found almost word for word

in 2 Kings 25:27-30.  
"Evil-Merodach" – he was also called "Amel-Marduk."

# LAMENTATIONS

**Author:**

Jeremiah.

**Date:**

Sometime after 586 BC.

**Themes:**

A lament about the fall of Jerusalem in poetic language; the reason for it; Jeremiah's mental anguish; the spiritual lessons he declares; his prayer for the people of Israel. In the midst of the mournful lament we have the beautiful and meaningful words of 3:21-27.

**Contents:**

The prophet describes the city's ruined condition .....	1:1-11
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Jerusalem's past glory and present sad state .....	4:1-22
The prophet, representing the city, pleads with God for mercy .....	5:1-22



# 1

- 1 How lonely the city sits,  
*she that was* full of people!  
*How* she has become like a widow,  
*she that was* great among the nations!  
*And* the princess among the provinces,  
*how* she has become a forced labourer!
- 2 She weeps bitterly in the night,  
and her tears *are* on her cheeks.  
Among all her lovers she has no one  
to comfort *her*.  
All her friends have dealt  
treacherously with her,  
they have become her enemies.
- 3 Judah has gone into captivity under  
affliction and under great servitude.  
She lives among the nations;  
she finds no rest.  
All her persecutors have caught up with  
her in *her* distress.
- 4 The roads of Zion mourn, because  
no one comes to the solemn feasts.  
All her gates are desolate.  
Her priests sigh, her virgins are  
afflicted, and she *is* in bitterness.
- 5 Her adversaries have become the masters,  
her enemies prosper.  
For the LORD has afflicted her because  
of her many transgressions.  
Her children have gone into captivity  
in the presence of the enemy.
- 6 And all her beauty has departed from  
the daughter of Zion.  
Her princes have become like deer

- that* find no pasture,  
and they have gone without strength  
before the pursuer.
- 7 In the days of her affliction and her miseries,  
when her people fell into the hands of  
the enemy,  
Jerusalem remembered all her pleasant  
things that she had in the days of old,  
but no one helped her.  
*Her* adversaries saw her,  
*and* mocked at her Sabbaths.
  - 8 Jerusalem has grievously sinned;  
therefore she has been removed.  
All who honoured her despise her,  
because they have seen her nakedness.  
Yes, she sighs and turns back.
  - 9 Her filthiness *is* in her skirts.  
She did not consider her future,  
therefore her fall was amazing.  
She had no comforter.
- O LORD, see my affliction, for the  
enemy has exalted *himself*.
- 10 The adversary has spread out his  
hands on all her precious things,  
for she has seen the nations enter  
her sanctuary, those whom you had  
forbidden to enter your congregation.
  - 11 All her people sigh; they seek bread;  
they have given their precious things  
for food to renew life.  
See, O LORD, and consider, for I am despised.
  - 12 *Is it* nothing to you, all you who pass by?  
Look and see if there is any sorrow  
like my sorrow, which has been  
brought on me,

1:1 The prophet expresses his deep grief that Jerusalem, the city of the King of heaven, had fallen into her enemies' hands and was crushed and deserted.  
"Princess" – 1 Kings 4:21; Ps 48:2; 87:1-3.  
1:2 "Lovers", "friends" – these speak of those peoples or nations for whom she had forsaken God, those whom she thought would help her against the Babylonians (Jer 2:36,37; 3:12; 4:30).  
1:3 "Captivity" – 2 Chron 36:15-20.  
"No rest" – this happened just as Moses had foretold many centuries before (Deut 28:65. See also Ps 137:1-4).  
1:4 "Feasts" – Ex 23:14-17; Levi 23:1-44.  
"Bitterness" – Jer 9:17-22.  
1:5 "Her many transgressions" – 2 Chron 36:14-16; Jer 2:8,9; 4:18; 6:19; 13:22,25. Jerusalem deserved all the destruction which came on her. And notice that it was "the LORD" who brought this destruction. He did so in perfect justice, after appealing to her many times to repent.

1:6 "Daughter" – compare Ps 9:14; 45:12; 137:8; Isa 1:8; Jer 6:2.  
1:7 "No one helped her" – Jer 2:36,37; 37:7,8.  
"Mocked" – v 21; Jer 48:26; Ezek 25:2-7; Obadiah 12; Zeph 2:8.  
1:8 Verse 5.  
1:9 "Future" – Deut 32:28,29. Compare Isa 47:7. Men close their eyes to the future and go on sinning without restraint. They do not think of the punishment God is going to send on them either in this world or the next.  
"See my affliction" – the prophet writes as though Jerusalem were speaking.  
1:10 "Precious things" – Jer 52:12-19.  
1:11 "Seek bread" – a famine attended the destruction of Jerusalem – 2:20; Jer 14:12; 15:2; 16:4.  
1:12 From this verse to the end of the chapter it is as though Jerusalem herself were speaking as an individual. The prophet who is speaking for her has been enabled by God's Spirit to understand the deep grief that was in the mind of the people and to

- which the LORD has inflicted on *me*  
in the day of his fierce anger.
- 13 He has sent fire from above into my bones,  
and it has prevailed.  
He has spread a net for my feet;  
he has turned me back;  
he has made me desolate *and* faint all  
day long.
- 14 The yoke of my transgressions was bound,  
woven by his hands.  
*They* have come onto my neck.  
He has made my strength fall.  
The Lord delivered me into the hands  
of *those whom* I was not able  
to withstand.
- 15 The Lord has trampled underfoot all  
my mighty *men* in my midst.  
He called an assembly against me to  
crush my young men.  
The Lord has trampled the virgin,  
the daughter of Judah, *as* in a winepress.
- 16 For these *things* I weep.  
My eye, my eye flows with water,  
because the comforter who could  
relieve my soul is far from me.  
My children are desolate, because the  
enemy prevailed.
- 17 Zion spreads out her hands,  
*but there is* no one to comfort her.  
Concerning Jacob the LORD has  
commanded *that* his adversaries  
*should* surround him.  
Jerusalem has become an unclean thing  
among them.
- 18 The LORD is righteous;  
for I have rebelled against his commandment.  
Please listen, all you people, and see

- my sorrow.  
My virgins and my young men have  
gone into captivity.
- 19 I called for my lovers, *but* they deceived me.  
My priests and my elders expired in the city,  
while they sought their  
food to renew their lives.
- 20 Look, O LORD, for I *am* in distress.  
My inner being is troubled.  
My heart turns over inside me;  
for I have grievously rebelled.  
Outside, the sword bereaves;  
at home *it is* like death.
- 21 They have heard that I sigh.  
*There is* no one to comfort me.  
All my enemies have heard of my trouble;  
they are glad that you have done *it*.  
You will bring the day *that* you have  
announced,  
and they will become like me.
- 22 Let all their wickedness come before you,  
and do to them as you  
have done to me for all my  
transgressions;  
for my sighs *are* many, and my heart *is* faint.

## 2

- 1 How the Lord has covered the daughter  
of Zion with a cloud in his anger!  
*And he* has thrown down the beauty of  
Israel from heaven to the earth,  
and has not remembered his footstool  
in the day of his anger.
- 2 The Lord has swallowed up all the  
dwelling places of Jacob,  
and has not shown pity.

experience it with them (see Jer 4:19,20; 6:24,25; 9:1,10).

"Fierce anger" – Jer 4:8,26; 12:13; 25:37,38; 30:24. See notes on God's anger at Numbers 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

1:13 "Fire" – Jer 52:12,13.

"Net" – this refers to falling into the hands of the Babylonians.

1:14 "Yoke" – Deut 28:48; Isa 47:6; Jer 27:1-11.

1:15 "Daughter" – v 6.

"Winepress" – a symbol of God's judgment (Isa 63:2,3; Joel 3:13; Rev 14:19,20; 19:15).

1:16 Jer 9:1,10,18. Sin and its consequences (punishment and grief) are closely bound together and follow each other.

1:17 "The LORD has commanded" – all that happened to Jerusalem, including the enmity shown by neighboring peoples, was a result of God's action (Levi 26:16,18,23-25; Jer 25:8-11).

1:18 "Righteous" – God will never punish the innocent. And He will never punish

anyone more than they deserve. All of His decrees and ways are just and good (Rev 15:3; 16:5-7).

"Rebelled" – Jer 2:8,20; 5:23; 6:19; 7:25,26. It is men's rebellion against the true and living God that brings punishment on them.

1:19 Verse 7.

1:20 Jer 2:19; 9:21,22.

1:21 "They are glad" – v 7.

"The day that you have announced" – Jer 25:15-28.

1:22 Ps 109:14,15; 35:8.

2:1 In this whole chapter up to verse 20 the prophet himself is speaking of Jerusalem.

"Daughter" – 1:6.

"Anger" – see notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc. This sentence can also be translated "How the Lord in His anger has treated the Daughter of Zion with contempt."

"His footstool" – Ps 99:5,9; 1 Chron 28:2. 2:2 "Not shown pity" – v 17; Jer 13:14; Ezek 5:11; 7:4,9; 8:18; 9:5. God knows when to

In his wrath he has thrown down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah. He has brought *them* down to the ground; he has dishonoured the kingdom and its princes.

3 In *his* fierce anger he has cut off all the horn of Israel. He has drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and burned against Jacob like a flaming fire *which* devours all around.

4 He has bent his bow like an enemy. He stood with his right hand like an adversary, and has slain all *who* were pleasant to the eye. In the tent of the daughter of Zion, he has poured out his fury like fire.

5 The Lord was like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel, he has swallowed up all her palaces. He has destroyed its strongholds, and has multiplied mourning and lamentation in the daughter of Judah.

6 And he has done violence to his tabernacle like a garden. He has destroyed his place of assembly. The LORD has caused the appointed feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and in the indignation of his anger has despised the king and the priest.

7 The Lord has rejected his altar; he has abhorred his sanctuary; he has given up the walls of her palaces into the hands of the enemy. They have made a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of an appointed feast.

8 The LORD purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion. He stretched out a *measuring* line. He did not withdraw his hand from destroying; therefore he caused the rampart and

the wall to lament. They languish together.

9 Her gates are sunk into the ground. He has destroyed and broken her bars. Her king and her princes *are* among the Gentiles. The law *is* no *more*, and her prophets find no vision from the LORD.

10 The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground, *and* keep silent. They have thrown dust on their heads. They have tied sackcloth around themselves. The virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.

11 My eyes fail with tears, my inner being is troubled, my heart is poured out on the earth, because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, because the children and the infants faint in the streets of the city.

12 They say to their mothers, "Where *is* grain and wine?" as they faint like the wounded in the streets of the city, as their life pours out into their mothers' bosom.

13 What thing shall I take to testify for you? To what can I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what can I compare you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your fracture *is* as vast as the sea. Who can heal you?

14 The things your prophets saw for you were empty and foolish visions. And they did not expose your guilt, to turn you away from captivity, but their visions for you were false oracles, leading *you* astray.

15 All who pass by clap *their* hands at you. They hiss and wag their heads at the

show mercy and when not to show mercy. 2:3 "Horn" – here indicates strength. 2:4 "Bow" – Deut 32:42; Ps 7:12,13. 2:5 God was their true friend, but was an enemy of their sins and rebellion and wickedness. 2:6 "His tabernacle", "His place" – the temple in Jerusalem (Ps 27:4,5; 74:4). 2:7 Ezek 10:4,18,19; 11:23; Jer 52:13. 2:8 1:17. 2:9 Ps 74:9; Amos 8:11; Micah 3:6,7. 2:10 Job 2:12,13; Ps 35:13,14. 2:11 Compare 1:20; Jer 9:1; Luke 19:41-44. The Spirit of Christ was in the prophet. The grief of the prophet indicated beforehand the grief of Christ.

"Heart" – the Hebrew has the word for "liver," but it is symbolic here of the inner person, or, as we say, heart. 2:12 1:11. 2:13 Jer 14:17; 30:12-15. 2:14 See Jer 5:12,13; 6:13-15; 8:10-12; 14:13-15; 23:9-40; 27:9-28:17. Perhaps if those called prophets had exposed and rebuked the sins of the people the people might have repented and this calamity might not have come on them. But those prophets preferred to speak lies. And the people wanted to hear and believe lies (Jer 5:31). The results of all this are seen here in this book of Lamentations. Compare 2 Thess 2:9-12. 2:15 "Hiss" – Jer 19:8; Deut 28:37.

daughter of Jerusalem, *saying*,  
"Is this the city that *men* called  
The Perfection of Beauty,  
The Joy of the Whole Earth?"  
16 All your enemies have opened their  
mouth against you.  
They hiss and gnash the teeth.  
They say, "We have swallowed *her* up!  
Certainly this *is* the day that we looked for.  
We have found it, we have seen it."  
17 The LORD has done what he planned.  
He has fulfilled his word that he  
commanded in the days of old.  
He has thrown down, and has not shown pity.  
And he has caused *your* enemy to  
rejoice over you.  
He has set up the horn of your adversaries.  
18 Their hearts cried to the Lord.  
O wall of the daughter of Zion,  
let *your* tears run down like a  
river day and night.  
Give yourself no rest.  
Do not let your eyes get relief.  
19 Arise, cry out in the night!  
In the beginning of the watches pour  
out your heart like water before  
the face of the Lord.  
Lift up your hands toward him for the  
life of your young children,  
who faint for hunger at the head  
of every street.  
20 See, O Lord, and consider whom you  
have treated like this.  
Should the women eat their offspring,

children a span long?  
Should the priest and the prophet be  
slain in the sanctuary of the LORD?  
21 The young and the old lie on the  
ground in the streets.  
My virgins and my young men have  
fallen by the sword.  
You have slain *them* in the day of your anger.  
You have killed, *and* not pitied.  
22 You summoned my terrors all around  
as to a feast day, so that in the day  
of the LORD's anger no one  
escaped or remained.  
My enemy has consumed those whom I  
nursed and reared.

3

1 I *am* the man *who* has seen affliction  
by the rod of his wrath.  
2 He has led me and brought *me* into  
darkness, but not *into* light.  
3 Surely he has turned against me;  
he turns his hand *against me* all day long.  
4 He has made my flesh and my skin grow old.  
He has broken my bones.  
5 He has built *siege works* against me,  
and surrounded *me* with bitterness  
and hardship.  
6 He has set me in dark places,  
like *the* dead of long ago.  
7 He has hedged me in, so that I cannot  
get out.  
He has made my chain heavy.

"Joy" – Ps 48:2.  
2:16 3:46; Jer 51:34; Ps 35:25; Ezek 36:3; Micah 4:11.  
2:17 "Fulfilled His Word" – Lev 26:23-39; Deut 28:15-68.  
"Not shown pity" – v 2.  
"Horn" – power and authority.  
2:18 Jer 14:17. Here the word "daughter" signifies all that remained in the city.  
2:20-22 Here once again it seems that Jeremiah is presenting Jerusalem herself as speaking. Speaking of himself he could hardly have used words like "my virgins and my young men" (v 21), "those whom I nursed and reared" (v 22). See Jer 16:1,2.  
2:20 "Eat their offspring" – Levi 26:29; Deut 28:53-57; Jer 19:9. This is one of the punishments that God Himself said would come on them if they rejected Him and disobeyed His Word.  
2:21 Jer 9:21,22.  
2:22 "Anger" – v 1.  
3:1 In this chapter the prophet again is speaking. Here and there he uses the word "we" – vs 22,40-47. Even when he is speaking of his own experiences the people

are never far from his thoughts and feelings. This chapter is the heart of this little book. In it we see deep sorrow, the beginning of hope as he thinks of God's goodness, the willingness to quietly accept the will of God, to learn the lessons God was teaching through chastisement, and the prayer that justice would prevail. When the people suffered calamities it was as though Jeremiah suffered them. Their inner experiences were his inner experiences.  
"Rod of His wrath" – the Babylonian army (compare Isa 10:5. See Jer 51:20). Job also spoke of the rod of God's anger punishing him (Job 9:34). Many words of the first 18 verses of this chapter are quite similar to words in the book of Job and in other poetical books of the Old Testament.  
3:2 Job 12:25; 19:8.  
3:3 Job 19:21; Ps 38:2.  
3:4 Job 13:28; 16:8; 30:30; Ps 51:8; Isa 38:13.  
3:5 This may refer to the siege of the Babylonian armies.  
3:6 Ps 143:3; 88:5,6; Isa 59:10; 50:10.  
3:7 Job 3:23; 19:8; Ps 88:8.

- 8 Also when I cry and shout, he shuts  
out my prayer.
- 9 He has blocked up my ways with cut stones.  
He has made my paths crooked.
- 10 He *was like* a bear lying in wait for me,  
*and like* a lion in secret places.
- 11 He has turned aside my ways,  
and pulled me in pieces.  
He has made me desolate.
- 12 He has bent his bow, and set me as a  
target for the arrow.
- 13 He has caused the arrows of his quiver  
to enter my inner being.
- 14 I was an *object of* derision to all my people,  
*and* their *mocking* song all day long.
- 15 He has filled me with bitterness.  
He has made me drunk with wormwood.
- 16 He has also broken my teeth with gravel.  
He has covered me with ashes.
- 17 And you have moved my soul far from peace.  
I have forgotten prosperity.
- 18 And I said, "My strength, and my hope

- from the LORD have perished.
- 19 I remember my affliction and my misery,  
the wormwood and the bitterness,
- 20 My soul still remembers *them*,  
and sinks down within me.
- 21 This I recall to my mind,  
therefore I have hope:
- 22 *Because of* the LORD's mercies we are  
not consumed,  
for his compassions do not fail.
- 23 *They are* new every morning.  
Great *is* your faithfulness.
- 24 The LORD *is* my portion, says my soul,  
therefore I will hope in him.
- 25 The LORD *is* good to those who wait for him,  
to the soul *who* seeks him.
- 26 *It is* good to hope and wait quietly  
for the salvation of the LORD.
- 27 *It is* good for a man to bear the yoke  
in his youth.
- 28 Let him sit alone and keep silent,  
because he has laid *it* on him.

3:8 Verse 44. Job 30:20; Ps 22:2; 28:1.  
3:9 Verse 7; Isa 63:17; Hosea 2:6. If  
God apparently does not hear the prayers  
of a person and does not help him, if God  
brings darkness on him, it will seem to him  
that his ways have been made crooked.  
Compare Ps 5:8.

3:10,11 Job 10:16; Jer 4:7; 5:6; 49:19;  
50:44; Hosea 6:1; 13:7,8. Men acted like  
wild animals toward them and toward Jerusa-  
lem, but it was God who appointed it.

3:12,13 2:4; Job 6:4; 7:20; 16:12-14; Ps 38:2.  
3:14 Job 17:2; 30:9; Ps 22:6,7; 69:12;  
Jer 20:7.

3:15 Verse 19; Job 9:18; Jer 9:15.

3:16 Since God had appointed all this the  
prophet is attributing all of it to God.

3:17 Job 3:26; Ps 77:2-4.

"Prosperity" – the Hebrew word also  
means "happiness", "good", etc.

3:18 Job 7:6; 17:15. The prophet here  
draws near to the borders of despair.

3:19-21 The prophet cannot forget the fear-  
ful things which he has experienced. But by  
thinking again of the wonderful truths found  
in the following verses (up to v 39), he is  
able to stand in faith instead of falling into  
despair. By doing so he shows the way for  
anyone to endure discouragement, mental  
distress, and inner pain and to come out  
safely on the other side.

"I remember" – Deut 8:2-5; 32:7; Ps  
42:4,5; 63:6; 77:1-12.

3:22,23 The prophet remembers what God  
is like, and by contemplating God's loving  
and gracious qualities finds peace for his  
troubled heart. He knows very well that both  
himself and Jerusalem have deserved even  
worse punishment than has actually come  
on them (compare Ps 103:10). He realizes  
afresh that only one thing kept them from

complete destruction and gave them hope  
for the future, and that one thing was the  
grace of God. God loves those whom He  
has chosen with an eternal love (Jer 31:3;  
Rom 8:37-39). So His love remains on them  
forever (Ps 78:38; 103:13,14). Every  
morning believers can make new  
beginnings. They can receive fresh encour-  
agement every day by understanding that  
their sins are blotted out, and that God's  
love and mercy will surround them in the  
future. They can go on from the failures and  
mistakes of the past to higher, better things  
in the future, knowing that God will always  
be faithful to His covenant and promises  
(Ex 34:6; Ps 89:1,2; 108:4; 115:1; etc).

3:24 Ps 73:26; 119:57; 142:5; Num  
18:20. The truths he has been looking at  
have strengthened his faith and brought  
peace of mind, and rest of heart. No despair  
can stand against these powerful truths when  
they are understood and believed.

3:25 Ps 25:3; 34:8; 86:5; Jer 29:14;  
Matt 7:7-11. In spite of the experiences  
recorded in vs 1-18 he knows that God is  
good and does good. This is the victory  
faith achieves over every circumstance that  
seems against faith.

3:26 Ps 37:7; 40:1; Isa 26:3; 30:15.

3:27 "Yoke" – in other words it is good for a  
person to fully obey God and heartily accept  
the discipline, chastisement, training, and  
the pains that go with such things, and he  
should learn to do this when he is young.  
The older he is when he begins this the  
harder it will be for him. The word "yoke"  
brings to mind the words of the Lord Jesus  
in Matt 11:29.

3:28 If God has put certain things on us to  
bear we should not try to escape from them  
by fellowship with other people, but face up

- 29 Let him put his mouth in the dust;  
perhaps there is hope.
- 30 Let him give *his* cheek to the one who  
strikes him.  
Let him be filled with disgrace.
- 31 For the Lord will not reject forever.
- 32 For though he causes grief, he will  
have compassion in accordance with  
the abundance of his mercies.
- 33 For he does not willingly afflict  
or grieve the children of men.
- 34 To crush under his feet all the  
prisoners of the earth,
- 35 To turn aside a man's rights before the  
face of the Most High,
- 36 To defraud a man in his case,  
the Lord does not approve *of such things*.
- 37 *Who is he who* speaks, and it comes to pass,  
when the Lord has not  
commanded *it*?
- 38 *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High  
that disaster and good *things* come?
- 39 Why should a living man complain,  
a man *undergoing* punishment for his sins?
- 40 Let us search and examine our ways,  
and turn back to the LORD.
- 41 Let us lift up our heart *together* with  
*our* hands to God in the heavens.

- 42 We have transgressed and have rebelled;  
you have not pardoned.
- 43 You have covered *us* with anger,  
and pursued us.  
You have slain *us*; you have not shown pity.
- 44 You have covered yourself with a cloud,  
so that *our* prayer cannot pass through.
- 45 You have made us *like* scrapings and  
trash in the midst of the people.
- 46 All our enemies have opened their  
mouths against us.
- 47 Fear and a snare have come upon us,  
desolation and destruction.
- 48 My eye runs down with rivers of water  
for the destruction of the daughter  
of my people.
- 49 My eye will flow without interruption,  
and will not stop,
- 50 Until the LORD looks down, and sees  
from heaven.
- 51 My eye affects my heart because of  
all the daughters of my city.
- 52 My enemies hunted me down like a bird,  
without cause.
- 53 They cut off my life in the dungeon,  
and hurled a stone on me;
- 54 Waters flowed over my head.  
*Then* I said, "I am cut off."
- 55 I called on your name, O LORD,

to them in God's presence. Compare Jer 15:17.

**3:29** "Dust" – indicates a sincere and humble acceptance of those things God has caused to happen and obedience to His will.

**3:30** Compare Isa 50:6; Matt 5:39.

**3:31,32** Ps 30:5; 66:10-12; 94:14; Isa 54:7,8; Heb 13:5. The prophet encourages himself by the thought that the troubles and griefs that God causes His people to undergo are only for a comparatively short time. See 2 Cor 4:17,18.

**3:33** Ps 103:13,14; Jer 48:36-38; Isa 63:9; Ezek 18:23,32; Hosea 11:8; Heb 12:10,11. God, in accordance with His absolute justice, brings troubles and distress on people because of their sins. But this gives him no pleasure at all. In all that He does He has good motives and grand purposes.

**3:34-36** God sees the cruel and unjust acts of men such as those displayed by the leaders of Judah and the armies of Babylon, but He does not approve of them – quite the opposite.

**3:37-39** If God had not decreed the disaster that came on Jerusalem and its people then it would not have happened (1:17; Amos 3:6; Isa 14:26,27). But all left alive in Jerusalem (and all men everywhere) should understand that any punishment from God comes because of their sins. Micah 7:9 perfectly describes the kind of attitude we

should have when God causes troubles to come to us.

"Why. . .complain" – see Ex 14:11,12; 15:24; 16:2; Num 11:1; 14:2,3; 16:11; 17:5.

**3:40** There will be good results from the troubles and griefs which come to us if we are able to do this (Ps 119:59; 139:23,24; 1 Cor 11:28; 2 Cor 13:5).

**3:41,42** This was the way for the people of Jerusalem to obtain forgiveness and restoration, and the only way. Compare Ps 32:3-5; Prov 28:13; 1 John 1:9.

**3:43-47** This happened just as God foretold in Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapter 28.

**3:48-51** The prophet has humbly submitted to what God has done to him and to Jerusalem and is looking with hope to the future. But this has not removed the grief he feels for his people. He determines that he will go on lamenting until God shows mercy and compassion on them. Having peace in our personal relationship with God does not mean that we will not feel sorrow at the troubles and pains of others. Compare Luke 19:41; Rom 9:1-3; Ps 126:5.

**3:52-63** These words bring before us Jeremiah's personal experiences. Compare v 53 with Jer 37:16 and 38:6, v 58 with Jer 38:7-13, v 59 with 18:19,20, v 60 and 61 with 11:18-21; 12:6; 18:18.



out of the deep dungeon.  
 56 You heard my voice:  
     "Do not hide your ear at my breathing,  
     at my cry."  
 57 You drew near in the day *that* I called to you.  
     You said, "Do not fear."  
 58 O Lord, you have pleaded the case for  
     my soul.  
     You have redeemed my life.  
 59 O LORD, you have seen the wrong  
     done to me. Judge my case.  
 60 You have seen all their vengeance *and*  
     all their plots against me.  
 61 You have heard their insults, O LORD,  
     *and* all their plots against me,  
 62 The words of those who rose up against me,  
     and their whispering  
         against me all day long.  
 63 Look at their sitting down, and their rising up.  
     I *am* their mocking song.  
 64 Repay them, O LORD, in accordance  
     with the work of their hands.  
 65 Give them sorrow of heart.  
     Your curse *be* on them!  
 66 In anger pursue and destroy them  
     from under the LORD's heavens!

# 4

1 How the gold has become dim!  
     *How* the most fine gold has changed!  
     The stones of the sanctuary are  
         scattered at the head of every street.  
 2 The precious sons of Zion,  
     worth their weight in fine gold,  
     how they are regarded like earthenware  
         pitchers, the work of the potter's hands!  
 3 Even jackals offer the breast,  
     they give suck to their young ones,  
     *but* the daughter of my people *has*  
         *become* cruel, like the ostriches in

the desert.  
 4 The tongue of the sucking child clings  
     to the roof of his mouth for thirst.  
     The young children ask for bread,  
     *and* no one breaks *it* for them.  
 5 Those who ate delicacies are desolate  
     in the streets.  
     Those who were brought up in scarlet  
         embrace ash heaps.  
 6 For the punishment of the wickedness of  
     the daughter of my people is greater  
         than the punishment of the sin  
         of Sodom that was overthrown  
         in a moment,  
     with no hand turned to *help* her.  
 7 Her Nazirites were purer than snow;  
     they were whiter than milk;  
     their bodies were more ruddy than rubies;  
     their appearance *was* like sapphire.  
 8 *Now* their faces are blacker than coal;  
     they are not recognized in the streets.  
     Their skin clings to their bones;  
     it is withered;  
     it has become like a stick.  
 9 *Those* slain by the sword are better off  
     than *those* slain by hunger;  
     for these pine away, stricken by the  
         *lack of* the fruits of the field.  
 10 The hands of compassionate women  
     have boiled their own children;  
     they were their food in the destruction  
         of the daughter of my people.  
 11 The LORD has brought his fury to bear;  
     he has poured out his fierce anger,  
     and has kindled a fire in Zion;  
     and it has devoured its foundations.  
 12 The kings of the earth,  
     and all the inhabitants of the world,  
     would not have believed that the  
         adversary and the enemy could  
         enter the gates of Jerusalem.

3:62 "Words" – in Hebrew "lips."  
 3:64-66 This is a prayer that justice might prevail. See the note on such prayers at Ps 35:8.  
 3:65 Compare Isa 6:9,10.  
 3:66 "Pursue. . . them" – v 43; Ps 35:6.  
 4:2 The people of Judah and Jerusalem were God's special treasure – Ex 19:5. But all their beauty and splendor had vanished.  
 4:3 The people had become harsher than animals toward their children (2:20).  
 "Ostriches" – Job 39:13-17.  
 4:4 Verse 10; 2:11,12.  
 4:5 Neither wealthy people or those of the royal family were able to escape (scarlet here probably indicates royalty).  
 4:6 Sodom was destroyed immediately by fire from heaven, but Jerusalem had to

endure a siege of a year and a half, and then fell into the hands of savage enemies who destroyed her.  
 4:7 Verse 5.  
 4:8 This was the result of the famine that came to them.  
 4:10 Verse 4; Lev 26:29; Deut 28:53-57. Terrible indeed is the curse that sin brings on people.  
 4:11 Sin not confessed and forsaken brings God's anger, and that anger brings terrible punishment.  
 4:12 Jer 21:13. Before this event Jerusalem had sometimes fallen into the hands of its enemies. But afterwards the kings of Judah had greatly strengthened the walls and defensive fortifications of the city (2 Chron 26:9; 33:14). Jerusalem withstood

13 Because of the sins of her prophets,  
    *and* the evil deeds of her priests  
    who shed the blood of the just in  
    the midst of her,  
14 They have wandered *like* blind men  
    in the streets;  
    they have polluted themselves with blood,  
    so that men could not touch their garments.  
15 They cried out to them,  
    “Go away, unclean! Go away, go away!  
    Do not touch!”  
    When they ran away and wandered,  
    *people* among the nations said,  
    “*They* will not settle *there* again.”  
16 The anger of the LORD has scattered  
    them; he no longer regards them.  
    They did not respect the person of  
    the priests;  
    they did not show favour to the elders.  
17 As for us, our eyes failed, vainly  
    *looking* for our help.  
    In our watching we looked for a nation  
    *that* could not save *us*.  
18 They hunt our steps, so that we cannot  
    go into our streets.  
    Our end is near; our days are finished,  
    for our end has come.  
19 Our pursuers are swifter than the  
    eagles of the sky.  
    They pursued us on the mountains.  
    They lay in wait for us in the wilderness.  
20 The breath of our nostrils,  
    the anointed of the LORD,  
    was caught in their pits;  
    we had said of him,  
    “Under his shadow we will live among  
    the nations.”

even a siege of one and a half years at the hands of the mighty Babylonian army. Perhaps the kings and peoples of the earth remembered how the armies of Sennacherib had perished outside Jerusalem’s walls (Isa 36:1,2; 37:36,37), and thought the same thing might happen to the Babylonians.  
4:13 Jer 2:8; 5:31; 6:13. Even a city thought to be impossible to conquer may be destroyed because of its sins. Sin is the great destroyer of cities and people.  
4:14 Deut 28:28,29; Isa 29:9.  
4:15 The priests had changed their holy consecration and the glory of their priesthood into something abominable and evil.  
4:16 Deut 28:49,50.  
4:17 Jer 2:18,36; Ezek 29:16.  
4:20 This refers to king Zedekiah – Jer 39:4,5.  
4:21 Esau’s descendants rejoiced when they saw the fall of Judah and Jerusalem (Ezek 35:15; Obadiah 12). But the time of their destruction was near (Jer 25:15,21).

21 Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom,  
    *you* who live in the land of Uz;  
    but the cup will also pass to you.  
    You will get drunk, and make yourself naked.  
22 The punishment of your guilt is completed,  
    O daughter of Zion.  
    He will no longer lead you away into captivity.  
    He will punish your guilt,  
    O daughter of Edom;  
    he will expose your sins.

5

1 Remember, O LORD, what has come  
    upon us.  
    Consider, and look at our disgrace.  
2 Our inheritance has been turned over  
    to foreigners, our houses to aliens.  
3 We are orphans and fatherless;  
    our mothers *are* widows.  
4 We have to lay out money for our  
    drinking water.  
    Our wood is sold to us.  
5 Our necks *are* being pursued.  
    We labour, *and* have no rest.  
6 We have given *our* hand *to* the  
    Egyptians, *and to* the Assyrians,  
    to be satisfied with bread.  
7 Our fathers sinned, *and are* no more,  
    and we have borne their evil deeds.  
8 Servants rule over us.  
    *There is* no one to rescue *us* out  
    of their hands.  
9 We get our bread at *the peril of* our lives,  
    because of the sword in the wilderness.  
10 Our skin is black as an oven because  
    of the terrible famine.

“Uz” – Job 1:1.  
5:1 See 3:49,50.  
5:2 “Inheritance” – their country.  
5:4 “Money for our drinking water” – compare Deut 8:7. Sin can ruin the good gifts God has given.  
5:5 Isa 57:20,21.  
5:6 The leaders of Judah thought that Egypt or Assyria would come to their help in the fight against Babylon (Jer 2:18,36; Ezek 29:16).  
5:7 Since that generation bore the punishment of their ancestors we may be sure that they deserved it (v 16; Jer 14:20; 16:11,12; 31:29,30).  
5:8-12 Let us learn this lesson well – sin was the one and only thing that brought cruel enemies to rule over them, that brought danger to life and limb, that brought them into a destitute state, that robbed them of all peace and happiness. The only cause of their pains, troubles, griefs and destruction was sin.

11 They have ravished the women in Zion,  
    *and* the maidens in the cities of Judah.  
12 Princes have been hanged up by their hands.  
    The faces of elders have not been honoured.  
13 They took the young men to grind,  
    and the children fell under the *loads*  
        *of* wood.  
14 The elders have gone from the gate,  
    the young men from their music.  
15 The joy of our heart has ceased.  
    Our dancing has turned to mourning.  
16 The crown has fallen *from* our head.  
    Woe to us, for we have sinned!

17 Because of this our heart is faint.  
    Because of these *things* our eyes are dim;  
18 Because of Mount Zion, which is desolate.  
    The foxes walk on it.  
19 You, O LORD, remain forever,  
    your throne from generation to generation.  
20 Why do you forget us permanently,  
    *and* forsake us for such a long time?  
21 Turn us back to you, O LORD,  
    and we will turn back.  
    Renew our days as of old,  
22 unless you have utterly rejected us,  
    *and* are very angry with us.

5:15 Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10. Compare Ps 30:11; Isa 61:3.  
5:19-22 The prophet leaves all these matters where they belong – in the hands of the eternal God who is the creator and ruler of the universe. Verse 19 is similar to Ps 102:12. In fact the language of that whole psalm is something like this book of

Lamentations.  
5:20 Ps 6:3; 13:1; 89:46.  
5:21,22 Jer 31:18,19; Ps 80:3. Jeremiah knows that if God does not turn the people back to Himself then they will not turn to Him. It is God who enables men to repent and seek Himself (Acts 5:31; 11:18; Rom 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25).

# EZEKIEL

## Author:

The prophet Ezekiel. His name means "God strengthens." Ezekiel was from a priestly family. His father was an official of high rank. Nebuchadnezzar took Ezekiel along with other captives in Babylon in 597 BC.

## Date:

God called Ezekiel to be a prophet in 593 BC, when Ezekiel was 30 years of age. The events in this book cover a period of 22 years. He wrote either during those years or shortly afterwards.

## Themes:

God's glory; in prophetic vision the departure of God's glory from His temple in Jerusalem, and in a future time the return of that glory to a new temple. Between these two events the prophet writes of the corrupt condition of the people of Israel, God's judgment on them and on other nations, the change that will come to Israel at the end of this age, the destruction of armies invading from the north. Everywhere in this book we see that the LORD (Jehovah) God is the sovereign ruler of the world. We also see His determination that through His deeds and actions men should know that He alone is God. The phrase "then they will know that I am the LORD" is found a great many times. Another common phrase is "the word of the LORD came." Ezekiel did not devise the messages he delivered. They came directly from God. See 1 Peter 1:20,21.

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**1** Now this happened in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month*, on the fifth *day* of the month, when I *was* among the captives by the Kebar River: the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

2 On the fifth *day* of the month, which *was in* the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, 3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the Kebar River; and there the hand of the LORD was on him.

4 And I looked and saw a whirlwind coming out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself. And a brightness *was* around it, and *radiating* from its center *something* like the colour of amber, from inside the fire. 5 Also from its center *came* the likeness of four living beings. And this *was* their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. 6 And each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. 7 And their legs *were* straight legs, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of a calf's foot; and they gleamed like the colour of burnished bronze. 8 And *they had* the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and the four of them had their faces and their wings.

9 Their wings *were* joined to one another. The *beings* did not turn as they went; each one went straight forward.

10 As for the likeness of their faces, *each* of the four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, *and each of* the four also had the face of an eagle. 11 Thus *were* their faces. And their wings *were* stretched upward. Two *wings* of each one *were* joined to one another, and two covered their bodies. 12 And each one went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went; *and* they did not turn as they went. 13 As for the likeness of the living beings, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, *and* like the appearance of torches. The *fire* went up and down among the living beings, and the fire was bright, and out of the fire came lightning. 14 And the living beings sped back and forth like the appearance of a flash of lightning.

15 Now as I was watching the living beings, one wheel appeared on the earth by *each of* the living beings, with their four faces. 16 The appearance of the wheels and their workmanship

**1:1,2** "Thirtieth year" – probably means the 30th year of Ezekiel's life – 593 BC.

"Captives" – those taken by the Babylonians to Babylonia in 597 BC, before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

"River" – the Hebrew word can mean a stream of any sort. Kebar was actually a canal from the river Euphrates south of the city of Babylon.

"Heavens were opened" – the doors of God's unseen dwelling place opened. Compare Rev 4:1.

**1:3** "Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi" – or it could be translated "Ezekiel son of Buzi the priest." Three statements indicate that God's revelation came to Ezekiel – "visions of God" (v 1. Note on vision at Gen 15:1); "the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel" (v 3. Jer 1:2); "the hand of the LORD was upon him" (3:14,22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1). Ezekiel gives us a sure revelation from God, not the mere writings of a man.

"Chaldeans" – Babylonians.

**1:4** Here are three symbols of God's presence – whirlwind or storm (Ex 19:16; Job 38:1; 40:6; Ps 18:9-13); fire (note at Ex 3:2); brightness or light (Ps 104:2; 1 Tim 6:16; 1 John 1:5).

**1:5-28** This vision can be divided into three sections – living beings (vs 5-14), wheels (vs 15-21), expanse (vs 22-28). The vision as a whole reveals God's glory in His sovereign rule over all the earth.

**1:5-14** The living beings are cherubim (10:15), not human beings. Notes on cherubim at Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-20. Here we should note the following:

There were four cherubim (v 5). This

number may indicate the whole earth with its "4 corners."

The cherubim had four faces (vs 6,10). Their faces represent the whole of earth's creatures – lion "king" of wild beasts, eagle "king of birds", ox symbolizing cattle in general, the most important species of domesticated animals, and man "king" of all other of earth's creatures (Gen 1:28; Ps 8:6-8).

The form of the cherubim was like a man's form (v 5). God's glory has more to do with mankind than with the rest of earth's creatures.

The cherubim were in the fire which symbolizes God's presence and glory (v 5). They were very bright and fiery themselves (v 13).

They went straight ahead without turning. God's ways are straight ways not like man's crooked ways (Ps 125:5; Prov 2:12-15; Isa 40:3,4; 42:16; 59:8; Mark 1:3).

They went as the Spirit directed (v 12). Spirit here means God's Spirit in relation to the sovereignty of earth.

They moved like flashes of lightning. This may indicate the speed with which they executed the will of God. With them there is no reluctance, no hesitation, no delay.

In 10:12 it is said they were "full of eyes" (compare Rev 4:6,8). This suggests God's ability to see everything everywhere.

Their movement was like the voice of God (v 24. Compare Rev 1:15).

**1:15-21** "Wheels" – we should note the following:

Wheels obviously speak of motion, of a vehicle of some sort. Here the wheels with



was like the colour of beryl. And the four had the same likeness; and their appearance and their workmanship was like a wheel inside another wheel. 17 When they went, they went in the direction of one of their four sides, and they did not turn as they went. 18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were awesome; and their rims were full of eyes all around the four of them.

19 And when the living beings went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living beings were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. 20 Wherever the spirit would go, they went, for there the spirit went. And the wheels were lifted up close beside them, for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. 21 When those went, these went; and when those stood still, these stood still; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up close beside them, for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

22 And the likeness of the expanse above the heads of the living creature was like the colour of an awesome crystal; it was above, stretched out

over their heads. 23 And under the expanse their wings were straight, toward one another. Each one had two which covered this side, and each one had two which covered that side of their bodies. 24 And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings, like the sound of great waters, like the voice of the Almighty, the sound of speech, like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings.

25 And there came a voice from the expanse that was above their heads, when they stood and let down their wings. 26 And above the expanse that was above their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone. And high above, on the likeness of the throne was the likeness of the appearance of a man. 27 And I saw something like the colour of amber, like the appearance of fire all around inside it; from the appearance of his waist upward, and from the appearance of his waist downward, I saw what appeared to be fire, and it had brightness all around. 28 The appearance of this surrounding brightness was like the appearance of the rainbow that is in

the cherubim seem to carry above them a platform and a throne (vs 22,26). It is interesting that the ark of the covenant, with the cherubim above it and God's glory above them, is compared to a chariot in 1 Chron 28:18. See also Dan 7:9. Note on this ark at Ex 25:10-16.

These wheels were like wheels within wheels or like intersecting wheels, but their structure is not described. Perhaps they speak of the mysterious and complicated nature of the activity of God's glorious presence on earth (Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33). Remember these verses present a picture of God's glory and it is a part of God's glory to conceal certain matters (Prov 25:2).

The wheels did not act independently of the cherubim and the Spirit (vs 17,19, 20,21). God's ways on earth are intimately connected with the activities of heavenly beings. And everything works together in perfect harmony as a vehicle of God's glory.

The rims, like the cherubim, were full of eyes. The movement of God's glorious activity in the world and in history is not blind. God is fully aware of every direction or change of direction that needs to be taken. The chariot of the true Lord of the universe does not recklessly, ruthlessly roll on and crush individuals or peoples or nations. He who sits on the throne is love (1 John 4:8). His throne is a throne of grace (Heb 4:16). When He acts in judgment He does so because He is the just judge of the universe and must put down evil. This too is done because He sees it needs to be done for the good of the world as a whole.

1:22-28 The expanse and the throne – vs 22 and 26 suggest some sort of beautiful platform on which God's throne rested. Let

us observe the following:

The throne with its occupant is the important thing, not the expanse. Evidently, from there the voice was heard (vs 25,26). The throne here speaks of God's sovereignty over all creation. His voice, His word determine the direction of His activity on earth. The cherubim and the wheels give instant and full obedience.

The one sitting on the throne was in figure like a man (v 26). No one has seen God at any time (John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16). But God at times has come in the form of man to speak with men (Gen 18:1,2; etc). The Lord Jesus was the supreme example of this (John 1:1,14; Phil 2:5-7). Doubtless He is the one on the throne in this vision, as He was in Isaiah's vision (Isa 6:1; John 12:41).

1:24 "The Almighty" – in Hebrew "Shaddai" – note at Gen 17:1.

1:27 Compare Rev 1:13-16.

1:28 "Rainbow" – Rev 4:3; 10:1.

"Glory" – he does not say He saw God. He does not say even that he saw God's glory, only the "appearance" of the "likeness" of it. He knows it is all symbolic and gives only a picture of something that cannot be conveyed fully in a picture. No doubt Ezekiel associated the glory of God with the temple in Jerusalem. It was the temple which had the ark and God's presence over it and the cherubim. To the people of Israel, the center of God's activity on earth was there (1 Kings 8:11; Ps 26:8; 63:2; 96:6; 102:16). Ezekiel could never have expected to see God's glory coming to the plains of Babylon, but later he came to understand that for that time God was forsaking Jerusalem and coming to His people in captivity (10:4,15,18,19; 11:22-24). The glory of

the cloud on a day of rain.

This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw *it*, I prostrated myself, and I heard a voice of one who spoke.

**2** And he said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you." **2** And when he spoke to me the Spirit came into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

**3** And he said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. **4** For *they are* obstinate and stubborn progeny. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' **5** And whether they listen, or refuse *to listen* (for they *are* a rebellious house), they will still know that there has been a prophet among them. **6** And, son of man, do not be afraid of them, or be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns *surround* you, and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of their words, or be dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house. **7** And you shall speak my words to them, whether they listen or refuse *to*

*listen*; for they *are* very rebellious. **8** But, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth, and eat what I give you."

**9** And when I looked, a hand appeared, stretched out to me, and in it a scroll appeared. **10** And he spread it out before me; and it *was* written inside and outside; and lamentations and mourning and woe *were* written on it.

**3** Moreover he said to me, "Son of man, eat what you are encountering; eat this scroll, and go speak to the house of Israel." **2** So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that scroll.

**3** And he said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach, and fill your belly with this scroll that I am giving you." Then I *ate it*; and in my mouth it was like honey in sweetness.

**4** And he said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel, and speak to them with my words. **5** For you *are* not sent to a people of obscure speech and difficult language, *but* to the house of Israel; **6** not to many people of obscure speech and difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I had sent you to them, they

God was still bound up with Israel – not principally with those Jews who remained in the land of Israel but with those in Babylon (Jeremiah chapter 24). Let us understand that where we as God's people go, God goes with us (Heb 13:5).

Compare Ezekiel's reaction to the appearance of God's glory with Dan 8:17,18; 10:7-10; Rev 1:17. The vision as a whole, even if we don't understand all the details of it, should strike us to some extent as it did Ezekiel. There is in it a mysterious, powerful, indescribable sense of the glory of God. God's purpose in giving the vision to Ezekiel was not to confuse him with details but to give him, before he entered into his ministry, a view of the greatness, glory and holiness of God. He wanted him (and us) to serve God with reverence and awe and godly fear.

**2:1** "Son of man" – an emphatic way for God to say that Ezekiel was a mere man. The Lord Jesus when He called Himself "the son of man" was referring to Dan 7:13 and 8:17 where the phrase is a title of the Messiah. This phrase is not used like that here in Ezekiel.

"Stand" – Ezekiel could not forever lie on his face in God's presence. There was work to do, messages to deliver for God. Compare Acts 26:16. Worship is to lead to work. **2:2** The same Spirit in the cherubim and wheels (1:12,19,20) now comes into Ezekiel to empower him to do God's will and to live for God's glory. All the true prophets of God stood in God's presence, heard God speak, and spoke as they were moved by God's Spirit (2 Pet 1:21).

**2:3-8** Compare Isa 6:9-13; Jer 1:4-10.

**2:3** "Rebellious" – Isa 1:2-4; Jer 5:23. Rebellion was a characteristic of the nation from the very beginning (Deut 9:24).

**2:4,5** "Say" – verse 7. God's prophets are to speak whether people will listen or not.

"Lord God" – see the note at Gen 15:2.

**2:6** "Do not be afraid" – 1:8; Josh 1:9; 2 Tim 1:7; Heb 13:6.

"Scorpions", "rebellious house" – from this description of Israel in Babylon we would not guess that these people were the good fruit of Jer 24:5-7, the remnant of Isa 46:3,4 through whom God would restore the nation. **2:8** Ezekiel by nature was a sinner too and had to be on guard against the rebelliousness of his fallen nature (notes at Jer 9:21; 12:13; Num 20:11; 2 Sam 11:1).

**2:9,10** Ezekiel's message at the beginning was loaded with God's condemnation of the people's behavior and His judgments which were very grievous. Later in his ministry Ezekiel was given a message full of hope. Observe that his message was not of his own invention. It was handed to him by God. It was not his business to add anything to it or take anything away. See 2 Tim 3:16; Rev 22:18,19.

**3:1-3** Compare Jer 1:9; 15:16; Rev 10:9,10. God's word must be received and digested by God's servants. It must become a part of their lives.

"Sweetness" – this contact with God, this taste of His message was sweet even though it contained words of lamentation and woe. But in Ezekiel's inner man, as later in John's, it became bitter (vs 12-14).

**3:4-6** 2:3-5. Compare Matt 11:20-24.

would have listened to you. 7 But the house of Israel will not listen to you, for they will not listen to me; for the whole house of Israel *is* obstinate and hard-hearted. 8 See, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. 9 I have made your forehead like adamant, harder than flint. Do not fear them, or be dismayed by their looks, though they *are* a rebellious house."

10 Moreover he said to me, "Son of man, hear with your ears and receive in your heart all my words that I speak to you. 11 And go to those of the captivity, to the children of your people, and speak to them, and tell them, 'Thus says the Lord God,' whether they listen or refuse *to listen*."

12 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a voice *sounding like* a great rushing, saying, "Blessed be the glory of the LORD in his place." 13 Also *I heard* the sound of the wings of the living beings that touched one another, and the sound of the wheels beside them, and a sound of a great rushing. 14 So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong on me. 15 Then I came to those of the captivity at Tel-Abib, who lived by the Kebar River, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

16 And at the end of seven days it happened that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Therefore hear the word from my mouth, and give them warning from me. 18 When I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and you do not give him warning or speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life, that wicked *man* will die in his guilt, but I will require his blood at your hand. 19 But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he will die in his guilt, but you will have delivered your soul.

20 "Again, when a righteous *man* turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Because you did not warn him, he will die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done will not be remembered; but I will require his blood at your hand. 21 But if you warn the righteous *man* that the righteous are not to sin, and he does not sin, he will surely live, because he was warned; also you have delivered your soul."

22 And the hand of the LORD was on me there; and he said to me, "Arise, go out to the plain, and there I will talk with you." 23 Then I arose, and went out to the plain; and the glory of the LORD appeared standing there, like the glory which I saw

3:7 Jer 7:27. But God has His good purpose in sending His messages even if the people they go to won't listen.

3:8,9 Ezekiel means "God is strong" or "God strengthens" or "God makes hard." To face the kind of people he faced Ezekiel needed to be a tough, strong, determined man and only God could make him so. Compare Isa 50:7; Jer 1:17-19. God will make all His servants suited to the task to which He calls them (2 Cor 3:5,6).

3:10 The messenger of God himself must be very careful to respond to the Word of God. He is not to be like a mere talking parrot or a myna bird, untouched by the Word he delivers.

3:11 The exiles were troubled by false prophets who predicted an early end to their exile. They did not believe Jerusalem would be destroyed and that they would be in Babylon for many decades. See Jeremiah's letter to these same exiles in Jeremiah chapter 29.

3:12-14 From 2:1 to 3:11 the cherubim, the wheels, and the glory of God have been there. Now Ezekiel must leave all that and begin a ministry to a stubborn people who will reject what he says. The word of God with its messages of sadness and woe is burning in his heart (2:10). It is no wonder he went in bitterness and anger of spirit. God was already beginning to work in him to make him the kind of person who could deliver His message as He wanted it delivered (vs 8,9). Observe that God's Spirit

compelled him to go.

3:15,16 Dan 8:27; 10:2. It is not surprising that he was overwhelmed for seven days. Truly, after all he had experienced he could never be the same again.

3:17 "Watchman" — Isa 52:8; 56:10; 62:6; Jer 6:17; 31:6; Ezek 33:7-9. God's watchmen were to watch for God's Word and the behavior of the people, and speak for God, especially warning of coming danger.

3:18-21 See the awesome responsibility of God's prophets. They had to give an account to God for their ministry and for the people to whom they were sent. It is not clear what God would do to Ezekiel if he failed to warn those God sent him to, but the words "I will require his blood at your hand" (vs 18,20) are very severe and no doubt went deep into the mind and heart of Ezekiel.

3:20 "Die" — this does not necessarily speak of the loss of eternal life but of physical death. See 18:1-32. Compare John 5:24; 11:25,26.

3:22 "Hand of the LORD" — 1:3.

"Go out" — to be alone with God. Ezekiel was already overwhelmed (v 15); perhaps the message of vs 16-21 overwhelmed him even more. In any case God wanted him to see the glory again. Alone he communed with God. Compare Moses alone (Ex 3:1,2;), Elijah alone (1 Kings 19:9-13), John the Baptist alone (Luke 1:80), Jesus alone (Luke 4:42; 6:12), John alone (Rev 1:9,10).

3:23 God's glorious presence awaited His

by the Kebar River; and I prostrated myself.

24 Then the Spirit came into me, and set me on my feet, and spoke to me, and said to me, "Go, shut yourself up inside your house. 25 But, son of man, see, they are going to put ropes on you and tie you up with them; and you will not go out among them. 26 And I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you will be mute, and will not be one who rebukes them; for they *are* a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: He who will listen, let him listen; and he who refuses *to listen*, let him refuse; for they *are* a rebellious house.

**4** "Also you, son of man, take a clay tablet, and place it in front of you, and draw the city of Jerusalem on it; 2 and lay siege to it, and build siege works against it, and heap up a mound against it. Also set up camps against it, and place *battering* rams against it all around. 3 Moreover take for yourself an iron pan, and set it up as an iron wall between you and the city, and set your face against it. And it will be under siege, and you will be laying siege to it. This *will be* a sign to the house of Israel.

4 "Also, lie down on your left side, and lay the guilt of the house of Israel on it. You shall bear their

guilt for the number of the days that you lie on *your side*. 5 For I have laid on you a number of days in accordance with the years of their guilt, three hundred and ninety days. So you shall bear the guilt of the house of Israel.

6 "And when you have completed them, lie down again, on your right side; and you will bear the guilt of the house of Judah forty days. I have appointed to you a day for each year. 7 Therefore you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and your arm *shall be* bare, and you shall prophesy against it. 8 And, see, I will put ropes on you, and you will not be able to turn yourself from one side to the other, until you have finished the days of your siege.

9 "And take for yourself wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and spelt, and put them in a container, and make bread with them. You shall eat it for as many days as you lie on your side, three hundred and ninety days. 10 And your food which you will eat *is to be* by weight, twenty shekels a day; you shall eat it from time to time. 11 You shall also drink water by measure, the sixth part of a hin. You shall drink it from time to time. 12 And you shall eat it *like* barley cakes, and you shall bake it in their sight with human dung *for fuel*."

obedient servant – as always.

**3:24-27** New instructions that would further prepare Ezekiel for what he had to face.

**3:26,27** Apparently Ezekiel for some time was unable to speak except when God enabled him. At times there are firm restraints on God's servants; they may not have the same freedom that others enjoy. During this time Ezekiel's ministry was in his house and only to those who came there. But through them his words and news of his doings would surely spread among all the exiles. Compare Paul bound (Phil 1:12-14; 2 Tim 2:9).

**4:1-3** In this chapter and the first 4 verses of chapter 5 is the record of how God made Ezekiel an object lesson to the people. Ezekiel acted out what would happen to Jerusalem. The people had refused to believe that the city would be destroyed (3:11). Ezekiel's actions worked impressively with God's message which begins from 5:5. For other examples of object lessons see 1 Kings 11:29-31; 2 Kings 13:14-19; Isa 8:3,4,18; Jer 13:1-7.

**4:3** The iron pan with Ezekiel behind it facing Jerusalem probably conveyed the following idea to the people – iron would speak of strength and fixed purpose; Ezekiel the prophet represented God as being opposed to the city and bringing a siege against it.

**4:4-8** Israel means here the northern kingdom that separated from Judah after king Solomon's death (1 Kings chapter 12). Judah means the southern kingdom. From the beginning of the northern kingdom Israel was

in rebellion against God and worshiped idols (1 Kings 12:28-30). So the time of their sin is put at 390 years – probably from Jeroboam's time to Ezekiel's. The sin of the house of Judah was put at 40 years, possibly because for a long time they did not completely fall away from God. They had some good kings, some times of revival, and maintained at least the outward forms of worship of the true God in His temple.

**4:4** "Bear their guilt" – this does not mean to make atonement for them or take their sins away. Ezekiel was merely representing the two kingdoms and showing by his actions the times of their most grievous sin against God.

**4:7** "Arm shall be bare" – symbolized that God was ready to take action. Compare Isa 52:10. "Prophecy against it" – see the prophecy given in 5:5-17. Ezekiel's remarkable actions and words would have been spoken of throughout the community of exiles and many must have come to watch and hear him. Indeed, who would have kept away?

**4:9-11** Ezekiel's food was to be only that which could be stored for a long time in containers, no fresh vegetables, no meat, and no dairy products. Both his daily food and water were to be taken in rationed, very limited quantities. All this symbolized siege conditions (vs 16,17).

"Twenty shekels a day" (v 10) – a little more than 200 grams.

"Hin" – about 0.6 liter.

**4:12,13** Speaks of very severe conditions when normal fuels would not be available.

13 And the LORD said, "In this way the children of Israel will eat their defiled food among the Gentiles, where I will drive them."

14 Then I said, "Ah Lord God! See, my soul has never been defiled; for from my youth up until now I have not eaten anything which died of itself, or was torn in pieces, and no unclean meat has come into my mouth."

15 Then he said to me, "See, I grant you cow's dung in place of human dung, and you can prepare your bread over that."

16 Moreover he said to me, "Son of man, see, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem; and they will eat bread by weight, and with care; and they will drink water by measure, and with astonishment, 17 because they will lack bread and water, and be astonished at one another, and consume away because of their guilt."

**5** "And, son of man, take a sharp knife; take and use *it* as a barber's razor on your head and on your beard. Then take scales for weighing, and divide the *hair*. 2 You shall burn a third of it with fire inside the *city*, when the days of the siege are ended. And you shall take a third of it, *and* strike it with the knife all around the city, and you shall scatter a third in the wind. For I will draw out a sword after them. 3 You shall also take a few *hairs* from it, and tie them in your garment. 4 Again, take some of them and throw them into the middle of the fire, and burn them in the fire. *For* from there a fire will spread to the whole house of Israel.

**4:14** Compare Acts 10:14. Ezekiel was a priest (1:3), and carefully observed the dietary instructions given in the law of Moses (Leviticus chapter 11).

**4:15** Ps 103:13,14.

**4:16,17** Lev 26:26; Deut 28:47,48; Lam 1:11. "Guilt" – Lev 26:39; Ezek 24:23; 33:10.

**5:1** See Isa 7:20; 15:2; 2 Sam 10:4,5. This signified falling into the hands of enemies and the humiliation that would result. Shaving the head was also a sign of mourning (Job 1:20; Jer 7:29; 16:6; Ezek 27:31).

**5:2** Indicated that most of the people of Jerusalem would perish in or around the city (v 12). The hair represented the people, Jerusalem represented the head. Notice God says "I will draw out a sword after them." In other words God would use Jerusalem's enemies for its punishment. Compare Isa 10:5; Jer 51:20.

**5:3,4** Some of the people would escape, but some of those who escaped would also perish. Try to imagine what an effect Ezekiel's strange behavior would have on those who saw it.

**5:5** From this verse to the end of chapter 7 we have God's message through Ezekiel explaining his symbolic actions.

"In the midst" – or "in the center" – 38:12; God has placed all peoples in the

5 "Thus says the Lord God: This *is* Jerusalem. I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries *that* surround her. 6 And she has rebelled against my ordinances more wickedly than the nations, and *against* my statutes more than the countries that *are* around her; for they have rejected my ordinances and my statutes. They have not walked in them.

7 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have multiplied *rebellion* more than the nations that are around you, and have not walked in my statutes, or kept my ordinances, or even acted according to the ordinances of the nations around you,

8 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: See, I, I myself, *am* against you and will execute judgments among you in the sight of the nations. 9 And, because of all your abominations, I will do in you what I have not done, and the like of which I will not do again. 10 Therefore the fathers will eat the sons in your midst, and the sons will eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in you, and I will scatter all the rest of you to all the winds. 11 Therefore, *as* I live, says the Lord God, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your detestable things, and with all your abominations, therefore surely I will also withdraw and my eye will have no pity, and I will not spare. 12 A third of you will die from the plague, and will be consumed by famine in your midst; and a third part will fall by the sword around you; and I will scatter a third part to all the winds, and draw out a sword after them.

parts of the world where He wanted them to be (Acts 17:26). Jerusalem was to be a channel of truth and blessing to all nations. God so arranged matters that Jerusalem would be in an ideal place at the center of all, at the crossroads of many peoples. Jerusalem was the center of God's activities on earth, not merely geographically but spiritually.

**5:6-8** Jerusalem utterly failed in what she should have been. Because that city had far more of God's light and truth than other nations its wickedness was even greater than others because it turned away from light and truth. Because it had been given much, much was required of it. Compare Matt 11:20-24; Luke 12:48. So God would make that city an object lesson to all the world. See the terrible words of v 8 – "I am against you". If God is against us who can be for us?

**5:9** Verse 11. Idolatry was one of the chief reasons for God's terrible anger against Jerusalem (6:3-10).

**5:10** Deut 28:53; Jer 19:9; Lam 2:20; 4:10; Zech 11:9.

**5:11** "No pity" – this word came from the God who is love (1 John 4:8), and who delights to show compassion (Ex 34:6; Ps 103:8). We can understand from this how terrible was Jerusalem's wickedness.

**5:12** Verse 2.



13 "Thus my anger will be spent, and I will cause my fury to rest on them, and I will be appeased; and when my fury against them is spent, they will know that I, the LORD, have spoken it in my zeal.

14 "Moreover I will make you a wasteland, and an *object of reproach* among the nations that *are* around you, in the sight of all who pass by. 15 So it will be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and an *object of astonishment* to the nations that *are* around you, when I execute judgments in you in anger and in fury and in furious rebukes. I, the LORD, have spoken *it*. 16 When I send on them the disastrous arrows of famine, which will destroy *them*, I will send them to destroy you (then I will increase the famine among you, and will break your staff of bread). 17 So I will send on you famine and evil beasts, and they will bereave you; and plague and bloodshed will pass through you; and I will bring the sword on you. I, the LORD, have spoken *it*."

**6** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, 3 and say, 'You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God: Thus says the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys: See, I, I *myself*, will bring a sword on you, and I will destroy your high places. 4 And your altars will be desolate, and your images will be broken. And I will throw your slain *people* down in front of your idols. 5 And I will lay the dead bodies

**5:13** 6:12; 7:8; 13:15; 20:8,21. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18.

"They will know that I, the LORD, have spoken" – these words or similar words are found 65 times in Ezekiel. It was very important for the people of Israel to know that God was speaking to them. Hearing and obeying God's message was the only way back to God for them.

**5:14,15** Lev 26:32; Deut 28:30,46; Ps 74:3-10; 79:1-4; Jer 18:16; 19:8; 22:8,9. **5:16,17** Here are the four means of destruction God sometimes used when He rose against evil cities and lands – famine, wild beasts, plague, and sword (Jer 15:2,3; 24:10). For something similar in the future see Rev 6:8. Observe that in times of judgment "arrows of famine" are sent by God Himself.

**6:1** In 5:5-17 God speaks of punishment coming on Jerusalem. In this chapter He speaks of judgments about to fall on the whole land of Israel.

**6:3** "High places" – the Israelites, contrary to God's commands about worship, followed the practice of other nations and erected shrines and idols in the open air, usually on hills (v 13).

**6:4-14** God would personally see to it that their false worship would be ended. Observe

of the children of Israel in front of their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. 6 In all the places you live, the cities will be laid waste, and the high places will be desolate, so that your altars will be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols will be broken and come to an end, and your images will be cut down, and your works will be abolished. 7 And the slain will fall in your midst, and you will know that I *am* the LORD.

8 "Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have *some* who will escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered through the countries. 9 And those of you who escape will remember me among the nations where they are led away *as* captives, because I am heartbroken over their adulterous heart which departed from me, and over their eyes which go after their idols, prostituting themselves. And they will loathe themselves because of the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. 10 And they will know that I *am* the LORD, *and that* I have not said in vain that I would bring this disaster on them.

11 "Thus says the Lord God: Strike with your hand, and stamp with your foot, and say, 'Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel!' For they will fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the plague. 12 He who is far off will die from the plague, and he who is near will fall by the sword, and he who remains and is besieged will die from the famine. Thus I will spend my fury on them. 13 Then you will know that I *am* the LORD, when

"I will throw" (v 4), "my hand" (v 14). Then is God heartless and cruel? Not at all (Lam 3:22,32,33). He has infinite love and compassion. But this will not mean that the guilty will be spared (Ex 34:6,7). There would be great destruction and misery, but out of it all would come great good – the people who escaped would learn an invaluable lesson (vs 7,10,13,14). Israel's need to recognize Jehovah and His deeds is a central theme in the whole book of Ezekiel, mentioned more than 50 times.

**6:8-10** God often spoke through Isaiah concerning a remnant (Isa 1:9; 10:20-22; 11:11,16; 37:31,32; 46:3). In this way one of God's purposes in bringing disaster on Judah would be fulfilled – the exiles would remember God (Jer 29:11-14). They would understand in some measure how they had grieved Him by their idolatry and adulterous behavior. And they would loathe themselves – an attitude that accompanies deep conviction of sin and true repentance (Job 42:6).

**6:11** Ezekiel's actions could make a deeper impression on the people than mere words could do.

**6:12** "My fury" – 5:13; 7:8; 13:15; 20:8,21. **6:13** Throughout the Bible the one true God reveals His utter hatred of false worship and idolatry (Ex 20:4-6; etc).



their slain *people* are among their idols around their altars, on every high hill, on the tops of all the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the places where they offered fragrant incense to all their idols. 14 So I will stretch out my hand on them, and make the land desolate, yes, more desolate than the wilderness toward Diblath, in every place they live; and they will know that I *am* the LORD."

**7** Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Also, son of man, thus says the Lord God to the land of Israel: An end! The end is coming on the four corners of the land. 3 Now the end *is coming* on you, and I will send my anger on you, and will judge you according to your ways, and will repay you for all your abominations. 4 And my eye will not spare you, nor will I have pity, but on you I will repay you for your ways, and for your abominations which are among you; and you will know that I *am* the LORD.

5 "Thus says the Lord God: A disaster, a unique disaster! See, it has come. 6 An end has come! The end has come! It is aroused for you. See, it has come! 7 Doom has come to you, O you who live in the land. The time has come, the day of trouble *is* near, and not the sounds of joy again on the mountains. 8 Now I will shortly pour out my fury on you, and spend my anger on you, and judge you according to your ways, and repay you for all your abominations. 9 And my eye will not spare, and I will not have pity; I will repay you for your ways and your abominations *that* are among you; and you will know that I, the LORD, give the blows.

10 "See the day! See, it has come. Doom has set out. The rod has blossomed, pride has budded. 11 Violence has grown into a rod of wickedness.

**6:14** "My hand" – 14:9,13; 16:27; 35:3. Compare Isa 5:25; 9:12,17,21; 10:4.

**7:1,2** This whole chapter, like chapter 6, is taken up with judgments against the whole land of Israel. The language of verses 2, 6, 7, 10, 12 indicates how near and how certain was the threatened disaster.

**7:3** "Judge you" – as the just judge of the universe this is what God must do and does do (Ps 7:8; 9:8; 50:6; 89:14; 94:2; 98:9). We may be sure that no individual, no city, no land, no people anywhere will ever receive more punishment than they deserve. But this should be no consolation to those who live in sin.

**7:4** 5:11; Jer 13:14.

**7:8** "Pour out my fury" – 9:8; 14:19; 20:8,13,21; 22:31; 30:15; 36:18. This phrase is similar to the expression "spend my wrath" in 6:12. The words "wrath" and "anger" and "fury" are used many times in Ezekiel.

**7:9** "I, the LORD, give the blows" – 2 Chron 21:14; Ps 39:10; Isa 9:13; Jer 5:3; Lam

None of them *will remain*, none of their crowd, nothing they have; and *there will be* no wailing for them. 12 The time has come! The day has drawn near! Do not let the buyer rejoice, or the seller grieve; for wrath *is* on its whole multitude. 13 For the seller will not return to what was sold, as long as they are alive; for the vision concerns its whole multitude, *which* will not return, and no one will strengthen his life by his iniquity. 14 They have blown the trumpet to prepare everyone, but no one goes to the battle; for my wrath *is* on its whole multitude.

15 "The sword *is* outside, and the plague and famine inside. He who *is* in the field will die by the sword, and famine and plague will devour the one who *is* in the city. 16 But those among the ones who escape will escape and be on the mountains, all of them mourning like doves of the valleys, each one for his guilt. 17 All hands will be feeble, and all knees will be as weak *as* water. 18 They will also tie sackcloth around *themselves*, and horror will cover them, and shame *will be* on every face, and every head will be shaved. 19 They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be abhorred. Their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the LORD; they will not satisfy their souls, or fill their stomach, because it has been their stumbling block of wickedness. 20 As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty; but they made the images of their abominations *and* of their detestable things out of it, so I will make it abhorrent to them. 21 And I will give it into the hands of foreigners as prey, and to the wicked of the earth as plunder, and they will defile it. 22 I will also turn my face from them, and they will defile my secret *place*; for robbers will enter it, and defile it.

3:1; Ezek 24:16; Hos 6:1. The people would trace their calamities back to their source and understand why they had come on them.

**7:10-13** These verses point out other reasons for God's anger. The people were proud (vs 20,24), violent (v 23), greedy (v 19), and totally occupied with their own affairs. This will be the condition of many at the end of this age – Matt 24:37,38; 2 Tim 3:1-5. **7:14** They would not be able to resist the coming armies of Babylon.

**7:16** "For his guilt" – God repeats this again and again so that none might think they were innocent sufferers.

**7:18** 5:1-4.

**7:19** Too late they would learn what little value their wealth had. Compare Ps 49:5-10; Luke 12:14-21.

**7:20** Isa 3:16,18-22; Jer 10:3,4; Ezek 16:11-17.

**7:21** What we do not use in a proper way for God's glory may be taken from us at any moment.

**7:22** "Turn my face" – compare the expression

23 "Make a chain. For the land is full of crimes of bloodshed, and the city is full of violence. 24 Therefore I will bring the worst of the nations, and they will possess their houses. I will also put a stop to the pomp of the strong, and their holy places will be defiled. 25 Destruction is coming! And they will seek peace, and *there will be* none. 26 Disaster will follow disaster, and rumour will follow rumour. Then they will seek a vision from the prophet; but the law will perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. 27 The king will mourn, and the prince will be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land will tremble. I will do to them as their ways deserve, and judge them according to their own standards, and they will know that I *am* the Lord."

**8** And it came about in the sixth year, in the sixth *month*, on the fifth *day* of the month, as I sat in my house, with the elders of Judah sitting in front of me, that the hand of the Lord God suddenly came on me there. 2 Then I looked, and saw a figure like the appearance of fire; from the appearance of his waist downward, fire; and from his waist upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the colour of amber. 3 And he stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by the hair of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looks toward the north, where the seat of the idol of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy, was. 4 And, see, the glory of the God of Israel was

there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

5 Then he said to me, "Son of man, now raise your eyes toward the north." So I raised my eyes toward the north, and saw in the north, at the gate of the altar, this idol of jealousy at the entrance.

6 And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing? The great abominations that the house of Israel is committing here, to drive me far away from my sanctuary? But now turn, *and* you will see greater abominations."

7 And he brought me to the door of the courtyard: and when I looked I saw a hole in the wall. 8 Then he said to me, "Son of man, now dig in the wall." And when I had dug in the wall, a door appeared.

9 And he said to me, "Go in, and see the wicked abominations that they are doing here." 10 So I went in and looked, and saw every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the wall. 11 And before them stood seventy of the elders of the house of Israel, and among them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. And each man *had* his censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense was rising up.

12 Then he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, each man in the room of his idol? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us. The LORD has forsaken the land.'" 13 He also to me, "Turn yourself again, *and* you will see greater abominations that they are doing."

to hide the face (Ps 13:1; 30:7; 69:17; 143:7).

"My secret place" – God's temple in Jerusalem.

**7:23** "Chain" – signifies that some who remained in Jerusalem would go into captivity.

**7:24** "The worst of the nations" – Babylon. See Isa 14:3-6; Jer 50:29-33,38; 51:6,7, 34,35; Hab 1:6-11.

**7:25** 13:10,16; Jer 6:14; 8:11; Isa 48:22; 57:21.

**7:26** When God withdraws His guidance it is a calamity worse than mere physical ones. **7:27** "As their ways deserve" – Ps 18:25,26.

"According to their own standards" – Israel knew what just judgment was, and was quick enough to judge other nations. Compare Rom 2:14,15. Now they would experience judgment themselves. Compare Matt 7:12; Rom 2:1-3.

**8:1** This begins a series of visions which is concluded at the end of chapter 11. This section records things Ezekiel saw and heard in vision as though he were in Jerusalem. The time was September 592 BC, about 14 months after the first visions he saw (1:2).

"Elders" – by now it seems they recognized Ezekiel as a prophet who could

give them God's message.

"Hand" – 1:3.

**8:2** The same figure that appeared on the throne in 1:26,27.

**8:3** This was an experience similar to Paul's recorded in 2 Cor 12:2. Possibly Ezekiel did not know whether he was in the body or out of it.

"Jealousy" – v 5; Ex 20:4-6; 34:14; Deut 4:23,24.

**8:4** 1:4-27.

**8:6** "Abominations" – it was arrogant and daring wickedness to put idols to a false god or goddess in Jehovah's own temple compound.

"Drive me far away" – 10:4,18,19; 11:23. The unbelief and sin of the people had reached such a degree that God could no longer endure it.

**8:10** Observe even in God's special people Israel this strange and wicked tendency to forsake the true and living God, the Creator, and to worship animals. See Rom 1:21-23. The Jews in Ezekiel's day even worshiped animals they regarded as unclean (Lev 11:26,27,41-45).

**8:11,12** It was not merely the common people (who may not have known better)

14 Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north, and there appeared women sitting, weeping for Tammuz. 15 Then he said to me, "Have you seen *this*, son of man? Turn yourself again, *and* you will see greater abominations than these."

16 And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and about twenty-five men appeared at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the portico and the altar, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they were worshipping the sun toward the east.

17 Then he said to me, "Have you seen *this*, son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they are committing here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have repeatedly provoked me to anger. And, see, they are putting the branch to their nose. 18 Therefore I will also deal in fury. My eye will not spare, and I will not have pity. And though they cry out in my ears with a loud voice, I will *still* not listen to them."

**9** He also cried out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Cause those who have charge of the city to draw near, each once *with* his destroying weapon in his hand." 2 And six men

who engaged in this detestable worship of creatures, it was the leaders of the people. Observe what they said (9:9; Ps 10:11; Isa 29:15; etc).

**8:14** Tammuz was the Babylonian god of fertility, connected with the cycles of nature. He was regarded as dying each year when vegetation died, and as coming to life when new vegetation sprang up. Each year women mourned the death of Tammuz. They were forsaking the God of Israel, who gave them all they had, for one of the false gods of their conquerors, the cruel and ruthless Babylonians. This was very detestable to the true God.

**8:15,16** The most detestable thing of all was false worship at the very altar of God by priests or Levites (no one else could approach the altar). They were facing the wrong way – not toward the Most Holy Place where God was, but toward the east. They had forsaken the God who made the sun (Gen 1:16), and worshiped the sun He had made – a thing forbidden in God's law on pain of death – Deut 17:2-5.

**8:17** "Putting the branch to their nose" – the only place in the Bible where this is mentioned. It may have been connected with their false worship.

**8:18** 5:11; 9:10; 24:14; Jer 11:11; 13:14; Isa 1:15; 59:2.

**9:1,2** These ones who had "charge of the city" were angels who appeared to Ezekiel in the form of men as angels sometimes did then and, for all we know, may do now

appeared coming from the way of the Upper Gate, which faces north, and each one *had* a weapon of slaughter in his hand. And one man among them *was* clothed with linen, with a writing case at his side. And they went in, and stood beside the bronze altar.

3 And the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub, on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And he called to the man clothed with linen, who *had* the writing case at his side, 4 and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of it."

5 And he said to the others in my hearing, "You go after him through the city, and strike. Do not let your eye spare, do not have pity. 6 Slaughter old *and* young, both maidens and little children and women, but do not go near anyone on whom *is* the mark. And begin at my sanctuary." Then they began with the elders who *were* before the house.

7 And he said to them, "Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain. Go forth." And they went forth, and killed *people* in the city. 8 And it came about, as they were killing them, and I was left *alone*, that I prostrated myself, and cried out, saying, "Alas, Lord God! Will you destroy all the

(Gen 19:1; Heb 13:2).

"Writing case" – pens, ink, writing material.

**9:3** The glory of God moved away from its place in the Most Holy Place above the cherubim over the mercy seat. The true God will have nothing to do with idolatry. Compare 2 Cor 6:14-16.

**9:4** Even in those days of wickedness and unbelief there were some in Jerusalem who remained true to God and His word. They showed they were in tune with God by their attitude to the sins of the city. The angel was to mark them out for protection. Remember that this happened in a vision. There was no literal marking of physical foreheads. Compare Rev 7:1-4.

**9:5,6** This was to signify to Ezekiel what would happen when the Babylonians captured and destroyed the city.

"Begin at my sanctuary" – they began with those who were responsible to lead the people in the ways of God. Because they did not do so, these leaders were the most guilty of all the people (8:11,12; compare 1 Pet 4:17).

**9:7** "Defile" – dead bodies were defiling under the law (Lev 21:1,11; Num 19:11-16). God commanded the angels to defile His own holy temple. It had become an idol shrine and He was abandoning it.

**9:8** 11:13. Compare Ezekiel's love for the people with other men of God – Ex 32:30-32; Num 14:5,6,10-19; Josh 7:6,7; Jer 8:21; 9:1; Rom 9:1-3. What a contrast with the elders described in 8:10,11!

rest of Israel in your pouring out of your fury on Jerusalem?"

9 Then he said to me, "The wickedness of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceedingly great, and the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land,' and 'The LORD does not see.' 10 And as for me also, my eye will not spare, and I will not have pity, *but* I will repay their way on their head."

11 And the man clothed in linen, who *had* the *writing* case at his side, appeared, *and* reported the matter, saying, "I have done as you commanded me."

**10** Then I looked and saw in the expanse that was above the heads of the cherubim an appearance above them of something like a sapphire stone, like the appearance of the likeness of a throne. 2 And he spoke to the man clothed in linen, and said, "Go in between the wheels, under the cherub, and fill your hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter *them* over the city." And in my sight he went in.

3 Now the cherubim stood at the right side of the temple when the man went in, and the cloud was filling the inner courtyard. 4 Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and stood* above the threshold of the temple, and the temple was filled with the cloud, and the courtyard was full of the brightness of the LORD's glory. 5 And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard *as far as* the outer courtyard, like the voice of the Almighty God when he speaks.

6 And it came about, when he commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, "Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubim," *that* he went in, and stood beside the wheels. 7 And *one* cherub stretched out his hand from between the cherubim to the fire that *was* between the cherubim, and took *some of it*, and put *it* into the hands of *the one who was* clothed in linen, who took *it* and went out. 8 And there appeared among the cherubim the form of a man's hand under their wings.

9 And when I looked, I saw the four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub; and the appearance of the wheels *was* like the colour of a beryl stone. 10 And *as for* their appearances, the four of them had the same likeness, as if one wheel was inside another wheel. 11 When they went, they went in *the direction of one of* their four sides. They did not turn as they went, but followed to the place where the head was looking. They did not turn as they went. 12 And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, *were* full of eyes all around, *even* the wheels that the four of them had. 13 As for the wheels, in my hearing they were called "The Whirling Wheels." 14 And each one had four faces. The first face *was* the face of a cherub, and the second face *was* the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.

15 And the cherubim rose up. This *is* the living being that I saw by the Kebar River. 16 And when the cherubim went, the wheels went with them; and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to rise up from the earth, the wheels also did not turn from beside them. 17 When they stood, *these* stood, and when they went up, *these* went up *with them*; for the spirit of the living creature *was* in them.

18 Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple, and stood above the cherubim. 19 And the cherubim raised their wings, and rose from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels also *were* beside them, and *each one* stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house. And the glory of the God of Israel *was* up above them.

20 This is the living being that I saw under the God of Israel by the Kebar River; and I knew that they *were* the cherubim. 21 Each one had four faces, and each one four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man *was* under their wings. 22 And the likeness of their faces *was* the same as the faces whose appearance I had seen by the Kebar River. Each one went straight forward.

9:10 7:4,9; 8:18; 11:21; 23:49.  
10:1 1:26.  
10:2 Verses 6,7; 1:13. These coals symbolize God's fiery judgments falling on Jerusalem.  
10:4 2 Chron 7:1-3. This was the last time this was ever true of the temple Solomon built.  
10:5 1:24; 3:13. "Almighty God" – in Hebrew "El-Shaddai" – note at Gen 17:1.  
10:8 1:8.  
10:9-11 1:15-21.  
10:12 This is a fact not stated in the

description of the cherubim in 1:5-14. Full of eyes signifies great intelligence and great watchfulness.  
10:13 A fact about the wheels not given in chapter 1.  
10:15 Verse 20. Ezekiel did not call them cherubim in chapter 1. Perhaps he did not then recognize them to be such.  
10:16,17 1:19-21.  
10:18,19 Signifies the slow, reluctant departure of God from His temple, His home, His people.  
10:21,22 1:6-8.

**11** And the spirit lifted me up, and brought me to the east gate of the LORD's house, which looks eastward. And at the door of the gate twenty-five men appeared. Among them I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, leaders of the people. **2** Then he said to me, "Son of man, these *are* the men who plot evil, and give wicked counsel in this city, **3** who say, '*It is not near the time* for us to build houses. This *city is* the cooking pot and we *are* the meat.' **4** Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, son of man."

**5** And the Spirit of the LORD suddenly came on me, and said to me, "Say, Thus says the LORD: You have spoken this, O house of Israel; for the things which come into your mind, I know them *all* . **6** You have multiplied your slain in this city, and you have filled its streets with the slain.

**7** "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Your slain whom you have caused to lie in the midst of it, they *are* the meat, and this *city* is the cooking pot, but I will bring you out of the midst of it. **8** You have feared the sword, and I will bring a sword on you, says the Lord God. **9** And I will bring you out of the midst of the *city*, and hand you over to foreigners, and will execute judgments among you. **10** You will fall by the sword. I will judge you at the border of Israel, and you will know that I *am* the LORD. **11** This *city* will not be your cooking pot, and you will not be the meat inside it, *but* I will judge you on the border of Israel, **12** and you will know that I *am* the LORD. For you have not walked in my statutes, or executed my judgments, but have acted in the

ways of the nations that *are* around you."

**13** And it happened, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then I went down on my face, and cried out with a loud voice, and said, "Alas, Lord God! Will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?"

**14** Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, **15** "Son of man, your brethren, *even* your brethren, your relatives and kindred, and the whole house of Israel, *are* the ones to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Go far from the LORD. This land has been given to us to possess.'

**16** "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: Although I have put them far off among the nations, and although I have scattered them in the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.'

**17** "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.'

**18** "And they will come here, and they will take away from here all its detestable things and all its abominations. **19** And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh, **20** so that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them. And they will be my people, and I will be their God. **21** But *as for those* whose heart follows their detestable things and their abominations, I will

**11:1** This Jaazaniah is different from the one in 8:11.

**11:3** They refused to believe God's message through Jeremiah that the Babylonians would destroy the city (Jer 14:12-16; 21:3-10). They thought they were safe, that the walls of Jerusalem would be like brass walls around them to protect them. They boasted that they were the "meat", the choicest part of the nation. Compare vs 7-11; see Jeremiah chapter 24.

**11:5** "The things which come into your mind, I know them all" – Ps 26:2; Jer 17:10; Heb 4:12.

**11:6** 7:23; Isa 1:15; etc.

**11:7** God says the choicest part of the nation was those murdered by these men. Those dead were true prophets and godly men. Compare Matt 23:27-31; Acts 7:52.

**11:10,11** 2 Kings 25:18-21.

**11:12** 2 Chron 36:14.

**11:13** 9:8.

**11:15** The people of Jerusalem were referring to those who had gone into exile with Ezekiel. They thought God's wrath was on them and imagined that God's blessing was on those who remained in Jerusalem. This was the exact opposite of the truth as verses 16-21 show. See also Jeremiah chapter 24. It is the way of sinful men to

misinterpret what God does and turn the truth upside down.

**11:16** "I have been a sanctuary for them" – God's presence was forsaking Jerusalem to be with His people in exile. This is the significance of the vision of the glory of God leaving the temple in Jerusalem and appearing to Ezekiel in Babylon.

**11:17** The future of the nation of Israel lay with the exiles, not with those who remained in Judah.

**11:18** The exiles after their return from Babylon, having learned their lesson, were opposed to all idolatry.

**11:19** 36:26. "One heart" – Ps 86:11; 1 Cor 7:35; Jam 1:6,7.

"Stony heart" – this is what they had before the exile. Their hearts were so hard that the word of God made no impression on them. A heart of flesh is a heart that is tender and obedient toward God, a heart on which His word can be written – v 20; Prov 3:3; 7:3; Jer 31:33; 2 Cor 3:3.

**11:20** "I will be their God" – the promise that runs like a golden thread through the Bible – Gen 17:7; Ex 6:7; Lev 26:12; Deut 7:6; 26:19; Jer 11:4; 31:33; Ezek 36:28; Hos 1:9,10; 2:23.

**11:21** 9:10; 16:43; Jer 16:18.

repay their way on their own heads, says the Lord God."

22 Then the cherubim raised their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was up above them. 23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood on the mountain which *is* on the east side of the city. 24 Afterwards the Spirit took me up, and in a vision brought me by the Spirit of God to Chaldea, to those of the captivity.

So the vision that I had seen went up from me. 25 Then I told those of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shown me.

**12** Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, you live in the midst of a rebellious house. They have eyes to see, but do not see. They have ears to hear, but do not hear. For they *are* a rebellious house.

3 "Therefore, son of man, pack up your things for exile, and in the daylight go into exile in their sight, going into exile from your place to another place in their sight. Perhaps they will consider, though they *are* a rebellious house. 4 Then you are to bring out your things in the daylight in their sight, like things for exile, and in the evening set out in their sight, like those going away into captivity. 5 Dig through the wall in their sight, and carry *the things* out through it. 6 In their sight you carry *them* on your shoulders, *and* bring *them* out at twilight. You are to cover your face, so that you will not see the ground. For I have made you a sign to the house of Israel."

7 And I did as I was commanded. I brought out my things in daylight, like things for captivity, and in the evening I dug through the wall with my hand. I brought *them* out at twilight, *and* carried *them* on my shoulder in their sight.

8 And in the morning the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9 "Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing?'

10 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: This burden *is concerning* the prince in Jerusalem, and all the house of Israel who *are* among them.'

**11:22,23** The mountain east of Jerusalem is the mount of Olives. From its summit, much later in history, God's glory in Christ, after pausing there, ascended into heaven. To the same mount He will return at the end of this age (Zech 14:4).

**11:24** 8:3. "Chaldea – the southern part of the country of Babylon, but sometimes the whole country was called by this name.

**12:2** Isa 1:2-4; 6:9,10.

**12:3-16** Neither the exiles in Babylon nor those who remained in Jerusalem believed that Jerusalem would be destroyed and all the people exiled. To convince them of the

11 Say, 'I *am* your sign. It will be done to them just as I have done. They will be exiled *and* go into captivity.'

12 "And the prince who *is* among them will carry *his things* on *his* shoulders at twilight, and go out. They will dig through the wall to carry *their things* out through it. He will cover his face, so that he will not see the ground with *his* eyes. 13 And I will spread my net over him, and he will be taken in my snare, and I will bring him *to* Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans. But he will not see it, though he will die there. 14 And I will scatter all his helpers who *are* around him and all his troops to all the winds, and I will draw out the sword after them.

15 "And they will know that I *am* the LORD, when I scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries. 16 But I will spare a few of their men from the sword, from famine, and from the plague, so that they may declare all their abominations among the nations where they go; and they will know that I *am* the LORD."

17 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, eat your food with shuddering, and drink your water with trembling and with anxiety, 19 and say to the people of the land, 'Thus says the Lord God concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *and* concerning the land of Israel: They will eat their food with anxiety, and drink their water with astonishment, for their land will be emptied of everything that is in it, because of the violence of all those who live there. 20 And the cities that are inhabited will be laid waste, and the land will be desolate; and you will know that I *am* the Lord.'"

21 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 22 "Son of man, what *is* that proverb you have in the land of Israel, saying, 'The days go on, and every vision fails'? 23 Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord God: I will put a stop to this proverb, and they will no longer use it as a proverb in Israel.' And say to them, 'The days are at hand, and the fulfilment of every vision. 24 For there will no longer be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. 25 For I *am* the LORD. I will speak, and the word that I speak will come to

truth God once again makes Ezekiel an object lesson to them (v 11).

**12:12-14** This prince was king Zedekiah. He was brought to Babylon but did not see it because his eyes had been put out (Jer 52:6-11).

**12:15,16** "They will know" – 6:8-10.

**12:17-20** Another object lesson showing the hopelessness of the situation of the people in Jerusalem (7:27).

**12:21,22** This "proverb" showed the unbelief of the people. Compare 2 Pet 3:4.

**12:23** Verses 25,28.

**12:24** For false visions see next chapter



pass. It will no longer be delayed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word, and will fulfil it, says the Lord God."

26 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 27 "Son of man, see, *those* of the house of Israel say, 'The vision that he sees *is* for many days *from now*, and he prophesies about times far off.'

28 "Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: None of my words will be delayed any longer, but the word which I have spoken will be done, says the Lord God.'"

**13** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are prophesying, and say to those who prophesy out of their own hearts, 'Hear the word of the LORD. 3 Thus says the Lord God: Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! 4 O Israel, your prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. 5 You have not gone up into the gaps, or made a wall for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD. 6 They see a false thing and lying divination, saying, "The LORD says," and the LORD has not sent them; and they have made *others* hope that they would confirm the word. 7 Have you not seen a false vision, and have you not spoken a lying divination when you say, "The LORD says *it*", although I have not spoken?

8 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have spoken falsehood, and seen lies,

and Jer 14:14.

**12:27** Since the Lord through the prophets kept giving the same message again and again the people finally admitted that it might be fulfilled – but only far in the future. They tried to escape the plain meaning of God's word by saying it did not apply to their own time. They were not the last to do so.

**13:2,3** "Own hearts" – Jer 14:14. Other notes on false prophets at Gen 20:7; Deut 18:20-22; 1 Kings 18:19-29; Jer 23:32; Matt 24:11,24.

"Foolish prophets" – or it could be translated "wicked" or "vile" prophets. The Hebrew word signifies someone who is foolish because he is lacking in moral character, one who has no wisdom because he has no fear of the Lord (Prov 1:7). In other respects such "foolish" shepherds might be very clever and knowledgeable.

**13:4,5** They were destructive not constructive. They sought a comfortable place for themselves in ruins left by others, but could do nothing to rebuild those ruins.

**13:6** Not everyone who imagines he is a prophet is one. The world has always been troubled and deceived by those who vainly thought they were prophets or whom others considered prophets.

therefore, see, I *am* against you, says the Lord God. 9 And my hand will be on the prophets who see false things, and lying divinations. They will not be in the assembly of my people, nor will they be written in the records of the house of Israel, and they will not enter the land of Israel; and you will know that I *am* the Lord God.

10 "Because, yes, because they have seduced my people, saying, "Peace," when *there was* no peace, and one builds a wall, and, see, others daub it with whitewash, 11 say to those who daub it with whitewash, that it will fall. There will be a torrential rain, and you, O great hailstones, will fall, and a stormy wind will tear *it down*. 12 Look, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, "Where *is* the whitewash with which you daubed *it*?"

13 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: In my fury I will tear *it down* with a stormy wind, and in my anger there will be a torrential rain, and in my fury great hailstones to destroy *it*. 14 So I will break down the wall that you have daubed with whitewash, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered, and it will fall, and you will be destroyed in it; and you will know that I *am* the LORD. 15 Thus I will spend my wrath on the wall, and on those who have daubed it with whitewash, and will say to you, The wall *is* gone, and those who daubed it, 16 *that is*, the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when *there is* no peace, says the Lord God.'

17 "Likewise, son of man, set your face against

**13:8,9** Those who falsely speak for God will find eventually that God is against them. These particular ones were among the exiles in Babylon. See Jer 29:15,32.

**13:10** This is the great damage false prophets do to their fellow men. They lead them astray, away from truth, away from God. To those who have the anger of God resting on them because of their sins and unbelief they promise peace. They whitewash the wall which unbelieving people try to build against disaster. Whitewash means to make it look finished and attractive. Thus they contribute to their hardness of heart and eventual punishment (vs 19,22).

**13:11** This storm symbolizes the anger of God that would demolish all that people thought was their protection and safety (vs 13-16).

**13:12** The false prophets will be found out for what they really are.

**13:17-23** There were true prophetesses in Israel – Miriam (Ex 15:20), Deborah (Jud 4:4), Hulda (2 Kings 22:14). There were also false ones who engaged in black magic. The practice of magic, divination, sorcery, etc is severely condemned in the Bible (Ex 22:18; Deut 18:10; Acts 8:11; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15). Those who engage in them will have God against them. They who practice such

the daughters of your people, who prophesy out of their own heart, and prophesy against them, 18 and say, Thus says the Lord God: Woe to the *women* who sew *magic* charms on all wrists, and make veils on the heads of every height to hunt for souls! Will you hunt for the souls of my people, and will you save alive the souls *who come* to you? 19 And will you profane me among my people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save alive the souls that should not live, by your lying to my people who hear *your* lies?

20 “Therefore thus says the Lord God: See, I *am* against your charms, with which you there hunt souls like birds, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, the souls that you hunt like birds. 21 I will also tear off your veils, and rescue my people out of your hands, and they will no longer be in your hands to be hunted; and you will know that I *am* the LORD. 22 Because with *your* lies you have saddened the heart of the righteous, whom I have not made sad, and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked by promising him life, so that he would not turn back from his wicked way. 23 Therefore you will no longer see false visions, or practice divinations, for I will deliver my people out of your hands; and you will know that I *am* the LORD.”

**14** Then some of the elders of Israel came to me, and sat in front of me. 2 And the word

things do so for their personal benefit. These things lead to bondage. They are based on lies, and appeal to those who are ignorant of the truth of God or who refuse that truth. They destroy those who persist in them.

**13:19** What they did was from a desire for gain. Compare Jer 6:13; 8:10; Micah 3:5,11. For the sake of money there are always some people who will teach and preach what people want to hear, without any regard for the truth (Titus 1:11). They do not seem to care even though those deceived by them are destroyed in time and eternity. Notice the words “who hear your lies” – false prophets and prophetesses would have no place in the world if people were not willing to believe their lies. God will judge very severely those who prefer lies to truth (2 Thess 2:10-12).

**13:20** False prophets and prophetesses ensnare people by lies and satanic power. They operate in the realm of the darkness and spiritual ignorance of the human heart. They use the same method Satan uses to destroy men – lies (John 8:44). Those who do not know the Bible or believe God’s truth revealed in it are in grave danger from such. God will deal with them all as they deserve in His time and way.

**13:21** They have a kind of power only God

of the LORD came to me, saying, 3 “Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their wickedness before their face. Should I be consulted by them at all? 4 Therefore speak to them, and tell them, Thus says the Lord God: When anyone of the house of Israel sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet, I, the LORD, will answer the one who comes, in accordance with his many idols, 5 so that I may take hold of the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

6 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Repent, and turn away from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

7 “When anyone of the house of Israel, or of the foreigners who have settled in Israel, separates himself from me, and sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to a prophet to consult him concerning me, I, the LORD, will answer him by myself, 8 and I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among my people; and you will know that I *am* the LORD.

9 “And if a prophet is induced to speak a thing, I, the LORD have induced that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him

can save people from (v 23).

**13:22** Verses 13,19.

**14:1** These elders recognized Ezekiel as a prophet and came to enquire what God had to say through him.

**14:3** They did not receive the kind of message they expected. They were not fit to enquire of God and were plainly told so. They were breaking God’s first commandment and were worthy of death (Ex 20:3-5; Deut 13:6-18). Did they vainly imagine that God would give them His blessing? Two sins are mentioned here. Idols in the heart are mentioned three times (vs 3,4,7). Idolatry in the heart is the source of all kinds of idolatry and is just as sinful and dangerous as the worship of outward idols. Many a person who is religious and seemingly pious may have something in his heart which replaces the true God and to which he gives his affections and service. Compare Col 3:5. So we are told in God’s Word to guard our hearts above all things (Prov 4:23).

**14:4** God will give such people what they deserve – v 8.

**14:5** Even in severe judgments God has good purposes.

**14:6** God delights to show mercy, not to punish – 18:30; 33:11; etc.

**14:9** Here is a truth (punishment, judgment from God) that should make us tremble. If

from among my people Israel. 10 And they will bear the punishment for their wickedness. The punishment of the prophet will be the same as the punishment of the one who seeks *him* out, 11 so that the house of Israel may no longer go astray from me, or be polluted any more with all their transgressions, but that they may be my people, and I may be their God, says the Lord God."

12 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 13 "Son of man, when the land sins against me by unfaithfulness, then I will stretch out my hand on it, and will break the staff of its bread and send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14 Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would rescue *only* their own souls by their righteousness, says the Lord God.

15 "If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they depopulate it, so that it becomes desolate, no man passing through it because of the beasts, 16 *even if* these three men were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they would rescue neither sons nor daughters; only they would be rescued, and the land would become desolate.

17 "Or if I bring a sword on that land, and say, 'Sword, go through the land,' so that I cut off man and beast from it, 18 even if these three men were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they would rescue neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves would be rescued.

people insist on hearing lies and false doctrine, in judgment God will see to it that they get them. Then He will punish both the prophet who spoke them and the people who loved to hear them (Deut 13:1-5; 1 Kings 22:1-28; 2 Thess 2:9-12).

**14:10** They who refuse God's truth and love to hear lies (Jer 5:30,31) and prophets who tell them what they want to hear are all following their fallen sinful natures.

**14:11** Verse 5.

**14:13,14** God here means Jerusalem and Judah in particular. It seems some of the exiles thought that as long as there were righteous men such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel to pray for the people God would not destroy Jerusalem. The three mentioned in v 14 were the most righteous people in their generations – Noah (Gen 6:9; 7:1); Job (Job 1:8); Daniel (his righteousness and purity appear throughout the book of Daniel). But even if they were in Jerusalem to intercede for it they would not be able to preserve anyone but themselves by their righteousness. God reveals more about this truth in chapter 18. In all history there is only one person able to save others by His righteousness – the Lord Jesus (Rom 5:18,19).

"Daniel" – some scholars think that the Hebrew spelling of this name here may indicate some person other than Daniel the prophet (also v 20). However, it would be strange if there were a person so outstanding

19 "Or if I send a plague into that land, and pour out my fury on it through bloodshed, to cut off from it man and beast, 20 even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they would rescue neither son nor daughter; they would rescue *only* their own souls by their righteousness.

21 "For thus says the Lord God: How much more when I send my four severe judgments on Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the wild beast, and the plague, to cut off from it man and beast? 22 Yet there will be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, *both* sons and daughters. See, they will come out to you, and you will see their way and their deeds, and you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought on Jerusalem, concerning all that I have brought on it. 23 And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their deeds; and you will know that I have not done all that I have done in it without reason, says the Lord God."

**15** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, how is the vine tree *better* than any wood of a branch which is among the trees of the forest? 3 Will wood be taken from it to do any work? Or will *men* make a peg from it to hang any utensil on? 4 See, it is thrown into the fire as fuel. The fire devours both ends of it, and

for his righteousness but totally unknown down through the centuries, whose name could be joined with such famous names as Noah and Job.

**14:21** "Four severe judgments" – these four are the usual instruments of punishment (5:17; 33:27; Jer 14:12; 15:3; 24:10; 27:8; Rev 6:8).

**14:22** 12:16. They will be preserved from destruction, not because of the righteousness of others, but because of their own righteous conduct – 9:4-6. Seeing this the exiles in Babylon would have some comfort.

**14:23** Did they doubt that God always has a good reason for what He does?

**15:1-8** The nation Israel is compared to a vine also in Ps 80:8-13; Isa 5:1-7. Here the remnant of those remaining in Jerusalem is described as completely useless. They have been like wood put in the fire already and who had escaped to some extent. This was in 597 BC when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and took away captives. Jerusalem would be in the fire again and conquered completely. This happened in 586 BC. Ezekiel has warned about it already (5:2,4; 10:2,7). But why should the nation represented by Jerusalem be compared to wood from a vine? The purpose of a vine is to bear fruit. Israel had not done this. It was fit only for the fire. Compare Matt 3:10.

the middle of it is burned. Is it fit for *any* work? 5 See, when it was whole, it was not fit for *any* work; how much less will it be fit for *any* work, when the fire has devoured it, and it is burned?

6 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Like the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given as fuel for the fire, so I will give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 7 And I will set my face against them. They will go out of *one* fire, and *another* fire will devour them; and you will know that I *am* the Lord, when I set my face against them. 8 And I will make the land desolate, because they have been unfaithful, says the Lord God."

**16** Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 3 and say, Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of Canaan. Your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite. 4 And *as for* your birth, in the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, and you were not washed in water to cleanse *you*; you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths. 5 No eye pitied you to do any of these for you, to have compassion on you, but you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day that you were born.

6 "And when I passed by you, and saw you defiled in your own blood, I said to you *while you were* in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you *while you were* in your blood, 'Live!' 7 I caused you to grow like a plant of the field, and you increased

and became great, and you reached *the age of wearing* beautiful ornaments. *Your* breasts were formed, and your hair grew, but you *were* naked and bare.

8 "When I passed by you, and looked at you, I saw your time *was* the time of love, and I spread my cloak over you and covered your nakedness; yes, I gave *my* oath to you, and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became mine.

9 "Then I washed you with water; yes, I thoroughly washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil. 10 I also clothed you with embroidered work, and gave you sandals of badger skin, and I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I also adorned you with ornaments, and put bracelets on your arms, and a necklace around your neck. 12 And I put a jewel on your forehead, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing *was of* fine linen and silk and embroidered work. You ate *food made with* fine flour and honey and oil. And you were exceedingly beautiful, and you rose to a position of royalty. 14 And your fame went out among the nations for your beauty, for it *was* perfect through my splendour, which I had put upon you, says the Lord God.

15 "But you trusted in your own beauty, and acted like a prostitute because of your fame, and poured out your *acts of* adultery on everyone who passed by who would have it. 16 And you took some of your garments and adorned your high

**16:1-63** This whole chapter is an elaborate parable or allegory about Jerusalem. It may be divided into 5 parts – God's chosen city (vs 1-14), the city and apostasy (vs 15-34), the city and judgment (vs 35-43), the city compared with her sisters (vs 44-52), and the restoration of the city and her sisters (vs 53-63).

**16:3** The people of Israel did not build Jerusalem. Before they arrived in Canaan it had already been built by the people of the land. Note on Amorites and Hittites at Gen 15:16; Josh 1:4.

**16:4,5** When first built Jerusalem was not a holy city, not beautiful, not loved by anyone. In fact it was treated as an unwanted female infant and abandoned to die.

**16:6-8** God looked at Jerusalem and choose it as His city on earth. But He did not immediately take possession of her. He waited until the proper time. Then He entered into a marriage relationship with her (here, as in Mal 2:14, called a covenant). Verse 8 probably points to the time when God's servant David took the city from the Jebusites (2 Sam 5:6-9). From here on in this chapter Jerusalem is the capital city of the people of Israel and represents them.

**16:9-14** God inspired His people (especially David and Solomon) to build and beautify the city. But surely more than buildings is meant here. Jerusalem was beautiful also because it was the center of true religion and spirituality. The "crown" of v 12 probably means God's temple situated on one of the hills of Jerusalem.

**16:13** "Gold and silver" – Solomon's day (1 Kings 10:21).

"Royalty" – because from there David and Solomon ruled all Israel, and other nations, and because it was the city of the great king, God Himself (Ps 48:2; Matt 5:35).

**16:14** "Fame" – 1 Kings 10:23,24.

"Beauty" – Ps 48:1,2; Lam 2:15.

**16:15-34** The city is not mere buildings, but its people. In these verses Jerusalem, representing Israel, is pictured as going away from the one true God to worship other gods. This began to happen toward the end of Solomon's reign and continued with some breaks until Ezekiel's own day (1 Kings 11:4-8; Ezek 8:5-16). In the Bible unfaithfulness to God in spiritual matters is compared to adultery and prostitution. See chapter 23; Jeremiah chapter 3; Hosea chapter 2.

**16:15** "Everyone" – Israel ran after the gods

places with various colours, and acted like a prostitute on them; *such things* should not happen or ever be. 17 You also took your beautiful jewels *made* from my gold and my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and committed prostitution with them, 18 and took your embroidered garments, and covered them, and set my oil and my incense before them. 19 Also my food which I gave you, fine flour and oil and honey, *with which* I fed you, you set before them as a fragrant aroma. *This is the way* it was, says the Lord God.

20 "Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to me, and you sacrificed them to the *idols* to be devoured. *Were* your acts of prostitution a small matter, 21 that you slaughtered my children, and offered them up to pass through *the fire* for the *idols*? 22 And in all your abominations and your acts of prostitution you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, *and* defiled in your blood.

23 "And it came about after all your wickedness (woe, woe to you! says the Lord God), 24 *that* you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place in each street for yourself. 25 You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty abhorrent, and offered yourself to every one who passed by, and multiplied your acts of prostitution. 26 You also committed adultery with your neighbors the Egyptians, great of flesh, and increased your acts of prostitution, provoking me to anger. 27 See, therefore, *that* I stretched out my hand over you, and reduced your rations, and delivered you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd way. 28 You also acted like a prostitute with the Assyrians, because you were unsatiable; yes, you acted like a prostitute with them, and yet could not be satisfied. 29 And you

of all the nations around them.

**16:17** "Images of men" – part of the idolatry of Israel's neighbors, and at times of Israel herself, had to do with phallic symbols.

**16:18,19** All that the people possessed had been the gift of God. They offered their gifts to idols which God hated.

**16:20,21** 20:26,31; 23:37; 2 Kings 21:6; 23:10; Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35.

**16:22** Deut 4:9; 6:12; Ps 78:11,42; 106:13.

**16:23-25** Places of idolatry which had been on the hills and in the towns around Jerusalem were built afterwards in Jerusalem itself.

**16:27** After the death of Solomon the kingdom was divided, and Judah and Jerusalem lost much territory and were greatly weakened. They lost more territory in 701 BC when the king of Assyria gave some of it to the Philistines.

**16:28,29** Whatever nation became the great

multiplied your acts of adultery with the land of merchants, Chaldea; and yet you were not satisfied with that.

"30 How weak is your heart, says the Lord God, since you do all these *things*, the work of a bold-faced prostitute! 31 When you build your shrine at the head of every road, and make your high place in each street, you have not been like a prostitute, because you scorned payment, 32 *but like* a wife who commits adultery, *who* takes strangers instead of her husband! 33 They give payments to all prostitutes, but you give your payments to all your lovers, and hire them, so that they will come to you from every side for your prostitution. 34 And in your prostitution you are different from *other* women, because no one comes after you to commit adultery, and because you give payment, and no payment is given to you; therefore you are different.

35 "Therefore, O prostitute, hear the word of the LORD. 36 Thus says the Lord God: Because your filthiness was poured out, and your nakedness uncovered through your prostitution with your lovers and with all of your abominable idols, and through the blood of your children, which you gave to them, 37 see, therefore, I will gather all your lovers, *those* with whom you have taken pleasure, and all *those* whom you have loved, with all whom you have hated, I will gather them around against you, and will uncover your nakedness to them, so that they may see all your nakedness. 38 And I will judge you, as women who commit adultery and shed blood are judged, and I will bring blood on you in fury and jealousy. 39 And I will also give you into their hands, and they will tear down your shrines, and break down your high places. Also they will strip you of your clothes, and take away your beautiful jewels, and leave you naked and bare. 40 They will also bring up a mob against you, and they will hurl stones on you, and pierce you with

power in western Asia Israel ran after it and its gods.

**16:31-34** Jerusalem, unlike prostitutes, got nothing for giving herself to other gods. Her behavior was worse than that of a common prostitute. So God calls her in v 32 an adulterous wife who refuses her own husband and fully abandons herself to strangers.

**16:35-43** Now God sets forth what Jerusalem will have to suffer because of her unfaithfulness.

**16:37** Jerusalem's enemies would destroy her and strip her and leave her as she was in the beginning (vs 4,5).

**16:38** The penalty of murder and adultery was death (Gen 9:5,6; Ex 21:12-14; Lev 20:10).

"Fury" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**16:40** "Hurl stones on you" – 23:47; Deut 22:22-24.



their swords. 41 And they will burn your houses with fire, and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will cause you to stop acting like a prostitute, and also you will no longer hire lovers. 42 So I will cause my fury toward you to subside, and my jealousy will depart from you, and I will be quiet, and no longer be angry.

43 "Because you have not remembered the days of your youth, but have provoked me in all these *things*, see, I will also bring repayment of your way on *your* head, says the Lord God; and you will not commit this lewdness on top of all your *other* abominations.

44 "See, everyone who uses proverbs will use *this* proverb against you, saying, 'As the mother, so her daughter.' 45 You *are* the daughter of your mother who loathed her husband and her children, and you *are* the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and their children. Your mother was a Hittite, and your father an Amorite. 46 And your elder sister *was* Samaria, who lived to the north of you, she and her daughters; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you, *was* Sodom and her daughters. 47 Yet you have not followed their ways or acted according to their abominations, but, *as if that were* too little, you became more corrupt in your ways than all of them. 48 As I live, says the Lord God, neither Sodom your sister nor her daughters did as you have done, you and your daughters.

49 "See, this was the wickedness of your sister Sodom: Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, and she did not strengthen the hands of the poor and needy.

50 And they were haughty, and committed abomination in front of me; therefore I took them away as I saw *good*. 51 Neither did Samaria commit half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and have made your sisters *seem* righteous *in comparison* with all the abominations which you have done. 52 And you, who have judged your sisters, must bear your own shame, for the sins that you have committed are more abominable than theirs. They are more righteous than you. Yes, and be disgraced, and bear your shame, for you have made your sisters *seem* righteous.

53 "When I reverse their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then along with them *I will bring back* the captives of your captivity, 54 that you may bear your own shame and be disgraced by all that you have done by being a source of comfort to them. 55 When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state. 56 For in the day of your pride your lips did not even mention your sister Sodom, 57 before your wickedness was uncovered. So at this time *you* are reproached by the daughters of Syria, and all *who are* around her, *and* the daughters of the Philistines. Everyone around you despises you. 58 You have brought *it on you by* your lewdness and your abominations, says the LORD.

59 "For thus says the Lord God: I will deal with you as you have done, *you* who have despised

**16:41** After the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah's captivity in Babylon the people renounced idolatry.

**16:42** Isa 40:1,2; 54:9; Jer 29:10-14; Ezek 5:13; 39:29.

**16:43** Jerusalem had sunk so low morally and spiritually that she could not escape. Her punishment was certain to come.

**16:44-52** Jerusalem is now compared to Samaria the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, and Sodom the ancient wicked city destroyed by God (Gen 19:24-29).

**16:45** "Mother" – v 3. Jerusalem before Israel took it under David was unfaithful and idolatrous.

**16:46-48** "Daughters" – towns and cities in the territory ruled from Samaria.

"Sodom" – except for a small number of people Jerusalem became more wicked than Sodom had been. See Isa 1:9,10.

**16:49,50** Sodom's sins were both sins of commission and of omission – they did what they should not have done, and did not do what they should have done. Both kinds of sins are equally bad. On sins of omission see Num 32:23; 1 Sam 12:23; Matt 25:31-46.

**16:51,52** No words could better show how vile Jerusalem had become. Samaria's people were so evil God sent them into exile. Sodom was the most notoriously wicked city of ancient times and was completely destroyed for its many sins. If Samaria and Sodom appeared righteous compared to Jerusalem what must Jerusalem have been? And did she vainly imagine she could escape God's judgment?

**16:53-63** Here begins a message of hope – the first such message about Jerusalem in Ezekiel. Jerusalem would be restored to her former glory (v 55). But only after she had been punished for her sins (vs 58,59). Along with Jerusalem Samaria and Sodom and the towns associated with them would also be restored. This is the only place in the Bible that speaks of the restoration of Sodom. It surely speaks of a time when the whole land of Canaan including the area where Sodom was located would blossom like a rose (Isa 35:1,2).

**16:53** "Bring. . . from captivity" – or "Restore their well-being" – the Hebrew phrase means either thing.



the oath in breaking the covenant. 60 Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with you *made* in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. 61 Then you will remember your ways, and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, your elder and your younger; and I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant. 62 And I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I *am* the LORD, 63 so that you may remember, and be ashamed, and never again open your mouth because of your shame, when I am propitiated toward you for all that you have done, says the Lord God."

**17** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable to the house of Israel, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: A great eagle with large wings, long pinions, full of feathers of various colours, came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar. 4 He plucked off the topmost of its new twigs, and carried it into a land of traders and set it down in a city of merchants.

5 "He also took *some* of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fertile field. He placed *it* by great waters, *and* planted it *like* a willow tree. 6 And it grew, and became a low spreading vine, whose branches turned toward him, and whose roots were under it. So it became a vine, and produced branches, and put out sprigs.

7 "And there was another great eagle with large wings and many feathers; and, see, this vine bent its roots toward him, and put out its branches toward him from the garden where it had been planted, so that he might water it. 8 It had been planted in good soil beside abundant waters, that it might put out branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might become a splendid vine.'

9 "Say, 'Thus says the Lord God: Will it prosper? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers? All of its spring leaves will wither. No

great power or many people *will be required* to pull it up by its roots. 10 Yes, see, *though* planted, will it prosper? Will it not completely wither, when the east wind touches it? It will wither in the garden where it grew."

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 12 "Now say to the rebellious house, 'Do you not know what these *things mean*?' Tell *them*, 'See, the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem, and took its king and its princes, and brought them with him to Babylon. 13 And he took *one* of the royal family, made a covenant with him, and took an oath from him. He also took away the mighty of the land, 14 so that the kingdom might be lowly, that it might not lift itself up, *but* might stand by keeping his covenant. 15 But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and many people. Will he prosper? Will the one who does such *things* escape? Or can he break the covenant and be saved?

16 "'As I live, says the Lord God, he will certainly die in the place *where* the king *lives* who made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke, with him in Babylon. 17 Nor will Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great horde do *anything* for him in the war, by erecting *siege* mounds and building fortifications, to cut off many people, 18 since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, when, see, he had given his hand, then did all these *things*. He will not escape.

19 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: As I live, I will certainly bring repayment on his own head for my oath that he despised, and my covenant that he broke. 20 And I will spread my net over him, and he will be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon, and will try him there for his unfaithfulness shown against me. 21 And all his fugitives with all his troops will fall by the sword, and those who remain will be scattered to all the winds. And you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it*.

22 "Thus says the Lord God: I will also take a

**16:60** "Everlasting covenant" – 37:26-28; Isa 54:10; 55:3; Jer 31:31-34.

**16:61** At that time Samaria and Sodom will not be separate kingdoms but will be associated and subsidiary to Jerusalem.

**16:63** Jerusalem's forgiveness and restoration and God's covenant with them will be based on the atonement He will make for them. Can this refer to anything other than the cross of Christ?

"Propitiated" – Christ's sacrifice will remove God's anger from them (this is the meaning of propitiation), and make it possible for God to completely forgive them. **17:1** This chapter contains a parable (vs 3-10) and its explanation (vs 11-21). In the parable the eagle (v 3) is Nebuchadnezzar

king of Babylon (v 12; 48:40; Jer 49:22; Dan 7:4). Lebanon is Jerusalem. Cedar is the royal family of David. The topmost twig (v 4) is King Jehoiachin deported to Babylon, a "city of merchants" (v 4). The "seed" (v 5) is Zedekiah who remained in the land of Judah and was appointed ruler by Nebuchadnezzar. In v 6 the seed becomes a vine (chapter 15). The "cedar" grew in Babylon until Judah was restored. The eagle of v 7 is Pharaoh king of Egypt. Zedekiah appealed to him for help, but God reveals that it will come to nothing (vs 9,10,17). **17:13** "One of the royal family" – this person was Zedekiah.

"Oath" – 2 Chron 36:13.

"Mighty of the land" – 2 Kings 24:15-17.

*twig* of the topmost branch of the tall cedar, and will set *it out*. I will pluck from the top of its young twigs a tender one, and will plant *it* on a high and lofty mountain; 23 I will plant it on the high mountain of Israel, and it will produce branches and bear fruit, and be a splendid cedar; and under it birds of every kind will live; they will live in the shadow of its branches. 24 And all the trees of the field will know that I, the LORD, have brought down the high tree, exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree, and made the dry tree flourish; *that* I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it*."

**18** The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2 "What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? 3 "As I live, says the Lord God, you will no longer have *occasion* to use this proverb in Israel. 4 See, all souls are mine. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sins, it will die.

- 5 "But if a man is righteous, and does what is lawful and right,
- 6 *And* does not eat at the *shrines* on the mountains, or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbour's wife, or go near a menstruous woman,
- 7 *And* does not oppress anyone, *but* restores the debtor's pledge to him, does not commit robbery, gives his bread to the hungry, and covers the naked with a garment,
- 8 *if* he does not lend at usury, or take increase,

withdraws his hand from evil, administers true justice between man and man, 9 walks in my statutes and keeps my judgments, to behave faithfully, he *is* righteous; he will surely live, says the Lord God.

- 10 "If he begets a son *who* is a robber, a shedder of blood, or *who* does *any* of these *things*,
- 11 or who does not do any of those *duties*, but eats on the mountains, and defiles his neighbour's wife,
- 12 oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, and lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination,
- 13 lends at usury and takes increase, then will this *son* live? He will not live. He does all these abominations; he will surely die. His blood will be on him.

- 14 Now, see, *if* he begets a son who sees all his father's sins which he has done, and considers, and does not do likewise,
- 15 does not eat on the mountains, or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbour's wife,
- 16 or oppress anyone, does not withhold the pledge, does not commit robbery, *but* gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment,

**18:2** Jer 31:29. The exiles evidently thought that the disasters that had come on them were not because of their own sins but because of the sins of their fathers. The tendency of human nature is always to try to shift the responsibility for one's guilt to other people or to blame one's fate or circumstances. Compare Gen 3:12,13. **18:4** Here is a great principle of God's word. God deals with each person individually. All belong to Him and the great issues of life and death are in His just hands. It is true that children are affected by the sins of their fathers and suffer for them (Ex 34:6,7). This is because in some way, in some measure, they share the guilt of their fathers (Rom 5:12-19). But individually they do not suffer the judgment of being suddenly cut off and going to hell because of what their fathers did. In judging people God always takes into account what the individual himself has or has not done (v 30).

**18:5-29** Illustrations of the truth that God deals with the individual and does not cut him off for what another person has done. **18:6-9** Under the law God in grace accepted the righteous acts of individuals because such acts revealed their faith in God, the true desire of their hearts to be right with God, and a proper attitude toward God and His word. Here the righteous life is seen to be both in what a man does not do and in what he does do. **18:6** "Shrines" – high places where unlawful sacrifices were made. **18:7** Ex 20:15; 22:21,26; Deut 15:7-11; 24:12,13. Compare Matt 25:31-46. **18:8** Ps 15:5, "Usury" – or simply "interest" (also verses 13,17). **18:9** 20:11; Lev 18:5; 19:37; Deut 4:1. **18:10-13** A son does not inherit the righteousness of his father. If he lives in sin he will personally be guilty and will die for it. **18:14-20** The third generation is now

17 withdraws his hand from the poor,  
does not receive usury or increase,  
administers my justice,  
and walks in my statutes,  
he will not die for the guilt of his  
father; he will surely live.

18 "As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed *others*, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, see, he will die in his guilt.

19 "Yet you say, 'Why does the son not bear the guilt of the father?' When the son does what is lawful and right, and keeps all my statutes and does them, he will surely live. 20 The soul that sins, it will die. The son will not bear the guilt of the father, and the father will not bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous will be on him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be on him.

21 "But if the wicked turns from all the sins that he has committed, and keeps all my statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he will surely live; he will not die. 22 None of the transgressions that he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of his righteous acts, which he has done, he will live. 23 Do I have any pleasure at all in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his ways, and live?

24 "But when the righteous turns away from his righteousness, and does evil, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* does, will he live? All the righteous acts that he has

considered. Compare Ex 20:5; 34:7. Children to the third and fourth generation will be punished as their fathers, only if they commit the same sins as their father. If they do not, they will escape God's judgment (v 20).

**18:17** "From the poor" – this means he does not injure or oppress or rob the poor.

**18:21,22** Verses 14-20 teach that the evils of one generation may be overcome in the next generation. These verses teach that the evils of one generation may be overcome by the same generation. In either case, a person's so-called karma has nothing to do with it. Verse 21 speaks of full repentance. Compare Isa 55:7. Verse 22 speaks of forgiveness, the complete blotting out of one's sins. See Ps 103:12; Isa 44:22; Mic 7:18,19; 1 John 1:7-9.

**18:23** Verse 32; 33:11. God is love. He is not keen to punish, but to forgive (Joel 2:13; 2 Pet 3:9). He does not heartlessly, arbitrarily decree the death or the eternal punishment of anyone. Does anything make Him happier than seeing men turn to Him in repentance (Luke 15:7,10)? He delights in those who turn to Him, who are redeemed and forgiven (Zeph 3:17; Ps 147:11).

**18:24** The meaning here is not that a child

done will not be remembered. Because of the trespass that he has committed, and because of the sin that he has done, because of them, he will die.

25 "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear now, O house of Israel, Is not my way just? Are not your ways unjust? 26 When a righteous *man* turns away from his righteousness, and does evil, and dies in it, he will die for the evil that he has done. 27 Again, when the wicked *man* turns away from the wickedness that he has committed, and does what is lawful and right, he will keep himself alive. 28 Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions that he has committed, he will surely live. He will not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Are not your ways unjust?

30 "Therefore I will judge each one of you, O house of Israel, according to his ways, says the Lord God. Repent, and turn away from all your transgressions. Then wickedness will not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, through which you have transgressed, and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why will you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of the one who dies, says the Lord God; therefore turn to me, and live.

**19** "Moreover take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, 2 and say,

"What is your mother? A lioness.  
She lay down among lions,

of God, saved by God's grace and given eternal life, can lose eternal life and be lost. That would contradict a verse like John 10:28 and a number of other such verses. Eternal life and eternal death are not in view here in Ezekiel (and rarely in any place in the whole Old Testament). The context is God's judgment on Israel, the destruction of Jerusalem and many of its people and the exile of others. In those circumstances physical death is viewed as God's judgment, living means enjoying His favor.

**18:25** Jer 2:29. This shows a tendency in fallen human beings. Unjust themselves they dare to accuse God of injustice.

**18:26-29** Verses 21-25; 33:12-20.

**18:30-32** A strong and moving appeal to Israel and every individual in the nation to repent. Compare Isa 1:16-19; 19:22; Jer 8:1; 35:15; Hos 12:6-14; Joel 2:12; Matt 3:2; Acts 17:30.

**18:30** "Your ruin" – Hos 5:5; 13:9; 14:1. **18:31** A new heart and new spirit can be gotten only by repentance and coming to God who alone can give them (36:26; Ps 51:10).

**18:32** Verse 23. A great theme of Ezekiel and of the whole Bible.

**19:2** "Mother" – the people of Israel with

she nourished her cubs among young lions.

3 And she raised one of her cubs.  
It became a young lion,  
and it learned to catch prey;  
it devoured men.

4 The nations also heard of him.  
He was captured in their pit,  
and they brought him with chains  
to the land of Egypt.

5 "Now she waited *and* saw that her hope  
was gone.  
Then she took another of her cubs *and*  
made him a young lion,

6 And he prowled among the lions.  
He became a young lion,  
and learned to catch prey,  
*and* he devoured men.

7 And he knew their desolate palaces,  
and he laid waste their cities;  
and the land with its abundance became  
desolate through the sound of his  
roaring.

8 Then the nations from the provinces  
beset him on every side,  
and spread their net over him.  
He was captured in their pit.

9 And with hooks they put him in a cage  
and brought him to the king of Babylon.  
They brought him into nets, so that his  
voice would no longer be heard on  
the mountains of Israel.

10 "Your mother *is* like a vine in your  
bloodline, planted by the waters.  
She was fruitful and full of branches  
because of the many waters.

11 And she had strong rods for the  
sceptres of those who ruled,  
and she towered in height among the  
thick branches,  
and she appeared in her height with her  
many branches.

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their capital in Jerusalem.

**19:3,4** "One of her cubs" – king Jehoahaz who was defeated by Pharaoh Neco and taken to Egypt (2 Kings 23:31-34; Jer 22:10-13).

**19:5-9** Both king Jehoiachin and king Zedekiah were taken to Babylon but the description in verses 6-9 seems to fit Zedekiah better, although the time of his exile had not yet come.

**19:10** "Vine" – 15:2; 17:7,8; Isa 5:1,7.

**19:12** The armies of Babylon which destroyed Judah and Jerusalem were from an eastern country.

**19:13** "Wilderness" – Babylon seemed like a spiritual wilderness to the exiles.

**19:14** Fire here means sinful rebellion that

12 But she was rooted up in fury.  
She was hurled to the ground,  
and the east wind dried up her fruit.  
Her strong rods were broken and  
withered; the fire consumed them.

13 And now she *is* planted in the  
wilderness,  
in a dry and thirsty ground.

14 And fire has gone out of a rod of her  
branches;  
*it* has consumed her fruit, so that she  
has no strong rod *to be* a sceptre  
to rule.  
This *is* a lament, and is to be for a lament."

**20** And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth *month*, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* some of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me.

2 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 3 "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Have you come to inquire of me? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.

4 "Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge *them*? Cause them to know the abominations of their fathers, 5 and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: In the day that I chose Israel, and lifted up my hand *to swear* to the offspring of the house of Jacob, and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up my hand *to swear* to them, saying, I *am* the LORD your God, 6 in the day *that* I lifted up my hand *to swear* to them to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, flowing with milk and honey, which *is* the glory of all lands. 7 Then I said to them, 'Throw away, each of you, the abominations *that attract* his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I *am* the LORD your God.'

8 "But they rebelled against me, and would not listen to me. They did not all throw away the abominations *that attracted* their eyes, nor did they bring destruction on Jerusalem.

"No rod" – after Zedekiah's exile there was no king left in Jerusalem.

**20:1** This was five years before the capture of king Zedekiah and the burning of Jerusalem.

**20:2,3** 14:1-4.

**20:4-29** A recounting of Israel's sinful history. Compare 16:1-52; 23:1-49; Ps 78:8-64; 106:7-48.

**20:5,6** Ex 3:6-17; 4:29-31; 6:1-8. Lifting up the hand was a solemn way of making a promise.

**20:7-9** This description of events in Egypt is not given anywhere else in the Bible. While in Egypt Israel began to worship the gods

they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will pour out my fury on them, to spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.' 9 But I acted for my name's sake, so that it would not be profaned before the nations among which they *were*, in whose sight I made myself known to them to bring them out of the land of Egypt. 10 Therefore I caused them to go out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness, 11 and I gave them my statutes and showed them my judgments, by which a man will live, *if* he does them. 12 And I also gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies them.

13 "But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not walk in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, by which a man will live, *if* he does them. And they greatly profaned my Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out my fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them. 14 But I acted for my name's sake, so that it would not be profaned before the nations, in whose sight I brought them out. 15 But I also lifted up my hand *to swear* to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them*, flowing with milk and honey, which *is* the glory of all lands, 16 because they had despised my judgments, and did not walk in my statutes, but profaned my Sabbaths. For their heart went after their idols. 17 Nevertheless my eye spared them instead of destroying them, and I did not make an end of them in the wilderness. 18 But I said to their children in the wilderness, "Do not walk according to the statutes of your fathers, or observe their judgments, or defile yourselves with their idols. 19 I *am* the LORD your God. Walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them, 20 and hallow my Sabbaths, for they are a sign between me and you, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God."

21 "However, the children rebelled against me. They did not walk according to my statutes, or

keep my judgments to do them, by which a man will live, *if* he does them. They profaned my Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out my fury on them, to spend my anger against them in the wilderness. 22 But I withdrew my hand, and acted for my name's sake, so that it would not be profaned in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out. 23 I also lifted up my hand *to swear* to them in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the nations, and disperse them through the countries, 24 because they had not put my judgments into effect, but had despised my statutes, and had profaned my Sabbaths, and *because* their eyes went after their fathers' idols. 25 Therefore I also gave them statutes *that were* not good, and judgments they could not live by, 26 and I let them pollute themselves by their own gifts, letting them cause the firstborn to pass through *the fire to their idols*, so that I might make them desolate, so that they might know that I *am* the LORD.'

27 "Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: Also in this your fathers blasphemed me, by being unfaithful to me. 28 *For* when I had brought them into the land, *concerning* which I lifted up my hand *swearing* to give it to them, then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and there they offered their sacrifices, and there they made offerings that provoked *me*. There too they offered their fragrant incense and there poured out their drink offerings. 29 Then I said to them, "What *is* this high place you go to?" And its name is called Bamah to this day.

30 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Will you defile yourselves like your fathers? And act like a prostitute with their abominations? 31 For to this very day when you offer your gifts, when you make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, says the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.

of Egypt (Josh 24:14). Even though God promised them deliverance from slavery and freedom in their own land, the love of idolatry remained in them. Later this bore evil fruit in the shameful acts of Ex 32:1-6. On God's anger see Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11. 20:9 "My name's sake" – v 14,22,44. Compare 32:9-14; Num 14:10-19. 20:10 Ex 13:8; 19:1. 20:11,12 Ex 20:1-23; 31:13-17. 20:13 Ex 32:1-6; Num 14:1-4; Ps 78:40. 20:14 Verse 9. 20:15 Num 14:21-35. 20:16 Verses 7,8; 14:3. 20:17 Ex 34:6,7; Ps 103:8-10. 20:18-21 The second generation was little (or no) better than the first generation which

came out of Egypt.

20:22 Verses 9,14,44.

20:23 Lev 26:33; Deut 28:64.

20:25 This was a just punishment for their willful rebellion. Compare Rom 1:24,26,28. In judgment God sometimes abandons people to things that are not good for them. 20:26 Verse 31; 16:20. If only they would see the evil of their horrible acts and come to a knowledge of God their abandonment to evil would serve a good purpose.

20:27-29 Israel in the land was no better than it had been in Egypt or in the desert (Ps 78:55-58; 106:34-39).

"Bamah" (v 29) – means "high place".

20:30,31 Israel in Ezekiel's day was no better than any previous generation.



32 "And what comes into your mind will never happen, your saying 'We will be like the nations, like the tribes of *other* countries, worshipping wood and stone.' 33 As I live, says the Lord God, I will certainly rule you with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. 34 And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. 35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead my case with you face to face, 36 as I pleaded *it* with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead *it* with you, says the Lord God. 37 And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant, 38 and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and those who transgress against me. I will bring them out of the country where they live, but they will not enter the land of Israel; and you will know that I *am* the LORD.

39 "As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord God: Hereafter, if you will not listen to me, go, each of you serve his idols, but do not profane my holy name any longer with your gifts, and with your idols. 40 For in my holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel, says the Lord God, all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, will serve me. There I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, with all your holy things. 41 I will accept you with your fragrant incense, when I bring you out from the peoples, and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered. And I

will show myself holy among you before the nations. 42 And you will know that I *am* the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country *concerning* which I lifted up my hand to *swear* to give it to your fathers. 43 And there you will remember your ways, and all your deeds, in which you have been defiled, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evils that you have committed. 44 And you will know that I *am* the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, says the Lord God."

45 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 46 "Son of man, set your face toward the south, and utter *your words* toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the southland, 47 and say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord God: See, I will kindle a fire in you, and it will devour every green tree and every dry tree in you. The blazing fire will not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north will be scorched by it. 48 And all flesh will see that I, the LORD, have kindled it. It will not be quenched."

49 Then I said, "Ah Lord God! They say of me, 'Is he not *just* speaking parables?'"

**21** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, and utter *your words* toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel, 3 and say to the land of Israel, Thus says the Lord: See, I *am* against you, and will draw my

**20:32** This attitude was one of the foundation stones of their sinful, rebellious way of life. Compare 1 Sam 8:5. They did not wish to be what God called them to be – a distinct, separate, holy people (Ex 19:5,6; Deut 7:6). They wanted to conform to the world's standards and not be regarded as different. Do we not see the same attitude in many Christians today?

**20:33-44** As for Israel, God here declares that He will never let them be like other peoples of earth. What they wanted would never happen. He would not deal with them as He dealt with other nations. He had a purpose toward them and He was determined to fulfill it. This is true also of individual believers (see Ps 73:12-14; etc).

**20:33,34** Compare Deut 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 11:2; 26:8.

**20:35** Desert 19:13. Exile from their land was a desert-like experience for Israel.

**20:36** Verses 8-10.

**20:37,38** Jer 33:13. As a shepherd counts his sheep and separates them from those which are not his, so God will do to the people of Israel. Compare Num 14:26-35.

"Covenant" – 16:60,62.

**20:39** The first part of this verse is what Israel determined to do; the second part what God was determined to work in them.

**20:40-44** A gracious promise of restoration to their land. Not only so, but a promise that as a nation they would be freed from idolatry to serve God and be enabled to offer acceptable sacrifices. Above all they would come into a fuller knowledge of both themselves (v 43) and God (vs 42,44).

**20:43** They will see themselves (in some measure) as God sees them and will repent – 6:9; 16:63; 36:31.

**20:45-48** A prophecy of the complete destruction of that part of the kingdom which remained in the land. It is compared to a forest. The kingdom was the southern kingdom in relation to Israel, the northern kingdom. Also it was south of the armies of Babylon which always invaded from the north.

"Fire" – God's judgment in sending enemies to destroy them (Isa 10:16-19; Jer 15:14; 17:27; 21:14).

**20:49** Ezekiel evidently thought that speaking in parables would give unbelievers more opportunity to reject and mock him.

**21:3** "Sword" – Isa 31:8; 34:6; 66:16.



sword out of its scabbard, and will cut off the righteous and the wicked from you. 4 Since, then, I will cut off the righteous and the wicked from you, therefore my sword will come out of its scabbard against all flesh from the south to the north, 5 so that all flesh may know that I, the Lord, have drawn my sword out of its scabbard. It will not return again.

6 "Therefore, son of man, groan with a breaking heart, and with bitterness. Groan before their eyes. 7 And when they say to you, 'Why are you groaning?' then you are to answer, 'Because of the news. It is coming; and every heart will melt, and all hands will be feeble, and every spirit will faint, and all knees will be as weak as water. See, it comes, and will happen, says the Lord God.'"

8 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

9 "Son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus says the LORD. Say:

"A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also polished!

10 It is sharpened to make a terrible slaughter; it is polished to flash like lightning. Should we then be merry?

It despises the rod, my son, and all wood.

11 And he has given it to be polished, that it may be handled.

This sword is sharpened, and it is polished, to give it into the hand of the slayer.'

12 Cry and wail, son of man!

For it *will come* on my people, it will come on all the princes of Israel. Because of the sword terrors will be on my people.

Therefore strike *your* thigh.

13 Because *it is for* testing.

And what if *the sword* despises even the rod?

God calls invading armies His "sword," used to execute judgments. Here the armies of Babylon are meant (v 19).

21:5 Men will know it because God repeatedly foretold it through His prophets. 21:6 God wants His servants to be in tune with Him, to think and feel about things as He thinks and feels, and to reveal to people what He thinks and feels. Compare v 12; Isa 22:4; Jer 8:21 - 9:1; 48:36; Lam 1:16; Ezek 18:23; Luke 19:41.

21:7 Lev 26:36; 30:6; Jer 4:31; etc.

21:8-17 This is a sword song. In poetic language God's "sword" is described. It was all ready to descend in judgment on God's own people (v 12). Though that nation was like a son to God (v 10) it could not escape the punishment God was sending by means of Babylon's armies. Babylon's soldiers, swords in hand, would surround them, would

It will no *longer* be, says the Lord God.

14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and strike *your* hands together, and let the sword do double the third time,

the sword for the slaughter, the sword for the slaughter of great *men*, that enters their private rooms.

15 I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that *their* heart may faint, and *their* ruins be multiplied.

Ah! *it is* made bright, *it is* grasped for slaughter.

16 Go one way or another, *either* to the right *or* to the left, wherever your face *is* set.

17 I will also strike my hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest. I, the LORD, have said *it*."

18 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 19 "Also, son of man, mark out two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to come. Both of them are to come out of the same land. And make a sign and put *it* at the head of the road to the city. 20 Mark out a way for the sword to come to Rabbah of the Ammonites, and to Judah, to fortified Jerusalem. 21 For the king of Babylon stands at the fork in the road, at the head of the two roads, to use divination. He shakes *his* arrows, he consults images, he looks in the liver. 22 In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem, to appoint captains, to open the mouth for the slaughter, to lift up the voice with shouting, to appoint *battering* rams against the gates, to raise a siege mound, *and* to build fortifications. 23 And in the eyes of those who have sworn oaths it will seem like a false divination, but he will remind *them* of wrongdoing, that they may be captured.

24 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because

stand at every gate to slaughter the people (vs 14-16). God will thus spend His anger on them as He had declared He would (v 17; 5:12,13).

21:18-22 Ezekiel in exile in Babylon was to enact before the people the approach of king Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem. Compare 4:1-3. Verse 21 predicts that Nebuchadnezzar would be indecisive whether to first attack Jerusalem, or Rabbah the capital city of Ammon. He would seek for signs and omens to make a decision and then decide to come on to Jerusalem.

"Liver" (v 21) – examining the liver of an animal was one way those people then sought an omen. They did not have a living God to get guidance from.

21:23,24 "Sworn oaths" – the rulers of Jerusalem on oath agreed to submit to the king of Babylon, but were now in rebellion

you have caused your wrongdoing to be remembered, because your transgressions are uncovered, so that your sins appear in all your deeds; because, *I say*, that you have come to remembrance, you will be captured by hand.

25 "And to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, when wrongdoing *will come to* an end, 26 thus says the Lord God: Remove the turban and take off the crown. *Things will not be* the same. Exalt *him who is* lowly, and abase *him who is* high up. 27 I will overturn it, overturn, overturn, and it will be no *more* until he comes whose right it is; and I will give it *to him*."

28 "And you, son of man, prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord God concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach. Say:

The sword, the sword *is* drawn.

*It is* polished for the slaughter

to consume, to flash like lightning,

29 While they see vain *visions* for you,

while they divine a lie for you,

to bring you on the necks of *those*

to be slain, the wicked,

whose day has come,

and whose wrongdoing *will have* an end.

30 Shall I cause it to return to its scabbard?

I will judge you in the place where you  
were created,

in the land of your birth.

31 And I will pour out my indignation on you.

I will blow against you in the fire of  
my wrath,

and deliver you into the hands of

savage men, skillful in destruction.

32 You will be fuel for the fire.

Your blood will be in the midst of the land.

You will no *longer* be remembered;

for I, the LORD, have spoken *it*."

judge, will you judge the city of bloodshed? Yes, you must show her all her abominations. 3 Then say, Thus says the Lord God: The city sheds blood in the midst of it, bringing her time near, and makes idols against herself to defile herself. 4 You have become guilty because of the blood you have shed, and have defiled yourself with the idols which you have made, and you have caused your days of *punishment* to draw near, and have come to *the end of* your years. Therefore I have made you an *object of* scorn to the nations, and an *object of* mockery to all countries. 5 *Those* near and *those* far from you will mock you, *you who are* infamous and full of turmoil.

6 "See, each one of the princes of Israel, used their power to shed blood in you. 7 In you they have made light of father and mother; in the midst of you they have oppressed the foreigner; in you they have troubled the fatherless and the widow. 8 You have despised my holy things, and have profaned my Sabbaths. 9 In you are men who slander to cause bloodshed, and in you they eat at the *shrines in the* mountains; in the midst of you they commit lewd acts. 10 In you they have uncovered their fathers' nakedness, in you they have violated her who was set apart in *her* impurity. 11 And one has committed abomination with his neighbour's wife, and another has lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law, and another in you has violated his sister, his father's daughter. 12 In you they have taken bribes to shed blood. You have taken usury and increase, and you have made gain from your neighbours by extortion, and have forgotten me, says the Lord God. 13 See, therefore that I have struck with my fist at the dishonest gain which you have made, and at your bloodshed which has been in the midst of you. 14 Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong, in the days that I deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken *it*, and will do *it*. 15 And I will scatter you among the nations, and disperse you in the countries, and will rid you of your filthiness. 16 And this inheritance of yours will

**22** Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Now, you son of man, will you

(17:11-15). God condemns them for being unfaithful and treacherous.

21:25 Zedekiah.

21:26 17:24; 1 Sam 2:7,8; Luke 1:52:53. 21:27 Compare Gen 49:10. Probably means the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32,33).

21:28-32 Verse 20. After destroying Jerusalem God would send the king of Babylon against the Ammonites. For other prophecies concerning them see 25:1-7; Jer 49:1-6; Amos 1:13-15; Zeph 2:8-11.

21:31 Armies of Babylon would be the instrument God used – Jer 4:7; 51:20-23.

22:2 "City of bloodshed" – Jerusalem.

22:3,4 Two sins in particular brought God's anger on the city – murder and idolatry (2 Kings 21:16; 24:4; Isa 59:3,7; Jer

2:34; Lam 4:13; Ezek 8:5-12; 9:9).

22:5 "Mock" – Deut 28:37; 2 Chron 7:20; Jer 18:16; 44:8.

22:6-12 Here is a list of sins against specific commands of God's law (Ex 20:12,13; 22:21,22; 20:3,8,16; Lev 18:7; 12:2; 18:8,15,19; 19:13; Deut 27:25). One of the root causes of such behavior is seen in the last phrase of v 12 – they forgot God (Ps 106:21; Isa 71:10; 57:11. See Ps 50:22). Forgetting God is a great evil and leads to other great evil.

22:9 "Mountains" – note at 18:6.

22:12 "Usury" – or simply "interest".

22:14 Ps 76:7; Joel 2:11; Nah 1:6; Mal 3:2; Rev 6:17.

22:15 Lev 26:33; Deut 4:27.

22:16 It is exceedingly important that men

be allotted to you in the sight of the heathen, and you will know that I *am* the Lord."

17 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me. They *are* all bronze and tin and iron and lead, inside the furnace. They are the dross of silver. 19 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have all become dross, so see that I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 As they gather silver and bronze and iron and lead and tin into the furnace, to blow fire on it to melt *it*, so I will gather *you* in my anger and in my fury, and I will leave *you there* and melt you. 21 Yes, I will gather you and blow on you in the fire of my wrath, and you will be melted inside it. 22 You will be melted inside it, as silver is melted inside the furnace, and you will know that I, the LORD, have poured out my fury on you."

23 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 24 "Son of man, say to her, 'You *are* the land that is not cleansed, or rained on in the day of indignation.' 25 *There is* a conspiracy by her prophets inside it, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. 26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things. They have shown no *difference* between the holy

learn the ways of the one true God even if they have to learn them the hard way.

**22:17-22** Jerusalem is compared to a furnace, and God's wrath is compared to fire. The meaning is this: the best of the nation (the silver) had already gone into exile. Those who were left were the worst (dross). The Babylonians would invade Judah again, many from Judah would flee to Jerusalem, and Jerusalem would become a place where most of them would be destroyed.

**22:23-29** Verses 6-12. Here is what God means by "dross." He condemns the sinful condition of Jerusalem with special emphasis on its rulers (vs 25,27), priests (v 26) and prophets (v 28). Each group of people was the exact opposite of what it should have been. It was the work of rulers to rule with justice, of priests to know the difference between holy and unholy and to teach the holy, of prophets to get God's messages and speak only the truth. It is no wonder that the people followed the evil example of their leaders and became dross too (v 29).

**22:28** "Whitewash" – 13:10.

"Vain visions" – see Jer 14:14. Of all the prophets in Jerusalem at that time only Jeremiah spoke the truth, and rulers, priests, prophets, and people all refused to listen to him.

**22:30** Isa 51:18; 59:16; 63:5. God meant someone in an official position in Jerusalem who would stand for Him and turn the people back to God, to truth and holiness. Jeremiah was His man in Jerusalem but he

and profane, nor have they shown a difference between the unclean and the clean. And they have hidden their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. 27 Her princes inside her *are* like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. 28 And her prophets have daubed them with whitewash, seeing vain *visions*, and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God,' when the LORD had not spoken. 29 The people of the land have used oppression, and committed robbery, and have troubled the poor and needy; yes, they have unjustly oppressed the foreigner.

30 "And I sought for a man among them who would build up the wall, and stand in the gap before me for the land, so that I would not destroy it, but I found none. 31 Therefore I have poured out my indignation on them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. I have repaid their own way on their heads, says the Lord God."

**23** The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother, 3 and they committed acts of prostitution in Egypt. They committed acts of prostitution in their youth. There their breasts were pressed, and there their virgin bosoms were embraced. 4 And their names *were*

was an outsider, without an official position and rejected by all the leaders. Observe from this verse how reluctant God was to pour out His wrath on Jerusalem and how much leaders might have done to avert that wrath. Compare Ex 32:9-14; 34:8,9; Ps 106:23; Num 16:42-50.

**22:31** Though reluctant to punish when there is the slightest reason for mercy, the situation had become so bad that God could no longer delay. On wrath see Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**23:1** This whole chapter is about the unfaithfulness of the two divisions of the people of Israel. It may be compared with chapter 16 and Jeremiah chapter 3.

**23:2,3** Even before the people of Israel left Egypt for Canaan they became "prostitutes" – that is, they became unfaithful to God, and set their love on the things of Egypt (20:7,8; Num 11:5; 14:2-4; 16:13; 21:5). In the Bible spiritual unfaithfulness is frequently compared to adultery and prostitution (16:15; Ex 34:15; Lev 17:7; Deut 31:16; Jud 2:17; Jer 2:20; 3:6,9). In this chapter the emphasis is on unfaithfulness to God in the matter of seeking allies, but idolatry is also in view (vs 7,30,37,49). Both kingdoms in Israel all too often sought help, not from God, but from powerful and ungodly nations. They admired their strength and wanted to follow their ways. And they were prone to adopt the gods and idols of the nations they went after.

**23:4** Aholah means "her own tent"; Aholibah

Aholah, the older *one*, and Aholibah, her sister. And they were mine and bore sons and daughters. And their names: Aholah *is* Samaria, and Aholibah *is* Jerusalem.

5 "And Aholah acted like a prostitute when she was mine; and she lusted after her lovers, *her* neighbours the Assyrians, 6 *who were* clothed in blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding on horses. 7 So she committed her acts of prostitution with them, with all those *who were* the chosen men of Assyria, and with all whom she lusted after; she defiled herself with all their idols. 8 And she did not abandon her prostitution *carried on* from Egypt; for in her youth they lay with her, and they embraced her virgin bosom, and poured their immorality on her.

9 "Therefore I have delivered her into the hands of her lovers, into the hands of the Assyrians, whom she lusted after. 10 These uncovered her nakedness. They took her sons and her daughters, and killed her with the sword. And she became notorious among women, for they had executed judgment on her.

11 "And when her sister Aholibah saw *this*, she became more corrupt in her lust than she, and in her prostitution worse than her sister in *her* prostitution. 12 She lusted after *her* neighbors the Assyrians, captains and rulers dressed very splendidly, horsemen riding on horses, all of them desirable young men. 13 Then I saw that she was defiled, *that* both of them *had taken* the same way, 14 and *that* she increased her acts of prostitution. For she saw men portrayed on the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed in red, 15 with sashes tied around their waists, *and* flowing turbans on their heads, all of them looking like princes, in the manner of the Babylonians of

Chaldea, the land of their birth.

16 "And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she lusted after them, and sent messengers to Chaldea to them. 17 And the Babylonians came to her in the bed of love, and they defiled her with their prostitution. And she was defiled by them, and her mind was alienated from them. 18 So she uncovered her prostitution and uncovered her nakedness. Then my mind was alienated from her, just as my mind was alienated from her sister. 19 Yet she multiplied her acts of prostitution, calling to remembrance the days of her youth, where she had acted like a prostitute in the land of Egypt. 20 For she lusted after her lovers, whose flesh *is like* the flesh of donkeys, and whose issue *is like* the issue of horses. 21 Thus you called to remembrance the lewdness of your youth, when the Egyptians embraced your bosom because of your youthful breasts.

22 "Therefore, O Aholibah, thus says the Lord God: See, I will raise up your lovers against you, from whom your mind is alienated, and I will bring them against you on every side, 23 The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, *and* all the Assyrians with them; all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding on horses. 24 And they will come against you with weapons, chariots and wagons, and with a horde of people, *who* will set large shields and small shields and helmets against you all around. And I will delegate judgment to them, and they will judge you according to their judgments. 25 And I will set my jealousy against you, and they will deal furiously with you. They will remove your nose and your ears, and the rest of you will fall by the sword. They will take away your sons and your daughters,

means "my tent is in her." The northern kingdom with its capital in Samaria forsook God's dwelling place in Jerusalem and made her own places of worship (1 Kings 12:16-33). This is probably what is signified by the name Aholah. God's dwelling place remained in the southern kingdom, in Jerusalem, until the time of Ezekiel chapter 10. This is probably what is signified by the name Aholibah.

23:5 "Assyrians" – 2 Kings 15:19,20.

23:8 In some hundreds of years there was no real change in the people.

23:9,10 The Assyrians conquered Israel and took the people into captivity in 721 BC (2 Kings 17:1-18).

23:11 Though the southern kingdom of Judah knew all that had happened to Samaria she did not change her ways. Indeed she became worse than the northern kingdom (16:51; Jer 3:7-11).

23:12,13 2 Kings 16:7-15.

23:14-16 The beginning of this is indicated

in 2 Kings 20:12,13; 2 Chron 32:31.

23:17 Love of the world and friendship with ungodly people will defile God's people. So we have the New Testament admonitions of 2 Cor 6:14-18 and 1 John 2:15,16.

23:18 Jer 6:8; etc.

23:19-21 Instead of turning back to God for help from enemies Judah turned to any country that seemed to offer assistance. Compare Jer 27:3. And she longed for the time when she was controlled by Egypt and God had not yet brought her out of bondage.

23:22-35 Sin will always have its consequences. In this case those nations Judah considered allies would become her enemies and destroy her. Behind the marching of their armies God stood directing them and punishing His people (vs 22,24,25).

23:24 "Weapons" – the meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain.

23:25 "Jealousy" – Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; Nahum 1:2.

and the remainder of you will be devoured by fire. 26 They will also strip you of your clothes, and take away your beautiful jewels. 27 Thus I will put a stop to your lewdness, and your prostitution *carried on* from the land of Egypt, so that you will not lift up your eyes to them, or remember Egypt any more.

28 "For thus says the Lord God: See, I will deliver you into the hands of those you hate, into the hands of *those* from whom your mind is alienated. 29 And they will deal with you hatefully, and take away all that your labour *produced*, and will leave you naked and bare, and the nakedness of your prostitution will be uncovered, both your lewdness and your acts of prostitution. 30 I will do these *things* to you, because you have gone like a prostitute after the nations, *and* because you are defiled with their idols. 31 You have walked in the way of your sister, therefore I will give her cup into your hand.

32 "Thus says the Lord God:

You will drink from the deep and large cup of your sister. You will be laughed to scorn and derided. It contains much.

33 You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of your sister Samaria.

34 You will drink it and drain *it*, and you will break it to shards, and tear your own breasts; for I have spoken *it*, says the Lord God.

35 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have forgotten me, and thrust me behind your back, therefore you will also bear your lewdness and your prostitution."

36 The LORD also said to me: "Son of man, will you judge Aholah and Aholibah? Yes, declare to them their abominations. 37 *Tell them* that they have committed adultery, and that blood *is* in their hands, and that they have committed adultery with their idols, and have also caused their sons, whom

they bore to me, to pass through *the fire*, for *them* to devour. 38 Moreover they have done this to me: on the same day they have defiled my sanctuary and profaned my Sabbaths. 39 For when they had slaughtered their children for their idols, they then came the same day into my sanctuary to defile it; and, see, this they have done inside my house.

40 "And furthermore, you sent for men to come from afar, to whom a messenger *was* sent; and, see, they came. You washed yourself for them, painted your eyes, and adorned yourself with ornaments, 41 and sat on a stately bed, with a table prepared before it, on which you placed my incense and my oil.

42 "And a sound of a carefree crowd *was* with her; and Sabeans *were* brought from the wilderness, with men of the common sort, who put bracelets on their hands, and beautiful crowns on their heads. 43 Then I said about *this one grown* old in adulteries, 'Will they now commit acts of prostitution with her, and she *with them*?' 44 And they went in to her, as they go in to a woman who acts like a prostitute; so they went in to Aholah and to Aholibah, the lewd women. 45 And the righteous men will judge them as adulteresses, and as women who shed blood, because they *are* adulteresses, and blood is in their hands.

46 "For thus says the Lord God: I will bring a crowd against them, and will hand them over to be terrorized and plundered. 47 And the crowd will stone them with stones, and execute them with their swords. They will kill their sons and their daughters, and burn their houses with fire.

48 "Thus I will put a stop to lewdness in the land, so that all women may be taught not to act according to your lewdness. 49 And they will repay your lewdness on you, and you will bear the sins of your idolatry; and you will know that I *am* the Lord God."

**24** Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man,

**23:27** Here is God's good purpose in all this. He was determined to break them loose from their idols, and from their love of the ways of ungodly nations. See also 16:41,42. **23:30** The reasons for their destruction are clearly set before them.

**23:31** "Cup" – Isa 51:17,22; Jer 25:15-29. **23:35** "Forgotten" – one of the root causes of all their sinful behavior (22:12; Ps 50:22).

"Bear" – 16:52; Rom 2:8,9.

**23:36** God wants those who are suffering His punishment to understand exactly why.

**23:37** "Blood" – 22:3,4,6. "Sons" – 16:20.

**23:38,39** 8:1-18; 22:8. How more plainly could they have shown their contempt for

God, His temple, and His laws?

**23:40-44** God now speaks to both the southern and northern kingdoms in Israel and describes their behavior.

"Sabeans" (v 42) – or "drunkards."

**23:45-47** The penalty for adultery and murder under the law was death (Ex 21:12-14; Lev 20:10). Righteous people will see that what happened to Samaria and Jerusalem was a perfectly just punishment.

**23:48** Verse 27.

**23:49** The penalty for idolatry was also death (Ex 22:20; etc).

**24:1,2** January 15, 588 BC. This was the beginning of the siege that resulted in the



write *down* the name of the day, this very day. The king of Babylon lay siege against Jerusalem this very day. 3 And utter a parable to the rebellious house, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God:

- “Put on a pot; put *it* on,  
and also pour water into it.  
4 Gather the pieces *of meat* into it,  
every good piece, the thigh,  
and the shoulder;  
fill *it* with the choicest bones.  
5 Take the best of the flock,  
and under *the pot* burn *wood for* the bones,  
*and* make it boil well,  
and let them cook its bones in it.  
6 For thus says the Lord God:  
Woe to the city of bloodshed,  
to the pot whose scum *is* in it,  
and whose scum has not gone out of it!  
Bring it out piece by piece,  
without drawing lots.  
7 For her blood is in the midst of her.  
She placed it on the top of a rock;  
she did not pour it on the ground,  
to cover it with dust.  
8 That it might cause fury to come up  
to take vengeance,  
I have placed her blood on the top of a rock,  
so that it would not be covered.  
9 “Therefore thus says the Lord God:  
Woe to the city of bloodshed!  
I will make the pile for the fire great.  
10 Heap on wood, kindle the fire,  
cook the flesh, and spice it well,  
and let the bones be burned.  
11 Then place it empty on the coals there,  
that its bronze may become hot and burn,  
and *that* its filthiness may be melted in it,  
*that* its scum may be consumed.  
12 She has worn *herself* out with lies,

destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Jeremiah chapter 52).  
**24:3-14** The cooking pot is Jerusalem, the people there are the meat and bones. Compare 11:3-12. In 11:3 the leaders thought that the cooking pot would be like a wall to protect them. Here God says it will be the place where that people will be destroyed.  
**24:4** The people who had been left in Jerusalem when others went into exile in 597 BC thought they were spared because they were the best of all. See Jer 17:9.  
**24:6** “City of bloodshed” – 7:23; 11:6; 22:3.  
**24:7** “Cover it” – Jerusalem did not even try to conceal its crimes, was brazen and open about them (Isa 3:9). Now the blood it had shed cried from the ground for vengeance. Compare Gen 4:10.

and her great scum has not gone out of her. Her scum *will be* in the fire.

13 “In your filthiness *is* lewdness. Because I have cleansed you, and you were not cleansed, you will not be cleansed from your filthiness any more, until I have caused my fury to rest on you.

14 “I, the LORD, have spoken *it*. It will come to pass, and I will do *it*. I will not turn back, and I will not spare, and I will not repent. They will judge you according to your ways and according to your deeds, says the Lord God.”

15 Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 16 “Son of man, see, I am going to take away from you the delight of your eyes with one blow. Yet you must not mourn or weep, your tears must not run down. 17 Do not cry out, do not make any mourning for the dead. Bind your turban on your head, and put your shoes on your feet. And do not cover *your* lips, and do not eat the bread of men.”

18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. And in the morning I did as I had been commanded.

19 And the people said to me, “Will you not tell us what these *things* you are doing *have to do* with us?”

20 Then I answered them, “The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 21 Speak to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: See, I am going to profane my sanctuary, the pride of your strength, the delight of your eyes, and your soul’s desire; and your sons and your daughters, whom you left behind will fall by the sword. 22 And you will do as I have done. You will not cover *your* lips, or eat the bread of men. 23 And your turbans *will be* on your heads, and your shoes on your feet. You will not wail or weep, but you will pine away for your evil deeds, and groan for one another. 24 Thus Ezekiel is a sign to you. You will do everything just as he has done. And when this takes place, you will know

**24:8** God would listen to the cry for vengeance coming from the innocent blood that had been shed.

**24:11** After many had been slaughtered and some removed from the city to go into exile, Jerusalem was to be destroyed by fire (Jer 52:12-14).

**24:12** Fire was all that was left for Jerusalem. No other attempt at purification had been effective.

**24:14** 5:11; 8:18; 9:10; 18:30; 36:19.  
**24:15-27** Once again Ezekiel’s behavior was an object lesson to the people (vs 24,27). Compare 12:11; etc.

“Delight of your eyes” in v 16 was Ezekiel’s wife (v 18). The death of his wife whom he dearly loved was a picture of the death (destruction) of Jerusalem dearly loved by the people there (v 25). They would



that I *am* the Lord God.

25 "Also, son of man, *will it not be* on the day when I take from them their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes, and what they have set their minds on, their sons and their daughters, 26 *that* he who escapes on that day will come to you, to cause *you* to hear *it with your ears*? 27 On that day your mouth will be opened to him who escapes, and you will speak, and be mute no longer. And you will be a sign to them; and they will know that I *am* the LORD."

**25** The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them, 3 and say to the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord God. Thus says the Lord God: Because you said, 'Aha!' against my sanctuary, when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate, and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity, 4 so, look, I will hand you over to the men of the east as a possession, and they will set up their camps among you, and make their dwellings among you. They will eat your fruit, and drink your milk. 5 And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the *land of the Ammonites* a resting place for flocks; and you will know that I *am* the LORD. 6 For thus says the Lord God: Because you clapped *your* hands, and stamped with your feet, and rejoiced in heart with all your scorn against the land of Israel, 7 so, look, I will stretch out my hand over you, and will hand you over as plunder to the nations. And I will cut you off from the peoples, and will obliterate you from the countries. I will destroy you; and you will know that I *am* the LORD."

8 Thus says the Lord God: "Because Moab and Seir say, 'See, the house of Judah *is* like all the

have to keep their turbans and sandals on, they would not be able to cover the lower part of their faces or eat the food of mourners because they would be captives of Babylon's army and on the move into exile. 24:27 After the exiles arrived in Babylon their mouths would be open and there would be time for lamentation, tears and mourning. 25:2 For other prophecies about the Ammonites see Jer 49:1-6; Amos 1:13-15; Zeph 2:8-11.

25:3-7 Rejoicing in the ruin of others, especially the ruin of God's people, reveals a malicious nature worthy of severe punishment.

25:5 "Rabbah" – the capital of Ammon.

25:8-11 "Moab" – for other prophecies about Moab see Isaiah chapters 15 and 16; Jeremiah chapter 48; Amos 2:1-3; Zeph 2:8-11. Moab (and Edom) thought Judah's defeat by the Babylonians showed that Judah's God was weak and had failed His

nations;' 9 therefore, look, I will strip bare the sides of Moab, from the cities, from its frontier cities, the glory of the country, Beth-Jeshimoth, Baal-Meon, and Kiriathaim, together with the Ammonites, 10 by the men of the east, and will give them possession *of it*, so that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations. 11 And I will execute judgments on Moab; and they will know that I *am* the Lord."

12 "Thus says the Lord God: Because Edom has acted against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended, and avenged itself on them, 13 therefore thus says the Lord God: I will also stretch out my hand on Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it. And I will make it desolate from Teman; and those of Dedan will fall by the sword. 14 And I will take my vengeance on Edom by the hands of my people Israel, and they will deal with Edom in accordance with my anger and my fury. And they will know my vengeance, says the Lord God."

15 Thus says the Lord God: "Because the Philistines have acted out of revenge, and have taken vengeance with a scornful heart, to destroy *it* out of *their* old hatred, 16 therefore thus says the Lord God: See, I will stretch out my hand over the Philistines, and I will cut off the Kerethites, and destroy the rest of the sea coast. 17 And I will execute great vengeance on them with furious rebukes; and they will know that I *am* the LORD, when I take my vengeance on them."

**26** And it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, 'Aha! She *who was* the gateway of the peoples is broken. She has opened to me. I will be filled, *now*

people (v 8). God would let them know otherwise.

25:12-14 "Edom" – for other prophecies about Edom see Isa 21:11,12; 34:5-15; Jer 49:7-22; Amos 1:11,12; Obadiah 1:16. Because they took vengeance on Judah, God would take vengeance on them. This is another illustration of the truth expressed in Ps 18:25,26; Prov 3:34; etc. Note on vengeance at Num 31:2.

25:15-17 "Philistines" – for other prophecies about them see Isa 14:29-31; Jer 47:1-7; Amos 1:6-8; Zeph 2:4-7. They sought to destroy God's people, so they themselves would be destroyed.

26:2 "Tyre" – a city on the Mediterranean coast, north of Israel. For other prophecies concerning this city see Isaiah chapter 23; Jer 25:22; 47:4; Joel 3:4,5; Amos 1:9,10; Zech 9:2-4.

"Aha" – 25:3.

"Gateway of the peoples" – Jerusalem

that she is laid waste.’ 3 Therefore thus says the Lord God: See, I *am* against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. 4 And they will destroy the walls of Tyre, and break down her towers. I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. 5 It will be a *place for* spreading nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, says the Lord God. And it will become plunder for the nations. 6 And her daughters who *are* in the field will be killed by the sword; and they will know that I *am* the LORD.

7 “For thus says the Lord God: See, on Tyre I am going to bring Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and troops, and many people. 8 He will kill your daughters in the field with the sword, and he will make fortifications against you, and build up a siege mound against you, and raise the shield against you. 9 And he will set up battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10 Because of his many horses their dust will cover you. Your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he enters your gates, like men enter a city where *the wall* is broken in. 11 He will trample all your streets with the hooves of his horses. He will kill your people with the sword, and your strong garrisons will go down to the ground. 12 And they will plunder your riches, and take your merchandise as prey, and will break down your walls, and destroy your pleasant houses, and will hurl your stones and your timber and your dust into the water. 13 And I will put a stop to the sound of your songs, and the sound of your harps will no longer be heard. 14 And I will make you like the top of a rock. You will be a *place* to spread nets on. You will not be built

was at the center of the nations (5:5), near the main trade routes between countries on the north and east, and Egypt on the southwest. Tyre selfishly rejoiced in Jerusalem’s destruction because it thought it would gain more trade for itself.  
**26:5** The riches Tyre laid up would fall into the hands of others. How much better it is to lay up treasure in heaven (Matt 6:19-21).  
**26:7** “From the north” – Jer 1:13.  
**26:8,9** “Your daughters in the field” – part of the strong and prosperous city of Tyre was built on the mainland, the other part on a rocky island in the bay. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre for nearly 15 years.  
**26:10-12** Nebuchadnezzar was able to capture the mainland part, but the island stronghold held out against him. It was finally captured by Alexander the great in 332 BC.  
**26:13,14** Tyre continued as a city until the

again; for I, the LORD, have spoken *it*, says the Lord God.”

15 “Thus says the Lord God to Tyrus: Will not the islands shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter occurs in the midst of you? 16 Then all the princes of the sea will come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and take off their embroidered garments. They will clothe themselves with trembling. They will sit on the ground and tremble at *every* moment, and be astonished at you. 17 And they will take up a lament for you, and say to you,

“How you are destroyed!  
You *who were* inhabited by seafaring men,  
the renowned city,  
who was powerful on the sea!  
She and her inhabitants imposed their  
terror on all who live around her.

18 Now the islands will tremble on the  
day of your fall;  
yes, the islands of the sea will be  
alarmed at your passing.’

19 “For thus says the Lord God: When I make you a desolate city, like cities that are not inhabited; when I bring up the deep over you and great waters cover you; 20 When I bring you down with those who descend into the pit, with the people of olden times, and place you in the lower parts of the earth, like ancient ruined places, with those who go down to the pit, so that you may not be inhabited, then I will grant glory in the land of the living. 21 I will make you an *object of* terror, and you *will be* no *more*. Though you will be sought for, you will never be found again, says the Lord God.”

**27** The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2 “Now, son of man, take up a

end of the 13th century AD. But God’s word against it was finally fulfilled, and the condition of the island city of Tyre today is as described in these verses. It is a heap of ruins. A long time may pass before the fulfillment of some prophecies of God’s word, but we may be sure they will be fulfilled.  
**26:15-18** The fall of Tyre would cause great fear and alarm to neighboring cities along the coast. If Tyre could not stand how could they?  
**26:19-21** Describes in metaphorical language the death of the city. The ocean depths of v 19 probably refers to v 3. The death of Tyre should speak to us of the fate of all cities of men, products of man’s greed and pride. Happy are those who seek for an eternal city (Heb 11:10,16).  
**27:2** “Lament” – laments were funeral dirges usually concerned with individuals, but in the prophets sometimes they were concerned with the death of cities or nations.

lament for Tyre, 3 and say to Tyre,

“O you who are situated at the entrance to the sea, *who are* a merchant of the peoples on many islands,  
Thus says the Lord God:  
O Tyre, you have said, ‘I *am* perfect in beauty.’  
4 Your frontiers *are* in the heart of the seas, your builders have perfected your beauty.  
5 They made all your planks from fir trees of Senir.  
They brought cedars from Lebanon to make masts for you.  
6 They made your oars *from* the oaks of Bashan.  
the company of the Ashurites inlaid your deck *with* ivory, *brought* from the coasts of Kittim.  
7 Fine linen with embroidered work from Egypt was what you spread as your sail. Blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah was what covered you.  
8 The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were your oarsmen.  
Your wise *men*, O Tyre, were in you; *they* were your pilots.  
9 The elders of Gebal and its wise *men* were in you to repair your seams.  
All the ships of the sea with their sailors were in you to trade for your merchandise.  
10 “Men from Persia and Lud and Phut were in your army, your warriors.  
They hung up shield and helmet in you; they brought you glory.  
11 The men of Arvad with your army *were* all around on your walls,  
and the Gammadites were in your towers.  
They hung their shields all around on

your walls;  
they have made your beauty perfect.

12 “Tarshish *was* your customer because of the great wealth of goods; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded for your merchandise.

13 “Javan, Tubal, and Meshech *were* your customers. They bartered human lives and bronze articles in your market.

14 “Those of the house of Togarmah traded for your goods with horses and horsemen and mules.

15 “The men of Dedan *were* your customers. Many islands *took* the merchandise from your hand. In payment they brought you ivory tusks and ebony.

16 “Syria *was* your customer because of the many goods you made. They traded for your merchandise with emeralds, purple, and embroidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate.

17 “Judah and the land of Israel *were* your customers. For your goods they exchanged wheat from Minnith, and pastries, and honey, and oil, and balm.

18 “Damascus *was* your customer because of your many products and the wealth of your goods, the wine of Helbon, and white wool.

19 “Dan also and Javan travelling back and forth traded for your goods. Wrought iron, cassia, and calamus were among your merchandise.

20 “Dedan *was* your customer *trading* saddle cloths for riding.

21 “Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar traded with you in lambs, and rams, and goats; in these *they were* your customers.

22 “The merchants of Sheba and Raamah *were* your customers. They traded for your goods with the choicest of all spices, and with all *kinds of* precious stones, and gold.

23 “Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, *and* Kilmad, *were*

**27:3** 28:2. Pride will lead to shipwreck.  
**27:5-9** The city of Tyre is compared to a sailing ship.  
**27:5** Senir was another name for Mount Hermon which was famous for cedar trees.  
**27:6** “Bashan” – Num 21:33; Deut 4:33; Josh 12:4,5.  
“Kittim” – the island of Cyprus.  
**27:7** “Elishah” – a city of Cyprus.  
**27:8** “Sidon” – a city 40 Kilometers north of Tyre.  
“Arvad” – a inland city north of Sidon.  
**27:9** “Gebal” – a city between Sidon and Arvad.  
“All the ships of the sea” – Tyre was a very important center for sea trade.  
**27:10** The city was wealthy enough to hire soldiers from distant places. Lydia was in the land that is today called Turkey. Put is Libya west of Egypt in north Africa.

**27:11** “Gammad” – exact location unknown.  
**27:12-25** This portion speaks of cities and regions on every side of Tyre, some quite distant. The description shows how important Tyre was as a center for commerce.  
**27:12** “Tarshish” – note at 2 Chron 9:21; Isa 2:16.  
**27:13** “Javan” – Greece.  
“Tubal”, “Meshech” – note at 38:2.  
**27:14** “Togarmah” – probably in the region now called Armenia, a land south of Russia.  
**27:17** “Minnith” – a town in Ammon.  
“Pastries” – the meaning of the Hebrew word here is uncertain.  
**27:18** “Damascus” – the capital of Syria.  
“Helbon” – a town in Syria.  
**27:20-22** Refers to areas on the Arabian Peninsula.  
**27:23** Refers to towns and areas northeast of Israel in what was called Mesopotamia.

your customers. 24 They traded with you in all sorts of things: in blue cloth, and embroidered work, and in carpets of many colours, with knotted cords, *which were* among your merchandise.

- 25 “The ships of Tarshish were carriers of your merchandise.  
And you were filled, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas.
- 26 Your oarsmen have taken you to great waters.  
The east wind will break you in the midst of the seas.
- 27 Your riches, and your goods, your merchandise, your sailors, and your pilots, your caulkers, and the traders in your merchandise, and all your warriors who *are* in you and in all your company which *is* in your midst, will fall into the midst of the seas on the day of your ruin.
- 28 The shores will shake at the sound of the cry of your pilots.
- 29 And all who handle the oar, the sailors, *and* all the pilots of the sea, will come down from their ships. They will stand on the land,
- 30 And make their voice heard over you, and cry bitterly, and throw dust on their heads. They will wallow in the ashes,
- 31 And shave their heads because of you, and tie sackcloth around them, and weep for you with bitterness of heart *and* bitter wailing.
- 32 And in their wailing they will take up a lament for you, and mourn over you, *saying*, ‘What *city is* like Tyre, like *this one* destroyed in the midst of the sea?

- 33 When your wares went out on the seas, you filled many people, you enriched the kings of the earth with your many riches and goods.’
- 34 At the time *when* you are broken by the seas in the depths of the waters your merchandise and all your company in your midst will fall.
- 35 All the inhabitants of the islands will be astonished at you, and their kings will be terrified, *and their* faces will be troubled.
- 36 The merchants among the peoples will hiss at you.  
You will be an *object of* terror, and *will be* no more forever.”

28 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God:

- “Because your heart *is* lifted up *with pride* you have said, ‘I *am* a god; I sit *on* the seat of gods in the midst of the seas.’ But you *are* a man, and not a god, though you set your heart like the heart of a god.
- 3 See, you *are* wiser than Daniel! There is no secret they can hide from you!
- 4 With your wisdom and with your understanding you have gotten riches for yourself, and amassed gold and silver in your treasures.
- 5 By your great wisdom *and* by your trade you have increased your riches, and your heart is lifted up because of your riches.
- 6 “Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you have set your heart like

27:26-28 Tyre is compared to a ship again. It was built of the finest materials and sailed by the best sailors. But it will be wrecked in the sea and vanish from sight. 27:29-36 Those who traded with Tyre will lament at her destruction (26:15-18). Their lament over Tyre will be really a selfish lament over their own loss, and will be mixed with fear of what is coming on them. 28:2 “I am a god; I sit on the seat of gods” – or it could be translated “I am God; I sit on God’s seat (or throne).” There have been (and still are) men who like to think of themselves as God or a god, and exalt themselves above others. The coming antichrist will be the chief representative of such (2 Thess 2:4). They will all die like

men and face the fearful judgment of the one true God the Creator of the universe. 28:3-5 The king of Tyre thought he was very wise indeed. And in a worldly sense he was, and this was proved by his accomplishments. But in a spiritual sense he did not have even the beginning of wisdom (Job 28:28; 111:10; Prov 1:7). No mere man who is spiritually wise will ever say “I am a god,” or “I am God.” True wisdom shudders at the very thought of such statements. 28:3 “Daniel” – see the note on 14:14. 28:5 “Lifted up” – notice the connection between pride and wealth. 28:6-10 When we see pride in anyone in the Bible we can know that disaster will follow (Prov 3:34; 11:2; 16:18; Isa 2:11-18; etc.).

the heart of a god,  
7 see that I am going to bring strangers  
against you,  
the most terrible of the nations,  
and they will draw their swords  
against the beauty of your wisdom,  
and they will defile your splendour.  
8 They will bring you down to the pit,  
and you will die the death of *those*  
*who are* slain in the midst of the seas.  
9 Will you still say in front of the one  
who is killing you, 'I *am* a god'?  
But you *will be* a man, and not a god,  
in the hands of the one killing you.  
10 You will die the death of the uncircumcised  
at the hands of strangers;  
for I have spoken *it*,  
says the Lord God."  
11 Again the word of the LORD came to me,  
saying, 12 "Son of man, take up a lament for the  
king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord  
God:  
"You had the seal of perfection,  
full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.  
13 You were in Eden, the garden of God.  
Every precious stone *was* your covering,  
the sardius, topaz, and diamond,

beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire,  
emerald, and carbuncle, and gold.  
The workmanship of your tambourines  
and flutes was prepared for you on  
the day you were created.  
14 You *were* the anointed covering cherub;  
and I placed you *as such*.  
You were on the holy mountain of God.  
You walked up and down among the  
stones of fire.  
15 You *were* perfect in your ways from  
the day you were created,  
until wickedness was found in you.  
16 Because of the abundance of your  
commerce inside you became filled  
with violence, and you sinned.  
Therefore I threw you out of the  
mountain of God as a profane *thing*,  
and I made you disappear,  
O covering cherub,  
from among the stones of fire.  
17 Your heart was lifted up because of  
your beauty.  
You corrupted your wisdom because of  
your splendour.  
I hurled you to the ground,  
I placed you before kings,  
so that they could see you.

**28:11-19** This is a strange and difficult portion of Scripture. In some respects it is similar to Isa 14:12-15. The following interpretations have been made by scholars.

- (a) God is speaking ironically. The king of Tyre said he was a god (v 2). God now speaks to him as if it were so, and then goes on to show how great would be his fall and the fall of his city with him.
- (b) The passage has as its foundation a mythological account of the story of the garden of Eden which was known in Tyre. The language is highly metaphorical and is meant only to depict the splendor and wealth and power of Tyre and its king.
- (c) The passage is to be taken more literally and points to a king of Tyre in the unseen realm – probably Satan himself. Behind the proud rulers of earth's cities and lands stand invisible spirit beings who are the rulers of the fallen world (compare Daniel 10:13 where a fallen spirit being is called the prince of Persia, and Eph 6:12).
- (d) There is a double application – one to the human king of Tyre or to his city, and one to the spirit being behind him. Some of the language refers to the one, and some to the other.

This last interpretation seems the best way to understand these verses. Some of the language here, if taken at all in its natural literal meaning, cannot possibly fit the human ruler of the city of Tyre, and seem

plainly to indicate a spirit being behind him. Other expressions can hardly fit either Satan or the human ruler of Tyre, but fit the city of Tyre.

**28:12** Could this possibly be said of any earthly king?

**28:13** "Eden" – Gen 3:1. Certainly the literal king of Tyre was not in the garden of Eden.

**28:14** "Covering cherub" – this could mean guardian or protecting cherub.

"Cherub" – it is hard to see how this word could ever be used concerning any human being. See note at Gen 3:24.

We should note that if the one now called Satan was in the garden of Eden as an anointed guardian cherub, this would mean that the fall of this being into sin came after the creation of Adam and Eve. And he (though we should not be dogmatic about this) may have been appointed to protect Adam and Eve from any possible danger, not to tempt them to sin.

**28:15** "Perfect" – can we think that the literal king of Tyre, the ruler of an idolatrous and wicked people, was ever perfect? But Satan before he became the enemy of God and man, before his fall, as an angel created by God would have been blameless.

"Until iniquity was found in you" – God never created an evil being or made him evil after creating him. Satan's wickedness was a result of Satan's decision to oppose God and exalt himself. Compare Isa 14:12-14.

18 You have defiled your sanctuaries  
by the abundance of your evil deeds,  
by the evil of your trade,  
therefore I brought a fire out from the  
midst of you.

It consumed you, and I reduced you to  
ashes on the earth in the sight of  
all those who saw you.

19 All those among the peoples who knew  
you are astonished at you.  
You have become an *object of terror*,  
and *will be* no more forever."

20 Again the word of the LORD came to me,  
saying, 21 "Son of man, set your face against  
Sidon, and prophesy against it, 22 and say, Thus  
says the Lord God:

"See, I *am* against you, O Sidon,  
and I will be glorified in your midst.  
And they will know that I *am* the LORD,  
when I execute judgments on her,  
and am revealed as holy through her.

23 For I will send the plague into her,  
and blood into her streets.  
And the wounded will be judged in her  
midst by the sword against her on  
every side;  
and they will know that I *am* the LORD.

24 "And among all those who are around the  
house of Israel, who scorn them, there will no longer  
be for them a pricking briar or *any* painful thorn;  
and they will know that I *am* the Lord God.

25 "Thus says the Lord God: When I gather the  
house of Israel from the peoples among whom they  
are scattered, and am revealed as holy through  
them in the sight of the nations, then they will live  
in their land, which I gave to my servant Jacob.  
26 And they will live safely in it, and will build houses,  
and plant vineyards; yes, they will live securely,  
when I have executed judgments on all those who  
are around them who scorn them; and they will

know that I *am* the LORD their God."

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth *month*, on  
the twelfth *day* of the month, the word of  
the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set  
your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and  
prophesy against him, and against all Egypt.  
3 Speak and say,

Thus says the Lord God:  
See, I *am* against you, Pharaoh king  
of Egypt,  
the great monster that lies among its  
rivers, who has said,  
'My river *is* my own, and I made *it*  
for myself.'

4 But I will put hooks in your jaws,  
and I will cause the fish of your  
rivers to stick to your scales,  
and I will bring you up from among  
your rivers, and all the fish of your  
rivers will stick to your scales.  
5 And I will leave you in the wilderness,  
you and all the fish of your rivers.  
You will fall on the open field.  
You will not be picked up or gathered.  
I have given you as food to the  
beasts of the field and  
to the birds of the sky.

6 "And all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that  
I *am* the LORD, because they have been a staff of  
reed to the house of Israel. 7 When they took hold  
of you with the hand, you broke, and tore their  
whole shoulder; and when they leaned on you,  
you broke, and made all their lower back to shake.

8 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: See, I will  
bring a sword on you, and cut off man and beast  
from you. 9 And the land of Egypt will be desolate  
and ruined, because he said, 'The river is mine, and  
I made it'; and they will know that I *am* the LORD.  
10 Therefore, see, I *am* against you, and against  
your rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly

**28:18,19** These verses seem to be speaking of the city of Tyre.

**28:21** "Sidon" – 27:8. This city was to be punished, but nothing is said about its complete destruction. To this day it still exists in the country of Lebanon. The reason for its punishment is suggested in v 24.

**28:22** "Glorified" – God is glorified when men know of His just judgments.

**28:25,26** "Gather" – 11:17; 20:34,41,42; 29:13; 34:13; 36:24; 37:21; 38:8; 39:27; Isa 11:11,12; Jer 33:7.

**29:1** January 587 BC.

**29:2** For other prophecies concerning Egypt see Isaiah chapters 19 and 20 and Jeremiah chapter 46.

**29:3** "Monster" – 4:3; Job 41:1; Isa 27:1.

"Who has said" – here again is the arrogant self-exalting attitude that God hates so much. The kings of Egypt regarded themselves in some sense as divine. This particular one even deluded himself into thinking that he was the creator of Egypt's great river.

**29:4** "Hooks" – God has no difficulty in taking and disposing of any human ruler and his kingdom.

**29:7** Egypt was a useless ally to Israel against the Babylonians.

**29:8** "Sword" – the armies of Babylon.

**29:9** Pharaoh would find out who the true Creator is.

**29:10** "Syene to the border of Ethiopia" – north to south, the whole country, as we might



ruined *and* desolate, from the tower of Syene to the border of Ethiopia. 11 No human foot will pass through it, no foot of beast will pass through it; and it will not be inhabited for forty years. 12 And I will make the land of Egypt desolate among the countries *that are* desolate, and among the cities *that are* ruined her cities will be desolate for forty years. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries.

13 "Yet thus says the Lord God: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the people where they are scattered, 14 and I will bring Egypt back from captivity, and will cause them to return *to* the land of Pathros, to the land they came from, and there they will be a lowly kingdom. 15 It will be the lowliest of the kingdoms. No longer will it exalt itself above the nations; for I will make them small, so that they will no longer rule over the nations. 16 And it will no longer be the confidence of the house of Israel, but it will bring to remembrance *their* guilt in looking to them; and they will know that I *am* the Lord God."

17 And it came about in the twenty-seventh year, in the first *month*, on the first *day* of the month, that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to work hard against Tyre. Every head *was* made bald, and every shoulder *was* rubbed bare. Yet *neither* he nor his army received any wages for Tyre, for the work he did against it. 19 Therefore thus says the Lord God: See, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. And he will take away her wealth, and capture her plunder, and take her prey, and this will be the wages for his army. 20 I have given him the land of Egypt *for* the work that he did against it, because they were working for me, says the Lord God.

21 "In that day I will cause a horn to sprout for the house of Israel, and I will open your mouth among them; and they will know that I *am* the LORD."

**30** The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord God: Wail! Woe for the day!

- 3 For the day *is* near, the day of the LORD *is* near, a day of clouds. It will be the time of the nations.
- 4 And the sword will come on Egypt, and there will be great anguish in Ethiopia, when the slain fall in Egypt, and they take away her wealth, and her foundations are broken down.

5 "Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the mixed peoples, and Khub, and the men of the land which is allied, will fall by the sword with them.

- 6 "Thus says the LORD: Those who support Egypt will also fall. And the pride of her power will come down. They will fall in it by the sword, from the tower of Syene, says the Lord God.

- 7 And they will be desolate among the countries *that are* desolate, and her cities will be among the ruined cities.

- 8 And they will know that I *am* the LORD, when I set a fire in Egypt, and *when* all her helpers are destroyed.

9 "In that day messengers will go out from me in ships to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great anguish will come on them, as in the day of Egypt; for, see, it is coming.

- 10 Thus says the Lord God:

"I will also make an end of the hordes of Egypt at the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon.

- 11 He and his people with him, the most terrible of the nations, will be brought to destroy the land, and they will draw their swords

say in India "from Kashmir to Cape Comorin." 29:15 Egypt has never regained the power it had under the ancient Pharaohs.

29:16 "Their iniquity in looking to them" – this same sin is condemned in Isa 31:1; Jer 17:5. God wants His people to look to Him, not to worldly powers.

29:18 Nebuchadrezzar = Nebuchadnezzar. He besieged Tyre for nearly 15 years but was unable to capture the city's main part which was on an island in the bay (26:7,8).

29:19 God is the great Sovereign over all nations (Isa 40:15,17; Dan 4:34,35).

29:20 "They were working for me" – God was using the armies of Babylon to fulfil His

purposes, though they were not aware of it. We may also say that if He so chooses, God may use everything and everyone on earth to accomplish what he wants done.

29:21 Horn signifies power, strength, or authority.

30:3 Notes on the Day of the LORD at Joel 1:15; etc. In the midst of prophecies about Egypt, some of which were fulfilled long ago, God speaks of a time of judgment at the end of this age and punishment on all nations.

30:11 "Most terrible" – 28:7; 31:12; 32:12; Hab 1:6. 2 Kings 25:7 gives an example of their cruelty.

against Egypt  
and fill the land with the slain.  
12 And I will dry up the rivers,  
and sell the land into the hands of  
the wicked,  
and I will lay waste the land and  
everything in it at the hand of strangers.  
I, the LORD, have spoken.  
13 "Thus says the Lord God:  
I will also destroy the idols,  
and put an end to the images of Noph.  
And there will no longer be a prince of  
the land of Egypt;  
and I will put fear in the land of Egypt.  
14 And I will make Pathros desolate,  
and set fire to Zoan,  
and execute judgments in No.  
15 And I will pour my fury on Sin,  
the strength of Egypt,  
and I will cut off the populace of No.  
16 And I will set fire to Egypt.  
Sin will have great anguish,  
and No will be torn in two,  
and Noph *will have* daily distress.  
17 The young men of Aven and of  
Pibeseth will fall by the sword,  
and these *cities* will go into captivity.  
18 At Tahpanhes also the day will be dark,  
when I break there the yokes of Egypt,  
and the pomp of her strength will  
cease in her.  
As for her, a cloud will cover her,  
and her daughters will go into captivity.  
19 Thus I will execute judgments in Egypt,  
and they will know that I *am* the LORD."

20 And it came about in the eleventh year, in  
the first *month*, on the seventh *day* of the month,  
*that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying,  
21 "Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh  
king of Egypt, and, see, it will not be bandaged for  
healing, and a splint will not be put on to bind it to  
make it strong enough to hold a sword.  
22 Therefore thus says the Lord God: See, I *am*  
against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will break his  
arms, the strong one, and the one that was broken,

**30:13** "Idols" – Jer 43:12.  
"Noph" – another name for Memphis. It  
was a former capital of Egypt. In the next  
few verses the important cities of ancient  
Egypt are mentioned. God's anger would  
come on all of them.  
**30:14** "No" – another name for Thebes.  
**30:15** "Sin" – another name for a place also  
called Pelusium.  
**30:21** "Arm" – part of Pharaoh's power had  
gone because of a defeat in battle the  
previous year.  
**30:22** God would completely break Pharaoh's

and I will cause the sword to fall from his hand.  
23 And I will scatter the Egyptians among the  
nations, and will disperse them through the  
countries. 24 And I will strengthen the arms of the  
king of Babylon, and put my sword in his hand; but  
I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he will groan before  
him with the groanings of a *man* with a deadly  
wound. 25 But I will strengthen the arms of the  
king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh will fall;  
and they will know that I *am* the Lord, when I put  
my sword in the hand of the king of Babylon, and  
he stretches it out over the land of Egypt. 26 And  
I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and  
disperse them among the countries; and they will  
know that I *am* the LORD."

**31** And it came about in the eleventh year, in  
the third *month*, on the first *day* of the month,  
*that* the word of the LORD came to me,  
saying, 2 "Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of  
Egypt, and to that multitude of his,

"Who are you like in your greatness?  
3 See, the Assyrian *was* a cedar in  
Lebanon with beautiful branches,  
and cast a shadow over the forest.  
It was very tall;  
Its top was among the thick boughs.  
4 The waters made it grow,  
the deep *water* made it tall,  
its rivers flowed all around the place  
it was planted,  
and sent out its streams to all the  
trees of the field.  
5 Therefore it became higher than all the  
trees of the field,  
and its boughs were multiplied,  
and its branches became long because  
of the abundant water,  
as it spread out.  
6 All the birds of heaven made their nests  
in its boughs,  
and all the beasts of the field gave birth to  
their young under its branches.  
And under its shadow lived all the  
great nations.

power and make it impossible for him to go  
to war.  
**30:24** "My sword" – 21:3; 29:20.  
**31:2** "Who are you like?" – the rest of this  
chapter to v 18 describes the famous and  
powerful kingdom of Assyria that flourished  
from 885 to about 609 BC. This comparison  
is in the form of an allegory, and metaphorical  
language is used to describe something  
of Assyria's splendor.  
**31:3** "Cedar" – compare chapter 17.  
**31:5** "Higher" – Assyria became the most  
powerful kingdom of its day.

- 7 So it was beautiful in its greatness,  
in the length of its branches,  
for its root was by great waters.
- 8 The cedars in the garden of God could  
not eclipse it;  
the fir trees were not like its boughs,  
and the plane trees were not like its  
branches,  
and no tree in the garden of God was  
like it in its beauty.
- 9 I made it beautiful in the babundance of  
its branches,  
so that all the trees of Eden,  
that *were* in the garden of God,  
envied it.

10 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you towered so high, and lifted its top among the thick boughs, and its heart was puffed up because of its height, 11 I handed it over to the mighty one of the nations, for him to deal with it. He certainly dealt with it; I drove it out for its wickedness. 12 And foreigners, the most terrible of the nations, cut it off and left it. Its branches fell on the mountains and in all the valleys, and its boughs were broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth departed from its shadow, and left it. 13 On its ruin all the birds of heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field are on its branches. 14 Therefore not one of all the trees by the waters should exalt themselves for their height, or raise their top among the thick boughs, nor should their well-watered trees stand *proudly* in their height, for they have all been delivered to death, to the lower parts of the earth, among the children of men who go down to the pit.

15 "Thus says the Lord God: In the day when it went down to the grave I caused mourning. I covered the deep for it, and I held back its floods, and the great waters were stopped. And I caused Lebanon to mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it. 16 I made the nations shake at the sound of its fall, when I hurled it down

to hell with those who descend into the pit. Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, all the well-watered ones, were comforted in the lower parts of the earth. 17 They also went down into hell with it to *those* slain with the sword, with *those who were* its arm, who lived under its shadow among the nations.

18 "Among the trees of Eden which was like you in glory and in greatness? Yet you will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the lower parts of the earth. You will lie among the uncircumcised with *those* slain by the sword. This *is* Pharaoh and all his hordes, say the Lord God."

**32** And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, take up a lament for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him,

- "You are like a young lion among the nations,  
and you *are* like a monster in the seas.  
And you burst out of your rivers,  
and stirred up the waters with your feet, and dirtied their rivers.
- 3 Thus says the Lord God:  
Therefore I will spread my net over you with a gathering of many peoples,  
and they will bring you up in my net.
- 4 Then I will leave you on the land;  
I will hurl you out onto the open field,  
and will cause all the birds of heaven to remain on you,  
and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with you.
- 5 And I will lay your flesh on the mountains,  
and fill the valleys with your remains.
- 6 I will also drench with your blood the land where you swim,  
*up* to the mountains,  
and the rivers will be full of you.

**31:8** It had more worldly splendor than any other kingdom God had planted in the world up to that time.  
**31:9,10** God was the one who gave power and splendor to Assyria. Instead of giving honor to God it committed the sin of pride which God will not tolerate for long (Jam 4:6).  
**31:11** "Mighty one of the nations" – the king of Babylon.  
**31:12** The Assyrian armies were crushed by the Babylonians at the battle of Carchemish in 609 BC. After that Assyria never regained its power, and disappeared into history.  
**31:14** All man's kingdoms together with their splendor and pride will end up as Assyria did.

**31:15-17** At the fall of Assyria there was a great tumult among the nations, and great gloom to its allies.  
"Grave" (vs 15,16,17) – in Hebrew "Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.  
**31:18** "You" – the king of Egypt. His fate and the fate of his kingdom with him would be the same as Assyria.  
**32:2** "Lament" – it is always a sad thing that kingdoms and kings must fall because of their pride and wickedness.  
"Lion" – 19:1-9; etc. Lion is a symbol of power and majesty.  
"Monster" – 29:3.  
**32:3-6** God did this but His instrument was the king of Babylon with his armies.

- 7 And when I extinguish you,  
I will cover the heavens,  
and make its stars dark.  
I will cover the sun with a cloud,  
and the moon will not give its light.
- 8 I will make all the bright lights of  
heaven dark over you,  
and set darkness on your land,  
says the Lord God.
- 9 I will also trouble the hearts of many  
people, when I bring about your  
destruction among the nations,  
in countries which you have not known.
- 10 Yes, I will make many peoples amazed  
at you,  
and their kings will be horribly afraid  
because of you,  
when I brandish my sword before them,  
and they will tremble at *every* moment,  
each man for his own life,  
in the day of your fall.
- 11 "For thus says the Lord God:  
The sword of the king of Babylon will  
come on you.
- 12 I will cause your hordes to fall by the  
swords of the mighty,  
the most terrible of all the nations,  
and they will plunder the pride of Egypt,  
and all its hordes will be destroyed.
- 13 I will also destroy all its cattle  
from beside the great waters.  
The foot of man will not muddy them  
any more,  
nor will the hooves of cattle muddy them.
- 14 Then I will make their waters settle,  
and cause their rivers to run like oil,  
says the Lord God.
- 15 When I make the land of Egypt desolate,  
and the country destitute of what it had  
in abundance,  
when I strike all who live in it,  
then they will know that I *am* the LORD.

16 "This *is* the lament with which they will mourn for her. The daughters of the nations will lament for her; they will lament for her, for Egypt and for all her many people, says the Lord God."

17 It came to pass also in the twelfth year, on the fifteenth *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, wail for the multitudes of Egypt, and send them down, her and the daughters of the famous nations, to the lower parts of the earth, with those who go down into the pit, *saying*, 19 Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down, and be placed among the uncircumcised. 20 They will fall among *those* slain by the sword, she is handed over to the sword. Draw her and all her multitudes away. 21 From the midst of hell the strongest of the mighty will say of him *and* of those who helped him, 'They have come down, they lie among the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.'

22 "Asshur *is* there and all her horde. Her graves *are* all around her, all of them slain, fallen by the sword. 23 Their graves are set in the depths of the pit, and her horde is around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, who had caused terror in the land of the living.

24 "There *is* Elam and all her hordes around her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword. Those who caused their terror in the land of the living have gone down uncircumcised into the lower parts of the earth. Now they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit. 25 They have placed a bed for her among the slain, with all her hordes, *with* her graves all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword. Though they caused terror in the land of the living, yet they bear their shame with those who go down to the pit. They are put among *those* slain.

26 "There *are* Meshech, Tubal, and all her hordes. Their graves *are* all around it, all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living. 27 And they do not lie among the mighty *who have* fallen of the uncircumcised, who have gone down to hell

**32:7,8** These are signs usually associated with the "day of the LORD" (see Isa 13:10; Joel 2:31; etc). Egypt's destruction at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar may be a picture of what will happen to Egypt at the end of this age.

**32:9,10** Whenever war is loosed on the world and a great kingdom falls the result is fear and upheaval among the nations. Especially at the end of this age conditions will become so terrible that every ruler of every country will have reason to tremble every moment for his life.

**32:12** "Pride" – 31:10. When will men and rulers learn not to exalt themselves against the God of heaven?

**32:19** "Go down" – individuals and nations like to think themselves superior to others. This will be the end result of all such arrogance and pride.

"Uncircumcised" – here used as a term of contempt for people who were not in covenant relationship with God, who did not know God and did not have any desire to know Him.

**32:21** "Hell" (also v 27) – the Hebrew is "Sheol". It means the realm of the dead. This and the following verses describe in poetic language the fall of armies, the death of peoples, the destruction of kingdoms.

**32:24** "Elam" – Isa 11:11; 21:2; Jer 25:25; 49:34; Dan 8:2.

**32:26** "Meshech, Tubal" – 38:2.

with their weapons of war. They have laid their swords under their heads, but the *punishment* of their evil deeds is on their bones, though *they were* the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

28 "Yes, you will be broken among the uncircumcised, and will lie down among *those* slain with the sword.

29 "There *is* Edom, her kings, and all her princes, who, despite their might, are placed beside *those* slain by the sword. They lie among the uncircumcised, and among those who go down to the pit.

30 "There *are* the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Sidonians, who have gone down with the slain. They are put to shame despite the terror caused by their might; and they lie uncircumcised with *those* slain by the sword, and bear their shame with those who go down to the pit.

31 "Pharaoh will see them, and will be comforted over all his hordes, Pharaoh and all his army, slain by the sword, says the Lord God. 32 For I have caused my terror in the land of the living, and he will be placed among the uncircumcised with *those* slain with the sword, Pharaoh and all his hordes, says the Lord God."

**33** Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, speak to the children of your people, and say to them, When I bring the sword on a land, if the people of the land take one of their countrymen and make him their watchman, 3 if he blows the trumpet when he sees the sword come on the land, and warns the people, 4 then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet, and does not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and did not take warning. *The responsibility* for his blood will be on him. But he who takes warning will save his life. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, if the sword comes, and takes a person from among them, he is taken away in his

guilt; but I will require his blood at the watchman's hand.

7 "So, son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Therefore you shall hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. 8 When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked *man*, you will surely die,' if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* will die in his guilt, but I will require his blood at your hand. 9 But if you warn the wicked about his way to turn *him* from it, if he does not turn from his way, he will die in his guilt, but you will have saved your life.

10 "Therefore, son of man, say to the house of Israel, This is what you are saying, 'If our transgressions and our sins *are* on us, and we pine away in them, how then can we live?' 11 Say to them, 'As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turns from his way and lives. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! For why will you die, O house of Israel?'

12 "Therefore, son of man, say to the children of your people, The righteousness of the righteous will not deliver him in the day of his transgression. As for the wickedness of the wicked, he will not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor will the righteous be able to live because of his *righteousness* in the day that he sins. 13 When I say of the righteous *that* he will surely live, if he trusts in his own righteousness, and does evil, none of his acts of righteousness will be remembered, and he will die for the evil which he has committed. 14 Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' if he turns from his sin, and does what is lawful and right, 15 *if* the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, walks in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he will surely live; he will not die. 16 None of the sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has done what is lawful and right; he will surely live.

17 "Yet the children of your people say, 'The

**32:29** "Edom" – Isa 11:14; Jer 25:21; 49:7-22.

**32:30** "Sidonians" – 28:21.

**32:32** "I" – God used Egypt and its king as He uses all nations, to work out His purposes among the people of the world.

**33:1-20** This section, like chapter 18, emphasizes individual responsibility. God gives a general example in vs 2-6 and applies it to Ezekiel in vs 7-9. In vs 10-20 we have the words Ezekiel was to speak as a watchman to Israel.

**33:4** "Blood" – he will be responsible for his own death.

**33:7** "Watchman" – Ezekiel was not a watchman on the walls of a literal city. He was a spiritual watchman for the people of

Israel to point out those sins that brought them into danger and to call them to repentance. See also 3:1.

**33:8** "Die in his iniquity" – or "die for his iniquity" (also v 9).

**33:10** At last the people are beginning to confess their sins and to see that their sufferings are a result of them.

**33:11** "Live" – 18:23,32.

"Turn" – life and repentance were joined together and could not be separated – 14:6; 18:30. It was not enough to acknowledge their sins. They had to turn heartily from them to God.

**33:12-20** 18:21-30.

**33:15** Observe that repentance means also making amends for sin, restoring what one

way of the Lord is not just.' But it is their way which is not just. 18 When the righteous turns from his righteousness and does evil, he will die because of it. 19 But if the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he will live because of it. 20 Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' O house of Israel, I will judge each one of you in accordance with his ways."

21 And it came about in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth *month*, on the fifth *day* of the month, *that* someone who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me, saying, "The city has been taken." 22 Now before the arrival of the one who had escaped, the hand of the LORD was on me in the evening, and had opened my mouth. So when he came to me in the morning, my mouth had been opened, and I was no longer mute.

23 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 24 "Son of man, those who living in those ruins of the land of Israel speak and say, 'Abraham was one *man*, and he inherited the land. But we *are* many; the land has been given to us as an inheritance.' 25 Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord God: You eat *meat* with the blood, and lift up your eyes to your idols, and shed blood, and will you possess the land? 26 You depend on your sword, you commit abominations, and each one of you defiles his neighbour's wife; and will you possess the land?"

27 "Say this to them, Thus says the Lord God: As I live, surely those who *are* in the ruins will fall by the sword, and I will give those in the open field to the beasts as food, and those who *are* in the strongholds and in the caves will die of the plague. 28 For I will make the land a desolate waste, and her proud strength will come to an end, and the

mountains of Israel will be desolate, so that no one will pass through. 29 Then they will know that I *am* the LORD, when I have made the land a desolate waste because of all the abominations which they have committed.

30 "Also, son of man, the children of your people are still talking against you by the walls and in the doors of the houses, speaking to one another, each one to his brother, saying, 'Please come and hear whatever word comes from the LORD.' 31 And they come to you as people will come, and they sit before you *like* my people, and they hear your words, but they will not do them. For with their mouth they show much love, *but* their heart goes after their selfish profit. 32 And, see, to them you *are* like a very lovely song of someone who has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.

33 "And when this comes to pass (see, it will happen), then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

**34** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed *only* themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 You eat the fat, and you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, *but* you do not feed the flock. 4 You have not strengthened the weak, nor have you healed the sick, nor have you bound up *what* was broken, nor have you brought back what was driven away, nor have you sought what was lost, but you have ruled the *sheep* with force and with cruelty. 5 And they were scattered,

has unjustly taken. See Ex 22:1; Lev 6:4,5. **33:21** "Day" – January 8, 585 BC (according to the calendar generally in use). The city fell and the temple was burned August 14, 586 BC. It took nearly five months for this man to reach Ezekiel in Babylon. It then became clear to the exiles that Ezekiel's prophecies were fulfilled. **33:22** 3:26,27; 24:26,27.

**33:24** The people who remained in the land of Israel after the final collapse of Jerusalem still did not understand what God was doing and they did not turn from their sins. **33:25** "Blood" – Gen 9:4; Lev 17:10; Deut 12:16.

"Idols" – their idols had completely failed them, but still they would not give them up. **33:26** It was not people like this that God wanted in possession of His land – or wants now in His Church.

**33:27-29** These spiritually blind and unrepentant sinners would get just what they desired.

**33:30** The people in exile now recognized more clearly than before that Ezekiel was

God's prophet.

**33:31,32** How like many Christians today who willingly hear godly preachers deliver sermons, but will not put into practice what they say. They are like the second son of Matt 21:28-32 and the man of Jam 1:22-24. Blessing comes by obeying God's word, not simply by hearing it.

**34:2** "Shepherds" – leaders of the people whether political or religious. For other revelations about shepherds see Ps 78:70-72; Isa 56:10,11; Jer 23:1-4; 25:34-38; 50:6,7. Compare 1 Pet 5:2-4.

"Feed only themselves" – Isa 50:11; Jer 6:13. This was the great sin of the shepherds of Israel, and all too often the sin of leaders in the church today. Selfishness is rooted deeply in man's nature and only the Spirit of Christ can enable us to overcome it. **34:3,4** This is always the behavior of leaders who look out only for themselves and not for the people in their care.

**34:5** "No shepherd" – there was none worthy of the name. It was the same when Jesus was on earth (Matt 9:36).



because *there was* no shepherd. And when they were scattered, they became food for all the beasts of the field. 6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill. Yes, my flock was scattered over the surface of the whole earth, and no one searched for them or sought *them*.

7 "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: 8 As I live, says the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became food for every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd and my shepherds did not search for my flock, because the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed my flock, 9 therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. 10 Thus says the Lord God: See, I *am* against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the flock. And the shepherds will not feed themselves any more, for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, so that they will not be food for them.

11 "For thus says the Lord God: See, I, I *myself*, will search for my sheep, and seek them out. 12 I will seek out my sheep as a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day that he is among his scattered sheep, and I will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them on the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in a good pasture, and their fold will be on the high mountains of Israel. There they will lie in a good fold, and will feed *in* a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, says the Lord God. 16 I will seek what was lost, and bring back what was driven away, and I will bind up *what* was broken, and will strengthen what was weak. But I will destroy the fat and the strong ones. I will feed them with judgment."

**34:7-10** God will hold leaders responsible for their behavior if they care only for themselves, and they should not expect to escape the judgment of God.

**34:11-16** Here we see God Himself as shepherd. He will do what human leaders have failed to do. For other references to the Lord as shepherd see Ps 23:4-6; 80:1; Isa 40:11; Jer 23:3,4; John 10:1-16.

**34:13** 11:17; 20:34,41,42; 28:25. This is a common theme in the prophets.

**34:16** "Seek" – Luke 15:1-7.

"Fat and the strong" – they became so by selfishly looking out only for themselves, as we see in vs 17-22. Compare Luke 16:19-21.

**34:17** Compare Matt 25:32,33.

**34:23** There have been three suggested interpretations of the word "David" here –

17 "And as for you, O my flock, thus says the Lord God: See, I will judge between sheep and sheep, between the rams and the male goats. 18 *Does it seem such* a small thing to you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must trample down the rest of the pastures with your feet? And to have drunk of the deep waters, that you must muddy the rest with your feet? 19 And as for my flock, they eat what you have trampled down with your feet, and they drink what you have muddied with your feet.

20 "Therefore thus says the Lord God to them: See, I, I *myself*, will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Because you have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the weak ones with your horns until you scattered them away, 22 therefore I will save my flock, and they will no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 And I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will feed them. He will feed them, and he will be their shepherd. 24 And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them. I, the LORD, have spoken *it*.

25 "And I will make a covenant of peace with them, and will cause the evil beasts to cease from the land. And they will live safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. 26 And I will make them and the places around my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to fall in its season. There will be showers of blessing. 27 And the tree of the field will yield its fruit, and the earth will yield its crops. And they will be safe in their land, and will know that I *am* the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those who made them their servants. 28 And they will no longer be a prey to the heathen, nor will the beasts of the land devour them, but they will live safely, and no one will make *them* afraid. 29 And I will establish for them a famous ground for planting, and they will no longer be consumed with

some say the prince will be David risen from the dead. Others say he will be some descendant from David's royal house. Still others say he will be the Messiah the son of David. If "David" here is identical with the prince of 44:3 and 45:22, he cannot be the Messiah. See those verses.

**34:25** "Covenant of peace" – 16:62; 37:26; Jer 31:31-34.

**34:26** "My hill" – Mount Zion.

"Blessing" – notes on Gen 12:3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1. What Israel needed, what the church needs, what the whole world needs, is the blessings of God falling as monsoon rains everywhere. But for such rains to do good the "soil" of men's hearts must be prepared (Hos 10:12).

**34:27-29** A promise of a complete reversal

hunger in the land, or bear the insults of the nations any more. 30 Thus they will know that I, the LORD their God, *am* with them, and *that* they, the house of Israel, *are* my people, says the Lord God. 31 And you, my flock, the flock of my pasture, *are* men, and I *am* your God, says the Lord God."

**35** Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it, 3 and say to it, Thus says the Lord God: See, O mount Seir, I *am* against you, and I will stretch out my hand against you, and I will make you a desolate waste. 4 I will lay your cities waste, and you will be desolate, and you will know that I *am* the LORD.

5 "Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed *the blood of* the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, at the end, at the time *of the punishment* of their wickedness, 6 therefore, *as* I live, says the Lord God, I will prepare you for blood, and blood will pursue you. Since you have not hated blood, blood will pursue you! 7 Thus I will make mount Seir a desolate waste, and cut off from it the one who leaves and the one who returns. 8 And I will fill its mountains with its slain *men*: those who are slain by the sword will fall on your hills, and in your valleys, and in all your rivers. 9 I will make you a permanent desolation, and your cities will not be inhabited; and you will know that I *am* the LORD.

10 "Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two countries will be mine, and we will possess them,' even though the LORD was there, 11 therefore, *as* I live, says the Lord God, I will act in accordance with your anger, and in accordance with your envy which you showed out of your hatred for them, and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged you. 12 And you will know that I *am* the LORD, *and that*

I have heard all your blasphemies, which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, 'They are laid desolate, they are given to us to devour.' 13 Thus with your mouth you have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me. I have heard *them*. 14 Thus says the Lord God: When the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate. 15 As you rejoiced about the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so I will do to you. You will be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Edom, all of it. And they will know that I *am* the LORD.

**36** "Also, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say, You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. 2 Thus says the Lord God: Because the enemy has said against you, 'Aha! Even the ancient high places are ours to possess.' 3 Therefore prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord God: Because they have made *you* desolate, and swallowed you up on every side, so that you might be possessed by the rest of the nations, and because you are taken up by the lips of talkers, and *are* slandered by the peoples, 4 therefore, you mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God. Thus says the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and an *object of* derision to the rest of the surrounding nations: 5 Therefore thus says the Lord God: Surely in the fire of my jealousy I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who have claimed my land for themselves as a possession, with whole-hearted joy, with spiteful minds, plundering its countryside. 6 Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus says the Lord God: See, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury,

of their present circumstances.

**34:30** 11:20; 14:11; 37:27.

**35:2** "Seir" – the territory of the people of Edom, descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother. For other prophecies concerning them see Isa 21:11,12; Jer 49:7-22; Amos 1:11,12; Obadiah 1-16.

**35:3** "Against you" – 5:8; etc.

**35:5** "Hatred" – Gen 27:41; Num 20:14-21; 2 Sam 8:13,14; 1 Kings 9:26-28.

"Calamity" – Obad 11-14.

**35:6** Gen 9:6. If we do not renounce something wrong we may become the victims of it.

**35:9** "Permanent" – in contrast to Israel, Egypt and other lands.

**35:10** "Two nations" – the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

**35:11** Another example of God's dealing with men as they deal with others. See Matt 7:2;

Ps. 18:25,26.

**35:13** "Against me" – to speak against God's people is to speak against Him, to act against them is to act against Him (Matt 25:34-45; Acts 9:4).

**35:15** "Rejoiced" – 36:5; Obadiah v 12. This showed great hatred and malice toward God's people, great hardness and depravity of heart.

**36:1-38** A prophecy in four parts – vengeance against the nations that ruined Israel (vs 1-7), restoration of the land itself (vs 8-15), the reason for Israel's ejection from the land (vs 16-23), the return of the people of Israel to the land (vs 24-38).

**36:2** 35:10.

**36:3** Israel had to endure such things through much of their history.

**36:6** "In my jealousy" – see 8:5; Ex 20:5,6; Song 8:6.

because you have had to bear the scorn of the nations. 7 Therefore thus says the Lord God: I have lifted up my hand *to swear*, Surely the nations which *are* around you will have to bear their scorn.

8 "But you, O mountains of Israel, will put out your branches, and yield your fruit to my people Israel; for they are about to come. 9 For, see, I *am* for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be tilled and sown. 10 And I will multiply men on you, all the house of Israel, all of it. And the cities will be inhabited, and the waste places will be built up. 11 And I will multiply man and beast in you, and they will increase and bear fruit. And I will settle people on you as in the past, and will do more good *to* you than at your beginnings; and you will know that I *am* the LORD. 12 Yes, I will cause men, my people Israel, to walk on you, and they will possess you, and you will be their inheritance, and from then on you will no longer bereave them *of men*.

13 "Thus says the Lord God: Because they say to you, 'You, *O land*, devour men, and bereave your nation.' 14 Therefore you will devour men no longer, nor bereave your nation any more, says the Lord God. 15 Nor will I any longer cause *people* to hear in you the insults of the nations, nor will you bear the reproach of the peoples any longer, nor will you cause your nation to fall any more, says the Lord God."

16 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 17 "Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their own

way and by their deeds. To me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in *her monthly* impurity. 18 Wherefore I poured my fury on them, because of the blood that they had shed on the land, and because of their idols, *with which* they had defiled it. 19 And I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. I judged them in accordance with their way and their deeds. 20 And when they went among the nations, wherever they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, 'These *are* the people of the LORD, and have left his land.' 21 But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: I do not do *this* for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. 23 And I will show that my great name is holy, which *name* was profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I *am* the LORD, says the Lord God, when I am shown to be holy through you before their eyes.

24 "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols. 26 Also I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and I will take

**36:7** God will deal with those nations as they dealt with Israel (35:11).

**36:8-15** A prophecy that the land of Israel would be restored. Observe the words "no longer" in v 12 and "any more" and "any longer" in vs 14,15. This was not fulfilled at the return of the Jews from Babylon, for after that return the land was again deprived of its children (in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews). Two comings of Christ are foretold in the Old Testament, and there is no indication that many centuries would elapse between them. So it is with two restorations of Israel.

**36:16-23** The reasons for Israel's ejection from the land.

**36:17** "Defiled" – the penalty for defiling the land was to be ejected from it – Lev 18:28; 20:22.

**36:18** Two main ways in which Israel defiled God's land – murder and false religion. The one meant the death of people, the other meant the death of truth there. Both were done in defiance of God's laws (Exodus chapter 20).

**36:19** "In accordance with" – 7:8; 24:14; 39:24.

**36:20** "Profaned" – the nations would not have known the real reasons why Israel was defeated and scattered among them. They

would have thought it was because Israel's God was too weak to defend them, and beneath their own gods.

**36:22** God would act for the sake of His holy name. That is, He would bring Israel back to the land and make them a holy people in a restored land (vs 24-35), though they did not in any way deserve God's favor. Compare God's way with believers described in Eph 1:3-14 which results in praise of His glorious grace. Observe here in Ezekiel that God's reputation is bound up with His people. By observing them others will be influenced in their views of God.

**36:23** In His dealings with Israel God would show His true holy character to the nations of the world. Compare Lev 20:7; Matt 6:9.

**36:24** 34:13; Isa 43:5,6; Jer 23:3.

**36:25-27** This speaks of a complete change in the people similar to that described in Jer 31:31-34 and Isa 1:25; 4:3,4; etc. God promises to give this fallen people exactly what they needed – cleansing, a new heart, His own spirit and an inner strength to obey His word. All these He will give now also to the repenting sinner. Compare Ps 51:7-12.

**36:25** "Sprinkle" – Lev 14:51; Num 19:18.

**36:26** 11:19; 18:31. God would do what the people would not, and could not, do by themselves.

away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and you will keep my judgments, and do *them*. 28 And you will live in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will also save you from all your uncleanness. And I will call for the grain and increase it, and put no famine on you. 30 And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the crops of the field, that you will no longer receive reproach about famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your own evil ways, and your deeds that *were* not good, and will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your wicked deeds and for your abominations. 32 Let it be known to you that I do not do *this* for your sakes, says the Lord God. Be ashamed and feel disgraced for your own ways, O house of Israel.

33 "Thus says the Lord God: On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities I will also cause *you* to live in the cities, and the ruins will be built up. 34 And the desolate land will be tilled, instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who passed by. 35 And they will say, 'This land, which was desolate, has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted and desolate and ruined cities *are* fortified, *and* are inhabited.' 36 Then the nations that are left around you will know that I, the Lord, build the ruined *places*, *and* plant what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do *it*.

37 "Thus says the Lord God: I will also let the house of Israel inquire of me *for* this, to do *it* for them: I will increase them with men like a flock, 38 like the holy flock, like the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts. So the ruined cities will be filled

with flocks of men; and they will know that I *am* the LORD."

**37** The hand of the LORD was on me, and carried me away in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the middle of the valley. It was full of bones, 2 and he caused me to go all around among them, and *I saw that there were* very many in the open valley, and *that they were* very dry. 3 And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

And I answered, "O Lord God, you know."

4 Again he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: See, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you will live. 6 And I will put sinews on you, and will bring flesh on you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you will live; and you will know that I *am* the LORD."

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and then a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8 And when I looked *I saw* the sinews and the flesh coming on them, and the skin covering them, but *there was* no breath in them.

9 Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11 Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. See, they are

**36:27** Heb 8:10.

**36:29** 37:23; Heb 9:14; 10:22.

**36:31** This is certain to happen when God grants true repentance to sinful men – 6:9; 16:63; 20:43; Ps 51:3-5; Luke 18:13.

**36:36** This will be done in such a way that the nations will know it is God's work, not Israel's.

**36:37** God would once more hear His people (compare 14:3; 20:3,31), and what He would do would be in answer to their prayer. **37:1** 1:3; 8:3; 11:1,24 – indicates a vision.

"Carried me away" – may indicate that the valley of the bones was somewhere other than the place of his exile. Perhaps it signifies all the nations of 36:24 and 37:20.

"Bones" – v 11 reveals what these bones symbolize. This chapter is a very important prophecy of the restoration of the nation Israel and their permanent blessing under the rule of God.

**37:2** "Very dry" – suggests a very long time out of the land and in a hopeless condition.

**37:3** Sometimes God asks us questions we cannot answer to provoke us to think, and

to prepare us to participate in His work.

**37:4** Is there any use in preaching to dead bones? Yes, if God tells us to do it. Is there any use in preaching to those who are dead in trespasses and sins? Yes, it is a part of God's work in raising them to life.

**37:5,6** The bones were all separate from one another (v 2). This indicates that at the beginning of the time the vision points to, Israel would not be one nation, not a united kingdom.

"Breath" (v 5) – or "wind" or "spirit."

**37:7,8** Does this possibly suggest that Israel will become a united people, a nation, before the Spirit of God gives them new life?

**37:9** The Hebrew word translated "breath" also means wind and spirit. Here it is a symbol of God's Spirit (v 14).

**37:10** "An exceedingly great army" – surely indicates a greater number than the number of Jews who returned from Babylon in the 5th century BC (Ezra 2:64).

**37:11** "Cut off" – the KJV adds the words "for our parts", but there is no Hebrew word for parts here.

saying, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost. We ourselves are cut off.' 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: See, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up from your graves, and I bring you into the land of Israel. 13 And you will know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up from your graves. 14 And I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it*, and have done *it*, says the LORD."

15 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 16 "Moreover, son of man, take a stick and write on it, 'For Judah and for his associates *among* the children of Israel.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all his associates *among* the house of Israel.' 17 And join them to each other as one stick; and they will become one in your hand.

18 "And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, 'Will you not tell us what you *mean* by these?' 19 Say to them, Thus says the Lord God: See, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and his associates *among* the tribes of Israel, and will put them with him, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will become one in my hand. 20 And the sticks which you write on will be in your hand before their eyes. 21 And say to them, Thus says the Lord God: See, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into

their own land. 22 And I will make them one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel. And one king will be king for all of them, and they will no longer be two nations, nor will they ever again be divided into two kingdoms. 23 Nor will they any longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will save them from all the dwelling places where they have sinned, and will cleanse them. So they will be my people, and I will be their God.

24 "And my servant David *will be* king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. 25 And they will live in the land that I have given to Jacob my servant, where your fathers lived; and they will live in it, they and their children, and their children's children forever; and my servant David *will be* their prince forever. 26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them. It will be an everlasting covenant with them, and I will place them, and multiply them, and will establish my sanctuary in their midst forever. 27 And my tabernacle will be with them. Yes, I will be their God, and they will be my people. 28 And the nations will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forever."

**38** And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face against Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,

**37:12** "Graves" – the places among the nations of the world where their hopes, their national life was buried. God is speaking of the resurrection of a nation, not of the literal dead. Verse 14 makes this clear.

**37:14** 36:27. The work of God's Spirit would be needed in the formation of Israel as a nation again. When it takes place the people of Israel would know that God has done it in fulfillment of His Word.

**37:15-23** The people had been divided into two kingdoms since the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam in 930 BC. This passage foretells the reuniting of all the Jews as one nation, as they had been in the days of David and Solomon. And they will be delivered from all the sins that caused God to scatter them throughout the world.

**37:24-28** The same people are in view here – the Jews who had divided into two kingdoms, had been later scattered in the world, and had become like dead, dry bones.

**37:24** 34:23; 44:3; 45:22; Hos 3:5.

**37:25** "Land that I have given to Jacob" – the emphasis here is on the literal land of Israel with the literal descendants of Jacob living in it. It is difficult to see how this verse can in any way refer to the Church of

the New Testament.

"Forever" – this word is used four times in vs 25-28. This was not fulfilled when the Jews returned to the land of Israel after the Babylonian captivity. They were again uprooted and scattered by the Romans in 70 AD. Verses 25-28 speak of a time when they will be permanently settled in their land never again to be uprooted (see Amos 9:15).

**37:26** "Covenant" – 34:25.

"Sanctuary" – there is much about the sanctuary in chapters 40-48.

**37:27** "My tabernacle" or "my dwelling place" – note at Ex 25:8.

**38:1** Chapters 38 and 39 deal with one subject – an invasion of Israel by powerful northern nations. The invasion takes place "after many days," after the regathering of Israel to their land (38:8). Presumably this is after the regathering described in chapter 37. It is not easy to determine exactly what nations are meant here or the time of the invasion. The author of these notes can only suggest possibilities.

**38:2** "Gog" – evidently is a leader of this alliance of nations. In Rev 20:8 this name together with Magog seems to refer to



3 and say, Thus says the Lord God: See, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, 4 and I will turn you around, and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out with all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in all sorts of *armour*, a great horde with large shields and small shields, all of them handling swords, 5 together with Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya, all of them with shield and helmet, 6 Gomer, and all its troops, the house of Togarmah from the far north, and all its troops, *and* many people with you.

7 "Be prepared, and get yourself ready, you, and all the horde assembled around you, and be a guard for them. 8 After many days you will be mustered. In the latter years you will come into the land restored from the sword, gathered out of many peoples, against the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate, but *its* people will have

rebellious nations throughout the world, but here this does not seem to be so.

"Magog" – here refers to the land of which Gog is the leader. In Gen 10:2 Magog is linked with Meshech and Tubal. All these peoples were descendants of Japheth and settled to the far north of the land of Canaan. Nearly 2000 years ago Josephus identified Magog with the Scythians, a barbarous people who lived north of the Black sea in areas close to present-day Russia.

"Prince of Rosh" – the KJV has "chief prince" (also v 3). The Hebrew word "rosh" may mean "head" or "chief," or it may indicate a place. Many scholars hold that the most natural meaning of the Hebrew phrase here is "prince of Rosh." This would mean that Rosh is a land or people (not mentioned by name anywhere else in the Bible). Its similarity in sound to Russia is obvious. There is no absolute proof that Russia is meant, but it seems very likely.

"Meshech and Tubal" – Gen 10:2. These were tribes which lived at one time in the eastern part of what is present-day Turkey but which may have moved northward beyond the Black Sea.

**38:3** "Against you" – their behavior is against God and His people, so He is against them. He is opposed to their character and their purposes.

**38:4** "Hooks" – v 16; 39:2. This shows God's absolute sovereignty over these nations. Compare Dan 4:35.

**38:5** Persia is present-day Iran. In the Bible two lands of Cush are mentioned – an ancient land in the area of present-day Iraq, and the land usually identified with Ethiopia (or, more accurately, with parts of Sudan and parts of Ethiopia). There were also, it seems, two Puts – one present-day Libya, the other near the ancient Asian Cush.

**38:6** "Gomer" – Gen 10:3. A people who lived north of the Black Sea.

"House of Togarmah" – usually identified with present-day Armenia.

been brought out of the nations, and will be living in safety, all of them. 9 You will go up and come like a storm. You will be like a cloud covering the land, you, and all your troops, and many people with you.

10 "Thus says the Lord God: It will happen on that day *that* thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme, 11 and you will say, 'I will go up to a land of unwallled villages. I will go to those who are at rest, who are living in safety, all of them living *in towns* without walls, and having neither bars nor gates.' 12 *You will go* to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the desolate places *which will then be* inhabited, and against the people gathered out of the nations, who will have cattle and goods, who will be living in the center of the land. 13 Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all its young lions, will say to you, 'Have you come to

"Far north" – 38:15; 39:2. This means far north of Israel. In Ezekiel's day, if God had wanted to indicate an alliance of peoples headed up by Russia, using the names of peoples known in that day, how better could He have done so?

**38:7** Addressed to Gog, the leader of this large alliance of peoples.

**38:8** "After many days" – how far off the event may be is not clear. Up till now there has never been an invasion of Israel by the peoples of verses 3,5 and 6. It will take place either toward the end of this age or at the end of the millennium (Rev 20:8). The author of these notes believes that a time toward the end of this age is indicated. See 39:12,13.

**38:10** "Mind" – the thoughts that come into Gog's mind will be the "hooks" God uses to draw him into Israel (v 4). Compare Prov 21:1.

**38:11** This verse, with verses 8 and 14, indicates more of a time of safety and peace than Israel has enjoyed for most of its existence in the twentieth century.

**38:12,13** Israel is not a rich country, and there is not much there that would attract the greed of great nations. The richest resources in Israel are in the Dead Sea which contains potential great wealth in minerals and salts. Of course Israel is at present a strategic land in the area of the world that contains so much of the world's oil reserves. Perhaps the plunder mentioned in these verses uses the language of Ezekiel's day to symbolize a different kind of benefit to be gained by seizing Israel.

"Center of the land" (v 12) – or it could be translated "middle of the earth."

**38:13** Gog will not come into Israel with no one to question him. Sheba and Dedan were both in the Arabian peninsula.

"Tarshish" – a place probably located on the southern coast of Spain. It was the most western place mentioned in the Bible.

"All its young lions" – could possibly



take plunder? Have you gathered your horde to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take great booty?"

14 "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord God: On that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not know it? 15 And you will come from your place out of the far north, you, and many people with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, and a mighty army. 16 And you will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. It will happen in the latter days. And I will bring you against my land so that the nations may know me, when I reveal myself as holy through you, O Gog, before their eyes.

17 "Thus says the Lord God: You *are* the one whom I spoke about in former days through my servants the prophets of Israel. They prophesied for years during that time that I would bring you against them.

18 "And it will come about at that time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel, says the Lord God, *that* my fury will come up into my face. 19 For I have spoken in my jealousy *and* in the fire of my wrath: Surely on that day there will be a great shaking in the land of Israel, 20 so that the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field and all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who *are* on the surface of the earth, will tremble at my presence, and the mountains will be thrown down, and the cliffs will fall, and every wall will fall to the ground. 21 And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, says the Lord God. Every man's sword will be against his brother. 22 And I will

signify other nations allied with Tarshish. Together they may indicate western nations in general, although there is no proof in the context for this suggestion.

**38:14** "Know it" – Gog will think he sees a good chance to conquer Israel.

**38:16** Observe again that it is God who brings Gog into Israel.

**38:17** Gog is not mentioned by name in any of the prophets in the Bible up to Ezekiel's day. Perhaps he is symbolized by some other person (such as the "Assyrian", or the "king of the north"), but there is no certainty about it. Or this verse may possibly refer to prophecies not recorded in the Bible but which Ezekiel knew about.

**38:18** "My fury" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

**38:19-23** The destruction of the armies of Gog will be partly by God's supernatural intervention and partly by sword and bloodshed (vs 21,22). Summoning a sword probably indicates bringing opposing armies. Compare Isa 34:5,6; Jer 9:16; 12:12; 25:29.

**38:23** Here is one of God's good purposes

execute judgment against him with the plague and with blood, and I will pour down a flooding rain on him and on his troops and on the many people who *are* with him, a flooding rain, and great hailstones, fire, and sulfur. 23 Thus I will exalt myself, and show myself holy, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they will know that I *am* the LORD.

**39** "Therefore, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus says the Lord God: See, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, 2 and I will turn you around, and lead you along, and cause you to come up from the far north, and will bring you onto the mountains of Israel. 3 And I will strike your bow out of your left hand, and will cause your arrows to fall from your right hand. 4 You will fall on the mountains of Israel, you, and all your troops, and the people who *are* with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort, and *to* the beasts of the field to be devoured. 5 You will fall on the open field; for I have spoken *it*, says the Lord God. 6 And I will send a fire on Magog, and among those who live in safety in the coastlands; and they will know that I *am* the LORD.

7 "So I will make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not *let them* profane my holy name any more; and the nations will know that I *am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. 8 See, it is coming, and it will be done, says the Lord God; this *is* the day of which I have spoken. 9 And those who live in the cities of Israel will go out, and set the weapons on fire and burn them, both the small shields and the large shields, the

in that terrible destruction. See 39:7; etc. **39:1,2** 38:1-9. "Prince of Rosh" – or "chief prince."

**39:3** If these chapters foretell an event at the end of this age why speak of bows and arrows? or swords and shields (38:4)? or lances and spears (39:9)? Guns and tanks and bombs and planes had not yet been invented and the Hebrew language had no words for them. But the weapons mentioned in these chapters may signify the more destructive weapons that nations have today. The prophets had only the language of their day to speak of things far in the future.

**39:4** Verses 17-20. Compare Rev 19:17, 18,21.

**39:6** This speaks of the land of Gog. Sending fire suggests some terrible destructive force. God may, of course, use other nations to send the fire on Magog.

**39:8** "Day" – possibly a reference to the general time called "the day of the LORD." Notes at Joel 1:15; etc.

**39:9** "For seven years" – indicates an immense amount of arms left by the destroyed armies.

bows and the arrows, and the lances and the spears, and they will be burning them in the fire for seven years, 10 so that they will not take wood from the field, or cut down *any* from the forests; for they will be burning the weapons in the fire. And they will plunder those who plundered them, and loot those who looted them, says the Lord God.

11 "And it will happen in that day, *that* I will give to Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of travellers east of the Sea; and it will block the way of travellers. And there they will bury Gog and all his hordes, and they will call *it* The Valley of Hamon-Gog.

12 "And the house of Israel will be burying them for seven months, to cleanse the land. 13 Yes, all the people of the land will be burying *them*; and it will mean fame for them *on* the day that I am glorified, says the Lord God.

14 "And they will set apart men continually employed to go throughout the land to bury those who had been coming through, who remain on the surface of the ground, to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. 15 And as those going throughout the land go along, *if anyone* sees the bone of a man, he will put up a sign beside it, until those doing the burying have buried it in The Valley of Hamon-Gog. 16 And the name of the city *will also be* Hamonah. Thus they will cleanse the land.

17 "And, son of man, thus says the Lord God: Speak to every feathered bird, and to every beast of the field: 'Assemble and come. Gather together from every side to my sacrifice, which I sacrifice for you, a great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel, that you may eat meat and drink blood. 18 You will eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan.

19 And in the sacrifice I sacrifice for you, you will eat fat until you are full, and drink blood until you are drunk. 20 Thus you will be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all the warriors, says the Lord God.'

21 "And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see my judgment that I execute, and my hand that I lay on them. 22 So the house of Israel will know from that day on that I *am* the LORD their God. 23 And the nations will know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they were unfaithful to me. Therefore I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, so that they all fell by the sword. 24 I acted toward them in accordance with their uncleanness and their transgressions, and hid my face from them.

25 "Therefore thus says the Lord God: So I will bring Jacob back from captivity, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name, 26 after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to me, when they were living in safety in their land, and no one was making *them* afraid. 27 When I bring them back from the peoples, and gather them out of the lands of their enemies, and show myself holy among them in the sight of many nations, 28 then they will know that I *am* the LORD their God, who caused them to be led away into captivity among the nations, but have gathered them to their own land, and have left none of them there any longer. 29 And I will not hide my face any more from them; for I will have poured out my Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord God."

**40** In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the

**39:11** "Sea" – the Dead Sea. Hamon-Gog means "multitude of Gog".

**39:12,13** "Cleanse the land" – dead bodies were considered defiling (Lev 5:2; 21:1,11; Num 5:2; 6:6; 19:16; 31:19).

"Glorified" – 38:23; 39:21. God will be glorified in revealing His holiness in the destruction of evil and in rescuing His people from their enemies. These two verses seem clearly to point to a time before the new heavens and new earth, before the resurrection of the unsaved dead and eternal judgment (Rev 20:5,14,15; 21:1).

**39:16** "Hamonah" – this means "horde."

**39:17-19** The destruction of these godless armies will be like a feast God provides for the animal creation.

**39:21** Verse 13; 38:23.

**39:22** This deliverance from their enemies will have a permanent effect on Israel.

**39:24** Jer 2:17,19; 4:18; Ezek 7:22.

**39:25** Isa 11:12; 37:12,21; 38:8.

"Bring Jacob back from captivity" – or "restore the well-being of Jacob". See note at Ps 14:7.

**39:26** "Shame" – 6:9; 20:43; 36:31.

**39:27** 36:23. God has determined to show the nations of the world an aspect of His character they are very prone to forget – His holiness. One instrument He will use to do this is the nation Israel.

**39:28** "Have left none of them there any longer" – at present there are far more Jews living outside Israel in other countries than those living in Israel, and this has been true for a great many centuries, so this prophecy has not yet been completely fulfilled.

**39:29** "Face" – v 24.

"Spirit" – 36:26,27; 37:14.

**40:1** Chapters 40-48 form a unit. All the material in them came in one vision in the year 573 BC. Some of the people of Judah

city had been destroyed, on that very day the hand of the LORD was on me, and took me there. 2 In the visions of God he took me to the land of Israel, and set me down on a very high mountain. On it, to the south, there was what appeared to be the structure of a city. 3 And he took me there, and I saw a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze, with a cord of flax and a measuring rod in his hand; and he stood at the gate. 4 And the man said to me,

"Son of man, see with your eyes and hear with your ears and set your mind on all that I am going to show you. You *have been* brought here for the purpose of my showing *them* to you. Declare all that you see to the house of Israel."

5 And I saw a wall all around on the outside of the temple, and in the man's hand a measuring rod of six *long* cubits, *each* a cubit and a handbreadth. So he measured the width of the wall, one rod; and the height, one rod.

6 Then he came to the gate which faced east, and went up its steps, and measured the threshold

of the gate, *which was* one rod wide; and the other threshold *of the gate, which was* one rod wide. 7 And *each* alcove *was* one rod long, and one rod wide, and *there was a space of* five cubits between the alcoves. And the threshold of the gate by the portico of the gate *facing inward was* one rod.

8 He also measured the portico of the gate *facing inward*, one rod. 9 Then he measured the portico of the gate, eight cubits; and its posts, two cubits. And the portico of the gate *faced inward*.

10 And there *were* three alcoves of the gate *facing east* on one side and three on the other side. The three *were* of one size, and the posts were the same size on this side and on the other side. 11 And he measured the width of the entrance of the gate, ten cubits; *and* the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. 12 And the space in front of the alcoves *on one side was* one cubit, and the space on the *other side was* one cubit; and the alcoves *were* six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side. 13 He then measured the gate from

had been in exile for 25 years. The temple at Jerusalem had been destroyed for 13 years. Now in vision Ezekiel sees a new temple. These chapters have perplexed commentators, both Jewish and Christian, all through the centuries, and they have set forth various interpretations to explain them.

(a) Some scholars have taught that these chapters are altogether symbolic of the Church of the New Testament and give only spiritual lessons.

(b) Some have taught that these chapters describe how the temple and city were to be built by Israel when they were restored to their land, but that they never actually did it.

(c) Some have taught that these chapters speak of the future reign of Christ on earth and speak of a temple and city to be built after He returns and sets up His kingdom.

(d) Some have taught that these chapters speak of the future kingdom of God, after the return of Christ, using expressions of worship, etc. familiar then to the Jews, which will be fulfilled in ways impossible for us to state at present.

Each of these interpretations has its difficulties when the details of the prophecy are examined. It is the opinion of the author of these notes that these chapters describe something that will literally take place in the future. But we should remember that a "literal" fulfillment does not exclude spiritual meanings. Compare the description of the tabernacle in Exodus chapters 25-30. A literal tabernacle was built, but in all its parts it spoke of Christ and spiritual matters. We should not think it impossible that there will be something similar in the coming reign of Christ over the earth.

40:1 "Hand of the LORD" – 1:3; 3:14,22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1.

"Took me there" – 3:14; 8:3; 11:24.

40:2 "Visions" – 1:1; 8:3. Note on vision at Gen 15:1.

"Very high mountain" – Mount Zion in Jerusalem (17:22; Isa 2:2; Micah 4:1; Zech 14:10). Zion is not a high mountain in the physical sense. But it is extremely high in regard to God's dealings with the earth. And in the future its physical altitude may be much greater than it is now.

40:3 "Bronze" – may possibly indicate that the word "man" is not to be taken literally. Angels in the Bible sometimes appeared in the form of men (Gen 19:1). A cord was used for long measurements, a rod for short measurements.

40:4 "Declare" – these closing chapters of Ezekiel were a special message for the Jews. The nation was shattered and scattered, the temple and the city were in ruins, the land was rapidly becoming a waste. These chapters speak of a complete restoration of people, land, city, and temple.

40:5-7 Quite a bit of these chapters is taken up with measurements of walls, gateways, courts, buildings, etc. At present we cannot see any spiritual significance in this (which is not to say that it has none). It may have been much more meaningful to the Jews of that day than to us. It is difficult to keep from thinking that these measurements were given to indicate something physically real and solid.

40:5 "Wall" – walls are built to keep out those who should not come in.

"Cubit" – slightly less than one half meter.

"Handbreadth" – about ten centimeters.

40:7 "Portico" – the Hebrew word translated portico is obscure in meaning and could mean something like a porch.

the roof of *one* alcove to the roof of another. The width from door to door *was* twenty-five cubits. 14 He also measured the pillars, sixty cubits to the pillar of the courtyard around the gate. 15 And *it was* fifty cubits from the front of the entrance gate to the front of the portico of the inner gate. 16 And *there were* narrow windows in the alcoves, and all around inside the gate to their posts, and also in the archways; and there were windows all around inside; and *there were figures of* palm trees on each post.

17 Then he brought me into the outer court, and *I* saw that rooms *were there*, and pavement made all around for the courtyard. Thirty rooms *were* along the pavement. 18 And the pavement was by the side of the gates, corresponding to the length of the gates. *This was* the lower pavement. 19 Then he measured the width from the front of the lower gate to the front of the outside of the inner courtyard, a hundred cubits toward the east and the north.

20 And he measured the length and the width of the gate of the outer courtyard that faced the north. 21 And its alcoves *were* three *in number* on this side and three on that side, and its posts and its archways had the same measurement as the first gate. Its length *was* fifty cubits, and the width twenty-five cubits. 22 And their windows, and their archways, and their palm trees, *had* the same measurement as the gate that faced east. And its ascent was by seven steps; and its archways *were* in front of them. 23 And the gate of the inner court was opposite the gate facing north and *the gate* facing east. And he measured from gate to gate, a hundred cubits.

24 After that he brought me toward the south, and *I* saw a gate facing south. And he measured its posts and its archways with these same measurements. 25 And *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around, like those windows. The length *was* fifty cubits, and the width twenty-five cubits. 26 And *there were* seven steps going up to it, and its archways *were* in front of them; and it had *the figures of* palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, on its posts. 27 And

*there was* a gate in the inner court facing south. And he measured from *this* gate to the gate facing south, a hundred cubits.

28 And he brought me to the inner courtyard at the south gate; and he measured the south gate, with these same measurements, 29 and its alcoves, and its posts, and its arches, with these same measurements. And *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around. *It was* fifty cubits long, and twenty-five cubits wide. 30 And the archways all around *were* twenty-five cubits long, and five cubits wide. 31 And its archways faced the outer court, and *figures of* palm trees *were* on its posts, and its ascent had eight steps.

32 And he brought me into the inner courtyard facing east, and measured the gate with these same measurements. 33 And its alcoves, and its posts, and its archways, *had* these *same* measurements. And *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around. *It was* fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 34 And its arches faced the outer court; and *there were figures of* palm trees on its posts, on this side, and on that side; and its ascent *had* eight steps.

35 And he brought me to the north gate, and measured *it* with these same measurements, 36 its alcoves, its posts, its archways, and its windows all around. The length *was* fifty cubits, and the width twenty-five cubits. 37 And its posts faced the outer court, and *there were figures of* palm trees on its posts, on this side, and on that side; and its ascent *had* eight steps.

38 And its rooms and its entrances *were* by the posts of the gates, where they washed the burnt offering. 39 And in the portico of the gate *there were* two tables on this side, and two tables on that side, for slaughtering the burnt offering and the sin offering and the trespass offering. 40 And on the outer side, as one goes up to the entrance of the north gate, *were* two tables, and on the other side, which *was* at the portico of the gate, *were* two tables. 41 Four tables *were* on this side, and four tables on that side, by the side of the gate, eight tables *in all*, on which they killed *their sacrifices*. 42 And for the burnt offering the four

**40:14** "Pillars" – the meaning of the Hebrew of this verse is uncertain.

**40:15** "Cubit" – the common cubit was slightly less than one half meter.

**40:17** "Outer court" – inside the outer walls, but outside the temple compound with its altar, etc.

**40:38-43** Three types of offering are mentioned – burnt, sin and trespass. Peace offerings and grain offerings are included in later references such as 43:27; 45:17; 46:2,12. For the meanings of these offerings see notes on Leviticus chapters 1-7.

The mention of offerings here has puzzled commentators. It points to a time when they will still be offered. If the picture in Ezekiel chapters 40-48 is of the time of the millennium, does this mean that such offerings of animals will be made then? Or should we take these references to offerings as altogether symbolic of Christ's one offering? If the offerings are altogether symbolic does this mean that all the other details of this vision – temple, city, priests, etc – are altogether symbolic and will never have a physical reality? Or is there a

tables *were* of cut stone, a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit high. On it they also put the instruments for slaughtering the burnt offering and the sacrifice. 43 And inside *were* hooks, a handbreadth wide, fastened all around. And on the tables *was put* the flesh of the offering.

44 And outside the inner gate *were* the rooms for the singers in the inner court. One *was* by the north gate *facing* toward the south, one by the east gate facing toward the north. 45 And he said to me,

"This room which faces south *is* for the priests who have charge of the temple. 46 And the room which faces north *is* for the priests who have charge of the altar. These *are* the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, who approach the LORD to minister to him."

47 So he measured the courtyard, a square a hundred cubits long and a hundred cubits wide, and the altar in front of the temple.

48 And he brought me to the portico of the temple, and measured *each* post of the portico, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side; and the width of the gate *was* three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side. 49 The length of the portico *was* twenty cubits, and the width eleven cubits. And *he brought me* by the steps which went up to it; and *there were* pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side.

**41** Afterwards he brought me to the sanctuary, and measured the doorposts, six cubits wide on one side, and six cubits wide on the other side, *which was* the width of the tabernacle. 2 And the width of the entrance *was* ten cubits, and the side walls of the entrance *were*

five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side. And he measured its length, forty cubits; and the width, twenty cubits.

3 Then he went inside and measured the doorpost, two cubits; and the entrance, six cubits *high*; and the width of the entrance, seven cubits.

4 So he measured its length, twenty cubits; and the breadth, twenty cubits, beyond the sanctuary.

And he said to me, "This *is* the Most Holy Place."

5 Afterwards he measured the wall of the temple, six cubits *thick*; and the width of *every* side room, four cubits, all around the temple on every side. 6 And the side rooms *had* three *stories*, one over another, with thirty on each level. And they extended to the wall of the temple which *was the wall* for the side rooms all around, so that they might be supported, but they were not fastened into the wall of the temple. 7 And all around the side rooms *became* wider at each successive story, for the structure all around the temple went up *by stages*. Therefore the width of this temple *structure* increased *going up from* the lowest room to the highest through the middle one.

8 I also saw that the temple had a raised base all around, the foundation for the side rooms. It *was* a full rod of six large cubits. 9 The thickness of the outside wall of the side rooms, *was* five cubits; and also the terrace of the side rooms inside *the house*. 10 And beyond the rooms *was* an open area twenty cubits wide all around on every side of the temple. 11 And the doors of the side rooms faced the terrace, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south. And the width of the terrace *was* five cubits all around.

12 And the building facing the separated area at its western end *was* seventy cubits wide, and the wall of the building *was* five cubits thick all

mixture of symbolic and literal language here (as in many other places in the prophets), and should we expect a literal fulfillment in general without all the details being literally fulfilled? Such questions are easy to ask, but perhaps impossible for us to answer in our present state of knowledge.

One thing is certain – if animal sacrifices are to be offered in the millennium they will be memorials pointing to the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus already made, as the Lord's Supper is now. They will not be for the purpose of taking away sin, for Christ by His one offering has taken away the sins of His people forever (Heb 10:5-14). Regarding a future temple and offerings – other prophets seem to foretell that there will be such. See Isa 19:21 (vs 22-25 puts the context in the future); Isa 60:7 (in context); Isa 66:20-23; Jer 33:14-18; Hag 2:6-9; Zech 14:16-21; Mal 3:2-4. See also Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 11:1,2. **40:44-46** 44:15-31. This mention of a group

of priests, especially said to be descendants of Zadok (2 Sam 8:17), who are distinguished from other Levites and from the people in general, indicates a time other than this Christian era. Now all believers are priests and may draw near to the Lord to minister to Him (Rom 5:1,2; Heb 10:19-22; 1 Pet 2:5,9).

**40:47** "The altar" – 43:13-17.

**40:48** "Portico" – the first main compartment of the temple. Compare 1 Kings 6:3.

**41:1** "Sanctuary" – the second main compartment of the temple and the largest. Compare 1 Kings 6:3-5,17. It corresponds to the Holy Place in the tabernacle.

"Cubits" – a cubit was slightly less than one half meter.

"Tabernacle" – or it could be translated "dwelling place" (for God).

**41:3** "Inside" – the Most Holy Place. The angel could enter there, but not Ezekiel. Among men only the high priest could enter that place, and only once a year – Leviticus



around, and its length *was* ninety cubits.

13 So he measured the temple, a hundred cubits long, and the separated area, and the building with its walls, a hundred cubits long, 14 and the width of the eastern face of the temple and of the separated area, a hundred cubits.

15 And he measured the length of the building opposite the separated area behind it, and its galleries on the one side and on the other side, a hundred cubits, with the inner temple, and the porticoes of the courtyard. 16 Their thresholds and the narrow windows and the galleries all around on their three stories, opposite the threshold, *were* paneled with wood all around, from the ground up to the windows (the windows *being* covered) 17 to the space above the door, to the inner house, and outside, and every wall all around, inside and outside, by measure. 18 And *it was* made with *figures of* cherubim and palm trees, so that a palm tree *was* between cherub and cherub. *Each* cherub had two faces, 19 so that the face of a man was facing the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a young lion faced the palm tree on the other side. *They were* carved all around the whole temple. 20 From the floor to the space above the door cherubim and palm trees *were* carved, and *on* the wall of the temple.

21 The doorposts of the temple *were* square, *also* the *one at the* front of the sanctuary. The appearance *of the one was the same* as the appearance *of the other*. 22 The wooden altar *was* three cubits high, and its length two cubits; and its corners, and its length, and its walls, *were* of wood.

And he said to me, "This *is* the table that *is* before the LORD."

23 And the temple and the sanctuary had double doors. 24 The doors *each* had two leaves, two folding leaves; two *leaves* for one door, and two *leaves* for the other. 25 And on them, on the doors of the temple, *were* carved cherubim and palm trees, like the ones carved on the walls; and *there was* a wooden projection over the front of the outside portico. 26 And on the sides of the portico *there were* narrow windows and palm trees, on one side and on the other side, and *on* the side rooms of the house, and on the wooden projection.

**42** Then he brought me out into the outer courtyard, the way facing north; and he

brought me into the room that *was* opposite the separated area, and which was in front of the building facing north. 2 Facing the length, *which was* a hundred cubits, and the width which *was* fifty cubits, *was* the north door. 3 Opposite the inner court of twenty *cubits*, and opposite the pavement of the outer court, *was* gallery facing gallery in three *stories*. 4 And in front of the rooms on the inner side *was* a walkway ten cubits wide, one cubit away; and their doors faced north. 5 Now the upper rooms *were* shorter, for the galleries took more space from them than the lower and middle ones of the building. 6 For they *were* in three *stories*, and did not have pillars like the pillars of the courts, therefore *the building* was narrower *at the top* than at the lower and middle *levels* from the ground up. 7 And the length of the outside wall that *was* opposite the rooms facing the outer courtyard at the front of the rooms *was* fifty cubits. 8 For the length of the rooms that *were* in the outer courtyard *was* fifty cubits, but, see, *that* facing the temple *was* a hundred cubits. 9 And the eastern entrance *was* at these rooms, as one goes into them from the outer court.

10 *There were* rooms in the thickness of the wall of the courtyard facing east, opposite the separated area, and opposite the building, 11 with a walkway in front of them. In appearance *they were* like the rooms which faced north, as long as those, *and* as wide as those; and all their exits were like their designs, and like their doors. 12 And corresponding to the doors of the rooms facing south *was* a door at the head of the walkway, the walkway directly in front of the wall to the east, as one goes into them.

13 Then he said to me, "The north rooms *and* the south rooms, which *are* in front of the separated area, *are* holy rooms, where the priests who approach the LORD will eat the most holy things. There they will put the most holy things, and the grain offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place *is* holy. 14 When the priests enter it, they will not go out of the holy *place* into the outer courtyard, but put there the garments in which they minister, for they *are* holy. And they will put on other garments, and approach *the places* which *are* for the people."

15 Now when he had finished measuring the inner temple, he brought me out to the gate which faced toward the east, and measured it all around. 16 He measured the east side with the measuring

chapter 16; Heb 9:7.  
**41:18** "Cherubim" – note at Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-20. Compare 1 Kings 6:29-35.  
"Two faces" – compare 10:14.  
**41:22** "The altar" – a table probably for the bread that was to be kept in the Holy Place

(Ex 25:30; 1 Kings 6:20).  
**42:13,14** Notice again the emphasis on a special priesthood distinguished from the rest of the people. They have special rooms, special food, special clothing. It is not easy to see how this could be spiritually fulfilled



rod, five hundred rods, all around with the measuring rod. 17 He measured all around the north side with the measuring rod, five hundred rods. 18 He measured the south side with the measuring rod, five hundred rods. 19 He came around to the west side, *and* measured five hundred rods with the measuring rod. 20 He measured it on the four sides. It had a wall all around, five hundred rods long, and five hundred wide, to separate the holy from the common.

**43** Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate facing toward the east, 2 and I saw the glory of the God of Israel coming from the direction of the east; and his voice *was* like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory. 3 And *it was* like the appearance of the vision which I had seen *before*, like the vision that I saw when I came for the destruction of the city; and the visions *were* like the vision that I saw by the Kebar River; and I went down on my face. 4 And the glory of the LORD came into the temple by the gate facing toward the east. 5 Then the Spirit lifted me up, and took me into the inner court, and *I* saw the glory of the LORD fill the temple.

6 And I heard *him* speaking to me from the temple; and the man stood beside me. 7 And he said to me, "Son of man, *this is* the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the children of Israel forever. The house of Israel will no longer defile my holy name, *neither* they, nor their kings, by their prostitution or by the corpses of their kings on their high places. 8 When they placed their threshold by my threshold, and their post by my post, with a wall between me and them, they defiled my holy

either in the Church of this New Testament age, or in the eternal ages when God will dwell in the midst of believers.

**43:1-5** This remarkable passage reveals the return of the glory which departed earlier. See 11:22,23. Because of the sin of His people God left His temple and His land. Here He is seen returning. Observe that the coming of this glory in the vision is after the people are in the land, after the temple is built.

**43:3** See chapters 9 and 10.

**43:5** Compare Ex 40:34,35; 1 Kings 8:11.

**43:6** "Him" – God Himself, as is clear from the next verse.

**43:7** "This is the place of my throne" – compare Jer 3:17; 17:12. In the old temple God was said to be enthroned over the ark (1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2; Ps 80:1; 99:1).

"Where I will dwell" – note at Ex 25:8.

"Children of Israel" – we believe literal Jews are meant because the history of literal Jews with their idolatry, high places and sins is referred to. Also in the New Testament the Church is never called "Israel."

"Forever" – v 9; 37:26-28. These

name by their abominations which they committed. Therefore I consumed them in mine anger. 9 Now let them put away their prostitution, and the corpses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell among them forever.

10 "Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their evil deeds; and let them take the measurements of the pattern. 11 And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, reveal to them the design of the temple, and its arrangement, and its exits, and its entrances, and its complete design, and all its ordinances, and all its forms and all its laws. And write *it down* in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design, and all of its ordinances, and do them.

12 "This *is* the law of the temple: All its surrounding area on the top of the mountain *will be* most holy. See, this is the law of the temple.

13 "And these *are* the measurements of the altar in cubits (this cubit *is* to be a cubit and a handbreadth): the base *shall be* a cubit, and the width a cubit, and its rim all around the edge *shall be* a span. And this *shall be* the height of the altar: 14 From the base *on* the ground to the lower ledge *shall be* two cubits, and the width *one* cubit; and from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge *shall be* four cubits, and the width one cubit. 15 So the altar *shall be* four cubits. And from the altar *rising* upward *shall be* four horns. 16 And the altar hearth *shall be* twelve cubits long, twelve wide, square at its four corners. 17 And the ledge *shall be* fourteen cubits long and fourteen wide at its four corners; and the rim around it *shall be* half a cubit, and its base *shall be* a cubit all around. And its steps shall face east."

18 And he said to me, "Son of man, thus says

chapters speak of a permanent arrangement. This was not fulfilled in any temple the Jews ever had until this day.

"Prostitution" – adultery, or unfaithfulness to God in spiritual matters. See notes at 16:15-34; Ex 34:15; Lev 17:7; 2 Chron 21:11; Jer 2:20.

**43:8** "In my anger" – 5:11; 18:10-12; 22:1-15.

**43:11** This is one main purpose of this revelation – indeed of all revelation from God. God means for it to promote repentance and obedience.

"If" – perhaps all these chapters remain unfulfilled to this very day because this "if" has not been fulfilled.

"That they may keep" – it would seem from this that there is more in these chapters than mere symbols. They were being given definite regulations to follow.

**43:12** A special area distinguished from other areas was to be most holy.

**43:13-17** 40:47 – the altar of burnt offerings. See Ex 27:1-8. "A handbreadth" (v 13) here means about 22 centimeters.

**43:18-27** Note at 40:38-43. Observe how

the Lord God: These *are* to be the ordinances of the altar at the time they make it, to offer burnt offerings on it, and to sprinkle blood on it. 19 And you shall give a young bull as a sin offering to the priests, the Levites, who are the descendants of Zadok, who approach me to minister to me, says the Lord God. 20 And you shall take some of its blood, and put *it* on the four horns of *the altar* and on the four corners of the ledge, and all around on the rim. Thus you shall cleanse and make atonement for it. 21 Also you shall take the bull of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the temple, outside the sanctuary.

22 "And on the second day you shall offer a male goat without blemish as a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they cleansed *it* with the bull. 23 When you have finished cleansing *it*, you shall offer a young bull without blemish, and a ram without blemish from the flock. 24 And you shall offer them before the LORD, and the priests will throw salt on them, and offer them up *as* a burnt offering to the LORD.

25 "Each day for seven days you shall prepare a goat as a sin offering. They shall also prepare a young bull, and a ram from the flock, without blemish. 26 Seven days they shall make atonement for the altar and purify it; and they shall consecrate themselves. 27 And when these days have expired, on the eighth day and onward, it shall be *that* the priests will make your burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar, and I will accept you, says the Lord God."

**44** Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. 2 Then the LORD said to me, "This gate

specific and detailed these instructions are. And they were meant to be followed (v 11). These verses speak of the sprinkling of blood and atonement being made for the altar (see Ex 29:16,37). So the fulfillment of these chapters looks forward to a time when men can defile the altar by their touch – a time, that is, when the people of God would still be in the flesh and have a sinful nature. It cannot, therefore, be speaking of spiritual worship in the ages of eternity.

43:19 Zadok – 40:46.

43:21 Ex 29:14; Lev 4:12,21.

43:27 "Peace offerings" – notes at Leviticus chapter 3.

"Accept you" – they will show their faith by their obedience to these regulations and so God will accept them. Compare 18:6-9. 44:1,2 The shut eastern gate would be a constant reminder to the people that the glory of God had entered by it. It should also remind them of God's promise not to leave again (43:7,9), as He had once done by the east gate of the old temple (10:19; 11:22).

shall be kept shut. It shall not be opened, and no man shall enter through it, because the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered through it; therefore it shall be kept shut. 3 As for the prince: The prince shall sit by it to eat bread before the LORD. He shall enter through the portico of the gate, and shall go out by the same way."

4 Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple. And I looked and saw that the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD, and I prostrated myself.

5 And the LORD said to me, "Son of man, pay close attention, and see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all that I say to you concerning all the ordinances of the temple of the LORD, and all its laws; and pay close attention to the entrance of the temple, and all the exits of the sanctuary.

6 "And you shall say to the rebellious ones, *that is*, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: O house of Israel, let all your abominations be enough for you. 7 For you brought foreigners *into my sanctuary*, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, defiling it, my house, when you offered my food, the fat and the blood, and because of all your abominations, they made my covenant void. 8 And you did not keep charge of my holy things; you put keepers in charge of my sanctuary instead of yourselves. 9 Thus says the Lord God: No foreigner, of all the foreigners among the children of Israel, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, will enter my sanctuary.

10 "And *as for* the Levites who went far away from me, when Israel went astray, who strayed from me after their idols, they will bear their guilt. 11 Yet they will be servants in my sanctuary, *having* charge of the gates of the temple, and ministering

44:3 "The prince" – 34:24; 37:25. The prince in these chapters cannot be the Messiah, because he needs to offer sin offerings for himself (45:22).

44:4 43:5; Ex 40:35; 1 Kings 8:10,11.

44:5 God was impressing Ezekiel with the importance of the details of His revelation.

44:6 "Abominations" – 5:11; 7:20; 11:18,21; 37:23; Jer 16:18.

44:7 "Uncircumcised in heart" – Jer 9:26; Acts 7:51. Here this means spiritually unprepared and not in covenant relationship with God.

44:8 If we try to put off on others what God has given us to do we prove ourselves unworthy of His service.

44:9 This indicates that at the time of the fulfillment of this vision there will be such people living in the midst of Israel. There is a lesson here for our times as well. Those who are not cleansed by the blood of Christ, not in living relationship with God, should have no place in the Church.

44:10-14 "The Levites who went far away from me" – 16:18-21; 22:26; Jer 2:8; 5:31; 8:1,2; 26:7,8; 32:32.

in the temple. They will slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and stand before them to minister to them. 12 *But* because they ministered for them in front of their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into wickedness, I have lifted up my hand *with an oath* against them, says the Lord God, and they will bear the consequences of their wickedness. 13 And they shall not come near me to serve me as priests, or to approach any of my holy things in the Most Holy Place, but they will bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. 14 But I will have them keep charge of the temple, for all its service, and for everything done in it.

15 “But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, shall approach me to serve me, and shall stand before me to offer to me the fat and the blood, says the Lord God. 16 They shall enter my sanctuary, and approach my table to serve me, and they shall keep my charge.

17 “And it shall be *like this* : When they enter the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool is to come on them, while they minister at the gates of the inner court and inside. 18 They shall have linen turbans on their heads, and linen undergarments on their loins. They shall not dress *themselves* with anything that makes *them* sweat. 19 And when they go to the outer court, to the people in the outer court, they shall take off the garments in which they ministered, and put them in the holy rooms, and put on other garments, and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

20 “Nor shall they shave their heads, or allow their hair to grow long. They shall *keep the hair* of their heads trimmed. 21 Nor shall any priest drink wine when they enter the inner court. 22 Nor shall they take a widow or a divorced woman as a wife,

but shall take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests. 23 And they shall teach my people *the difference* between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

24 “And in a dispute they shall take *their* stand as judges, *and* judge it in accordance with my judgments. And they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my assemblies. And they shall keep my Sabbaths holy.

25 “And they shall not approach any dead person, so defiling themselves; except that they may defile themselves for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for a sister who has had no husband. 26 And after he has been cleansed, they shall count off seven days for him. 27 And on the day that he goes into the sanctuary, to the inner court, to serve in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, says the Lord God.

28 “And as for the inheritance they are to have, I *am* their inheritance. And you shall give them no possession in Israel. I *am* their possession. 29 They shall eat the grain offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. 30 And the best of all the firstfruits of everything, and every offering of every *kind* from all of your offerings, shall belong to the priest. You shall also give to the priest the first part of your dough, so that he may cause the blessing to rest on your house. 31 The priests shall not eat anything that dies of itself, or has been torn *by animals*, whether it is bird or beast.

**45** “Moreover, when you divide the land by lot for inheritance, you shall present a portion to the LORD, a holy district of the land. Its length *shall be* twenty-five thousands cubits, and its width ten thousand. This *will be* holy all around within its boundaries. 2 Of this, for the sanctuary there shall be *a place* five hundred *cubits long* and

“Bear” – let us never forget that sin will bring sad consequences – see 2 Sam 12:10-14. We will not be able to avoid God’s law of sowing and reaping. In the case of the Levites it will mean the shame of being in a lower place than they might have had.

**44:15,16** Only the descendants of one man, Zadok, remained faithful. They would be rewarded. On Zadok see 2 Sam 8:17; 15:24-29; 20:25. As believers our service in this life will have eternal reward – or lack of it (1 Cor 3:12-14).

**44:17-31** These instructions for the priests are similar to instructions in the law of Moses (Ex 39:27-29; Lev 6:10; 10:9; 15:31; 21:1-5,7; Deut 17:8,9; Leviticus chapter 23; 21:1-3; Num 18:20,23,24). Observe that the vision speaks of a time when there will still be a distinction between holy and common, clean and unclean (v 23), a time

when disputes and death will still be in the world (vs 24,25,31). It cannot, therefore, refer to the redeemed in eternity, when there will be no such things.

**44:28** See Num 18:20,23,24; Deut 10:9; Josh 13:14,33; 18:7.

**45:1** “Divide. . . by lot” – 47:13 - 48:29. Compare Num 34:1-15; Josh 14:1-5. Here we have a new allotment of the land of Israel, entirely different from the old one recorded in the book of Joshua.

“Holy district” – together with the 5,000 cubits width for the city (v 6) the whole area is a perfect square 25,000 cubits on each side (about 12.5 kilometers). If the long cubit is used (a cubit and a span) it would come to about 14 kilometers on each side. (The rod of 40:3,5 was equal to 6 long cubits.)

**45:2** 42:15-20.

five hundred *wide*, completely square, with fifty cubits all around for its open space. 3 And in this area you shall measure a length of twenty-five thousand cubits, and a width of ten thousand. The sanctuary and the Most Holy Place will be in it. 4 It will be the holy *portion* of the land for the priests, the servants of the sanctuary, who approach to serve the LORD. It will be a place for their houses, and a holy place for the sanctuary. 5 And *an area* twenty-five thousand *cubits* long and ten thousand wide will be for the Levites, the servants of the temple, for a possession of twenty rooms.

6 "And you shall appoint as the property of the city *an area* five thousand *cubits* wide and twenty-five thousand long, bordering the *portion* for the holy district. It shall be for the whole house of Israel.

7 "And the prince *will have a portion* on the one side and on the other side of the portion for the holy *district*, and of the property for the city, bordering the portion for the holy *district*, and bordering the property for the city, extending to the west from the west side, and to the east from the east side, *running* lengthwise along one of the *tribal* portions, from the western border to the eastern border. 8 This land will be his possession in Israel; and my princes will no longer oppress my people. And *the rest of* the land they will give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.

9 "Thus says the Lord God: Let it be enough for you, O princes of Israel! Remove violence and plundering, and administer judgment and justice. Stop dispossessing my people, says the Lord God.

45:3 "25,000 cubits" – about 12.5 kilometers.  
"10,000 cubits" – about 5 kilometers.

45:4,5 Priests and Levites were to have places to live, not to own (44:28).

45:6 This city does not contain the temple, but lies next to the temple area. The area allotted for the city contains pasture lands, etc. The city itself is much smaller than this (48:16).

45:7 The prince is given two portions, one east and one west of the temple and city area.

45:8 Here the word prince is put in the plural. And they will not behave as former rulers in Israel's history had behaved (vs 9-12).

45:10,11 An ephah and a homer were dry measures, and a bath was a liquid measure.

45:12 A shekel weighed about 11.5 grams. A mina usually was 50 shekels, the one described here was 60 shekels.

45:13-17 The system described is different from that in the law of Moses. According to that system the people gave their offerings directly to the priests. Here they give them to the prince who will then place the offerings in the hands of the priests. Observe that the purpose of these offerings is "to make reconciliation for the people." The Hebrew word here is usually translated "make atonement." But it is possible to translate it "make reconciliation," or "cover over," "pacify." The vision

10 You shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. 11 The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, so that the bath contains the tenth part of a homer, and the ephah the tenth part of a homer; their measure shall be according to the homer. 12 And the shekel *shall be* twenty gerahs: twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, and fifteen shekels, shall be your mina.

13 "This *is* the offering that you shall offer: a sixth of an ephah from a homer of wheat, and you shall give a sixth of an ephah from a homer of barley. 14 The rule concerning oil, a bath of oil: *you shall offer* a tenth of a bath from a cor, *which is* a homer of ten baths; for ten baths equal one homer. 15 And *take* one lamb out of a flock of two hundred, from the rich pastures of Israel, as a food offering and as a burnt offering and as peace offerings, to make reconciliation for them, says the Lord God. 16 All the people of the land shall give this offering for the prince in Israel. 17 And it will be the prince's part *to give* burnt offerings, and grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, and at the new moon festivals, and on the sabbaths, at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel. He will provide the sin offering, and the grain offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.

18 "Thus says the Lord God: In the first *month*, on the first *day* of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish, and purify the sanctuary; 19 and the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering, and put *it* on the

then points to a time when atonement will need to be made, and so it cannot refer to the redeemed in the new heaven and earth.

Many scholars think the time refers to the millennium (Revelation chapter 20). But in the millennium will animal sacrifices and other offerings be needed to make atonement? This is a hard question for those who see a completely literal fulfillment of this vision in the millennium. But, then, these chapters pose hard questions for any system of interpretation. And if we refuse an interpretation because there are difficulties involved in it, we can have no interpretation of these chapters at all. Actually, even under the law of Moses, sacrifices could not make full atonement – they could only symbolize the atonement which Christ would make when He came. Perhaps the same thing may be said about the sacrifices mentioned here in Ezekiel. They may symbolize the atonement Christ has already made at His first coming. "Peace offerings" (vs 15,17) – notes at Leviticus chapter 3.

45:18 From this verse to verse 16 of chapter 46 we have instructions regarding the offerings of the people. There are many changes from the law of Moses, and the significance of these changes is very difficult to determine.

doorposts of the temple, and on the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and on the gateposts of the inner court. 20 And you shall do the same on the seventh *day* of the month for each one who has gone astray *unintentionally* or in ignorance. Thus you shall make atonement for the temple.

21 “In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall have the Passover, a feast of seven days. Unleavened bread shall be eaten. 22 And on that day the prince shall provide a bull as a sin offering for himself and for all the people of the land. 23 And for the seven days of the feast he shall provide a burnt offering for the LORD, seven bulls and seven rams, without blemish, each day of the seven days, and each day a young male goat as a sin offering. 24 And he shall provide a grain offering of an ephah for each bull, and an ephah for each ram, and a hin of oil for each ephah.

25 “In the seventh *month*, on the fifteenth day of the month, he shall do the same for the seven days of the feast, for the sin offering, for the burnt offering, and for the grain offering, and for the oil.

**46** “Thus says the Lord God: The gate of the inner court that faces east will be shut the six working days, but on the Sabbath it will be opened, and on the day of the new moon it will be opened. 2 And the prince shall enter by way of the portico of the gate from outside, and shall stand by the gatepost. And the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. 3 Likewise the people of the land shall worship before the LORD at the door of this gate on the Sabbaths and on the new moons. 4 And the burnt offering that the prince offers to the LORD on the Sabbath day *shall be* six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish. 5 And the grain offering *shall be* an ephah for each ram, and the grain offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give, and a hin of oil for each ephah. 6 And in the day of the new moon *it shall be* a young bull without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram. They

shall be without blemish. 7 And he shall provide a grain offering, an ephah for each bull, and an ephah for each ram, and for the lambs as much as he is able to get, and a hin of oil for each ephah. 8 And when the prince enters, he shall go in by way of the portico of the gate, and he shall go out by the same way.

9 “But when the people of the land come before the LORD at the appointed feasts, he who enters by way of the north gate to worship shall go out by way of the south gate, and he who enters by way of the south gate shall go out by way of the north gate; he shall not return by way of the gate that he came in, but shall go out opposite it. 10 And the prince among them will go in when they go in, and will go out when they go out.

11 “And at the festivals and appointed feasts the grain offerings shall be an ephah for each bull, and an ephah for each ram, and as much as he is able to give with the lambs, and a hin of oil for each ephah. 12 Now when the prince provides a freewill burnt offering or peace offerings voluntarily for the LORD, then *someone* shall open the gate that faces east for him, and he shall provide his burnt offering and his peace offerings, as he did on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out *someone* shall shut the gate.

13 “Daily you shall prepare a burnt offering for the LORD, a lamb of the first year without blemish. You shall prepare it each morning. 14 And with it you shall prepare a grain offering each morning, a sixth of an ephah, and a third of a hin of oil, to moisten the fine flour. This is to be a regular grain offering to the LORD by a permanent ordinance. 15 Thus they shall prepare the lamb, and the grain offering, and the oil, each morning as a continual burnt offering.

16 “Thus says the Lord God: If the prince gives a gift from his inheritance to any of his sons, it shall belong to his sons. It *shall be* their possession by inheritance. 17 But if he gives a gift from his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall belong to him until the year of liberty. Afterwards it shall revert to the prince; but his inheritance shall belong to his sons. It shall be theirs. 18 Moreover,

**45:21** “Passover” – note at Lev 23:5.

**45:22** This verse is evidence that the prince cannot be the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus was sinless and needed to offer no sin offering for himself.

**45:24** “Hin” – probably about 4 liters.

**45:25** This feast is called the Feast of Ingathering in Ex 23:16 and 34:22, and the feast of Tabernacles in Lev 23:34 and Deut 16:16.

**46:1** There were two east gates – one for the outer court which was to be permanently closed (44:2), one for the inner court which was sometimes to be opened.

“New moon” – 1 Sam 20:5; Isa 1:13.

**46:2** “Prince” – 45:22.

**46:9** Great numbers of people would be coming and going. To avoid disorder straight columns should move in only one direction through the temple courts.

**46:12** “Freewill” – Lev 22:18; 23:38; Num 15:3; Deut 12:6.

**46:13-15** In Numbers 28:3-8 the instruction was to offer a lamb in the morning and one in the evening.

**46:17** “Liberty” – see Lev 25:8-15. Properties which had been sold were to revert to their original owners every 50th year.

**46:18** “His property” – compare Micah’s



the prince shall not seize any of the people's inheritance by oppression, by evicting them from their property; *but* he shall give an inheritance to his sons from his own property, so that none of my people will be scattered from his property."

19 Afterwards he brought me through the entrance, which *was* at the side of the gate, into the holy rooms of the priests, which faced north; and *I* saw there a place at the far western end. 20 Then said he to me, "This *is* the place where the priests will cook the trespass offering and the sin offering, where they will bake the grain offering, so that they do not carry *them* out into the outer court, *and so* sanctify the people."

21 Then he brought me out to the outer court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and *I* saw in each corner of the court *another* court. 22 In the four corners of the court *there were* enclosed courts forty *cubits* long and thirty wide. These four corner *courts had* the same measurements. 23 And *there was* a row of *stones* all around them, surrounding each of the four, and all around under these rows cooking hearths had been made. 24 Then he said to me, "These *are* places for those who will do the cooking, where the servants of the temple will boil the sacrifice of the people."

**47** Afterward he brought me back to the door of the temple, and *I* saw water flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east; for the front of the temple *faced* the east, and the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, at the south *side* of the altar. picture of God's coming kingdom (Micah 4:4).

**46:19-24** Again detailed descriptions are given and their spiritual significance, if they have any, is almost impossible to discover. They seem to point only to physical activity. **47:1-12** There are three possible views about this river:

(a) It is a literal river showing the great physical changes there will be in the land of Israel in the millennium.

(b) It is altogether a symbolic picture teaching spiritual lessons and will never have any kind of literal fulfillment.

(c) The description contains a mixture of literal and symbolical meanings which speak of some sort of literal stream in the future, but which teach spiritual lessons.

The author of these notes thinks the third view most likely.

**47:1** "He" – 40:3. "Temple" – indicating that the source of blessing, whether physical or spiritual, is God Himself who will reside in the temple (43:7).

**47:2** The water flows from under the gate through which the glory of God entered (43:4). Where God comes in, from there

2 Then he brought me out by way of the gate on the north, and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faced east; and *I* saw water running out on the right side.

3 And when the man who had the line in his hand went out toward the east, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the water. The water *was* up to the ankles. 4 Again he measured a thousand *cubits*, and brought me through the water. The water *was up* to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through. The water *was up* to the waist. 5 He measured another thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not cross, for the water had risen, water to swim in, a river that could not be crossed.

6 And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this*?" Then he led me and had me return to the bank of the river. 7 Now when I returned *I* saw that there were many trees on the bank of the river, on the one side and on the other. 8 Then he said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region, and goes down into the desert, and into the Sea. *When it* enters the Sea, the water *there* will be made healthful. 9 And this will happen: Wherever the river flows every moving living creature will live, and there will be a great many fish, because this water will go there, and the *water there* will be made healthful, and where the river goes everything will live. 10 And it will be *that* fishermen will stand by it from Engedi to En-Eglaim. There will be *places* for spreading nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, a great many. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not be made healthful. They will be given for blessings inevitably flow out.

**47:3** A thousand cubits equals about 450 meters.

**47:4-6** The river begins as a spring in the temple. In less than two kilometers it becomes deep and wide. The picture forbids thinking of other streams joining it. So this is a miraculous river. Its flow is not increased in the natural way of rivers in our world today. The angel's question in v 6 was probably meant to emphasize this.

**47:7** Compare Gen 2:9; Isa 35:1,2; 51:3. Water brings life.

**47:8** "Sea" – the Dead Sea.

**47:9,10** At present there are no fish, no living creatures at all in the Dead Sea. Its heavy concentration of salts and minerals makes it impossible for such life to exist there. Spiritual lessons have been drawn from this – the Holy Spirit like living streams of water (John 7:39) flow through the world, and people dead in trespasses and sins are made alive. But such spiritual applications should not blind us to the possibility of a transformation of the literal Dead Sea in the future. **47:10** "Great Sea" – the Mediterranean Sea (also vs 15,19,20).

**47:11** Salt will still be needed.



salt. 12 And by the river, on its bank, on this side and on that side, all *kinds of* trees will grow for food. Their leaf will not wither, their fruit will not come to an end. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. And their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine."

13 Thus says the Lord God: "These *are* the boundary *lines*, by which you will inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph *will have two* portions. 14 And you will inherit it with one another equally, for I lifted up my hand *and swore* to give it to your fathers, and this land will fall to you as *your* inheritance.

15 "And this *will be* the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea, the road to Hethlon, as men go to Zedad, 16 Hamath, Berothah, Sibram, which *is* between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath, Hazar-Hatticon, which *is* on the border of Hauran. 17 And the border from the Sea will be to Hazarenan, the border of Damascus northward, with the border of Hamath on the north. *This is on* the north side.

18 "And on the east you shall mark out from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and the Jordan *river by* the land of Israel, from the *northern* border to the eastern sea. And *this is* the east side.

19 "And the south side *will be* from Tamar southward to the waters of Meribah *in* Kadesh, along the river *of Egypt* to the Great Sea. And *this is* the south side on the south.

20 "And the west side *will be* the Great Sea from the *southern* border to a point opposite Hamath. *This is* the west side.

21 "So you shall divide this land for yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. 22 And it will be *like this*: You will divide it by lot as your inheritance, and for the foreigners who live among you, who will beget children among you; and they shall be to

you as those born in the country among the children of Israel. They are to have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. 23 And it shall be that whatever tribe the foreigner lives among, there you shall give *him* his inheritance, says the Lord God.

**48** "Now these *are* the names of the tribes: From the northern border along the road to Hethlon, as one goes to Hamath, Hazarenan, the northern border of Damascus, to the boundary with Hamath; these are his sides east *and* west, a *portion for* Dan.

2 "And along the border of Dan, from the east side to the west side, a *portion for* Asher.

3 "And along the border of Asher, from the east side to the west side, a *portion for* Naphtali.

4 "And along the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west side, a *portion for* Manasseh.

5 "And along the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west side, a *portion for* Ephraim.

6 "And along the border of Ephraim, from the east side to the west side, a *portion for* Reuben.

7 "And along the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west side, a *portion for* Judah.

8 "And along the border of Judah, from the east side to the west side, will be the district you will set apart as a gift, twenty-five thousand *rods* wide, and *as* long as any of the *other* portions from the east side to the west side; and the sanctuary will be in the middle of it.

9 "The district you set apart as a gift to the LORD *will be* twenty-five thousand *cubits* in length and ten thousand in width. 10 And this holy portion will be for the priests. *It will be* twenty-five thousand *cubits long* on the north, and ten thousand wide on the west, and ten thousand wide on the east, twenty-five thousand long on the south; and the sanctuary of the LORD will be in the center of it. 11 *It will be* for the priests who are set

**47:12** "By the river" – for a spiritual lesson suggested by this see Ps 1:3. For other significant mentions of streams in the Bible see Gen 2:10; 36:8,9; Ps 46:4; Isa 33:21; Zech 14:8; John 7:37-39; Rev 22:1,2.

**47:13** From this verse to verse 29 of chapter 48 we have instructions concerning the division of the land of Israel. See also 45:1-8. Here is a detailed description of the borders of the land and the portions for all the tribes of Israel. If no kind of literal fulfillment of this vision is to be expected the language here seems strange indeed.

"Joseph" – Levi would live in a special, holy area in the land and would have no inheritance like the other tribes, so there is no portion for Levi, so both Manasseh and Ephraim are allotted portions.

**47:14** "Fathers" – the land spoken of in these chapters is not some "glory land" out

of this world. It is the very land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Gen 15:9-21; 17:18,21; 28:13) and which is in view throughout the Old Testament.

**47:15-17** The northern border is approximately where it was in the days of David and Solomon.

**47:18** The area east of the Jordan river, once the home of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh (Deut 3:12-17), is not included.

"Eastern sea" – Dead Sea.

**47:19** "Kadesh", "river of Egypt" – Solomon's kingdom extended this far. The "river of Egypt" does not mean the Nile but a river on the border of Egypt.

"Great Sea" – Mediterranean.

**47:22,23** This is a new instruction, not found in the law of Moses.

**48:8-22** 45:1-8 is here given in more detail. **48:11** 40:46; 44:15.

apart from the sons of Zadok, who have kept my charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. 12 And *this* portion of the land that is offered as a gift for them will be a most holy place along the border of the Levites.

13 "And opposite the border of the priests the Levites *will have a portion* twenty-five thousand *cubits* long, and ten thousand wide. The entire length *will be* twenty-five thousand, and the width ten thousand. 14 And they shall not sell or exchange any of it, or make this best part of the land over to *others*, for *it is* holy to the LORD.

15 "And the five thousand *cubits* in width that are left along the twenty-five thousand, will be for the common *use* of the city, for dwellings and open land; and the city will be in the center of it. 16 And these *are* its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred *cubits*, and the south side four thousand five hundred, and the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand five hundred. 17 And the open land of the city will be two hundred and fifty *cubits* on the north, and two hundred and fifty on the south, and two hundred and fifty on the east, and two hundred and fifty on the west. 18 And the rest of the length along the holy *portion* set apart as a gift *will be* ten thousand on the east, and ten thousand on the west; and it will be alongside the holy *portion* set apart as a gift. And its crops will be for food for those who serve the city. 19 And those who serve the city, from all the tribes of Israel, will cultivate it. 20 The complete portion set apart as a gift *will be* twenty-five thousand by twenty-five thousand *cubits*. You shall set apart this holy portion, along with the property of the city.

21 "And the rest of *it will be* for the prince; *this area* on the one side and on the other of the holy portion, and of the property of the city, from the twenty-five thousand *cubits* of the contributed portion to the eastern border, and on the west from the twenty-five thousand to the western border, along the *tribal* portions *will be* for the prince. It will be the holy portion; and the sanctuary of the temple *will be* in the center of it. 22 Moreover,

**48:14** Indeed God's priests must not sell or barter anything that belongs to God Himself.  
**48:15,16** 45:6. The city, like the one in Rev 21:16, is square. But its size is very much smaller than that one, being little more than two kilometers each way.  
**48:21,22** 45:7,8.  
**48:25-27** Under Joshua the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun were allotted territories in the northern part of Israel, and Gad was east of the Jordan river.  
**48:28** 47:19. "Great Sea" – the Mediterranean.  
**48:30-34** Rev 21:12,13. The arrangement

apart from the property of the Levites, and apart from the property of the city, *which is* in the center of *that* which belongs to the prince, *the land* between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, will be for the prince.

23 "As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side to the west side, Benjamin *will have* one *portion*.

24 "And along the border of Benjamin, from the east side to the west side, Simeon *will have* one *portion*.

25 "And along the border of Simeon, from the east side to the west side, Issachar one *portion*.

26 "And along the border of Issachar, from the east side to the west side, Zebulun one *portion*.

27 "And along the border of Zebulun, from the east side to the west side, Gad one *portion*.

28 "And along the southern border of Gad, the border will go toward the south from Tamar to the waters of Meribah in Kadesh, and to the river of Egypt to the great sea.

29 "This is the land which you will divide by lot to the tribes of Israel as *their* inheritance, and these *are* their portions, says the Lord God.

30 "And these *will be* the exits of the city: from the north side, which measures four thousand five hundred cubits, 31 the gates of the city *will be* named after the tribes of Israel. *There will be* three gates on the north; one gate *named* for Reuben, one gate for Judah, one gate for Levi.

"32 And on the eastern side, *measuring* four thousand five hundred *cubits*, *will be* three gates; one gate *named* for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, one gate for Dan.

33 "And on the southern side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits*, *will be* three gates; one gate *named* for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, one gate for Zebulun.

34 "On the western side, four thousand five hundred *cubits*, *with* their three gates; one gate *named* for Gad, one gate for Asher, one gate for Naphtali.

35 "*The total distance* around *will be* eighteen thousand *cubits*.

"And the name of the city from *that* day *will be*, The LORD is There."

of these names is quite different from the arrangement of the tribes surrounding the tabernacle in the wilderness (Num 2:3-31). Levi is included in the names here (v 31), so to keep the number at twelve Joseph has one gate representing the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.  
**48:35** Jerusalem in the future will have other names (see Isa 1:26; 60:14; 62:2-4,12; Jer 3:17; 33:16; Zech 8:3). But no name can be superior to Jehovah-Shammah, "The LORD is there." God will be where He delights to be – in the midst of His people. See note at Ex 25:8.

# DANIEL

**Author:**

Some modern critics of the Bible have denied that Daniel wrote this book, but see 8:1,15,27; 9:2-4,20; 10:2,7; 12:5,8. These verses indicate that Daniel was the author. Further evidence for this is in Matt 24:15 where the Lord Jesus stated that the prophecy concerning “the abomination of desolation” (Dan 9:27) was spoken through “Daniel the prophet.”

**Date:**

Babylon was captured by the Medes and Persians in 539 BC. Daniel must have written this book a short time after that.

**Themes:**

Two themes appear together throughout the book – the experiences of Daniel (and sometimes his Hebrew friends) in the city of Babylon, and the prophetic visions which came to Daniel. Over both themes we see the sovereign God fulfilling His purposes. In the prophetic visions we can see the rise and fall of empires, the very powerful empire that will rule the world in the last days of this present age, the coming of antichrist, the destruction of man's kingdoms and the establishment of Christ's eternal kingdom.

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**1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem, and besieged it. **2** And the LORD gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hands, and some of the articles belonging to the house of God, which he carried away to the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

**3** And the king ordered Ashpenaz the chief of his eunuchs to bring *some* of the children of Israel, and of the royal family, and of the nobles, **4** young men without blemish, but handsome, with training in every *branch of* wisdom, well informed, and understanding science and who *had the* ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the literature and language of the Chaldeans. **5** And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's food and of the wine which he drank, and three years training for them, so that at the end of that *time* they might stand before the king.

**6** Now among these were Daniel, Hananiah,

Mishael, and Azariah of the children of Judah. **7** The chief of the eunuchs gave them names. He gave to Daniel *the name* Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, Shadrach; and to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

**8** But Daniel determined in his heart that he would not defile himself with *any* portion of the king's food or with the wine which he drank. Therefore he requested the chief of the eunuchs that he might not to defile himself. **9** Now God had brought Daniel into the favour and tender affection of the chief of the eunuchs. **10** And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who *are* of your age? Then you would make *me* endanger my head to the king."

**11** Then Daniel said to Melzar whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, **12** "Please test your

**1:1** "Third year" – Jer 25:1 indicates that this was the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. The difference can be accounted for like this – in Babylon the years of a king's reign were counted from the first new year's day after he became king, but in Israel the year he became king also was included in the reckoning. Jehoiakim began his reign in 608 BC. He ruled part of that year, the years 607 and 606, and part of the year referred to in this verse which was 605 BC. Daniel, writing in Babylon, used the Babylonian system of reckoning and so did not count the year Jehoiakim ascended the throne.

**1:2** 2 Chron 36:5-7. Daniel was taken to Babylon in that same year, Ezekiel eight years later.

"Shinar" – another name for Babylonia.

**1:3,4** Only those regarded as the brightest and best were chosen. We should be glad that this is not God's way of choosing – 1 Cor 1:26-29. Yet God's good purpose was in the king's command. God had determined to raise Daniel to the highest place in Babylon, next to the king.

"Eunuchs" – or "court officials." It seems that officials in the king's court were sometimes called "eunuchs" even though they may not have been literal eunuchs.

"Understanding science" – or "quick to understand."

"Chaldeans" – Chaldea was the southern part of Babylonia but sometimes the name was used to indicate the whole country.

**1:5** "The king's food" – a sign of the king's favor. So God does for believers – Ps 23:5; Isa 25:6; Luke 14:16; John 6:48-51; Rev 19:7.

**1:6,7** The name Daniel means "My judge is God", Hananiah means "Jehovah is gracious" (Hebrew "Yah" = Jehovah, the LORD), Mishael means "Who is what God is?", and Azariah means "Jehovah helps". The new names given to them were all connected with

various gods of Babylon. Belteshazzar probably means "May Bel protect his life". Bel meant Lord in the Babylonian language and signified the god Marduk (Jer 50:2). Shadrach could mean either "the inspiration of Rach (the sun god)" or "the command of Aku (their moon god)". Meshach could mean either "devotee of Shach (their word for the planet Venus)" or "who is like Aku?". Abednego means "servant of Nego" (Nego = Nebo – another of the many gods of Babylon – Isa 46:1).

Why did the chief official give them these names? Possibly he considered the gods of Babylon more powerful and important than Jehovah the God of Israel, or perhaps he wanted these Hebrew youths to fit into the society of that country and thought that Babylonian names would help them in this.

**1:8** Daniel would consider this food and wine defiling because portions of both would have been offered to false gods. Also the meat would not have been prepared according to the law God gave Israel (Lev 11:4-20; Deut 12,23,24). Daniel was a young man, far from his homeland and faced with the choice of offending God or offending the king. With great courage he chose to risk the latter. Holiness was more important to him than physical comfort or safety. Christians sometimes sin because they are afraid of offending others, or because of fear for their own safety or position. This is because the fear of God is not the controlling factor in their lives (Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14).

**1:9** "God" – God will work on behalf of those who take their stand for Him. This is seen all through the book of Daniel. See also the case of Joseph (Gen 39:2-4; 20-23; etc). **1:10** Daniel feared God, the official feared the king. This made a big difference in their behavior.

**1:11-14** Daniel began to show the wisdom

servants for ten days; let them give us vegetables to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be inspected in your presence, along with the appearance of the young men who eat of the *appointed* portion of the king's food. Then deal with your servants according to what you see."

14 So he gave his consent to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days, in appearance they looked better and fatter than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's food. 16 So Melzar took away the portion of their food and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all *branches of* literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all *kinds of* visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days which the king had specified for bringing them in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in to the presence of Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king talked with them, and among them all no one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they served in the king's presence. 20 And in all the matters of wisdom *and* understanding that the king asked them about, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who *were* in his whole realm.

for which he was later famous.

**1:15** This was God's doing.

**1:16** God caused the guard to cooperate. So the temptation to eat of the king's food and the danger of not doing so were overcome. Compare 1 Cor 10:13.

**1:17** "God gave" – Job 32:8; Jam 1:5; 2 Pet 3:15. The ability to understand visions and dreams was a special gift of God over and above the other understanding God gave Daniel.

**1:19** "They served" – God had been preparing them for His own service as well.

**1:20** This was God's doing and not merely a matter of their own intellect and study.

**1:21** 539 BC. This means that Daniel was still living when Cyrus made his proclamation that the Jews could return to Israel (2 Chron 36:22,23).

**2:1** "Second year" – 603 BC. See note on the time of a king's reign at 1:1. Daniel and his friends were trained for "three years" (1:5,18). This was probably a round figure including parts of years. Their first year (or part of a year) of training was the year Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne, their second was his first full year as king, their third was in his second full year as king.

"Dreams" – God used this means to raise Daniel to a high position in Babylon and to reveal important truth through the interpretation of the dream.

**2:2** See Deut 18:10-12. Babylon was

21 And Daniel remained *there* until the first year of king Cyrus.

**2** And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams, which made his spirit so troubled that his sleep left him. 2 Then the king gave orders to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to know the dream."

4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Syriac, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will tell the interpretation."

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The thing has gone from me. If you do not make known the dream to me, along with its interpretation, you will be cut in pieces, and your houses will be made heaps of rubbish. 6 But if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honour. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."

7 They answered again and said, "May the king tell his servants the dream; then we will tell the interpretation of it."

8 The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see the thing has gone from me. 9 But if you do not

overrun with such people as are listed here. It was in some ways probably much like India is today (western countries are certainly not free of them either). All through the book of Daniel these magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers are shown to be completely unable to find out the mind and will of the one true God. And this is as true of such people now as it was then.

"Astrologers" – the Hebrew word here signifies conjurors or enchanters.

"Chaldeans" (also vs 4,5,10) – Chaldea, the southern section of Babylonia, was noted for its astrologers and wise men – so much so that in some contexts, such as the one here, Chaldeans actually meant astrologers or wise men. Astrology is as empty a superstition now as it was proved to be in Daniel's day. The so-called "fate" of men, or what happens to them day by day, has nothing to do with the position of the stars at their birth or at any other time. Their future is determined by the true and living God, and while they live on this earth the important thing is their relationship to Him and whether they trust and obey and serve Him, or not. See note at Gen 25:24.

**2:4** The text from this verse to the end of chapter 7 is in the Aramaic language – the language of Aram (Syria). This language was very similar to Hebrew.

**2:5-13** No doubt the astrologers and other such people pretended to have supernatural



make known to me the dream, *there is but* one decree for you. For you have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak to me, until the time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I will know that you can tell me its interpretation."

10 The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter. So no king, lord, or ruler has *ever* asked such things of any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 *It is* a difficult thing that the king requires, and there is no one who can tell it to the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

12 Because of this the king was angry, *indeed* very furious, and gave orders to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. 13 When the decree went out that the wise *men* should be slain, they sought Daniel and his companions to kill *them*.

14 Then Daniel with *good* advice and wisdom answered Arioch the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise *men* of Babylon. 15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why *is* the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch revealed the matter to Daniel. 16 Then Daniel went in and asked the king to give him *some* time, so that he could tell the king the interpretation.

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 so that they would ask mercy from the God of heaven concerning this secret, that Daniel and his companions would not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon. 19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. 20 Daniel responded and said,

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,

insights. Now they are put to the test and their ignorance exposed. The true God arranged this to show the folly of looking for answers to such people, and to show Himself mighty in behalf of Daniel.

2:12,13 Anger often leads men to speak and act unjustly.

2:18 Daniel acted very wisely (vs 14-16), but he depended on God, not on his wisdom. 2:19 "Secret" – 2:27-30,47; 4:9.

"Vision" – in Bible days God often revealed truth in dreams and visions. Notes at Gen 15:1; Num 12:6.

"God of heaven" – the name is used 22 times in the Old Testament. Of these 17 are in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. The true God, the God of Israel, is transcendent, far higher than sun, moon, and stars, and all the so-called gods of the world.

2:20 Daniel was as ready to praise as he was to pray. And he did not praise himself for having learned the interpretation of the

for wisdom and might are his.

21 And he changes the times and the seasons. He removes kings, and sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding.

22 He reveals deep and secret things. He knows what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

23 I thank you and praise you, O God of my fathers. You have given me wisdom and power, and have made known to me now what we asked from you; for you have *now* made known to us the king's matter."

24 Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; he went and said this to him: "Do not destroy the wise *men* of Babylon. Bring me into the king's presence, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel into the king's presence, and said this to him: "I have found a man among the captives of Judah who will make known to the king the interpretation."

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I saw, and its interpretation?"

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, *and* the soothsayers cannot tell the king, 28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and makes known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head on your bed, were these:

king's dream. He praised God who gave it. "Wisdom and might" – these are the twin themes of this prayer. In this way the true God is distinguished from the gods of Babylon, and all other gods.

2:21 The course of history and its political changes are in God's hands (4:17; 1 Sam 2:6-8; Jer 27:5; Rom 13:1).

2:22 Job 12:22; Ps 139:11,12; Jer 23:24; Heb 4:13; Jam 1:17; 1 John 1:5.

2:23 "I thank" – notes on thanksgiving at Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12.

"Wisdom and power" – Daniel is not boasting but recognizing God's good gifts and thanking God for them.

2:27,28 First of all, Daniel gives glory to God. And he indicates that Babylon's astrologers, magicians, etc were not in touch with the true God. By all the means at their disposal they could not tell the king his dream. But God can reveal anything to His servants.

29 "As for you, O king, on your bed you had thoughts of what will happen hereafter. And the one who reveals secrets makes known to you what is going to happen. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me because of *any* wisdom that I have more than any living *person*, but for the sake of *those* who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you might know the thoughts of your heart.

31 "You, O king, looked and saw a great image. This great image, of exceptional splendour, stood before you, and its form was awe-inspiring. 32 The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 You watched until a stone was cut out without hands. It struck the image on its feet *that were* of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze,

the silver, and the gold, were broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, so that no place was found for them. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

36 "This *is* the dream. And we will tell its interpretation in the king's presence. 37 You, O king, *are* a king of kings, for the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wherever the children of men live, he has given the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky into your hands, and has made you ruler over them all. You *are* this head of gold.

39 "And after you another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which will rule the whole earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron; for just as iron breaks in pieces and crushes all *things*, and

**2:29** Notice this name for God – "the one who reveals secrets". Let us always look to Him to interpret to us the mysteries of Himself and His Word. Compare Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:9-12; Eph 1:9,17-19; 3:3,9; Col 1:26,27; 2:2.

**2:30** He put the emphasis where it belonged. God was revealing needed truth, not giving Daniel a reason for boasting. There are some who pride themselves in being able to interpret the Bible and tend to forget to praise the One who gives all such ability.

**2:31** Evidently Daniel saw in vision (v 19) exactly what the king had seen in his dream, and so could describe it in detail.

**2:32-45** The statue represents four kingdoms of the world. It seems clear both from the Bible and from history which kingdoms are meant. The head is king Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian empire (vs 37,38). The chest and arms represent the empire which succeeded Babylon (v 39; 5:28) – the empire of the Medes and Persians established by Cyrus. The belly and thighs represent the empire which succeeded Medo-Persia (v 39; 8:21) – the empire of Greece and Macedonia under Alexander the Great. The legs and feet represent the kingdom which replaced all the others (v 40) – the Roman empire. (In Luke 2:1 we are told that Caesar Augustus, the Roman emperor, controlled the "world" – that is, the world of the Old and New Testaments.) The rock that struck the image is God's eternal kingdom (vs 44,45).

There have been other great empires since Rome's power waned. Why are they not mentioned here? Probably because they are not related to Bible times and are not of central importance in Bible prophecy.

**2:34** "Stone" – or "rock". In the Bible "stone" and "rock" sometimes symbolize Christ (Ps 118:22; Isa 28:16; Zech 4:7; 10:4; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:7. For the destructive power of this "stone" see Matt 21:42-44). Here the rock is God's kingdom (vs 44,45), in which, of course, Christ is the King of

kings. The stone is cut out, but not by human hands. In other words it is established not by men, but by God Himself.

**2:35** The rock striking the statue brings to an end, all at the same time, all the kingdoms mentioned. This indicates either that the first three kingdoms will be parts of the 4th at the time of its destruction, or that with the destruction of the 4th kingdom all the kingdoms of men (symbolized by the other three) will come to an end; or it may indicate both of these things. This verse surely speaks of sudden, overwhelming destruction. Not a trace of those kingdoms will remain after the rock has smashed them. The times of the Gentiles with their worldly kingdoms will have an utter end. God's kingdom which will completely replace man's kingdoms is compared to a mountain that "filled the whole earth". Compare Isa 2:23; 11:9; Micah 4:1.

**2:37,38** Jer 27:6,7. Daniel says King Nebuchadnezzar is the head of gold. This is because the king represented the kingdom (v 39).

**2:40-44** More detail is given concerning the fourth kingdom than the other three. The same is true in chapter 7 where these same four kingdoms appear again.

**2:40** Iron was a fit symbol of the Roman Empire – hard, strong, able to crush others. It is possible that the two legs of the statue symbolize the division of the Roman Empire into two parts in 394 AD (as the chest with its two arms may speak of the two "arms" of the empire of the Medes and Persians, and the belly and two thighs may speak of Greece and Macedonia in Alexander's empire), but this is not certain. As for the toes, the number is not given but two feet certainly mean ten toes. And the toes surely must have the same interpretation as the ten horns of 7:7,24 and Rev 13:1; 17:3,12-14, since the same kingdom is in view in each of these visions. See notes on those chapters. The author of

as iron shatters, it will break in pieces and shatter all these *others*. 41 And just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of potter's clay, and partly of iron, the kingdom will be divided. But there will be in it the strength of iron, just as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron, and partly of clay, so the kingdom will be partly strong, and partly brittle. 43 And just as you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will be a combination of the offspring of men, and will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.

44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed. And the kingdom will not be left to other people, *but* it will break in pieces and bring to an end all those kingdoms; and it will stand forever, 45 just as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain, without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold.

"The great God has made known to the king what will happen hereafter; and the dream *is* certain, and its interpretation sure."

these notes believes that the final form of the Roman Empire is still in the future and that its sudden destruction will occur at the second coming of Christ (Rev 19:11-16).

**2:41-43** We are not told what the clay may signify, only that there will be an inherent weakness and lack of true unity in this kingdom. The picture may suggest a very strong central government forcing diverse elements together for a time. Certainly the final world kingdom of man will be like this (Revelation chapter 13).

**2:44** "Kings" – the context indicates feet with its toes, not kings. The word "kings" coming here is evidence that the toes signify kings. God will set up His kingdom "in the days of these kings". "These kings" cannot refer to the rulers of the kingdoms mentioned in the preceding verses (Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander), for God did not set up His kingdom in those days. In v 34 we are told that the rock strikes the statue on the feet – which must signify the final form of the Roman empire. In any case, for the following reasons it seems clear the fulfillment of these things did not take place at the first coming of Christ but awaits the end of this age:

The Roman Empire and the kingdoms which preceded it were not suddenly smashed to pieces at the first coming of Christ, nor did they then disappear with "no place found for them." And the whole earth is not yet filled with the kingdom of God (vs 34,35). Moreover, the kings symbolized by the ten horns of chapter 7 and Revelation chapter 17 (and no doubt by the toes of this chapter) were not in existence at Christ's first coming (see Rev 17:12 – this is a very important fact which should keep us from

46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar prostrated himself and paid homage to Daniel, and gave orders that they should present an offering and incense to him. 47 The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret."

48 Then the king gave Daniel a high position, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon. 49 Then Daniel made a request of the king, and he placed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

**3** Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold. Its height was sixty cubits, *and* its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent *men* to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the

thinking that the stone crushing the image in the way Daniel describes it means Christ at His first coming setting up this kingdom).

But has not the kingdom of God already come? Did not Christ set it up at His first coming? In a hidden and spiritual sense, yes, and all believers are in it. But it has not yet come openly, in its manifest form, in its outward glory and splendour, and believers are to look forward to its coming (Matt 6:10; 19:28; Luke 19:11,12; 21:31; Acts 1:6; Rev 11:15). Notes on God's kingdom at Matt 4:17; etc.

**2:46** "Prostrated" – an amazing sight. The most powerful king on earth on his face before a mere youth who was an exile from a foreign land. The king was acknowledging the superiority of Daniel's God and the supernatural revelation that had come to Daniel.

"Offering" – we are not told Daniel permitted this actually to happen. It is very doubtful that he did. Compare Acts 14:13.

**2:48,49** Compare Gen 41:41-43. Perhaps this is one reason why the Babylonian empire is compared to gold (vs 32,38).

**3:1** "Image" – in the interpretation of the dream Nebuchadnezzar had been called the "head of gold". Now he has an image made which is gold from head to foot (at least, gold-plated – Isa 40:19). He was a proud man with visions of grandeur (4:30). By making this image was he not showing what was in his heart? It seems he wanted the whole image of chapter 2 to be gold, to be his kingdom alone, with no kingdom ever succeeding his.

**3:2-6** The king had started on the road to a knowledge of the true God (2:47). This matter of the image shows he had not come

dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, and counsellors, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up, and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then a herald proclaimed loudly, "This is the command given to you, O people of all nations and languages: 5 When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up. 6 Whoever does not fall down and worship will be thrown that same hour into the middle of a blazing fiery furnace."

7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, and all kinds of music, all the people of *all* the nations and languages, fell down *and* worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

8 Therefore at that time some Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. 9 They spoke up and said to king Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! 10 You, O king, made a decree, that every man who hears the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, must fall down and worship the golden image, 11 and whoever does not fall down and worship must be thrown into the middle of a blazing fiery

furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, have paid no attention to you. They do not serve your gods, or worship the golden image which you have set up."

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury gave a command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said to them, "*Is it true*, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods, or worship the golden image which I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good*. But if you do not worship, in that same hour you will be thrown into the middle of a blazing fiery furnace. And what God will deliver you out of my hands?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we *have* no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the blazing fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of your hands, O king. 18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, or worship the golden image which you have set up."

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression on his face changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. *Therefore*

very far. At this time the true God to him was merely one of the gods and he was not about to abandon the ones he had always served (v 14). This is often the way with men – many are willing to add another god to their list, if it does not mean leaving the gods they have. But God will have no part in this. See note at 1 Kings 18:21; etc.

**3:7** Fallen man will do almost anything to save his skin. Only a few, comparatively, will not (see note at Job 2:4,5). This will be demonstrated to the full at the end of this age when the antichrist rules the world (Rev 13:15-17).

**3:8-12** "Chaldeans" – these astrologers (note on 2:2) had been saved from death by the Jews (1:12-24). This is how they tried to reward them (compare Ps 35:12-18). Daniel is not mentioned in this chapter. There are three possible reasons for this. He may have been away from the city of Babylon on official business; or if he was in the city he may not have been required, for some reason or other, to attend the dedication of the image; or if he was present at the dedication and joined with his friends in refusing to worship the image (as he certainly would have done had he been there), at that time the astrologers may have been afraid to accuse him because of his high

position (2:48).

**3:13** "Rage" – 2:12.

**3:15** Those who have false views of God and religion sometimes resort to persecution and threats of torture or death to get their way (Acts 8:1; 9:1).

**3:16-18** Like Daniel in 1:8 they courageously resolved to risk their lives rather than displease God by disobedience to His Word. They well knew what God thought of the worship of anyone or anything other than Himself. See Ex 20:2-6; etc. They were also aware no doubt, that one of the chief reasons for the exile of the Jews to Babylon was idolatry (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 27:14-26; Jer 1:16; 9:13,14).

**3:16** "We have no need" – this is what the Hebrew here literally means. The KJV translation here is surprising.

**3:18** "If not" – they accepted God's will no matter what it might prove to be, and they were ready for anything – certainly ready to escape fiery persecution and death, but equally ready to endure them if necessary. Their attitude is an example to all believers facing trouble now, and to all God's people at the end of this age when the great tribulation (Matt 24:21) looms on the horizon.

**3:19** Verse 13; Prov 19:12,19.

he spoke and commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 And he commanded *some of* the strongest men in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and* to throw *them* into the blazing fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their *other* clothing, and were thrown into the middle of the blazing fiery furnace. 22 Therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flames from the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the middle of the blazing fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king became astonished, and rose up hurriedly, *and* spoke, saying to his counsellors, "Did we not throw three bound men into the middle of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

25 He answered and said, "Look, I see four men loose, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like a Son of God."

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar approached the mouth of the blazing fiery furnace, *and* spoke and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you servants of the Most High God, come out, and come *here*." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came out of the middle of the fire. 27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power. Not a hair of their head was singed, nor were their clothes affected, nor was the smell of fire on them.

**3:25** "A son of God" – this could be translated also "a son of the gods" (the Hebrew word "Elohim" here can mean either God or gods. The word for 'the' is absent). Nebuchadnezzar meant some sort of supernatural being (v 28). He served many gods and knew nothing about the one Son of the true God. But in the light of the rest of the Bible we can say that this one who came to be with his servants was the "messenger" of Jehovah (note at Gen 16:7). This fiery trial brought the Son of God to their side. Welcome all trials and tribulations that bring a deeper experience of His nearness! Compare Isa 43:1,2.

**3:26,27** "Most High God" – 4:2,34; 5:18,21; 7:18.

"Come out" – see Ps 66:8-12. They had passed this test of faith, had glorified God in the fire. Now they are brought out to a place of abundance. God does not always deliver His servants in a miraculous way; He calls on some of them to lay down their lives for Him (Heb 11:35-38). And whatever He decides in individual cases

28 *Then* Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said, "Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent his angel, and rescued his servants who trusted in him, and frustrated the king's command and gave up their bodies rather than serve or worship any god, except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree that the people of any nation or language who speak anything improper against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, will be cut in pieces, and their houses will be made a pile of rubbish. Because there is no other God who can rescue in this way."

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

**4** "Nebuchadnezzar the king to *all* peoples and nations of all languages who live in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you.

2 "I thought it good to tell of the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

3 "How great *are* his signs!  
And how mighty *are* his wonders!  
His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,  
and his dominion *is* from generation  
to generation.

4 "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. 5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and on my bed *my* thoughts and the visions of my head troubled me. 6 Therefore I gave an order to bring all the wise *men* of Babylon into my presence, so that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came, and I told the dream to them, but they did not reveal its interpretation to me.

is best.

**3:28-30** The king takes another step forward in the knowledge of the true God (2:47). Pharaoh in Egypt did not react like this when he saw God's wonders (Ex 8:15,32; 9:34). In Babylon God was being gracious not only to His servants but to the king.

**3:29** "No other God who can rescue" – a true and powerful testimony from an idolatrous king. He well knew that none of the gods of Babylon had ever done anything like this. In 6:27 we have a similar testimony.

**4:1-37** This chapter gives the record of how God brought the king to a deeper knowledge of Himself. The king himself wrote it down and, presumably, published it far and wide (vs 1, 2).

**4:3** 2:44.

**4:5** 2:1.

**4:6,7** Compare 2:5-9. This time the king was making it much easier for these "wise" men. But they failed once more, as they always must and will wherever they may be. "Astrologers. . . Chaldeans" – see 2:2.



8 But finally Daniel came into my presence. His name is Belteshazzar, after the name of my god. The Spirit of the holy gods *is* in him; and I told the dream to him, *saying*,

9 "O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the holy gods *is* in you, and no secret troubles you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw, and its interpretation. 10 These *are* the visions of my head on my bed: I looked and saw a tree in the middle of the earth, and its height *was* great. 11 The tree grew, and became strong, and its height reached to the sky, and it could be seen to the ends of the whole earth. 12 Its leaves *were* beautiful, and its fruit abundant, and on it *was* food for all. The beasts of the field had shade under it, and the birds of the heavens lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

13 "On my bed I looked in the visions of my head, and saw a watcher, a holy one coming down from heaven. 14 He cried out loudly, and said this: 'Chop down the tree, and cut off its branches. Shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts get away from under it, and the birds from its branches. 15 But leave the stump from its roots in the ground, with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field; and let it become wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth. 16 Let his heart be changed from *that of* a man, and let a beast's heart be given to him, and let seven times pass over him. 17 This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the decision by the word of the holy ones, so that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will, and sets over it the lowliest of men.'

18 "This dream I, king Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, O Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since none of the wise *men* of my kingdom are able to make known to me the interpretation. But you *are* able, for the Spirit of

the holy gods is in you.

19 "Then Daniel, whose name *is* Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spoke and said, Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.

"Belteshazzar answered and said, 'My master, *may* the dream *be* for those who hate you, and its interpretation for your enemies. 20 The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, its height reaching to the sky, and its appearance to the whole earth, 21 *with* its beautiful leaves, and its abundant fruit, and on which *was* food for all, *and* under which the beasts of the field lived, and on whose branches the birds of the sky had their dwelling place, 22 *this tree is* you, O king, who have grown and become strong. For your greatness has increased and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the ends of the earth.

23 "And as for the king seeing a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, 'Chop down the tree, and destroy it, but leave the stump from its roots in the ground with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, until seven times pass over him.'

24 "This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the Most High, which has come against my master the king: 25 They will drive you from men, and your dwelling will be with the beasts of the field, and they will make you eat grass like oxen, and they will wet you with the dew of sky. And seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will. 26 And as for their command to leave the stump from the tree roots, your kingdom will be assured to you, after you learn that heaven rules. 27 Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you, and break off your sins by *practicing* righteousness, and your evil deeds by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps

4:8 1:7. "Holy gods" – or, possibly "holy God."

4:9 He had not yet understood that Daniel was not a magician at all, that the source of Daniel's wisdom was not any kind of magic, but the true God alone.

4:13 "Watcher" (also in vs 17,23) – are there not, then, some angels appointed especially by God to keep watch over the earth?

"Holy one" – an angel.

4:16 "Seven times" – also verses 23, 25, 32. This almost certainly means seven years. See also 7:25.

4:17 In spite of the truth the king had heard in 2:36-45 he had not yet understood this fact (v 25).

4:19 Sometimes God's servants must speak

unwelcome truth.

4:22 "Tree" – in the Bible individuals and nations are sometimes compared to trees (Ps 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12; Isa 17:6; Jer 11:16; Ezek 17:22-24; Rom 11:17).

4:26 "Heaven rules" – that is, the God of heaven rules. This is a fact clearly revealed in the Bible – Ps 10:16; 47:2 (note); 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; Isa 52:7; Rev 19:6. But how slow, how reluctant people are to acknowledge it! Much of man's history is the story of rebellion against heaven's authority.

4:27 Again we see Daniel's boldness and faithfulness in dealing with those in high places.

"To the poor" – God demands that those in positions of authority show justice and



your tranquility will long continue.”

28 All this came on King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of twelve months he was walking in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, 30 *and* the king spoke and said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal residence by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?”

31 While the word *was still* in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven, *saying*, “O King Nebuchadnezzar, this is spoken to you: The kingdom has departed from you. 32 And they will drive you from men, and your dwelling *will be* with the beasts of the field. They will make you eat grass like oxen, and seven times will pass over you, until you learn that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will.”

33 That same hour this word was fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and ate grass like oxen, and his body became wet with the dew of the sky, until his hair had grown like eagles’ *feathers*, and his nails like birds’ *claws*.

34 “And at the end of these days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me, and I extolled the Most High, and I praised and honoured him who lives forever,

“Whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,  
and whose kingdom *is* from generation  
to generation.

kindness.

4:30 The king had a whole year to think over the truth God had given through Daniel. But pride is a great enemy of truth and hardens the heart against it (5:20. God’s attitude toward pride is seen in His Word – Prov 6:16,17; 8:13; Isa 2:10-18; 23:9; Jer 13:9; Jam 4:6.

4:31 “A voice fell from heaven” – another instance of God’s remarkable dealings with this king.

4:33 God will always do as He has said (Prov 19:21; Isa 14:24; 44:26; 46:10; Matt 5:18).

4:34 “Lifted up my eyes” – an indication that reason and sanity were returning to the king. Men who will not look to God for help, who will not acknowledge God’s greatness and authority, are spiritually insane, and behave like the greatest of fools (Ps 14:1; Eccl 9:3; etc). Here the king does what God said he must do. See the word “until” in vs 25,32.

4:35 “Nothing” – Isa 40:15-17.

“According to his will” – Ps 115:3; 135:6; Rom 11:33-36.

“What are you doing” – Deut 32:39; Job 9:4; Isa 45:9; Rom 9:20. The king learned what all men should learn. The one true God has absolute, eternal authority over the earth and the universe. If we rebel and live as we please without reference to Him, we will pay the price for such folly and sin.

4:36 This was altogether of God’s grace. The

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth count for nothing;  
and he does according to his will in the army of heaven,  
and *among* the inhabitants of the earth,  
and no one can hold back his hand,  
or say to him, ‘What are you doing?’

36 “At the same time my reason returned to me, and my honour and splendour returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. And my counsellors and my nobles sought me out, and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, whose works *are* all *in* truth, and whose ways *are* just; and those who walk in pride he is able to abase.”

5 Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. 2 Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which *was* in Jerusalem, so that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink from them. 3 Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple, the house of God which *had been* in Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank from them. 4 They drank

King of heaven is a God of love, mercy and kindness.

4:37 It is a great thing and shows a great work of God in the heart when a man stops praising himself and what he has done, and starts praising God.

“Just” – Deut 32:4; Ps 33:4,5; etc.

“Abase” – Ps 18:27; Prov 3:34; 16:18; Jam 4:10.

5:1 Belshazzar means “May Bel protect the king”. But Bel (the Babylonian god Marduk) could not and did not do that – vs 30,31. In vs 2,11,18 Nebuchadnezzar is called Belshazzar’s father. As often in the Old Testament the word father here simply means ancestor. Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC and was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach (2 Kings 25:27; Jer 52:31). Belshazzar came to power in Babylon many years later and after a brief reign was slain in 539 BC.

5:2 “Wine” – Prov 20:1; Isa 5:12; 21:5 (about Babylon); Jer 51:57.

“Father” – or “ancestor”, or “predecessor” (also in verses 11,13,18. See note on Gen 5:6-32).

“Jerusalem” – 2 Kings 24:13; Jer 52:19. 5:3,4 They were not acting in ignorance of previous events (vs 22,23). They were showing their utter contempt for Jehovah, the God of Israel, the God of heaven, the only God there is. Having rejected the true God the only gods left to praise were those

wine, and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

5 In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the candlestick on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. And the king saw the part of the hand that was writing. 6 Then the king's expression changed, and his thoughts so alarmed him that the joints of his hips became slack and his knees knocked together.

7 The king loudly called out *orders* to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. And the king spoke and said to the wise *men* of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, will be clothed in scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold *placed* around his neck, and will become the third ruler in the kingdom."

8 So in came all the king's wise *men*, but they could not read the writing, or reveal its interpretation to the king. 9 Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, and the expression on his *face* changed, and his nobles were astonished.

10 *Now* the queen, because of the words of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall, and the queen spoke and said, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you, or let your expression change. 11 There is a man in your kingdom in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him. King Nebuchadnezzar, your father, your father the king, made him the head over the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers, 12 because an excellent spirit and knowledge and understanding, the *ability* to interpret dreams and explain riddles and solve difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will reveal the interpretation."

13 Then Daniel was brought into the presence of the king. And the king spoke and said to Daniel,

made by men – Ps 115:3-8; etc.

5:5 "In the same hour" – God had had enough. His patience with these ungodly men was at an end. Compare Gen 6:3; Prov 29:1; etc. 5:6 No doubt Belshazzar had seen the tricks and seeming wonders of his magicians. This was his first encounter with a true sign from heaven.

"Expression" – the Hebrew word (translated "countenance" in the KJV) literally means "brightness" or "bright appearance." 5:7-9 In spite of their repeated failures (2:10-13; 4:7) such people retained their hold on Babylon. But neither threats of death, nor promises of power could get any wisdom out of them, any true interpretation of dreams or events. Such men are as useless today as they were then.

5:10 "Queen" – the wives of Belshazzar were already present (v 3). This one who came

"Are you that Daniel who *is one* of those captives from Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah? 14 I have heard of you, that the spirit of the gods *is* in you, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. 15 And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought into my presence that they might read this writing, and reveal its interpretation to me, but they could not tell the interpretation of the thing. 16 And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you can read this writing, and make known to me its interpretation, you will be clothed in scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold around your neck, and will become the third ruler in the kingdom."

17 Then Daniel answered and said in the king's presence, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18 "O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour. 19 And because of the majesty that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and *men of all* languages, trembled and were afraid in his presence. He killed whomever he wished, and kept alive whomever he wished, and he elevated whomever he wished, and put down whomever he wished. 20 But when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened with pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him, 21 and he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like *that of* the beasts, and his dwelling place *was* with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he learned that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and *that* he appoints over it whomever he will.

22 "And you, his son, O Belshazzar, have not

in later was probably either the mother or grandmother of Belshazzar, and so, in this case, queen means "queen mother."

5:11-13 Evidently Daniel had been shoved aside from the high position he held in the days of Nebuchadnezzar (2:48), and almost forgotten.

5:16 Did Belshazzar think that only promises of great reward would move Daniel to declare the truth? How mistaken he was appears in the next verse. God's true servants never need to be bribed or paid to declare God's Word, and they do not do so for money or men's rewards.

5:17 This prophet was not for hire – unlike Balaam and many others since (2 Pet 2:15; 1 Tim 6:5).

5:20 4:29,30.

5:22 "Son" – here means "descendant", or "successor" (see note on Gen 5:6-32).

humbled your heart, though you knew all this, 23 but have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And they have brought the vessels of his temple to you, and you, and your nobles, your wives, and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know *anything*; and the God in whose hands your breath *is*, and all your ways, you have not glorified. 24 So the part of the hand was sent from him, and this inscription was written.

25 "And this *is* the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN

26 "This *is* the interpretation of the words:

MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and put an end to it.

27 TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting.

28 PERES: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

29 Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel in scarlet, and *put* a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he would be the third ruler

in the kingdom.

30 In that night Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans was slain. 31 And Darius the Mede took the kingdom, *being* about sixty-two years old.

**6** It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, who would be over the whole kingdom, 2 and over these, three presidents, of whom Daniel *was* one, so that the satraps might be accountable to them, and the king might not suffer loss. 3 Then this Daniel distinguished himself among the presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit *was* in him. And the king considered setting him over the whole realm. 4 Then the presidents and satraps sought to find a matter *for an accusation* against Daniel concerning the kingdom. but they could find no *such* matter or fault, because he *was* faithful, and no error or corruption was found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We will not find any matter against this Daniel, unless we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God."

6 Then these presidents and satraps came together to the king, and said this to him, "King Darius, live forever! 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors and the satraps, the counsellors and

"Knew" – this made Belshazzar's action in vs 1-4 so much more worthy of condemnation. Compare Heb 10:26,27; 2 Pet 2:21; etc.

5:23 "Lifted up yourself" – Jer 47:10; 50:29.

"In whose hands your breath is" – see Job 12:10. How insane it is to refuse to honor God who has absolute authority over our lives now and over our eternal destinies.

5:25 These words were in Aramaic, a language of same family as Hebrew. Only consonants in the words would have been written (as with Hebrew). They were written in such a way that the wise men of Babylon could not be sure what words were meant (v 8). Of course they could have no idea what the interpretation of them might be.

"Upharsin" – the "u" at the beginning of this word means "and" in Aramaic, and is omitted in some versions. Pharsin or Parsin is a plural form (the "in" ending of the word indicates the plural). The consonants which appeared on the wall were the Aramaic for MN, MN, TKL, PRSN. Vowels were not written in the original. The vowels now found in the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures were not put there until many centuries had passed after the words were first written down.

5:26 Daniel revealed what the words were and what God meant by them. MN, signifying "mene," means "numbered," and the interpretation is that God had counted up the full time He would permit Babylon to be ruled by Belshazzar and the time was over.

5:27 TKL, signifying "tekel", means "weighed", but it was not some commodity or unit of money being weighed, but Belshazzar himself. Compare Job 31:6; Ps

62:9; Prov 16:2.

5:28 Daniel gives a double meaning to the three consonants PRS. "Peres" meant "divided", "Paras" meant "Persia". Divided here would mean broken up, ended. The end of the Babylonian empire was at hand, and the Persians would take it over.

5:29 Though the interpretation brought bad news to Belshazzar he did as he said he would in v 16. Daniel accepted the position probably with a view to the influence he might bring to bear on the new rulers of Babylon for the good of the Jews.

5:30 Babylon was a large city with very high and thick walls, and strongly fortified. But it fell to the Medes and Persians just as God said it would (2:39; Isa 13:1,17,18; Jer 50:1,2).

5:31 "Darius the Mede" – Cyrus was the chief ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire (1:21; 6:28; 10:1; Ezra 1:1-4; Isa 45:1-4). Darius must have been appointed by Cyrus to rule over Babylon.

6:2 No doubt Daniel came to his notice because of the position he already occupied (5:29).

"Daniel was one" – when used in a series (first, second, etc) the Hebrew word means "first", otherwise it means "one".

6:4 Envy lifted its poisonous head. See Prov 14:30; 27:4; Matt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5; Rom 1:29; 13:13; 1 Cor 3:3; Gal 5:26; Jam 3:14,16.

"No error or corruption" – the inability of enemies to find anything wrong in a person's life is a great testimony for him. See also Mark 14:55; John 18:38; 19:4,6; 1 Pet 3:13-16; 4:14-16.

6:7 "All" – a lie. Daniel had not agreed to

the commanders, have consulted together about establishing a royal law and making a firm decree, that whoever makes a prayer to any God or man for thirty days, except *to* you, O king, will be thrown into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which is unalterable." 9 Therefore king Darius signed the document *containing* the decree.

10 Now when Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went into his house, and the windows in his room being open toward Jerusalem, he got down on his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks in the presence of his God, just as he did before. 11 Then these men came together, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

12 Then they approached the king and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Did you not sign a decree *stating* that every man who requests *anything* from any God or man for thirty days, except from you, O king, will be cast into the den of lions?"

The king answered and said, "The statement is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which is unalterable."

13 Then they answered and said to the king, "That Daniel, who *is one* of those captives from Judah, shows no regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you signed, but makes his prayer three times a day." 14 Then the king, when he heard *these* words, was deeply distressed, and set *his* heart on Daniel to rescue him; and he made efforts until sunset to rescue him.

15 Then these men came together to the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians *is* this: no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

16 Then the king gave an order, and they

brought Daniel and threw *him* into the den of lions. *Now* the king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you serve continually, will rescue you."

17 And a stone was brought, and laid on the den's mouth, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring, and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. 18 Then the king went to his palace, and spent the night fasting; nor were instruments of music brought before him; and his sleep left him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and hurried to the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with an anguished voice to Daniel. *And* the king spoke and said to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

21 Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! 22 My God has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his presence. And also I have done no wrong before you, O king."

23 Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and gave orders to take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury at all was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

24 And the king gave orders, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel and threw *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives. And the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they got to the bottom of the den.

25 Then king Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and *those of all* languages who live on the whole earth: "Peace be multiplied to you. 26 I issue a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

their plan, and they knew he never would agree to elevate any man to the place of God.

**6:10** Daniel did not close the windows and resort to secret prayer. In his faithfulness to God and courage in the face of danger he was an example not only to those of his own day but to all succeeding generations. If he considered something right to do, he did it regardless of consequences.

"Thanks" – notes on thanksgiving at Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Eph 5:20; etc.

**6:14** "Distressed" – v 18; Mark 6:26. Rulers often bring grief to themselves and others by foolish decisions.

**6:16** Verse 20. Another testimony to Daniel's character (v 4).

**6:20** "The living God" – a remarkable phrase from the lips of an idolater who had issued the decree of v 7. Was faith in the true

God beginning to awaken in his heart?

**6:22** Ps 37:3-6.

**6:23** "Because he had trusted" – 1 Chron 5:20; Ps 22:13,21; 91:1,2,9,10,13-15; Heb 11:33.

**6:24** Ps 37:34; 91:8; 7:15,16; Prov 26:27.

**6:25-27** Because of Daniel, some of the mightiest monarchs in ancient times wrote down professions of faith in the greatness of the God of Israel, and sent them everywhere. This is an example of what one man can do who boldly and openly stands for God in all circumstances. King Darius meant well in making this decree (v 26). He was trying to turn his whole kingdom to thoughts of the God of Daniel. It seems he little realized that fear and reverence for God cannot be a matter of a proclamation of a king no matter how powerful. These things must come from the heart made new by God's Spirit.

"For he is the living God,  
and continues on forever,  
and his kingdom will not be destroyed,  
and his dominion *will be* to the end.

27 He delivers and rescues,  
and he performs signs and wonders  
in heaven and on earth,  
*he* who has delivered Daniel from the  
power of the lions."

28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius,  
and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

**7** In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon,  
Daniel, on his bed, had a dream and visions  
*came* to his mind. Then he wrote down the  
dream, relating the substance of the words.

2 Daniel spoke and said, "I saw in my vision at  
night, and there appeared the four winds of heaven  
stirring up the great sea. 3 And four great beasts  
came up from the sea, different from one another.

4 "The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's

**6:28** "In the reign of Darius and in the reign  
of Cyrus" – this could possibly be translated  
"In the reign of Darius, that is, the reign of  
Cyrus." See note on 5:31.

**7:1** "First year" – before the events of  
chapter 5. Giving dreams and visions was  
one way God revealed His truth to the  
prophets (Gen 15:1; Num 12:6).

**7:2** The great sea here may indicate the  
Mediterranean, but it could indicate the na-  
tions and people of the world (compare  
v 17 – "out of the earth", and Isa 17:12,13;  
Rev 13:1; 17:1,15).

"Four winds" – north, south, east and west  
– here may possibly symbolize the forces in  
the whole world that God uses to produce in  
the world the four kingdoms of this chapter.  
**7:3-7** The four beasts symbolize four king-  
doms (v 17). They seem to be the same  
four kingdoms King Nebuchadnezzar saw in  
the form of a statue (chapter 2). In this  
vision God caused them to appear as wild  
beasts. By this symbolism something of  
their true nature is revealed. The following  
interpretation of the identity of these king-  
doms is the one taught by most com-  
mentators who believe the book of Daniel.  
It seems more likely to be the right one  
than any other interpretation. For a possible  
reason why God gave different dreams about  
the same kingdoms see Gen 41:32.

**7:4** The first beast symbolizes  
Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian empire. The  
prophets spoke of Nebuchadnezzar as both  
a lion and an eagle (Jer 4:7; 48:40;  
49:22; 50:17; Ezek 17:3,12).

"Like a man" – with Nebuchadnezzar's  
experience recorded in chapter 4 and his  
acknowledgment of the true God, Babylon  
lost something of its beastly character.

**7:5** The bear symbolizes the empire of the  
Medes and Persians. The bear was raised

wings. I watched until its wings were plucked off,  
and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to  
stand on *its* feet like a man, and a man's heart was  
given to it.

5 "And then appeared another beast, a second,  
like a bear; and it raised itself up on one side, and  
*it had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth.  
And this was said to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

6 "After this I looked, and another *beast*  
appeared, like a leopard, which had on its back  
four wings of a bird. Also the beast had four heads;  
and dominion was given to it.

7 "After this I was watching in the night visions,  
and then a fourth beast appeared, dreadful and  
terrible, and exceedingly strong, and it had great  
iron teeth. It was devouring and crushing, and  
trampling what remained with its feet. And *it was*  
different from all the beasts that preceded it; and  
it had ten horns.

8 "I considered the horns, and then another  
horn, a little one, appeared, which came up among  
them. Before it three of the first horns were

up on one side – that is, Persia was the  
more dominant power in this alliance. The  
three ribs may symbolize the three principal  
kingdoms conquered by the Medes and  
Persians – Lydia, Egypt, and Babylon.

**7:6** The leopard symbolizes Alexander's  
Greco-Macedonian empire. The leopard is  
a swifter beast than the others mentioned  
and the four wings add to the suggestion of  
very rapid movement. Alexander's swift con-  
quests were a marvel in the ancient world.

"Four heads" – after Alexander's death  
what remained of his empire was divided  
into four parts.

**7:7** This beast symbolizes the Roman Em-  
pire, the same kingdom symbolized by the  
legs and feet of the image of chapter 2.  
Just as in chapter 2 it is the fourth kingdom  
to arise beginning with Babylon. Other fea-  
tures of its description also suggest its iden-  
tity with the fourth kingdom of chapter 2.

"Iron" – 2:33,40; "crushing" – 2:40;  
"ten" – 2:42,44; 7:24. These ten horns  
together with the description of the "little  
horn" and the judgment of God in the  
following verses indicate the Roman Empire  
in its final form at the end of this age  
(2:40,44). Revelation chapter 17 makes it  
clear that this beast is associated with the  
city of Rome (17:3,9,18), and 17:12 states  
that the ten kings had not yet arisen in  
John's day.

**7:8** The ten horns are kings (v 24), so it is  
safe to assume that this "little horn"  
symbolizes a king. Though he is called "little"  
he is "more imposing" than the others (v 20).  
The Hebrew means "in sight greater"), and  
evidently he soon becomes the dominant  
figure (v 21). "Little" may indicate lowly  
beginnings or the comparative insignificance  
of the kingdom from which he comes. The  
eyes of a man suggest intelligence or cunning.



uprooted. And eyes appeared in this horn like a man's eyes, and a mouth speaking big things.

9 "I watched until thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days sat down.

His garment *was as* white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool.

His throne *was like* a fiery flame, and its wheels *like* blazing fire.

10 A stream of fire came out, issuing from his presence.

Thousands upon thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

The *court* of judgment was seated, and the books were opened.

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the great words which the horn spoke. I watched until the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the blazing flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 "I watched in the night visions, and *then one* like the Son of man appeared, coming with the

The mouth that speaks boastfully suggests the person described in 2 Thess 2:4 and Rev 13:5,6, the antichrist who will arise at the end of this age and be the ruler of the Roman Empire in its final form.

7:9-14 Here is a picture of judgment. With the brutal and boastful form of the fourth beast man's kingdoms will come to an end. These verses refer to the same time period as 2:34,44,45.

7:9 "Thrones" – a possible connection with the thrones of Rev 4:4.

"Set in place" – or "cast down." Strange as it may seem, the Hebrew can mean either (see the note at Ps 14:7). If "cast down" is taken as the meaning, it refers to the thrones of earth's kings.

"Ancient of Days" – the Hebrew means "one advanced in days" and would, except for the context, mean simply an old person. Here it means God Himself sitting in judgment.

"Wheels" – here are connected with the throne. Compare Ezek 1:15-21,26,27.

7:10 "Fire" – Ps 50:3; 97:3; Isa 29:6; 30:27,28,33; 2 Thess 1:7,8; Heb 12:29.

"Thousands" – Rev 5:11; Jude 14,15.

"Books" – 12:1; Ex 32:32; Ps 69:28; Mal 3:16; Rev 20:12-15.

7:11 God's judgment will result in the total destruction of the fourth beast and the fiery punishment of the little horn who will head it up (Rev 19:20).

7:12 Before the death of the fourth beast the first three beasts (vs 4-6) lost their power one by one, but the nations they symbolized were not immediately destroyed.

7:13 "Son of man" – Rev 1:13. This name the Lord Jesus often applied to Himself (Matt 16:13-15; 24:27,30; Luke 19:10. The

clouds of heaven; and he came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him.

14 And dominion, and glory, and a kingdom were given to him, so that all peoples, nations, and *those of all* languages, would serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which will not pass away, and his kingdom *one* which will not be destroyed.

15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within *me*, and the visions *coming* to my mind troubled me.

16 I approached one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth about all this. So he told me, and made known to me the interpretation of these things:

17 "These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings *who* arise out of the earth. 18 But the saints of the Most High will take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever."

19 "Then I wanted to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, whose teeth *were* of iron, and whose nails *were* of bronze, which devoured, crushed, and trampled what remained with its feet; 20 and of the ten horns which *were* on its head, and *of* the other *horn* which came up,

name appears more than 80 times in the Gospels). The title indicates the Son of God's true humanity.

"Clouds" – in the Old Testament signified the presence of God (Deut 33:26; Ps 97:2; 104:3; Isa 19:1. In the New Testament see Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Rev 1:7). The picture here is of the one true God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, coming into the presence of God the Father. The next verse speaks of all people "serving [or worshiping – the Hebrew word means both]" the Son of man. This is a further indication of His true deity.

7:14 This receiving of sovereign power seems to be at the time of the destruction of the 4th beast at the end of this age. It corresponds with the events described in 2:34,35,44. Revelation chapter 5 seems connected with these same events. It is true that the Lord Jesus has already received authority (Matt 28:18) and His kingdom is established in the hearts of His people. But the time to come to earth and reign openly as king has not yet come. He still waits until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet (Acts 2:35; Heb 10:13). When the time comes for man's kingdoms to be judged and destroyed He will come and openly set up His own kingdom (2:45; Rev 19:11-16).

7:15 "Within me" – the meaning of the Hebrew word translated "body" here in the KJV is doubtful, but may mean "sheath" or "scabbard."

7:16 "One of those" – an angel.

7:17 "Kings" – they represent the four kingdoms (v 23).

7:18 "Saints" – vs 22,27; Matt 5:5; 19:28,29; 25:34; Luke 22:29,30; Rom 4:13; Rev 2:26,27; 3:21; 20:4-6.



and before whom three fell, that horn which had eyes and a mouth that spoke big things, whose appearance was more imposing than his associates. 21 As I watched, the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

23 "He said this: "The fourth beast will be the fourth kingdom on earth. It will be different from all the kingdoms, and will devour the whole earth, and trample it down, and crush it. 24 And the ten horns are ten kings who will arise from this kingdom, and another will arise after them; and he will be different from the earlier ones, and he will subdue three kings. 25 And he will speak words against the Most High, and will wear out the saints of the Most High, and plan to change times and laws. And they will be given into his hands until a time and times and half a time.

26 "But the court of judgment will sit, and they will take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it forever. 27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heavens, will be given to the saints, the people of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and all dominions will serve and obey him.'

28 "This is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and the expression on my face changed, but I kept the matter in my heart."

7:21 Verse 25; Matt 24:21; Rev 13:7,15.  
7:22 The antichrist will persecute and slay God's saints until the second coming of Christ. The "horn" can defeat the saints, but not their Lord.

7:23 Verse 7.

7:24 "Ten kings" – judging from 2:44 and Rev 17:12 these kings all live at the same time just before the return of Christ. So this vision of the fourth beast cannot refer to the Roman Empire as it was at the first coming of Christ.

7:25 "Speak" – v 8.

"Saints" – Rev 13:7.

"Given into his hands" – a time of great testing for God's people. See note on testing at Ps 66:10-12.

"Time and times and half a time" – 4:16. In Nebuchadnezzar's case seven times was a limited brief period, almost certainly seven years. Three and a half times obviously means only half of that. This same time period is referred to as 1260 days and 42 months in Rev 11:2,3; 12:6; 13:5. There is no good reason to think these figures are not to be taken literally. If not taken literally no man can know how long or how short this time period will be.

7:26 Rev 19:19-21.

7:27 The kingdoms of the world are not said

8 In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, to me, Daniel, after the one which appeared to me the first time. 2 And while I was looking in a vision it came about as I watched that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw that in the vision I was by the river Ulai. 3 Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and a ram appeared there, standing beside the river. It had two horns, and the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer one came up last. 4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beast could withstand him, nor was there any that could rescue from his hands, but he did as he pleased and became great.

5 And as I was considering this, a male goat appeared, coming from the west across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground. And the goat had a notable horn between its eyes. 6 And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him in his powerful anger. 7 And I saw him come close to the ram, and he was moved with rage against him, and struck the ram and broke off his two horns. And there was no power in the ram to withstand him, so he threw him down to the ground, and trampled him. And there was no one who could deliver the ram from his hands. 8 Therefore the male goat became very great. But when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and in its place four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

to be destroyed, but handed over to the saints. They will reign with Christ (references at v 18).

"Serve" – the Hebrew word also means "worship" – Ps 22:27; 72:11; 86:9; Zech 14:16-19; Rev 21:24.

8:1 551 BC.

8:2 "Shushan" – (sometimes written Susa) was the chief city of Elam and became the principal capital of the Persian empire.

"Palace" – or it might be translated "citadel."

"Elam" – a mountainous region east of Babylon in what is now western Iran.

8:3 Verse 20 tells us what this ram symbolizes – the Medo-Persian kingdom. The larger horn represents Persia which was the dominant power in the alliance.

8:4 Medo-Persia became the most powerful kingdom in the world of its day.

8:5 According to v 21 this goat symbolizes Greece. The prominent horn was Alexander the Great, the first king of the Greco-Macedonian Empire.

8:6,7 Alexander crushed the Medo-Persian Empire in the years 334-330 BC, more than 200 years after this prophetic vision.

8:8 "Broken" – refers to the death of Alexander in 323 BC.

"Four" – these represent the four divisions

9 And out of one of them a little horn came out, which grew exceedingly great, toward the south and toward the east, and toward the glorious *land*. 10 And it grew up to the host of heaven. And it threw *some* of the host and of the stars to the ground, and trampled on them. 11 Yes, it set *itself* up to be as great as the Prince of the host, and it took away the daily *sacrifice* from him, and the place of his sanctuary was thrown down. 12 And an army was given *to* it against the daily *sacrifice*, because of transgression, and it threw the truth down to the ground; and it was active and prospered.

13 Then I heard one holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that *holy one* who had spoken, "How long is the time in the vision concerning the daily *sacrifice*, and the transgression that causes desolation, causing both the sanctuary and the army to be trampled under foot?"

14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days. Then the sanctuary will be cleansed."

15 And it came about when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, and was seeking for the meaning, then someone appeared who looked like a man, standing before me. 16 And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of* the Ulai, which called out

and said, "Gabriel, cause this *man* to understand the vision."

17 So he came near the place I was standing; and when he came, I was afraid, and prostrated *myself* on my face. But he said to me, "Understand, son of man; for the vision *concerns* the time of the end."

18 Now as he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep with my face toward the ground, but he touched me and stood me upright.

19 And he said, "Look, I will cause you to know what will happen at the end of the indignation. For the end *will occur* at the appointed time. 20 The ram which you saw which had *two* horns represents the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Greece, and the great horn that is between its eyes is the first king. 22 Now as for that one being broken and four arising in its place, four kingdoms will arise out of the nation, but not with its power.

23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their full extent, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark schemes, will arise. 24 And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power; and he will cause appalling destruction, and will prosper, and be

of his empire that came about after Alexander's death (7:6).

**8:9** "Little horn" – there is a difference of opinion among commentators about this "little horn". Some say he is the same as the "little horn" of 7:8,20-25. Others say he is not, because this one comes out of one of the divisions of the Grecian Empire, that one comes out of the Roman Empire after the Grecian Empire and all of its four divisions had lost their power. Most commentators agree that this "little horn" symbolizes a king who arose in Syria in the 2nd century BC and became a great enemy of the Jews. His name was Antiochus Epiphanes. He may be regarded in some ways as a type of the coming antichrist. See also 11:21-35.

Some students of the Bible are of the opinion that just as Antiochus was king in Syria so the antichrist at the end of this age will arise in Syria. It appears to be true that antichrist will arise from within the boundaries of the old Roman Empire (7:8), and Syria was once a part of that Empire. Others think, however, that the case of Antiochus is brought forward in Daniel to show only something of the character and deeds of the coming antichrist and not the country of his origin. This is the opinion of the author of these notes. But we should be careful not to be dogmatic in doubtful matters such as these.

"Glorious land" – or "beautiful land." The translation "pleasant land" though possible is not likely. The land meant is, of course, Israel (11:16,41; Jer 3:19; Ezek 20:6). **8:10,11** "Of the host and of the stars" –

probably refers to believers in Israel seen as stars in this vision (compare 12:3). Antiochus swept down into Israel, captured Jerusalem, killed many thousands of people, desecrated the temple, and prevented the Jews from offering sacrifices.

"Prince of the host" – Jehovah of hosts. **8:12** The disaster to the Jews in the days of Antiochus was a result of their sin and rebellion against God.

"Army" – or "host" – the same word in Hebrew.

**8:13,14** "Days" – literally, "Evening, morning". This may mean 2300 days (compare Gen 1:5,8; etc). This is a little more than six years – the period of time of the persecution by Antiochus (171-164 BC). But some scholars have thought the figure 2300 means 1150 days, this being the number of days it would take for 2300 sacrifices offered both morning and evening. 1150 days was the time between Antiochus' desecration of the temple and its reconstruction by the Jews (168-165 BC).

**8:16** "Gabriel" – 9:21; Luke 1:19,26.

**8:17** "Son of man" – Ezek 2:1.

**8:19** In the context of the verses which follow, the time of wrath, the time of the end spoken of here probably means the end of the days covered by the vision of vs 3-14, especially the end of the time of Antiochus. But those days were surely a picture of the days of the antichrist at the end of this age.

**8:23-25** Antiochus Epiphanes.

**8:24** "Not by his own power" – compare 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:2.

"The holy people" – of Israel.

active and destroy the mighty and the holy people. 25 And through his cunning he will also cause deceit to prosper in his hands. And in his heart he will exalt *himself*, and by peace will destroy many. He will also stand up against the Prince of princes. But he will be broken, but not by human hand.

26 "And the vision of the evenings and the mornings which was told *is* true. So seal up the vision, for it *will not take place* for many days."

27 And I, Daniel, fainted, and was sick *for* days. Afterward I got up, and did the king's work. And I was astonished at the vision, but no one understood *it*.

**9** In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, that he had specified for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, seventy years. 3 And I set my face toward the Lord God, to seek *him* by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.

4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant and mercy for those who love him, and for those who keep his commandments, 5 we have sinned, and have done evil, and have behaved wickedly, and have

rebelled, by departing from your precepts and from your judgments. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 "O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to you, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day, to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, *those* near, and *those* far away in all the countries where you have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness they have shown against you. 8 O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. 9 To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him. 10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us through his servants the prophets. 11 Yes, all Israel have transgressed your law by departing from you, so as not to obey your voice. Therefore the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against him.

12 "And he has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven nothing has been done like what was done in Jerusalem. 13 Just as *it is* written in the law of Moses, this whole disaster has come on

**8:25** "Prince of princes" – God Himself.

"Human hand" – Antiochus was not killed in battle but by an act of God. Compare 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:20.

**8:26** "Seal up" – preserve it.

**8:27** "No one understood it" – prophecies of future events were often not understood even by those through whom they came. We should not rashly assume that we know all about them now.

**9:1** 5:31. This Ahasuerus is not the same as the one of the book of Esther.

"First year" – 538 BC.

**9:2** Observe that Daniel regarded the writings of Jeremiah as inspired by God and authoritative. Twice Jeremiah spoke of 70 years – 25:11,12 and 29:10. The first invasion of Judah by the Babylonian armies was in 605 BC. The 70 years were nearly over.

**9:3** The knowledge that the 70 years were nearing their end inspired Daniel to prayer, not to complacency. Likewise God's promises to us should move us to prayer, should inspire us to claim them, to act on them. Let us learn from Daniel's prayer how to seek God in time of need with humility, confession, repentance, pleading. Observe the great earnestness with which Daniel sought God. He was seeking according to Deut 4:29; Jer 29:12,13.

"Fasting" – Jud 20:26; 1 Sam 7:6; Neh

1:4; Esther 4:3; Ps 35:13; 69:10; Acts 14:23; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27.

"Sackcloth, and ashes" – Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 13:19; Esther 4:1-3; Job 16:15; Ps 30:11; Lam 2:10.

**9:4** "Keeps his covenant and mercy" – Deut 7:9,12; 1 Kings 8:23; 2 Chron 6:14; Neh 1:5; 9:32.

**9:5** "We" – Daniel includes himself (v 20). Compare Ezra 9:5-7; Isa 64:5-9; Jer 3:25.

"Sinned" – 1 Kings 8:46-50.

**9:6** 2 Kings 18:12; Jer 7:13-15,25,26.

**9:7** "Righteousness" – Ps 11:7; 119:137; 145:17.

"Shame" – Ezra 9:6; Ps 44:14-16; Jer 3:25; 31:19.

"Unfaithfulness" – Ps 78:57; Isa 1:4; Jer 3:6-10; Ezek 39:23,24.

**9:9** Ex 34:6,7; Ps 4:1; 15:1; 86:5; 103:8,13; Isa 55:7; Jer 33:8; 42:12.

**9:10,11** 2 Kings 17:13-15; 18:12; 2 Chron 36:15,16; Jer 25:3,4.

"Curse and" – Lev 26:14,33; Deut 11:26-28; 27:15-26; 28:15,63-67.

**9:12** Jer 44:2-6; Lam 1:12; Ezek 5:9.

"Judges who judged us" – or "leaders who led us" – the Hebrew means either.

**9:13** "Not made our prayer" – Isa 9:13; 64:7. Observe that truly seeking God's favor means to turn from sin and give attention to the truth He has revealed.

us. Yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our evil deeds and understand your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD kept the disaster in view and brought it on us. For the LORD our God *is* righteous in all the deeds which he does, because we did not obey his voice.

15 "And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made yourself a name, as at this day, we have sinned, we have behaved wickedly. 16 O Lord, I beg you, according to all your righteousness, let your anger and your fury be turned away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain, because for our sins and for the evil deeds of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people *have become an object* of scorn to everyone around us.

17 "Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of your servant, and his supplications, and, for the Lord's sake, cause your face to shine on your sanctuary that is desolate. 18 O my God, bow down your ear, and hear. Open your eyes, and look on our desolations, and the city which is called by your name. For we do not present our supplications

**9:14** Gen 18:25; Neh 9:33; Ps 7:9; 19:9; 129:4; 145:17. It was because God is perfectly just that He brought disaster on them. Justice must punish sin that is not repented of and forsaken. Instead of complaining against God everyone should humble himself or herself, and confess that God is just (2 Chron 12:6).

**9:15** Ex 14:26-31. "Name" – Ex 9:16.

**9:16** Daniel continues to place the emphasis where it belongs – on their sin and God's righteousness.

**9:17-19** "For the Lord's sake" – 1 Sam 12:22; Ps 23:3; 25:11; 31:3; 106:8; Isa 37:35; 43:14,25; Jer 14:7,21; Ezek 20:9; 36:22. God's reputation was bound up with the people and the land and the city He had chosen.

**9:18** "Not. . .because of our righteousness" – compare Luke 18:9-14. In this book we see that Daniel was a mighty man of God, pure and upright. However, in prayer he did not depend on any of that, but on God's mercy alone.

**9:20** "Holy mountain" – Mount Zion.

**9:21** "In prayer" – v 23; 10:12; Isa 65:24; Luke 18:7,8.

"Gabriel" – 8:16.

"Evening sacrifice" – Ex 29:39.

**9:22** 1:17; 7:16; 10:14; Amos 3:7.

**9:23** "Greatly beloved" – the Hebrew verb from which this comes means "to desire", "take pleasure in", "delight in." It is not from the Hebrew word meaning "love." Heaven viewed Daniel with special regard, took pleasure in him, delighted in him. How could anyone receive a better commendation than this? How much better to be highly esteemed in heaven than on earth. **9:24-27** There has been, and is, much

before you because of our righteousnesses, but because of your great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For your own sake, O my God, do not delay. For your city and your people are called by your name."

20 And while I *was* speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, flying swiftly, came and touched me about the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 And he gave *me* information, and talked with me and said, "Daniel, I am now come forth to give you insight and understanding. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell *you*; for you are greatly beloved. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

24 "Seventy 'weeks' have been decreed for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for wickedness, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision

disagreement among scholars about the meaning of these verses. Some words and phrases in Hebrew are obscure in meaning and the interpretation difficult.

**9:24** "Weeks" – in Hebrew "sevens." It is clear that one "week" means seven years (4:16; 7:25). God had decreed 70 sevens for the accomplishment of six purposes. These purposes concern the Jews ("your people") and Jerusalem ("holy city"). But, of course, the results of God's work there would affect the whole world. Question: Were these six purposes fulfilled at the first coming of Christ and at His death? Or will they be fulfilled sometime in the future? The author of these notes believes that by the sacrifice of Christ the foundation was laid for the fulfillment of these purposes, but that as regards Israel as a nation and Jerusalem not all of them have been fulfilled. For example, Jerusalem remained sinful and in rebellion against God after the death of Christ and was destroyed in 70 AD. It remains in rebellion to this day.

The words "seal up prophecy" probably means here to completely fulfill it and to lay it aside as being no longer necessary (1 Cor 13:8). Certainly not all prophecies concerning the Jews and Jerusalem were fulfilled at the first coming of Christ. Another reason for thinking these six purposes were not all fulfilled at the first coming of Christ is this: 70 sevens are decreed to fulfill these purposes, but Christ was put to death after 69 sevens and before the 70th was finished (vs 25,26).

"Finish" – or, possibly, "restrain."

"The Most Holy" – this may refer either to the Most Holy Place in the temple or to the Most Holy One (Christ).

and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

25 "Know therefore and understand that from the issuing of the command to restore and build Jerusalem to the Messiah the Prince *will be* seven 'weeks', and sixth-two 'weeks'. The streets and the wall will be rebuilt, but in troublesome times. 26 And after the sixty-two 'weeks' Messiah will be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary; and its end *will come as* with a flood, and to the end of the war desolations are decreed. 27 And he will confirm a covenant with many for

**9:25** The decree mentioned here was probably that of king Artaxerxes in 445 BC. See Neh 2:1-9. The temple had been finished and some other buildings had been constructed in Jerusalem before then. But it could not be said that the city had been rebuilt, for Nehemiah said he wished to go and rebuild it, and he received permission to do so. Some of the troubles he had in rebuilding the city are recorded in Nehemiah chapters 4 and 6. From the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the ministry and death of the Messiah (the Lord Jesus) 69 sevens were to be completed.

If this time period is calculated according to the lunar year which the Jews used (360 days to a year), it reaches to the last days of Christ on earth. So we have here a prophecy of the time of the death of Christ given more than five centuries before.

**9:26** "Cut off" – this word was used in the Old Testament for the death penalty. See Ex 31:14; Lev 7:20,21,25,27; 20:2,3.

"Not for himself" – this could also be translated "have nothing" or "have no one." Christ certainly did not die for himself, but for us, and on the cross, in the place of sinners, he was forsaken by both God and men (Matt 26:56; 27:46), and had received nothing that rightly belonged to Him as the Messiah of Israel.

"Will destroy the city and the sanctuary" – this probably refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD by the Romans. This took place nearly 40 years after the end of the 69 sevens. "The ruler who will come" – probably means the final ruler of the Roman Empire at the end of this age, the antichrist, the "little horn" of chapter 7. It is important to observe that in this verse that coming ruler is said to belong to the same nation or people who destroyed Jerusalem.

**9:27** "He will confirm a covenant" – some have taught that this refers to the Messiah mentioned in vs 25,26. But how can one "seven" (almost certainly meaning seven years) have to do with the covenant Christ confirmed to His disciples just before His death (Matt 26:26-29)? That covenant was not for seven years, nor did it take seven years to confirm it.

What seems a better explanation is this: "he" is the coming ruler of the people who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD mentioned

one 'week', but in the middle of the 'week' he will put a stop to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations will be *one* who creates desolation, until the end that *is* decreed is poured out on the desolator."

**10** In the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the message *was* true, and *involved* a great conflict. And he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.

in the last part of v 26 (the people of the Roman Empire). He has not yet appeared. When he comes to power he will confirm an agreement for seven years with many. The "many" probably refers to the majority of Jews living in Israel at the end of this age. In the middle of the seven, that is, after 3 and 1/2 years he will stop the rituals and worship of the Jews (compare 11:31; 12:11), and will try to make himself the only object of worship in Israel (and, for that matter, throughout the whole world). This will be the "abomination of desolation" that Christ warned about in Matt 24:15, and the act of the "man of lawlessness" Paul described in 2 Thess 2:3,4.

A difficult question which arises from this interpretation is this: Why is the 70th "seven" separated from the 69 "sevens" by a great many centuries (Christ was crucified after the 69th in the first century of this age, but the 70th occurs at the end of the age)? The answer may be that the book of Daniel is not at all concerned with the course of this present age. In chapter 2 four kingdoms are seen – Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; then the thought leaps to the end of this age to the second coming of Christ. In chapter 7 the same four kingdoms are seen; then again many centuries are passed over in silence until the antichrist appears and is destroyed at the second coming of Christ. So we should not be surprised at the same way of treating events here in chapter 9.

"On the wing of abominations will be" – this may also be translated "will place abominations on a wing of" (the temple).

**10:1** Chapters 10-12 form a unit and give things Daniel saw and heard on the same occasion.

"Third year of Cyrus" – Daniel was an aged man. He had been brought to Babylon more than 70 years previously as a youth.

"True and *involved* a great conflict" – or it could be translated "true and concerned an extended conflict", or possibly "true and burdensome," or "true and the appointed time is a long way off," or "true and covers a long period of time," but the translation in the text above seems best. The problem with translating here is that the Hebrew words have more than one meaning and so the phrase is ambiguous. See note on the Hebrew language at Ps 14:7.



2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant food, and no meat or wine came into my mouth, and I did not anoint myself at all, until three whole weeks were over.

4 And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, the Hiddekel, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked and saw a man clothed in linen. He had a belt of fine gold of Uphaz around his waist. 6 And his body *gleamed* like beryl, and his face *had* the appearance of lightning, and his eyes *shone* like lamps of fire, and in colour his arms and his feet *were* like polished brass, and the sound of his words *was* like the sound of a multitude.

7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but great trembling fell on them, so that they ran away to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone and saw this great vision; and no strength remained in me, for my vigour changed in me to utter weakness, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet I heard the sound of his words. And when I heard the sound of his words, I was in a deep sleep on my face, my face toward the ground.

10 And, suddenly, a hand touched me, which placed me on my knees and the palms of my hands. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, O man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright; for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me,

**10:2,3** We are not told why Daniel fasted and mourned. Perhaps it was because of the troubles the Jews were having in Jerusalem (see Ezra 4:1-5). Perhaps it was because of the sins of those left in Babylon, or because of their lack of desire to return to Jerusalem to help in the work there.

**10:5-7** A vision of a great and glorious person who can hardly have been anyone other than the Son of God. Compare v 6 with Rev 1:13-16. Concerning other appearances of the Son of God as the divine messenger see Gen 16:7.

**10:8,9** Rev 1:17; Isa 6:5.

**10:10** It does not say that "His" hand touched Daniel. This may refer to the hand of an angel. In the verses which follow, the speaker may be different from the one who appeared in such glory in vs 5-9. But it is not clear whether two beings or only one are with Daniel in this chapter – v 16. Certainly in chapter 12 (which was given at the same time as this) two others are seen (12:5,6).

**10:11** "Greatly beloved" – note at 9:23.

**10:12** "From the first day" – Isa 30:19; 58:9; 65:24. Here is great encouragement for all those who, like Daniel, humble themselves and seek an understanding of God's revelation. God delights to hear the prayers of such people.

**10:13** This verse reveals something of what

I stood trembling.

12 Then said he to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me for twenty-one days. But, see, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days; for the vision *concerns* days still *future*."

15 And when he was speaking these words to me, I turned my face to the ground, and was speechless. 16 And, suddenly, *someone* like the sons of men in appearance touched my lips. Then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to the one who was standing in front of me, "O my lord, because of the vision sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have no strength left. 17 For how can this servant of my lord talk with you my lord? For as for me, now no strength remains in me, no breath is left in me."

18 Then *the one who had* the appearance of a man came again and touched me and strengthened me, 19 and said, "O man greatly beloved, do not fear. Peace be with you. Be strong, yes, be strong." And when he had spoken to me, I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have goes on in the unseen realm of spirits. It also gives a reason why the answer to a prayer may be delayed.

"Prince" – he is not the same as the king of Persia in the same verse. The king was Cyrus. Who was this "prince" (ruler)? It is said that he resisted God's angelic messenger, so he was hostile to God. The angel Michael is also called a "prince." It seems clear that the prince of the Persian kingdom was a fallen angel, an evil spirit who was trying to influence king Cyrus against the Jews. Verse 20 speaks of the "prince" of Greece. In v 21 Michael is called "your" (that is, the people of Israel's) prince.

Evidently there is a war going on in the unseen world of spirits between those sent to do God's will and those who oppose them. On angels see note at Gen 16:7. For other references to fallen angels see Isa 24:21; 1 Cor 8:5; 10:20; Eph 6:12; Rev 12:7. What goes on among the nations of earth is partly a result of spiritual battles fought in the unseen world – and praying believers have a part in it all. If our prayers are not immediately answered we should not think no answer will come, but continue on in faith.

**10:14** "Your people" – the Jewish nation. The rest of the book of Daniel, in large part, is concerned with what will happen to that people.

**10:20** "Prince of Greece" – the most



come to you? And now I will return to fight with the prince of Persia. And when I have gone away, see, the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is inscribed in the true writings. (And *there is* no one who upholds me against these *powers*, except Michael your prince.

**11** And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to support and strengthen him.)

2 "And now I will tell you this truth: See, there will still be three kings in Persia who arise, and the fourth will be far richer than *them* all; and by his strength, through his riches, he will stir up everyone against the realm of Greece. 3 And a mighty king will arise, who will rule with great authority, and act according to his will. 4 And when he arises, his kingdom will be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity, or according to the authority with which he ruled. For his kingdom will be uprooted for others instead of those.

5 "And the king of the south will be strong, *along* with *one* of his princes who will gain power over him, and have dominion. His dominion *will be* a great dominion. 6 And at the end of *some* years they will join together, for the daughter of the king of the south will come to the king of the north to reach an agreement. But she will not retain the power of authority, and neither he nor his authority will stand. But she will be given up with those who brought her *there*, and her father, and the one who strengthened her at *that* time.

7 "But out of a branch of her roots *someone* will arise in his place. He will come with an army, and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and

deal with them, and prevail, 8 and will also carry away as captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, *and* with their valuable articles of silver and of gold. And he will continue *more* years than the king of the north. 9 So the king of the north will come to *his* kingdom, but will return to his own land. 10 But his sons will be stirred up, and shall assemble a great many forces, and *they* will certainly come *like* an overflowing *flood* passing through, coming back then, stirred up *to wage war as far* as his fortress.

11 "And the king of the south will be moved with rage, and come out and fight with him, with the king of the north, who will muster a great multitude. But the multitude will be given into the hand of his *enemy*. 12 And when the *king of the south* has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up *with pride*, and he will overthrow *many* tens of thousands, but he will not remain in a position of strength *by it*. 13 For the king of the north will return, having mustered a multitude greater than the former one. He will certainly come after some years with a great army and much equipment.

14 "And in those times many will stand up against the king of the south. Also the violent ones among your people will exalt themselves to fulfil the vision; but they will fall. 15 So the king of the north will come, and build up a siege mound, and take the most fortified cities; and the arms of the south will not withstand *him*; nor *will* his chosen people; nor *will there be any* strength for withstanding. 16 But the one who comes against him will do according to his own will, and no one will be able to stand before him. And he will stand in the glorious land, with destruction in his hands. 17 He will also set his face

powerful of the evil spirits Satan had appointed to fulfill his evil will in that nation.

**10:21** "The true writings" – apparently a heavenly record of those things that God had decreed should happen. This truth is revealed in some detail in the next two chapters.

**11:1** "Darius" – 5:31.

**11:2** From here to 12:4, beginning with Daniel's day and going on to the end of this age, there is a remarkable glimpse into the future. The prophecies contained in verses 2-36 were fulfilled over a period of 362 years.

"Three kings" – Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius Hystaspis. The fourth was Xerxes (the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther). He launched an invasion against Greece in 480 BC which failed.

**11:3** Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.).

**11:4** "Four" – 7:4-7; 8:8. After Alexander's death his empire broke into four parts.

**11:5-34** Gives us the struggle for predominance between two of the four parts of Alexander's former empire. The king of the south is the ruler of Egypt. The king of the north is the ruler of Syria and lands allied

with Syria. A very few commentators have taught that all these verses relate to the end of this present age. The great majority have taught that they give a succession of rulers of those two kingdoms over a period of roughly 160 years, beginning in 323 BC. This is the view given in these notes. The first king of the south was Ptolemy Soter, a Macedonian. The first king of the north was Seleucus. The land of Israel was directly between the kings of the north and the kings of the south.

**11:6** "Daughter" – Berenice.

"King of North" – Antiochus II.

**11:7-9** "One from her family line" – this was Ptolemy III.

"King of the north" – Seleucus II.

**11:10** "His sons" – Seleucus III and Antiochus III.

**11:11-13** "King of the south" – Ptolemy IV defeated Antiochus III in a battle at Raphia.

**11:14** "South" – Ptolemy V.

"Among your people" – Jews who joined forces with the king of the north.

**11:16** "One who comes" – Antiochus III.

**11:17** "Daughter" – Cleopatra I. The

to come with the power of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him. He will do this. And he will give him the daughter of women, to ruin it. but she will not stand on *his side*, or be for him. 18 After this he will turn his face to the coastlands, and take many. But a prince will put a stop to the scorn shown by him, and will make his scorn turn back on him. 19 Then he will turn his face toward the fortress of his own land, but he will stumble and fall, and not be found.

20 "Then in his place will arise someone who imposes taxes *for* the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he will be destroyed, but not in anger, or in battle.

21 "And in his place a contemptible person will arise. They will not give royal honours to him, but he will come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by intrigue. 22 And with the power of a flood they will be swept away from before him, and will be shattered, yes, also the prince of the covenant. 23 And after an alliance *has been made* with him he will act deceitfully. For he will come up, and become strong with a small *number of* people. 24 He will enter peaceably into even the richest places of the province, and will do what neither his fathers or grandfathers ever did; he will distribute among them the plunder, and loot, and riches. Yes, and he will devise his plots against the strongholds, but *only* for a time.

25 "And he will stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south will be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army. But he will not

stand, for they will devise plots against him. 26 Yes, those who eat of the food he provides will destroy him, and his army will be swept away, and many will fall down slain. 27 And both these kings' hearts *will be* set on evil, and they will speak lies at the same table. But it will not succeed, for the end *will still come* at the appointed time. 28 Then he will return to his land with great riches. And his heart *will be set* against the holy covenant, and he will take action, and return to his own land.

29 "At the appointed time he will return, and come to the south. But this latter *time* will not be like the former. 30 For the ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened, and return in fury against the holy covenant, and take action. Yes, he will return and be favorable toward those who forsake the holy covenant.

31 "And forces of his will arise and defile the sanctuary stronghold, and will take away the daily *sacrifice*; and they will put *there* the abomination that causes desolation. 32 And he will corrupt by flattery those who act wickedly against the covenant, but the people who know their God will be strong, and do *exploits*.

33 "And those among the people who understand will instruct many. Yet *for many* days they will fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by plundering. 34 Now when they fall, they will be aided by a little help, but many will join them who are not sincere. 35 And *some* of those *who have* understanding will fall, to refine them, and to purify *them*, and to make *them* white, until the time of the end. For *it will* still come at the

Hebrew of this verse is very obscure and difficult to translate.

**11:18** "Prince" – a Roman leader named Scipio Asiaticus.

**11:19** Antiochus III perished in 187 BC in Elymais.

**11:20** "In his place" – Seleucus IV.

**11:21** Antiochus IV, also known as Antiochus Epiphanes. See 8:9-13, 23-25. He seized power when the rightful heir to the throne was very young.

**11:22-24** At first Antiochus IV was very successful in battle. But he was very treacherous toward those who had made agreements with him.

**11:25** "King of the south" – Ptolemy VI.

**11:26** "Army" – Ptolemy's army.

**11:27** "These kings" – Antiochus IV and Ptolemy VI.

**11:28** "Against the holy covenant" – Antiochus hated Israel. In 169 BC he came to Jerusalem, killed many Jews, and plundered the temple.

**11:29** "Appointed time" – the time appointed by God to fulfill His purposes through Antiochus.

**11:30** "Ships" – Roman ships commanded by Papilius Laenas.

"Holy covenant" – v 28.

"Those who forsake" – apostate Jews who sided with Antiochus (v 32).

**11:31** In 168 BC Antiochus sent troops to take possession of Jerusalem. They attacked people on the Sabbath day and took captive many women and children. The temple was taken and Antiochus ordered the Jews to stop all sacrifices. He had an altar to the Greek god Zeus erected in the temple court on the altar of burnt offering. This was the state of things for more than three years. This abomination of desolation was not the same as that Jesus spoke of in Matt 24:15, but was a type, a picture of it. See Dan 9:27; 12:11.

**11:32,33** The Jews were divided. Some wicked and ambitious persons came under the influence of Antiochus. Other Jews were strong to resist him, taught the people the truth, and endured great persecution at his hands. They were Jews who knew God and were willing to suffer for Him. Compare Heb 11:36-38.

**11:34** "Not sincere" – in every age there will be hypocrites who say one thing and do another.

**11:35** "Fall" – the very "falling" of the wise will be, in God's hands, a means to their further refinement and purification. The

appointed time.

36 "And the king will do just as he wishes. And he will exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and will speak extraordinary things against the God of gods, and will be successful until the *time of indignation* is fulfilled. For what is decreed will be done. 37 He will not have regard for the God of his fathers, or for the *one* women desire, or have regard for any god; for he will exalt himself above all. 38 But in their place he will honour a god of fortresses, will honour a god unknown to his fathers, with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and desirable things. 39 Thus he will do in the strongest fortresses with a strange god. He will give great honour to those who acknowledge *him*, and he will cause them to rule over many, and will divide up the land for gain.

40 "And at the time of the end the king of the south will push at him, and the king of the north will come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he will invade countries, and overwhelm *them* and

Hebrew word here translated "fall" means to stumble from lack of strength. The truly wise through stumbling in their weakness will learn to seek and find their strength in God. Then there will be no stumbling (Isa 40:31). On refining see Ps 66:10-12.

"The time of the end" – perhaps the end of that particular time of persecution. Or the phrase may point suddenly to the end of this age. The verses which follow actually do so – v 40-45. As in chapters 2, 7, and 9 many centuries are passed over in silence and the end of this age is brought into view.

**11:36-45** The king here is not Antiochus Epiphanes whose doings are described in vs 21-32. There is no evidence that he magnified himself above every god and showed no regard for the gods of his fathers (vs 36,37). And the death of Antiochus was different from that described in verses 44,45. Antiochus was but a type or picture of this one who will come at the "time of the end" (v 40).

The language of v 40 is obscure in Hebrew, so it is difficult to know whether the king of v 36 is attacked by both the king of the south and the king of the north, or whether he himself is the king of the north who attacks the king of the south. If he is the king of the north, vs 41-45 refer to him. If he is not the king of the north they do not refer to him. Since the language is obscure we should be careful not to be dogmatic and make statements which cannot be proved. The fulfillment will make the prophecy clear.

**11:36** 7:8; 2 Thess 2:3,4; Rev 13:5,6. Here is the essence of sin – self-will and self-exaltation. It began with Adam's one act of self-will in the garden of Eden. It will end with one man of utter self-will ruling

pass on through.

41 "He will also invade the glorious land, and many *countries* will be overthrown. But these will escape from his hand: Edom, and Moab, and the leaders of the children of Ammon. 42 He will also stretch out his hand over *other* countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. 43 But he will have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the desirable things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Ethiopians *will be* at his feet. 44 But news from the east and from the north will trouble him, therefore he will set out with great fury to destroy, and do away with many. 45 And he will pitch his palace tents between the seas in the glorious holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

**12** "And at that time Michael, the great prince who stands *guard* over the children of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of trouble such as never occurred since there was a nation until that same time. And at that time your people

the earth and the vast majority of people bowing down to him.

"Time of indignation" – Isa 26:20,21; 30:27,28; 34:2; Jer 30:4-8; Dan 8:19; 12:1; Joel 3:12-16; Matt 24:21,22.

**11:37** "God" – or, perhaps "gods." This future king may possibly be either an apostate Christian or an apostate Jew.

**11:38** "God of fortresses" – he will honor the person who helps him to be victorious in war. This will be the only "god" he will show respect for. Though the language of verses 36,37 suggests this king may be the "man of lawlessness" of 2 Thess 2:3,4 and the first beast of Revelation chapter 13, he may be the second beast of Revelation 13 (13:4,11-17). We should not be dogmatic about this.

**11:39** "The land" – Israel. No other country could be designated here simply "the land".

**11:40-45** The king of the north is in view here. He may or may not be the same as the king of v 36.

**11:40** He will make many conquests (vs 41-43). Compare Rev 6:2; 13:4,7.

**11:41** "Glorious land" – Israel (v 16; 8:9; Ezek 20:6).

"Edom", "Moab", "Ammon" – countries east and southeast of Israel.

**11:44** "East" and "north" – compare Ezek 38:1-9; Rev 16:12-16. At the end of this age the armies of all earth's great nations will be marching toward Israel (Joel 3:9-16; Zech 12:2,3; 14:2-4).

**11:45** "Between the seas" – the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea.

"Holy mountain" – Ps 48:1,2.

"To his end" – 2 Thess 2:8; Rev 19:19,20.

**12:1** "Michael" – 10:13.

"Trouble" – a time of trouble is coming which will be worse than any the world has

will be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the *heavenly* expanse, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. 4 But you, Daniel, shut away the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many will travel here and there, and knowledge will increase."

5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and saw two others standing there, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. 6 And *one* said to the man dressed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, "How long *will it be to* the end of these wonders?"

ever seen. The Lord Jesus warned about it in Matt 24:21. Verses 29,30 of the same chapter make it clear that He was speaking of the end of this age.

"Your people" – Daniel's people were Jews. They will be at the center of that time of trouble called in the New Testament "great tribulation" (Matt 24:21; Rev 7:14). But this does not mean that non-Jews will not suffer at that time. It will be a time of trouble for some from every tribe and nation (Rev 7:9; 12:17; 13:7,8; 20:4).

"Delivered" – Isa 45:17; Jer 30:7-9; Zech 12:8,9; 14:3; Rom 11:26,27; Rev 7:1-8; 12:13-17. This probably speaks of the physical deliverance from danger of those Jews whom God has chosen. It is not the same as the resurrection spoken of in the next verse.

"Book" – Ex 32:32; Luke 10:20; Phil 4:3; Rev 20:12.

**12:2** "Will awake" – refers to the resurrection of the dead. Does this teach a general resurrection of the saved and unsaved at the same time? Nothing is said about the saved and unsaved dead rising at the same time – only the fact is given that both classes of people will rise. Rev 20:4-6 seems to teach clearly that there will be two resurrections separated by a thousand years. The prophets of the Old Testament spoke of events separated by long periods of time without indicating those events would be so separated. There are other examples of this in the book of Daniel. See the closing remarks in the note on 9:27.

**12:3** "Wise" – v 10; 11:33; Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7; 3:35. There are not two separate classes of people here. The wise are those who will lead many to righteousness – that is one way their true wisdom is revealed. See Prov 11:30. By their teaching and righteous living many will be turned to the God of righteousness and be made righteous themselves. This verse gives only a hint of the eternal reward and glory which await those who live such a wise

7 And I heard the man dressed in linen *speak*, the one above the waters of the river, as he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever that *it will be* for a time, times, and half a *time*, and *that* when the power of the holy people has been fully shattered, all these *things* will be finished.

8 And I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "My Lord, what *will be* the result of these *things*?"

9 And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, and made white, and refined. But the wicked will behave wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but the wise will understand.

11 "And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the abomination that causes

and righteous life.

**12:4** "Seal. . .until the time of the end" – 8:26. The book of Daniel has now been preserved for more than 2,500 years.

**12:5,6** A continuation of the vision which begins at 10:4,5. The question in v 6 seems to be, not how long will it be before those events are fulfilled? but, how long will it take to fulfill them once they began to take place? The events meant seem to be those of 11:35 - 12:1.

**12:7** This taking of an oath indicates that a very solemn and important matter is being referred to. Compare Deut 32:40,41; Ps 110:4; Heb 6:13-18; Rev 10:5,6.

"Time, times, and half a time" – see 7:25; 9:27; Rev 12:14; etc.

"Holy people" – the nation of Israel is called a holy people because God separated it from all other nations to be His special treasure (Ex 19:6; Deut 7:6). Now believers in Christ are called a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9,10). Who is meant here in Daniel? Israel and the holy land have been at the heart of the prophecy to this point (10:14; 11:39,31-34,45; 12:1). Here the meaning seems to be that the end will come when the nation of Israel is crushed and brought to its lowest condition.

**12:8** He did not understand the meaning of the words in v 7. He wanted to know the end result of the things of the prophecy given to him.

**12:9,10** It was not necessary for Daniel to understand anything further, and the Lord did not attempt to satisfy his curiosity. The heart of the prophecy related to the time of the end. Then the wise would be able to know all they would need to know. As the events unfold they will be able to understand what is happening. As for the wicked, their wickedness will blind them, and they will worship the antichrist.

"Refined" – 11:35; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:2-4. See Ps 66:10-12.

**12:11** The abolishing of sacrifices and the appearance of the abomination of

desolation is set up, *there will be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed *is* the one who waits, and comes to the *end of* the thousand three hundred and thirty-five

desolation are referred to also in 9:27 and 11:31. This verse does not say what will happen at the end of 1290 days. The persecutions by antichrist are said to be a time, times, and half a time (1260 days, 42 months). We are not told here what happens during these 30 extra days.  
**12:12** The meaning of this too is now hidden from us. Those who reach the end of those days will understand the blessedness of it. If we do not understand now it should not trouble us. Let us remember in the study of prophecy an important matter or two – living a life of love for God and man is far more important than understanding all

days.  
13 “But you, go *your* way until the end. For you will rest, and rise *to receive* your allotted portion at the end of the days.”

prophecy (1 Cor 13:2), and knowledge has a tendency to puff us up but love to build us up (1 Cor 8:1). But if we ask God in faith He will give us all the understanding we need to live lives of integrity and faithfulness whatever time we may live in. And to faithful believers who are living when prophecies of the end time at last have their fulfillment He will surely give all the understanding they will need to have.  
**12:13** “Rest” – here means death.  
“Rise”– v 2.  
“Allotted portion” – Matt 5:5; Acts 20:32; Rom 8:17; Eph 1:11; Col 1:12; 3:24; Heb 9:15.

# HOSEA

## Author:

Hosea, the son of Beeri. His name means “salvation” or “save”. All we know about him is what is written in this book. Neither he nor his ministry is mentioned anywhere else in the Old Testament.

## Date:

The kings mentioned in the first verse reigned 740-700 BC. Hosea and Isaiah prophesied at the same time. See Isa 1:1.

## Theme:

The people of Israel had forsaken the true God and had fallen into false worship and idolatry. As a result their personal lives and their national life as a whole had become corrupt. Hosea (and God speaking through Hosea) urged them to repent and turn back to the God they had deserted. He set forth the long-suffering love of God, and depicted Israel as an adulterous wife. Though the behavior of His people brought great grief to God, He did not cease to love them, or to call them back to Himself. The prophet shows that eventually Israel would turn back to God.

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**1** The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

2 At the beginning of the word of the LORD to Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, "Go, take a prostitute as your wife, and *have* children by a prostitute; for the land has engaged in great prostitution, *departing* from the LORD." 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. She conceived and bore him a son.

4 And the LORD said to him, "Call his name Jezreel; for *in* just a little *while* I will avenge the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease. 5 And on that day it will come about that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

6 And she conceived again, and bore a daughter. And God said to him, "Call her name

Lo-Ruhamah; for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but will utterly take them away. 7 But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them through the LORD their God, but will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by battle, by horses, or by horsemen."

8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then God said, "Call his name Lo-Ammi; for you are not my people, and I will not be your God."

10 "Yet the number of the children of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And this will happen: in the place where it was said to them, '*You are* not my people', *there* it will be said to them, '*You are* the sons of the living God.' 11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel will be gathered together, and appoint one head for themselves, and they will come up out of the land; for great will

1:1 "The word . . . came" – 2 Sam 24:11; 1 Kings 16:7; Isa 38:4; Jer 1:2; Ezek 1:3.

"Hosea" – the name means "save" or "salvation."

"Kings of Judah" – Isa 1:1. Isaiah and Hosea lived and prophesied during the same years.

"Son of Joash" – 2 Kings 14:23-29.

1:2 "The LORD to Hosea" – the prophets of the Bible were living channels through whom the Word of God came. Compare 2 Sam 23:2; Jer 1:9; Matt 22:43; Acts 28:25; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:7; 2 Pet 1:21.

"Prostitute as your wife" – a possible meaning is this: God was telling him to marry a woman who He foresaw would later prove unfaithful to Hosea (3:1).

"Prostitution" – here the Lord is speaking of spiritual matters; the people of Israel had been unfaithful to God. See Ex 34:15; Lev 17:7; Deut 31:16; Jud 2:17; Jer 2:2,20; Ezek 16:15-34; 23:2,3. In spiritual matters forsaking God is the vilest thing that people can do.

1:3 Gomer means "perfection," but she proved far from perfect. Perfection is also what God wants for His people (compare Matt 5:48), but Israel as a nation proved as bad as Gomer the individual.

1:4 "Jezreel" – a wide valley or plain in the northern part of Palestine south of the hills of Galilee. Hosea was to name his son Jezreel as a sign to Israel. Compare Isa 8:3,18. The name means "God scatters". God was signifying what He was going to do.

"Jehu" – 1 Kings 19:16. The account of his rise to power in Israel and the massacre in the valley of Jezreel is in 2 Kings chapters 9 and 10. Jehu was the instrument God used in punishing the house of the wicked king Ahab, but God punished the house of Jehu for their own wickedness. Compare Isa 10:5,6,12; Jer 51:20-25.

"Cause. . . to cease" – 2 Kings 17:1-23. The kingdom of Israel was made up of ten tribes descended from Jacob (Israel). It

was different from the kingdom of Judah – v 7. 1 Kings chapter 12 describes how the division came about.

1:5 Israel's military power was broken in the valley of Jezreel some months before Samaria fell to the Assyrians.

1:6 "Lo-Ruhamah" – means "not an obtainer of mercy", "not loved." God had borne patiently with the northern kingdom for two hundred years. He sent them great prophets like Elijah and Elisha. See 2 Kings 17:13. But they refused His love and trampled underfoot all His commands. At last things had reached a state where God would no longer bear it and so He brought their kingdom to an end. Compare Gen 6:3,6,7; Prov 1:22-29; Jer 7:13,25.

1:7 God showed love to Judah for another hundred and twenty years, until they too went the same way as Israel.

"Not. . . by bow" – Ps 33:16,17; Isa 37:36,37; Zech 4:6.

1:8,9 "Lo-Ammi" means "not my people". Temporarily God was rejecting them because they were rejecting Him. This was according to His word through Moses in Deut 31:16-18. Compare Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68.

1:10 In Rom 9:26 Paul applies this verse in a spiritual sense to the conversion of non-Jewish peoples. This does not mean that he was teaching there could be no literal fulfillment in the nation of Israel. See Rom 11:26-29. Here through Hosea God says that His rejection of Israel was only temporary.

"Sand" – Gen 22:17; 32:12.

"The place" – the land of Israel. This is where God said that Israel was not His people, so this is where God would call them His sons. This seems to speak of the restoration and transformation of that people descended from Jacob. Compare 2:23; Lev 26:40-45; Isa 11:12; Jer 23:5,6; 30:1-3; 31:27,28; Ezek 37:11-14; Amos 9:14,15.

1:11 "Together" – Ezek 37:15-23.

"One head" – 3:5; Jer 30:21; Ezek 37:24,25.

be the day of Jezreel.

2 "Say to your brethren, 'Ammi', and to your sisters, 'Ruhamah.'

2 "Bring charges against your mother, bringing charges; for she *is* not my wife, nor *am* I her husband. But let her put away her prostitution from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts,

3 so that I do not strip her naked, and expose her as on the day she was born, and make her like a wilderness, and make her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.

4 And I will not have mercy on her children, for they *are* children of prostitution.

5 For their mother has behaved like a prostitute; she who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers who give *me* my food and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'

6 Therefore, see, I will block your way with thorns, and make a wall so that she cannot find her paths.

7 And she will follow her lovers, but she will not catch up with them; and she will seek them, but not find *them*. Then she will say, 'I will go and return

to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.'

8 For she did not know that *it was* I *who* gave her grain and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they used for Baal.

9 "Therefore I will return, and take away my grain at its time, and my wine in its season, and will take back my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness.

10 And now I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one will deliver her from my hand.

11 I will also put a stop to all her rejoicing, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, all her appointed feasts.

12 And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, of which she has said, 'These *are* my rewards that my lovers have given me.' And I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field will eat them.

13 And I will punish her for the days of the Baals, when she burned incense to them, and adorned herself with her earrings and her jewels, and went after her lovers,

"Day of Jezreel" – the day when God blesses His people in the great valley where He once punished them.

2:1 Compare 1:6,8. This points to a complete reversal of God's dealings with Israel. Ammi means "my people." Ruhamah means "obtainer of mercy."

2:2 "Bring charges against" – this seems a better translation than "plead with."

"Mother" – from here to the end of the chapter God speaks through the prophet about the kingdom of Israel.

"Not my wife" – Israel was unfaithful to God and was like a woman forsaking her husband (1:2). So He was presently rejecting that people as if He were no longer its "husband".

"Let her put away" – repentance was the only hope for them.

2:3 Ezek 16:37; Lev 26:31-33; Deut 28:63.

2:4,5 1:6. The people of the kingdom of Israel, spiritually speaking, were not the children of God. Israel had turned to idols and the people were "children" of false gods. Morally, ethically and spiritually they were the result of the union of Israel with idolatry.

"I will go" – Jer 3:1,6; 44:17,18.

2:6 God would make it very difficult for Israel to continue in its idolatrous practices.

2:7 This suggests that Israel would

experience great disappointments with the idols and gods it went after, and eventually return to the one true God. Compare Lev 26:40-45.

2:8 Verse 5. The people thought God's good gifts came from the false gods they worshiped.

"Used for Baal" – compare Ezek 16:15-19. Note on "Baal" at Jud 2:11.

2:9-13 God had made Israel prosperous, and He would ruin their prosperity because of their idolatry and many sins.

2:9 "Grain" – "corn" (KJV) was not then a crop in that part of the world.

2:10 "From my hand" – see Heb 10:31. None of the gods Israel worshiped, none of the nations it begged for help would be able to rescue it.

2:11 Their religious feasts had become a mockery. God had appointed them (Leviticus chapter 23), but they had no heart for God when they observed them. Compare Isa 1:12-17. So for a time He would make it impossible to them to observe them.

2:13 God declares repeatedly in His Word that He will punish idolatry – Deut 13:1-8; 27:15; Rev 21:8.

"Forgot me" – the very thing God often warned them about (Deut 6:12; 8:11, 14,19).

and forgot me, says the LORD.

- 14 "Therefore, see, I will allure her,  
and bring her into the wilderness,  
and speak to her heart.  
15 And there I will give her vineyards  
back to her and the valley of Achor  
as a door of hope.  
And she will sing there,  
as in the days of her youth,  
and as on the day when she came up  
out of the land of Egypt.  
16 "And it shall be on that day,  
says the LORD, *that* you will call me Ishi,  
and will no longer call me Baali.  
17 For I will take away the names of the  
Baal from her mouth,  
and they will no more be remembered  
by their name.  
18 And on that day I will make a covenant  
for them with the beasts of the field,  
and with the birds of the sky,  
and *with* the creeping things of  
the ground.  
And I will break the bow and the sword  
and *abolish* war from the earth,  
and will cause them to lie down in safety.  
19 And I will betroth you to me forever;

- yes, I will betroth you to me in  
righteousness, and in justice,  
and in loving kindness, and in mercies.  
20 I will betroth you to me in faithfulness;  
and you will know the LORD.  
21 "And it will happen on that day that  
I will answer, says the LORD,  
I will answer the heavens,  
and they will answer the earth,  
22 And the earth will answer the grain  
and the wine and the oil,  
and they will answer Jezreel.  
23 And I will sow her for myself in the earth.  
And I will have mercy on her who had  
not obtained mercy,  
and I will say to *those who were* not  
my people, 'You are my people,'  
and they will say, '*You are my God.*'"

**3** Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by a friend, but an adulteress. *Show her love* just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love *their* raisin cakes."

2 So I bought her for myself for fifteen *shekels* of silver, and *for* a homer and a half of barley.  
3 And I said to her, "You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not engage in prostitution, and you

**2:14-23** God here speaks of a time after Israel had suffered its punishment. He says He will bring the people back to Himself. See 1:10 - 2:1.

**2:14** God is saying He will take the nation Israel again as His "wife". That time will be like a new "betrothal" (vs 19,20).

"Speak to her heart" – the literal translation of the Hebrew.

**2:15** "Give her" – restore Israel's prosperity.

"Achor" – compare Isa 65:10. Achor was the place where Achan was punished for his sin – Josh 7:25,26. The word means "trouble". But God would transform trouble into blessing when Israel turned back to Him.

"Sing" – or possibly "respond."

"Youth" – compare Jer 2:2.

"Egypt" – 12:9; Ex 12:51; 14:30,31.

**2:16** "Ishi" – means "my husband" – Isa 54:5.

"Baali" – means "my master or "my Baal."

**2:17** Compare Ex 23:13; Ps 16:4. God says He will break Israel free from idolatry and fulfill the righteousness of the law in them.

**2:18** In other words, wild beasts will not harm them as they did in the time of their punishment (v 12). Compare Isa 11:6-9.

"Abolish war" – Ps 46:9; Isa 2:4; Zech 9:10.

**2:19,20** The LORD (Jehovah – Ex 3:14,15) will again take Israel as His "bride". From then on the five qualities He lists in these verses will prevail. Compare Isa 1:27; 54:8.

"In righteousness" – or "with righteousness." "Know" – compare Jer 24:7; 31:34.

**2:21,22** When Israel turns back to God He will make the land and the people fruitful and prosperous again.

**2:23** "In the earth" – or "in the land" – Jer 23:8; Ezek 36:24; 37:24,25; Amos 9:15. The same Hebrew word means both earth and land.

"My people" – 1:8; 2:1. Compare Rom 9:25. See note at Hos 1:10.

"My God" – they will take the one true God as their God again and renounce false gods and idols.

**3:1** "Adulteress" – 1:2. The Lord for a time would not show His love to Israel – 1:6, but His love had not been destroyed (compare Song of songs 8:6,7). We should be very glad that God's love is not as changeable and fleeting as ours can be.

"Raisin cakes" – these were offerings the people made for the false god Baal.

**3:2,3** "Fifteen shekels" – about 170 grams. It seems from this that Gomer, Hosea's wife, had become a slave. Possibly one of her lovers had sold her into slavery. So Hosea paid in money and grain the total price to buy her back. The value put on a female slave was thirty shekels – Ex 21:7,32.

"Homer and a half" – about ten bushels or 330 liters. Gomer's slavery was a picture of the captivity and enslavement of Israel to foreign nations. But God would release them from captivity in due time (Jer 30:8).

shall not be for *another* man; so I *will* also *be* for you."

4 For the children of Israel will remain many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and *without* teraphim. 5 Afterward the children of Israel will return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and will show reverence for the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

4 Hear the word of the LORD,  
you children of Israel;  
for the LORD has a controversy to bring  
with the inhabitants of the land:  
"For *there is* no faithfulness, or mercy,  
or knowledge of God in the land,  
2 *but* swearing, and lying, and killing,  
and stealing, and committing adultery.  
They use violence, and bloodshed  
follows bloodshed.  
3 Therefore the land will mourn,  
and everyone who lives in it will  
waste away,  
along with the beasts of the field and  
the birds of the sky;

3:4 God would remove them from the land of Israel and bring them under foreign rule. They would not be able to worship as they had been doing.

"Ephod" – see Ex 25:7. Here the word is used of something connected with idolatry, and not for the purpose God designed.

"Teraphim" – household gods.

3:5 This is a clear statement of the future turning of Israel to God (5:15; Isa 10:20).

"David" – see Jer 30:9; Ezek 34:23,24; 37:24,25.

"The latter days" – Deut 4:30; Isa 2:2; Jer 50:4,5.

4:1 "Word of the LORD" – 1:1.

"Controversy" – God now brings against the people of the northern kingdom of Israel (v 15) a fuller description of their wrongdoing.

"No faithfulness" – Ps 12:1; 18:25,26; 78:8,37.

"No mercy" – they were failing in every-thing God wanted them to be.

"No knowledge" – 2:20. They did not know the Lord and did not want to know Him. Compare Rom 1:28.

4:2 "Swearing" – the Hebrew means to pronounce a curse on.

"Use violence. . . bloodshed" – when a people lack faithfulness, mercy and the knowledge of God there will be little or no restraints on their sinful nature. They will plunge into the evils God most hates (Prov 6:16-19).

4:3 There are terrible penalties that come on people who live as Israel did. Their whole country would be involved in punishment for

yes, the fish in the sea will also be taken away.

4 "But let no man strive, or rebuke another; for your people *are* like those who strive with the priest.

5 Therefore you will stumble in the day, and the prophet also will stumble with you in the night, and I will destroy your mother.

6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Because you have rejected knowledge,  
I will also reject you,  
so that you will not be a priest for me.  
Since you have forgotten the law of  
your God,  
I will also forget your children.

7 The more they increased, the more they sinned against me;  
*therefore* I will change their glory  
into shame.

8 They feed on the sin of my people,  
and they set their heart on their evil.

9 And it will be,  
'Like people, like priest';  
and I will punish them for their ways,

their sins.  
4:4 All were guilty, people and priests alike, so no one should accuse and condemn anyone else. Compare Rom 2:1-4.

"Priest" – note at Ex 28:1.

4:5 "Day", "night" – there was no rest from sinning. Sin makes a cruel master, keeping its slaves on the job continually.

"Prophet also" – compare Isa 28:7; Jer 2:8,26; 5:13,31; 6:13; Ezek 13:2.

"Mother" – the kingdom of Israel.

4:6 Lack of knowledge of God and His ways is a great destroyer of people – Prov 1:29-32; 10:21; Isa 1:3; Eph 4:18,19.

"Rejected knowledge" – He speaks now to the priests and says their lack of knowledge of God was deliberate. They did not know God and His ways because they did not wish to know.

"Forgotten the law" – they failed in their most important task (Deut 31:9-13; 2 Chron 17:8,9; Ezra 7:10).

"Forget your children" – they ignored what was most important to God; He would ignore what was most important to them. Compare Ps 18:25,26; Gal 6:7.

4:7 Compare Ps 106:20; Rom 1:23.

4:8 When people sinned they brought sacrifices to the priests to offer. The priests ate those offerings – Lev 6:24-29. The more the people sinned the more sacrifices they brought and the more the priests could take for themselves. They were not the last of the priests or religious leaders to make use of people's sins for selfish reasons. It goes on to this day.

4:9 People will become like their religious

- and repay them for their deeds.  
 10 For they will eat, but not have enough.  
 They will engage in prostitution,  
 but shall not increase;  
 because they have stopped obeying the LORD.  
 11 Prostitution and wine and new wine  
 take away the heart.  
 12 My people ask counsel from their wooden *idols*,  
 and get their answers from their rod  
 of divination.  
 For the spirit of prostitution has caused  
*them* to go astray,  
 and they have given themselves to  
 prostitution against their God.  
 13 They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains,  
 and burn incense on the hills, under  
 oaks and poplars and terebinths,  
 because their shade is good.  
 Therefore your daughters engage in  
 prostitution and your brides  
 commit adultery.  
 14 "I will not punish your daughters  
 when they engage in prostitution,  
 or your brides when they commit adultery,  
 because *the men* themselves go off  
 with harlots and offer sacrifices

teachers and leaders and they will be punished like them.

"Repay" – Deut 32:35; 1 Kings 2:32,44; Ps 28:4; Prov 24:12.

**4:10-12** "Enough" – Lev 26:26; Micah 6:14.  
 "Prostitution" – He probably meant both literal and figurative prostitution, sexual sins and the sin of forsaking the true God for idols (v 13). These two sins sometimes go together.

"Wine" – 7:5,14; Prov 20:1; 23:31.

"Ask counsel from. . . idol" – compare 2 Kings 1:2-4; 2 Chron 25:15; Isa 19:3; 44:14-20; Ezek 21:21.

"Spirit of prostitution" – 5:4. This means a mind to leave the true God and run after gods and idols.

**4:13** "Hills" – 10:8; Deut 12:2; 1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 17:10; Jer 2:20.

**4:14** The daughters and daughters-in-law learned their evil behavior from the men and so the men were more guilty than they.

"Temple prostitutes" – women connected with idol temples and shrines who engaged in sexual sins with the men who came to worship.

"Without understanding" – v 6. Ruin will be the result to any people anywhere who refuse the knowledge of the true God.

**4:15** Notice the distinction between the northern kingdom and the southern. Gilgal and Beth Aven were places where the northern kingdom had places of idol worship. "Beth Aven" means "house of wickedness". Here it is used to indicate Bethel (which means "house of God" – Gen 28:19). The people of Israel had changed the "house of

with temple prostitutes.

So a people without understanding fall  
*into ruin*.

- 15 "Though you, Israel, act like a prostitute, let not Judah offend.  
 So do not come to Gilgal,  
 nor go up to Beth-Aven,  
 nor swear, 'As the LORD lives.'  
 16 For Israel is as stubborn as a rebellious heifer.  
 How can the LORD pasture them like a  
 lamb in a large field?  
 17 Ephraim *is* joined to idols;  
 let him alone.  
 18 Their drink is sour;  
 they give themselves to prostitution  
 continually;  
 her rulers love shamefully, *saying*, 'Give!'  
 19 The wind wraps her up in its wings,  
 and they will be put to shame  
 because of their sacrifices.

**5** "Hear this, O priests!  
 Pay attention, house of Israel!  
 Give ear, O royal house!  
 For judgment is against you, because  
 you have been a snare at Mizpah,

God" into a place of evil practices. Compare Matt 21:12,13.

"As the LORD lives" – taking an oath in the name of Jehovah God. The people of Israel did this hypocritically – they were devoted to idols.

**4:16** "Stubborn" – compare Deut 9:7; 1 Sam 15:23; Ps 78:8; 81:12; Isa 1:5; Jer 5:23; 7:24.

"Heifer" – the nation was like a young rebellious cow.

"Lamb" – God cannot treat people like His young sheep when they are like cattle which refuse to accept training.

**4:17** "Ephraim" is here used for the whole northern kingdom of Israel – see Isa 7:2,5,8,9,17; 11:13; Jer 7:15.

"Leave him alone" – that kingdom was so determined to ignore God and worship idols that nothing could be done for it (1:4-6; Prov 29:1).

**4:18** They did not need to drink in order to abandon themselves to sin.

**4:19** "Wind" – compare 8:7; 13:15; Ps 1:4; Prov 1:27; Isa 40:24.

"Shame" – Isa 1:29. By worshipping idols they thought they would have prosperity and peace. Instead they would be ruined and destroyed – vs 6,14.

**5:1** Political leaders, religious leaders and people were all guilty.

"Snare. . . net" – literal snares were to catch birds and animals, but here the words are used figuratively. They were catching people for their own selfish purposes and oppressing the poor and helpless. Mizpah was a town, Tabor a hill in Israel.

and a net spread on Tabor.  
2 And the rebels are deep in slaughter,  
though *I have* rebuked them all.  
3 I know Ephraim, *and* Israel is not  
hidden from me;  
for now, O Ephraim, you engage in  
prostitution, and Israel is defiled.  
4 "They will not employ their deeds to  
turn to their God,  
for the spirit of prostitution is among them,  
and they do not know the LORD.  
5 And the pride of Israel testifies against him.  
Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble  
in their wickedness.  
Judah also stumbles with them.  
6 They will go with their flocks and with  
their herds to seek the LORD,  
but they will not find *him*.  
He has withdrawn himself from them.  
7 They have dealt treacherously against  
the LORD;  
for they have begotten alien children.  
Now a New Moon *festival* will devour  
them with their portions.  
8 "Blow the horn in Gibeah,  
*and* the trumpet in Ramah!

Cry out loudly *at* Beth-Aven,  
'Behind you, O Benjamin!'  
9 Ephraim will be desolate in the day of rebuke.  
Among the tribes of Israel I make  
known what is sure.  
10 The princes of Judah are like those  
who remove boundary *stones*,  
*therefore* I will pour out my wrath on  
them like water.  
11 Ephraim is oppressed *and* broken in  
judgment,  
because he willingly followed *human* orders.  
12 Therefore I *will be* to Ephraim like a moth,  
and to the house of Judah like rot.  
13 When Ephraim saw his sickness,  
and Judah *saw* his wound,  
then Ephraim went to the Assyrian,  
and sent a *message* to king Jareb.  
But he could not cure you,  
or heal you of your wound.  
14 For I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim,  
and like a young lion to the house  
of Judah.  
I *myself* will tear *them* and go away.  
I will take *them* away,  
and no one will rescue *then*.  
15 I will go away *and* return to my place,

5:2 God's rebukes are often ignored by those who are determined to go on their own way.  
5:3 "I know" – Ps 33:13-15; 94:9; Prov 5:21; Jer 16:17; 23:24; Amos 5:12; Heb 4:13.  
"Ephraim" – note at 4:17.  
"Prostitution" – 1:2; 2:2; 4:10-12.  
5:4 "To turn" – they had hardened their hearts so much with their sins that they had no desire to repent. Compare Heb 3:13.  
"Spirit of prostitution" – 4:11.  
"Not know" – 4:6; Jer 4:22.  
5:5 "Pride" – those who are the most spiritually ignorant are often the most arrogant, and they who have least to be proud about are often the most proud.  
"Judah" – the southern kingdom was being affected by the idolatry and corruption of the northern kingdom.  
5:6 "Seek" – 1 Chron 16:10,11; 2 Chron 7:14; Ps 27:8; 119:2; Jer 29:13; Matt 7:1. Seeking God from proper motives is the best thing anyone can do. But Israel was not seeking God from right motives. They continued in their idolatry and corruption but wanted God's blessing on top of it. So He would have nothing to do with them. Compare Isa 58:1-4. The Bible tells us how we must seek God if we would find Him – Isa 55:6,7; Jam 4:8-10.  
5:7 1:2; 2:4. As long as they were determined to continue in their sins their seeking God was in vain.  
"New Moon" – Isa 1:14. In spite of their attempts to worship God, judgment and

destruction were coming.  
5:8 War was about to come on the northern kingdom.  
"Beth Aven" – note at 4:15.  
"Benjamin" – this area was a part of the southern kingdom. It would join with other people against Israel.  
5:9 "Sure" – Isa 46:10; Zech 1:6. When God speaks of judgment on sinful people it is no idle threat.  
5:10 "Judah" – evidently the southern kingdom had taken part of Israel's territory. The Bible forbids moving boundary stones – Deut 19:14; Prov 22:28. Judah's leaders would pay the penalty for breaking God's command.  
5:12 God had decided to destroy both Israel and Judah.  
5:13 Both Israel and Judah had been defeated by foreign armies and left like a wounded body. Compare Isa 1:5-7. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.  
5:14 This is why the king of Assyria was not able to help Israel. God was against Israel and had decreed its destruction – v 9. If God is against us who can be for us?  
"Tear them" – God would use foreign armies to tear them, so it was as if He were doing it. Compare Isa 10:5-7; 13:4; Jer 25:9.  
5:15 God would leave Israel as He said He would – 1:6,9; Josh 24:20; 2 Kings 21:14.  
"Until" – He would not forsake them forever, but would wait for true repentance. Compare Isa 54:7; Rom 11:11,25-27. God says a time would come when Israel



until they acknowledge their offense,  
and seek my face.

In their affliction they will seek me earnestly."

**6** "Come, and let *us* return to the LORD;  
for he has torn *us*, but he will heal *us*.  
He has struck *us*, but he will bind up  
our *wounds*.

2 After two days he will revive *us*;  
on the third day he will raise *us* up,  
and we will live in his sight.

3 Then we will know the LORD,  
*if* we press on to know him.  
His coming is as certain as the morning,  
and he will come to *us* like the rain,  
like the latter *and* former rain to the earth."

4 "O Ephraim, what shall I do with you?  
O Judah, what shall I do with you?  
For your goodness *is* like a morning cloud,  
and it goes away like the early dew.

5 Therefore I have cut *them* down by the  
prophets,  
I have slain them by the words of my mouth.  
And judgments on you *are like* light  
going forth.

6 For I delight in mercy, and not sacrifice,  
and the knowledge of God more than  
burnt offerings.

7 But like men they have transgressed  
the covenant.

There they have dealt  
treacherously against me.

8 Gilead *is* a city of evildoers,  
*and is* defiled with blood.

9 And as bands of robbers lie in wait for  
a man,  
so the company of priests commit  
murder on the way to Shechem;  
they commit shameful deeds.

10 I have seen a horrible thing in the  
house of Israel.  
There *is* the prostitution of Ephraim,  
Israel is defiled.

11 Also, O Judah, there is a harvest  
appointed for you, when I bring  
back my people from captivity.

**7** "When I would have healed Israel,  
then the guilt of Ephraim was  
uncovered,  
and the wickedness of Samaria;  
for they practice deceit.

The thief comes in, *and* the band of  
robbers plunders outside.

2 And they do not consider in their  
hearts *that* I remember all their

and Judah would seek Him in a proper way.  
Compare vs 6,7.

**6:1-3** These words seem to indicate the  
repentance and faith that would come to  
Israel and Judah sometime after God tore  
them to pieces and withdrew from them  
(5:14,15). Hosea is putting these words  
into the mouths of a future generation of  
people. They could not have spoken these  
words at the time Hosea was writing because  
God had not yet torn them to pieces. But  
eventually that nation would understand that  
God had torn them in justice and would heal  
them in mercy, that He tore them just so  
they would turn to Him for mercy.

**6:2** "Two days . . . third day" – a compara-  
tively brief time. But see 2 Pet 3:8.

"Revive. . . raise" – compare 2:14-23;  
Isa 44:26; 49:6,8; 57:18; 61:4; Jer  
15:19; 16:15; 30:17,18; Ezek 37:11-14.  
**6:3** "Know" – 2:20.

"Press on" – compare Phil 3:10-12.  
"He will come" – words indicating faith.  
Rains came to the land of Israel in winter  
and spring and brought life to the land. God  
would come and rain blessings again on His  
people. Compare 10:12; Ps 72:6; Isa  
44:3; 45:8; Ezek 34:26.

**6:4** "I" – God speaks again. At the same  
time Hosea wrote neither Israel nor Judah  
was for a complete turning to God. What  
little devotion they had to Him was very brief.

**6:5** God pronounced judgment on them  
through His prophets, and once pronounced

its coming was absolutely certain. The words  
of His mouth were spoken through His  
prophets and they signified destruction for  
the people. Compare Jer 23:29.

**6:6** Here is the reason why God punished  
His people. They were content with the outer  
forms of their religion and rejected its heart.  
Compare Ps 50:7-23; Isa 1:11-17; Matt  
23:23,24. See also Matt 9:13 and 12:7  
where Jesus quoted these words.

**6:7** "Like men" – this could be translated  
"like Adam". The Hebrew word for Adam  
and man is the same.

**6:8** "Gilead" – 12:11. A palce belonging to  
Israel east of the Jordan river.

**6:9** "Priests" – not only did they fail in their  
most important task (4:6), they trampled  
God's law under their feet and became  
utterly vile.

**6:10** 4:10,12,18; 5:3,4.

**6:11** "Bring. . . from captivity" – this could  
be translated "restore the well-being of" –  
the Hebrew means either.

**7:1** God did not want to punish His people.  
He much preferred to heal and bless them  
(compare Matt 23:37. See note at Jer  
48:31-39). But He could not justly do so.  
The great Judge of the universe must uphold  
justice and righteousness and punish those  
who break His laws.

"Samaria" – 8:5,6.

**7:2** "I remember" – 8:13; Jer 14:10;  
44:21,22. Compare Jer 31:34; Heb 8:12;  
10:17.

wickedness.  
Now their own deeds have surrounded them; they are before my face.

3 "They make the king glad with their wickedness,  
and *please* the princes with their lies.

4 They *are* all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker,  
*who* stops stirring up *the fire* after kneading the dough until it is leavened.

5 On the king's *special* day the princes become inflamed with bottles of wine.  
He stretches out his hand with scoffers.

6 For they prepare their heart like an oven,  
while they lie in wait.  
Their baker sleeps all night;  
in the morning it burns like a blazing fire.

7 They are all as hot as an oven,  
and they have devoured their judges.  
All their kings have fallen.  
*There is* none among them who calls out to me.

8 "Ephraim has mixed himself among the peoples.  
Ephraim is a cake not turned over.

9 Foreigners have devoured his strength,  
and he does not know *it*.  
Yes, gray hairs are here and there on him,  
but he does not know it.

10 And the pride of Israel testifies against him.  
And they do not return to the LORD

their God, or seek him,  
in spite of all this.

11 "And Ephraim has become like a silly dove without heart.  
They call out to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

12 When they go, I will spread my net on them.  
I will bring them down like the birds of the sky.  
I will punish them, as their congregation has heard.

13 Woe to them!  
For they have strayed from me.  
Destruction to them!  
Because they have transgressed against me.  
Though I redeemed them, they have spoken lies against me.

14 And they have not cried out to me with their heart,  
when they wailed on their beds.  
They gather together for grain and new wine, *but* they rebel against me.

15 Though I trained *and* strengthened their arms,  
they plot evil against me.

16 They return, *but* not to the Most High.  
They are like a deceitful bow.  
Their princes will fall by the sword because of the insolence of their tongue.  
This is *why* they *will be* mocked in the land of Egypt.

"Before my face" – 5:3; Ps 90:8.  
7:3 4:2; Micah 7:3. Only wicked rulers take delight in the wickedness of their people.  
7:4-7 These verses describe the condition among the people that delighted their rulers – adultery, drunkenness and uncontrollable passions. Verse 13 gives the result. All this in the midst of a people God chose to be His holy people and a special treasure!  
7:5 "Scoffers" – Ps 1:1; Prov 1:22; 21:24; 2 Pet 3:3. They who live evil lives will mock at the things of God.  
7:7 "Their judges" – or "their leaders" or "their rulers." The history of the northern kingdom of Israel was full of intrigues and assassinations of rulers. Some kings lasted only a year or two, some only a few months, one only seven days. In the 200 years of the existence of that kingdom not one of its kings was a good man who tried to serve God.  
7:8 "Mixed" – Israel was the exact opposite of what God wanted them to be (v 11; Ex 19:5,6; Deut 7:1-6). Compare 2 Cor 6:14-18.  
"Not turned" – burned on one side, raw on the other; unfit for the purpose it was made.  
7:9 Alliances with foreign countries cost them dearly both economically and spiritually. And

Israel was getting old and enfeebled and still remained in ignorance of it.  
7:10 "Pride" – 5:5. "Seek" – they sought God half-heartedly and from wrong motives (v 14; 5:6,7).  
7:11 "Silly" – Isa 1:3; Jer 5:21. Instead of seeking help from the Almighty they sought it from various military alliances. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.  
7:12 God knows how to deal with people who behave like that. Compare 5:13,14.  
7:13 "Woe" – 9:12; Isa 3:9,11; 5:8,11,18, 20,21,22.  
"I redeemed them" – note on redeem at Ps 78:35. God had often freed them from their troubles and their enemies, but this is how they repaid him.  
7:14 "Heart" – they wept over their sufferings and troubles; they pitied themselves, but they would not heartily seek God. Compare Deut 4:29; 2 Chron 6:37,38; Jer 29:13.  
7:15 Israel was His people. All they had came from Him. He had done them good, but see what He got in return. This is the way with the people of this world. They want God's blessings and complain bitterly if they don't get them, but they will do only evil in return for all His good.  
7:16 "Deceitful bow" – they will be useless

- 8 "Put the trumpet to your mouth!  
*The enemy is coming* like an eagle  
 against the house of the LORD,  
 because they have transgressed my  
 covenant,  
 and rebelled against my law.
- 2 Israel will cry out to me,  
 'My God, we know you.'
- 3 Israel has rejected *what is* good.  
 The enemy will pursue him.
- 4 They have set up kings, but not by me.  
 They have made princes,  
 but I did not acknowledge *it*.  
 With their silver and their gold they  
 have made idols for themselves,  
 with the result that they will be cut off.
- 5 Your calf, O Samaria, is rejected.  
 My anger burns against them.  
 How long will *it be* before they attain  
 to innocence?
- 6 For this also *is* from Israel;  
 the workman made it, therefore *it is* not God.  
 That calf of Samaria will be broken in pieces.
- 7 "For they have sown the wind,  
 and they will reap the whirlwind.  
 The stalk has no bud; it will never produce meal.  
 Even if it did produce *meal*

- foreigners would swallow it up.
- 8 Israel is swallowed up.  
 Now they will be among the Gentiles  
 like a vessel in which  
 no *one takes* pleasure.
- 9 For they have gone up to Assyria,  
 a wild donkey alone by itself.  
 Ephraim has hired lovers.
- 10 Yes, though they hire *them* among  
 the nations, now I will gather them,  
 and they will begin to diminish because  
 of the burden of the king of princes.
- 11 "Because Ephraim has made many  
 altars for sin,  
 they have become for him altars for sinning.
- 12 I wrote for him the great things of my law,  
 but they were considered something alien.
- 13 They sacrifice flesh as the sacrifices  
 for my offerings, and eat *it* ;  
 but the LORD does not accept them.  
 Now he will remember their wickedness,  
 and punish their sins.  
 They will return to Egypt.
- 14 For Israel has forgotten his Maker,  
 and built temples;  
 and Judah has multiplied fortified cities.  
 But I will send a fire on his cities,

in the decisive battles to come.

8:1 "Trumpet" – to sound a warning.

"Eagle" – the Assyrian army.

"Covenant" – Ex 19:5.

"Rebelled" – 7:13.

8:2 Their cry would not sincere and accompanied with repentance (5:6,7).

8:3 "Good" – God's covenant, His law and His way.

8:4 "Kings" – 7:7; 2 Kings 15:8-30. They chose the rulers they wanted without taking into account what God wanted.

"Cut off" – observe the cause of the destruction coming on them – idolatry. Compare Ex 20:3-5; Lev 26:30-33; Deut 27:15.

8:5 "Calf" – 10:5. See 1 Kings 12:28-33. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom and here represents the whole nation.

"Anger" – Lev 26:28; Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; 11:16,17. Few things that go on in the world make God as angry as idolatry does.

8:6 "Workman" – Isa 40:20; 41:22-24; 44:9-20.

"Not God" – there is no connection whatever between any idol and the one true God. He will not accept any worship offered to an idol.

8:7 "Sown. . .reap" – Job 4:8; Prov 22:8; Gal 6:7,8.

"Foreigners" – Assyrians.

8:8 "Among the Gentiles" – 7:8. Gentiles means non-Jewish nations. Israel lost its character of being a separate people for God

and became like others. So God could take no pleasure in them.

8:9 Compare 2 Kings 15:19; 17:3.

8:10 They were willing to pay anyone who would promise to help them.

"Begin to diminish" – the translation of the KJV here – "shall sorrow a little" – is possible, but very unlikely.

8:11 They built altars to false gods, not to the one true God, so all their worship at those places was in defiance of God, and sinful.

8:12 "I wrote" – God says the writings of Moses came from Him. Moses was His pen. Compare 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21.

"Alien" – Israel had become so corrupted that their own law seemed strange to them.

8:13 Verse 2. Even when they offered sacrifices to God rather than to idols, they were lacking in sincerity and their worship was not acceptable. Compare Isa 1:11-17.

"Remember" – 7:2; 9:9.

"Egypt" – 7:11,16; 9:3,6. The Assyrians took most of the people away (2 Kings 17:3-6), but some of them escaped to Egypt (9:6).

8:14 "Forgotten" – see 2:13.

"Maker" – ignoring the Creator and turning to idols is a common sin among men (Rom 1:21-25,28). Since Israel had God's law their guilt in this was even worse than that of other peoples.

"Temples" – forgetting the Creator and building temples to false gods is also a common practice among men.

and it will devour *its* palaces."

- 9 Do not rejoice, O Israel,  
with joy like *other* people,  
for you have gone away from your God  
and engaged in prostitution.  
You have loved a *prostitute's* pay at  
every threshing floor.
- 2 The threshing floor and the winepress  
will not feed them,  
and the new wine will fail her.
- 3 They will not live in the LORD's land,  
but Ephraim will return to Egypt,  
and they will eat unclean things in Assyria.
- 4 They will not offer wine *offerings* to  
the LORD,  
nor will they be pleasing to him.  
Their sacrifices *will be* for them like the  
bread of mourners.  
All who eat it will be defiled;  
for their bread will be for their lives.  
It will not come into the house of the LORD.
- 5 What will you do on the appointed day,  
and on the day of the feast of the LORD?
- 6 For, see, they are going because of  
destruction.  
Egypt will gather them up,  
Memphis will bury them.  
Nettles will possess their treasures of silver,  
thorns *will be* in their tents.
- 7 The days of punishment are coming,  
the days of retribution are coming.

9:1 "Rejoice" – with God's judgment hanging over them it was folly to be rejoicing.

"Prostitution" – this is a recurring theme of this book (1:2; 2:2; 3:1; 4:1,10,12,15; 5:3,4).

9:2 2:9,12; 4:10.

9:3 The land of Israel is "the LORD's land." He will choose who should live there and who not.

"Egypt" – 8:13.

"Unclean" – see Leviticus chapter 11.

"Assyria" – 2 Kings 17:3-6.

9:4 "Bread of mourners. . . defiled" – Num 19:14; Deut 26:14; Jer 16:7.

"House" – there was only one temple of the LORD and that was in Jerusalem. And they would not be going there.

9:6 "Egypt" – 8:13. Memphis was the capital of northern Egypt.

"Nettles. . . thorns" – 2:12; 5:9; 10:8.

9:7 "Inspired man" – the same as a prophet. Note at Gen 20:7; 2 Pet 1:21. Israel considered God's spokesmen as fools and crazy people. Compare 2 Kings 9:11; Jer 29:26,27; Acts 26:24; 1 Cor 4:10.

"Hostility" – Lev 26:21,23,27. Compare Rom 8:7; Jam 4:4; Ps 51:4.

9:8 "Watchmen" – Isa 56:10; Jer 6:17; Ezek 3:17; 33:2-8. Observe that the

Let Israel know.

The prophet *is considered* a fool,  
the inspired man insane,  
because of your many evil deeds,  
and great hostility.

- 8 The watchman of Ephraim *is* with  
my God, a prophet;  
*yet* a bird catcher's snare *is* in all his ways,  
*and* hostility in the house of his God.
- 9 They have deeply corrupted *themselves*,  
as in the days of Gibeah.  
*Therefore* he will remember their iniquity,  
he will punish their sins.
- 10 "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness.  
I saw your fathers as the firstfruit of  
the fig tree in its first season.  
*But* they went to Baal-Peor,  
and dedicated themselves to *that*  
shameful thing,  
and they became as abominable as  
*what* they loved.
- 11 *As for* Ephraim, their glory will fly  
away like a bird, without birth,  
without pregnancy,  
and without conception.
- 12 Though they bring up their children,  
*yet* I will bereave them *until* no man *is* left;  
yes, and woe to them when I depart  
from them!
- 13 I have seen Ephraim, like Tyre,  
planted in a pleasant place.  
But Ephraim will bring out his children

watchman is a prophet "with God." God is the supreme "watchman".

"Ephraim" – note at 4:17. "A snare" and "hostility" were what faced all the faithful prophets who warned the people. This is abundantly clear in the history of Jeremiah.

9:9 "Gibeah" – see Judges chapters 19-21. That was one of the most corrupt times in Israel's history.

"Remember" – 7:2; 8:13; 13:12.

"Punish" – God is not keen to punish, but He does so when His justice demands it (Ex 34:6,7).

9:10 "I found Israel" – God speaks of the beginnings of the people of Israel as a nation when they came out of Egypt. He was delighted to have them as His people.

"Baal-Peor" – see Num 25:1-5. They gave themselves up to worship a "shameful" and "abominable" image. Note on Baal at Jud 2:11. Loving an immoral god they became immoral themselves – not an uncommon thing in our own day.

9:11 Israel would decrease in numbers and power and prosperity.

9:12 "When I depart from them" – 5:15. This is the greatest disaster possible to any people.

9:13 "Tyre" – see Ezek 27:1-25.

to the murderer."

14 Give them, O LORD; what will you give?  
Give them a miscarrying womb and dry  
breasts.

15 "All their wickedness *appeared* in Gilgal;  
so I hated them there.

Because of the evil of their deeds

I will drive them out of my house.

I will love them no more.

All their princes *are* rebels.

16 Ephraim is stricken;

their root is dried up.

They will bear no fruit.

Yes, even though they bear *children*,

I will slay the loved ones of their womb."

17 My God will reject them because they  
did not listen to him,  
and they will become wanderers among  
the nations.

**10** Israel became an empty vine.  
He brought forth fruit for himself.

As his fruit multiplied, he increased  
*the number of* altars.

As the prosperity of his land *increased*  
they adorned his sacred pillars.

2 Their heart is divided.

Now they must bear their guilt.

He will break down their altars,

he will ruin their sacred pillars.

3 For now they will say,

"We have no king, because we did not  
fear the LORD.

What then could a king do for us?"

4 They speak words, swearing falsely  
while making a covenant.

So judgment springs up like poisonous  
weeds in the furrows of the field.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria will fear  
for the calf *idols* of Beth-Aven;

yes, its people will mourn over it,  
and its priests, *who* have rejoiced  
over it for its splendour,

because it has *now* departed from it.

6 And *the idol* will be carried to  
Assyria as a present for King Jareb.  
Ephraim will be humiliated, and Israel  
will be ashamed of his own counsel.

7 *As for* Samaria, her king will be cut  
off like a stick on the water.

8 And the high places of Aven,  
the sin of Israel, will be destroyed.

The thorn and the thistle will come up

on their altars,  
and they will say to the mountains,

"Cover us!"

And to the hills, "Fall on us."

9 "O Israel, you have sinned from the  
days of Gibeah.

There they stood. *Then* the battle in  
Gibeah against the children of

"Murderer" – because of its sins Israel  
would face the slaughter of its children and  
be responsible for it.

**9:14** God has been speaking. Now Hosea  
speaks. Note on such prayers at Ps 35:8.

**9:15** God speaks again. "Gilgal" – 4:15 – a  
place of idol worship.

"I hated them" – this is just what God  
said would happen if Israel forsook Him and  
worshiped false gods (Lev 26:30). Note on  
"hate" at Mal 1:3. Compare Ps 5:5; 45:7;  
Prov 6:16.

"Love them no more" – 1:6.

**9:16** "No fruit" – 10:1; Jude 12.

**9:17** Again Hosea speaks.

"Reject" – 2 Kings 17:15,20; Jer 6:30.

"Wanderers" – this has been true during  
much of the history of the Jews.

**10:1** "Vine" – Isa 5:1-7.

"For himself" – instead of for God who  
planted the nation in the land.

"Altars . . . sacred pillars" – not to God  
but to false gods (4:7; 8:11; 12:11;  
1 Kings 12:33; 14:23; 16:32).

**10:2** "Divided" – Jam 1:8. "Guilt" – 13:16;  
Ex 34:7.

"Break down" – v 8. The Lord would  
cause others to do this and so it was the  
same as His doing it.

**10:3** They would speak so, after the

kingdom was destroyed and their king was  
in prison – 2 Kings 17:4-6.

**10:4** 4:1,2; 7:1. This is the way deceitful  
hearts (v 2) express themselves. Let us  
resolve to keep away from such poison. See  
1 Cor 6:1-8.

**10:5,6** "Samaria. . . calf idols" – 8:5. The  
people were worshiping a god which could  
do nothing to defend itself. The idol with all  
its splendor was powerless and was taken  
captive along with the people of Israel.

"Beth Aven" – note at 4:15.

"Humiliated. . . ashamed" – their  
weakness and folly and the powerlessness  
of their gods would be exposed. Note on  
Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.

**10:7** 2 Kings 17:4-6.

**10:8** "High places" – 4:13. "Aven" – 4:15.  
This could be translated as "wickedness", the  
meaning of the Hebrew word. Their high  
places were places of wickedness because  
there Israel forsook God and worshiped idols.

"The sin of Israel" – 1 Kings 12:30;  
13:33,34; 16:26.

"Fall on us" – the danger and suffering  
caused by invading Assyrians would be so  
great that the people would prefer to have  
a mountain fall on them and end their  
misery. Compare Luke 23:30; Rev 6:16.

**10:9** See 9:9. God is speaking here.

- wickedness did not overtake them.
- 10 *When it is* my desire I will punish them;  
and peoples will be gathered against  
them, when they are to be bound for  
their two transgressions.
- 11 And Ephraim *is* like a trained heifer  
*that* loves to thresh *the grain*,  
but I will put *a yoke* on her fair neck.  
I will drive Ephraim; Judah will plow,  
*and Jacob will break up his clods."*
- 12 Sow for yourselves in righteousness,  
reap in mercy.  
Break up your fallow ground.  
For *it is* time to seek the LORD,  
until he comes and rains  
righteousness on you.
- 13 You have plowed wickedness,  
you have reaped evil.  
You have eaten the fruit of lies,  
because you trusted in your way,  
in your many mighty men.
- 14 Therefore a tumult will arise among  
your people,  
and all your fortresses will be plundered,  
as Shalman spoiled Beth Arbel on the  
day of battle;

**10:10** "When it is my desire" – God has a proper time for everything, and we should not think that because judgment does not come for a long time it will not come at all. Compare 2 Pet 3:4-9.

"Two transgressions" – perhaps the two calf idols, one at Dan and one at Bethel. Or perhaps the double sin described in Jer 2:13. The KJV translation of the last sentence of this verse is very doubtful.

**10:11** "Ephraim" and "Jacob" signify the kingdom of Israel. Judah means the southern kingdom. Both would eventually go into captivity and work for their captors.

**10:12** "Sow. . .reap" – God's law of sowing and reaping is always at work. See 8:7; Job 4:8; Ps 126:5,6; Prov 11:18; 22:8; Eccl 11:6; Gal 6:7. Israel had been "sowing" evil and would reap punishment. They should "sow" right actions and "reap" God's loving blessings.

"Fallow ground" – Jer 4:3. He means the "unplowed" hard condition of their hearts.

"Seek the LORD" – Deut 4:29; Ps 9:10; 22:26; 34:10; 69:32; Jer 29:13; Matt 7:7,8. This is the only way to break up hard hearts and to sow righteousness. We need His power and wisdom to accomplish any spiritual work.

"Rains righteousness" – Isa 45:8. This is the kind of rain we need – God's blessing which will make us behave righteously and justly. And we should seek God until He gives us this kind of "rain."

**10:13** Israel had been sowing the wrong sort of "seed" and it resulted in great trouble.

"Lies" – v 2; 4:2; 7:13. Those who tell

- the mother was dashed in pieces on  
*her* children.
- 15 Thus it will be done to you, Bethel,  
because of your great wickedness.  
In *one* morning the king of Israel will  
be completely cut off.
- 11** "When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and called my son out of Egypt.
- 2 *But the more* they called *them*,  
the more they went away from them.  
They sacrificed to the Baals,  
and burned incense to carved images.
- 3 And I taught Ephraim to walk,  
taking them by their arms;  
but they did not know that I healed them.
- 4 I drew them with human cords,  
with bands of love.  
And I was for them like those who take  
off the yoke from their jaws,  
and I bent down and fed them.
- 5 "Will he not return to the land of Egypt?  
And the Assyrian will be his king,  
because they refused to return *to me*.
- 6 And the sword will whirl over his cities,  
and will make an end of his branches,

lies and listen to lies will have to endure the results of that kind of behaviour.

"Your way" – Isa 53:6.

"Mighty men" – instead of seeking God they put their confidence in human beings.

**10:14** We know nothing about Shalman's attack on Beth Arbel. This is the only place in the Bible where these names appear.

**10:15** "Bethel" – this is the town where one of the calf idols (v 5) was located (1 Kings 12:28,29). It became a center for idolatry and it would have to pay the price for that sin.

**11:1** Here God is speaking again. He is the one who loved Israel and called them out of Egypt – 9:10; Deut 4:37; 7:7,8.

"Called my son" – Ex 4:22,23; Deut 32:6; Isa 1:2-4; 64:8. Matthew applies these words to the Lord Jesus in Matt 2:15.

**11:2** "They" – refers to God's spokesmen the prophets through whom God called the people.

"Went away from them" – to turn away from the message of the prophets was the same as turning away from God – v 7; Jer 7:13; Isa 1:4; 2 Kings 17:13,14.

"Baals" – 2:8,13.

**11:3** Like a father God taught Israel how to behave.

"Healed" – Ex 15:26.

**11:4** Jer 31:3. In tender love God lifted the yoke of slavery in Egypt from them and fed them in the wilderness – Ex 2:23; 13:3; 16:13-18; Deut 7:8; Ps 78:25.

**11:5** "Refuse to return" – v 7; Job 36:10; Jer 5:3; Ezek 18:30,32.

**11:6** 13:16.



- and destroy *them*, because of their own plans.
- 7 And my people are bent on backsliding from me. Though they called them to the Most High, none at all would exalt *him*.
- 8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim?  
How can I give you up, Israel?  
How can I make you like Admah?  
How can I deal with you like Zeboim?  
My heart turns over within me,  
my compassions are kindled.
- 9 I will not execute the fierceness of my anger.  
I will not destroy Ephraim again,  
for I *am* God, and not man;  
the Holy One in your midst.  
And I will not enter the city.
- 10 They will follow the LORD.  
He will roar like a lion.  
When he roars, the children will come  
trembling from the west.
- 11 They will come trembling like a bird from Egypt,  
and like a dove from the land of Assyria;  
and I will settle them in their houses,  
says the LORD."
- 12 Ephraim has surrounded me with lies,  
and the house of Israel with deceit.  
And Judah still wanders restlessly against God,  
and against the faithful holy ones.

**11:7** "Bent" – they were not unknowingly displeasing God, but were very determined and stubborn in their wickedness, though He called them again and again (v 2).  
"Most High" – 7:16.

**11:8-11** Now God says He will not make a full end of Israel. He would punish the people but not completely destroy them. Israel would not become like Admah and Zeboim (cities near Sodom destroyed with Sodom – Gen 19:24,25; Deut 29:23; Jer 49:18). After sending Israel into exile He would regather them – v 11.

**11:8** "How" – God's great love for Israel would not permit Him to cast them off forever.  
"Compassions" – 2:19; Deut 30:3; 32:36; Ps 103:13; 116:5; 119:156; 145:9; Isa 14:1; Jam 5:11.

**11:9,10** "Anger" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.  
"Not man" – Num 23:19. Men may think God is like them (Ps 50:21), but He is not (Isa 55:8,9).  
"Holy One" – note at Lev 20:7.  
"Like a lion" – not against them as in 5:14, but as their Redeemer calling them home.

**11:11** Amos 9:14,15.

**11:12** Hosea now speaks again, and shows that if God shows compassion to Israel it will not be because they deserve it.  
"Lies. . .deceit" – 4:1,2; 10:2,4.  
The last sentence of this verse is

- 12** Ephraim feeds on the wind,  
and follows the east wind.  
Daily he multiplies lies and violence.  
And they make a covenant with the Assyrians,  
and oil is carried into Egypt.
- 2 The LORD also *brings* a charge against Judah,  
and will punish Jacob according to his ways;  
according to his deeds he will repay him.
- 3 In the womb he took his brother by the heel,  
and with his strength he struggled with God.
- 4 Yes, he struggled with the angel,  
and prevailed.  
He wept, and pleaded with him.  
He found him at Bethel, and there he spoke with us,
- 5 that is, the LORD God of hosts;  
the LORD *is* his memorial *name*.
- 6 Therefore turn to your God.  
Maintain mercy and justice,  
and wait on your God continually.
- 7 A merchant *with* the balances of deceit  
in his hand loves to oppress;
- 8 And Ephraim says,  
"Surely I have become rich,  
I have found wealth for myself.  
*In* all my labours they will find  
no evil in me that *can be called* sin."

somewhat obscure and difficult, but the translation of the KJV here – "But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints" – is very doubtful. For in Hosea Judah is not revealed as faithful – see 5:5,10,12,14; 6:4; 8:14; 12:2. Also the root meaning of the word translated "ruleth" in the KJV is to wander restlessly, to roam. The word translated "with" in the KJV also means against or near.

**12:1** This speaks of Israel's useless attempts to find a military ally – 5:13; 7:11; 8:9. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.

**12:2,3** "Judah" – 5:5,12-14; 6:4,11; 10:11; 11:12.  
"Jacob" – the people of Israel. They had behaved in accordance with the meaning of the name Jacob (Gen 25:26; 27:36).

**12:4** "Angel" – Gen 32:22-28.  
"Bethel" – Gen 28:12-19; 35:1-15.

**12:5** "LORD" – Jehovah. Note at Ex 3:14.

**12:6** Jacob had been a deceiver, but he later turned to God with his whole heart. This is what his descendants now needed to do.

"Justice" – Isa 1:16,17; Amos 5:15,24; Micah 6:8.

"Wait" – Ps 5:3; 27:14; 33:20; 37:7,34; 123:2. They (and all God's people always) should look to God for His help and favor rather than trying to find help from men.

**12:7,8** Ways in which the people of Israel revealed their deceitfulness. They deceived others and themselves, and thought their

- 9 "But I, *who am* the LORD your God  
since the land of Egypt,  
will make you live in tents again,  
as in the days of the appointed feast.
- 10 I have also spoken by the prophets,  
and I have multiplied visions,  
and given parables through the prophets."
- 11 *Is there* wickedness in Gilead?  
Surely they are worthless.  
They sacrifice bulls in Gilgal;  
yes, their altars *are* like heaps of  
stones in a plowed field.
- 12 And Jacob fled to the country of Syria,  
and Israel served *to get* a wife,  
and for a wife he kept *sheep*.
- 13 And by a prophet the LORD brought  
Israel out of Egypt,  
and by a prophet he was preserved.
- 14 Ephraim provoked *him* to anger most  
bitterly.  
Therefore his Lord will leave his  
bloodguilt on him,  
and bring back his scorn onto him.

**13** When Ephraim spoke, trembling,  
he exalted himself in Israel;  
but when he offended through Baal, he died.  
2 And now they sin more and more,  
and have made for themselves cast  
metal images with their silver,

deceitfulness would never be discovered.

"Rich" – compare Rev 3:17.

"Iniquity. . . sin" – sometimes those who  
are most wicked have the least  
consciousness of their wickedness, and can  
even boast that they are good. See Jer  
17:9; Luke 18:10-14.

**12:9** "Egypt" – 11:1.

"Tents again" – 2:14,15. The people of  
Israel lived in tents in the desert after they  
came out of Egypt – Ex 33:8; Num 1:52,53.

**12:10** "I have also spoken" – 1:1. Note on  
prophets at Gen 20:7.

"Visions" – note at Gen 15:1.

"Parables" – 2 Sam 12:1-4; Ps 78:2;  
Isa 5:1-7; Ezek 17:2; 24:3.

"Through the prophets" – Heb 1:1;  
2 Pet 1:21.

**12:11** "Gilead" – 6:8,9. "Gilgal" – 4:15;  
9:15.

**12:12** Gen 28:2,5; 29:20-28; 30:31;  
31:41. Jacob fled to Aram (Syria). His de-  
scendants would be taken there as captives  
(Syria became part of the Assyrian empire).

**12:13** "Prophet" – Moses (Num 12:6-8;  
Deut 18:15; 34:10). God used Moses to  
care for Israel.

**12:14** Ephraim signifies Israel. Their guilt  
was so great that God could no longer over-  
look it – 1:6.

"Bloodguilt" – 1:4; 4:2; 5:2; 6:8.

*and* idols according to their own  
understanding,  
all of it the work of the craftsmen.  
They say of them, "Let the men who  
sacrifice kiss the calves."

3 Therefore they will be like the morning cloud,  
and like the early dew that passes away,  
like the chaff *that* is driven by the  
whirlwind out of the threshing floor,  
and like the smoke out of the chimney.

4 "Yet I *am* the LORD your God since the  
land of Egypt,  
and you shall know no God but me;  
for *there is no* saviour except me.

5 I knew you in the wilderness,  
in the land of great drought.

6 When their pasture *was* rich,  
they became satisfied.  
They were satisfied, and their heart  
was exalted,

therefore they forgot me.

7 Therefore I will be to them like a lion.  
I will watch like a leopard by the wayside.

8 I will meet them like a bear robbed of  
*her cubs*,  
and will tear the flesh from their heart,  
and there I will devour them like a lion.  
A wild beast will tear them apart.

9 "O Israel, you have destroyed yourself,  
but your help *is* in me.

**13:1** In this verse "Ephraim" means one of  
the twelve tribes and "Israel" means all the  
twelve tribes.

"Trembling" – for a time Ephraim was one  
of the most powerful of the tribes. Joshua,  
Moses' successor, and Jeroboam, the  
founder of the northern kingdom, were from  
this tribe.

"Baal" – 2:8,13,17; 11:2.

"Died" – because of idolatry true spiritual  
life died out in Ephraim (compare Prov 14:12;  
Rom 6:23). The tribe lost also its power  
and prosperity.

**13:2** "More and more" – sin not forsaken  
always leads to more sin.

"Craftsmen" – 8:6.

**13:3** Israel would soon disappear from the  
land – 9:17; 10:7; 11:5.

**13:4** 11:1; 12:9; Ex 20:2,3; Isa 43:11;  
45:21,22.

**13:5** 11:3,4; 12:13.

**13:6** Deut 6:11,12; 8:10-14; 11:15,16;  
31:20; 32:15,18. It is very possible to set  
one's heart on the things God gives, to think  
we deserve them and so get puffed up, and  
then to forget the One who gave them.

**13:7,8** 5:14. Compare Lam 3:10,11.

**13:9** 9:7. What real help is there for those  
who reject their true Helper? But this is  
something we see on every hand. People  
oppose the one true God and then wonder

- 10 I will be your king.  
Where *is any other* to save you in all  
your cities?  
And *where are* your judges to whom you said,  
'Give me a king and princes?'
- 11 I gave you a king in my anger,  
and took *him* away in my wrath.
- 12 The wickedness of Ephraim is bound up.  
His sin *is* stored up.
- 13 Pains as a woman in childbirth will come on him.  
He *is* an unwise son, for he should not  
stay long in the *place where* children  
are born.
- 14 "I will ransom them from the power of  
the grave;  
I will redeem them from death.  
O death, I will be your plagues!  
O grave, I will be your destruction!  
Compassion will be hidden from my eyes.
- 15 Though he is fruitful among his brethren,  
an east wind will come.  
The wind of the LORD will come up  
from the desert,  
and his spring will become dry,  
and his fountain will dry up.  
It will plunder the treasury of every

valuable article.

- 16 Samaria will become desolate,  
for she has rebelled against her God.  
They will fall by the sword.  
Their infants will be dashed in pieces,  
and their pregnant women will be  
ripped up."

- 14** O Israel, return to the LORD your God,  
for you have stumbled by your wickedness.
- 2 Take with you words,  
and turn to the LORD.  
Say to him, "Take away all guilt,  
and receive us graciously,  
that we may offer the *praise* of our lips  
*like the sacrifice of calves*."
- 3 Assyria will not save us.  
We will not ride on horses,  
nor will we any longer say to the  
work of our hands,  
'*You are* our gods';  
for in you the fatherless finds mercy."
- 4 "I will heal their backsliding.  
I will love them freely.  
For my anger has turned away from him.
- 5 I will be like the dew to Israel.

that their lives are filled with trouble and there seems no help for them anywhere.

**13:10,11** 3:4; 10:7; 1 Sam 8:4-9,19,20; 13:14; 15:10,11,28; 1 Kings 11:29-31; 14:10.

**13:12** 7:2; 8:13; 9:9. "Stored up" – compare Rom 2:5.

**13:13** Isa 13:8; 21:3; 26:17; Jer 4:31; 13:21; Matt 24:8.

**13:14** In the midst of warnings and disaster God gives this great promise to Israel (compare 1:10,11; 2:14-23).

"Ransom" – means to pay a price for the purpose of rescue. See note on redeem at Ps 78:35.

"Grave" – the word in Hebrew is "Sheol". See note at Gen 37:35.

"From death" – v 1. "Destruction" – see 1 Cor 15:55.

**13:15** The redemption God promises in v 14 was in the future. God would first punish the nation as He said He would.

"East wind" – the Assyrian army which God would send on Israel.

**13:16** 7:1,13; 8:5,6; 10:5,7,14; 11:6,7. **14:1** "Return" – 10:12; 12:6.

"Stumbled by your wickedness" – this is one of the principal themes of Hosea. Misery and destruction came on Israel for one reason only – their sins. This is a message for all people anywhere in any era. Compare Num 32:23; Rom 6:23.

**14:2** Hosea by God's Spirit is so eager for their repentance he gives them the very words they should say.

"Take away" – or "forgive." Ex 34:9;

1 Kings 8:46-51; Ps 25:11; Jer 31:34; Dan 9:19; Matt 6:12; 1 John 1:9.

"Praise of our lips" – literally "the calves of our lips." The Septuagint has "the fruit of our lips" – compare Heb 13:15.

**14:3** They should realize that their trust must not be in men, or in false gods or idols, and turn to the true Helper of needy men (compare 13:9).

"Mercy" – 2:19; 11:8.

**14:4-8** God speaks these words through Hosea. When Israel turns to God and prays according to the words of vs 2,3, God will hear them and restore them. See Lev 26:40-45; Deut 4:29-31. Verses 5-7 give a beautiful poetic picture of this restoration. Compare Isa 27:3-6; 32:15-18; 35:1,2.

**14:4** "Backsliding" – going away from God to pursue one's own way – 11:7; Ps 58:3; Prov 1:32; Isa 53:6. Healing of this terrible characteristic of going astray is what we all need. The only hope for healing is in God (Isa 29:24; Jer 31:33).

"Love" – 2:1,19,23; 3:1; 10:12; 11:4; Jer 31:3; Isa 54:6-8; Micah 7:18-20; Zeph 3:17; 1 John 4:8. After their repentance, after their sins are taken away and their waywardness healed, there will be no longer any obstacle to God's fully expressing His love to them.

"Anger has turned away" – sin is the reason for His anger, and when sin is taken away and forgiven there is no longer cause for anger. Note on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18.

**14:5** "Dew" – Gen 27:28. This speaks of

He will grow like the lily,  
and thrust out his roots like *a cedar*  
of Lebanon.  
6 His branches will spread, and his  
beauty will be like the olive tree,  
and his fragrance like *a cedar of Lebanon*.  
7 Those who dwell under his shade will return.  
They will come alive like the grain,  
and grow like the vine;  
their renown will be like the wine of Lebanon.  
8 Ephraim *will* say,

‘What have I to do any more with idols?’  
I have heard *him*, and observed him.  
I *am* like a green fir tree.  
Your fruit comes from me.”  
9 Who is wise?  
He will understand these *things*.  
*Who is* discerning?  
He will know them.  
For the ways of the LORD *are* right,  
and the just will walk in them,  
but the transgressors will fall in them.

God’s blessing, new every morning.  
**14:8** “What have I to do any more with idols?”  
– v 3. A question they should have asked  
long before.  
“From me” – God is the one who is the  
source of all fruitfulness. This is especially  
true of spiritual fruitfulness – John 15:4,5;  
Gal 5:22,23.

**14:9** Ps 107:43. “Understand” – Dan 12:10;  
Prov 4:5,7; 9:10.  
“Ways of the LORD” – Ps 37:34; Prov  
8:32; 23:26; Matt 7:13,14.  
“Right” – Ps 111:7,8; Zeph 3:5. Every  
individual either walks in God’s ways or  
stumbles because of a rebellious heart –  
4:5; 5:5

# JOEL

**Author:**

Joel was a prophet who lived in the southern kingdom of Judah. His name means “Jehovah is God”.

**Date:**

Some time about 835 BC.

**Themes:**

The great and terrible Day of the LORD; the warning that because of Israel's sin that day will bring on them great destruction; that destruction will be like a devastating invasion of locusts; however, God will preserve Israel at that time and punish those who attack them. In 2:28,29 there is the great prophecy about the Holy Spirit.

**Contents:**

The destruction caused by locusts .....	1:2-20
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Judgment on those who cause Israel's suffering .....	3:3-16
A promise that blessings will come to Israel .....	3:17-21

- 1** The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.
- 2** Hear this, you elders, and listen,  
all you inhabitants of the land.  
Has *anything like* this happened in your days,  
or even in the days of your fathers?
- 3** Tell your children of it,  
and *may* your children *tell* their children,  
and their children another generation.
- 4** What the gnawing locust has left the  
large locust has eaten;  
and what the large locust has left the  
crawling locust has eaten;  
and what the crawling locust has left  
the shearing locust has eaten.
- 5** Wake up, you drunkards, and weep.  
And wail, all you drinkers of wine,  
because of the new wine,  
for it has been cut off from your mouth.
- 6** For a nation has invaded my land,  
strong, and without number.  
Its teeth *are* the teeth of a lion,  
and it has the fangs of a great lion.
- 7** It has laid waste my vine,  
and splintered my fig tree.  
It has stripped it bare, and thrown *it* away.  
Its branches have become white.
- 8** Lament as a virgin dressed in sackcloth  
*mourns* for the husband of her youth.
- 9** The grain offering and the drink  
offering have been cut off from the  
house of the LORD.

**1:1** "Word. . .came" – Hos 1:1. "Joel" means Jehovah is God.

**1:2-4** Locust swarms are referred to in other parts of the Bible and were regarded as a judgment of God (Ex 10:13-15; Deut 28:38,42; 2 Chron 7:13). The one Joel speaks of here was the worst in the land of Israel for a very long time. The locust is similar to the grasshopper of India but not the same. Verse 4 in Hebrew has four different names for locusts – either different kinds of locusts or locusts in four different stages of development (the exact meaning of each of the four Hebrew words used here for locusts is unclear).

**1:5** "Drunkards" – notes on drunkenness at Gen 9:21; Prov 23:29-35. This was evidently a common sin in Israel at that time.

"Weep" – vs 8,11,13. God was punishing them for their sins. It was no time for drunkenness and carelessness but for repentance and confession of sin – 2:12-14.

**1:6,7** "Nation" – Joel means the locusts. He describes them as an invading army. Swarms containing millions of locusts come like a cloud and cover a land and are very destructive.

**1:8** "Lament as a virgin" – now Joel addresses

The priests, the LORD's ministers, mourn.

- 10** The field lies waste, the land mourns,  
for the grain is ruined,  
the new wine is dried up, the oil fails.
- 11** Be dismayed, you farmers!  
Wail, you vinedressers!  
*Weep* for the wheat and the barley,  
because the harvest of the field has  
perished.
- 12** The vine has dried up,  
and the fig tree has withered.  
The pomegranate tree, the palm tree also,  
and the apple tree,  
all the trees of the field are withered.  
Indeed, joy has withered away from  
the sons of men.
- 13** Put on *sackcloth* and lament,  
you priests.  
Wail, you ministers of the altar.  
Come, lie all night in sackcloth,  
you ministers of my God.  
For the grain offering and the drink  
offering are withheld from the house  
of your God.
- 14** Sanctify a fast.  
Call a solemn assembly.  
Gather the elders *and* all the  
inhabitants of the land *to* the house  
of the LORD your God,  
and cry out to the LORD.
- 15** Alas for the day!  
For the day of the LORD *is* at hand,  
and it will come as a destruction

the whole nation. Their grief should be as great as a bride who loses her husband before the marriage is consummated.

**1:9-12** "Offering" – Ex 29:40; Lev 2:1; 23:18; Num 6:15; 29:16. The locusts had destroyed the vines and the grain in the fields so there was nothing left to bring as offerings to the temple. Verse 12 indicates that along with the plague of locusts there was a drought in the land.

**1:13** "*Sackcloth*" – Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31; 1 Kings 21:27; Neh 9:1; Esther 4:1; Job 16:15.

**1:14** "A fast" – 2:15; Lev 16:29; Jud 20:26; 2 Sam 12:16; Jer 14:12; Jonah 3:4,5; Matt 6:16; 9:15.

"Cry out" – they were to repent and plead with God to take away His judgment and restore the people and the land.

**1:15** "The day of the LORD" – this phrase appears four more times in Joel (2:1,11,31; 3:14). There is no good reason to think the phrase does not have the same meaning in each place. Joel had been speaking of a past event but suddenly sees a much greater future event. The past one is just a little picture of the future one. The "day of the LORD" appears also in other books of the Bible – Isa 13:6,9; Ezek 13:5; 30:3;



from the Almighty.

- 16 Has not the food been cut off before  
our eyes;  
yes, joy and gladness from the house  
of our God?
- 17 The seeds shrivel under their clods,  
the storehouses are in ruins,  
the barns are broken down,  
for the grain is withered.
- 18 How the beasts groan!  
The herds of cattle are bewildered,  
because they have no pasture;  
yes, the flocks of sheep are made desolate.
- 19 O LORD, to you I cry out,  
for the fire has devoured the  
wilderness pastures,  
and flames have burned up all the trees  
of the field.
- 20 The beasts of the field also cry out to you,  
for the streams of water have dried up,  
and the fire has devoured the  
wilderness pastures.

**2** Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound  
an alarm in my holy mountain!

Amos 5:18,20; Obadiah 15; Zeph 1:7,14; Mal 4:5; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10. The day of the LORD has to do with events which will take place at the end of this age when Christ returns to earth.

"At hand" – in several of the above references it is said that the day of the LORD is near. If that day still has not come, how could the prophets speak of it as near in their own time? There are various possible explanations.

We may say that "near" or "at hand" does not necessarily mean "coming soon". It can mean impending, ready to come whenever God sees the time is ripe, not far off in distance. See Rom 13:11,12; Rev 1:3.

Or we may say that God was speaking through the prophets and regarding time in His own way (compare 2 Pet 3:8,9 – in His eyes it is only as the passing of three days since He spoke through His servants, or even much less than three days – Ps 90:4).

Or we may say that Joel and the other prophets were given a vision of events at the end of this age and from that point of view the day of the LORD was near in time (compare Hab 2:3).

"Destruction" – see further descriptions of that day in Isa 2:10-21; 24:1-13; Revelation chapters 15 and 16.

"Almighty" – in Hebrew "Shaddai" – note at Gen 17:1.

**1:16-20** Joel resumes his description of the event in his day which was a small picture of the great and terrible day of the LORD still to come.

**1:19** "To you I cry out" – calamities are not times for complaining against God, or for

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,  
for the day of the LORD is coming,  
for *it is* at hand,

- 2 A day of darkness and of gloominess,  
a day of clouds and of dense darkness.  
Like dawn spreading on the mountains,  
so a vast and mighty people *come*.  
There has never been such as this;  
nor will there be any such after it,  
even to the years of many generations.

- 3 Before them a fire devours,  
and behind them a flame burns.  
Before them the land *is* like the  
garden of Eden,  
but behind them a desolate wilderness;  
yes, and nothing escapes them.

- 4 Their appearance is like the  
appearance of horses,  
and they run like cavalry.

- 5 They leap over the mountains with a  
noise like that of chariots,  
like the sound of a flame of fire that  
devours the stubble,  
like a mighty people set in battle array.

- 6 Before their faces the people are

despair and hardening one's heart. They should stir us to pray and seek God's face.

"Fire" – this may mean that the locusts and the drought destroyed everything like a great fire would do, or possibly because of the dry conditions literal fire broke out here and there.

**2:1** "Trumpet" – Lev 23:24; 25:9; Num 10:5; Hos 5:8; 8:1.

"My holy mountain" – Ps 2:6. Both this phrase and Zion refers to Jerusalem. God speaks now through Joel.

"At hand" – note at 1:15. God is here speaking of a time at the end of this age when the day of the LORD will very suddenly come.

**2:2** "Darkness" – compare 2:10,31; Isa 13:10; Amos 5:18,20; Zeph 1:15.

"Vast and mighty people" – the locusts Joel speaks of in chapter 1 were like an invading army (1:6). Does God here speak of a more literal army? Very possibly. We know that before the day of the LORD fully comes vast armies of some kind will be on the march on earth. See Revelation chapter 9. Certainly nowhere else does the Bible tell us that there will be a world-wide plague of literal locusts at the end of this age.

"Years of many generations" – God speaks of an army so vast there has never been one like it before and never will be afterwards. He is speaking, then, of an event still to come. Compare 3:9-11; Zech 12:3,9; Rev 16:14.

**2:3** Literal armies can be as destructive to a land as locusts and, of course, far more destructive to human life.

**2:4,5** Rev 9:7,9.

**2:6** "Collect warmth" – or "gather brightness"

in anguish; all faces collect warmth.  
7 They run like mighty men.  
They climb the walls like warriors;  
and each one of them marches on in  
line and they do not break their ranks.  
8 They do not bump one another.  
Each one walks in his path;  
and *when* they fall by the sword  
they are not stopped.  
9 They run to and fro in the city.  
They run along on the wall,  
they climb into the houses;  
they enter at the windows like a thief.  
10 The earth quakes before them,  
the heavens tremble.  
The sun and the moon grow dark,  
and the stars withdraw their shining.  
11 And the LORD makes his voice sound  
before his army;  
for his camp *is* very great,  
for strong *is the one* who carries out his  
word.  
For the day of the LORD is great and  
very terrible, and who can endure it?  
12 "So even now," says the LORD,  
"turn to me with all your heart,  
and with fasting, and with weeping,  
and with mourning,  
13 And rend your hearts, and not your  
garments,  
and turn to the LORD your God.  
For he *is* gracious and merciful,  
slow to get angry, and abounding in

or "take on a ruddy colour." These are more literal translations of the Hebrew than the KJV, which, it seems, followed the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate here, rather than the Hebrew. Perhaps the phrase means that their faces will be red with weeping or exertion. Several modern versions translate this "turn pale."  
**2:9** There will be no safety, no escape.  
**2:10** Isa 13:13; 24:17-21; Jer 4:23-26; Nah 1:5,6; Hab 2:21; Heb 12:26-28.  
"Withdraw their shining" – vs 2,31; Isa 13:10; Rev 6:12-14.  
**2:11** "His army" – God says they are His army because they are an instrument in His hands to fulfill His purposes of judgment. Compare Isa 10:5-7; 13:4; Jer 25:9; 43:10-13; Hab 1:5,6.  
"Day of the LORD" – 1:15.  
"Who can endure it" – Nah 1:6; Rev 6:17.  
**2:12** 1:13,14.  
**2:13** "Not your garments" – in those times the tearing of garments was an outward expression of grief or alarm (Gen 37:29,34; 44:13; Josh 7:6; Job 1:20; 2:12). Repentance means much more than that. It is hard hearts that need to be torn, not clothing – Ps 51:17; Isa 57:15.

kindness,  
and relents concerning disaster."  
14 Who knows *but that* he may turn and relent,  
and leave a blessing behind him,  
a grain offering and a drink  
offering for the LORD your God.  
15 Blow the trumpet in Zion!  
Sanctify a fast! Call a solemn assembly!  
16 Gather the people, consecrate the  
congregation, assemble the elders,  
gather the children, and those nursing  
at the breast.  
Let the bridegroom come out of his chamber,  
and the bride from her room.  
17 Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD,  
weep between the portico and the altar,  
and let them say,  
"Spare your people, O LORD, and do not  
give up your inheritance to scorn,  
so that the nations rule over them.  
Why should they say among the peoples,  
'Where *is* their God?'"  
18 Then the LORD will be jealous for his land,  
and pity his people.  
19 Yes, the LORD will answer and say to  
his people,  
"See, I will send you grain, and wine,  
and oil, and you will be satisfied with it.  
And I will no longer make you an  
*object of reproach* among the nations,  
20 But will remove far from you the  
northern *invader*,  
and will drive him into a barren and

"Turn" – Jer 3:12, 14,22; Lam 3:40; 5:21; Hos 14:1,2.  
"Slow to get angry", etc – Ex 34:6,7; Micah 7:18,19; 1 John 4:8.  
"Relents" – Jer 18:8; Jonah 3:10; 4:2.  
**2:14** Verse 18; Jer 26:3; Amos 5:15. The blessing the prophet was thinking of is the ability once again to worship God with offerings.  
**2:15,16** This is a call for the people to meet together and earnestly seek God. No one was to stay away for any reason whatever. It is the way to the blessing of the previous verse.  
**2:17** The religious leaders of the people must take the lead in repentance and seeking God.  
"Inheritance" – Deut 4:20; Ps 28:9; 33:12; Eph 1:18.  
"Scorn" – Deut 9:26-29; 1 Kings 9:7; Ps 44:13,14.  
"Where is their God" – Ps 42:3,10; 79:10; 115:2.  
**2:18** If the people will do their part, God will be sure to do His part. Compare Jam 4:8-10.  
"Jealous" – Isa 26:11; Zech 1:14; 8:2.  
**2:19** 2 Chron 7:14; Ezek 34:29.  
**2:20** Some scholars think this is a reference

desolate land with his face toward  
the eastern sea,  
and his back toward the western sea,  
and his stench will go up,  
and his bad smell will rise,  
because he has done monstrous things.”

21 Do not fear, O land.  
Be glad and rejoice, for the LORD will  
do great things.

22 Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field,  
for the wilderness pastures are springing up,  
for the tree is bearing its fruit,  
the fig tree and the vine are  
yielding their strength.

23 Be glad then, you children of Zion,  
and rejoice in the LORD your God,  
for he has given you the early rains justly,  
and he causes the rains to fall for you,  
the early rains, and the later rains  
in the first *month*.

24 And the threshing floors will be full  
of wheat,  
and the vats will overflow with wine and oil.

25 “And I will repay you for the years  
that the gnawing locusts have eaten,  
the large locusts, the crawling locusts,

and the shearing locusts,  
my great army which I sent among you.

26 And you will have plenty to eat,  
and will be satisfied and praise  
the name of the LORD your God,  
who has dealt wonderfully with you;  
and my people will never be put to shame.

27 And you will know that I am in the  
midst of Israel,  
and *that I am* the LORD your God,  
and there is no other;  
and my people will never be put to shame.

28 “And it will come about afterward,  
*that* I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters will  
prophesy,  
your old men will dream dreams,  
your young men will see visions.

29 And in those days I will also pour out  
my Spirit on *my* male and female servants.

30 And I will show wonders in the  
heavens and on the earth, blood,  
and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun will be turned into darkness,  
and the moon into blood,  
before the great and terrible day of

to the “army” of locusts seen in chapter 1. Compare v 25. Others think it means a literal army which will invade Israel at the end of this age (compare Ezekiel chapters 38,39). Perhaps it refers both to the time then and the time still to come. See note on Isa 60:1-22.

“Eastern sea” – the Dead Sea.  
“Western sea” – the Mediterranean.  
“Stench” – compare Isa 34:3; Ezek 39:11,12.

**2:21-24** In the earlier part of Joel the people of Israel are told to weep, wail and mourn – 1:5,8,11,13; 2:17. Now they are told to be glad and rejoice. What makes the difference? On their part, repentance and turning to God; on God’s part, restoring and blessing the people and the land.

“The LORD will do great things”, not they (Ps 126:3; Isa 25:1; 1 Sam 12:24). And they must rejoice in Him (v 23), not in themselves.

“Early rains, and the later rains” (v 23) – he means literal rains. There had been a drought in the land and God will give them rains “as before.”

**2:25** Note at 1:4. “Repay” – God speaks. He sometimes has to chastise and punish His people. But when they accept correction He pours out His blessings on them, and these blessings more than make up for the hardships and trouble they endured.

“My great army” – compare v 11. Whether an army of locusts or of men, God can use it for His purposes, and so it becomes His army.

**2:26** “Praise” – compare Isa 12:1-3; 25:1.

Note on praise at Ps 33:1.

**2:27** See Jer 31:34. “No other” – Isa 44:8; 45:18,21,22.

“Never be put to shame” – this must speak of a time not yet come. From Joel’s day to this Israel has often been put to shame. But a time is coming when this will happen no more – Isa 29:22; 45:17; 54:4.

**2:28-32** See Acts 2:16-21. Pentecost was the beginning of the fulfillment of these verses.

**2:28** “Afterward” – here this means “the last days” (Acts 2:16). On “last days” see John 6:39; 11:24; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:8; Jam 5:3; 1 Pet 1:20; 2 Pet 3:3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18. The last times began with Christ’s first coming and go on at least until His second coming.

“Your sons and your daughters” – that is, people of Israel. There are other promises concerning God’s giving His Spirit to Israel. See Isa 32:15; 44:3,4; Ezek 36:27,28; 37:14; 39:29. Judging from the contexts of these promises the time when God will fulfill them is still in the future. Because there was the beginning of fulfillment at Pentecost does not mean that there will not be a final outpouring of the Spirit on Israel sometime in the future.

**2:30,31** Compare Matt 24:29; Rev 6:12-14. These events will take place just before the “day of the LORD” (1:15; 2:1,11; 3:14). The fact that God refers to them in connection with the outpouring of His Spirit may suggest that there will be an outpouring just before the end of this age.

the LORD comes.

32 And it will come to pass,  
*that* whoever calls on the name of  
 the LORD will be saved.  
 For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem  
 there will be deliverance,  
 as the LORD has said,  
 among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

**3** "For, see, in those days,  
 and at that time,  
 when I reverse the captivity of Judah  
 and Jerusalem,  
 2 I will also gather all nations,  
 and will bring them down into the  
 valley of Jehoshaphat,  
 and will enter into judgment with  
 them there *for* my people and  
 for my inheritance Israel.  
 They scattered them among the nations,  
 and divided up my land.  
 3 And they cast lots for my people,  
 and traded a boy for a prostitute,  
 and sold a girl for wine,  
 that they might drink.  
 4 "Yes, and what have you to do with me, O  
 Tyre, and Sidon, and all the coasts of Palestine?  
 Will you retaliate against me? And if you retaliate  
 against me, swiftly *and* speedily I will bring your  
 retaliation back on your own head, 5 because you

took my silver and my gold, and carried my valu-  
 able possessions into your temples. 6 And you sold  
 the children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem  
 to the Greeks, so that you might remove them far  
 from their borders.

7 "See, I will raise them out of the place where  
 you sold them, and will bring your retaliation back  
 on your own head, 8 And I will sell your sons and  
 your daughters into the hands of the children of  
 Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabaeans, to a  
 people far off, for the LORD has spoken."

9 Proclaim this among the Gentiles:  
 "Prepare for war! Rouse the mighty men!  
 Let all the warriors draw near;  
 let them come up.

10 Beat your plowshares into swords,  
 and your pruning hooks into spears.  
 Let the weak say, 'I *am* strong.'

11 Assemble and come, all you nations,  
 and all around gather yourselves  
 together.  
 Have your mighty ones go down there,  
 O LORD.

12 Let the nations be wakened,  
 and come up to the valley of  
 Jehoshaphat;  
 for there I will sit to judge all the  
 surrounding nations.

13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.  
 Come, go down, for the winepress is

**2:32** "Saved" – Rom 10:13.  
 "Deliverance" – Isa 46:13; 59:20,21;  
 Rom 11:26.  
 "Remnant" – Isa 10:20; 11:10,11; Zech  
 13:8,9.

"Calls" – Acts 2:39.  
**3:1** "Days. . . time" – the time indicated in  
 2:30-32.

"Reverse the captivity of" – or it could be  
 translated "restore the well-being of" – the  
 Hebrew means either. Here it seems to  
 mean to bring Judah and Jerusalem back  
 to a place of spiritual prosperity and God's  
 blessings (2:26,27,32; Isa 2:1-4; 40:9-  
 11; 44:1-5; 51:1-3; 59:20 - 60:22; 62:1-  
 12; Jer 31:35-40; Ezek 37:15-27; Hos 2:14-  
 23; Amos 9:14,15; Zech 14:8-11,20,21.

**3:2** "Valley of Jehoshaphat" – as far as is  
 now known there has never been a valley  
 by this name in Israel. The word  
 "Jehoshaphat" means "The LORD (Jehovah)  
 judges" and the valley is here called by that  
 name because of events to take place there  
 in the future. They will take place near  
 Jerusalem (vs 14-16). God will bring "all  
 nations" there. Compare vs 11,12; Isa  
 29:7; Zech 12:3; 14:2; Rev 16:14.

"My inheritance Israel" – 2:17. God is  
 going to deal with those nations in  
 accordance with the way they have treated  
 His people.

"Scattered" – 2 Kings 17:3-6; 24:14;

25:8-12; Luke 21:24.

"My land" – those who fight for  
 possession of the land of Israel are fighting  
 about land which belongs to God. And God  
 will give it to those He chooses.

**3:3** "Cast lots for my people" – Obadiah  
 11. When their enemies conquered the land  
 they treated the people like slaves.

**3:4-8** God singles out Tyre and Sidon as  
 examples of what He will do to "all nations"  
 which have mistreated the people of Israel.  
 See the principle upon which God will judge  
 – "I will bring your retaliation back on your  
 own head." Compare Deut 32:40-43; Ps  
 79:1-7; 83:1-18; 94:23; Jer 25:12-14.  
 Note on Tyre and Sidon at Isa 23:1,2.

**3:9** "War" – this war is connected with the  
 day of the Lord (vs 14-16), and so awaits  
 fulfillment at the end of this age.

**3:10** Compare Isa 2:4 which describes what  
 things will be like when this final great battle  
 is over.

**3:11** "Your mighty ones" – this may mean  
 angels who come to oppose the armies com-  
 ing against Jerusalem. Compare Zech 14:5.  
 "There" – vs 2,14-16.

**3:12** God speaks. "Jehoshaphat" – v 2.  
 This is not a judgment of individuals. God  
 will deal with the armies which come against  
 Jerusalem and pour out His judgment on  
 them. Compare Zech 12:2-9; 14:3.

**3:13** Compare Rev 14:14-20.

full, the vats overflow;  
for their wickedness *is* great."

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of  
decision!

For the day of the LORD *is* near in the  
valley of decision.

15 The sun and the moon will be darkened,  
and the stars will withdraw their shining.

16 And the LORD will roar out of Zion,  
and makes his voice heard from  
Jerusalem.

And the heavens and the earth will shake,  
but the LORD will be the hope of his people,  
and the strength of the children of Israel.

17 "So you will know that I am the LORD  
your God, dwelling in Zion,  
my holy mountain.

Then Jerusalem will be holy,  
and no foreigners will pass through her again.

18 And it will happen in that day,  
that the mountains will drip with new wine,  
and the hills will flow with milk,  
and all the rivers of Judah will flow with  
water,

and a fountain will flow from the  
house of the LORD and water the  
valley of Shittim.

19 Egypt will become a desolation,  
and Edom will become a desolate  
wilderness,

because of their violence against the  
children of Judah,

for they shed innocent blood in their land.

20 But Judah will be inhabited forever,  
and Jerusalem from generation  
to generation.

21 For I will cleanse away their bloodguilt  
which I have not cleansed;  
for the LORD dwells in Zion."

**3:14** "Multitudes" – v 2. The valley called Jehoshaphat in vs 2,12 is here called "decision". This does not mean God will come there and decide something. It means He will put into effect a decision He has already made.

"Day of the LORD" – 1:15.

**3:15** 2:2,10,31.

**3:16** "From Jerusalem" – indicating that Jerusalem will be the center of God's activities in that coming great battle.

"Shake" – Heb 12:26.

"Hope" or "Refuge" – Ps 2:12; 5:11; 46:1-3; Zech 12:8,9.

**3:17** God speaks again through the prophet.

"Then" – at the time of the day of the Lord. God will dwell in Jerusalem. That this means a literal Jerusalem on earth seems clear from the statement "no foreigners will pass through her again." Of course, foreigners never did invade the heavenly

Jerusalem. In other places also God says He will make Jerusalem His dwelling place in the future – Ps 132:13,14; Ezek 48:35; Isa 12:6; 24:23; Jer 3:17; Zech 8:3; 14:16-21. But Jerusalem will be greatly changed from what it is now.

**3:18** 2:24. Compare Ex 3:8. "House of the LORD" – see Ezek 47:1-12.

**3:19** Isa 19:5-8; 34:5-15.

**3:20,21** "Forever" – Ps 68:16; Ezek 37:25-28; 43:7,9; Amos 9:15; Micah 4:6,7; Gen 17:8; 48:4. No good reason appears to the author of these notes to think that Judah and Jerusalem are not to be taken literally. It is the same city which is guilty of shedding blood, and which remained for a time unpardoned, which will exist through all generations.

"I will cleanse" – Jer 31:31,34; Ezek 36:25; Mic 7:18-20.

"In Zion" – Ps 43:3; 74:2.

# AMOS

## Author:

Amos means "One who carries a load". He was a shepherd, and evidently a poor man who earned money by looking after sycamore trees. His village Tekoa was about 9 kilometers south of Bethlehem, 18 kilometers south of Jerusalem.

## Date:

Sometime about 760 BC.

## Theme:

God is faithful to His people, so they must obey His commands and live in accordance with them; the condition of society as a whole is a reflection of the condition of the individuals who live in it; God is the Supreme Ruler of the world and will punish evil nations; He will also punish His own people who are unfaithful and disobedient to His covenant; because of Israel's sin God will use other people to uproot them from their land; but He gives a promise of eventual redemption for Israel.

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- 1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa, *the visions* he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.
- 2 And he said,  
"The LORD roars from Zion,  
and makes his voice heard from Jerusalem,  
and the pastures of the shepherds mourn  
and the top of Carmel withers."
- 3 Thus says the LORD:  
"For three transgressions of Damascus,  
and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
because they have threshed Gilead  
with iron threshing implements.
- 4 So I will send a fire into the house of Hazael,  
which will devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.
- 5 I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus,  
and cut off the inhabitant from the  
valley of Aven,  
and the one who holds the sceptre  
from Beth Eden;  
and the people of Syria will go into  
captivity to Kir," says the LORD.

1:1 "Shepherds – Amos was no leader in the religious establishment (7:14,15). Often God calls people from very ordinary jobs to do His great work – see Judges 6:11-14; Ps 78:70,71; Matt 4:18-22; 9:9.  
"Tekoa" – this village was about nine kilometers south of Bethlehem.  
"Visions he saw" – this means God revealed to him what he has written down. Compare Isa 1:1; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1.  
"Uzziah" – 2 Kings 14:21; 2 Chron 26:23. He reigned 792-740 BC.  
"Jeroboam" – 2 Kings 14:23. This was Jeroboam the Second who reigned 793-753 BC.  
"Joash" – a variant of Jehoash.  
1:2 Jerusalem was the city God made His special dwelling place on earth. His temple was there. See Ps 43:3; 68:16; 132:13,14.  
"Roars" – compare Jer 25:30. The words signify that God was aroused and pronouncing judgment against sinful people. Those "roars" make up the large part of this book.  
"Withers" – a severe drought was coming on the land of Israel.  
1:3-5 Damascus was (and is) the capital of Syria. For other prophecies concerning it see Isa 17:1; Jer 49:23-27.  
1:3 "Thus says the LORD" – Amos was not speaking his own words but words God gave him to speak. Compare Jer 1:9,10; 2 Pet 2:21.  
"Transgressions" – God sees what is going on in the world, and at the right time sends punishment on nations and cities, people and individuals. Here He speaks of national sins and national punishment.  
"Gilead" – an area belonging to Israel

- 6 Thus says the LORD:  
"For three transgressions of Gaza,  
and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
because they deported all the captives,  
to deliver *them* up to Edom.
- 7 So I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza,  
which will devour its palaces.
- 8 And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,  
and the one who holds the sceptre from  
Ashkelon,  
and I will turn my hand against Ekron;  
and the rest of the Philistines  
will perish," says the Lord God.
- 9 Thus says the LORD:  
"For three transgressions of Tyre,  
and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
because they delivered up all the  
captives to Edom,  
and did not remember the covenant of  
brotherhood.
- 10 So I will send a fire on the wall of Tyre,  
which will devour its palaces."
- 11 Thus says the LORD:

east of the Jordan river. Syria had captured it and behaved in a very cruel way toward the Israelites there. Now the Syrians had to pay for their sins against God's people.  
1:4 Hazael was king of Syria about 842-796 BC, and Ben-Hadad was his son who ruled about 796-775 BC.  
1:5 "I will also break the gate bar" – God would send enemy armies to do this. See note at Isa 10:5,6.  
"Kir" – Isa 22:6. This was probably located somewhere in what is present-day Iran. The valley of Aven and Beth Eden evidently were somewhere in Syria. "Aven" means "evil" or "wickedness".  
1:6,7 "Gaza" – Gen 10:19; 1 Sam 6:17; Zeph 2:4. This was one of the chief cities of the Philistines. It was on the Mediterranean coast, west of Judah.  
"Deported all the captives" – possibly refers to people in Judah whom they had captured. They would have to pay for this contempt for God's people.  
1:8 Three more chief cities of the Philistines are named in this verse.  
"The rest. . . will perish" – there are no Philistines today. The nation has disappeared into history.  
"Lord God" – see the note at Gen 15:2.  
1:9,10 "Tyre" – for other prophecies concerning this city see Isa 23:1-18; Ezek 26:1 - 28:19.  
"Covenant of brotherhood" – 1 Kings 5:1,12; 16:30,31. Its sin also was selling people (probably people of Israel) into slavery.  
1:11,12 "Edom" – see Gen 25:23-30. The

“For three transgressions of Edom,  
and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
because he pursued his brother  
with the sword,  
and cast off all pity,  
and his anger tore continually,  
and he kept his wrath permanently.  
12 So I will send a fire on Teman,  
which will devour the palaces of Bozrah.”  
13 Thus says the LORD:  
“For three transgressions of the  
children of Ammon, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
because they have ripped up the  
pregnant women of Gilead,  
so they could enlarge their border.  
14 So I will kindle a fire on the wall of  
Rabbah, and it will devour its  
palaces, amid shouting in the day  
of battle, and a tempest in the day  
of the whirlwind;  
15 And their king will go into captivity,  
he and his princes together,”  
says the LORD.

**2** Thus says the LORD:  
“For three transgressions of Moab,

and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
because he burned the bones of the  
king of Edom to lime.  
2 So I will send a fire on Moab,  
and it will devour the palaces of Kiriath;  
and Moab will die amid tumult and  
shouting *and* the sound of the trumpet.  
3 And I will cut off the judge from its midst,  
and will slay all its princes with him,”  
says the LORD.  
4 Thus says the LORD:  
“For three transgressions of Judah,  
and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
because they have despised the law  
of the LORD,  
and have not kept his commandments,  
and their lies led them astray,  
*the lies* their fathers followed.  
5 So I will send a fire on Judah,  
and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem.”  
6 Thus says the LORD:  
“For three transgressions of Israel,  
and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
because they sold the righteous for silver,  
and the poor for a pair of sandals.

land lay southeast of Judah. For other prophecies about it see Isa 34:5-17; Jer 49:7-22; Ezek 25:12-14; Obadiah.

“His brother” – the people of Israel were descended from Jacob, the Edomites from Jacob’s brother Esau. God sees the hate, rage, and brutality in any nation and will punish it. Teman was a region and Bozrah a chief city in Edom.

**1:13** “Ammon” – Gen 19:38; Jer 49:1-6; Ezek 25:1-7; Zeph 2:8,9. This land was east of Israel.

“Gilead” – v 3.

“Enlarge their border” – observe what nations sometimes do to gain more land for themselves. God will see that they pay for it. **1:14,15** Rabbah was the capital of Ammon. It was destroyed by the Assyrians. Today it is called Amman and is the capital of the kingdom of Jordan. Compare Jer 49:6.

**2:1** “Moab” – a land east of the Dead Sea, north of Edom, south of Ammon. For other prophecies concerning it see Isa 15:1 - 16:14; Jeremiah chapter 48; Ezek 25:8-11; Zeph 2:8-11.

“Burned” – in the culture of that day this was considered an evil act. This was not Moab’s only sin but was a symbol of the hatred and contempt they showed toward other nations.

**2:2** “Kiriath” – probably the same as Kir Moab or Kir Hareseth, the capital of Moab. But the Hebrew here may be translated “of her cities”.

**2:3** “I will cut off” – God used an invading army to do this. Compare 1:5.

**2:4** From here to the end of this book God speaks of His own people. He has much more to say about their sins than about the sins of other nations. Because they had His law and knew much more truth than other people, they were more guilty and deserved harsher punishment. God determined to punish other nations; He could not let His own people escape punishment. See 3:2.

“Despised the law” – the sins of the nations described in 1:3 - 2:3 were against other people. Judah had sinned grievously against the law of God and the God who gave the law (Jer 6:19; Ezek 20:23,24; Acts 7:53; Rom 3:19).

“Lies” – may signify idols or false gods. Compare Hab 2:18. Following false gods is a sin against which God repeatedly warned His people – Ex 20:3-6; etc. A worship of gods will always lead people away from the one true God.

“Fathers” – or “ancestors” – Josh 24:14,15; Jud 2:10-12,16-19; Jer 9:14. **2:5** “Fire” – 1:5,7,10,12,14; 2:2. Since God determined to destroy other kingdoms for their sins, could He pass over guilty and unrepentant Judah? He could not and would not.

**2:6-8** Now attention is focused on Israel, especially the northern kingdom (concerning the division of the twelve tribes into two kingdoms see 1 Kings chapter 12). It too

- 7 They pant after the dust of the earth  
*that is* on the head of the poor,  
and turn aside the way of the humble.  
And a man and his father go in to the  
*same* girl,  
thus profaning my holy name.
- 8 And they lie down beside every altar  
on clothes taken in pledge,  
and in the house of their god they drink  
the wine of those who have been  
condemned.
- 9 Yet *it was I who* destroyed the Amorite  
before them,  
whose height *was* like the height of the cedars,  
and whose strength *was* like the oaks.  
Yet I destroyed his fruit above,  
and his roots below.
- 10 "*Also it was I who* brought you up  
from the land of Egypt,  
and led you forty years through the desert,  
to possess the land of the Amorite.
- 11 And I raised up some of your sons as  
prophets,  
and some of your young men as Nazirites.  
*Is it* not so, O children of Israel?"  
says the LORD.
- 12 "But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink,

was guilty of many sins against God and His law, and had to be punished. The nation as a whole was called to be a holy and righteous people, to have compassion on the poor – Ex 19:3-6; 23:11; Deut 15:7,8,11. Instead they persecuted the righteous and oppressed the poor, and for financial gain were willing to commit any evil – 4:1; 5:11; 8:4-6. They were not interested in justice, only in bribes and profit. The poor and oppressed could not pay bribes and so got no justice.

"The same girl" – another example of despising God's law (Lev 18:7,8,15; 20:11,12).

"Profaning my holy name" – Lev 18:21; 19:12; 21:6; Jer 34:16; Ezek 20:9. God's name is linked with His people. When they sin His reputation in the world suffers. **2:8** "Altar" – they committed immoral acts at the shrines of their false gods.

"Pledge" – a further breach of the law (Ex 22:26,27; Deut 24:12,13,17).

**2:9** "Amorite" – those who lived in Canaan before Israel took the land (Gen 15:16; Jud 6:10).

**2:10** "Egypt" – 3:1; Ex 20:2; Deut 8:2; Josh 21:43-45.

**2:11** "Prophets" – Israel alone of all the nations on earth had men inspired by God to tell the people the Word of God (this was what prophets were – Gen 20:7).

"Nazirites" – (Num 6:1-21) were people wholly dedicated to the one true God. Observe that it was God who raised up prophets and Nazirites. Compare Eph 4:11,12.

and commanded the prophets, saying,  
'Do not prophesy'.

- 13 "See, I am weighed down by you,  
as a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.
- 14 Therefore flight will perish from the swift,  
and the strong will not strengthen his power,  
nor will the mighty deliver himself,
- 15 Nor will the one who handled the bow  
be able to stand;  
and *the one who is* swift of foot will not  
escape,  
nor will the one who rides a horse  
deliver himself.
- 16 And the bravest of the mighty will run  
away naked in that day,"  
says the LORD.

**3** Hear this word that the LORD has spoken  
against you, O children of Israel, against the  
whole family which I brought up from the land of  
Egypt, saying,

- 2 "You only have I known of all the  
families of the earth,  
therefore I will punish you for all your  
evil deeds.
- 3 Can two walk together, unless they are  
in agreement?

**2:12** This is how Israel treated these great gifts of God. They showed utter contempt for the servants of God and therefore for God Himself. If a Nazirite drank wine he broke his vow of dedication. Israel did not want people fully dedicated to God or people telling them the truth of God. They did not want to be rebuked for their sins by either the lives or words of anyone. Compare 2 Tim 4:3,4.

"Do not prophesy" – 7:12,13; Isa 30:10; Jer 11:21; Micah 2:6. It is sad when people do not have the truth, but sadder still when they do not want the truth.

**2:13-16** There could be no escape for such people even if they were God's chosen nation.

**2:16** "In that day" – the day when He sent the Assyrian army to punish Israel (2 Kings 17:5-23).

**3:1** 2:10. "Whole family" – not just the ten tribes of the northern kingdom but Judah and Levi also.

**3:2** "You only" – Ex 19:5,6; Deut 10:15-17.

"Known" – the word here indicates a special intimate relationship.

"Therefore" – they may have thought that since they were God's special people, God would not punish them for their sins (compare Matt 3:7-10). The exact opposite was true. He would punish them because they were His people. Great privileges bring great responsibilities, and when these are ignored great punishment is sure to follow.

**3:3** God and Israel could not go on together unless Israel was in agreement with God's

- 4 Will a lion roar in the forest,  
when he has no prey?  
Will a young lion cry out of his den,  
if he has caught nothing?
- 5 Can a bird fall in a snare on the earth,  
where there *is* no trap for it?  
Will a trap spring up from the ground,  
if it has caught nothing at all?
- 6 Will a trumpet be blown in the city,  
without the people being afraid?  
Will there be a disaster in a city,  
without the LORD causing *it*?
- 7 Surely the Lord God does nothing  
without revealing his secret to his  
servants the prophets.
- 8 The lion has roared! Who will not fear?  
The Lord God has spoken!  
Who can but prophesy?
- 9 Make a proclamation in the palaces at Ashdod,  
and in the palaces in the land of Egypt,  
and say,  
"Assemble on the mountains of Samaria,  
and see the great tumults in her midst,  
and the oppression within her."
- 10 "For they do not know how to do right,"  
says the LORD,  
"who store up in their palaces  
*the gains of* violence and robbery."
- 11 Therefore thus says the Lord God:  
"*There will be* an enemy surrounding  
the land,

- and he will deprive you of your strength,  
and your palaces will be plundered."
- 12 Thus says the LORD:  
"As a shepherd takes out of the mouth  
of a lion two legs, or a piece of an ear,  
so will the children of Israel who live  
in Samaria be taken out on the  
corner of a bed,  
and to Damascus *on* a couch.
- 13 Listen and testify against the house  
of Jacob," says the Lord God,  
the God of hosts,
- 14 "That in the day that I punish Israel  
for his transgressions,  
I will also punish the altars of Bethel,  
and the horns of the altar will be  
cut off, and fall to the ground.
- 15 And I will strike the winter house with  
the summer house,  
and the houses of ivory will perish,  
and the great houses will come to  
an end," says the LORD.

**4** Hear this word, you cows of Bashan,  
who *are* on the mountain of Samaria,  
who oppress the poor,  
who crush the needy,  
who say to their husbands,  
"Bring *something*, and let us drink."

- 2 The Lord God has sworn by his own holiness:  
"See, the days are coming on you when

laws and ways. If Israel would not agree there must be the punishment of separation. Compare Hos 1:2-9.

**3:4,5** Every event has a cause. Lions roar thinking of their prey. They growl when they are eating it. Birds are not caught without a trap or snare. And traps and snares do not catch something if there is nothing there. Amos means that God was roaring against them (1:2) and had laid a trap for them.

**3:6** People tremble when a trumpet sounds in alarm – Joel 2:1. Disaster coming on a city is like a trumpet sound from God. It does not come without cause and the cause is the Lord Himself.

**3:7,8** Here Amos applies the above illustrations. Why is he there warning them of coming disaster? Because God had revealed to him what was coming and told him to prophesy. His prophesying was God roaring like a lion through him and the roar was a sure sign that disaster was coming on them. Compare Hos 5:14.

"Revealing His secret" – this God did throughout the Bible. He told people in advance what He would do – Isa 46:10.

"Prophecy" – why did Amos come to Israel to speak God's message? He felt an inner compulsion.

**3:9,10** People who did not have God's law

and did not know God are called as witnesses against Israel. Even such people could see that what Israel was doing was wrong.

**3:11** The rich and powerful in Israel hoarded their wealth and oppressed the poor – 2:6,7. God would deal with them as they dealt with others (see note at Ps 18:25,26).

"Enemy" – Assyria.

**3:12** There would be only a few survivors of the Assyrian captivity (Isa 10:20-23; 11:11).

**3:13,14** "Punish" – 2:6; 3:2.

"Bethel" – this town was a center for idolatry in Israel (1 Kings 12:26-33).

**3:15** This verse speaks of wealth and luxury. God would destroy all that because it was based on selfishness and contempt for the poor (4:1). See 1 Tim 6:6-19.

**4:1** "Bashan" – the cows of Bashan were fat and sleek and fed on the finest pasturelands in Israel. The prophet compares the wealthy women of Israel to them.

"Needy" – 2:6,7; 5:11; 8:4-6. These women ate the finest things and cared not at all whether the poor had anything at all to eat.

"Drink" – luxury and pleasure are all they thought about while the needy died on their doorsteps (compare Luke 16:19-25).

**4:2,3** "Sworn by His holiness" – the Almighty

- he will take you away with hooks,  
and your posterity with fishhooks.
- 3 And you will go out the breaks *in the wall*, each one *straight* ahead of her,  
and you will throw down *your riches*  
in the palaces," says the LORD.
- 4 "Come to Bethel, and transgress!  
At Gilgal multiply transgression!  
And bring your sacrifices every morning,  
*and* your tithes every three years,
- 5 And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving  
with leaven,  
and proclaim *and* announce the freewill  
offerings:  
for this you love *to do*, O children  
of Israel," says the Lord God.
- 6 "But I have also given you cleanness of  
teeth in all your cities,  
and lack of bread in all your places.  
Yet you have not returned to me,"  
says the LORD.
- 7 "And I have also withheld the rain from you,  
three months before the harvest;  
and I caused it to rain on one city,  
and withheld the rain on another city.  
One part was rained on, and the piece  
which was not rained on dried up.

- 8 So two *or* three cities wandered  
to another city to drink water,  
but they were not satisfied.  
Yet you have not returned to me,"  
says the LORD.
- 9 "I have struck you with blight and mildew.  
When your gardens and your vineyards  
and your fig trees and your olive  
trees increased,  
the locust devoured *them*.  
Yet you have not returned to me,"  
says the LORD.
- 10 "I have sent plague among you,  
like the *plague* of Egypt.  
I have slain your young men by the sword,  
and have taken away your horses,  
and have made the stench of your  
camps to come up into your nostrils.  
Yet you have not returned to me,"  
says the LORD.
- 11 "I have overthrown *some* of you,  
as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,  
and you were like a firebrand snatched  
out of the blaze.  
Yet you have not returned to me,"  
says the LORD.
- 12 "Therefore this is what I will do

speaks in this solemn and emphatic way so that the people might understand the gravity of their situation, the certainty of their danger. God has compassion on the poor and when people oppress them He sees it and one day He will arise in anger to punish the oppressors.

"Hooks" – compare 2 Chron 33:11. The Assyrians actually put hooks through the lip or nose of prisoners of war and led them away with ropes. God is declaring here that this is fitting punishment for anyone who selfishly oppresses the poor.

4:4,5 He tells them to go ahead and do what He knows they are determined to do anyway (compare Rom 1:28). Here He is speaking ironically. Bethel and Gilgal were once places where God's people erected memorials to the one true God, but Israel now worshiped false gods there (Gen 28:10-19; 35:1; Josh 4:20-24).

"Morning" – Ex 29:38-42; Num 28:3,4.

"Tithes" – Lev 27:30-32; Num 18:21.

"Every three years" – or "on the third day."

"Thanksgiving" – Lev 7:12,13. They were thanking idols for what God alone had given.

"Freewill offerings" – Ex 36:3; Lev 7:16; 22:18. There were giving God's offerings to idols.

"Love to do" – their offerings, indeed their whole religion, was hypocritical and vain. So twisted can the mind and heart of people become. See Jer 17:9; Prov 14:12.

4:6-12 The Lord speaks of methods He had

used to turn His people back to Him. They were chastisements and warnings. But Israel refused to repent and stubbornly went on its own way, so there was no remedy – Hos 11:7; 2 Kings 17:14-20.

4:6 "Cleanness of teeth" – indicating nothing to eat. God sent famines to Israel because of their sins – 1 Kings 18:2; 2 Kings 4:38; 6:25; 8:1. But the people did not heed these warnings.

4:7,8 Drought was another way God chastised and warned His people – 1 Kings 17:1; Jer 3:3.

4:9 Deut 28:22; Joel 1:4-12.

4:10 "Egypt" – Exodus chapters 7-12.

"Sword" – God sent war to Israel. He used their enemies against them so He says "I have slain".

4:11 "Sodom" – Gen 19:24,25. God completely destroyed some places in Israel (probably using foreign armies). Compare Isa 1:5-9. Israel itself as a nation had just barely survived. All these various punishments were in accordance with His own Word to Israel long before, and they should have understood and turned to God. See Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-35.

"Yet you have not returned to me" – this was their most grievous sin and the root cause of their other sins and the punishment which came on them. Compare Ps 107:10-13, 17-19,33,34,43.

4:12 They had ignored all His words, warnings, chastisements, and methods. So

- to you, O Israel;  
*and* because I will do this to you,  
 prepare to meet your God, O Israel."
- 13 For, see, he who forms the mountains,  
 and creates the wind,  
 and declares his thought to man,  
*he* who darkens the morning,  
 and treads on the high places of the  
 earth,  
 The LORD God of hosts *is* his name.
- 5** Hear this word, a lament which I take up against  
 you, O house of Israel:  
 2 "The virgin Israel has fallen.  
 She will rise no more.  
 She is forsaken on her land;  
*there is* no one to raise her up."
- 3 For thus says the Lord God:  
 "The city that marched out a thousand  
*strong* will have a hundred left,  
 and that which marched out a hundred  
*strong* will leave *only* ten to the  
 house of Israel."
- 4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel,  
 "Seek me, and you will live.
- 5 But do not seek Bethel,  
 do not go to Gilgal,  
 and do not travel to Beersheba.

God would bring on them one final punishment – 3:11-15. There would be no escape for the nation as a whole, and they should prepare to face God's judgment. This may be the meaning of "prepare to meet your God". But this phrase may also be taken as a call to repentance. They should turn their backs on their sins and prepare to hear what God has to say to them. Compare 5:4-6.  
**4:13** The God they must deal with is the almighty Creator of the universe (Gen 1:1; Isa 40:25,26; 42:5).

"Declares his thoughts to man" – 3:7; Dan 2:28; 2 Cor 2:10. The Bible as a whole is a revelation of God's thoughts.

**5:1** Amos accepts the fact that God will execute His judgment on Israel and grieves as if it were already done.

**5:2** "Virgin Israel" – compare 2 Kings 19:21; Isa 23:12; Jer 14:17; 18:13. The words personify Israel but do not mean Israel was pure.

"Never to rise again" – this means only that the northern kingdom as such was to be destroyed forever.

**5:3** See 3:11,12; Isa 6:13.

**5:4** "Seek me and you will live" – Ezek 18:30-32; Jer 29:13; Isa 55:6,7; 45:19.

**5:5** "Gilgal" – 4:4. He is saying that idols cannot help them.

"Beersheba" – evidently this town, far to the south in Judah, had also become a place of idolatry. See 8:14.

"Nothing" – or "grief", or "wickedness" –

For Gilgal will surely go into captivity,  
 and Bethel will come to nothing."

- 6 Seek the LORD, and you will live;  
 otherwise he will break out like fire in  
 the house of Joseph, and devour *it*,  
 with no one in Bethel to quench *it*.
- 7 You *are those* who turn judgment to  
 bitterness,  
 and abandon righteousness in the earth.
- 8 Seek *him* who made the Pleiades and Orion,  
 and turns the shadow of death into  
 morning and darkens day into night,  
 who calls for the waters of the sea  
 and pours them out on the surface of  
 the earth;  
 the LORD *is* his name.
- 9 He causes destruction to burst out  
 against the strong,  
 so that destruction comes to the fortress.
- 10 They hate the one who rebukes in the gate,  
 and they abhor him who speaks uprightly.
- 11 Therefore, since you trample on the poor,  
 and compel him to give wheat,  
 though you have built houses with  
 dressed stone,  
 you will not live in them.  
 You have planted pleasant vineyards,  
 but you will not drink wine from them.
- 12 For I know your many transgressions,

in Hebrew "Aven", which has various meanings. Here it probably refers to Bethel as "Beth Aven" (Hos 4:15).

**5:6** "House of Joseph" here signifies the whole kingdom of Israel. Ephraim, the dominant tribe in Israel, was descended from Joseph – Gen 41:52; 48:17-20.

"Fire" – Deut 4:24; Heb 10:26-31; 12:29.

"Bethel" – the false god at Bethel could not even save itself, let alone Israel.

**5:7** Amos begins again to describe some of the sins that were bringing God's judgment on Israel. They were sins against justice and righteousness. Israel had become a thoroughly corrupt society where people as a whole only thought of what they could get, and not of how they could help others.

**5:8,9** He reminds them again of the God who was watching them – 4:13. The Creator of the universe was well able to judge and punish Israel if the people would not seek Him.

"Pleiades and Orion" – two well-known constellations. See Job 9:9.

**5:10** All they wanted was to do what they pleased and get away with it. Justice and truth meant nothing to them. See the danger of this in 2 Thess 2:11,12.

**5:11** See again God's regard for the poor – 2:7; 4:1; 8:4,6. God would see to it that their oppressors would pay for their crimes – 3:15; 4:1-3.

**5:12** "I know" Hos 5:3; Heb 4:13.

"Bribe" – Ex 23:8; Ps 15:5; Prov 15:27;



and your enormous sins.  
 You afflict the just.  
 You take a bribe, and you turn away  
 the poor in the gate *from their right*.  
 13 Therefore the prudent keeps silent at  
 that time; for it *is* an evil time.  
 14 Seek good, and not evil, that you may live,  
 and so the LORD, the God of  
 hosts, will be with you,  
 as you have spoken.  
 15 Hate evil, and love good, and establish  
 justice in the gate.  
 It may be that the LORD God of hosts  
 will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph."  
  
 16 Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the  
 Lord, says this:  
 "Wailing *will be* in all the streets,  
 and they will say in all the highways,  
 'Alas! alas!'  
 And they will call the farmer to mourning,  
 and those who are skilled in laments  
 to wailing.  
 17 And in all the vineyards *there will be* wailing;  
 for I will pass through your midst,"  
 says the LORD.  
 18 "Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!  
 What will it *mean* for you?  
 The day of the LORD *is* darkness,

and not light.  
 19 As if a man flees from a lion,  
 and a bear meets him;  
 or goes into the house and leans his  
 hand on the wall,  
 and a serpent bites him.  
 20 *Will* not the day of the LORD *be*  
 darkness, and not light?  
 Very dark with no brightness in it?  
 21 "I hate, I despise your feast days,  
 and I will not savour your solemn  
 assemblies.  
 22 Though you offer me burnt offerings  
 and your grain offerings,  
 I will not accept *them* ;  
 nor will I have regard for your peace  
 offerings of fattened animals.  
 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs,  
 for I will not hear the music of your harps.  
 24 But let justice flow down like water,  
 and righteousness like a mighty stream.  
 25 "Did you offer sacrifices and offerings  
 to me in the desert forty years,  
 O house of Israel?  
 26 But you carried the tabernacle of your  
 Moloch and Kiyun, your idols,  
 the star of your god,  
 which you made for yourselves.

Eccl 7:7; Isa 1:23; 33:15. The Bible condemns those who demand bribes and those who give bribes to pervert justice. It says nothing about the helpless who are forced to give tips or bribes to get anything done (as in so many offices in India). In such cases the responsibility and the sin belongs to those who demand bribes.  
 5:13 A prudent man knows when to speak out and when it is useless to speak out.  
 5:14 "Live" – vs 4,6. Seeking God means to seek good and to turn from evil. God meets those who do this with forgiveness and blessing. Compare Jam 4:8-10.  
 "As you have spoken" – God was not with them; they were deceiving themselves (compare Hos 5:6,15).  
 5:15 Ps 97:10; Isa 1:16,17; Rom 12:9.  
 "It may be" – Ex 33:19. Even if they repented they would not deserve His mercy, and they would have to wait and prove their repentance was genuine.  
 "Remnant" – God had already determined to destroy the kingdom of Israel and only some survivors would receive mercy – 3:11,12.  
 5:16,17 God says this because He knew that Israel at that time would not repent and seek Him.  
 "I will pass through" – in judgment like a roaring lion – 1:2; 3:8.  
 5:18-20 Isa 2:10-21; 13:6; Joel 1:15; 2:1,2,11; 3:31. Evidently some in Israel

did not understand what the day of the LORD would be like. On that day there would be absolutely no escape for the wicked.  
 5:21-24 Compare Isa 1:11-17.  
 "Burnt. . . and grain offerings" – Leviticus chapters 1 and 2. Some worship can never be acceptable to God. Jesus spoke of the kind of worship God wants – John 4:23,24.  
 "Peace offerings" – notes at Leviticus chapter 3.  
 "Harps" – the fault was not in their music but in their hearts.  
 5:24 Ps 89:14; Jer 9:24; 22:3; Micah 6:8; Matt 5:6,10,20. No one who perverts justice and puts righteousness to one side (as Israel did) can be pleasing to the one true God, and the worship of such people will never be acceptable.  
 5:25 Israel was disobedient in the desert. That is why they had to wander there forty years – Num 14:22-35. What if they brought sacrifices to God? Sacrifices without obedience is not acceptable to Him. See 1 Sam 15:22,23.  
 5:26 What good are sacrifices and religious ceremonies and worship when people do things God hates? How could they even imagine God was with them when they trampled underfoot one of His most important laws – Ex 20:3-6? Compare Hos 8:11-13. The first three lines of this verse may be translated in various ways. It could be "You have lifted up Sakkuth your king and

27 Therefore I will cause you to go into  
captivity beyond Damascus,"  
says the LORD,  
whose name is The God of hosts.

- 6 Woe to those *who are* at ease in Zion,  
and trust in the mountain of Samaria,  
notable *men* of the chief of the nations,  
to whom the house of Israel comes!
- 2 Go to Calneh, and see;  
and go from there to Hamath the great.  
Then go down to Gath of the Philistines.  
*Are you* better than these kingdoms?  
Or their border greater than your border?
- 3 You who would put the day of disaster  
far off,  
and cause the seat of violence to come near,
- 4 who lie on beds of ivory,  
and stretch out on your couches,  
and eat the lambs from the flock,  
and the calves from the midst of the stall,
- 5 who chant to the sound of the harp,  
*and* invent musical instruments for  
themselves, like David,
- 6 who drink wine from bowls,  
and anoint yourselves with the best  
ointments,

but are not grieved at the ruin of Joseph.  
7 Therefore they will now go away  
captive with the first who go away  
captive,  
and the banqueting of those who  
stretch themselves out will pass away.

8 The Lord God has sworn by himself, the LORD  
God of hosts says,  
"I abhor the arrogance of Jacob,  
and hate his palaces.  
Therefore I will deliver up the city  
with all that is in it."

9 And it will happen, if ten men remain in one  
house, that they will die. 10 When an uncle, with  
someone who burns *bodies*, picks up the bodies to  
take them out of the house, he will say to him who  
is in a corner of the house, "*Is there anyone* with  
you?" And he will say, "No." Then he will say, "Hold  
your tongue! For we must not mention the name of  
the LORD."

11 For, see, the LORD gives a command,  
and he will smash the great house  
to pieces,  
and the little house to bits.

12 Do horses run on the rock?  
Does *one* plow *there* with oxen?

Kiyun your idols, your star-gods". Or, according to the Septuagint, "You have lifted up the shrine of Moloch and the star of your god Raphan, their idols" (compare Acts 7:43 – a quotation from the Septuagint).

5:27 Their disobedience would have a very painful result.

"Captivity" – 4:2; Hos 5:14; 9:3.

"Beyond Damascus" – in the land of Assyria.

6:1-7 Amos here describes the sin of complacency and pronounces God's judgment on it. See also Isa 32:9-11; Zeph 1:12,13. God had been like a lion roaring against them, pointing out their terrible sins and threatening terrible punishment – 1:2; 2:4-8; 3:14,15; 4:1-3; 5:16,17. It was no time for complacency and feelings of security, but for repentance and turning to God with all their heart and mind and strength. Complacency was the result of unbelief. It was utter foolishness and made more certain their destruction. See Prov 1:32. Today, in the light of the teachings of Jesus such as Matt 4:17; 5:29,30; 7:13,14; 13:49,50; 16:24-27; 25:26, complacency, smug self-satisfaction, is a mark of the utmost folly.

"At ease" (v 1) – this was carnal security, thinking they were secure in themselves no matter what God or His prophets had to say. 6:2 Hamath was a city in Syria about 180 kilometers north of Damascus. Perhaps Calneh was a city near there.

"Gath" – Josh 11:22; 13:3. It is unclear

why Amos makes the comparison he does in this verse. Doubtless it was understood by those who heard him.

6:3 "Put. . . off" – in their thinking they would not admit a day of disaster was near, and by refusing to do so they brought that day nearer.

6:4-6 Here is a picture of their complacency. They refused to think of God's coming judgment and sought only luxury and pleasure.

"Like David" – 1 Sam 16:15-23; 2 Sam 23:1. There is nothing wrong with this in its time and place. But that was not the time and place for it.

6:6 "Not grieve" – compare Ps 119:136; Jer 9:1; 13:17; Ezek 9:4-6; Joel 2:12,13; Matt 5:4; Luke 19:41.

"Joseph" – note at 5:6.

6:7 "They" – the careless and hardened who cared nothing for either God or man.

6:8 "Sworn by Himself" – compare Heb 6:13,14.

"I abhor the arrogance" – see Prov 6:16,17; Isa 2:12-18; etc.

"Palaces" – or fortresses (the Hebrew word can mean either). God hated their luxury and unreasoning confidence in their own wealth and strength.

6:9-11 This is the sort of situation that would develop when the enemy captured the city of Samaria. There would be great slaughter and destruction, and fear even to mention the name of the true God.

6:12 Israel's leaders had been acting against both reason and God's order in the world.

For you have turned justice into gall,  
and the fruit of righteousness into poison,  
13 you who rejoice in nothing, who say,  
"Did we not take power for ourselves  
by our own strength?"

14 "But, see, I will raise up against you a  
nation, O house of Israel,"  
says the LORD, the God of hosts,  
"and they will afflict you from the  
entrance of Hamath to the river of  
the wilderness."

**7** This is what the Lord God showed me: *I saw* that he was forming a swarm of locusts at the beginning of the late crop, and saw *it was* the late crop after the king's mowing. 2 And it came about when it had finished eating the grass of the land, *that* I said, "O Lord God, forgive, I beg you. How can Jacob stand? For he *is* small."

3 The LORD relented about this. "It will not be," said the LORD.

4 This is what the Lord God showed me: I saw the Lord God calling to contend by fire, and it consumed the great deep, and was eating up a part of *the land*. 5 Then I said, "O Lord God, stop, I beg you. How will Jacob stand? For he *is* small."

6 The LORD relented about this. "This also will not be," said the Lord God.

7 This is what he showed me: I *saw* the Lord

Horsemen and farmers had better sense than they.

"Justice into gall" – they perverted justice and by that means harmed and killed the helpless – 12:7; 5:7,12. See an illustration of this in 1 Kings 21:1-16.

"Righteousness into poison" – 5:7. They perverted the righteousness God required into self-righteousness and pride and an excuse to exalt themselves and despise others. Compare Luke 18:9-14.

**6:13** "In nothing. . . strength" – or "in Lo Debar. . . Karnaim" (towns east of the Jordan river in Gilead). In Hebrew Lo Debar means "nothing", and Karnaim means "horns" (power or strength).

**6:14** "A nation" – Assyria (Isa 10:5,6).

"From the entrance of Hamath to the river of the wilderness" – or "the valley of the Arabah" – the whole land of Israel from the northernmost boundary to the Dead Sea.

**7:1** "Showed me" – in a vision.

"A swarm of locusts" – God was preparing them to send on Israel for their punishment. Compare Joel chapter 1.

**7:2** "I said" – compare Gen 18:23-33; Ex 32:11-13,31,32.

"Jacob" – the people of Israel.

**7:3** "Relented" – Ex 32:14; Deut 32:36; Jer 18:8; 26:19; Hos 11:8.

"Not be" – the locust plague described in Joel was at a different time.

**7:4** "By fire" – perhaps a judgment like the

standing on a wall *made* with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. 8 And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

And I said, "A plumb line."

Then the Lord said, "See, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel. And I will not pass by them any longer.

9 "And the high places of Isaac will become desolate,  
and the sanctuaries of Israel will be laid waste;  
and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

10 Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent *word* to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words.

11 For Amos says this:

'Jeroboam will die by the sword,  
and Israel will surely be led away captive from their own land.'

12 Also Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go! Run away to the land of Judah, and eat food there, and prophesy there. 13 But do not prophesy any more at Bethel, for it *is* the king's sanctuary, and the king's court."

14 Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, "I *was* not a prophet, and not the son of a prophet,

one that came on Sodom (Gen 19:23-28). **7:7,8** The Lord here compares Israel to a wall. He wanted Israel to be "straight." When He tested them He found them altogether crooked. So the wall had to come down.

**7:9** He would not send a devastating plague of locusts or destroying fire, but He would send an enemy army to destroy their places of idolatry and many of the people.

"Isaac" – Jacob's father here signifies the people of Israel.

"Jeroboam" – 1:1; Hos 1:1.

**7:10** Bethel was a place of idolatry – 4:4; 5:5,6; 1 Kings 12:28-30. So Amaziah was an idolatrous priest and not a true one. He did his best to get rid of God's prophet Amos.

"Not able to bear his words" – in other words, could not bear the truth. Compare 5:10.

**7:11** Amos did not say Jeroboam himself would die by the sword, and Jeroboam did not (2 Kings 14:29). The sword did come on the "house of Jeroboam" – v 9; 2 Kings 15:8-10.

**7:12** "Seer" – 1 Sam 9:9. Amos told Israel what he saw in visions. So Amaziah sarcastically calls him a "seer" (one who sees).

**7:13** Bethel was a wicked king's temple; the temple of the King of heaven was in Jerusalem.

**7:14,15** Amaziah was completely mistaken in his view of Amos. So Amos explained

but I *was* a shepherd, and a gatherer of sycamore figs. 15 And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' 16 Now therefore hear the word of the LORD. You say,

'Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not drop *your words* against the house of Isaac.'

17 "Therefore thus says the LORD:  
"Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, and your land will be divided by line, and you will die in a defiled land, and Israel will surely go into captivity out of his land."

**8** This is what the Lord God showed me: I saw a basket of summer fruit.

2 And he said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit."

Then the LORD said to me, "The end has come on my people Israel. And I will not pass by them any longer. 3 And the songs of the temple will become wailing sounds in that day, says the Lord God. *There will be* many dead bodies everywhere. They will throw *them* out in silence."

4 Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, and do away with the poor of the land,

5 Saying, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain?

And the Sabbath, that we may set out wheat *for sale*, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit, 6 that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, yes, and sell the refuse of the wheat?"

7 The LORD has sworn by the excellence of Jacob, "Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. 8 Will the land not tremble for this, and everyone mourn who lives in it? And all of it will swell like the river *Nile* ; and it will be tossed up and subside, like the river of Egypt.

9 "And this will come about in that day, says the Lord God:

I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight.

10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamenting, and bring sackcloth on every waist, and baldness on every head, and make it like the mourning for an only *son*, and its end like a bitter day.

11 "See, the days come," says the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.

that he was not a professional prophet, that was not how he "earned his bread" (v 12), and that the king of Judah had not sent him to "conspire" in Israel (v 10). He came to Israel only because God sent him.

**7:16** "Now therefore, hear" – since God had sent him to prophesy he would do so whether Amaziah or Israel liked it or not.

**7:17** Amos repeats his prophecy that Israel would go into exile (5:27) and adds predictions concerning Amaziah.

**8:1** "Showed me" – 7:1,4,7.

**8:2** When fruit is ripe men pluck it and take it away. So Assyria would do to Israel.

**8:3** "Wailings" – 5:16,17. This phrase may also be translated "the temple singers will wail."

"Silence" – was Amos about to plead for Israel as he did in 7:2,5? God did not want to hear it for He had decided that this punishment must come on them.

**8:4,5** Again we see God's concern for the poor and needy – 2:6,7; 4:1; 5:12. Merchants cared nothing for the sufferers they caused the poor. They were greedy for gain and practiced dishonesty to get it. Even their religious festivals and days of rest were a burden to them because they could not do business at those times.

"Falsifying the balances" – Deut 25:15; Prov 11:1; 16:11; Hos 12:7; Micah 6:10,11. **8:6** 2:6.

**8:7** "The excellence of Jacob" – the Lord Himself. Compare 6:8.

"Never forget" – this speaks of the certainty of punishment for an unbelieving, unrepentant people. See Hos 8:13. Compare Jer 31:34; Heb 8:12; 10:17.

**8:8** Egypt's great river, the Nile, every year during the rainy season would rise by as much as 25 feet and flood all the surrounding land. God's judgment would be like that.

**8:9** Compare 5:18. The day God speaks of here is not the "day of the LORD", but it is something like it, in some ways a little picture of it.

**8:10** Verse 3. "Sackcloth" – Gen 37:34; 2 Sam 3:31; 21:10; Isa 3:24.

"Baldness" – Isa 7:20; Jer 47:5.

**8:11** "A famine of. . . words of the LORD" – surely the worst of all possible famines. The people would be left without a word of encouragement or comfort or rebuke or hope or warning or guidance. God would no longer speak to them through His prophets, and they would have to face His judgments without a word from Him. Compare Prov 1:22-33, especially vs 28,29; Hos 5:6,15.

12 And they will wander from sea to sea,  
and from the north to the east,  
running here and there to seek the  
word of the LORD,  
and will not find *it*.

13 "In that day the beautiful virgins  
and young men will faint for thirst.

14 Those who swear by the sin of  
Samaria, and say,  
'Your god, O Dan, lives!'  
and, 'The way of Beersheba lives!'  
will fall, and never rise up again."

9 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said,

"Strike the top of the doorposts,  
so that the thresholds shake,  
and break on the heads of them all.  
And I will slay the last of them with the sword.  
The one among them who flees will not  
get away,  
and the one among them who escapes  
will not be rescued.

2 Though they dig into *hell*,  
my hand will take them from there.

Though they climb up to heaven,  
I will bring them down from there.

3 And though they hide themselves on  
the top of Carmel,  
I will search them out and take *them*  
from there.

And though they hide from my sight in  
the bottom of the sea,

I will give a command to the serpent there,

and it will bite them.

4 And though they go into captivity in  
front of their enemies,  
I will command the sword there,  
and it will slay them.

And I will set my eyes on them for  
disaster, and not for good."

5 The Lord God of hosts *is* he who  
touches the land, and it melts,  
and all who live there mourn,  
and all of it rises like the river *Nile*  
and subsides like the river of Egypt.

6 He *it is* who builds his upper rooms  
in the heavens,  
and places his foundation on the earth.  
He *it is* who calls for the waters of the sea,  
and pours them out on the surface of  
the earth. The LORD *is* his name.

7 "Are you not like children of the  
Ethiopians to me,  
O children of Israel?" says the LORD.  
"Did I not bring Israel up out of the  
land of Egypt?  
And the Philistines from Caphtor,  
and the Syrians from Kir?

8 See, the eyes of the Lord God *are* on  
the sinful kingdom,  
and I will destroy it from the face of  
the earth.

Yet I will not totally destroy the house  
of Jacob, says the LORD.

9 For, see, I will give a command,  
and will sift the house of Israel among  
all the nations,

"For disaster and not for good" – compare 2 Chron 16:9. We can well imagine the fearful condition of a people or an individual whom God determines to punish. 9:5 "Melts" – Ps 46:6; 68:2; Heb 12:29. "Egypt" – 8:8.

9:6 A beautiful picture of the work of the Creator. It was He with whom Israel had to deal.

"LORD" – Jehovah (Ex 3:14,15).

9:7 "Ethiopians" – Isa 18:1,2. Because Israel had broken God's covenant and trampled underfoot His laws, He says He would treat them as other peoples. It is true He brought them up from Egypt but He had moved other peoples also from place to place.

"Caphtor" – the island of Crete.

9:8 "Eyes" – v 4.

"Not totally destroy" – God would destroy the kingdom of Israel but not all the people (3:12).

9:9 "Among all the nations" – Lev 26:33.

"Sieve" – there would be a great shaking and sifting process which would completely separate the "grain" from what was not grain.

8:12 Compare Ezek 20:1-3,31. When they had God's Word they would not obey it. This was their punishment. They would understand something of its great value when it was taken away from them.

8:13 "Thirst" – he probably means both physical and spiritual thirst.

8:14 "Sin" – the idol of Samaria. Compare Jer 11:13; 32:34.

"Dan" – 1 Kings 12:28,29.

"god" – or "power."

"Beersheba" – 5:5.

"Will fall" – Hos 8:4.

9:1 "I saw" – 7:1.

"The altar" – probably the one at Bethel (7:13).

"Strike" – this signified the destruction of the place of worship there (3:14).

"I will slay" – God would use Israel's enemies as His instruments.

9:2 "Into hell" – or "to Sheol" (note at Gen 37:35).

9:2-4 Compare Ps 139:7-12. For Israel there would be no possibility of escape from God who is everywhere.

"Carmel" – a mountain in Israel.

like *grain* is sifted in a sieve,  
yet not the smallest grain will fall onto  
the earth.  
10 All the sinners among my people will  
die by the sword,  
*all* those who say,  
'The disaster will not overtake or meet us.'  
11 "In that day I will raise up the  
tabernacle of David which has fallen,  
and repair the broken places,  
and raise up its ruins,  
and build it up as in the days of old,  
12 so that they may possess the remnant  
of Edom,  
and of all the nations which are called by  
my name," says the LORD who will do this.  
13 "See, the days are coming,"

**9:10** Though a remnant of the people would survive, there would be no hope for those who went on in their sins.  
**9:11,12** In Acts 15:15-18 James refers to these verses. His purpose was not to show that they were completely fulfilled in his day, but to show that Gentile peoples would also bear God's name - that is, find salvation in Christ.  
"In that day" – in the prophets this sometimes means the "the day of the LORD" – Isa 10:21; 13:6-13; Joel 1:15; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10. See Joel 3:1,18; etc.  
"Tabernacle of David" – the kingdom of David. He ruled over the twelve united tribes. This kingdom would be restored. See also Ezek 34:23,24; 37:15-28. The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament made before the birth of Christ) is different here. See Acts 15:17 which is a

says the LORD,  
"when the plowman will overtake the reaper,  
and the treader of grapes him who  
sows seed.  
And the mountains will drip with sweet wine,  
and all the hills will melt.  
14 And I will reverse the captivity of my  
people Israel,  
and they will build the ruined cities and  
live in them,  
and they will plant vineyards and drink  
the wine from them,  
and they will make gardens and eat  
their fruit.  
15 And I will plant them in their land,  
and they will never again be uprooted  
from their land which I have given  
them," says the LORD your God.

quotation from the Septuagint.  
**9:13** Joel 3:18.  
**9:14** Isa 11:10-16; Jer 29:14; 33:7; etc.  
"I will reverse" – or "I will restore the fortunes of" – the Hebrew means both.  
**9:15** Here is a plain declaration that the final restoration of the people of Israel to the land of Israel would be permanent (compare Joel 3:20). Since this was not the case when the Jews returned from Babylon in the 6th century BC, God is speaking of another "planting" of Israel in their land. Up to this present century this never happened. Whether the existence of Israel as a nation in the land now is in fulfillment of this verse is not clear – at least to the author of these notes. But it is clear that Israel will eventually be planted permanently there.  
"Given them" – Gen 13:14,15; 28:13; Jer 3:18; Obadiah 17.



# OBADIAH

**Author:**

The Bible tells us nothing about Obadiah. He is not the same person as the government official of the same name who lived in the days of Elijah and Ahab (1 Kings 18:3-16), or any of about a dozen other men in the Old Testament named Obadiah. His name means “Worshipper of Jehovah” or “Servant of Jehovah”.

**Date:**

Probably sometime about 845 BC.

**Theme:**

The punishment that will come on the people of Edom because of their acts of violence against Israel.

**Contents:**

The destruction coming on Edom .....	1-9
The reason for God's judgment on Edom .....	10-14
The judgment coming on Edom and others .....	15,16
The future restoration and possessions of Israel .....	17-21

The vision of Obadiah.  
This is what the Lord God says concerning Edom;  
We have heard a report from the LORD,  
and a messenger has been sent among the nations –  
Arise, and let us go up against her in battle.

2 “See, I have made you small among the nations.  
You are greatly despised.

3 The pride of your heart has deceived you,  
you who live in the clefts of the rock,  
whose home is in the heights,  
who says in his heart,  
‘Who will bring me down to the ground?’

4 Though you exalt yourself like the eagle,  
and though you set your nest among the stars,  
I will bring you down from there,” says the LORD.

5 “If thieves came to you,  
if robbers at night  
(oh, how you will be cut off!),  
would they not steal only until they had enough?  
If grape pickers came to you,  
would they not leave some grapes?

6 Oh, how Esau’s land will be searched out!  
How his hidden treasures hunted!

7 All the men of your confederacy will bring you to the border.  
The men who were at peace with you  
will deceive you,  
and prevail against you.

1 “Vision” – Isa 1:1; Gen 15:1.  
“Edom” – for other prophecies concerning this land and people see Isa 34:5-15; Jer 49:7-22; Ezek 25:12-14; Amos 1:11,12.  
2-4 They were a very proud people, so God would humble them. They thought they were greet, so He had made them small. See Prov 3:34; 6:16,17; Jam 4:6-10; 1 Pet 5:5,6; Ps 18:25-27; Isa 2:11-18.  
“Rock” (v 3) – the capital city of Edom was located among rocks and cliffs and they were sure that no enemy could take it. They forgot about God the Almighty One.  
5,6 Edom’s enemies would deal with them in a much worse way than thieves and robbers. They would leave nothing behind.  
“Grapes” – Deut 24:20,21.  
7 Edom’s friends and allies would prove false and treacherous and deceive the people. God would use this means of destroying them.  
8 Edom was famous for men of worldly wisdom – Jer 49:7 (Job’s friend Eliphaz was a native of an Edomite city – Job 2:11).  
“Destroy” – their wisdom would not be able to save either the country or

Those who eat your food prepare a wound for you.  
He has no understanding!”

8 The LORD says,  
“In that day will I not destroy the wise men out of Edom,  
and understanding out of the mountain of Esau?

9 And your mighty men, O Teman, will be dismayed,  
so that everyone belonging to the mountain of Esau may be cut off in the slaughter.

10 Because of your violence against your brother Jacob shame will cover you,  
and you will be cut off forever.

11 “On the day that you stood on the other side,  
on the day strangers took his forces captive,  
and foreigners entered through his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem,  
you were like one of them.

12 But you should not have watched on the day of your brother,  
on the day that he became a foreigner;  
nor should you have rejoiced over the children of Judah on the day of their destruction;  
nor should you have spoken proudly on the day of distress.

13 You should not have entered through the gate of my people in the day of their calamity.  
Indeed, you should not have looked on

themselves.  
“Esau” – another name for Edom. See Gen 25:29,30.  
9 Teman was a tribe descended from Esau. It gave its name to the region it occupied in Edom.  
10-14 Here is the principal reason why God would send destruction on Edom. When Israel was attacked by enemies Edom was glad and actually took part in destroying Israel.  
10 “Brother Jacob” – Edom was Jacob’s brother (Gen 25:24-30). So Edom and Israel were brother nations. This is what made their joy over Israel’s destruction worse than it would otherwise have been.  
“Forever” – Ezek 35:9.  
11 “One of them” – Esau was like one of Israel’s worst enemies.  
12 To be glad at the destruction of a brother is devilish and those guilty of it will have to face God’s judgment. Here was a whole nation guilty of this.  
13 “Laid hands on their wealth” – they jumped on a suffering people and made their sufferings worse.

their affliction in the day of their calamity,  
or laid hands on their wealth in the day  
of their calamity;  
14 nor should you have stood at the  
crossroads to cut off those among  
them who were escaping;  
nor should you have delivered up those  
among them who remained in the  
day of distress.  
15 "For the day of the LORD is near on  
all the nations.  
It will be done to you as you have done.  
Your payment will return on your own head.  
16 For as you drank on my holy mountain,  
so all the nations will drink continually.  
Yes, they will drink,  
and they will swallow,  
and they will be as though they had  
never been.  
17 But on mount Zion there will be  
deliverance,  
and there will be holiness,  
and the house of Jacob will possess  
their possessions.

14 They were determined that none of their  
"brother" nation should escape, so deadly  
was their malice and hatred.  
15 "Day of the LORD" – Joel 1:15;  
2:1,11,31; 3:14.  
"Own head" – here is a theme that runs  
throughout the Bible (Ps 7:15,16; 18:25-  
27; Jer 50:29; Ezek 35:11; Hab 2:8;  
Gal 6:7. This will be true of both individuals  
and nations.  
16 "On my holy mountain" – the mountain  
where Jerusalem is. The Edomites celebrated  
Israel's defeat with drinking parties. But  
Edom and many other nations would have  
to drink something other than alcoholic be-  
verages at the time of the day of the LORD.  
See Jer 25:15-29; 49:12,13; Rev 14:10.  
17 Joel 2:32; Amos 9:11-15; Rom  
11:26,27.  
"Their possessions" – Gen 13:14,15.

18 And the house of Jacob will be a fire,  
and the house of Joseph a flame,  
and the house of Esau will be stubble,  
and they will set them on fire and  
consume them.  
And no one will remain of the house  
of Esau, for the LORD has spoken."  
19 And those of the south of Israel  
will possess the mountain of Esau,  
and those of the plains the land of  
the Philistines,  
and they will possess the fields of Ephraim,  
and the fields of Samaria,  
and Benjamin will possess Gilead.  
20 And the returned captives of this host  
of the children of Israel will possess  
the land of the Canaanites as far  
as Zarephath,  
and the captives from Jerusalem,  
who are in Sepharad,  
will possess the cities of the south.  
21 And saviours will come up on Mount  
Zion to judge the mountain of Esau.  
And the kingdom will belong to the LORD.

18 Ezek 25:12-14; Zech 12:6. God will treat  
Edom as Edom treated Israel, and will use  
Israel as the instrument in its destruction.  
19,20 People of Israel will occupy the land  
of Edom. This has not yet taken place, but  
as sure as God's Word is true it will yet  
happen.  
"Philistines" – at that time a people along  
the Mediterranean coast west of Israel.  
"Gilead" – a region east of the Jordan  
river. Israel does not now possess it.  
"Zarephath" – 1 Kings 17:9. The loca-  
tion of Sepharad is uncertain.  
21 The center of authority and, apparently,  
the capital of the coming kingdom will be  
Jerusalem. And the kingdom of Israel and  
the rule over the nations will belong to the  
LORD – Isa 2:1-4; 11:10-16; Ezek 48:35;  
Joel 3:20,21; Zechariah chapter 14; Rev  
11:15.

# JONAH

**Author:**

It is not stated anywhere that Jonah wrote this book, but according to tradition he was the author, and the prayer in chapter 2, being in the first person, is evidence that he wrote down at least that. Jonah is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25. His village, Gath-Hepher was in the territory of Zebulun in the northern part of Israel. His name means "dove."

**Date:**

Possibly sometime about 760 BC.

**Themes:**

God has ways of making His disobedient servants obedient; God's compassion and love, not only toward Israel, but toward people of other nations; to be spared destruction those people must repent and turn to God; people from Israel were responsible to declare God's grace to other people and be an instrument to turn them to God.

**Contents:**

God's command to Jonah, Jonah's flight .....	1:1-3
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Jonah's prayer from the belly of the great fish .....	2:1-10
Jonah proclaims God's message in Nineveh .....	3:1-5
The king repents and tells his people to show their repentance .....	3:6-9
God shows His forgiving nature and relents .....	3:10
Jonah's anger at God's show of mercy .....	4:1-4
The plant and the worm .....	4:5-8
God rebukes Jonah .....	4:9-11

**1** Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, **2** "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before me."

**3** But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa. And he found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

**4** But the LORD sent out a great wind onto the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. **5** Then the sailors were afraid, and each one cried out to his god. And they threw the cargo that *was* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it* by that *much*. But Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. **6** So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean *by this*, sleeper? Arise, call on your God. Perhaps *your* God will think about us, so that we do not perish."

**7** And they all said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, so that we can find out who *is to blame* for this calamity on us." So they cast lots, and the

lot fell on Jonah.

**8** Then they said to him, "Tell us, we beg you, who *is to blame* for this calamity on us. What *is* your occupation? And where do you come from? What *is* your country? And of what people are you?"

**9** And he said to them, "I *am* a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry *land*."

**10** Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

**11** Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, so that the sea may calm down for us?" For the sea was growing more stormy.

**12** And he said to them, "Pick me up, and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will calm down for you. For I know that because of me this great tempest *has come* on you."

**13** Nevertheless the men rowed hard to reach land, but they could not; for the sea was growing *even* more stormy against them. **14** Therefore they cried out to the LORD, and said, "We beg

**1:1** "Word. . .came" – Jer 1:2; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1.

**1:2** Nineveh" – Gen 10:11; 2 Kings 19:36; Nahum chapters 1-3; Zeph 2:13; Matt 12:41. Nineveh was the chief city of Assyria, and the greatest city in the world in those days. According to an ancient tradition, to go around it and all of its suburbs or sister cities was a journey of about 100 kilometers. It was about 800 kilometers from Jonah's home town in Israel.

"Their wickedness" – in Nahum's day Nineveh had become an arrogant, violent, cruel, evil, corrupt city (Nah 1:11; 2:12,13; 3:1,4,16,19). It must have been something like that in Jonah's day – 3:8. It was the great enemy of Israel and eventually – after Jonah's time – crushed the northern kingdom and took the people into captivity. See 2 Kings 17:3-6. Sometimes God asks His servants to do very difficult things and things they do not at all wish to do or understand the necessity of doing.

**1:3** "To flee" – in 4:2 Jonah himself gives his reason for this. He did not want Nineveh to repent or to have God's forgiveness. He wanted God to destroy the city. Little did he seem to understand that no one can run away from God – Ps 139:7-12. And did he vainly imagine that he was the only prophet in Israel and that God had no one else He could send to Nineveh?

"Tarshish" – this city (probably on the southern coast of present-day Spain) was as far away as he could get from Nineveh and in the opposite direction. "Joppa" was in Israel on the Mediterranean coast.

**1:4** "The LORD sent" – compare v 17; 4:6,7,8; Ps 107:25; Ps 29. God the

Creator is in charge of His creation and can use any of it at any time for His purposes.

**1:5** "Each. . .his god" – these sailors were of nations other than Israel and worshiped various and sundry gods, worthless and helpless gods which had no power to control the elements of nature (compare Ps 115:3-8).

"Sleep" – evidently Jonah did not much care what happened or whether he lived or died. He was out of touch with the true and living God, and in a stupor of disobedience and possibly despair.

**1:6** The captain saw that prayer to other gods was not working and thought maybe Jonah's God would do something for them.

**1:7** "Cast lots" – Lev 16:8; Josh 18:6; 1 Chron 24:5; Ps 22:18; Ezek 21:21; Acts 1:26.

**1:9** "Hebrew" – Gen 14:13; 39:14; Ex 1:15; Phil 3:5.

"LORD" – in Hebrew "Jehovah" (Ex 3:14). "God of heaven" – 2 Chron 36:23; Ezra 1:2; Neh 1:4; Dan 2:18; Isa 66:1; Ps 115:3.

"Who made" – Gen 1:1; Isa 40:25,26.

**1:10** "Exceedingly afraid" – they realized that the God worshiped by Jonah was no mere tribal deity, not one of the lesser gods most people worshiped.

"Told them" – Jonah was at least perfectly open and frank with them (v 12). **1:12** It seems that Jonah was in a state of mind that welcomed death – v 5. He saw he could not run away from God, and he would rather die than go to Nineveh.

**1:13-15** They had been terrified at the mention of Jehovah, the God of heaven – v 10, and did not want to offend Him by harming one of His servants.

"Stopped its raging" – Ps 107:29; Matt 8:26.

you, O LORD, we beg you, do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not put innocent blood to our account. For you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you." 15 So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. 16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD, and made vows.

17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

**2** Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly, 2 and said,

"I cried out to the LORD because of my distress, and he heard me.

I cried out from the belly of hell,  
and you heard my voice.

3 For you cast me into the deep,  
into the heart of the seas,  
and the floods surrounded me.

**1:16** "Feared the LORD" – Mark 4:41; Ex 20:1; Ps 76:7; 96:4; Mal 1:14. They had seen dramatic and unmistakable evidence that the mighty Creator was at work. It does not say that they renounced their own various gods. Possibly they simply tried to add Jehovah to the list of gods to be worshiped. All too often this is the way with people. Many do not understand that to worship and serve the true God, men must renounce all gods and idols – Ex 20:1-6; 1 Kings 18:21; Isa 42:8.

**1:17** Compare v 4. "Great fish" – it does not say this was a whale and it may have been a special fish that God prepared for this one event. God sent this fish to save Jonah from death in the sea.

"In the belly" – the God who made both Jonah and the great fish could keep Jonah alive in it as long as He wished.

"Three days and three nights" – see Matt 12:40; 16:4.

**2:1** This is surely the strangest place from which anyone ever prayed. But the true and living God can hear us no matter where we are, no matter how extreme our trouble or how great and desperate our need. In the prayer which follows it is significant that Jonah does not pray to get out of the fish's belly. But since he is turning back to God, it seems that he assumed that God would deliver him – v 9. He may have realized that the fish was God's way of deliverance from death in the sea.

**2:2** Compare Ps 18:5,6; 30:3; 50:15; Lam 3:55; Matt 14:30.

"I cried out" – he had faced death calmly, and even thought it was good for him to die – 1:12. But facing death and actually experiencing it are two different things. He went into the sea quietly enough, but when the sea began to go into him he was alarmed.

"He heard me" – yes, we see God's goodness even to a disobedient prophet.

All your billows and your waves passed  
over me.

4 Then I said,

'I am cast out of your sight.

Yet I will look again toward your holy temple.'

5 The waters surrounded me to the soul.

The deep closed around me,  
the weeds were wrapped around my head.

6 I went down to the bottoms of the  
mountains.

The earth with its bars *were about to*  
enclose me forever.

Yet you have brought up my life from  
the pit, O LORD my God.

7 When my soul fainted within me I  
remembered the LORD,  
and my prayer went up to you,  
into your holy temple.

8 Those who regard lying vanities  
forsake their own mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice to you with the

How much more will God hear those who obey Him.

"Hell" – in Hebrew "Sheol" – the unseen realm of the dead (note at Gen 37:35). It seemed to Jonah that he was as good as dead. Some commentators think that Jonah actually died, and that God brought him to life again. This interpretation also does not seem impossible, but it is not demanded by the language here, which is, after all, poetry. **2:3** "You" – 1:15. The sailors were merely God's instruments. Compare Job 1:21.

"Billows", "waves" – Ps 42:7.

**2:4** Ps 31:22. "Yet" – Ps 73:22,23; Lam 3:19-23. Our danger or trouble is never so great as to be beyond the reach of God's help, if we will call to Him. This should always be our confidence.

"Holy temple" – v 7. Probably means God's temple in heaven – Rev 7:15; 11:19; 15:5,6; 16:17.

**2:5** Compare Ps 69:1,2.

**2:6** "Pit" – v 2; Ps 30:3; 69:15.

**2:7** Verse 2; Ps 78:34,35; Hos 5:15. It is sad that people often wait until they are in the depths of trouble before they remember God and seek Him. But it is better to remember Him then than not to remember Him at all.

**2:8** "Lying vanities" – sometimes this is the way the Jews referred to false gods. Deut 32:21; 1 Sam 12:21; Ps 115:4-8.

"Forsake their own mercy" – they turn their back on God's grace, the grace of the God who demands that they forsake their idols.

**2:9** Though he is still in the fish's belly (v 1), he has faith that God will deliver him and enable him to sing and offer sacrifices again.

"Thanksgiving" – Lev 7:12,13; Ezra 3:11; Ps 7:17; 56:12; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

"Vowed" – Ps 50:14; 56:12; 61:8; 65:1; 66:13,14; 16:12-19.



voice of thanksgiving.

I will pay what I have vowed.

Salvation is of the LORD."

10 And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto the dry *land*.

**3** And the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, **2** "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you."

**3** So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, in accordance with the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, three days' journey *in size*. **4** And Jonah began to go into the city *on the first day's journey*, and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh will be overthrown!"

**5** So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

**6** For word came to the king of Nineveh, and he

"Salvation is of the LORD" – always true of every kind of salvation – Ps 3:8; Isa 43:11; 64:4; Acts 4:12; Eph 2:8,9.

**2:10** "The LORD spoke" – Ps 33:9; 148:5,7,8. In this book everyone and everything, except Jonah, is seen obeying God's will. And after Jonah's disobedience God made him also willing to obey.

**3:1** "The second time" – why did not God send another prophet and reject Jonah once and for all? God does not give up on His servants so easily. Compare Matt 26:34,35; Mark 16:7; Luke 22:31,32,61,62; Ex 3:11; 4:10,13; Jer 1:6. God does not accept excuses and He knows how to make His servants obedient. Perhaps we may be glad that He doesn't always use such drastic ways as He used with Jonah, but it is far better that He use such means than that He leave us in disobedience. A state of disobedience is much worse than any trouble that moves us to be obedient.

**3:2** "Preach. . . the message that I tell you" – this was the work of a prophet. He was simply to deliver God's message whether it had to do with the future or the present, whether it meant prediction or just preaching.

**3:3** "Arose and went" – Jonah still did not want to go, and later he was not happy when his preaching met with success (4:1-3), but he went. Perhaps God's servants are to be more commended when, in obedience to God, they do things they don't want to do rather than when they do things they do want to do.

"Three days" – see note at 1:2.

**3:4** God's message was simple and direct. Of course, God did not mean that Nineveh would be destroyed whether the people repented or not (compare Jer 18:7,8; Ezek 18:21-23; 33:10,11,14-16). God is what Jonah thought Him to be – gracious and compassionate (4:2).

**3:5** This was a marvelous thing, not equaled in all the days of the Old Testament, as far

arose from his throne, and laid aside his robe from him, and covered *himself* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. **7** And by the decree of the king and his nobles, he caused *this* proclamation to be published throughout Nineveh, saying, "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not eat, or drink water, **8** But have man and beast covered with sackcloth, and cry out mightily to God. Yes, have every one of them turn from his evil way, and from the violence of their hands. **9** Who can tell *but that* God may turn and relent, and turn away from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish?"

**10** And God saw their deeds, that they turned from their evil way, and God relented concerning the harm that he had said he would do to them; and he did not do *it*.

**4** But this displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. **2** And he prayed to the

as we know. This was a city of the Gentiles which worshiped many gods and with little knowledge of the true God. See 1:2 for the character of the people. Yet there was this turning to God at the preaching of Jonah – something that the cities of Galilee and Judea did not do at the preaching of the Lord Jesus Himself (Matt 11:20-24; 12:41).

"Sackcloth" – 1 Kings 21:27; Neh 9:1; Dan 9:3.

**3:6** The king of Nineveh was the very powerful king of Assyria.

"Ashes" – signifies a remarkable and complete humbling of himself.

**3:7** "Eat or drink" – the people were to devote themselves to repentance and calling on God, and not to go about their usual tasks.

**3:8** "Evil way", "violence" – he admitted the terrible spiritual condition of his people and made no excuses for them, no attempt to cover up their sin (compare Prov 28:13).

**3:9** "Who can tell" – Joel 2:14; Amos 5:15.

**3:10** This was according to His nature and His word – Ex 34:6,7; Joel 2:13. Jer 18:7,8 (written long after this) reveals God's dealings with cities or countries.

"Relented" – Ex 32:14. God delights to show mercy (Micah 7:18), and is reluctant to punish and destroy (compare Jer 48:31,32; Matt 23:37; etc.).

**4:1** "Angry" – what other preacher in history reacted like this to a great success? Why was Jonah angry? Nineveh was a great enemy of Israel and he thought God should not have mercy on it. His view was that if God is going to show mercy to anyone let it be to Israel alone, and not to Gentile enemies of Israel. Though Jonah was a prophet of the true God his heart was not in tune with God's heart in these matters. He did not want what God wanted, and did not delight in what God delighted in.

**4:2** He knew the truth of Ex 34:6,7; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 116:5; Joel 2:13; etc.

LORD, and said, "Please, LORD, *was* not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore before *this* I fled to Tarshish. For I knew that you *are* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to get angry, and of great kindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. 3 Therefore now, O LORD, I beg you to take my life from me, for *it is* better for me to die than to live."

4 Then the LORD said, "Are you right to be angry?"

5 So Jonah went out of the city, and sat at the east side of the city, and there he made a booth for himself, and sat under it in the shade, until he could see what would become of the city. 6 And the LORD God prepared a plant and made *it* come up over Jonah, so that it might give shade over his head, to deliver him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad about the plant. 7 But the next day when

morning dawned, God prepared a worm, and it attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 And it came about when the sun rose that God prepared a hot east wind. And the sun beat down on Jonah's head, so that he fainted, and wished that he might die, and said, "*It is* better for me to die than to live."

9 And God said to Jonah, "Are you right to be angry about the plant?"

And he said, "I am right to be angry, *even* to death."

10 Then the LORD said, "You are sorry about the plant, for which you did not labour or make to grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, where *there* are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also many cattle?"

But he wanted this truth applied to himself and to his people, not to outsiders.

**4:3** "Take my life" – compare 1 Kings 19:4. Jonah's life meant nothing to him since God would not act as he wanted Him to act (others since then have fallen into depression for the same reason). He wanted Israel exalted above all peoples and nations, and could not see that God's behavior toward Nineveh was the way to go about it.

**4:4** God now has to deal again with His grieved and angry prophet. We see how gently He does this in the rest of the chapter. The answer to the question of this verse is plainly "no". No one ever has any right to question God's ways (compare Rom 9:20). It is our part to learn God's ways and gladly yield to them.

**4:5** "What would become of the city" – perhaps he hoped that Nineveh's repentance was only skin deep and that God would have to destroy it after all.

**4:6** "Prepared" – vs 7,8; 1:17. God begins to teach Jonah a very important lesson. Jonah was concerned about trifling things such as personal comfort, and cared nothing for the salvation of people other than his own. It is a sad fact that in this matter there are a great many in Christian churches just like him. They are glad for comforts and luxuries but care nothing for the souls of men.

"Plant" – what kind of plant is not clear

from the Hebrew. Possibly it was some sort of gourd.

**4:7** God can take away our comforts as easily as He provides them, and may do so to teach us a lesson.

**4:8** Again we see that Jonah thought entirely too much of his comforts and not enough of the people to whom God sent him to minister. He still wanted to die, not because of the vine, but because he was still not reconciled to God's ways and God's heart.

**4:9** "I am right" – he was utterly mistaken in this. No person has the right to be angry with God for taking away what He once gave. Compare Job's attitude with Jonah's – Job 1:21,22. This is one reason why Job was the best man in his day, and Jonah was hardly the best man in his. Are not many of us more like Jonah than like Job? Do we not sometimes get upset with God because He won't do as we want Him to do and takes away some of the things we delight in?

**4:10,11** Here is the lesson Jonah needed to learn. Let us learn it too. Let us learn that all things of this world, like the vine that gave shade to Jonah, are passing away – 1 John 2:17, and that we must care about the things that God cares about. God is concerned about all the peoples of the world. Are we taken up only with ourselves and our comforts?

# MICAH

## Author:

Micah was probably from the town of Moresheth-Gath which was near the Philistine city of Gath. His name is an abbreviated form of Micaiah, which means "Who is like Jehovah?" He is not the same as the prophet by that name who prophesied in the days of Ahab. This Micah is mentioned in Jer 26:18.

## Date:

Perhaps sometime about 700 BC, though Micah had been prophesying for many years before that.

## Themes:

The wickedness of the people and God's coming judgment. This little book contains prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. The place of His birth is announced 700 years before it took place (5:2), and His coming kingdom is briefly described (4:1-8). A famous description of true religion is given in 6:8, and a beautiful passage about God's mercy and love in 7:18-20.

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**1** The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, *the vision* he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

- 2 Hear, all you peoples!  
Listen, O earth, and all that is in it,  
that the Lord God may be a witness  
against you,  
the Lord from his holy temple.
- 3 For, see, the LORD is coming out of his place,  
and will descend and tread on the high  
places of the earth.
- 4 And the mountains will melt under him,  
and the valleys will split,  
like wax before the fire,  
*and* like water poured down a steep place.
- 5 All this *is* because of the transgression  
of Jacob,  
and because of the sins of the house of  
Israel.  
What *is* the transgression of Jacob?  
*Is* it not Samaria?  
And what *are* the high places of Judah?  
*Are they* not Jerusalem?
- 6 Therefore I will make Samaria a heap  
of ruins in the field *and* a place for

- planting a vineyard,  
and I will pour her stones into the valley,  
and I will uncover her foundations.
- 7 And all her carved images will be  
smashed to pieces,  
and all her earnings will be burned  
with fire, and all her idols I will  
make desolate.  
For she collected *them* from the  
earnings of a prostitute,  
and they will return to the earnings of  
a prostitute.
- 8 Therefore I will wail and mourn.  
I will go stripped and naked.  
I will wail like the jackals,  
and mourn like the owls.
- 9 For her wound *is* incurable;  
and it has come to Judah.  
It has come to the gate of my people,  
to Jerusalem.
- 10 Tell *it* not at Gath, weep not at all.  
In the house of Aphrah roll yourself in  
the dust.
- 11 Pass by in naked shame, inhabitant of Saphir.  
The inhabitant of Zaanan does not come out.  
Beth-Ezel is in mourning.  
Its standing place has been taken

1:1 Jer 1:2; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1.  
"Moreshtite" – he was probably from the town of Moresheth-Gath, a town in southern Judah.  
"Hezekiah" – Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea.  
"Vision he saw" – see Isa 1:1.  
"Jerusalem" – Micah, unlike some of the prophets, was a prophet concerning both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.  
1:2 The whole earth should hear what God has to say to Israel and Judah. Compare Isa 1:2. When God speaks of the sins of His people He is also witnessing against all the nations of earth, for they are guilty of the same sins.  
"His holy temple" – in heaven (Rev 7:15; 11:19; 15:5,6; 16:17).  
1:3 "Coming" – Micah means that God was about to take decisive action. Compare Ps 18:9; 144:5; Isa 26:21; 31:4; 64:1-3.  
"High places" – Amos 4:13. High places may mean either mountains (v 4) or places of false worship which were often erected on hills (v 5).  
1:4 "Melt" – 46:6; 97:5; Nah 1:5. This language signifies God's coming in judgment to punish evildoers.  
1:5 "Jacob" – means here the northern kingdom of Israel.  
"Samaria" – the capital of Israel and the center of that nation's rebellion against God and His laws.  
"High places" – Lev 26:30; Num 22:41;

1 Kings 3:2; 12:32, etc. Micah means that the whole of Jerusalem had become a place of idolatry and false worship. This happened in the days of king Ahaz – 2 Kings 16:1-18; 2 Chron 28:25.  
1:6,7 Now God speaks through Micah.  
"I will make" – using foreign armies to do it (Isa 10:5,6). See 2 Kings 17:5-20 for the fulfillment of this.  
"Prostitute" – see Hos 4:10-15.  
1:8 "I will wail" – compare Isa 16:9-11; 22:4; Jer 8:21-9:1; 13:17; 48:31,36; Luke 19:41-44.  
"Naked" – Isa 20:2-4.  
1:9 "Incurable" – Isa 17:11; Jer 30:12,13; Hos 7:1. For God to heal a people there must be some willingness on their part. If they refuse God's healing, their wound is indeed incurable. Here Micah speaks of the destruction the Assyrians would bring on Israel.  
"To Jerusalem" – Isa 36:1,2.  
1:10 "Gath" – Josh 11:22; 13:3; 1 Sam 5:8; 6:17. The prophet did not want the misery and destruction of God's people told in the cities of their enemies.  
"In the house of Aphrah" – or it could be "in Beth-le-Aphrah," a Philistine city. "House of Aphrah" means "house of dust".  
1:11 "In naked shame" – that is, "in the shame of nakedness." This is the way conquering armies led away their captives. Compare Isa 20:4. "Saphir" means "pleasant." "Zanaan" sounds like the Hebrew for "come out."

- away from you.
- 12 For the inhabitant of Maroth longed  
for good,  
but disaster from the LORD came down  
to the gate of Jerusalem.
- 13 O inhabitant of Lachish, harness the  
chariot to the swift beast (she was  
the beginning of sin to the  
daughter of Zion),  
for the transgressions of Israel were  
found in you.
- 14 Therefore you will give presents to  
Moreseth-Gath.  
The houses of Achzib *will prove* false  
to the kings of Israel.
- 15 Yet I will bring an heir to you,  
O inhabitant of Mareshah.  
The glory of Israel will come to Adullam.
- 16 Make yourselves bald, and cut off your  
hair *in mourning* for the children  
of your delight.  
Make your baldness like that of the eagle,  
because they have gone away from you  
into captivity.

- 2** Woe to those who devise iniquity,  
and work out evil on their beds!  
When morning light comes, they do it,  
because it is in the power of their hand.
- 2 And they covet fields and take *them*

- by violence,  
and *covet* houses and seize *them* ;  
so they oppress a man and his house,  
a man and his inheritance.
- 3 Therefore thus says the LORD:  
"See, I am devising a disaster against  
this family,  
from which you will not remove your necks;  
nor will you walk haughtily,  
for it *will be* a time of disaster.
- 4 In that day *they* will take up a proverb  
against you,  
and mourn with a bitter lament,  
*and* say, 'We are utterly ruined!  
He has changed the portion of my people.  
How he has removed *it* from me!  
He has divided our fields to a traitor:'"
- 5 Therefore you will have no one in the  
congregation of the LORD who will  
cast a measuring line by lot.
- 6 "Do not prophesy," *they say to those*  
who prophesy.  
"Do not prophesy to them," *so that*  
they will not be ashamed.
- 7 "O *you who are* named the house of Jacob,  
is the Spirit of the LORD impatient?  
*Are* these his deeds?  
Do not my words do good to him who  
walks uprightly?"
- 8 Lately my people have risen up like an enemy.

1:12 "Maroth" sounds like the Hebrew for "bitter."

"From the LORD" – compare Isa 10:5,6.  
1:13 "Lachish" – a large town in Judah about  
50 kilometers southwest of Jerusalem. The  
name sounds like the Hebrew for "team."

"Beginning of sin" – perhaps this means  
that the idolatry which later found a place in  
Jerusalem had its beginnings in Lachish.

"Daughter of Zion" – the city of Jerusa-  
lem. Compare 2 Kings 19:21; Ps 9:14.

1:14 Moreseth-Gath (v 1) would be lost to  
the enemy. "Achzib" means "deception."

1:15 "Mareshah" sounds like the Hebrew for  
"conqueror." The "glory of Israel" was God  
Himself – 1 Sam 15:29. Compare Ps  
106:20; Jer 2:11; Hos 4:7. Perhaps the  
prophets called God this because He  
appeared as a cloud of glory in both  
tabernacle and temple – Ex 40:34,35;  
1 Kings 8:10,11.

"Adullam" – God will come to punish the  
people there.

1:16 "Make. . . bald" – shaving the head  
was a sign of grief (Job 1:20).

"Captivity" – Deut 4:27; Amos 5:27;  
6:7; 7:17.

2:1-5 Micah is speaking of the wealthy and  
powerful in the land. Compare Amos 1:6,7;  
3:15 - 4:3.

2:2 "Covet" – see Ex 20:17.

"Seize them" – compare 1 Kings 21:1-16.

2:3 "Devising" – the powerful and rich in  
society left the true God out of their plan-  
ning but He did not leave them out of His.

"Not remove your necks" – their wealth  
and power would come to nothing on the  
day of disaster.

"Haughtily" – see in Isa 2:10-18 what  
God thinks of man's pride.

2:4 Prov 3:34,35. "To a traitor" – or "to  
one who has turned back."

2:5 "By lot" – Num 34:13; Josh 18:10.  
Micah means they won't be in the land at all.

2:6 "Do not prophesy" – Isa 30:10; Jer  
11:21; 26:7-9; Amos 2:12; 7:12,13; Acts  
4:18; 5:40. They had the greatest privilege  
any people on earth every had – to hear  
messages direct from God through His ser-  
vants. But this was the last thing they wanted.

2:7 Now God speaks through Micah. The  
people were badly mistaken if they thought  
God could not be angry with them. God's  
words would do good only to those who were  
obedient to Him and straight in their deal-  
ings with others. But the wicked would not  
be able to escape from disaster by trying to  
silence God's prophets – they would only  
make that disaster more certain to come.

2:8,9 "Enemy" – the leaders of those called  
the people of God were behaving like the  
people of the devil. They were enemies of

- You pull off the robe *with* the garment  
from those who pass by *feeling* secure,  
like men returning from war.
- 9 You cast out the women of my people  
from their pleasant homes.  
You have taken away my glory from  
their children forever.
- 10 Arise and depart, for this *is* not *your*  
rest, because it is defiled.  
It will destroy *you* with a great destruction.
- 11 If a man who is a liar, walking in the  
spirit of falsehood, *says*,  
'I will prophesy to you of wine and  
strong drink,' he will become the  
prophet of this people.
- 12 "I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob.  
I will surely gather the  
remnant of Israel.  
I will put them together like the sheep  
of Bozrah, like the flock in the  
middle of their pasture.  
Because the men *will be so* many they  
will make a great noise.
- 13 The one who breaks will go up before them.  
They will break out, pass through the gate,  
and go out by it;  
and their king will pass before them,  
with the LORD at their head."

- 3 And I said,  
"Please listen, O heads of Jacob,  
and you rulers of the house of Israel.  
Is it not for you to know justice,  
2 You who hate the good and love the evil,

truth, of righteousness, of the people, and  
of God (compare Jam 4:4).

2:10 There was no longer any security for  
them in the land of Israel. By their sin they  
had defiled and ruined it.

2:11 The people wanted to be told only what  
they wanted to hear, not the truth they  
needed to hear. Compare 2 Tim 4:3.

2:12 As God often did, here in the middle  
of prophecies of disaster He promises  
eventual deliverance and blessing for the  
people of Israel.

"Gather" – Isa 11:14; Jer 29:14;  
31:8,10; Ezek 34:13; 36:24.

"Sheep" – Jer 23:3,4.

2:13 This verse probably looks forward to  
the end of this age. Compare Isa 11:10-  
16; Amos 9:14,15. "One who breaks" seems  
to refer to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. He  
will remove all obstacles to the permanent  
settlement of Israel in their land. "Their king"  
and "the LORD" (Jehovah) also refer to Him.

3:1-4 These rulers and leaders of Jacob and  
Israel included those of Judah. See vs 9,10.

3:1 "Know justice" – they were called to be  
God's people, a holy righteous people,  
therefore knowing and administering justice

- who strip the skin from the *people*  
and the flesh from their bones,
- 3 Who also eat the flesh of my people,  
and flay their skin from them?"  
And they break their bones,  
and chop them in pieces,  
like *meat* for the pan,  
and like flesh in the pot.
- 4 Then they will call to the LORD,  
but he will not hear them.  
He will even hide his face from them  
at that time,  
because of the evil deeds they have  
committed.
- 5 Thus says the LORD concerning the  
prophets who cause my people to go  
astray,  
who cry out 'Peace' *when* chewing  
with their teeth,  
but prepare war against the one who  
puts nothing into their mouths.
- 6 Therefore night *will come* to you,  
without a vision,  
and darkness *will come* to you,  
without divination.  
The sun will go down on the prophets,  
and the day will become dark over them.
- 7 Then the seers will be ashamed,  
and the diviners confounded.  
Yes, they will all cover their lips,  
for *there is* no answer from God.
- 8 But truly I am full of power by the  
Spirit of the LORD, and of justice and might,

was absolutely essential.

3:2 "Hate the good and love the evil" – this  
was, of course, the exact opposite of what  
they should have been. But all too often in  
every country and in every era this describes  
what leaders are like.

3:3 Of course, they were not literally eating  
the people. These words signify how they  
violently oppressed them.

3:4 "They" means the leaders.  
"He will not hear" – compare Prov 1:24-  
31; Isa 1:15; 59:1,2; Jer 11:11.

"Hide His face" – Deut 31:17; Isa  
45:15; Hos 5:6,15.

3:5-7 The prophets who should have  
spoken for God were as bad as the leaders  
of Israel. Instead of leading the people to  
the truth they led them away from it.  
Compare Isa 3:12; 9:16; Jer 6:13,14;  
Matt 7:15; 24:24; 2 Pet 2:1.

3:6 Prophets were supposed to have God's  
light, but because these particular ones did  
not want the light God would plunge them  
into darkness. The punishment exactly  
fitted their crime.

3:7 "Seers" – see 1 Sam 9:9.

3:8 "The Spirit of the LORD" – Ex 31:3; Isa



to declare to Jacob his transgression,  
and to Israel his sin.

9 Please hear this, you heads of the  
house of Jacob,  
and rulers of the house of Israel,  
you who despise justice,  
and pervert every straight thing.

10 They build up Zion by bloodshed,  
and Jerusalem with wickedness.

11 Her heads judge for reward,  
and her priests teach for pay,  
and her prophets foretell for money.  
Yet they lean on the LORD, and say,  
"Is not the LORD among us?  
No disaster can come on us."

12 Therefore, on your account Zion will  
be plowed *like* a field,  
and Jerusalem will become heaps,  
and the mountain of the temple like  
the high places of the forest.

**4** But in the last days it will come about,  
*that* the mountain of the house of the  
LORD will be established on the top  
of the mountains,

and it will be exalted above the hills,  
and peoples will flow to it.

2 And many nations will come, and say,  
"Come, and let us go up to the  
mountain of the LORD and to the  
house of the God of Jacob,  
and he will teach us of his ways,  
and we will walk in his paths."  
For the law will go out of Zion,

and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

3 And he will judge among many peoples,  
and rebuke strong nations far off,  
and they will beat their swords into  
plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,  
nor will they learn war any more.

4 But each man will sit under his vine  
and his fig tree,  
and no one will make *them* afraid;  
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts  
has spoken.

5 For each one of all the peoples may  
walk in the name of his god,  
but we will walk in the name of the  
LORD our God forever and ever.

6 "In that day," says the LORD,  
"I will assemble the lame,  
and I will gather the exile,  
and those whom I have afflicted,

7 And I will make the lame a remnant,  
and the exile a strong nation,  
and the LORD will reign over them in  
mount Zion from now on, and forever.

8 And you, O tower of the flock,  
the stronghold of the daughter of Zion,  
the former dominion will come to you *again*,  
the kingdom will come to the daughter  
of Jerusalem."

9 Now why do you cry aloud?  
*Is there* no king in you?  
Has your counsellor perished?

48:16; Ezek 2:2; Zech 4:6; Eph 5:18;  
1 Pet 1:11. Note at John 14:16,17.

"His sin" – this was one of the most important tasks of God's prophets. Compare Isa 58:1.

**3:9** "You who despise justice" – v 1. They perverted justice for personal gain – compare Ezek 22:27.

**3:10** Compare 7:2; Jer 22:13,17; Isa 59:7.  
**3:11** Rulers, priests and prophets wanted only money. They cared nothing at all for people, for goodness, for justice. In other words, they were much like the corrupt society we see today.

"Yet" – they had their religion and thought everything would be all right. They were badly mistaken, as the next verse reveals. The words there were fulfilled when the king of Babylon invaded the land and destroyed Jerusalem. See 2 Kings chapter 25. God will punish greed, corruption and wickedness wherever they are found, though men may vainly imagine they can escape the consequences of their actions.

**4:1-3** See notes on Isa 2:2-4.

**4:4** "His vine" – even in the future reign of Christ over Israel and the world He will not

abolish private property.

"Afraid" – Lev 26:6; Ezek 39:25-29; Zeph 3:13.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**4:5** "Walk in the name of" – means to identify with and behave in accordance with. Other nations choose the gods they please and behave in accordance with the character they think those gods have. God's people must be different. They must trust in the one true God and behave in accordance with His character. Compare 1 Cor 8:4-6; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12.

**4:6** "In that day" – v 1; Isa 2:2,11,17,20.  
"Lame" – Jer 31:8,9.

"Exile. . . afflicted" – Ps 147:2,3; Isa 11:12; 35:10; Ezek 34:13,16; 37:21-23; Zeph 3:19.

**4:7** "The LORD will reign. . . forever" – Dan 2:44; 7:14; Joel 3:20,21; Obad 21; Zech 14:9,16; Luke 1:33; Rev 11:15.

**4:8** "Tower of the flock" – Jerusalem the capital city of the people of God.

"Daughter" – 1:13.

"Former dominion will come to you again" – this will happen "in that day" (vs 1,6).

**4:9** Jer 8:19; 30:6.

- For pains have seized you like  
*those of* a woman in labour.  
 10 Writhe and labour to give birth,  
 O daughter of Zion,  
 like a woman in labour.  
 For now you will go out of the city,  
 and you will live in the field,  
 and you will go to Babylon.  
 There you will be rescued,  
 there the LORD will redeem you from  
 the hand of your enemies.  
 11 But now many nations have gathered  
 against you.  
 They say, "Let her be defiled,  
 and let our eye look on Zion."  
 12 But they do not know the thoughts of  
 the LORD,  
 nor do they understand his purpose.  
 For he gathers them like sheaves to  
 the threshing floor.  
 13 "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion,  
 for I will make your horn *like* iron,  
 and I will make your hooves *like* bronze,  
 and you will crush many peoples.  
 And I will consecrate their ill-gotten  
 gain to the LORD,  
 and their wealth to the Lord of the  
 whole earth."

- 5** Now gather yourself in troops,  
 O daughter of troops.  
 He has laid siege against us.  
 They will strike the judge of Israel  
 on the cheek with a rod.  
 2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
*though* you are little among the

- thousands of Judah,  
 yet out of you will come forth to me  
 the one *who is* to be ruler in Israel.  
 His goings forth *are* from of old,  
 from everlasting."  
 3 Therefore he will give them up,  
 until the time *that* she who travails  
 has given birth.  
 Then the remnant of his brethren will  
 return to the children of Israel.  
 4 And he will stand and shepherd *his*  
*flock* in the strength of the LORD,  
 in the majesty of the name of the  
 LORD his God;  
 and they will remain, for now he will  
 be great to the ends of the earth.  
 5 And this *man* will be *our* peace.  
 When the Assyrian comes into our land,  
 and when he treads in our palaces,  
 then we will raise against him seven  
 shepherds, and eight leaders of men.  
 6 And they will waste the land of Assyria  
 with the sword,  
 and the land of Nimrod at its entrances.  
 And he will deliver *us* from the  
 Assyrian, when he comes into our land,  
 and when he treads within our borders.  
 7 And the remnant of Jacob will be in  
 the midst of many peoples  
 like a dew from the LORD,  
 like showers on the grass,  
 which do not delay for man,  
 or wait for the sons of men.  
 8 And the remnant of Jacob will be  
 among the Gentiles in the midst of  
 many peoples,

4:10 "Babylon" – Micah uttered this remarkable prophecy 100 years before it was fulfilled. At that time Assyria, not Babylon, was the strongest power in that area.

"There you will be rescued" – this was another 70 years in the future.

4:11-13 Compare Zech 12:1-9.

4:12 "Understand his purpose" – Rom 11:33,34; Ps 2:1-12.

5:1 The scene in this verse seems to be the city of Jerusalem.

"The judge of Israel" – or "the leader of Israel", that is, the king. See 2 Kings 25:7 for the fulfillment of this.

5:2 God speaks through the prophet. "Ephrathah" was the area where Bethlehem was located – Ruth 1:2; 4:11; 1 Sam 17:12. Bethlehem was a small town about 10 kilometers south of Jerusalem.

"Goings forth" – this signifies activities. This prophecy is about the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ and gives the place of His birth 700 years before He came to earth. See Matt 2:4-6. As the Son of God He is eternal

and had no origin, no beginning – Isa 9:6; Ps 90:2; John 1:1. He was active all through the history of mankind.

5:3 "Give them up" – Jer 7:29; Hos 3:4,5; 5:6,15; Rom 11:11,25-27.

5:4 "He" – the Messiah, the Lord Jesus.

"His flock" – John 10:1-16.

"Ends of the earth" – Isa 9:7; 11:4,9; Dan 2:34,35.

5:5 "Peace" – Isa 9:6; Luke 2:14; Eph 2:14. "Assyrian" – Isa 8:7; 10:24-27.

5:6 "Waste the land of Assyria" – Israel has never laid waste Assyria to this day. So the fulfillment of this is still in the future. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.

"Nimrod" – Gen 10:8-12.

"He will deliver us" – "he" here is Christ.

5:7 "Remnant of Jacob" – the survivors of the people of Israel (Isa 10:20; 11:11; 37:31,32; Amos 3:12).

"Dew" – speaks of blessing (Deut 32:2; Ps 110:3; Prov 19:12; Isa 26:19).

5:8,9 These verses signify a victory of the people of Israel not yet seen on earth.

- like a lion among the beasts of the forest,  
like a young lion among the flocks of  
sheep, which, passing through,  
both tramples down and tears in  
pieces, with no one to rescue.
- 9 Your hand will be lifted up against your foes,  
and all your enemies will be cut off.
- 10 "And it will come to pass in that day,"  
says the LORD,  
"that I will cut off your horses from  
among you, and destroy your chariots,
- 11 And I will destroy the cities of your land,  
and tear down all your strongholds.
- 12 And I will destroy witchcraft from your hand,  
and you will have no *more* soothsayers.
- 13 I will also destroy your carved images,  
and your sacred pillars from your midst,  
and you will no longer worship the  
work of your hands.
- 14 And I will uproot your sacred groves  
from your midst,  
and destroy your cities.
- 15 And I will execute vengeance in anger  
and fury on the nations which have  
not obeyed *me*."

- 6** Hear now what the LORD says:  
"Arise, plead your case before the mountains,  
and let the hills hear your voice.
- 2 Hear the LORD's case, O mountains,  
and you strong foundations of the earth.

**5:10-14** These are all things which Israel trusted in after forsaking God. God will destroy all these things so that Israel might trust in Him alone.

**5:10** Ps 20:7.

**5:11** Hos 10:14; Amos 5:9.

**5:12** Deut 18:10-12; Isa 2:6; 8:19.

**5:13** Isa 2:18; Ezek 6:9; Hos 10:2; Zech 13:2.

**5:14** "Groves" – or "Asherah poles" – Ex 34:13; Jud 3:7; 2 Kings 17:10.

**5:15** "Vengeance" – Deut 32:41,43; Isa 34:8; 35:4; 2 Thess 1:7,8; Rev 19:11-16.

**6:1,2** In this chapter God makes His accusations against Israel. It is like a scene in a courtroom, only the court in this case is the wide outdoors with mountains and hills as witnesses. Compare Isa 1:2. Israel is called on to make its defense, if indeed it dares to attempt any.

**6:3** "My people" – Amos 3:2.

"Wearied you" – compare Jer 2:5. God is angry if they think He has been unreasonable and cruel toward them.

**6:4** Ex 2:23-25; 14:29-31; Deut 7:7,8.

"Moses" – Ex 3:7-10.

"Aaron and Miriam" – Ex 3:14-16; Num 33:1; Ex 15:20. Far from being cruel and unreasonable, God gave them some of the best leaders any people ever had and

For the Lord has a case against his people,  
and he will plead *his case* against Israel.

- 3 "O my people, what have I done to you?  
And how have I wearied you?  
Testify against me.
- 4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,  
and redeemed you out of the house of  
servitude,  
and I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam  
in front of you.
- 5 O my people, remember now what  
Balak, king of Moab, counseled,  
and what Balaam, the son of Beor,  
answered him from Shittim to Gilgal,  
that you may know the righteousness  
of the LORD."
- 6 With what shall I come before the LORD  
*and* bow down before the God  
on high?  
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?
- 7 Will the LORD be pleased with  
thousands of rams,  
*or* with ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression,  
the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?
- 8 He has showed you, O man, what *is* good.  
And what does the LORD require of you,  
but to behave justly,  
and to love mercy,  
*and to walk humbly with your God?*

treated them with kindness and love.

**6:5** "Balak. . . Balaam" – see Numbers chapters 22-24, especially 23:8-10,20-24; 24:5-9,17-19.

"Shittim to Gilgal" – Josh 3:1; 4:19.

"Righteousness" – in this case God's righteous acts were displayed in bringing His people across the Jordan river to occupy the land He had promised them.

**6:6,7** It seems here that Israel speaks and the only defense the people can offer is a series of questions. They appear to be expressing ignorance of what God really wants. And the last question in v 7 is not a proper question at all. God never asked Israel to do any such thing.

**6:8** Micah speaks for God to every individual in the nation.

"He has showed you" – Israel was not really ignorant of what God wanted. He had told them repeatedly how they should behave. The ten commandments in Ex 20:1-17; much of Deuteronomy, psalms like 1, 15, 24, 119, the book of Proverbs, and passages in the prophets like Isa 1:11-17 showed Israel how they should live. What does God require of us now? That we should be righteous in our behavior; that we should know that our righteous acts cannot save us – we need God's mercy for

- 9 The LORD's voice cries out to the city,  
and *the man of* wisdom will see  
your name.
- "Heed the rod, and the one who has  
appointed it.
- 10 Are there yet storehouses of  
wickedness in the house of the wicked,  
and the short measure,  
*which is* an abomination?
- 11 Shall I acquit *those* with wicked balances,  
and with a bag of false weights?
- 12 For her rich men are full of violence,  
and her inhabitants speak lies,  
and the tongue in their mouth *is* deceitful.
- 13 Therefore I will also make *you* sick by  
striking you,  
by making *you* desolate because of your sins.
- 14 You will eat, but not be satisfied,  
and you will be cast down in the midst of you.  
And you will take hold, but will not deliver,  
and what you do deliver I will give  
to the sword.
- 15 You will sow, but you will not reap.  
You will trample the olives,  
but you will not anoint yourselves with oil,  
*and* make sweet wine, but will not drink wine.
- 16 "For the statutes of Omri are kept,  
and all the deeds of the house of Ahab,  
and you walk in their counsels.  
So I will make you a desolation,  
and her inhabitants *an object of* hissing.  
Therefore you will bear the reproach  
of my people."

- 7 Woe is me!  
For I am like those who gather summer  
fruits,  
like those gleaning the vineyard.  
*There is* no cluster to eat of the first  
ripe fruit my soul craves.
- 2 The good *man* has perished from the earth,  
and *there is* no one upright among men.  
They all lie in wait for blood,  
each one of them hunts his brother  
with a net.
- 3 They do evil with both hands eagerly.  
The ruler and the judge demand a bribe,  
and the *man* in a high position speaks  
out his evil desire.  
So they weave *their plots*.
- 4 The best of them *is* like a briar,  
the most upright worse than a thorn hedge.  
The day of your watchmen *and* your  
punishment is coming.  
Now will be *the time of* their confusion.
- 5 Do not trust in a friend;  
do not put confidence in a guide.  
Guard the doors of your mouth from  
her who lies in your bosom.
- 6 For the son dishonours the father;  
the daughter rises up against her mother,  
the daughter-in-law against her  
mother-in-law;  
a man's enemies *are* the individuals of  
his own house.
- 7 Therefore I will look to the LORD.  
I will wait for the God of my salvation.  
My God will hear me.

ourselves and we need to show it to others;  
and we must not let our righteous behavior  
make us self-righteous and proud. Walking  
humbly with God means obedience to Him,  
trust in Him, and the mind Jesus speaks of  
in Matt 5:3.

6:9 "The city" – Jerusalem.

"Rod" – compare Isa 10:5,6. Israel was  
not able to offer any good defense against  
God's accusations. The people were guilty  
and God must punish them.

6:10 "Wicked" – Israel was not a victim of  
unfortunate circumstances, not ignorant of  
what God said. It was wicked. It was  
determined to do what it pleased regardless  
of what God thought about it.

"Short measure" – an "ephah", a  
measure for grain. Sellers cheated buyers.  
6:11 Prov 11:1; 20:23; Hos 12:7; Amos 8:5.  
6:12 "Violence" – 3:2,3; Amos 2:6,7; 4:1;  
5:11.

"Lies. . .deceitful" – Ps 5:3; 12:2;  
34:13; 62:4; 63:11; Prov 6:19; 19:22;  
Isa 32:7; 59:3; Jer 9:3; John 8:44.

6:13 "Therefore" – 2:3. Sin has inevitable  
consequences (Gal 6:7,8).

6:14 Isa 9:20; Hos 4:10; Lev 26:26.

"In the midst of you" – the Hebrew of  
here is obscure and the meaning uncertain.  
6:15 Deut 28:38; Jer 12:13.

6:16 "Omri. . .Ahab" – 1 Kings 16:25,29-33.  
"Desolation. . .hissing" – Deut 28:37; Jer  
25:9; 51:51.

7:1-7 Micah speaks. He begins by  
expressing his sorrow and ends with hope.

7:1 "Woe is me" – compare Jer 8:21 - 9:1.  
"My soul craves" – he could see no fruit  
from his labors as a prophet. He could find  
no good people left in the land.

7:2 "No one upright among men" – Ps  
12:1,2; 14:1-3.

7:3 "Bribe" – Ex 23:8.

7:4 "Thorn" – 2 Sam 23:6,7; Isa 10:17;  
Heb 6:7,8.

"Watchmen" – Isa 21:11; Ezek 3:17;  
33:7; Hos 9:8. God's prophets were the  
watchmen over Israel, warning them of  
coming disasters. Now the time had come  
for God to act according to those warnings.  
7:5 This reveals how much lying and  
deceitfulness (6:12) had corrupted the  
people as a whole.

7:6 Ex 20:12; Ezek 22:7; Matt 10:35,36.

7:7 Lam 3:19-24; Ps 4:3.

8 Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy.  
When I fall, I will arise;  
when I sit in darkness,  
the LORD *will be* a light to me.

9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD,  
because I have sinned against him,  
until he pleads my case and executes  
judgment for me.  
He will bring me out to the light,  
*and* I will see his righteousness.

10 Then my enemy will see *it*,  
and shame will cover her,  
*the one* who said to me,  
"Where is the LORD your God?"  
My eyes will see her.  
Now she will be trampled down like  
the mire of the streets.

11 At the time when your walls are to be built,  
*on* that day the decree will go out to  
distant *places*.

12 *And on* that day he will come to you  
from Assyria,  
and from the fortified cities,  
and *from* the fortress to the River,  
and from sea to sea,  
and *from* mountain to mountain.

13 However, the land will be desolate  
because of those who live in it,  
as the fruit of their deeds.

14 Shepherd your people with your rod,

the flock of your inheritance,  
which lives alone *in* the forest,  
in the midst of Carmel.

Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead,  
as in the days of old.

15 "As in the days of your coming out of  
the land of Egypt I will show him  
marvellous *things*."

16 The nations will see and be ashamed  
of all their might.  
They will lay *their* hand on *their* mouth.  
Their ears will be deaf.

17 They will lick the dust like a serpent.  
They will move out of their holes like  
things that crawl on the earth.  
They will be afraid of the LORD our God,  
and will fear because of you.

18 Who *is* a God like you,  
who pardons wickedness,  
and passes over the transgression of  
the remnant of his inheritance?  
He does not retain his anger forever,  
because he delights *in* mercy.

19 Once more he will have compassion on us.  
He will subdue our wicked deeds.  
And you will cast all their sins into the  
depths of the sea.

20 You will grant the truth to Jacob,  
*and* mercy to Abraham,  
which you have sworn to our fathers  
from the days of old.

**7:8-10** It seems that in these verses the city of Jerusalem (representing the people of Israel) speaks. The time is in the future. **7:8** "My enemy" – enemy nations like Assyria and Babylon.

"Fall" – this looks into the future to the time when Jerusalem would fall (4:10; Jer 52:4-27).

"I will arise" – Amos 9:11-15; Rom 11:11.

"Light" – Isa 42:16; 46:13; 60:1-3.

**7:9** Lam 3:39-47; Hos 5:15; Ps 32:5; 107:10-16; Prov 28:13.

**7:10** 4:11-13; Ps 35:26; 42:3; Isa 51:22,23; Zech 10:5.

**7:11-13** It seems Micah speaks again to Jerusalem (and, of course, God is speaking through Micah).

**7:11** Isa 54:11,12; Amos 9:11. The same Jerusalem that was destroyed would be rebuilt.

**7:12** Isa 11:11.

**7:13** Isa 24:1-6.

**7:14** Either Israel or Micah speaks, representing the future godly remnant of Israel. This prayer God will answer.

"Shepherd" – 5:4; Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:11-16; 37:24.

"Inheritance" – v 18; Ps 94:14; Deut 4:20; Eph 1:18.

"Bashan and Gilead" – fertile regions east of the Jordan river.

**7:15** God speaks again. "Marvellous things" – Joel 2:30,31.

**7:16-20** Micah speaks again and gives a fitting conclusion to his prophecy.

**7:16** Isa 26:11.

**7:17** Ps 2:8,9; Isa 25:3; 59:19; Rev 19:15.

**7:18** "Who is a God like you" – Ex 15:11; 1 Sam 2:2; Ps 89:6; Isa 40:18,25,26.

"Pardons. . . passes over" – Ex 34:6,7;

Ps 103:8-13; Isa 43:25; 55:7-9; Jer 50:20; Luke 24:46,47; Eph 1:7.

"Remnant" – Micah has the people of Israel in mind (v 20; Jer 31:34; Ezek 36:25; Rom 11:26,27).

"Anger forever" – Ps 103:9; Isa 54:9; 57:16; Jer 3:12.

"Mercy" – Ps 25:6; Ezek 18:23,32; Amos 5:15; Rom 11:32.

**7:19** "Compassion" – 2 Chron 30:9; Jer 31:20; 32:41.

"The sea" – compare Ps 103:12; Isa 38:17; 44:22 – different ways of saying that God will put away the sins of His people, will obliterate them, and remember them no more (Jer 31:34; Rom 4:7,8).

**7:20** Gen 12:1-3; 22:16,17; 28:14; Deut 7:8; Ps 108:4.

"Grant" – the Hebrew word here does not mean "perform" (KJV).

# NAHUM

**Author:**

Nahum means “compassion” or possibly “consolation.”

**Date:**

Sometime about 650 BC.

**Themes:**

God’s holiness is revealed both in punishing the wicked and in showing grace and kindness toward those who trust in Him; the righteous rejoice when they see God’s justice at work; the coming destruction on the wicked city of Nineveh.

**Contents:**

God’s anger against the ungodly,	
his compassion toward the godly .....	1:2-11
The future well-being of Judah .....	1:12-2:2
The siege against Nineveh .....	2:1-10
The destruction of Nineveh .....	2:11-13
The reasons for the fall of Nineveh .....	3:1-19



- 1** The burden concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.
- 2** God *is* jealous, and the LORD avenges. The LORD avenges, and *is* furious. The LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserves *wrath* for his enemies.
- 3** The LORD *is* slow to get angry, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*. The LORD has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet.
- 4** He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon withers.
- 5** The mountains quake before him, and the hills melt, and the earth heaves at his presence, yes, the world and all who live in it.
- 6** Who can stand before his indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of his anger?

**1:1** "Burden" – or "oracle" – note at Isa 13:1. "Nineveh" – Gen 10:11; 2 Kings 19:36; Jonah 1:2; 3:2,3; Zeph 2:13; Matt 12:41. "Vision" – Gen 15:1; Isa 1:1. "Elkoshite" – of the town of Elkosh, location unknown.

**1:2** "Jealous" – Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:34; Josh 24:19; Zech 8:2. The word jealous here indicates love for His people and anger against those who would try to destroy them. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria and here representing the whole Empire, had destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 17:5,6).

"Vengeance" – Num 31:11-3 (note); Deut 32:40,41. The word means that God will justly judge and punish those who oppose Him the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

"Wrath" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18.

"Enemies" – those who are enemies of His people are His enemies.

**1:3** "Slow to get angry" – Ex 34:6.

"Not at all acquit" – Ex 34:7. Nineveh was guilty and could not escape God's judgment.

"Whirlwind. . . clouds" – Ps 18:7-15; 68:4; 77:16-19; 104:3,4.

**1:4** Ex 14:21,22; Josh 3:14-17. Bashan, Carmel and Lebanon were very fertile places but God can turn such places into deserts if He wishes to do so.

**1:5** Ex 19:18; Ps 18:7; 46:2,3; 97:5; 114:4; Joel 2:10; Ezek 38:20; Heb 12:26-28.

**1:6** Ps 76:7; 90:11,12; Jer 10:10; Ezek 22:14; Rev 6:17.

"Like fire" – Isa 5:24,25; 24:6; 42:25;

His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

**7** The LORD *is* good, a stronghold in the day of trouble,

and he knows those who trust in him.

**8** But with an overwhelming flood he will make a complete end of its place, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

**9** What do you plot against the LORD?

He will make a complete end *of it*.

Trouble will not rise up a second time.

**10** For while *they are* tangled up *like* thorns, and while they are drunk like drunkards, they will be consumed like fully dry stubble.

**11** From you comes out a wicked counsellor who plots evil against the LORD.

**12** Thus says the LORD:

"Though *they are* secure, and also numerous, yet they will be cut down, when he passes through.

Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more.

**13** For now I will break off his yoke from you,

**2** Thess 1:7,8; Heb 12:29.

**1:7** "The LORD is good" – Ps 25:7,8; 34:8; 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 145:9; Matt 19:17. Since God is angry and takes vengeance and pours out His wrath like fire, how can He be good? He does those things *because* He is good. Justice is an element in His goodness, and in His goodness He cannot allow men to corrupt the earth and try to destroy His kingdom, His work and His people without rising up to defend them and to punish evildoers (Num 3:1-3). In His goodness He loves good and so hates evil and is angry with it.

"Stronghold" – or "refuge" – Deut 33:27; Ps 2:12; 5:11; 7:1; 9:9; etc.

"Knows" – the Hebrew word indicates an intimate relationship. Ps 1:6; etc.

"Trust" – 2 Kings 17:14; Ps 4:5; 20:7; 62:8; Prov 3:5; Isa 26:4; 30:15; John 14:1.

**1:8** "But" – those who continue on in their sins and refuse to trust in the one true God do not deserve any good thing, and have no right to expect any good thing from Him. Nineveh did not trust Him, was "vile" (v 14), and so would be destroyed. This happened in 612 BC.

**1:9-14** God foretells the utter destruction of Nineveh. For other prophecies about Nineveh and Assyria see Isa 10:12-19; Ezek 32:22,23. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.

**1:9** "Plot" – compare Ps 2:1-5.

**1:12** "I have afflicted" – see Isa 10:5,6. It seems that God is speaking to Judah here. The Assyrians tried to capture Jerusalem, failed, and had no second chance (Isaiah chapters 36,37).

**1:13** Assyria once exercised some control

- and will break your shackles in two.”
- 14 And the LORD has given a  
commandment concerning you,  
that your name will no longer be perpetuated.  
“I will cut off the carved images and  
cast metal idols from the house of your gods.  
I will make your grave; for you are vile.”
- 15 See on the mountains the feet of him  
who brings good tidings,  
who proclaims peace!  
O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,  
perform your vows.  
For the wicked will no longer pass through you;  
he is utterly cut off.
- 2 He who dashes in pieces has come up  
before your face.  
Guard the fortress! Watch the road!  
Strengthen your flanks!  
Mustering all your strong forces!
- 2 For the LORD will restore the  
excellence of Jacob,  
like the excellence of Israel, even though  
destroyers have laid them waste,  
and ruined their vine branches.
- 3 The shield of his mighty men are red.  
The valiant men are in scarlet.  
The chariots will be with flaming  
torches in the day of his preparation,  
and the fir tree spears will be brandished.
- 4 The chariots will rage in the streets,  
they shall jostle one another in the broad roads.  
They will seem like torches.  
They will speed like lightning flashes.
- 5 He will remember his nobles.  
They will stumble in their walk.  
They will hurry to its wall,  
and the defense will be prepared.

- 6 The river gates will be opened,  
and the palace will be dissolved.
- 7 And Huzzab will be led away captive.  
She will be brought up,  
and her maid servants will lead her,  
moaning with voices like doves,  
beating their breasts.
- 8 From olden times Nineveh is like  
a pool, but her waters drain away.  
“Stop! Stop!” they cry,  
but no one will look back.
- 9 Take the plunder of silver,  
take the plunder of gold.  
For there is no end of treasure,  
wealth from all kinds of desirable articles.
- 10 She is empty, and vacant, and waste.  
And the heart melts, and the knees  
knock together,  
and every back is in anguish,  
and all their faces are drained of colour.
- 11 Where is the dwelling place of the lions,  
and the feeding place of the young lions,  
where the lion, the old lion,  
and the lion's cub, walked,  
and no one made them afraid?
- 12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs,  
and strangled the prey for his lionesses,  
and filled his caves with prey,  
and his dens with flesh.
- 13 “See, I am against you,”  
says the LORD of hosts,  
“and I will burn her chariots in the smoke,  
and the sword will devour your young lions.  
And I will cut off your prey from the earth,  
and the voice of your messengers will  
be heard no more.”

3 Woe to the city of blood!  
It is all full of lies and robbery;

over Judah. God, by destroying Assyria,  
would break their “yoke” over Judah.

1:14 “Your gods” – compare Ex 12:12.

“Vile” – compare Hos 9:10.

1:15 The mountains are the mountains of  
Jerusalem. The good news was deliverance  
from the Assyrians (Isa 37:29,33-35).  
Compare Isa 52:7; Rom 10:15. God  
through Nahum assures Judah that the  
Assyrians would never again invade them,  
and indeed, they never did.

2:1 “He who dashes in pieces” – one who  
headed a combined army of three nations  
– Babylonia, Media and Scythia.

2:2 Isa 11:10-13; 35:1,2; Ezek 37:22,23.

2:3-10 These verses describe the battle for  
the city of Nineveh in 612 BC before it fell to  
its enemies. Nahum is uttering a prophecy  
that was fulfilled a few years afterwards.

2:11,12 A description of Nineveh before its  
destruction. It was like the king of beasts  
breaking in pieces the nations round about.  
Now it would be done to Nineveh as Nineveh  
had done to others.

2:13 “Against you” – if God is against any-  
one who can be for them?

“I will” – God used the army of v 1 to  
burn Nineveh’s weapons of war and to kill  
its soldiers. Compare Jer 51:20.

3:1 God would destroy Nineveh because it  
fully deserved destruction.

“Blood” – the Assyrians were notorious  
for their thirst for bloodshed, brutality and  
cruelty.

“Lies” – in God’s eyes lying is so grave a  
sin that it is put alongside murder. Lying is  
brutality and cruelty against the truth, an  
attempt to murder it. Swords destroy

- the prey never gets away.
- 2 The noise of a whip!  
And the noise of the rattling of the wheels,  
and of prancing horses,  
and of jolting chariots!
- 3 The horseman lifts up both the bright  
sword and the glittering spear,  
and *there is* a multitude of slain,  
and a great number of bodies,  
no end of their corpses;  
they stumble over the corpses,
- 4 *all* because of the many acts of  
prostitution of the well-favoured prostitute,  
the mistress of witchcrafts,  
who sells nations through her acts of  
prostitution,  
and families through her witchcrafts.
- 5 “See, I *am* against you,  
says the LORD of hosts,  
and I will lift your skirts over your face,  
and I will show the nations your nakedness,  
and the kingdoms your shame.
- 6 And I will throw abominable filth  
on you, and reveal your vileness,  
and will make you a spectacle.
- 7 And this will happen:  
All who look at you will flee from you, and say,  
‘Nineveh is laid waste.  
Who will mourn for her?  
Where will I seek comforters for you?’”
- 8 Are you better than populous No that  
was situated among the rivers,  
*that had* water all around it?  
Her rampart *was* the sea,  
and her wall was the sea.
- 9 Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength,  
and *it was* without limit.  
Put and Lubim were your helpers.

- 10 Yet she *was* taken away,  
she went into captivity.  
Also her young children were dashed in  
pieces at the head of all the streets.  
And they cast lots for her honourable men,  
and all her great men were bound in chains.
- 11 You also will be drunk, you will be hidden,  
you also will seek refuge because of the enemy.
- 12 All your strongholds *will be like*  
fig trees with the first ripe figs;  
when shaken, they fall into the mouth  
of the eater.
- 13 See, your people in the midst of you are women.  
The gates of your land will be opened  
wide to your enemies.  
The fire will devour your bars.
- 14 Draw water for the siege!  
Fortify your strongholds!  
Go to the clay, and tread the mortar!  
Strengthen the brick kiln!
- 15 There the fire will devour you.  
The sword will cut you down,  
it will devour you like locusts.  
Make yourselves as many as the locust,  
make yourselves as many as the  
*swarming locusts*!
- 16 You have multiplied your merchants  
more than the stars of heaven.  
The locust plunders, and flies away.
- 17 Your officials *are* like locusts,  
and your captains like the great  
grasshoppers,  
which settle in the hedges on a cold day,  
*but* when the sun rises,  
they flee away,  
and it is not known where they *will be*.
- 18 Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria.  
Your nobles dwell *in the dust*.

bodies, lies destroy souls.

**3:2,3** A further description of the future battle for Nineveh.

**3:4** “Prostitute” – Ex 34:16; Lev 17:7; Isa 1:21; 23:15,16; Jer 2:20; 3:1; Rev 17:5. Nineveh had many gods, many idols.

“Witchcrafts” – Deut 18:10.

**3:5-7** God would deal with Nineveh as men sometimes dealt with prostitutes. He would show to other nations its filthiness, corruption and weakness, and utterly humiliate that great and proud city.

**3:8-10** “No” – or “No Amon” – the city of Thebes, a large city in Egypt, the capital of the southern part of the country. The Assyrians destroyed it in 663 BC. If they could destroy Thebes they should not think they could not be destroyed themselves.

“Ethiopia” – Isa 18:1.

**3:11** “Drunk” – out of their senses because

God’s anger is poured out on them (compare Jer 25:15,16).

**3:12** Nineveh was a huge city, very well fortified, but when the “enemy” (v 11) came their forts would fall as easily as fruit from a tree.

**3:13** “Women” – in the day of battle their soldiers would be ineffective.

**3:14,15** Nineveh would try desperate measures to keep enemy troops out of the city, but they would fail.

**3:16** The merchants, greedy for gain, would salvage what they could from the collapse of Nineveh. Swarms of locusts coming on any land completely strip it of vegetation.

**3:17** Nineveh’s officials were no better than its merchants. Both groups were only out for what they could get. Between them they would strip Nineveh of its wealth.

**3:18,19** Nahum the prophet speaks of the

Your people are scattered on the  
mountains, and no one gathers *them*.  
19 *There is* no healing for your injury.  
Your wound is incurable.

All who hear the news about you will  
clap *their* hands over you,  
for who has not had your wickedness  
coming on them continually?

future as if it were past.  
“Slumber. . . dwell in the dust” – a  
figurative way of speaking of death (see  
John 11:11,14).  
“Your wound is incurable” – indicates

complete destruction. Nineveh was never  
rebuilt, and the Assyrians lost their power  
forever.  
“Clap their hands” – in delight at  
Nineveh’s destruction.

# HABAKKUK

**Author:**

The prophet Habakkuk is not mentioned in any other place in the Bible, so all we know about him is in this writing of his.

**Date:**

Habakkuk probably wrote a short time before the armies of Babylon invaded Judah, during the reign of either Josiah or Jehoiakim. The Babylonians invaded in 605 BC.

**Theme:**

Faith in God overcoming doubt about the wisdom of His ways. The question which troubled the prophet's mind was this: Why would God use the cruel and wicked Babylonians to punish His own people Judah? The answer God gave was: "The righteous will live by his faith" (2:4), words referred to three times in the New Testament (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38,39).

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- 1** The burden which Habakkuk the prophet saw.  
 O LORD, how long will I cry out,  
 and you not listen?  
*And* call out to you *about* violence,  
 and you not save?
- 3** Why do you make me look at evil,  
 and cause *me* to see trouble?  
 For plundering *and* violence are  
 before me, and there is strife,  
 and contention rises up.
- 4** Therefore the law is made feeble,  
 and justice never goes forth.  
 For the wicked surround the righteous;  
 so perverted justice results.
- 5** "Look among the nations, and watch,  
 and be utterly amazed,  
 for I will do a work in your days,  
*which* you will not believe,  
 even though it is told *you*."
- 6** For, see, I am raising up the Chaldeans,  
*that* bitter and rash nation.  
 They will march through the breadth of

- the earth to take possession of  
 dwelling places *which are* not theirs.
- 7** They *are* terrible and dreaded.  
 Their judgment and their exaltation  
 come from themselves.
- 8** And their horses are swifter than leopards,  
 and fiercer than evening wolves.  
 And their horsemen charge ahead,  
 and their cavalry comes from afar.  
 They fly like an eagle swooping to eat.
- 9** They all come for violence.  
 Their faces advance *like* the east wind,  
 and they gather captives like sand.
- 10** And they scoff at kings,  
 and princes are scorned by them.  
 They deride every stronghold,  
 for they heap up earth, and take it.
- 11** Then *his* mind changes,  
 and he passes on, and offends,  
*imputing* this his power to his god."
- 12** *Are* you not from everlasting,  
 O LORD my God, my Holy One?

**1:1** "Burden" – note at Isa 13:1. Habakkuk received a revelation of truth from God, as all the true prophets of the Old Testament did (2 Pet 1:21).

**1:2** The prophet could not get an answer to his prayers, could not get an explanation from God for the problem that troubled him. This was sometimes the complaint of other Old Testament believers – Ps 6:3; 13:1-4; 74:10,11; 89:46,47; Lam 5:20. Probably this same thing has bothered all of us at one time or another. All they (or we) could do was to wait and look to God for Him to work in His time and way.

**1:3,4** Here is the problem which tormented Habakkuk. In Judah, where he lived, wicked people had the upper hand and crushed the righteous. Injustice, oppression and violence were everywhere. Yet it seemed to the prophet that God did not care; that He tolerated the situation and did nothing about it. This is a problem that has vexed many people, perhaps nearly all of us at one time or another (see Job 24:1-12; Ps 10:1-12; 13:1,2; 73:2-12; Eccl 3:16,17). God is the all-powerful Ruler of the universe, and He loves justice and righteousness – Ps 33:5; 47:2; 89:14. Yet in this world the wicked prosper and the good suffer and are denied justice. Why doesn't God do something about it?

**1:5-11** In these verses God gives an answer to Habakkuk. He assures him that He is going to do something about the corrupt society of Judah. He will bring an end to it, and the instrument He will use is the Babylonian army.

**1:5** "Amazed" – Isa 29:9,14. The people of Judah were God's special people whom He chose above all nations on earth – Deut 10:15; Ps 135:4. Though God had used

the Assyrians to destroy the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 17:5,6), the people of Judah did not believe such a thing could happen to them.

"Told" – Acts 13:41.

**1:6** "I am raising up" – compare 1 Chron 5:26; 2 Chron 21:16; Isa 13:17; Jer 51:1; Amos 6:14. If any nation comes to a place of power on earth it is because the one true God has raised it up; if any falls into weakness and decay it is because He has put it down. Compare Dan 4:34,35; Isa 40:15,22-24; Acts 17:26

"Chaldeans" – the Babylonians. Babylonia became a world power and crushed Assyria, the previous greatest power, between 612 and 605 BC.

"The breadth of the earth" – here this means the lands known to the people of Judah, including their own land. God would use that people to punish His own people. See Jer 51:10 and compare Isa 10:5,6.

**1:6-11** From this description of the Babylonians we see they were an exceedingly violent, arrogant and lawless people who cared nothing at all for the true God.

**1:11** "His god" – compare Dan 4:30; 11:38. The Babylonians practically worshiped their military power.

**1:12-17** God has given an answer to Habakkuk's questions in vs 2-4. But the prophet was not happy with the answer. He wanted God to do something, but was not pleased with what God planned to do. It seems to him that the proposed remedy was worse than the disease. He knew that his own people were bad, but that the Babylonians were even worse (v 13). And now his question is, how can a perfectly holy God use such a wicked nation to punish His own people?

**1:12** "Everlasting" – Ps 90:2; Ex 3:14.



- We will not die. O LORD, you have  
appointed them for judgment, and,  
O mighty God,  
you have established them for correction.
- 13 *Your eyes are* too pure to gaze at evil,  
and cannot look on wickedness.  
Why do you look on those who deal  
treacherously,  
and hold your tongue when the wicked  
devours the *man who is* more  
righteous than he?
- 14 *Why do you* make men like the fish of the sea,  
like crawling things *which have* no  
ruler over them?
- 15 They take up all of them with a hook;  
they catch them in their net,  
and gather them in their dragnet.  
Therefore they rejoice and are glad.
- 16 Therefore they offer sacrifices to their net,  
and burn incense to their dragnet,  
because through them their portion  
*is* rich, and their food abundant.
- 17 So will they go on emptying their net,  
and continually slaying nations  
without sparing?

- 2 I will stand my watch,  
and place myself on the fortifications,  
and will look to see what he will say to me,  
and what answer I should give when I  
am rebuked.
- 2 And the LORD answered me, and said,  
"Write the vision, and make *it* plain on tablets,  
that he who reads it may run.
- 3 For the vision *is* yet for the appointed time,  
but in the end it will speak, and not lie.  
Even though it delays, wait for it,  
because it will surely come, it will not delay.
- 4 "See the proud one.  
His soul is not upright in him.  
But the righteous will live by his faith.
- 5 And indeed, because he transgresses  
through wine,  
*he is* a proud man, and does not stay at home.  
He enlarges his desire as hell, and,  
like death, cannot be satisfied,  
but gathers for himself all nations,  
and heaps up for himself all people.
- 6 Shall not all these make up a parable  
about him,  
and *take up* a taunting proverb against

"My Holy One" – Isa 1:4; 6:3; Lev 20:7.  
"Die" – Ps 118:17.

"Judgment", "correction" – he accepts  
what God says in v 6 about raising up the  
Babylonians as an instrument to punish  
Judah.

1:13 "Wickedness" – v 3. It seemed to the  
prophet that God was going to tolerate an  
even greater wrong in letting the Babylonians  
destroy Judah than the wrong already  
present in Judah. And since God could do  
no evil and could not even look at it, how  
could He use the evil Babylonians?

"Those who deal treacherously" – the  
Babylonians.

"More righteous than he" – though the  
prophet knew the people of Judah were bad,  
he thought they were still better than the  
Babylonians.

1:15 "They" – the Babylonians. The prophet  
describes them as determined fishermen  
who catch helpless peoples and nations.

1:16 "Net" – here signifies their military power.  
It enabled them to plunder other nations  
and live in luxury themselves.

1:17 This is an important question in the  
prophet's mind. Could God continue to  
tolerate the atrocities of the Babylonians?  
Would He not put a stop to them?

2:1 "Watch" – Isa 21:8; Ezek 3:17. As a  
prophet Habakkuk was like a watchman for  
the kingdom of Judah. He realized he had  
been questioning God and waits to see the  
result of it.

2:2,3 "Vision" – the revelation God gave him  
in a vision appears in the rest of this chap-  
ter. It concerns God's judgment on the  
Babylonians.

"That he who reads it may run" or it could  
be translated "So that a herald may run with  
it."

"Though it delays, wait for it, because it"  
– or "though He linger, wait for Him, because  
He."

"It [or He] will not delay" – Babylon fell in  
539 BC, about 65 years after God gave this  
message to His prophet – a brief time in  
prophecy and in the rise and fall of nations.

2:4 "The proud one" – possibly the king of  
Babylon representing the whole kingdom,  
or possibly the kingdom itself personified.

"Faith" – the message is that the prophet  
should trust God even though he does not  
understand a thing God is doing. The  
prophet was baffled at God's ways –  
1:2-4,13,17. God tells him (and us) that  
faith in Him is the only way for the righteous,  
whether they understand little or much of  
what God does in the world. Compare 2 Cor  
5:7. See how this great phrase from  
Habakkuk is used in the New Testament –  
Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38,39.

2:5-19 God describes the character of  
Babylon and speaks of its downfall – vs  
6-8,17. He would use Babylon to punish  
His people (1:6), but this did not mean that  
He favored Babylon over them. He would  
deal with Babylon too at the proper time.  
This is God's answer to Habakkuk.

2:5 "Transgresses through wine" – Prov  
20:1; 23:31,32; Dan 5:1-4.

"His desire as hell" – the Hebrew has  
"Sheol" – note at Gen 37:35.

"All people" – 1:6,9,17. This is evidence  
that God is speaking of Babylon.

2:6 "Taunting proverb" – those nations could

- him, and say,  
 'Woe to him who piles up *what is* not his!  
 And to him who loads himself down  
 with the weight of pledges.'  
*But for* how long?  
 7 Will not those who will bite you rise  
 up suddenly,  
 and those who will trouble you awake?  
 And you become booty for them?  
 8 Because you have plundered many nations,  
 all the remainder of the peoples will  
 plunder you,  
 because of men's blood, and the  
 violence of the land, of the city,  
 and of all who live in it.  
 9 "Woe to him who covets ill-gotten gain  
 for his house,  
 that he may set his nest on high,  
 that he may be delivered from the reach  
 of calamity!  
 10 "You have devised a shameful thing for  
 your house,  
 cutting off many people,  
 and sinning *against* your *own* soul.  
 11 For the stone will cry out of the wall,  
 and the beam from the timbers will  
 answer it.  
 12 "Woe to him who builds a town by bloodshed,  
 and establishes a city by wickedness!  
 13 See, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts

- that the peoples labour for the fire,  
 and the nations exhaust themselves  
 for nothing?  
 14 For the earth will be filled with the  
 knowledge of the glory of the LORD,  
 as the waters cover the sea.  
 15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbour,  
 who puts your bottle to *him*,  
 and makes *him* drunk also,  
 that you may look on their nakedness!  
 16 You are filled with shame instead of glory.  
 Drink, you also, and be counted as  
 uncircumcised.  
 The cup from the LORD's right hand  
 will come around to you,  
 and utter disgrace *will cover* your glory.  
 17 For the violence *done* to Lebanon will  
 overwhelm you,  
 and the destruction of beasts *which*  
 made them afraid,  
*and* because of men's blood,  
 and because of violence *done* to the land,  
 to the city, and to all who live in it.  
 18 "What profit is an idol when its maker  
 has carved it,  
*or* a cast metal image, a teacher of lies?  
 For the maker trusts in his *own* handiwork,  
 making idols which cannot speak.  
 19 Woe to him who says to a *piece of* wood,  
 'Awake!', to a mute stone,

only taunt Babylon if they thought Babylon was about to fall.

"Woe" – the five "woes" in vs 6-19 signify that punishment would come to Babylon because of their sins. We may be sure that God will not spare any nation, any people which behaves as Babylon did. Compare Isa 5:8-24.

"The weight of pledges" – things given in pledge by others to get loans. The KJV has "thick clay" here. It seems that here they were following the Syriac version or the Vulgate, rather than the Hebrew.

**2:7,8** The oppressed will rise up and overcome their oppressor. Other nations will treat Babylon as Babylon treated them.

**2:9-11** Like Babylon, individuals sometimes think that by lies, deceit or force they can make themselves secure for the future. Little do they realize that the methods they use to escape ruin will inevitably lead them to ruin.

"Cry out" (v 11) – Babylon was built by riches plundered from other nations. The very walls of the city would testify against it. In the same way do not the walls and beams of many houses all over our land cry out against their owners?

**2:12,13** Towns, cities, and empires can be built by violence and sinful methods, but they will all come to nothing in the end. Only

what is done through God and for God and by God will endure. Compare 1 John 2:16,17.

**2:14** Num 14:21; Isa 11:9. This will come about only when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Christ – Rev 11:15; Dan 2:34,35,44.

**2:15** This may refer to the methods Babylon used to strip neighboring nations of their wealth.

**2:16** God would treat Babylon as it treated others (compare Ps 18:25,26). God would give Babylon a "cup" to drink which would make it stagger and fall and lie in nakedness and shame, stripped of its power, its wealth, and its glory. Compare Jer 25:15, 16,27,28.

"As uncircumcised" – like those who are not the people of Israel, those in covenant relationship with the true God.

**2:17** Apparently the Babylonians had been very severe in their treatment of Lebanon. **2:18,19** Compare Ps 115:4-8; Isa 40:18-22; 41:29; 44:9-20. Babylon was full of idols – Jer 50:38; the people trusted in the work of their own hands, not in God. This would be a cause of terrible "woe" to them. Observe that an idol is a "teacher of lies" – it lies to people about the nature of God and how to receive divine help. Compare Rom 1:25.

'Arise!' Can it teach?  
See, it *is* overlaid with gold and silver,  
and there is no breath at all in it.  
20 But the LORD *is* in his holy temple.  
Let all the earth keep silence before him."

**3** A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet,  
on Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard your renown,  
*and* was afraid.

O LORD, revive your work in the midst  
of the years.

In the midst of the years make *yourself*  
known. In wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Teman, the Holy One  
from mount Paran. Selah

His glory covered the heavens,  
and the earth was full of his praise.

4 And *his* brightness was like the light.  
He had rays *flashing* out of his hand,  
and there his power *was* hidden.

5 Before him went the plague,  
and burning coals followed at his feet.

6 He stood and measured the earth.  
He looked and made the nations tremble,  
and the everlasting mountains were  
scattered,  
the perpetual hills bowed down.  
His ways *are* everlasting.

7 I saw the tents of Cushan in distress;  
*and* the *tent* curtains of the land of  
Midian trembled.

8 Was the LORD displeased with the rivers?  
*Was* your anger against the rivers?  
*Was* your wrath against the sea,  
that you rode on your horses *and*  
your chariots of salvation?

9 Your bow was completely uncovered,  
oaths were sworn over your tribes. Selah  
You split the earth with rivers.

10 The mountains saw you, and they trembled.  
Floods of water swept by.  
The deep uttered its voice,  
*and* lifted up its hands on high.

11 The sun *and* moon stood still in their  
habitation.  
At the light of your arrows they went,  
*and* at the shining of your  
glittering spear.

12 You marched through the land in indignation,  
you threshed the nations in anger.

13 You went forth for the deliverance of  
your people,  
for the deliverance of your anointed.  
You struck the head of the house of  
the wicked, by baring *its* foundation  
to the neck. Selah

14 You pierced the head of his villages  
with his own spears.  
They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me.  
Their rejoicing *was* like devouring the  
poor in secret.

15 You walked through the sea with your horses,  
*through* the heap of great waters.

**2:20** Idols cannot speak but God can. From His holy temple in heaven He has been pronouncing judgments on the wicked of the earth. Let men be quiet and listen and learn from Him.

**3:1** "Prayer" – though this is called a prayer, only in v 2 do we see any requests. Prayer can be more than merely asking God for things. Much of this psalm is a very poetic description of God as the great judge and punisher of the nations, the great warrior against wickedness on earth, and the Redeemer of His people.

"Shigionoth" – no one knows now the meaning of this Hebrew word. It was probably a musical term indicating this prayer could be sung with musical instruments.

**3:2** "Revive" – Ps 85:6; 119:25,37,40,88, 107,149,154,156,159; 138:7; 143:11; Isa 57:15; Hos 6:2; 14:7. Habakkuk no longer is set on questioning God as he did in chapter 1. He is willing for God to be God, and is pleading for a revival of God's marvelous work among the people.

"Wrath" – see Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18.

"Mercy" – Ex 34:6,7.

**3:3** "Teman" – an area in the land of Edom southeast of Judah.

"Paran" – a mountain not far from Edom. The prophet pictures God coming from that direction to subdue His enemies. Whether Habakkuk is referring to a past event or describing a vision which has to do with the future is not clear. Compare Isa 34:5-10; 63:1-6.

"Selah" – note at Ps 3:2.

"The earth" – 2:14.

**3:4** Isa 18:4; Rev 1:16.

**3:5** Ex 5:3; 9:14; Lev 26:25; Deut 32:24; Ps 91:3; Rev 15:1.

**3:6** Ps 18:7; Jer 4:24-26; Heb 12:26-28; Rev 6:14; 16:18-20.

"Everlasting" – Gen 21:33; Ex 3:14; Ps 90:2.

**3:7** Cushan and Midian were tribes living near Edom. The prophet gives these two names as two examples among many – v 12.

**3:8** Ex 7:20-24; 14:15-31; Ps 68:17; 77:16; Rev 8:8,9; 16:3,4.

**3:9** Deut 32:23; Ps 7:12,13; 45:3-5.

**3:10** Ps 77:16; 93:3.

**3:11** Josh 10:12,13; Joel 2:30,31.

**3:12** This happened in the past and is happening now, but will be more fully true in the future – Isa 24:1-6; 34:1-4; Zech 14:2-5.

**3:13** Compare Ex 3:8; Ps 68:21; 110:6; Isa 31:5; Mic 5:6; Rom 11:26.

**3:14,15** See v 8.

16 When I heard, my body trembled,  
my lips quivered at the sound.  
Decay entered my bones, and I  
trembled in myself.  
But I will wait quietly for the day of trouble  
which will come on the people  
who will invade us with his troops.  
17 Though the fig tree does not blossom  
and *there is* no fruit on the vines,  
*though* the yield of the olive fails

**3:16** The language here seems to indicate that Habakkuk has seen and heard the things of vs 3-15 in a vision.  
"Trembled" – compare Dan 4:19; 7:15,28; 8:27; 10:16,17.  
"I will wait quietly" – he will question God about it no more.  
"Who will invade us" – Babylon. He accepts God's word that Babylon would be punished and fall.  
**3:17,18** Habakkuk puts into practice the word God gave him – "the just will live by his faith" (2:4). He is willing to leave the matter of God's judgments and His dealings in the world where they belong – in God's hands, and trust Him and rejoice in Him no matter what happened. Surely this is a great lesson for all of us to learn.

and the fields produce no food,  
*though* the flock is cut off from the  
fold and *there is* no herd in the stalls,  
18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD,  
I will be glad in the God of my salvation.  
19 The Lord God *is* my strength,  
and he will make my feet like a deer's *feet*,  
and he causes me to walk on my heights.  
For the choir director. On my stringed instruments.

The condition described in v 17 would be the result of the Babylonian invasion. The whole idea of this was once a terrible shock to him – 1:12-17. Now he rests in God who always knows what is the best thing to do.  
"Rejoice" – Ps 97:12; Isa 61:10; Phil 4:4.  
"God of my salvation" – Ex 15:2; Luke 1:47. What brought joy to the prophet was a personal knowledge of God and his own salvation. If we have this same knowledge we too can rejoice in all that may happen to us – Matt 5:11,12; John 16:33; Rom 5:3; 8:28.  
**3:19** "My strength" – Ex 15:2; Ps 18:1,32; 22:19; 73:26; Isa 40:29-31.  
"Heights" – Deut 32:13; Ps 18:33. Deer are very sure-footed on the hills and mountains.

# ZEPHANIAH

**Author:**

Zephaniah was descended from king Hezekiah, but we know almost nothing about him.

**Date:**

He prophesied during the days of king Josiah who reigned 640-609 BC.

**Themes:**

The Day of the LORD; warning that unless the people of Judah repented of their detestable behavior God's punishment would come on them; promise that in the last days God would pour out His blessings on them.

**Contents:**

God's judgment was about to come on Judah	
and on the whole earth .....	1:2-6
The destruction coming on the Day of the LORD .....	1:7-18
The call to turn to God before punishment came .....	2:1-3
Punishment coming on nations around Judah .....	2:4-15
On the Philistines .....	2:4-7
On the people of Moab and Ammon .....	2:8-11
On Cush .....	2:12
On Assyria .....	2:13-15
Punishment for the evil committed in Jerusalem .....	3:1-5
God's punishment on other nations .....	3:6-9
The well-being of the Jews after returning to the land .....	3:10-13
The blessings to come to the people of Israel .....	3:14-20

**1** The word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

**2** "I will completely make an end of all *things* from the land," says the LORD.

**3** "I will make an end of man and beast; I will make an end of the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea, and the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. And I will cut man off from the land," says the LORD.

**4** "I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and I will cut off what is left of Baal from this place, *and* the names of the idolatrous priests along with the priests,

**5** And those who worship the *starry* host of heaven on the housetops, and those who worship *and* swear by the LORD, and who swear by Malcam,

**6** And those who have turned back from the LORD, and *those* who have not sought the LORD or inquired of him.

**7** Be silent in the presence of the Lord God,

**1:1** "Word. . . came" – Jer 1:4; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1.

"Hezekiah" – 2 Kings 18:1.

"Josiah" – 2 Kings 22:1.

"Amon" – 2 Kings 21:19.

**1:2,3** Judging from the language of this verse, v 18 and 3:8, God is speaking through Zephaniah of a time in the distant future which still has not come. Compare Gen 6:7. God promised Noah that He would never again destroy everything with a flood – Gen 9:15,16. Through Zephaniah He speaks of destruction by other means. Compare also 2 Peter 3:10-13.

"The land" – or "the earth" – the Hebrew word means either.

**1:4-13** Having announced the far-off event, God now speaks of the punishment of Judah and Jerusalem. There seems to be a mingling of events to come in the near future and the is tant future (v 7). They were partly fulfilled in 586 BC – 2 Kings chapter 25.

**1:4** "I will" – compare Isa 10:5; Jer 51:20. "Baal" – note at Jud 2:11.

"Idolatrous priests" – in Hebrew "Kemarim."

**1:5** "Starry host" – 2 Kings 21:3; Jer 8:2; 19:13; Acts 7:42; Deut 4:19; 17:3-5.

"Malcam" – the god Molech – note at Lev 18:21. Trying to combine the name of the one true God with the worship of the false

for the day of the LORD *is* at hand, for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has invited his guests.

**8** And this will take place on the day of the LORD's sacrifice:

I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all those dressed in foreign clothes.

**9** On the same day I will also punish all those who leap over the *temple* threshold, who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit.

**10** "And on that day," says the LORD, "this will take place: *there will be* the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate, and a wailing from the Second *Quarter*, and a loud crash from the hills.

**11** Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people will be cut down, all those who carry silver will be cut off.

**12** And it will happen at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are settled *complacently like wine* on its dregs, who say in their heart, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do evil.'

**13** Therefore their goods will become booty, and their houses a desolation.

gods of the nations – this revealed much spiritual blindness and depravity.

**1:6** This was their great sin and the root cause of other sins.

**1:7** "Silent" – Hab 2:20.

"Day of the LORD" – v 14; see Isa 13:6-13; Joel 1:15; 2:2,11; 3:31; Amos 5:18; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10.

"A sacrifice" – Jer 46:10. Here the word speaks of a slaughter. Judah's enemies were set apart for this work of destroying Judah.

**1:8** "Foreign clothes" – God saw that His people's adopting foreign dress was a sign of their adopting foreign ways of life contrary to the ways a holy people should live.

**1:9** "Leap over the temple threshold" – 1 Sam 5:5. This was one of the foreign ways Judah had adopted. They were careful to observe that, but thought nothing of lying and killing – another example of how some people think that a little religious superstition can win God's favor even if their lives are full of sin.

**1:10,11** Neh 3:3; 11:9; 1 Kings 20:34.

**1:12** "Complacently" – Amos 6:1.

"Dregs" – Jer 48:11.

"The LORD will not do" – they felt secure in their sin and unbelief, thinking that God was inactive. Compare Ps 10:11; 73:11,12.

**1:13** "Booty" – Jer 15:13; 2 Kings 24:13.



And they will build houses but not live  
*in them*,  
 and they will plant vineyards but not  
 drink their wine.

14 "The great day of the LORD *is* near.  
*It is* near, and coming speedily.  
 The sound of the day of the LORD!  
 The mighty man there will cry out bitterly.

15 That day *is* a day of wrath,  
 a day of trouble and distress,  
 a day of devastation and desolation,  
 a day of darkness and gloom,  
 a day of clouds and dense darkness,

16 A day of the trumpet and alarm against  
 the fortified cities, and against the  
 high towers.

17 I will bring distress on men,  
 so that they walk like blind men,  
 because they have sinned against  
 the LORD.

And their blood will be poured out like dust,  
 and their flesh like dung.

18 Neither their silver nor their gold  
 will be able to save them in the day  
 of the LORD's wrath;  
 and the whole land will be devoured by  
 the fire of his jealousy.  
 For quickly he will rid the land of all  
 those who live in it."

**2** Gather yourselves together;  
 yes, gather together, O nation not desirable,  
 2 Before the decree is carried out,  
*before* the day takes away the chaff,  
 before the fierce anger of the LORD  
 comes on you,

before the day of the LORD's anger  
 comes on you.

3 Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth,  
 who have behaved in accordance with  
 his justice.  
 Seek righteousness, seek meekness.  
 Perhaps you will be hidden in the day  
 of the LORD's anger.

4 For Gaza will be abandoned,  
 and Ashkelon *will become* a desolation.  
 At midday they will drive out *the*  
*people of* Ashdod,  
 and Ekron will be uprooted.

5 Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast,  
 the nation of the Kerethites!  
 The word of the LORD *is* against you,  
 O Canaan, the land of the Philistines:  
 "I will destroy you, so that no one will  
 live *there*."

6 And the seacoast will become pastures,  
*and* caves for shepherds,  
 and folds for flocks.

7 And the coast will be for the remnant  
 of the house of Judah.  
 They will feed *their flocks* there.  
 In the evening they will lie down in  
 the houses of Ashkelon;  
 for the LORD their God will visit them,  
 and turn away their captivity.

8 "I have heard the insults of Moab,  
 and the taunts of the children of Ammon,  
 with which they have insulted my people,  
 and exalted *themselves* against their  
 borders.

9 Therefore, as I live,"

1:14 Verse 7. "Near" – Joel 1:15.  
 1:15 Amos 5:18-20.  
 1:16 Joel 2:2.  
 1:17 "Blind men" – Deut 28:28,29; Isa 59:10.  
 1:18 "Wrath" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18. The wealthy sometimes think their riches give them security. But they will learn that there is no security when God rises in anger against them.  
 "Devoured" – vs 2,3; 3:8.  
 2:1 "Nation not desirable" – Judah (Jer 3:3,25; 6:15). Their behavior was shameful but they were not ashamed of it.  
 2:2,3 A call to repentance before punishment falls.  
 "Seek" – Hos 14:1-3; Joel 2:12-14; Amos 5:4,6; Isa 55:6,7; Jer 29:13.  
 "Meek" – only the humble would be willing to listen to the prophet and seek God.  
 "Righteousness" – Isa 1:17; Matt 6:33.  
 "Meekness" – Isa 57:15; 66:2; Jam 4:6-10.

"Perhaps" – Joel 2:14; Amos 5:15.  
 2:4-7 A prophecy of God's judgment on the Philistines. See also Amos 1:6-8; Ezek 25:15-17. Note on Philistines at Gen 10:14. Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Ekron were important cities in their land.  
 "Kerethites" – 1 Sam 30:14; 2 Sam 8:18.  
 2:7 "Remnant" – Isa 11:11,16; 28:5; 37:32; Jer 23:3.  
 "Turn away their captivity" – or "restore their well-being" – the Hebrew means either. Deut 30:3; Jer 32:44; Hos 14:4-9; Joel 3:1; Amos 9:13-15.  
 2:8,9 God pronounces judgment on the people of Moab and the Ammonites together. They were descended from the same man (Gen 19:36-38), and lived in the same general area. For other prophecies about them see Isa 11:14; 15:1 - 16:14; Jer 9:26; chapter 48; 49:1-6; Ezek 21:28-32; 25:1-11; Amos 2:1-3. Both nations were continual enemies of Israel.  
 2:9 "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.  
 "Sodom," "Gomorra" – Gen 19:23-29.

says the LORD of hosts,  
the God of Israel,  
"surely Moab will become like Sodom,  
and the *land of the* children of Ammon  
like Gomorrah,  
a place of weeds and salt pits,  
and a permanent desolation.  
Those who are left of my people will  
plunder them,  
and the remnant of my people will  
possess them.  
10 This they will have for their pride,  
because they have insulted and exalted  
*themselves* against the people  
of the LORD of hosts."  
11 The LORD *will be* terrifying to them,  
for he will famish all the gods of the earth.  
And each *people* will worship him from  
their own place, all the islands of  
the nations.  
12 "You Ethiopians also *will be* slain by my sword."  
13 And he will stretch out his hand  
against the north and destroy Assyria,  
and make Nineveh a desolation *and* as  
dry as a desert.  
14 And flocks will lie down in the middle of her,  
*and* all the beasts of the country.  
Both the cormorant and the bittern will  
lodge on the tops of its pillars;  
*their* voice will sing through the windows.  
Desolation *will be* on the threshold;  
for he will lay bare the cedar work.  
15 This *is* the rejoicing city  
that lived without a care,

that said in her heart,  
"I *am*, and *there is* no one beside me."  
What a desolation she has become!  
A place for beasts to lie down!  
Everyone who passes by her will hiss,  
*and* shake his fist.  
3 Woe to her who is filthy and polluted,  
to the oppressing city!  
2 She has not obeyed *God's* voice;  
she has not received correction;  
she has not trusted in the LORD;  
she has not drawn near to her God.  
3 Her princes within her *are* roaring lions;  
her judges *are* evening wolves;  
they leave no bone to gnaw to the morning.  
4 Her prophets *are* light, treacherous persons.  
Her priests have defiled the sanctuary,  
they have done violence to the law.  
5 The just LORD *is* in her midst.  
He will do no evil.  
Each morning he brings his justice to light;  
he does not fail.  
But the unjust know no shame.  
6 "I have cut off nations.  
Their towers are in ruins.  
I made their streets desolate so that  
no one passes through *them*.  
Their cities are destroyed, so that  
there is no man, no inhabitant.  
7 I said, '*If* only you would fear me *and*  
receive instruction,'  
so that their dwelling place would not  
be cut off, in all that I laid on them.

"Will possess them" – this will be fulfilled in the future, since it has not been fulfilled up to the present time.  
2:10 "Pride" – Isa 16:6; Jer 49:16; Obad 3. See how God loathes pride – Prov 6:16,17; Isa 2:12-18.  
2:11 "Each people will worship Him" – 3:9; Ps 86:9; Hab 2:14; Zech 14:9,16. A time is coming when there will not be idols and gods in any country and all peoples everywhere will worship only the true God.  
2:12 Again God speaks. Note on "Ethiopia" – or "Cush" – at Isa 18:1.  
"My sword" – an enemy nation. Compare Isa 10:5.  
2:13-15 For other prophecies against Assyria and its capital Nineveh, see Isa 10:12-19; 19:23-25; Nahum chapters 1-3. Note on Assyria at 2 Kings 15:19.  
2:14 "Cormorant and the bittern" – it is unclear exactly what birds are indicated by the Hebrew.  
2:15 "I am" – compare Isa 47:10.  
3:1-8 The prophet now speaks of Jerusalem – this is the only city of which it could be said that the LORD (Jehovah God) was in it

– v 5.  
3:1 "Oppressing city" – Jer 6:6; 22:3.  
3:2 Jer 7:28; 22:21; Matt 7:21; Luke 6:46.  
3:3 The weak and helpless were their prey.  
3:4 These prophets were false prophets. Compare Jer 5:31; 14:14; 23:16,32. The work of the priests was to teach God's law and see that the people practiced it – Deut 31:9-13; 2 Chron 17:8,9; Jer 2:8; 23:11.  
3:5 "Just" – or "righteous" – Ps 11:7; 89:14; Deut 32:4.  
"In her midst" – God's glory, His presence was in His temple in Jerusalem. From there He worked justice in the earth, rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked.  
"Know no shame" – 2:1.  
3:6 God speaks and gives an illustration of the justice He works in the earth.  
3:7 "Dwelling place" – Jerusalem. God wished to spare His city – Ps 132:13; Matt 23:37-39. But He could not overlook the wickedness of the people.  
"Rose early" – they were eager to get to their corrupted work. Verse 7 in Hebrew is obscure and difficult to translate.

But they rose early *and* corrupted all  
their deeds.

8 Therefore wait for me, says the LORD,  
until the day that I rise up for plunder.  
For my decision *is* to gather the  
nations, to assemble the kingdoms,  
to pour out on them my indignation,  
all my fierce anger.  
For the whole earth will be devoured  
by the fire of my jealousy.

9 For then I will restore to the people a  
pure language,  
that they may all call on the name of  
the LORD,  
to serve him with one consent.

10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia  
my worshippers,  
the daughter of my dispersed,  
will bring my offering.

11 In that day you will not be put to shame  
for any of your deeds,  
by which you have transgressed  
against me,  
for then I will take away from your  
midst those who rejoice in your pride,  
and you will no longer be haughty on  
my holy mountain.

12 I will also leave a humble and lowly  
people in your midst,  
and they will trust in the name of the LORD.

13 The remnant of Israel will do no  
evil or speak lies,  
nor will a deceitful tongue be found in  
their mouth.  
They will feed *their flocks* and lie down,

and no one will make *them* afraid."

14 Sing, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout, O Israel!  
Be glad and rejoice with all *your*  
heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

15 The LORD has taken away judgments on you,  
he has cast out your enemy.  
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst.  
You will see no more disaster.

16 In that day it will be said to Jerusalem,  
"Do not fear,"  
*and* to Zion, "Do not let your hands hang limply."

17 The LORD your God in your midst is mighty.  
He will save *you*,  
he will rejoice over you with joy,  
he will rest in his love,  
he will rejoice over you with singing.

18 "I will gather *those* among you *who*  
grieve for the appointed assembly,  
*to whom* the scorning of it was a burden.

19 See, at that time I will deal with all  
who trouble you,  
and I will save the lame,  
and gather those who were driven out;  
and I will see that they get praise  
and fame in every land where they  
have been put to shame.

20 At that time I will bring you *back*,  
at the time that I gather you.  
For I will give you a name and praise  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore you from captivity  
before your eyes, says the LORD.

3:8 "Wait for me" – God would deal with them as they deserved.  
"Anger" – Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.  
"Devoured" – 1:2,3,18; Isa 24:1-13.

3:9 Though God will cause great calamities and devastations on the earth there will be nations left for Him to purify. And He will do so and the world will be united in worship of the true God – 2:11; Zech 14:9.

3:10 "My dispersed" – Deut 4:27; 28:64; Jer 9:16.  
"Offering" – Isa 11:11,12; 60:7.

3:11-13 "You" – God speaks to Jerusalem. This condition of the people of Israel has not appeared from that day to this. So its fulfilment awaits the future.

3:13 "Remnant" – 2:7.

3:14,15 Compare Isa 12:1,6; 40:1,2; 51:11. God speaks of something still in the future as if it had already taken place. See Isa 46:10.

"Daughter of Zion" – note at Ps 9:14; etc.

"The king of Israel" – Ezek 37:26-28; Zech 14:16; Isa 44:6. Notice the words "no more" – words as yet unfulfilled.

3:16 "In that day" – vs 9,11.  
"Limply" – Isa 35:3,4; Heb 12:12.

3:17 A great verse showing the joy and satisfaction God has in His people. This will be true in the future of Jerusalem and its people. It is true now of believers in Christ.  
"He will save" – Isa 46:13; 51:5; 63:1; Rom 1:16; Heb 7:25.  
"Rejoice" – Ps 147:11; Isa 62:4; Eph 1:3-6.  
"Love" – Isa 40:1; Hos 14:4; Rom 5:5; 1 John 4:16-18.

"Singing" – God sings over His redeemed people as parents sing to an infant safe in their arms.

3:18 God speaks and comforts His people.

3:19 "All who trouble you" – enemy nations.

3:20 Jer 29:14; Ezek 37:12,21-28; Amos 9:14,15.  
"You from captivity" – or "your well-being."

# HAGGAI

## Author:

The prophet Haggai is referred to in Ezra 5:1,2; 6:14, but we know almost nothing about him. He was a contemporary of Zechariah.

## Date:

About 520 BC, during the second year of the reign of king Darius.

## Theme:

In his second year as king of Persia Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem (538 BC). Under the leadership of Zerubbabel they began the construction of the temple, but after completing the foundation they stopped the work. Haggai encouraged them to work and finish the temple, warning them of loss if they did not and promising God's blessing if they did.

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God's judgment on the nations .....	2:20-22
A blessed promise to Zerubbabel .....	2:23

**1** In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Johozadak, the high priest, saying,

2 "This is what the LORD of hosts has spoken, saying: This people say, 'The time has not come, the time for building the LORD's house.'"

3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 "*Is it time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, and this house lie in ruins?*"

5 "Now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. 6 You have sown much, but have harvested little. You eat, but do not have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And the wage earner earns wages *to put* into a bag with holes.

7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the mountain, and bring timber and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it,

1:1 "Darius" – Ezra 4:24. The second year of his reign was in 520 BC. This Darius was not the same as the Darius of Daniel chapter 6.

"Word of the LORD came" – Jer 1:2; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1.

"Zerubbabel" – Ezra 2:2; 3:2; 4:2; 5:2; Neh 7:7; 12:1; Zech 4:6-10. He was governor of Judah after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon.

"Joshua" – Zech 3:1-9.

"Priest" – notes at Ex 28:1.

1:2 "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"Has spoken, saying" – the prophets knew they had a message from God and they spoke in His name with His authority.

"This people" – people of Judah.

"For building" – the Jews had laid the foundation of the temple sixteen years before, but had not continued the work – Ezra 3:8-10; 4:1-5,24.

1:3,4 They had built good houses for themselves but left God's house a ruin (it had been destroyed about seventy years before – 1 Kings 25:8-15). Like so many Christians today the people put themselves first and neglected God's work. They had time for themselves, but not for Him.

1:5 "Consider" – v 7; 2:15,18; Lam 3:40; 2 Cor 13:5; 1 Pet 1:13. God wanted His people to think about their condition and understand the reason why certain things were happening. By understanding our own ways we can understand something of God's ways with us (compare Ps 18:25,26; Lev 26:23,24).

1:6 This was the result of their self-centered ways. They got little from their hard labor and were sinking into poverty. Their purses had "holes" – as fast as they earned money they had to spend it and it seemed to be

and I will be glorified, says the LORD. 9 You looked for much, and, see, *it came* to little. And when you brought *it* home, I blew on it. Why? says the LORD of hosts. Because of my house, which *lies in* ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. 10 Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds her fruit. 11 And I called for a drought on the land, and on the mountains, and on the grain, and on the new wine, and on the oil, and on *all that* the ground produces, and on men, and on cattle, and on all the labour of *your* hands."

12 Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the rest of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, because the LORD their God had sent him, and the people feared the LORD.

13 Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, "*I am* with you, says the LORD." 14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the

going for nothing. All this was God's punishment for their sin of forgetting His work (compare Deut 28:38-40; Lev 26:18-20).

1:7,8 He wants them to realize the cause of their poverty and do something about it. If they would try to please God He would please them. If they would honor Him He would honor them (v 13; 2:19; 1 Sam 2:30; Isa 58:13,14; John 12:26; 2 Cor 9:6-8). We have no right to expect God's blessings if we care nothing for His pleasure and honor, and think only of our own.

1:9 "I blew on it" – that is, blew it away. Because of their selfish, thoughtless ways God arranged conditions so that they would not prosper.

1:10,11 It is the one true God who gives rain, and sometimes He withholds it as a punishment for people's sins. Compare Lev 26:4,19; Deut 28:22-24; 1 Kings 17:1; Jer 14:1,22.

1:12 "Remnant" – those who had returned from captivity in Babylon. They were a small number compared to the many people who had once lived in Judah.

"Obeyed" – Deut 6:3,24; 11:13-15; 28:1-6; John 14:15.

"Feared the LORD" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

1:13 "LORD's messenger" – this is what a prophet was. He got a message from God and delivered it to the people.

"I am with you" – because of their obedience and reverence He would bless and prosper them. The promise of the Lord's presence has been enough in all ages to spur God's people on to great efforts and accomplishments – Ex 33:14; Josh 1:5; Jud 6:16; 1 Chron 28:20; Jer 1:8; Matt 28:20.

1:14 "Stirred up" – compare Ezra 1:1,5; Phil 2:13.

son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the rest of the people; and they came to work on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

**2** In the seventh *month*, on the twenty-first *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying, **2** "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the rest of the people, saying, **3** who *is* left among you who saw this house in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with that *is it* not in your eyes as nothing? **4** Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD, and be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and be strong, all you people of the land, says the LORD, and work, for *I am* with you, says the LORD of hosts, **5** *in accordance with* the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt; for my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.

**6** "For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the

earth and the sea and the dry *land*, **7** and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. **8** The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. **9** The glory of this latter house will be greater than that of the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, says the LORD of hosts."

**10** In the twenty-fourth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, **11** "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Now ask the priests *concerning* the law, and say, **12** If someone carries consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and with the fold touches bread, or stew, or wine, or oil, or any meat, will it become consecrated?"

And the priests answered and said, "No."

**13** Then Haggai said, "If *someone who* is unclean by *touching* a dead body touches any of those, will it become unclean?"

And the priests answered and said, "It will become unclean."

**14** Then answered Haggai, and said, "So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, says the

**2:1-3** Some of the people had been living when Solomon's temple was destroyed by the Babylonian army many years before this – Ezra 3:12. That temple was very magnificent. See 1 Kings 6:1–37; 7:13-51. The temple they were now building was small and plain by comparison. But see Zech 4:10. **2:4** "Be strong" – Josh 1:6-9; 23:6; Jud 5:21; Ps 27:14; 31:24; Dan 10:19; Eph 6:10. "Work" – Eccl 9:10; John 6:37; 9:4; 1 Cor 15:58.

"With you" – 1:13.

**2:5** His covenant was that they would be His people and He would dwell in their midst – Ex 29:44-46.

"My Spirit" – Ex 31:3; Num 11:16,17,25; Ps 51:11; 106:33; Isa 63:11-14.

"Do not fear" – if God is with us there can be nothing to fear. If He is not with us there is good reason to fear many things.

**2:6** "Heavens and the earth" – Heb 12:26 refers to these words and puts their fulfillment in the future. At the second coming of Christ there will be a great shaking of heaven and earth and all the nations of earth – Rev 6:12-17; 16:14-21. **2:7** "All nations" – God can and does do what He wills among all the nations of the earth. He can and does use them all for His glory and the good of His people. Compare Dan 4:34,35.

"Desire of all nations" – some scholars think this refers to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. It may be so but we cannot be sure. Actually all nations do not desire Him, but some from among all nations do. The same Hebrew word translated here "desired" can also mean material things which men value. This may be the meaning here and

it may be significant that God speaks of silver and gold in the next verse. Compare Isa 60:5.

"Glory" – Ex 40:34,35; 1 Kings 8:10,11. If God's glory is in a building it needs no other magnificence; if it is not there no magnificence will mean anything.

**2:8** Compare Ps 50:10-12. God is well able to provide His people with all they need for any work He calls them to do – 2 Cor 9:8.

**2:9** The glory of Solomon's temple was coming to an end when Judah was conquered and exiled. The temple had become a place of idolatry and God abandoned it – Ezekiel chapters 8-11. Now the people had left idols and false gods and God would fill the new temple with His glory. Though there would not be in the new one as much physical splendor as in the old one there would be more of God's glory.

"This place" – Jerusalem.

"Peace" – Isa 60:17; Luke 1:79; 2:14; John 14:27; Col 1:20.

**2:10-14** Two months had passed since the previous message (v 1). This new message was this: because of their disobedience, thoughtlessness and carelessness in God's work the people were unclean. Being in the holy land and in the holy city and planning to build God's holy temple did not make them holy. Holiness cannot be transmitted like that. Holiness is a matter of the heart, of the character, of the behavior, and results from obedience to God (compare Rom 6:22). And those without true holiness defile everything they touch.

**2:12** "Consecrated meat" was meat brought as an offering to God.

**2:13** Lev 5:2; Num 19:11-13,22.



LORD, and so is every work of their hands, and what they offer there *is* unclean.

15 "And now, *carefully* consider from this day onward. Before a stone was laid on stone in the temple of the LORD, 16 from the time of those *days*, when *someone* came to a heap of twenty *bushels*, there were *only* ten; when *someone* came to the wine vat to draw fifty *measures* out of the vat, there were *only* twenty. 17 I struck you with blight and mildew and with hail on all the labours of your hands. Yet you *did* not *turn* to me, says the LORD. 18 Consider now from this day onward. Consider *things* from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth *month*, from the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid. 19 Is the seed still in the barn? And as yet the vine, and the fig tree,

and the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded *fruit*. From this day on I will bless *you*. "

20 And again the word of the LORD came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth *day* of the month, saying, 21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth. 22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. And I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them, and the horses and their riders will come down, each one by the sword of his brother.

23 "In that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, says the LORD, and will make you like *my* signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of hosts."

2:15 1:5.  
 2:16,17 1:6,9. "Did not turn to me" – Isa 9:13; Jer 3:10; Amos 4:6-9.  
 2:18,19 "I will bless you" – compare Mal 3:10; Ps 128:1,2; Joel 2:13,14. Because the people began to believe the prophet and to obey and honor God, He promises them there would be a great and sudden change in their condition. Instead of punishing them He would bless them, starting immediately. And He wanted them to mark down the date of this change and the reason for it, so that they might learn His ways with them.  
 2:20-23 On the same day that God sent a

message to the people he sent a personal message of encouragement to the leader of the people.  
 2:21 "Shake" – 2:6.  
 2:22 Zerubbabel had nothing to fear from enemies either far or near. The Commander of the armies of heaven and the Controller of all earth's armies was in charge of events. Compare Ex 15:1,4,19,21; Josh 21:43,44; Jud 7:22; Ezek 38:21; Dan 2:34,35,44,45; 4:35.  
 2:23 "Signet ring" – Ex 3:10; 8:8. In those days this was a sign of authority. God would execute His decisions through Zerubbabel.

# ZECHARIAH

## Author:

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai, the grandson of a priest named Iddo, and so a priest himself. In the Old Testament 29 men are named Zechariah, but the prophet who wrote this book is the one who lived in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah and is referred to in their books.

## Date:

Zechariah began his ministry in 520 BC, and wrote this book sometime after that.

## Themes:

Rebuking the people for their sins; encouraging the construction of the temple; God's judgment on the nations; future trouble and then blessing for Israel; both the first and second comings of Christ (3:8; 6:12,13; 9:9; 14:3,4).

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**1** In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, saying,

2 "The LORD was very angry with your fathers. 3 Therefore say to them, Thus says the LORD of hosts: Turn to me, says the LORD of hosts, and I will turn to you, says the LORD of hosts. 4 Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried out, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: Turn now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil deeds.' But they would not hear, or listen to me, says the LORD. 5 Your fathers, where *are* they? And the prophets, do they live forever? 6 But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers?"

"And they returned and said, 'The LORD of hosts has dealt with us in accordance with our ways and our deeds, just as he determined to do to us.'"

7 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which *is* the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the

prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, as follows:

8 I saw a *vision* at night, and a man appeared riding on a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees in a hollow, and behind him *there were* red, sorrel, and white horses.

9 Then I said, "My lord, what *are* these?"

And the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what these *are*."

10 And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, "These *are those* whom the LORD has sent to go throughout the earth."

11 And they answered the angel of the LORD who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have gone throughout the earth, and have seen that all the earth is quiet and peaceful."

12 Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years?" 13 And the LORD answered the angel who talked with me *with* good words, comforting words.

1:1 "Darius" – Hag 1:1; Ezra 4:24. Zechariah and Haggai were contemporaries.

"Word of the LORD came" – Jer 1:2; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1.

"Iddo" – Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh 12:4,16.

"Prophet" – Gen 20:7.

1:2 "Angry" – notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11.

"Fathers" – Jer 7:18,20; 8:19; 11:17; 32:31-35. The people of Judah turned away from God, broke His covenant and worshiped other gods. So He brought against them the Babylonians who destroyed Jerusalem and took the people into exile – 2 Chron 36:15-21. Now a remnant of the people had returned and God speaks to them.

1:3 "LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"Turn to me" – Jer 4:1; Hosea 14:1; Mal 3:7; Jam 4:8. If they would do their part it is certain that God would do His part – Ex 34:6,7; Ezek 18:30-32.

1:4 "Former prophets" – Isaiah, Joel, Micah, Jeremiah, etc.

"Would not hear" – Jer 7:13,25; 11:7,8; 25:3-7. Any people, any individual who refuses to pay attention to what God says is heading for disaster. Compare Heb 12:25.

1:5,6 Men pass away like grass in a field but God's Word stands forever – Isa 40:6-8; 1 Pet 1:24,25. And the punishment that came on Israel and Judah was in fulfillment of that Word.

"Then they returned and said" – compare Dan 9:1-3; Jer 29:10-14; Ezra 9:3-5; 10:1.

"In accordance with our ways" – Ezra 9:7,13; Dan 9:11-14.

"Determined to do" – Lev 26:27-33; Deut 28:45-52; Jer 23:20; 39:16.

1:7-17 This is the first of eight visions God gave Zechariah – v 18; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1,5; 6:1. It seems they all came in one

night. Giving visions is one way God used to reveal His truth and His messages to the prophets. See Gen 15:1; Isa 1:1; Dan 2:19; Acts 9:10; 10:3.

1:8 "A man" – it seems this "man" is "the angel of the LORD" (v 11), none other than the Son of God Himself. Note on this angel at Gen 16:7.

"Red horse" – the color red may signify bloodshed (Rev 6:4), white may signify victory and peace (compare Rev 19:11-15), and sorrel may signify a mixture of the two.

"Horses" – the meaning of these appears in v 10. They probably signify angels whom God sends on His work in the world (compare 2 Kings 6:17; Ps 78:49; 91:11,12; Dan 10:12,13,20; Heb 1:14; Rev 7:1; 12:7; 15:1).

1:9 The angel who was talking with Zechariah is not the same as the angel of the LORD (v 11).

1:10 "The earth" – Job 1:6,7. The angels go throughout the world to fulfill God's will.

1:11 Verse 8. The angel of the LORD was in authority over all the other angels and so they brought their reports to Him.

"Quiet and peaceful" – this was the state of the earth for a time after the Medes and Persians had conquered Babylonia and established their empire.

1:12 The Son of God prays to God the Father about the condition of Judah. Compare John 17:1; Rom 8:34; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1.

"Seventy years" – 2 Chron 36:21; Jer 25:11,12; 29:10; Dan 9:2.

1:13-17 God the Father listened to His Son and sent a comforting message to the people of Judah through His angel and His prophet.

1:13 "Angel" – v 9.

14 So the angel who talked with me said to me, "Cry out, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. 15 And I am very angry with the nations *that are* at ease. For I was only a little angry, and they helped forward the distress."

16 "Therefore thus says the LORD: I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy. My house will be built in it, says the LORD of hosts, and a measuring line will be stretched out on Jerusalem."

17 "Cry out again, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: My cities will again spread out through prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion, and will again choose Jerusalem.'"

18 Then I lifted up my eyes, and looked and saw four horns. 19 And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these?"

And he answered me, "Those *are* the horns which scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

20 And the LORD showed me four craftsmen. 21 Then I said, "What have those come to do?"

And he spoke, saying, "These *are* the horns which scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but these have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it."

**1:14** "Jealous" – 8:2; Ex 20:5; 34:14; Joel 2:18; James 4:5. Jealousy speaks of love. God's love for the people of Judah was very great, and therefore He was jealous of anything that might turn their hearts from Him, and was angry with any nation which injured them.

**1:15** "Angry" – v 2. "Nations" – the nations felt secure apart from God and did many things to provoke Him to anger (compare Rom 1:18-25). God's anger against them increased because of their treatment of the Jews.

**1:16** "My house" – the temple. For the fulfillment of this see Ezra 6:14,15.

"Measuring line" – here signifies either the rebuilding of Jerusalem or protection from enemies. See Jer 31:38-40.

**1:17** "Comfort" – Isa 40:1. "Choose" – 2:12; 3:2; Isa 14:1.

**1:18-21** A vision about the destruction of the nations which destroyed Israel and Judah. "Horns" signify authority and power (1 Sam 2:10; Ps 18:2; Dan 7:7,8; Luke 1:69; Rev 17:12). Here they symbolize the strong nations which scattered God's people, chief among which was Assyria and Babylonia. But "four" may indicate the "four corners" of the whole world.

**1:20** "Craftsmen" – nations or other forces God would use to crush the nations signified by the horns. "Craftsmen" suggests something constructive rather than merely destructive.

**2:1-13** This third vision has to do with the future greatness of Jerusalem and Judah.

**2:4** "Young man" – possibly the man with a measuring line in v 1.

"Without walls" – Jerusalem will be such a great city that its old walls will not be able

**2** I lifted up my eyes again, and looked and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 Then I said, "Where are you going?"

And he said to me, "To measure Jerusalem, to see what its width and length *are*."

3 And, suddenly, the angel who talked with me went out, and another angel came out to meet him, 4 And said to him, "Run, speak to this young man, saying, 'Jerusalem will be inhabited *like* towns without walls because of the many men and cattle in it. 5 For I, says the LORD, will be a wall of fire all around her, and will be the glory in her midst.'"

6 "Up, *and* away! Flee from the land of the north, says the LORD, for I have spread you out to the four winds of the heaven," says the LORD.

7 "Up, O Zion! Escape, *you* who dwell *with* the daughter of Babylon." 8 For thus says the LORD of hosts: After glory he has sent me to the nations who have plundered you. For he who touches you touches the apple of his eye. 9 For, see, I will raise my hand over them, and they will become plunder to their servants. And you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me.

10 "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for, see, I am coming, and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD. 11 "And many nations will be

to contain the multitude who live there – 10:10; Isa 49:19,20.

**2:5** "Wall of fire" – God Himself will protect the city, so physical walls will be unnecessary. Compare Ps 125:2.

"Glory" – Ex 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10,11; Ps 85:9; Isa 11:10; 24:23; 60:1-3; Rev 21:23.

**2:6** "I have spread" – Deut 4:27; 28:64; 1 Kings 14:15; Jer 31:10; Ezek 20:34.

"Four winds" – all corners of earth (Isa 11:10,11; 43:5,6; 49:12).

**2:7** "Zion" – here means Jerusalem's people in exile. "Escape" is a way of saying God would bring their exile to an end (Isa 48:20).

"Daughter" – 2 Kings 19:21; Ps 9:14; 45:12; 137:8.

**2:8** "He has sent me" – this seems a clear reference to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (vs 9,11). He will deal with the nations which have plundered Israel. Compare Ps 2:8; Rev 19:15.

"Apple of his eye" – see Deut 32:10. Israel is very precious to God and aiming a blow at her is like aiming a blow at God Himself (compare Acts 9:4).

**2:9** He will cause governments to fall and the oppressed to have the upper hand over their former rulers.

"Me" – the same person as in the previous verse.

**2:10** "Sing and rejoice" – 9:9; Zeph 3:14.

"I am coming" – 9:9 refers to Christ's first coming. This verse probably refers to His second coming.

"Dwell in your midst" – 8:3; 14:16; Ezek 37:27; 48:35. Note at Ex 25:8.

**2:11** "Many nations" – 8:20-22; 14:16;

joined to the LORD in that day, and will be my people; and I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. 12 And the LORD will inherit Judah, his portion in the holy land, and will choose Jerusalem again. 13 Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD; for he has roused himself from his holy habitation."

**3** And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand snatched out of the fire?"

3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes, and standing before the angel. 4 And the *angel* answered and spoke to those who were standing before him, saying, "Take off his filthy clothes."

Isa 2:2-4; 11:10,12; 14:1; 19:23-25.

"Has sent me" – v 9. The LORD (Jehovah) speaks and says that the LORD Almighty sent Him. How can Jehovah send Jehovah? Jehovah is God and is revealed in the Bible as a Trinity (Matt 3:16,17; 28:19), and God the Father who is Jehovah sent God the Son who is also Jehovah.

**2:12** "Inherit Judah" – the whole nation of Israel is an inheritance for Jehovah God (Deut 4:20; 9:26; Ps 33:12). In the future He (the Messiah) will choose a special part of the "holy land" as His own. It will be the land where Jerusalem is situated. There His temple and His dwelling place will be. This is the only place in the Bible where the land of Israel is called "the holy land."

"Choose" – 1:17. The same Jerusalem He once rejected He will choose again.

**2:13** Isa 41:1; Hab 2:20; Zeph 1:7.

**3:1** "Joshua" – Hag 1:1; Ezra 2:2. The name means "the LORD saves." Here Joshua represents the nation of Israel (v 8). God is teaching them that before He gives them the blessings He speaks of in chapter 2 He will cleanse and purify them. Compare Ezek 36:24-29. However, we may also take vs 1-5 as a beautiful picture of how God makes individuals righteous in His presence (Rom 3:20-26; Isa 61:10; Ps 132:9).

"Angel of the LORD" – 1:11; Gen 16:7.

"Satan" – notes at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44; 2 Cor 11:14. The name means "adversary", or, as some think, "accuser." See Rev 12:10.

**3:2** Why should the LORD say "the LORD rebuke you?" – note at 2:11. The LORD here is the same as the angel of the LORD and His words mean that God the Father should rebuke Satan.

"Chosen Jerusalem" – 1:17; 2:12.

"Out of the fire" – this is true of everyone whom God saves from sin. Compare Jude 23. The lake of fire is the destiny of all the unsaved – Rev 21:8. Joshua here represents Israel whom God snatched from

And to him he said, "See, I have removed your sin from you, and I will put costly garments on you."

5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and put the clothes on him. And the angel of the LORD stood by.

6 And the angel of the LORD solemnly affirmed to Joshua, saying, 7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you walk in my ways, and if you keep my command, then you will also govern my house, and will also have charge of my courts, and I will give you places to walk among these who are standing here.

8 "Now listen, high priest Joshua, you and your companions who are sitting before you, men who *are* a symbol. For, see, I will bring my servant the BRANCH. 9 For see the stone that I have laid before Joshua. Seven eyes *are* on that one stone.

the fire (Amos 4:11).

**3:3** "Filthy clothes" – a symbol of his sinful condition. Spiritually speaking "filthy clothes" is all any of us have by nature – Isa 64:6; Rom 3:23; Eph 2:3. The very best we can do, and all the religious works which people are most proud of (Joshua was a priest), are unclean in the holy eyes of the one true God.

**3:4** "Take off. . . put. . . on" – signifies taking away sin and giving righteousness. This was true of Joshua personally and will be true also of the whole land and people he represented (vs 8,9). Believers in Christ now have had a change of "garments" – Col 3:9,10. And their new garment is "costly" indeed, being the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Himself – Phil 3:9; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21.

**3:5** "Turban" – this was a mark of the priesthood in Israel (Ex 28:3,4,36). A clean turban symbolizes their holy dedication to God and the holy service they should accomplish.

**3:6,7** Joshua was made righteous and his sin was gone. Now in accordance with that he must live a faithful holy life. Compare Rom 12:1,2; Eph 4:1.

"Who are standing here" – v 3. Evidently these were angels. Joshua would have a place with them in fulfilling God's plan for Israel. Faithfulness to God and holy living will have a great reward for anyone.

**3:8** "Symbol" – compare Deut 28:46; Isa 8:18; Ezek 12:11. As high priest Joshua was a symbol of the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus, here called "the Branch" (6:12; Isa 4:2; 11:1; Jer 23:5; 33:15). The Messiah is also God's servant (Isa 49:5,6; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11; Rom 15:8).

**3:9** "Stone" – this is also a name for the Messiah (Ps 118:22,23; Isa 8:13-15; 28:16; Dan 2:35,45; Matt 21:42; Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:6-8).

"Seven eyes" – these may indicate perfect intelligence and perfect care and

See, I will engrave its inscription, says the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

10 "In that day, says the LORD of hosts, each of you will invite his neighbour under *his* vine and under *his* fig tree."

**4** And the angel who talked with me came back, and wakened me, as a man that is wakened from his sleep, 2 and said to me, "What do you see?"

And I said, "I look and see a lampstand of solid gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps on it, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* on the top of it, 3 and two olive trees beside it, one on the right *side* of the bowl, and the other on its left."

4 So I responded and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?"

5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these *are*?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

6 Then he answered and spoke to me, saying, "This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel, saying, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my

Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.

7 "Who *are* you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you will become* a plain. And he will bring out *its* capstone with shouts, *calling out*, 'Grace, grace to it!'"

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands will also finish it, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.

10 "For who has despised the day of small things? For those seven will rejoice, and will see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They *are* the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the whole earth."

11 Then I answered and said to him, "What *are* these two olive trees on the right and on the left of the lampstand?"

12 And I responded further and said to him, "What *are these* two olive branches beside the two gold pipes which empty the golden *oil* from themselves?"

13 And he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these *are*?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

14 Then said he, "These *are* the two anointed

watchfulness over Israel, or they may indicate the fullness of God's Spirit which Messiah would have (Rev 5:6; Isa 11:2,3). The Hebrew word translated "eyes" may also be translated "facets".

"In one day" – the foundation of the removal of Israel's sin was laid in a single day – the day Christ died on the cross. Israel's repentance and forgiveness will also take place in a single day (12:10 - 13:2). **3:10** "In that day" – 2:11. "Fig tree" – a picture of safety, peace and fellowship (Micah 4:4; 1 Kings 4:25).

**4:1** "With me" – 1:9,14; 2:3. This chapter records the fifth vision God gave Zechariah. It contains an encouragement to Zerubbabel and his fellow Jews to build the temple.

"Sleep" – Zechariah's visions were not dreams. He saw them when he was awake and in a trance.

**4:2,3** "Lampstand" – this is a better translation than "candlestick." One does not put "lamps" on a candlestick. This lampstand differs from that of Ex 25:31-40, and probably symbolizes something different. The two "olive trees" are two individuals through whom "oil" came to the "lamps" (vs 12-14). It seems likely that these two were Zerubbabel and Joshua – one the governor from the royal line of David, the other the high priest. Therefore it is probable that the lampstand symbolizes the people of Israel to whom they ministered. Israel was God's light to the world of that day as the Church is now (Matt 5:14).

**4:4,5** The angel's question may suggest that Zechariah should have known the meaning

of the lampstand and olive trees.

**4:6** Zerubbabel as one of the "olive trees" must not think he could minister to Israel in a proper way or accomplish God's work in his own strength. He needed the fullness of God's Spirit. This is the "oil" that needed to pour through him to the people (v 12). Compare 2 Cor 12:9,10.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**4:7** "Mountain" – here speaks of the difficulties in building the temple. But difficulties become as nothing before a Spirit-filled man who knows God's will and is working according to it.

"Capstone" – the completion of the temple. The people would then shout for joy.

**4:8,9** "Foundation" – Ezra 3:8-11. "Finish it" – about twenty years later (Ezra 6:14-16).

**4:10** "Small things" – this is how the work in the beginning seemed to the Jews (Hag 2:3). Great works of God often seem to begin in small and insignificant ways. Compare Matt 4:18-22; 13:31,32. No worker for Christ should ever be discouraged at the seeming smallness of the task God calls him to do. A mighty tree grows from a small seed.

"Plumb line" – speaks of building straight and true.

"Eyes" – v 2; 3:9; 2 Chron 16:9; Rev 5:6.

**4:12** "Oil" – Ex 25:6; 29:7; Lev 2:1; 1 Sam 10:1; Ps 23:5; 45:7; Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34; Jam 5:14.

**4:13** Verse 5.

**4:14** "Anointed ones" – the Hebrew has "sons of oil." This phrase may also be translated "two who bring oil." This could mean that God had anointed them or it could mean



ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

**5** Then I turned, and lifted up my eyes, and looked, and saw a flying scroll.

2 And he said to me, "What do you see?"

And I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits, and its breadth ten cubits."

3 Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: according to one side of it, everyone who steals will be banished; and according to the other side of it, everyone who commits perjury will be banished. 4 'I will send it out,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and it will enter the house of the thief, and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name, and it will remain inside his house, and consume it along with its wood and its stones.'"

5 Then the angel who talked with me went out, and said to me, "Now raise your eyes, and see what this is that is going out."

6 And I said, "What is it?"

And he said, "This is an ephah that is going out." He also said, "This is their appearance throughout

the earth."

7 And then a slab of lead was raised, and this woman was sitting in the middle of the ephah. 8 And he said, "This is wickedness." And he shoved her into the middle of the ephah, and pushed the lead weight over its mouth.

9 Then I raised my eyes, looked and saw two women coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork. And they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens.

10 Then I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the ephah?"

11 And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar. When it is prepared, it will be placed there on its own base."

**6** And I turned and raised my eyes, looked and saw four chariots coming out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of bronze. 2 The first chariot had red horses, and the second chariot black horses, 3 and the third chariot white horses, and the fourth chariot strong dappled horses. 4 Then I responded and said to

that the spiritual influences of God's Spirit flowed through them. In that time these two were Zerubbabel and Joshua. For a possible future fulfillment see Rev 11:3,4.

**5:1** The meaning of this sixth vision is clearer than that of some of the others. It declares that God's curse comes on sin and emphasizes two sins in particular, sins which must have been common in Judah.

**5:3** "Curse" – see Deut 11:26,28; 27:13-26; Prov 3:33; Gal 3:10-13.

"Steals" – Ex 20:15; Matt 19:18; Rom 13:9; 1 Cor 6:10; Jer 9:3,5; Rev 21:8.

"Banished" – at some time in the future God will rid the land of all such sinners. Compare 14:20,21; Isa 13:9; 33:14; Ezek 36:25-29,33; Amos 9:10.

**5:4** There will be no possibility of escape for any unrepentant sinner or anything he has. All that belongs to such people is defiled and will perish with them.

"Stones" – compare Lev 14:33-45; Hab 2:9-11.

**5:5** This is the seventh vision Zechariah saw. Some of its details are very difficult to interpret.

**5:6-11** This verse suggests that the full measure of the sins of the people of Israel is known to God, and that He will remove all of it from the land (compare vs 3,4; 3:9). God will again choose Jerusalem and inherit Judah as His portion and live there (2:11,12). Then wickedness will have no more place in His land. It will be holy in fact as well as in name.

**5:6** "Ephah" – a basket. "Earth" – or "land."

**5:11** "Shinar" – Babylonia. Babylon will be a proper home for all wickedness. Compare Rev 17:1-5; 18:2-8,23,24. But it is not clear

how wickedness can be removed from Israel and transported to Babylon. Israel's great sin was apostasy – forsaking the one true God. Perhaps the meaning of this vision is that Babylon, not Israel, will be the center of apostasy in the end time; and by Babylon is meant the religious and commercial system seen in Revelation chapters 17 and 18. When Zechariah heard these words the literal city of Babylon had fallen to the Medes and Persians (Dan 5:25-31). It never regained power and fell into complete ruin. Some scholars believe it will be rebuilt at the end of this age. This seems unlikely in the light of Isa 13:17-22; Jer 50:39,40; 51:29,37-43,62.

**6:1** This last vision concerns the accomplishment of God's purpose in the whole earth. As we know from other portions in Zechariah this purpose involves judgment on the nations that afflict God's people (1:14,15,21; 12:2-4; 14:2,3). Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and other prophets wrote of the same thing.

"Chariots" – Ps 68:17; 2 Kings 6:17. These chariots probably mean war chariots and signify the defense of His people and the defeat of their enemies.

"Four" – 1:18. "Two mountains" – Zechariah was in Jerusalem and these mountains may be two of the most prominent hills there. The mountains in the vision are of bronze. This may indicate the firmness of God's purpose, the indestructibility of His plans for Jerusalem, or it may speak of judgment (Num 21:9; Ex 27:1,2; Rev 1:15).

**6:2,3** Compare 1:8. The different colors may indicate different judgments.

the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these, my lord?"

5 And the angel answered and said to me, "These *are* the four spirits of the heavens, going out from standing before the Lord of all the earth. 6 *The one* with the black horses goes out into the north country, and the white ones go out after them; and the dappled ones go out toward the south country."

7 And the strong *horses* went out with eagerness to range throughout the earth. And he said, "Go and range throughout the earth." So they ranged throughout the earth.

8 Then he cried out to me, speaking to me and saying, "See, those that go toward the north country have given rest to my Spirit in the north country."

9 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 10 "Take *an offering from those* of the captivity, from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon, and come the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. 11 Then take silver and gold and make crowns, and set *them* on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, 12 and speak to him, saying, 'The LORD of hosts has spoken, saying, See the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he

6:5 The four "chariots" are four "spirits" (or "winds" – Hebrew uses the same word for both). Here they seem to represent angelic forces or other heavenly powers. Compare Rev 7:1.

"All the earth" – this is mentioned because the vision concerns the whole world.

6:6 It is not said that the one with the red horses went anywhere. Perhaps it stayed in Jerusalem and indicates the great judgment that will take place there at the end of this age – 14:2; Joel 3:9-16.

6:7 "With eagerness" – eager to fulfill God's purposes in the earth.

6:8 Invasions of the land of Israel often came from the north. In the end time it seems that there will be a final great invasion from there (Ezek 38:1-9,15; 39:2). This verse may mean this: God's judgment on those northern armies will release His anger and bring rest to His Spirit which had been provoked.

6:11 "Crowns" – in Israel high priests did not wear crowns, but turbans (3:5; Ex 28:4). Only kings wore crowns. After King David, kings in Judah were always of the tribe of Judah; priests were of the tribe of Levi. Setting a crown on Joshua's head had great prophetic meaning (compare 3:8). The meaning of Joshua's name is significant "The LORD (Jehovah) saves". Jesus is the Greek equivalent of Joshua and means the same thing.

6:12 "Branch" – Joshua was not the "Branch", Jesus is. See 3:8.

"The temple of the Lord" – Jesus builds no material temple but one far greater. See

will branch out from his place, and he will build the temple of the LORD. 13 He is the one who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will bear the majesty, and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne; and there will be the counsel of peace between these two *offices*. 14 And the crowns will belong to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, as a memorial in the temple of the LORD. 15 And those *who are* far away will come and build the temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And *this* will take place, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God."

7 And it came about in the fourth year of king Darius, *that* the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, on the fourth *day* of the ninth month, Kislev, 2 when they had sent Sherezer and Regemmelech, and their men, to the house of God to pray before the LORD, 3 *and* to speak to the priests who *were* in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done these many years?"

4 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 5 "Speak to all the people of the land,

Matt 16:19; Eph 2:21,22.

6:13 "Rule on his throne" – Ps 89:35-37; Isa 9:7; Jer 33:19-22; Ezek 43:7; Luke 1:32; Rev 22:3.

"A priest" – Heb 4:14; 5:5,6; 10:19-21; Ps 110.

"The two" – the Lord Jesus combines the two offices of priest and king which were separate in Judah. He does more than rule His people – as their Mediator He intercedes for them to God (Rom 8:34; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:24-27; 1 John 2:1,2).

6:15 "Temple" – this, too, may refer to the spiritual temple now being built – people "far away" coming to Christ and participating in the work (John 10:16; Acts 2:39; Eph 2:13). Or it may refer to the building of the temple described in Ezekiel chapters 40-43.

7:1 "Darius" – 1:1.

7:2 "To the house of God" – or "to Bethel." Bethel means "house of God" – Gen 12:8; 28:19; 35:1. This town was about twenty kilometers north of Jerusalem. Some of the Jews returning from Babylon had settled there again (Neh 11:31).

7:3 This fast had been observed for seventy years (v 5). Evidently this ceremony began as a memorial to the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in the fifth month (2 Kings 25:8,9).

7:5,6 The fast on the seventh month was a memorial to the assassination of Gedaliah the governor of Judah (2 Kings 25:25). The Lord rebukes the people through Zechariah. He says that whether fasting or feasting they thought only of themselves. They were not

and to the priests, saying, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, those seventy years, did you fast for me, *really* for me? 6 And when you ate, and when you drank, were you not eating *for yourselves*, and drinking *for yourselves*? 7 Should you not *have listened* to the words which the LORD cried out through the former prophets, when Jerusalem and its towns around it were inhabited and prosperous, when *men* inhabited the south and the plain?"

8 And the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, 9 "The LORD of hosts is speaking *and* saying this: Administer true justice, and each one *of you* show mercy and compassion to his brother. 10 And do not oppress the widow, or the fatherless, the foreigner, or the poor. And do not plot evil in your heart against his brother.

11 "But they refused to listen, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, so that they would not hear. 12 Yes, they made their hearts *like* flint, so that they would not hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts.

13 "Therefore it came about, *that* as the *LORD* cried out and they would not hear, so they cried out and I would not hear, says the LORD of hosts. 14 But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they had not known. So the land was desolate behind them, so that no one went *there* or returned; for they had made the pleasant land desolate."

**8** Again the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

really concerned with God and His honor and glory. Compare Isa 58:1-9. They cared more for their ceremonies than for God.

**7:7** "Former prophets" – 1:4. They had told the people repeatedly that religious forms and ceremonies were not what God delighted in. For example see Isa 1:11-14.

**7:9,10** 8:16,17; Isa 1:17; Jer 22:3; Ezek 45:9; Micah 6:6-8; Eph 4:32; Ex 22:22-24; Lev 25:17; Deut 10:18,19.

**7:11** Deut 9:6,13,27; Isa 1:2; Jer 5:3; 8:5; 32:33.

**7:12** "By His Spirit" – Neh 9:30; 2 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 1:11; 2 Pet 1:21.

**7:13** Compare Prov 1:24,28; Ps 18:25,26.

**7:14** "Scattered them" – Lev 26:33; Deut 4:25-27; 28:64; Ps 44:11.

"They had made" – Israel's enemies made the land desolate but Israel was responsible for it. It was their sin which brought ruin.

**8:1,2** "Thus says the LORD of hosts" – this phrase appears ten times in this chapter and with it ten promises of blessing for Israel.

"Jealous" – 1:14.

**8:3** "Jerusalem" – 1:3,16; 2:10; Ezek 48:35.

I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

3 "Thus says the LORD: I am returning to Zion, and will dwell in the middle of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts *will be called* the Holy Mountain.

4 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women will yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each one with his cane in his hand because of age. 5 And the streets of the city will be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.

6 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: If this is marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in my eyes? says the LORD of hosts.

7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: See, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country, 8 and I will bring them, and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and they will be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.

9 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Let your hands be strong, you who have been hearing in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets, who *were* in the day *that* the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be built. 10 For before these days there was no wage for man, or any wage for beast. *And there was* no peace for him who went out or came in, because of the enemy, for I set every one of the people against his neighbour. 11 But now I *will* not act toward the remnant of this people as in former days, says the LORD of hosts.

12 "For the seed *will* prosper, the vine will give

"City of Truth" – compare Isaiah 1:26; 65:16; Jer 33:16; Ps 15:2,3; 31:5.

"Holy Mountain" – 14:20,21; Isa 2:2-4; 11:9; Obadiah 17. It will be the holy dwelling place of a holy God and a holy people. **8:4,5** Isa 11:6-8; 65:20-25.

**8:6** Gen 18:14; Jer 32:17,27. What seems to men to be very difficult to accomplish is not difficult for God.

**8:7,8** God had already brought the Jews back to Jerusalem from various places. So this prophecy refers to a regathering of the Jews after that. See Amos 9:14,15; Isa 11:10-16.

"My people" – 13:9; Ex 6:7; Deut 29:13; Ezek 37:27. He means the Jews. See Hos 2:14-23; Rom 11:29.

**8:9** "Prophets" – Haggai and Zechariah were two. Perhaps there were others as well.

"Foundation" – Ezra 3:10,11; Hag 2:18.

"Built" – Hag 1:7,8; 2:4.

**8:10** "Before these days" – before they laid the foundation of the temple, times were difficult and the people in poverty (Hag 1:6-11; 2:15-18).

**8:11,12** "But now" – Hag 2:19. God promised blessings for obedience – Lev 26:3-10; Deut

its fruit, and the ground will give its increase, and the sky will give its dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these *things*. 13 And it will come about *that* just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah, and house of Israel, so you will be a blessing, for I will save you. Do not be afraid, *but* let your hands be strong.

14 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: Just as I decided to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, says the LORD of hosts, and I did not relent, 15 so again I have decided in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. Do not be afraid. 16 These *are* the things that you shall do: Every one of you must speak the truth to his neighbour. Administer justice in truth and peace in your gates. 17 And let none of you plot evil in your hearts against his neighbour. And do not love any false oath. For all these *are things* that I hate, says the LORD."

18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 19 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: The fast of the fourth *month* and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth *month* will be *times of joy* and gladness and cheerful feasts to the house of Judah. Therefore love truth and peace.

20 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: *It will yet*

*happen* that people and the inhabitants of many cities will come, 21 and the inhabitants of one *city* will go to another, saying, 'Let us go quickly to pray in the LORD's presence, and to seek the LORD of hosts. I also will go.' 22 Yes, many people and strong nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray in the LORD's presence.

23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days *it will come about* that ten men from every language of the nations will take hold of the sleeve of a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you, for we have heard *that God is with you*.'"

**9** The burden of the word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach, and Damascus, its resting place (for the eyes of men, as of all the tribes of Israel *will* be on the LORD);

2 And *against* Hamath which is on its border, and *against* Tyre and Sidon, though they are very wise,

3 And Tyre built a stronghold for herself, and heaped up silver like dust, and gold like the mire of the streets.

4 "See, the Lord will cast her out and he will strike her power in the sea; and she will be consumed by fire.

5 Ashkelon will see *it*, and be afraid.

28: 11, 12.

"To possess" – Isa 58:14; 60:21; Obad 17.

**8:13** "A curse" – Deut 28:37; Jer 24:9; 25:18.

"Blessing" – vs 20-23; Gen 12:1-3. To have God's blessing is good; having it to be a blessing to others is even better. Notice God says this of the whole nation, Judah and Israel combined.

"Strong" – compare Deut 31:6; 1:6, 7; 23:6; Ps 27:14; Eph 6:10.

**8:14, 15** "I decided" – if God purposes to bring disaster on an individual or a nation nothing can stop it. And if He purposes to do good to them no one can stop that either (Eph 1:11; Rom 11:36; Dan 4:35; Ps 115:3).

**8:16, 17** Since God purposed to bless them and make them a blessing they had a responsibility to live according to God's instructions.

"Speak the truth" – this is something God commands all through the Bible and is of the utmost importance (Ex 20:16; Ps 15:2; Eph 4:25; Col 3:19).

"Gates" – where town elders met to discuss and make decisions.

"Things that I hate" – Prov 6:16-19; Isa 29:20, 21; Ps 52:3-5; Rev 21:8.

**8:18, 19** "Fourth" – in remembrance of the event in 2 Kings 25:3, 4.

"Fifth, seventh" – 7:3, 5. "Tenth" – 2 Kings 25:1.

"Joy and gladness" – the future will be so bright that the sad things of the past will be forgotten, or else God's goodness will be seen in those things too. Compare Hos 2:15; Isa 61:3.

"Therefore" – Rom 12:1; Eph 4:1.

"Love truth" – Ps 51:6. This is an extremely important command. By nature people do not do this. They prefer lies which please them to truth which does not. Compare Rom 1:18, 25; 2 Thess 2:10.

**8:20-23** See 2:11; 14:16; Isa 2:1-4; 11:10, 12; 14:1; 19:23-25; 55:5; 56:6, 7. This happens after God makes Israel a "blessing" (v 13). The knowledge that God is with the Jews will cause people of other nations to seek Him.

**9:1** "Burden" – or "oracle" – note at Isa 13:1. Hadrach is a region north of Damascus in Syria. Damascus is the capital of Syria.

**9:2** Hamath was an important city in Syria. Zechariah is saying that the word of the Lord is against the whole country of Syria, that God will judge and punish it. Compare Isa 17:1, 3; Jer 49:23-27; Amos 1:3-5.

"Tyre and Sidon" – see Isa 23:1-18; Jer 25:22; Ezekiel chapters 26-28; Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9, 10.

**9:3** "Stronghold" – Isa 23:4. "Gold" – Ezek 28:4, 5.

**9:4** Isa 23:1; Ezek 26:3-5.

**9:5, 6** The cities mentioned here were all in the land of the Philistines along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, west of Israel.

Gaza also *will see it*, and writhe in anguish, and Ekron too;  
 for her expectation will be put to shame,  
 and the king will perish from Gaza,  
 and Ashkelon will become uninhabited.  
 6 And a mixed race will dwell in Ashdod,  
 and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.  
 7 And I will take the blood out of his mouth,  
 and his abominations from between his teeth.  
 But he who remains, *will be* for our God,  
 and he will be like a leader in Judah,  
 and Ekron like a Jebusite.  
 8 And I will camp around my house  
 because of an army,  
 because of him who comes and goes back.  
 And no longer will an oppressor pass  
 through them any more,  
 for now have I seen with my eyes.  
 9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
 Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
 See, your King is coming to you.  
 He is just and has salvation,  
 lowly and riding on a donkey,  
 and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.  
 10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,  
 and the horse from Jerusalem,  
 and the battle bow shall be removed.  
 And he will speak peace to the nations,

For other prophecies about the Philistines see Isa 14:28-32; Jer 47:1-7; Ezek 25:15-17; Amos 1:6-8; Zeph 2:4-7.  
**9:6** "I" – God.  
**9:7** "Blood" and "abominations" speak of sacrifices offered to idols. Philistia would come to an end as a nation and its survivors would be absorbed among the people of Judah. This had happened to the Jebusites, the people who lived in Jerusalem at the time of David (2 Sam 5:6-10).  
**9:8** "I will camp around" – v 15; 2:5; Ps 125:1,2.  
 "No longer" – Amos 9:14,15; Joel 3:20,21.  
**9:9** Several hundred years later these words were literally fulfilled. See Matt 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-38; John 12:12-16.  
 "Daughter" – 2 Kings 19:21; Ps 9:14; Isa 1:8.  
 "Shout" – Matt 21:9; Luke 19:37.  
 "King" – Isa 9:6,7; Matt 2:2; 25:34; John 18:37; Rev 19:16.  
 "Just" – John 18:38; 19:4,6; Acts 3:14; Heb 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22; 3:18.  
 "Salvation" – Luke 1:69,77; Acts 4:12; 13:47; 16:31; Rom 1:16; 10:9,10.  
**9:10** Verse 9 refers to the first coming of the Lord Jesus. This verse refers to His second coming. Compare Isa 2:4; 9:5-7; 11:1-10; Hos 2:18; Ps 72:8-11.

and his dominion *will be* from sea to sea,  
 and from the *Euphrates* River to the ends of the earth.  
 11 And as for you, because of the blood of your covenant I will release your prisoners from the waterless pit.  
 12 Return to the stronghold,  
 you prisoners of hope.  
 Today I declare *that* I will restore double to you,  
 13 When I have bent Judah for me,  
 filled the bow with Ephraim,  
 and raised up your sons, O Zion,  
 against your sons, O Greece,  
 and made you like the sword of a mighty man."  
 14 And the LORD will be seen over them,  
 and his arrow will go forth like lightning,  
 and the Lord God will blow the trumpet,  
 and will go with whirlwinds from the south.  
 15 The LORD of hosts will defend them,  
 and they will destroy and subdue with sling stones.  
 And they will drink, *and* roar as from wine;  
 and they will be filled *with blood* like bowls,  
*and* like the corners of the altar.  
 16 And the LORD their God will save them in that day as the flock of his people;  
 for *they will be* like the stones of a crown,

**9:11** "Blood of your covenant" – Ex 24:3-8; Matt 26:28; Jer 31:31-34.  
 "Your" – He is speaking to the people of Judah.  
 "Prisoners" – Isa 42:7; 51:14; 61:1; Ps 68:6; 146:7. Though this probably refers to the people of Israel exiled among the nations, it has a spiritual application now (Luke 4:18,21).  
**9:12** "Stronghold" – Jerusalem or God Himself in Jerusalem (Joel 3:16).  
 "Prisoners of hope" – captives in other lands but hoping God will restore them to Israel.  
 "Double" – Isa 61:7.  
**9:13** "Ephraim" – represents the northern kingdom of Israel (Isa 7:2; Hos 4:17; etc). God will be like a warrior. Judah will be His bow and Israel His arrow. This speaks of the future uniting of those two kingdoms. See Isa 11:12-14; Jer 3:18; 31:27; Ezek 37:15-23; Hos 1:11.  
 "Greece" – may here represent Gentile nations in general, just as Ephraim represents all the tribes of the northern kingdom.  
**9:14,15** God Himself will come and fight on the side of the people of Israel and protect them from their enemies. Compare 12:2-9; 14:3; Joel 3:16.  
**9:16** "In that day" – may mean the day of the Lord (Isa 2:12; 13:6; Joel 1:15; 2:31,32).  
 "Stones of a crown" – jewels in a crown –

lifted up like a banner over his land.

- 17 For how great *is* his goodness,  
and how great *is* his beauty!  
Grain will make the young men cheerful,  
and new wine the maids.

- 10** Ask the LORD for rain at the time of  
the latter rain;  
so the LORD will make bright clouds,  
and give them showers of rain,  
and grass in the field for everyone.
- 2 For the idols speak falsehood,  
and the diviners see a lie,  
and tell false dreams;  
they comfort in vain.  
Therefore the *people* go their way like sheep;  
in trouble, because *there is*  
no shepherd.
- 3 "My anger burns against the shepherds,  
and I will punish the goats;  
for the LORD of hosts will visit his  
flock the house of Judah,  
and make them like his majestic horse  
in battle.
- 4 From him will come the cornerstone,  
from him the nail,  
from him the battle bow,  
from him every ruler together.
- 5 And they will be like mighty *men*,  
who trample down *their enemies* in  
the mire of the streets in the battle;  
and they will fight, because the LORD

*is* with them,  
and the riders on horses will be put to shame.

- 6 "And I will strengthen the house of Judah,  
and I will save the house of Joseph,  
and I will bring them back,  
for I will have mercy on them,  
and they will be as though I had  
not rejected them;  
for I *am* the LORD their God,  
and will hear them.
- 7 And Ephraim's *people* will be like mighty *men*,  
and their heart will rejoice as if with wine;  
yes, their children will see *it*, and be glad.  
Their heart will rejoice in the LORD.
- 8 I will whistle for them,  
and gather them,  
for I have redeemed them.  
And they will be as numerous as they  
were before.
- 9 Though I scatter them among the people,  
they will remember me in far countries,  
and they will live, along with their  
children, and will return.
- 10 And I will bring them back from the  
land of Egypt,  
and gather them out of Assyria,  
and I will bring them into the land of  
Gilead and Lebanon,  
and *enough room* will not be found for them.
- 11 "And he will pass through the sea of  
trouble,

a symbol of beauty and glory. Compare Isa 6:3; 62:3.

**9:17** A picture of the peace and prosperity that Israel will enjoy. Compare Isa 62:8-12; Jer 31:11-14; Hos 2:21-23; Joel 2:18,19,24-27.

**10:1** "LORD" – Jehovah God, the God of Israel, is the only God there is. All nature is in His control and He sends rain or withholds it as He wills – Lev 26:4; 1 Kings 8:36; 17:1; Ps 135:6,7; Amos 4:7,8; Acts 14:17. **10:2** Neither idols nor the gods behind them can send rain or any other blessing – Ps 115:4-8.

"The idols speak" – idols cannot literally speak, but false prophets can speak in the name of an idol or false god. And it is all deception.

"Diviners" – Isa 44:25; Jer 27:9,10. Such people try to get guidance and information from the spirit world by the use of omens or contact with an unseen spirit. God forbids this. See Deut 18:9-14.

"Dreams" – Jer 14:14; 23:16,25-32.

"No shepherd" – Jer 23:1-4; Matt 9:36.

**10:3** Jer 25:34-38; Ezek 34:1-16.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"Battle" – 12:8.

**10:4** "From him" – from Judah – Gen 49:10; Jer 30:21; Mic 5:2.

"Cornerstone" – Isa 28:16; Eph 2:20.

"Nail" – Isa 22:23,24.

"Bow" – 9:13; Ps 7:12; 45:5.

"Ruler" – Gen 49:10; Rev 5:5.

**10:5** 12:6-9.

**10:6** "Joseph" – the father of Ephraim here represents the whole of the northern kingdom of Israel – 9:13; Amos 5:6,15; 6:6.

"Bring them back" – Ezek 36:24-28.

"Mercy" – Ex 34:6; Ps 103:13,14; Lam 3:22,23.

"Hear them" – Deut 4:29-31; Isa 30:19; 65:24.

**10:7** "Ephraim's people" – 9:13.

"Rejoice" – Isa 60:4,5; Joel 2:23.

**10:8-10** "Redeemed" – note at Ps 78:35.

"I scatter them" – they had already been scattered by Assyrians and Babylonians and some had returned to the land of Israel. So this must speak of a scattering and regathering after that. For the scattering see Luke 21:20-24. For the regathering see Isa 11:11,12; Ezek 37:21-28; Amos 9:14,15.

"Remember me" – Ezek 6:9; Deut 4:30.

"Enough room will not be found" – 2:4; Isa 49:19,20.

**10:10** "Assyria" – note at 2 Kings 15:19.

**10:11** "Sea of trouble" – compare Isa 44:2-7.

"Dry up" – compare Isa 11:15; 19:5-8;



and will strike the waves of the sea,  
and all the depths of the *Euphrates*  
River will dry up.

And the pride of Assyria will be  
brought down,  
and the sceptre of Egypt will depart.

12 And I will strengthen them in the LORD,  
and they will walk up and down in his  
name," says the LORD.

**11** Open your doors, O Lebanon,  
that the fire may devour your cedars.

2 Wail, fir tree, for the cedar has fallen,  
because the mighty *trees* are ruined.  
Wail, oaks of Bashan, for the dense  
forest has come down.

3 *There is* a sound of the wailing of the  
shepherds,  
for their glory is ruined;  
a sound of the roaring of young lions,  
for the pride of Jordan is ruined.

4 Thus says the LORD my God: "Feed the flock  
*designated* for slaughter. 5 Those who buy them  
slaughter them, and consider *themselves* not guilty,  
and those who sell them say, 'Blessed *be* the LORD!  
For I am rich!' and their own shepherds take no pity  
on them. 6 For I will no longer have pity for the  
inhabitants of the land, says the LORD, but, see, I

will:

"Pride of Assyria" – Zeph 2:13-15; Isa 2:12-18.

"Sceptre of Egypt" – Egypt will lose its  
sovereignty and power.

10:12 "Will walk" – Micah 4:5; Isa 26:8;  
Ezek 36:27,28.

11:1-3 This seems to indicate an army  
invading Israel from the north – from Lebanon  
through Bashan east of the Jordan and then  
into the region of the Jordan – destroying as  
they come. This is in great contrast with the  
preceding chapter, but vs 4-17 give the reason  
for it. The people of Israel were going to  
reject their coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus,  
and would be punished for it. See Matt 24:1,2;  
Luke 19:41-44; 21:23,24.

11:4 "Slaughter" – the "flock" is the people  
of Israel (Ps 77:20; Jer 10:21; 13:17;  
Ezek 34:2). The words here indicate great  
destruction.

11:5 "Those who buy them" – foreigners who  
lead them away captive.

"Those who sell" – their leaders.

"Blessed be the LORD" – see the twisted  
nature of their minds. They do evil and  
thank God for the seemingly good result.  
We still see such perverted thinking today.

11:6 "Land" – the land of Israel.

11:7 "I" – Zechariah. In the verses which  
follow he represents the coming Messiah,  
the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of  
Israel. What Zechariah does and says is a  
prophecy of coming events.

will hand over each one of them to his neighbour,  
and to the his king; and they will attack the land,  
and I will not deliver *them* out of their hand."

7 So I fed the flock *designated* for slaughter,  
*especially* the poor of the flock. And I took for  
myself two staffs. One I called Favour, and the  
other I called Union, and I fed the flock. 8 In one  
month I got rid of the three shepherds; and my  
soul loathed them, and their soul also hated me.

9 Then I said, "I will not feed you. Let the dying  
die, and let what is to be cut off be cut off, and let  
all the rest eat each other's flesh."

10 And I took my staff *called* Favour, and cut it  
in two, to break my covenant which I had made  
with all the people. 11 And it was broken on that  
day. And so the poor of the flock who were  
watching me knew that it *was* the word of the  
LORD.

12 And I said to them, "If you think *it is* good,  
give *me* my pay; but if not, withhold *it*." So they  
weighed out as my pay thirty *pieces* of silver.

13 And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the  
potter, *that* magnificent price at which they priced  
me!" And I took the thirty pieces of silver and  
threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

14 Then I cut my other staff, *called* Union, in  
two, to break the brotherhood between Judah and  
Israel.

15 And the LORD said to me, "Take again for

"Favour" – God's favor toward Israel. The  
Hebrew word could also be translated "grace"  
or, possibly, "beauty."

"Union" – indicating the unity of the  
people of Judah and Israel (v 14; compare  
Ezek 37:15-28).

11:8 "Hated me" – compare Isa 53:3; John  
1:11; 15:24; 19:15.

11:9 This speaks of God's judgment on a  
stubborn rebellious people who would not  
listen to Him. Compare Luke 19:41-44.

11:10,11 "Covenant" – the meaning of this  
is not clear, but it may refer to the old  
covenant God made at Mt Sinai with Israel  
for the benefit of the world. Christ revoked  
this covenant and established a new one –  
Matt 26:28.

11:12 "Give me my pay. . . withhold it" –  
Zechariah, as a type or picture of Christ,  
refused to continue to be their shepherd.  
Compare Matt 23:38,39.

"Thirty pieces of silver" – in Israel this  
was the value of a slave (Ex 21:32). This is  
the value the Jewish leaders put on Christ.  
See Matt 26:14,15.

11:13 "Potter" – see Matt 27:3-10.

"Magnificent price" – irony mingled with  
sadness.

11:14 "Cut. . . in two" – signifies the  
breaking up of the nation Israel after their  
rejection of Christ.

11:15-17 Because Israel rejected  
Christ the good Shepherd, God in judgment  
will see to it that they get a very bad

yourself the equipment of a foolish shepherd. 16 For, see, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *who* will not visit those cut off, or search for the young, or heal the broken, or feed the one standing. But he will eat the flesh of the fat *ones*, and tear their hooves in pieces.

17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock!  
The sword *will strike* at his arm,  
and at his right eye.  
His arm will be completely withered,  
and his right eye will be totally blinded."

**12** The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel: The LORD speaks, *he* who stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him: 2 "See, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling to all the surrounding peoples, when they besiege both Judah and Jerusalem. 3 And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples. All who try to lift it will be cut *in pieces*, when all the peoples of the earth are gathered together around it. 4 In that day, says the LORD, I will strike every horse with confusion, and his rider with madness. And I will keep watchful eyes

shepherd. Israel has had many worthless shepherds. But since the Lord here speaks of only one this one may be the final "worthless shepherd", the coming antichrist, or his helper. See John 5:43; 2 Thess 2:3,4; Revelation chapter 13. In contrast with the good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep (John 10:11-15) the coming worthless shepherd will try to tear life from the sheep. But God will judge and punish him in due course – v 17.

**12:1** "Burden" – 9:1. The one who gave this revelation, and in it declares things to come, is the great Creator of the universe and the Maker of man – Gen 1:1; 2:7; Ps 104:1-5; 139:13-16; Isa 42:5. He is well able to do what He says He will do.

**12:2** "Cup" – this word in the Bible sometimes signifies God's judgment or a preparation for judgment. See Ps 75:8; Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15; 49:12; 51:7; etc. The Lord is saying that He will use Jerusalem as a means of gathering the nations of the world and judging them. Compare 14:2,3; Joel 3:9-16; Rev 16:12-14.

**12:3** "In that day" – this phrase is used very often in this and the next two chapters and binds these three chapters together and points them to a time still future – vs 4,6,8,9,11; 13:1,2,4; 14:4,6,8,9,13,20,21. Various nations from time to time have besieged and conquered Jerusalem. But this verse has not yet been fulfilled. All the nations have not yet surrounded Jerusalem and that city has not been like an immovable rock. For example, in 70 AD the

on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the nations with blindness. 5 And the leaders of Judah will say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem *are* my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.'

6 "In that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a fire pot in a woodpile and like a fiery torch among the sheaves, and they will consume all the surrounding peoples, on the right and on the left, while Jerusalem is again inhabited in her own place, in Jerusalem.

7 "The LORD will also save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be greater than that of Judah. 8 In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them on that day will be like David, and the house of David *will be* like God, like the angel of the LORD before them. 9 And this will happen in that day: I will set out to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

10 "And I will pour out on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication. And they will look on me whom they have pierced, and will mourn for him, as one mourns for *his* only son, and will weep bitterly for

Romans besieged it and completely destroyed it.

**12:4** God Himself will fight for Israel against the enemies coming to destroy it.

"Horse" – see Ezek 39:3 and notes there.

**12:5** The Jewish leaders in that day will at last realize that their strength is not in themselves or their weapons of war. This may mark the beginning of their turning back to God.

**12:6** "Woodpile", "sheaves" – Israel's surrounding enemies.

**12:7** "Tents of Judah" – the people living in the country outside of Jerusalem.

"House of David" – the rulers in Jerusalem.

**12:8** "Like David" – 1 Sam 17:50; 18:7.

"Like God" – God will be with them so that their strength will be His irresistible strength (v 5).

"Angel of the LORD" – note at Gen 16:7.

"Before them" – compare Ex 14:19; 23:20.

**12:9** 1:21; 14:3; Isa 29:5-8.

**12:10-13** It seems quite clear from the Scriptures that Israel as a nation will repent of its age-long rejection of Christ and wholeheartedly turn to God. See Isa 59:20,21; Jer 23:5-8; 31:31-34; 32:37-40; Ezek 20:40-44; 37:21-28; Dan 12:1; Hos 3:4,5; 14:1-4. See also notes on Rom 11:25-29; Rev 7:3-8.

**12:10** "Spirit" – some think this means here a mind to repent and turn to Christ. Much more likely, it means the Holy Spirit. Compare Joel 2:28-32.

him, as one weeps bitterly for *his* firstborn.

11 In that day there will be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. 12 And the land will mourn, each family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; 13 the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; 14 of all the remaining families each family apart, and their wives apart.

**13** "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

2 "And it will come about on that day, says the LORD of hosts, *that* I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered. And I will also cause the prophets and the spirit of uncleanness to depart from the land. 3 And it will come about that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and his mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, for you are

speaking lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and his mother who gave him birth will pierce him through when he prophesies.

4 "And in that day it will happen *that* every one of the prophets will be ashamed of his vision, when he prophesies; nor will they wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive. 5 But he will say, 'I *am* no prophet. I *am* a farmer. For from my youth a man taught me to keep cattle.' 6 And *someone* will say to him, 'What are these wounds in your hands?' Then he will answer, 'The wounds I received *in* the house of my friends.'

7 "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *who is* my companion, says the LORD of hosts. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.

8 And this will take place throughout the land, says the LORD:  
Two-thirds in it will be cut off *and* die,  
but a third will be left in it.

"Me" – Jehovah God is speaking.

"Me whom they have pierced" – the Lord Jesus (Ps 22:16; Isa 53:5; John 19:34,37). In other words, Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See also Gen 16:7; Ex 3:14; Ps 23:1; 24:7-10; 96:10-13; Isa 6:1; note at Luke 2:11.

In this verse the Trinity clearly appears – My "Spirit" is the Holy Spirit; "I" means God the Father; "Him" means the Son of God, the Messiah. Notes on Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc.

"Mourn. . . weep" – at last their proud and stubborn hearts will be broken and they will weep for their great sin of rejecting their Messiah and Savior Jesus Christ.

**12:11** "In that day" – v 3.

"Megiddon" – perhaps a reference to the death of king Josiah on Megiddo's plain. See 2 Chron 35:22-25.

**12:12-14** "Land" – the land of Israel.

"Family" – the clans mentioned here are from the tribes of Israel. "David" represents the ruling family (Nathan was a son of David – 2 Sam 5:14). "Levi" represents the priests (Shimei was the grandson of Levi – Num 3:17,18). Does not the mention of these clans or families signify that the Lord is speaking about literal tribes of Israel and no one else?

**13:1** "On that day" – 12:3.

"For uncleanness" – 3:9; Ezek 36:24-29; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7,9. The basis of their future cleansing is the sacrifice of Christ made two thousand years ago. That "fountain" is open now for anyone who wishes to wash in it. But Israel in general has always rejected that sacrifice. Opening the fountain to them seems to mean that God will work in that nation in such a way that

they will turn back to Him and receive the Lord Jesus and His sacrifice for sin (12:10; Rom 11:25-27). Then they will wash in that fountain God has provided.

**13:2,3** "Idols" – anything that Israel puts in the place of God (compare Eph 5:5). Some in Israel in the last days will worship the "beast" of Revelation chapter 13 and his image (Rev 13:8,15). After that God will abolish all idolatry in Israel forever.

"Prophets" – the Lord Himself will come (13:3,9,16), so there will be no further need of prophets. God will abolish this office altogether, and it will be plain that anyone who claims to be a prophet will be lying (v 3; 1 Cor 13:8-10).

"Pierce him through" – Deut 18:20. False prophets will then no longer be permitted in Israel.

**13:4-6** False prophets, or those who think they are prophets, will try to hide the fact. Verse 6 is obscure. If it is joined with vs 4,5 the person here seems to be the prophet of vs 4,5 who is ashamed to say so; but if it is separated from those verses and joined with v 7 it could refer to Christ.

**13:7** See Matt 26:31. The shepherd is the Lord Jesus. The sheep were His disciples. The sword was God's judgment against sin and the punishment for it Jesus bore in our place – Isa 53:5; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18. But the words "I will turn my hand against" and vs 8,9 indicate that the nation of Israel as a whole is also in view. A partial fulfillment in the case of Christ's disciples does not exhaust the full meaning of this verse.

**13:8,9** These verses probably refer to the end of this age. Compare 14:2,3. In the future there will be a time of terrible trouble for Israel – Dan 12:1; Matt 24:15-22; Jer

9 And I will bring that third through the fire,  
and will refine them as silver is refined,  
and will test them as gold is tested.  
They will call on my name,  
and I will hear them.  
I will say, 'This is my people,'  
and they will say,  
'The LORD is my God.'

**14** "See, the day of the LORD is coming, and your plunder will be divided in your midst.

2 "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be taken, and the houses plundered, and the women ravished. And half of the city will go into captivity, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city."

3 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as when he fought on the day of battle. 4 And on that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives will split in its centre from east to west, and a very great valley will form, and half of the mountain will move toward

30:7. But God will bring a remnant through that trouble and they will be a redeemed people in the land of Israel.

"Fire" – Isa 4:4; 43:1,2.

"Silver" – Ps 12:6; 66:10-12; Dan 11:35; Mal 3:2,3.

"I will hear them" – 12:10; 10:6.

"My God" – Jer 30:22; 31:33.

**14:1** "Day of the LORD" – verses 4, 6, 8, 9; Isa 13:6,9; Joel 1:15; 2:31; 1 Thess 5:2.

"Your midst" – refers either to the land of Israel (13:8) or Jerusalem.

**14:2,3** "I" – God Himself is speaking.

"Will gather" – compare Ezek 38:4.

"All nations" – v 12; 12:3; Rev 16:12-14.

"To battle" – this is not a description of what happened when the Romans captured Jerusalem in 70 AD. Half the people then were not left in the city, and the Lord did not go out and fight against the Roman armies. Instead He permitted them to be completely victorious and destroy the city. The fulfillment of these verses is still in the future.

"Day of battle" – for example, Ex 14:14; 23:31; Isa 37:33-37.

**14:4** This also did not happen when the Romans captured Jerusalem, or at any other time up to the present. The Mount of Olives is still in one piece to this day.

"On that day" – v 1; 12:3.

"His feet" – the feet of Jehovah God (v 3), the Lord Jesus.

"Faces Jerusalem on the east" – Ezek 11:23; Matt 21:1; 24:3; 26:30. From there Jesus left earth and ascended to heaven – Acts 1:9-12. To the same mountain Jesus will return at the end of this age. **14:5** "You" – those then living in Jerusalem.

"Azal" – a place not now known.

"Earthquake" – Amos 1:1. The first part

the north, and half of it toward the south. 5 And you will flee *by* the valley in my mountains, for the valley in the mountains will reach to Azal. Yes, you will flee as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. And the LORD my God will come, *and* all the holy ones with you.

6 And it will happen on that day *that* no light will appear, the splendour *will grow* dark. 7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day, nor night. But at evening this will take place: it will become light.

8 And this will happen on that day: Living waters will go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea. This will occur in summer and in winter.

9 And the LORD will be king over all the earth. In that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only one.

10 The whole land will be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. And *Jerusalem* will be raised up and inhabited in her place, from the Gate of Benjamin to the place of

of verse 5 may also be translated "My mountain valley will be blocked and will extend to Azel. It will be blocked as it was blocked because of the earthquake in the days of Uzziah".

"The LORD my God" – Jesus, the incarnation of Jehovah, will come. See Rev 19:11-16. Compare Isa 29:6-8; 66:15,16.

"Holy ones" – may refer to either angels or to saved human beings or to both (Matt 25:31; 1 Thess 3:13; 4:14; Jude 14; Rev 19:14).

**14:6** "No light" – compare Isa 13:10; Amos 5:18.

**14:7** At the end of this age there will be strange things happening both on earth and in the heavens – things difficult for us to understand now (Joel 2:30,31; Rev 6:12-14; 8:12; 16:8-10).

**14:8** Compare Ezek 47:1-12. "Eastern sea" – the Dead Sea.

"The western sea" – the Mediterranean.

**14:9** "The LORD will be king" – this points to the future. In a sense, of course, He is now king over the whole earth – Ps 47:2; Rev 1:5. But His rule is hidden and most of earth's peoples reject it and do not have a mind to obey Him. A great change will occur when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. See Isa 11:1-9; Matt 19:28; 1 Cor 15:24,25; Rev 11:15; 19:15; 20:4-6.

"LORD" – Jehovah the one true God.

**14:10** There will be great changes in the topography of the land of Israel (also v 4). Geba was a village about 10 kilometers north of Jerusalem; Rimmon was nearly 60 kms south. From Geba to Rimmon is the area containing the hills of Judea, but it will become flat country.

"Raised up" – when the area around Jerusalem sinks and becomes a plain,

the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses. 11 And *people* will live in it, and never again will there be destruction *there*; but Jerusalem will be inhabited in safety.

12 And this is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the peoples who fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot away while they are standing on their feet, and their eyes will decay in their sockets, and their tongue will decay in their mouth. 13 And this will happen on that day: A great panic from the LORD will occur among them, and each of them will seize the hand of his neighbour, and his hand will rise up against the hand of his neighbour. 14 And Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered together, gold and silver and clothing, in great abundance. 15 And the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey, and on all the animals that will be in those camps, will be like that plague.

16 And it will come about *that* everyone left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem will go

up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And there will be no rain on those, whoever they may be of *all* the families of the earth, who will not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts. 18 And if the family of Egypt does not set out and come, they *will have* no rain. They will have the plague with which the LORD will strike the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This will be the punishment for Egypt, and the punishment for all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

20 In that day there will be *engraved* on the bells of the horses, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And the pots in the LORD's house will be like the *sacred* bowls before the altar. 21 Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of hosts, and all those who sacrifice will come and take them and cook in them. And in that day there will no longer be the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

Jerusalem itself will rise to a higher elevation. Verses like these seem to point clearly to changed conditions in the present earth when Christ returns and begins His reign, and not to a completely new earth and heaven and His eternal reign.

**14:11** "Inhabited in safety" – 2:4,5; Ps 48:8; Jer 31:40; Ezek 48:35.

**14:12** "Fought against Jerusalem" – v 2; 12:3. The plague God will send is a punishment for their crimes against Him and His people. The "rot" that will come to them will be very sudden – they will still be on their feet when it strikes.

**14:13** Compare Jud 7:22.

**14:14** "Judah" – 12:6-8.

"Wealth. . . will be gathered" – compare Isa 18:7; 60:5-11; 61:6.

**14:15** "Horse" – 12:4.

**14:16** "Worship" – Ps 86:9; Isa 2:2,3; Zeph 2:11; 3:9; Hab 2:14. They will "go up" to Jerusalem.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"Feast of Tabernacles" – see Lev 23:33-36 and notes. This was the last of the Jewish festivals. It speaks both of the final gathering of Israel and the gathering of the nations of the world to worship the God of

Israel the one true God.

**14:17-19** The language seems to indicate conditions on earth which are less than perfect. See notes on Isa 65:18-25. It does not seem possible that verses like these can refer to the new heaven and earth and Christ's eternal reign. However, they would fit into Christ's millennial reign when He will rule the nations with "an iron sceptre" (Ps 2:9; Rev 19:15).

**14:20,21** Everything in Israel will be fully dedicated to the Lord and set apart for Him. See note on "holy" at Lev 20:7. At last the people of Israel will become what God always wanted them to be (Ex 19:6; Lev 11:45).

"Sacrifice" – see notes on Isa 60:7; Ezek 40:38-43; 45:13-17.

"Canaanite" – the original inhabitants of Canaan were a depraved people. See Deut 7:1-6; 18:9-12; Lev 18:24-30. Often in the history of Israel people in the temple – priests, Levites and people – were as bad as the Canaanites had been (Isa 1:10-17; Ezek 8:6-18). When Christ reigns on earth things will be entirely different – Isa 35:8; Ezek 43:7; 44:9. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

# MALACHI

**Author:**

According to tradition Malachi was a Levite and a member of the synagogue called "The Great Synagogue".

**Date:**

Probably sometime about 430 BC, while Nehemiah was still the leader of the people in Jerusalem.

**Themes:**

The evil ways of the people; the coming of John the Baptist, Elijah and Christ; the Day of the LORD.

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**1** The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.

**2** "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say,

'How have you loved us?'

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" says the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob, **3** and I have hated Esau, and laid waste his mountains and his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness."

**4** Though Edom says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build the desolate places", thus says the LORD of hosts:

"They will build, but I will tear down; and they will be called, The Wicked Territory, and The People With Whom The LORD Will Be Angry Forever. **5** And your eyes will see *it*, and you will say, 'The

LORD will be exalted beyond the borders of Israel.'

**6** "A son honours *his* father, and a servant his master. Then, if I *am* a father, where is my honour? And if I *am* a master, where *is* my respect? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise my name.

"And you say, 'How have we despised your name?'

**7** "You offer defiled food on my altar, and you say, 'How have we defiled you?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD *is* contemptible.' **8** And when you offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? Offer it now to your governor! Would he be pleased with you, or accept you favourably? says the LORD of hosts.

**1:1** "Burden" – note at Isa 13:1.

"Through Malachi" – Heb 1:1; 2 Pet 1:21. The name Malachi means "My messenger." **1:2** "Loved you" – Deut 4:37; 7:7,8; 1 Kings 10:9; Ps 44:3; Jer 31:3. Compare Rom 5:8; 1 John 4:8-10.

"Yet you say" – vs 6,7; 2:14,17; 3:7,8,13. In unbelief the people questioned everything God said to them through His messenger. This is always the way of fallen, sinful humanity.

"How" – God had shown His love for Israel in innumerable ways, but they refused to see it. They were just like people of our own day.

"Esau" – Gen 25:24-26.

"Loved Jacob" – Rom 9:13. Jacob here also means the nation of Israel (Gen 32:28). **1:3** The behavior of Esau's descendants toward God, and toward His people Israel, made them worthy of God's loathing. See Amos 1:11; Obadiah; etc.

"Hated" – compare Ps 5:5,6; Lev 26:30; Prov 3:32; 11:20; 16:5. Esau here also means the nation called Edom. God loves all men – John 3:16; 1 John 4:8. That is, He desires the highest spiritual good of every person. He has compassion and pity for the whole world. If anyone, whoever he may be (including any Edomite), will repent of his sins and turn to God He will save him and make him His own dear child (John 1:12,13; Rev 22:17). But when people will not do this His anger rests on them – John 3:36; Rom 1:18, and He will hate their ways and their nature, and will judge and punish them for their sins. "Hate" in the Bible sometimes means to "love less." John 3:16 and John 3:36 are both true. This does not mean that His anger is less real or His punishment of sin is less terrible. Compare Luke 14:26; Matt 10:37. The Bible reveals that in Old Testament days God had a special love for the nation Israel, and that He now has a special love for believers in Christ. Believers have a special family relationship with God and God loves them as a Father (John 14:21; 17:6; 1 John 3:1,2).

"Jackals" – God showed His "hatred" for

the people of Esau by forcing them from their land. See what other prophets have to say about Esau (Edom) – Isa 34:5-15; Jer 49:7-22; Ezek 25:12-14; 35:1-15.

**1:4** "We will return and build" – pride, self-confidence, and ignorance of God's will.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3.

"I will tear down" – Isa 34:11; Jer 49:16.

"The Wicked Territory" – evidently Esau's descendants were particularly wicked people – reason enough for God's hatred.

"Angry" – Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18.

**1:5** "You" – the people of Israel. Were some of them doubting that God was a great King over all the earth (Ps 47:2)? God's actions would prove that He is.

**1:6** From this verse to 2:9 God rebukes the priests in Israel.

"Father. . . master" – Ex 20:12; Lev 20:9; Isa 1:2,3; 63:16; 64:8.

"Priests" – note at Ex 28:1.

"Despise" – Lev 22:9; Num 14:11; 16:30; 1 Sam 2:17; Prov 14:31; Hos 12:14; Rom 2:4. People show their real attitude toward God not just by what they may say but by their attitude toward His Word, by what they do and do not do.

**1:7,8** "Defiled" – the offerings they brought were contrary to God's Word (Deut 15:21), so they were unholy. See notes on offerings at Lev 1:2. Why did they bring blind, crippled or diseased animals? They wanted to keep the best for themselves and give to God the worst. This is how they showed contempt for Him. Many people today do likewise – but still want God's blessings and grumble if they don't receive them.

"Food" – Lev 3:11,16; 21:6,8. God does not get hungry and He needs nothing from men's hands – Ps 50:9-14; Acts 17:24,25. But as food satisfies our bodies so do the holy offerings of His people given in love satisfy God's heart.

"Governor" – they would not even dream of acting toward human beings whom they considered important as they acted toward God. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

9 "And now beg God to be gracious to us," *you* say. With such offerings from you will he accept you favourably? says the LORD of hosts.

10 "Who *is there* among you who will shut the *temple* doors so that you do not kindle *fire* in vain on my altar! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. 11 For from *the place of* the rising of the sun to *the place of* its going down my name *will be* great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense and a pure offering *will be* offered to my name; for my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.

12 "But you profane it, by saying, 'The table of the LORD is defiled, and its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.' 13 You also say, 'See, how tiresome!' And you sniff at it, says the LORD of hosts. And you bring *what* is torn, and the lame, and the sick. This is the way you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand? says the LORD. 14 But cursed *be* the deceiver, who has a male in his flock, and vows *to give it*, then sacrifices a blemished one to the Lord. For I *am* a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name *is to be* feared among the nations.

2 "And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. 2 If you will not listen, and if you will not take *it* to heart to give glory to my name, says the LORD of hosts, I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart.

3 "See, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your solemn feasts; and you will be taken away with it. 4 And you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant might be with Levi, says the LORD of hosts. 5 My covenant was with him, *a covenant* of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear me. And he did fear me and showed reverence toward my name. 6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found in his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from sin.

7 "For the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and the *people* should seek the law from his mouth, for he *is* the messenger of the LORD of hosts. 8 But you have departed from the way. You have caused many to stumble at the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the LORD of hosts. 9 Therefore I have also caused

1:9,10 "Accept you" – Jer 6:20; 14:10,12; Amos 5:22-24; 1 Pet 2:5.

"Shut the temple doors" – worship that is not in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24) is worse than no worship at all. Far better to close any place of so-called worship where God is dishonored than for people to deceive themselves there with meaningless ceremonies. Compare Isa 1:11-17.

1:11 Ps 47:7; 113:3; Isa 19:21; 24:15,16; 56:6,7; 60:6,7; Zeph 2:11.

"Gentiles" – peoples other than Jews.

1:12,13 God will be great among the nations of earth but His own people treated Him as if He were a nobody. To them His worship was tiresome and useless, and worthy of contempt (vs 7,8). They were not the last to think and act so.

1:14 Did these worshipers expect a blessing from God? God Himself pronounces a curse on them. Compare Deut 27:15-26; Gal 3:10; Heb 6:8.

"Deceiver" – by not giving God what was due to Him, by refusing Him their best, they were trying to deceive Him, cheating Him. The same principle applies today. The Lord Jesus wants our best, not our worst.

"King" – Ps 47:1-9.

"Feared" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

2:2 "Take it to heart" – Prov 4:23.

"Give glory" – 1:6; Matt 15:7-9; John 5:23.

"Curse your blessings" – this could mean either the privileges and advantages the priests had, or the blessings they

pronounced on the people (Num 6:23-27), or both. If God turns what we think are our blessings into curses how terrible our condition! And if God did this then does He not do it now when conditions demand it?

2:3 "Rebuke your offspring" – this could be translated "spoil your seed grain" (the same Hebrew word means both offspring and seed grain. See note at Ps 14:6,7.

"Spread refuse on your faces" – signifies disgrace. Compare Nahum 3:8.

2:4,5 "Covenant. . .with Levi" – Num 3:11-13; Neh 13:29. Priests were of the tribe of Levi.

"Covenant. . .peace" – Num 25:10-13.

2:6,7 God describes what a priest should be and what some had been.

"He walked with me" – compare Gen 5:22; 6:9; 17:1; Amos 3:3.

"From sin" – Acts 26:18; Jam 5:19,20.

"Messenger" – someone whom God raised up to teach people the truth. In this New Testament era all believers in Christ are priests and should be the kind of people described here. See Heb 10:19-22; 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6.

2:8 "The way" – the way God revealed.

"To stumble" – surely one of the worst sins priests and teachers can commit. Compare Matt 23:13-15; Luke 11:52.

2:9 They had treated God with contempt; so He made them appear contemptible to the people. Compare Ps 18:25,26; Gal 6:7.

"Partiality" – see Lev 19:15; Deut 10:15; Prov 24:23; 1 Tim 5:21; Jam 2:1,9.

you to be despised and abased before all the people, because you have not kept my ways, but have shown partiality in the law."

10 Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why does each of us act treacherously against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?

11 Judah has acted treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the holiness of the LORD which the LORD loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. 12 The LORD will cut off from the tents of Jacob the man who does this, the master and the scholar, though he brings an offering to the LORD of hosts.

13 And you have also done this: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and wailing because he no longer regards the offering, or receives *it* with pleasure from your hand. 14 Yet you say, "Why?" Because the LORD is a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have acted treacherously, though she *is* your companion, and your wife by covenant.

**2:10** "Father" – 1:6; Isa 43:1. Breaking faith, lying or practicing deceit were the same as breaking the covenant God gave them through Moses (Ex 19:5).

**2:11** "Which the LORD loves" – Ps 87:2. The Lord loved the sanctuary because it was in the midst of His people whom He loved. See note at Ex 25:8.

"Daughter of a foreign god" – means a woman of one of the idolatrous peoples around Israel. See Ezra 9:1,2. God forbade His people to do this – Ex 34:15,16; Deut 7:3,4. Compare 2 Cor 6:14-18.

**2:12** Intermarriage with unbelievers was an abomination and the prophet wanted God to show them that by taking severe action against the guilty. See also Ezra 9:1,2; Neh 13:23-27; 2 Cor 6:14.

"Tents of Jacob" – the Jews.

"Brings an offering" – they who do detestable things sometimes bring offerings to God. Vileness and a certain kind of religion sometimes go hand in hand. But see Prov 15:8.

**2:13** Because they did not repent and obey His Word, God was not pleased with their tears. They vainly thought they could get God's blessings by their offerings and tears even though they trampled God's law underfoot. See what God wants in Isa 1:16-19; 2 Cor 7:10,11.

**2:14** As long as they were unfaithful to their wives, or guilty of other evils, their weeping and wailing came to nothing.

**2:15** "One" – Gen 2:24.

"He was seeking godly offspring" – faithfulness in the family relationship will increase the possibility of godly offspring growing up in it. Divorce makes it less likely

15 And did he not make *them* one, having a remnant of the Spirit. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. Therefore keep watch over your spirit, and let no one act treacherously against the wife of his youth.

16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, says that he hates divorce; for it is *like* covering violence with *one's* garment, says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not act treacherously.

17 You have wearied the LORD with your words.

Yet you say, "How have we wearied *him*?"

When you say, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them"; or, "Where *is* the God of justice?"

**3** "See, I will send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in. See, he is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

**2** "But who can endure the day of his coming? And who will stand when he appears? For he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like a washman's soap. **3** And

that there will be godly offspring.

"Keep watch over" – Prov 4:23; Luke 12:15; 1 Cor 16:13; 1 Tim 6:20.

**2:16** "He hates divorce" – Matt 5:31,32; 19:4-9. If Christians ignore this statement, it will be at their own peril. And it is a very shameful thing that many of them do ignore it and do as they please about the matter of divorce. But it is surely both foolish and sinful to do something God hates.

**2:17** "Wearied. . . with your words" – what people (even His own people) sometimes say is hard for God to endure.

"Delights in them", "Where. . . justice?" – seemingly those people were ignorant of the most basic matters. Compare Ps 5:4; Ezek 18:25.

**3:1** "My messenger" – compare Isa 40:3; Matt 3:1-3; 11:10,14. John the Baptist was this first messenger. He appeared before Christ began His ministry. The nation of Israel did not receive him. Before Christ comes the second time a second messenger, Elijah, will appear (4:5). Mal 3:1-6 may possibly refer to either Christ's first or second coming. Indeed some features of these verses may refer to both comings. As in some other prophecies of the Old Testament there may be a spiritual application to the Church of this era and a literal fulfillment at the end of this age. See note on Isa 60:1-22.

"Messenger of the covenant" – the Messiah of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare Isa 42:6; Jer 31:31-34.

**3:2** The language here suggests judgment rather than grace. Compare 4:1-5; Isa 2:10-18; Joel 2:11; Rev 6:15-17.

"Refiner's fire" – Isa 1:25; Zech 13:8,9.

**3:3** "Purifier of silver" – Ps 66:10-12; Dan

he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them like gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

5 "And I will come near you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against perjurers, and against those who oppress the wage earner in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and who turn aside the foreigner *from his right*, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

6 "For I *am* the LORD. I do not change. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. 7 Even from the days of your fathers you have gone astray from my ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.

12:10. This is a process that has gone on throughout this age of grace and is still going on. But the Lord is doing this work in His believers, the priests of this New Testament era, not in the Levites of Israel. His purification of the Levites still awaits the future – Jer 33:18-22; Ezek 40:46; 44:10-16; 45:5; 48:11-13.

"Offering in righteousness" – this is what the Lord wants in every era. Compare Rom 12:1,2; Heb 13:15,16; 1 Pet 2:5.

3:4 This seems to mean Judah and Jerusalem as a whole. This was not fulfilled at Christ's first coming. Compare Matt 23:37-39.

3:5 "Judgment" – v 2. The Lord Jesus did not come the first time to judge the world – John 12:47. At His second coming He will be a judge – Acts 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1.

"Sorcerers" – Deut 18:9-13; Gal 5:19-21.

"Adulterers" – Ex 20:14; Heb 13:4.

"Perjurers" – Ex 20:16; Lev 19:12; Rev 21:8.

"Oppress the wage earner. . . turn aside the foreigner" – Lev 19:13; Jam 5:4; Ex 22:21,22; Deut 24:19; Isa 1:17; Ezek 22:7; Amos 2:6,7.

"Do not fear me" – Jer 2:19; 5:22; Rom 3:18.

3:6 "Change" – Heb 13:8; Jam 1:17.

"Consumed" – Israel had been unfaithful to God and deserved to be destroyed. The reason God did not destroy them was that He had made promises to them which He determined to keep and had plans for them which He would not change. Compare Rom 11:29.

3:7 "Return to me" – Isa 44:22; Jer 3:12,14,22; 4:1; Hos 14:1; Joel 2:12,13; Zech 1:3; Jam 4:8.

"How" – 1:2,7.

3:8,9 In 1:14 God called some of them "deceivers". Now He calls all of them robbers. They had robbed God by keeping for themselves what belonged to Him. They

"But you say, 'How shall we return?'"

8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me.

"But you say, 'How have we robbed you?'"

"In tithes and offerings. 9 You *are* cursed with a curse, for you, this whole nation, have robbed me. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and test me now in this, says the LORD of hosts: See if I will not open the windows of heaven for you, and pour you out *such* blessing that there *will* not be room enough to receive it. 11 And for your sakes, I will rebuke that which devours, and it will not destroy the produce of your ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its fruit before time, says the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, says the LORD of hosts.

13 "Your words have been harsh against me,

did this in the matter of tithes and offerings. See Lev 27:30; Num 18:21,24. Tithing is not a command given to Christians now. Believers are not under the law but under grace – Rom 6:14. So God appeals to us to give on the basis of grace – 2 Cor 8:12; 9:6,7. But surely grace and love working in our hearts will not teach us to give less than Jews under the law (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:1-4). A tenth is the very least believers should give to God and His work. They should recognize that they and all they have belong to the Lord – 1 Cor 6:19,20, and give accordingly. Notes on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

"Curse" – see 2:2. All breakers of God's law were under a curse (Deut 27:26; Jam 2:10), and they had broken God's law.

3:10 "Storehouse" – rooms by the temple for storing grain, etc (Neh 13:12). This is not an instruction to Christians now to give all their offerings to one church or denomination. In Christ there is freedom to give toward His work anywhere.

"Test me" – we must not test God in unbelief (Ex 17:2; Deut 6:16; Ps 78:18,41,56; 106:14; 1 Cor 10:9). God here speaks of a different kind of test. He tells Israel to believe His promise, obey Him, and see what the results would be. He has given us all a similar promise – Luke 6:38. God loves to bless believing, obedient, generous people. If we have none of these qualities we have no right to expect His blessings.

"LORD of hosts" – note at 1 Sam 1:3. He is well able to arrange all matters and all events for the good of His faithful people.

3:11 God has many ways of blessing His people. All nature is completely in His control.

3:12 Isa 61:8,9; 62:4; Hos 2:21,22; 4:5-7.

3:13 "What have we spoken" – they resisted everything God said about them instead of confessing and repenting.

says the LORD.

"Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against you?'"

14 "You have said, 'It is vain to serve God,' and 'what profit is *it* that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? 15 So now we call the arrogant blessed. Yes, the evildoers are established. Yes, *those who* test God escape.'"

16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke often with one another, and the LORD listened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written in his presence for those who feared the LORD, and who thought about his name.

17 "And they will be mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on that day when I make up my jewels. And I will spare them, as a man spares his own son who serves him. 18 Then you will again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves God and him who does not serve him.

**3:14** "Vain to serve" – could a more harsh thing be said to God by His people? It is the same as denying that He is good and loving and that He rewards faithful service. Even good people can fall into this wrong way of thinking and speaking. Compare Ps 73:2,3,13,14,22. See 1 Cor 15:58.

**3:15** Job 21:7-15; Ps 73:3-12. Men make mistakes like this in their thinking because of ignorance of God's coming judgment.

**3:16** "Feared the LORD" – Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"Heard" – 2:17; Ps 19:14; 94:9; 139:4; Matt 12:35-37.

"Book" – Ex 32:32; Ps 56:8; 97:6; Rev 20:12.

**3:17** "Mine" – Isa 43:21; John 6:37; 17:6; 1 Cor 6:19. They showed they belonged to the Lord by the way they talked with each other and the Lord will publicly confirm it.

"Jewels" – or "treasured possession" – Ex 19:5; Deut 7:6; Ps 135:4; 149:4. Of everything in the world, God treasures most His redeemed people who trust and serve Him.

"Spare them" – when He rises to judge the world.

**3:18** The time of judgment will make this distinction clear. Compare Matt 25:31-46; John 12:26. Observe that the righteous serve God, the wicked do not. So we can see what God thinks of a person's character by what he is doing or not doing. Then is a person who has no desire to serve God, no matter how moral and ethical he may be in many matters, actually wicked in God's sight?

**4:1** "The day" – the day of the Lord (v 5; Isa 13:6,9; Joel 1:15; 1 Thess 5:2).

"Burn" – Isa 1:31; 24:6; 66:15,16; 2 Thess 1:7,8.

**4:2** "Fear my name" – 3:16.

"Sun of righteousness" – Isa 60:1,19;

**4** "For, see, the day is coming that will burn like a furnace; and all the arrogant, yes, and all evildoers, will be *like* stubble, and the day that is coming will burn them up, says the Lord of hosts. It will leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But for you who fear my name the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings. And you will go out, and grow up like calves in the stall. 3 And you will trample down the wicked. For they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do *this*, says the LORD of hosts.

4 "Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded to him in Horeb for all Israel, *along with its* statutes and judgments.

5 "See, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 6 And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Luke 1:78,79. The righteousness of the Lord Jesus is as bright and shining as the sun.

"Healing" – His second coming will mean complete healing to those God has chosen (Isa 32:1-4; 35:5,6; Jer 30:17; Rom 8:21-23; 1 Cor 15:52,53).

"Wings" – the Hebrew word also means "edges", "ends" or "extremities". When the Sun of righteousness rises healing will come to those even at the furthest reach of His rays.

**4:3** Ps 148:6-9; Zech 12:6-9. The wicked will not always have the upper hand in this world.

**4:4** "Remember" – Deut 4:9-14; 8:11; Ps 119:52; Isa 64:5.

"Moses my servant" – Ex 14:31; Deut 34:5; Heb 3:5. "Horeb" is Mt Sinai where God gave His law – Exodus chapters 19,20.

**4:5** "Elijah" – Matt 17:11. Compare Rev 11:3-12. Apparently this coming of Elijah is just before "the day of the LORD" which is still in the future (1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10). If so, "Elijah" here cannot refer to the coming of John the Baptist which was in the past.

**4:6** "He will turn the heart" – John the Baptist was partially successful in this (Luke 1:16,17), but only partially. Israel as a whole rejected the Lord Jesus. In the future the nation will repent and receive Him – Zech 12:10-14; Rom 11:25-29.

"Curse" – the Old Testament ends with a reference to the law of Moses (v 4) and the threat of a curse coming on the land of Israel and on the earth. The New Testament (and the whole Bible) ends with a promise of the coming of the Lord Jesus and a reference to His grace which removes the curse and restores all things (Rev 22:20,21).

# The Gospel According to MATTHEW

## Author:

Matthew was one of the original disciples of Jesus Christ. His other name was Levi and he was a tax collector when Jesus called him into His service. See Matt 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32. He himself does not tell us that he wrote this Gospel, but that has been the firm belief of Christians from the first century onwards. When thinking of the authorship of any of the books of the Bible we should keep in mind that God Himself is the real author of them all, making use of human instruments whom He prepared in every way to write just what He wanted them to write. See 2 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Pet 1:21. Often the human authors did not identify themselves. Their object was not to point men to themselves but to the one true God who inspired them. Each of them would have agreed with the writer of psalm 115 when he said "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory" (Psalm 115:1).

## Date:

Some years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, about the middle of the first century A.D. The exact year is unknown.

## Theme:

Matthew, writing of the birth and life, teachings and deeds, death and resurrection of Jesus, presents Him as God's Anointed One who had been promised in the Old Testament, as the great King who brings in God's kingdom. In this Gospel there are about 60 references to Old Testament prophecy, and about 40 actual quotations from the Old Testament. Some key words, used many times, are "king", "the kingdom of God", and "fulfilled."

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**1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham begot Isaac; and Isaac begot Jacob; and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers; 3 And Judas begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and Perez begot Hezron; and Hezron begot Ram; 4 And Ram begot Amminadab; and Amminadab begot Nahshon; and Nahshon begot Salmon; 5 And Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab; and Boaz begot Obed by Ruth; and Obed begot Jesse

6 And Jesse begot David the king; and David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah; 7 And Solomon begot Rehoboam; and Rehoboam begot Abijah; and Abijah begot Asa; 8 And Asa begot Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begot Joram; and Joram begot Uzziah; 9 And Uzziah begot Jotham; and Jotham begot Ahaz; and Ahaz begot Hezekiah; 10 And Hezekiah begot Manasseh; and Manasseh begot Amon; and

**1:1** The name "Jesus", like the Hebrew name Joshua, means "the LORD (Jehovah) saves." The word "Christ" is from the Greek language and means "anointed one." Its meaning is the same as "Messiah" taken from the Hebrew. One great purpose Matthew had in writing this Gospel was to show that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

The Messiah was to be anointed by God – that is, set apart and consecrated by God, to fulfill the promises of the Old Testament. He was to be prophet, king, and priest (Deut 18:15; 2 Sam 7:11; Ps 2:2-9; 89:27-29; 110:1,4; Isa 7:14; 9:6,7; 11:1-9; 52:13-53:12; Zech 6:12,13).

According to the Old Testament the Messiah had to be a descendant of Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, and of David, Israel's greatest king. To show that this was true of the Lord Jesus, Matthew gives this genealogy. Genealogies were a matter of public record and could be checked by any Jew who wished to do so.

As used in the Bible the word "son" may indicate a variety of relationships. Sometimes, of course, it means a literal son, but it may also mean a grandson, or a disciple, or a person much loved, or a descendant. Here it means that Jesus as to His human nature was descended from David who lived a thousand years before Him, and from Abraham who lived nearly two thousand years before Him.

**1:2** "Isaac" – Gen 21:3,12.

"Jacob" – Gen 25:26.

"Brothers" – Gen 29:35. The Messiah was to come through the line of Judah (Gen 49:10; Ps 89:27-29. David was a descendant of Judah). So Matthew passes over the other sons of Jacob.

**1:3** "Tamar" – Gen 38:27-30. "Ram" – 1 Chron 2:9,10.

**1:5** "Rahab" – Josh 2:1-21; 6:25.

"Ruth" – Ruth 4:13-22. The stories of Rahab, a Canaanite, and Ruth, a Moabitess

Amon begot Josiah; 11 And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time *the Jews were* carried away to Babylon.

12 And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel; 13 And Zerubbabel begot Abiud; and Abiud begot Eliakim; and Eliakim begot Azor; 14 And Azor begot Zadok; and Zadok begot Akim; and Akim begot Eliud; 15 And Eliud begot Eleazar; and Eleazar begot Matthan; and Matthan begot Jacob; 16 And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the exile in Babylon to Christ *are* fourteen generations.

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this:

(both of whom were of nations other than Israel), reveal something of God's wonderful grace and mercy toward sinful people. They were both transformed by God's grace and were brought into the family line of the Messiah.

**1:6** "David" – 1 Sam 16:1; 17:12.

"Solomon" – 2 Sam 12:24.

"Wife" – Bathsheba. The story of David and Bathsheba (found in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12) teaches us again of God's great grace in overcoming human depravity and sinfulness.

**1:8** "Uzziah" – his father was Amaziah. Joram (Jehoram) was his great-great-grandfather. In the Bible the words "begot" and "father" (like the word "son") are used to express a variety of relationships, such as grandfather and forefather. Here it means ancestor.

**1:11** Josiah was the grandfather of Jeconiah (Jehoiachin).

"Babylon" – 2 Kings chapters 24 and 25.

**1:16** Notice Matthew's careful use of language here. Mary was the mother of Jesus, but Joseph was not His father, except in the legal sense. The rest of the chapter makes this clear. It was enough for Matthew to show that in the legal sense Jesus was David's descendant. Luke's purpose in his genealogy (Luke 3:23-38) may have been to show that Jesus was a physical descendant of David through Mary.

**1:17** "Exile to Babylon" – see 2 Chronicles chapter 36. Matthew left out some names from this genealogy – kings Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah and Jehoiakim. It was not necessary to list all the names in the ancestral line of the Lord Jesus to show that He was descended from David and Abraham. Matthew divided this genealogy into a series of fourteens, possibly for ease of memorizing. Such divisions of names for such a purpose was no new thing among the Jews.

**1:18** "Betrothed" – engagement to be married was very binding in Israel. After

After his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a righteous *man* and unwilling to make her a public example, intended to release her *from her vows*, secretly.

20 But while he was thinking about these things, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for what is conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will give birth to a son, and you shall call his name JESUS, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place so there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken by the Lord through

the prophet, saying,

23 See, the virgin will be with child,  
and will give birth to a son,  
and they will call his name Emmanuel,

which is, being translated, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph, after he was aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took her as his wife. 25 But he did not know her until she had given birth to her firstborn son. And he called his name JESUS.

**2** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, suddenly wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem,

engagement the man and woman did not live together until after the actual marriage ceremony, but engagement legally bound them together and they were even called "husband" and "wife."

"Holy Spirit" – Jesus was the Son of God. Joseph was His legal father, but God was His real father. That is, His human nature was produced in Mary by the creative power of the invisible Spirit of God (v 20; Luke 1:35). This does not mean that God came to Mary in some physical form, some kind of incarnation. This was not necessary and it did not happen. The Lord Jesus had a divine nature and a sinless human nature joined together in one personality. He was both fully God and fully man.

Notes and other references on the Holy Spirit at 3:11,16; Gen 1:2; Luke 1:15,35; 4:1; 11:13; John 1:33; 7:39; 14:16,17,26; 16:7,8; 20:22; Acts 1:5,8; 2:4,38; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:14; Eph 5:18. **1:19** "Righteous" – the Greek word here means "just, honorable and fair in one's dealings with others, and upright and pious in one's attitude toward God and God's Word." Joseph believed Mary was guilty of adultery and felt he had to divorce her. But he wanted to treat her with compassion because he was a good man and doubtless still felt affection for Mary. In the case of Mary we can learn that those who do the will of God may be misunderstood, falsely accused, and brought into danger. The penalty for adultery under the law of Israel was death (Deut 22:23,24).

**1:20** Note on angels at Gen 16:7. The Greek word translated "angel" means "messenger." Here it indicates a spirit being from heaven.

"Suddenly" – the Greek word here is the word for "see" and is translated "behold" in the KJV. Speakers and writers of modern English do not use "behold" except occasionally in the phrase "lo and behold." In Greek it was used to call attention to what follows and need not be translated literally. Sometimes we have put the word in the past tense, sometimes used the word "suddenly," etc. See also the note at Gen 1:29.

"Lord" – this is a translation of the Greek word "kurios." In the Greek New Testament

"kurios" is used in two ways. It is used to translate the word Jehovah, a name for God found in the Old Testament more than 6,000 times (see note at Ex 3:14,15). It is also the ordinary Greek word for Lord or master or owner or one in authority. See also the note at Luke 2:11.

**1:21** "JESUS" – v 1. The Lord Jesus came to save sinful men, not to destroy them (Luke 19:10; John 3:17). He came to release them from the penalty and power of their sins and to bring them into a state of eternal righteousness, blessedness, peace and joy in God's presence (Luke 4:18,19; Acts 26:18). This is what salvation is. He saves people *from* their sins, not *in* their sins. His people are all those who receive Him by faith as Lord and Savior (John 1:12,13), all those whom God has given to Him (John 6:37; 17:6).

**1:22** Much of the New Testament records events which were a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This is a strong reason to believe in the full divine inspiration of the Bible. For a list of some of these prophecies see the back of this Bible. Notice that God Himself spoke through the prophets. See 2:15; 4:4; 15:4; 22:43,44; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25; Heb 1:1,5,8,10,13; 3:7; 4:3,7; 5:5,6; 7:21; 8:8; 10:5,15; 13:5. See also 2 Pet 1:21; 2 Tim 3:16.

**1:23** "Emmanuel" – Isa 7:14. Matthew quotes from the Old Testament nearly 50 times to prove that the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus were firmly rooted in Old Testament prophecy. The life of Jesus on earth was the life of Immanuel, God incarnate, revealing God's nature and works in all their beauty and glory (John 1:1,14,18; Col 2:9; Heb 1:3).

**1:24** Joseph showed he was a righteous man (v 19) by his immediate obedience to God's command. Indeed, there is no true righteousness that does not result in obedience to the true and living God.

**2:1** Bethlehem was a small town about 8 kilometers south of Jerusalem. It was the home town of king David, and is referred to many times in the Old Testament (Gen 35:19; Ruth 1:19; 1 Sam 16:4; Micah 5:2). For Jesus to be born there Mary and

2 saying, "Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him." 3 When Herod the king heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. 5 And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea. For thus it has been written by the prophet:

6 And you, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of you a Ruler will come who will shepherd my people Israel."

Joseph had to travel from Nazareth (Luke 2:4), about 120 kilometers north of Bethlehem.

"Herod" – there are several Herods mentioned in the New Testament. They were all related to each other and all descended from this Herod, sometimes called Herod the Great. He was not a Jew but an Edomite (Edomites were descended from Esau. See Gen 25:25,30). He was appointed king of Judea by the emperor of Rome.

"Wise men" – or "magi," the name given by Persians and Babylonians to a religious and priestly class of people which included astrologers and astronomers, interpreters of signs, and such like. They were regarded as wise men with special secret knowledge. The minds of the best of them were a mixture of knowledge and superstition. Here is the first time after Jesus came to earth that people of another nation and religion recognized His greatness and came to worship Him. They were the first of a great multitude to come.

Christ's Gospel is for all men. He is the Saviour of all who trust in Him, regardless of nationality and background (28:19; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47; John 3:16). **2:2** It is evident that these magi had some knowledge of the Old Testament and its promises of a coming King who would be the Saviour of His people (Isa 9:6,7; etc). This knowledge was probably gained by contact with Jews who lived in various countries of western Asia after the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century BC. See the books of Esther and Daniel. The magi could have calculated the general time of Christ's birth from the prophecy in Dan 9:25-27 (which had been given to Daniel in Babylon).

We are not told what kind of "star" the magi saw or how they came to believe it announced the birth of Christ. The author of these notes believes that it was a heavenly body or other light in the sky specially created or given by God for this occasion. Its movement is evidence for this. It went due west, then due south for a few miles, and then stopped over a single house in Bethlehem, evidently low enough in the sky to indicate that particular house and not any other. No ordinary star or planet

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, found out from them the exact time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and search carefully for the young child. And when you have found *him*, bring me word again, so that I too may come and worship him."

9 When they had heard the king, they went away, and now the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them until it came and stood over the place where the young child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced, with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they came into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and prostrated themselves and worshipped him. And

behaves like this. It is also reasonable to believe that God convinced these magi by His Spirit that this heavenly body was somehow connected with the birth of Christ. See note at v 12.

The magi did not come merely to see Christ, or to satisfy their curiosity, or to engage in philosophical discussion about Him. They came to bow lowly before Him, to honor and adore Him.

**2:3** God had revealed a truth to the far-off magi which the king and people in Jerusalem, 8 kilometers from Bethlehem, did not know. The fact that they were alarmed instead of happy to hear this good news reveals their depraved spiritual condition. They were not ready for the coming of the Messiah, God's "anointed one."

**2:4** Note on priests at Ex 28:1. The chief priests were in charge of the temple worship and were the religious leaders of the Jews.

"Scribes" – these were scholars who interpreted the law of Moses to the people.

**2:5,6** This wonderful prophecy, giving the exact place of Christ's birth about 700 years before the event, is found in Micah 5:2. Observe that these religious leaders and scholars knew that the Messiah would come and knew the place of His birth. But they made no effort, it seems, to find Him or to honor and worship Him. It is not what men know which makes them acceptable to God. The state of their hearts with their motives and desires is all-important.

**2:8** Herod's purpose was evil (vs 13,16). But he, like many people since then, used a cloak of seeming piety to hide the wickedness of his heart.

**2:9** "Stood" – no star or planet on its own could stop in the sky over a place, as this one did. This was a special work of God.

**2:11** The Lord Jesus was no longer in the stable where He had been born (Luke 2:7). Many months may have passed since His birth. Observe whom they worshiped – not Mary the mother of Jesus, but the Lord Jesus Himself. And they brought their gifts to Him, not to her.

"Worshipped" – the fact that God brought these men to worship Christ, and recorded it for our instruction in His Word, tells us

opening their treasures, they presented gifts to him: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned by God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they went away to their own country by another way.

13 And when they had left, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up, take the young child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word. For Herod will look for the young child to destroy him."

14 When he got up, he took the young child and his mother at night and left for Egypt. 15 And he was there until the death of Herod, so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken about the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent *men* out, and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all of its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had found out accurately from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

that Christ is God – only God is worthy of worship (see 4:10). And God often commanded that men should worship no one but Himself (Ex 20:2-5). See other references which show that Christ is God at Phil 2:6 and Luke 2:11.

**2:12** "Dream" – Gen 15:12,13; 20:3; Num 12:6; Dan 7:1; Acts 2:17. Since God revealed truth to these men after their arrival in Bethlehem, it is not unreasonable to think He did the same before they started on their journey there.

**2:13** "Lord" – note at 1:20.

"To destroy him" – King Herod did not want any rivals to the throne, and the wise men had spoken of the king of the Jews (v 2). Herod was the kind of man who would kill his own sons if he thought they were a threat to his power. Behind Herod's evil intention stood Satan, the great enemy of God and man, trying to destroy the Messiah and so prevent Him from bringing salvation to men. But God knows how to work out His purposes and He infallibly does so (Isa 46:9,10; Rom 11:33-36).

**2:15** Again we see that it was God Himself who spoke through the Old Testament prophets (1:22). See note at Hosea 11:1.

**2:16** This verse suggests that Jesus may have been many months old when the magi came. To make sure of killing Him Herod thought it necessary to kill all male babies up to the age of two.

**2:18** Note at Jer 31:15.

**2:23** Nazareth was the town of Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:39). It was a small and insignificant town (John 1:45,46). A Nazarene was a person of Nazareth, so the name came to mean a person who was considered a

18 "In Ramah a voice was heard,  
lamentation, weeping, and great  
mourning,  
Rachel weeping *for* her children,  
and refusing to be comforted,  
because they are no more."

19 But when Herod was dead, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Get up and take the young child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are dead."

21 And he got up and took the young child and his mother, and came to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And having been warned by God in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. 23 And he came and lived in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He will be called a Nazarene.

**3** In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and

nobody. Calling Jesus a Nazarene fulfilled the meaning of the prophets who revealed that Christ would be despised by men. See Ps 22:6; Isa 53:3. Some scholars connect the name "Nazarene" with the Hebrew word "netzer", which means "Branch." This was one of the names of the Messiah (Isa 11:1; etc). There is no connection between the words Nazarene and Nazirite. See note at Num 6:7,8.

**3:1** Matthew passes over nearly thirty years of Christ's life and begins to write of the time when He was about to begin His ministry. Other references to John the Baptist – 11:2-14; 14:1-12; Mark 1:2-8; 6:14-29; Luke 1:5-25,57-80; 3:15-18; 7:18-23; John 1:6-8,15-35; 3:22-36; 5:33-35. The wilderness or desert of Judea was an area east of Jerusalem and Bethlehem running down to the Jordan river and the Dead Sea.

**3:2** "Repent" and "repentance" are very important words in the Bible. Noun and verb together are used more than 70 times. Repentance means a complete change of mind and heart which produces a change in behavior. As John and the Lord Jesus and His disciples used the word it means to turn to God from wrong thinking and wrong doing and accept God's Word and God's will as the rule of life. True Biblical repentance results in sorrow for sins committed and a desire to be free from all sin. For those who have been rejecting Christ it means to turn to Him and receive Him as Lord and Saviour.

Repentance is linked with that true faith which receives salvation. A person without repentance is without true faith and so without salvation. See Luke 13:3; 24:47; Acts



saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 3 For this is the one who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying,

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
Prepare the way of the Lord.  
Make his paths straight.

4 And John himself had his cloak of camel's hair, and a leather belt around his waist. And his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem, all

17:30,31. The person who is not willing to turn from all his sins – especially the sin of not trusting in Christ and putting others or other things above him – will not know salvation from his sins. John preached repentance because the people of Israel were sunk in sin and unbelief and were not ready to receive the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their condition was like that described in Isa 1:4; etc. For other notes on repentance see v 8; Luke 13:2,3; Acts 2:38; 17:30.

"Kingdom of heaven" – see 4:17.

"Near" – because the King of heaven (the Lord Jesus) was about to appear and begin His ministry. John was referring to a new and greater manifestation of God's kingdom than was known in Old Testament days. **3:3** This quotation is from Isa 40:3 and speaks of John's ministry of preparation for Christ.

"Lord" – the Hebrew of Isaiah is "Jehovah." Notes at 1:20; Ex 3:14,15; Luke 2:11.

**3:4** Plain clothing, simple food, and a humble style of living were the usual marks of God's true prophets. They avoided the materialistic outlook and love of ostentation seen in many religious leaders today.

**3:6** The word "baptized" comes from the Greek word "baptizo." A famous Greek-English dictionary gives its meaning thus: "Dip, immerse. . . plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm" (Arndt and Gingrich. Other dictionaries and lexicons are in substantial agreement with this definition).

John's baptism signified repentance and the forgiveness of sins, but it did not produce them. See also Mark 1:4; etc. No water ceremony of any kind or in any place can take away sin or change men's hearts. Only God can do so. And He does so when men receive His Son by faith (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; 5:24; Acts 13:38,39).

**3:7** "Pharisees" – a strict, conservative, very religious sect among the Jews. They emphasized the law of Moses and the religious traditions that had come down from previous generations. Many of them were very self-righteous and separated themselves from others, thinking they were holier than anyone else (the name "Pharisee" came from the Hebrew word "pharash" which means to separate or set apart). But their deeds did not match their words and Jesus severely condemned them for their hypocrisy (chapter 23). In the New Testament they are

Judea, and the whole region around Jordan, went out to him, 6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his *place* of baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think of saying to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for *our* father.' For I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 10 And even now the axe is

usually seen in opposition to the Lord Jesus.

"Sadducees" – another powerful sect among the Jews. In theology they were liberal, denying truth plainly taught in the Old Testament. See Acts 23:8. They were mostly from the priestly class and were in charge of temple worship in Jesus' day, but their minds were more taken up with the things of this world than the things of God. The origin of the name "Sadducee" is unknown.

"Vipers" – God had given John great insight into the character of these people. They were the religious leaders of Israel, but in John's eyes (and God's eyes) they were like poisonous snakes, injecting their venom into the life of the nation. Compare 12:34; 23:33; Ps 58:4; 140:3; Rom 3:13. The Bible reveals that sometimes the very worst of people rise to the highest place in religious leadership. See Jer 6:13; 23:11; Ezek 34:1-6.

"Wrath" – they who are not saved from their sins will have to face God's anger against their sins. Compare John 3:36; Rom 1:18. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**3:8** "Fruit" – see also Acts 26:20. Fruit worthy of repentance means such things as ceasing from evil, learning to do good, making restitution to others when wrong has been done to them, restoring what is stolen, etc. In short, true repentance results in a new way of living that will be the reverse of the former ways (see 2 Chron 33:1-20; psalm 51; Isa 1:16-20; Ezek 18:30-32; Luke 3:10-14; 19:7-9; Acts 2:36,37; 9:1,2,19-22).

**3:9** See John 8:39,40. The story of Abraham is in Genesis chapters 12-25. The mistake John pointed out here is a common one among religious people everywhere – thinking that God accepts them and regards them as His people because they are of a certain religious community or sect, or because they can trace their ancestry back to some famous religious leader. Abraham was a man of God but that did not make all his descendants men of God. Now a person is not a true Christian simply because his parents or grandparents were true Christians. An individual's own faith and deeds and character are the important things in God's eyes, not who his or her ancestors were.

**3:10** John meant that God was about to judge the nation. The Messiah was about to

laid to the root of the trees. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is being cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I indeed baptize you with water for repentance. But the one who comes after me is mightier than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and *with* fire. 12 His winnowing fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor,

appear. The people were like individual trees in the forest of Israel. Compare 7:17-20; Luke 13:6-9; Ps 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12; Eccl 11:3. "Fire" – 5:22; 7:19; 13:42; 18:8,9; Rev 20:15; 21:8.

**3:11,12** "For repentance" – this does not mean that John baptized them so that they would obtain repentance. If they had not already repented he would not have wanted to baptize them. The Greek word translated "for" (eis) also means "in", "into", "unto", "concerning", "about." John's baptizing work concerned repentance, pointed to repentance, and was a symbol of repentance. But it did not produce repentance, which is something only the Spirit of God working in the hearts of men can produce. See also the note at Acts 2:38.

"One who comes after me" – John was referring to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, and he recognized how far beneath Him he was. True men of God do not claim to be God but humble themselves in the dust before God. The closer a person is to God the less he will think he is worthy to stand before God. No man was greater than John (11:11), but John thought he was unworthy to carry Christ's sandals. He knew that all he could do was baptize in water, but that Christ could bring people into the depths of God's life-giving Spirit. And water baptism is nothing without the Spirit baptism Jesus gives. It is God's Spirit who gives spiritual life to people (John 3:5-8; 6:63; 7:37-39). Note on Spirit baptism at Acts 1:5.

"Baptize. . . with fire" – here may refer to God's purging of His people as in Mal 3:2-4. Fire there means a divine energy that would enter them and give force and power to witness to the truth (compare Jer 20:9). Or fire here could signify God's anger in judgment against sin (v 7. Compare Deut 32:32; Isa 30:30; 2 Thess 1:7,8). This second interpretation seems more likely. The wheat (God's true people) will be baptized with the Holy Spirit; the chaff (those not God's true people – Ps 1:4) will be baptized with fire.

John was a model for all preachers of God's Word. He lived very simply, did not engage in religious politics, sought no fame or material possessions, was humble but bold as a lion. He emphasized certain great truths all preachers should emphasize:

God's anger against sin

The need of repentance and a change of life-style

and gather his wheat into the barn. But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." 13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John *tried* to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 And Jesus, answering, said to him, "Permit *it* now, for in this way it is proper for us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he permitted him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, immediately went out of the

Personal relationship with God not based on ancestry

Coming judgments against evil men, but the future blessedness of God's true people (v 12)

The supremacy of Jesus above all  
And the giving of God's Spirit to those who repent and believe the gospel of Christ.

Do those of us who are preachers desire God's approval? Let us do as John did.

**3:13-15** Jesus was now about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23). John's baptism spoke of repentance and confession and forgiveness of sins (vs 6,11; Mark 1:4). The Lord Jesus was the sinless Son of God (Luke 1:35; John 8:46; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22). He did not need forgiveness. Why, then, did He come to be baptized by John? Commentators have suggested several reasons. The only reason Jesus Himself gave is in v 15 – "to fulfil all righteousness." What was right for His disciples to do, He did. He also partook of the Passover feast, thought the elements spoke of what He would do for them, not what He needed for Himself (Luke 22:14,15).

Baptism for Him was an act of humble obedience to God's righteous will, and in taking it (as in His whole life) Jesus was an example to all His followers (compare 11:29; 16:24; John 13:15; Phil 2:5; 1 Pet 2:21). He was sinless, but took the place of sinners. He was our representative. He pointed the way we should go, did what we should do, lived as we should live, and, at last, as our substitute, He took all our sins upon Himself and was baptized into suffering and death (Luke 12:50). He died the death we deserve to die.

In other words all He did, including being baptized, was a fulfillment and manifestation and glorification of God's righteousness. And baptism was but a picture of His death, burial, and resurrection which were for the purpose of making people righteous.

**3:16,17** The God revealed in the Bible, the true and only God, is a Trinity. That is, in the one Godhead there are three persons. Each of the three is spoken of in these verses. Jesus the Son is coming out of the water, the Spirit of God descends on Him, and God the Father speaks from heaven. The Son is not the Father, or the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Son or the Father. The three are distinct from each other but are perfectly united as one God in essence,

water. And suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And now a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

character, mind and heart. So there are not three Gods, but one only. See also 28:19; John 5:30; 14:26; 16:15; 1 Cor 12:3-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 2:6; 4:4-6; Rev 1:4,5. For Old Testament indications of this truth see Gen 1:26; 16:7; etc. The Old Testament speaks of the Father (Ps 89:26), the Son (Ps 2:12), and the Spirit (Gen 1:2), but reveals that there is but one God (Deut 6:4; Isa 44:6; 45:18).

God's Spirit is not a mere influence or impersonal power coming from God, but is a divine person. Notes at John 14:16,17,26.

In those days the dove was a symbol of innocence and harmlessness and gentleness (10:16). Since then it has become a symbol of peace.

Jesus had been conceived by the Spirit of God (1:18), and lived His whole life up to His baptism indwelt by the Spirit. At His baptism He was anointed by the Spirit for the ministry He was about to begin. In His life and ministry He laid aside His own divine powers and privileges and depended on God the Father for everything.

This anointing of God's Spirit enabled Him to accomplish all He accomplished. See 12:28; Luke 4:18,19; John 4:24; 5:19,30; 6:38; Acts 10:28; Phil 2:7,8; Isa 11:1-5. If this was the way of the Lord Jesus we should not vainly imagine that without God's empowering Spirit we can live as we ought or serve God as we ought.

**3:17** God here calls Jesus His Son. See Isa 9:6; Luke 1:32,35; John 1:1,14,18; 5:18-23. This means He fully shared the nature of God, as no one else can. He is God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). The Father was well pleased with Him because He was without sin of any kind, because He obeyed Him in everything, because He made it the whole business of His life to please the Father. See John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22.

**4:1** "Devil" – the Greek word for devil (diabolos) means one who accuses or slanders. It is another name for Satan, the chief of demons. Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; John 8:44; 2 Cor 11:14.

In the New Testament we see that there are two unseen kingdoms which oppose one another – God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom (12:22-28). Satan tries to destroy God's kingdom, and tempting others to evil is one method he uses. In studying the temptation of Jesus we can learn a great deal of what Jesus is like, what Satan is like, and how we can gain victory in temptation.

The Lord Jesus had just been anointed for His great ministry by the Spirit of God. The kingdom of heaven was at hand and the King was anointed. However, the Spirit

**4** Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

did not lead Jesus to ascend some earthly throne, but led Him into the desert to be tempted or tested (the Greek word can mean both). Is this the way to bring in a great kingdom – by fasting and hunger and temptation? Not man's way surely, but God's. His kingdom is spiritual. The character of the King had to be tested and approved, and the great enemy of God's kingdom, Satan, had to be defeated. This temptation demonstrated that Jesus was fully obedient to the Father and truly pleased Him in all things.

It may help us to understand the temptation if we recognize two facts: it was His human nature that was being tempted, not His divine nature (as God He could not be tempted to do wrong – James 1:13); and Jesus was tempted as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45-49). The first Adam was the progenitor of the human race and its representative. Jesus is the progenitor of a new kind of people (Rom 5:12-21). When tempted Adam fell and dragged the whole of humanity into sin with him. Jesus resisted temptation and made it possible for man to arise with Him. The fact of Jesus' temptation as a man is stated in Heb 2:18; 4:15.

**4:2** Compare Ex 24:18; 34:28; Deut 8:2; 1 Kings 19:8. In the Bible the number 40 is connected with a time of trial and preparation.

**4:3** "Tempter" – 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Cor 7:5. Satan wants men to sin so that he can gain power over them, so he makes evil suggestions and tries to stir them to yield to them. This temptation was for Jesus to use God's power for His own needs, without a word of instruction from God the Father.

All men need food and there is nothing wrong with trying to provide food for oneself. Temptation comes about the way to do this. For men may listen either to the voice of the devil or to the Word of God. As God's Son the duty and privilege of Jesus was to trust His Father to meet His needs and to act only on the Word of the Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; Heb 10:5-7).

Far better to suffer hunger in the will of God than to fill one's belly in obedience to a suggestion from Satan. And this applies to all that men need, or think they need, in this world. God has His way for men and the devil has his ways. The devil tempts us to doubt God's provision and to take matters into our own hands and to provide for ourselves regardless of the means. Compare 6:25-33; Luke 12:16-21; Phil 4:19. Compare this temptation with Gen 3:1-6; Ex 16:1-3,28; Ps 78:17-19.

4 But he answered and said, "It is written,  
Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from  
the mouth of God."

5 Then the devil took him up to the holy city,  
and had him stand on a pinnacle of the temple,  
6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God,  
throw yourself down, for it is written,

He will give his angels a command

concerning you,  
and they will bear you up in *their* hands,  
so that you will not at any time strike  
your foot against a stone."

7 Jesus said to him, "Again, it is written,  
You shall not test the Lord your God."

8 Again, the devil took him up on an exceedingly  
high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of  
the world, and the glory of them, 9 and said to  
him, "All these things I will give you, if you will fall

**4:4** The Lord Jesus in His fight against Satan used the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. And He put up the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of Satan (Eph 6:16,17).

"It is written" – Deut 8:3. Jesus knew God's Word, understood it, loved it, believed it, and was determined to obey it at any cost. So He was able to overcome temptation and defeat the devil. In this, as in everything, He is an example to us. The importance of knowing the Bible, believing it and obeying it, cannot be overestimated. Those who are ignorant of it will often be unable to recognize Satan's temptations, and they will be without their chief weapon if they do recognize them and wish to fight Satan.

"Every word that comes from the mouth of God" – where are these words to be found? Jesus was referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. Notice the importance Jesus put on every word God has spoken. In other things Jesus said we can see that He believed in the full divine inspiration of the Old Testament and of His own words, and we have His promise that God's Spirit would guide His apostles into all truth (so that what they wrote would also be completely true).

He said that not the smallest part of a single letter of the law of Moses would pass away until all of it was fulfilled (Matt 5:18). He taught that words written by David were "by the Holy Spirit" of God (Mark 12:36). He said that what was spoken to the leaders of Israel was "the word of God", and that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He assured us that His own teachings had come directly from God the Father in heaven (John 12:49; 14:24). He said that the Holy Spirit of God would lead His apostles "into all truth" (John 16:13), and His apostles taught that all the Old Testament Scriptures were given "by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16), and that Old Testament prophecy came through holy men of God who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). They also knew that they were of the truth and wrote the truth.

**4:5** "Holy city" – Jerusalem.

**4:6** Satan too can quote from the Bible. He will try to use the sword of the Spirit against us. He will deny that the Bible is God's Word if it suits His purpose. Or he will say it is God's Word and then pervert its meaning, if that suits his purpose. And He has many

willing helpers in the world – 2 Cor 11:13-15; Gal 1:7. Satan will take his quotations from the Bible out of context and misapply them.

The words of v 6 are taken from Ps 91:11,12. They were given to those who live in God and who accept God's rule over their lives (Ps 91:1-9). The promises there were not given to those who act as they please for their own purposes apart from God. It is never wise to follow a suggestion of the devil, especially when he quotes from the Bible. His aim will always be to get us to act on our own apart from God's guidance, to have us attempt things for our own reputation or pleasure or profit, and not for God's glory.

Each of the three temptations Satan brought against Christ had to do with Christ's complete submission to God's will. Christ came to glorify God, not to win fame and name for Himself. It was not for Him to perform some spectacular miracle without moral purpose.

**4:7** See Deut 6:16. Men should not get themselves into difficulties and dangers by their foolishness and presumption, expecting God to miraculously deliver them. It is man's business to believe God and obey Him, not to try to force God to do miracles. There is a big difference between presumption and faith. Observe that Jesus used a Scripture rightly interpreted to counter Satan's misapplied use of Scripture. For a proper understanding of the Bible, Scripture must be compared with Scripture, and any Scripture should be studied in its context.

**4:8,9** Here Satan revealed his secret desire – he wants people to worship him. He is the "god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4). As such he wants people to honor him and bow to him and obey him. And men do so, some knowingly, some unknowingly. See Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20; Rev 9:20. To accomplish this he is active in all matters on earth, both secular and religious.

One way he attracts people to himself and his ways is to offer them worldly possessions and power. He can give these things because in a sense they came into his power when he caused Adam to sin. Adam was God's person to rule the earth (see Gen 1:27,28). He was the father and representative of the human race. Satan succeeded in gaining a large measure of control over the human race because of Adam's fall into sin. Compare Luke 4:6;

down and worship me.”

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan. For it is written,

You shall worship the Lord your God,  
and you shall serve only him.”

11 Then the devil left him, and, at once, angels came and ministered to him.

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been thrown into prison, he went to Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and lived in Capernaum, which is by the lake, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zebulun and the land of

Naphtali,

the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles:

16 The people who sat in darkness have  
seen a great light,  
and on those who sat in the region and  
shadow of death light has dawned.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

18 And Jesus, walking by the lake of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 And immediately they left *their* nets, and followed him.

John 12:31; Eph 2:1,2; 2 Tim 2:26;  
1 John 5:19.

For only a little of this world’s wealth or glory or power a great many people are willing to abandon righteous principles, reject God’s truth, and follow the way of lies and deceit and selfishness and injustice, which is the way of Satan (it is a very sad thing that some of these call themselves Christians).

The difference between Christ and them is seen in this: they will abandon all principles of righteousness to gain a small piece of land, but Christ would not abandon a single principle of righteousness to gain the whole world. Christ scorned all that Satan offered. He remained determined to be true to God the Father, and do the Father’s will, though it meant poverty, suffering, and death. He is our example.

**4:10** See Deut 6:13. This sets forth the limit of true worship. Only The Lord (Jehovah – Ex 3:14), the God of the Bible, the Creator of the universe, the only God there is, is worthy of worship (notes at Ex 20:1-6). A clear command of God in the Bible was enough for Jesus. It meant for Him immediate, absolute, permanent obedience. And any suggestion that would lead Him away from that was to be utterly rejected. He is our example in this too. The fact that Jesus accepted worship from others and that God told angels to worship Jesus reveals that Jesus is the incarnation of God (28:17; John 20:28; Heb 1:6).

**4:11** Compare Jam 4:7. See Luke 4:13. Satan had to leave for the time, but would return when he could. See here something of the work of heaven’s angels. See Heb 1:14.

**4:12** 14:3.

**4:13** Capernaum was a town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus made it His home for some time during His ministry in the province of Galilee (Mark 2:1; 9:33).

**4:15,16** See Isa 9:1,2. The great light was the Messiah, the Lord Jesus – Luke 2:32; John 8:12; 12:46.

**4:17** “Repent” – see note at 3:2.

“Kingdom of heaven” – this phrase is found only in Matthew. Mark, Luke, and John all use the similar phrase “kingdom of God.” The teaching about God’s kingdom is a very important one in the New Testament. It is referred to nearly 50 times in Matthew and about 140 times in the NT as a whole. Some important references are 5:3-10; 6:10,33; 7:21; 13:11; 16:28; 18:3,23; 21:43; 24:14; 25:34; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:3,6; 14:22; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9,10; 15:24,50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 1:13; Heb 1:8; 12:28; Rev 1:9; 11:15; 12:10.

Kingdom of “heaven” indicates a rule that is spiritual and heavenly, having its source in heaven. Kingdom of “God” means God’s rule among men or in men’s hearts. Sometimes God’s kingdom means the outward sphere of His rule, sometimes the inner spiritual rule in the hearts of His believers. Both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus spoke of the kingdom as being “near.” This was because Jesus the King from heaven was on the scene and His ministry was beginning (2:2; 21:5). So there would be a new and greater manifestation of God’s rule than was known in Old Testament days (see the note on God as King at Ps 47:2; also the note at Gen 50:20; etc).

**4:19** Being “fishers” of men does not mean catching men for one’s own purposes. The work of Christ’s disciples was (and is) to bring men from sin to Christ and eternal salvation. This is the greatest and noblest work on earth. Observe that it is Christ who makes His disciples “fishers of men” – it does not come out of their own hearts and they cannot accomplish it themselves. Christ makes them that as they “follow” Him – as they take His way, obediently listen to His instructions, and receive the Spirit He gives. From the book of Acts and the letters of the apostles we can see what fishers of men they became.

**4:20** Observe the power and authority of Jesus’ call to these men, and their immediate obedience. Here is another example of God’s sovereign choice of some from among men to be His servants (Mark 3:13,14; John 15:16; Acts 22:14,15;



21 And going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother. *They were* in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 And immediately they left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 And Jesus went around all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and disease among the people. 24 And his fame spread

Gen 12:1; Ex 3:4,10; Josh 1:2; Jer 1:4,5). **4:21,22** The Lord Jesus did not choose His disciples from among the priests in the temple, the learned teachers of the law, the wealthy, or the politically or socially powerful. He chose ordinary people in ordinary jobs, and then made them extraordinary in the work of God's kingdom. Compare 1 Cor 1:26-29. This is still the method of the Lord Jesus.

**4:23** "Synagogues" – these were buildings erected by the Jews throughout the land of Israel for the purpose of worship, prayer, and religious instruction and for judging cases related to the law God gave through Moses. They were centers of the religious life of the Jews. The Lord Jesus taught the Word of God in synagogues when their leaders were willing.

Also He preached to crowds on streets or hillsides or wherever they gathered around Him. His message was the good news that God was establishing His rule in human hearts. And He healed every kind of disease, sometimes with a mere word or touch. He did not do miracles for Himself (v 1-7), but in compassion did a great many for others. This was His three-fold ministry as the Messiah of Israel.

Let us learn that teaching and preaching God's truth is very honorable work, one that the Son of God Himself was happy to do. Let us learn also that He set out to help individuals in every way – body, soul, and spirit. He did not preach to suffering people without doing what He could do to relieve their suffering. He is our example.

**4:24** "Syria" – the land north and northwest of Galilee. It was occupied for the most part by non-Jews.

"Demon-possessed" – possession by demons is referred to frequently in the accounts of Jesus' ministry. Sometimes the New Testament calls demons "unclean spirits" or "evil spirits." The Bible does not reveal where they came from or how they became demons, but there are hints that may lead us to believe they are fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion against God (12:24; 25:41; Rev 12:3). The Bible nowhere suggests that they are the spirits of human beings who have died.

Demon possession is more than demonic influence on individuals from without. It means the taking over of the bodies of individuals by evil spirits who then live in them. The Lord Jesus had absolute authority

all over Syria. And they brought to him all who were in the grip of various diseases and acute pains, and those who were demon-possessed, and epileptics and paralytics. And he healed them. 25 And great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea, and *from* beyond the Jordan, followed him.

**5** And seeing the multitudes, he went up on a mountain, and when he was seated, his

over all demons and cast them out of people with a word of command (8:16,28-32). See note also at Lev 17:7.

**4:25** Decapolis was a region east of the sea of Galilee and the Jordan river.

**5:1** The following teaching of Jesus up to 7:28 is called "The Sermon on the Mount" because Jesus preached it on a mountain side. He had spoken of the nearness of the kingdom of heaven (4:17), and had preached "the good news of the kingdom" (4:23). This sermon shows what Jesus meant when He commanded people to repent. It reveals what entering God's kingdom means, both in one's inner experience and outward behavior. It reveals principles which operate in the Kingdom, and those things which exclude people from the kingdom.

The sermon begins (both in Greek and English) with the word "blessed". So we can say the sermon sets forth the blessed life – who the blessed are and how they should behave. The blessed are those in the kingdom of heaven (5:3). This sermon does not give specific instructions as to how to enter God's kingdom but shows what sort of people are in it, and what they should seek to become and do.

This sermon, for the most part, is for disciples of the Lord Jesus, not for everyone (v 2. But see the note there). Those who will not receive Him as their one teacher and guru, and learn from Him in all things, will not truly understand this sermon or be able to practice it. This is for those who have entered God's kingdom through faith in the Lord Jesus, and those who are not in it cannot really put it into practice (though they may pick out a verse here and there and seem to live according to it). Any attempt they make will be imitation and not reality.

Corrupt and fallen human nature cannot keep God's spiritual holy laws (Rom 8:6,7). And fallen human nature is what we all have by birth – see notes at Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9,23. To keep the laws and principles of God's kingdom, we need to be changed, given new, spiritual life, and receive God's Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus gives the Spirit to those who repent and receive Him by faith (3:11; John 7:37-39; 14:16,17).

Only by living in the Spirit can we practice these spiritual principles. See Gal 5:16-25. The more we are controlled by God's Spirit the more possible it will be to live as Christ



disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

3 "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the

taught. Without God's Spirit it is impossible to be truly spiritual, and all men do not have God's Spirit (John 14:17; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 2:14; Jude 19).

We cannot become God's children and spiritual people by trying to live according to the Sermon on the Mount. But if we are God's children we should set out by His Spirit to live according to it. For here Jesus is setting forth what it really means to be a child of God, a true believer in Himself, a real disciple. See the note on "disciple" at 10:1.

In interpreting this sermon we should always keep in mind that it is set in the context of the whole Bible, that we cannot understand it if we ignore this fact, and that the better we understand the Bible as a whole, the better we can understand this sermon.

**5:2** "Them" means His disciples – those who had left all to follow Him and learn from Him (see note at 10:1). However, it seems clear from 7:28 that many other people besides His small number of disciples came up where they were on the hillside and heard Jesus speak. Some of Jesus' words, especially toward the end of these instructions, seem meant for them as well.

**5:3** "Blessed" – this is a translation of a Greek word meaning happy. However it does not mean here a feeling of happiness in the heart, but a happy state, a blessed condition, one that will mean at last eternal joy in God's presence. This word is used 50 times in the Greek New Testament – 28 times in Matthew and Luke alone, 7 times in the Revelation (see references at 11:6). Twice it is used of God – 1 Tim 1:11 and 6:15, and speaks of the perfection of bliss of the Eternal One. The word when used in the NT of people speaks of spiritual blessing, the blessing that comes to those who are in God's kingdom and ruled by God. They have a share in God's happy condition.

This does not mean that the blessed in God's kingdom on earth will never know sorrow or will always experience the emotion of happiness. The fullness of their joy awaits the future. But they have a foretaste of it now, for God shares His joy with His people (John 15:11; 17:13; Rom 14:17; 15:13). True blessedness comes only when we are linked with the true God and His blessedness. The whole Bible was given that men might know of this and come to share it.

See other notes on "blessed" at Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:3; Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1; 119:1. Who are the blessed in this world? The rich? The proud and powerful? Those who are self-confident and feel very good about themselves? That is the way men think, but God's thoughts are different from theirs (Isa 55:8,9; Luke 16:15).

He says the blessed ones are those who are "poor in spirit." This means those who

kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

know their spiritual poverty and are humbled before God because of it. Why are they the blessed ones? Because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Repentance is necessary to enter God's Kingdom (3:12; 4:17). The poor in spirit are the ones who repent. They do so because they are convicted of their sins, they see the poverty of their spiritual condition, and they know they have no righteousness, no merit to plead before God. So they humble themselves in the dust before the Lord Jesus and receive Him into their hearts and lives.

This is put first of the blessings because this is the way into God's kingdom and the only way. And they who are in God's kingdom, every one of them, have experienced this, and so Jesus calls them blessed. These blessed ones are not those who think highly of themselves, but those who think lowly of themselves. See Luke 18:10-14. Other examples – Gen 18:27; Num 12:3; Job 40:4; 42:5,6; Ps 32:5; 40:17; 51:1-5; 90:8,9; Isa 6:5; Jer 3:25; Dan 9:3-6,20; Rom 7:18-25; Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:15. See the opposite of all this in Luke 18:9; Acts 8:9; Rev 3:17. God puts very great value on this quality of humility (18:2,3; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Jam 4:6).

The poor in spirit have true enlightenment – in some measure they see themselves as they really are and God as He really is. Far from thinking they are God (as some people like to do), they feel themselves to be among the worst of people and worthy of no good thing from God. Only God's grace can produce this quality in us. We certainly do not have it by nature. Neither this nor the quality of meekness (v 5) has anything to do with a natural sense of inadequacy, or timidity, or a feeling of inferiority.

**5:4** This is like saying "sad people are really the happy ones." We can see from the place Jesus gives to mourning here in this sermon that it is basic to His whole teaching, that it is a foundation stone on which His kingdom is built.

This verse is linked with the preceding one. Those who see their spiritual poverty, their sin and sinfulness, will feel sorrow, will grieve that they are such sinners. And they may, for that matter, lament the sad fallen condition of the whole human race. Jesus is not talking about the sorrow of this world, the selfish sorrow that people feel because they can't get what they want, or because they experience losses, or because their hopes are dashed. That kind of sorrow works death (2 Cor 7:10).

The sorrow of those in God's kingdom is a godly sorrow that works repentance, and so it leads to the happy condition of God's kingdom. Compare Jam 4:8-10. See godly sorrow at work in psalm 51. Such people will know God's own comfort to some extent now (Isa 40:1,2; John 14:1; 16:33; 2 Cor 1:3-5), and know it fully and eternally hereafter

5 "Blessed *are* the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst

after righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 "Blessed *are* the merciful, for they will obtain mercy.

(Luke 16:25; Rev 21:4).

**5:5** Meekness is not weakness. In fact, it is great strength of character. It is a quality of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Himself (11:29; 21:5; 2 Cor 10:1), and we see what it means by looking at His life. Meekness is consistent with the character of a spiritual soldier mightily fighting the battle for truth and opposing sin and Satan (Eph 6:10-17).

Meekness is a person humbly accepting the circumstances God has brought him into. It is to be willing to suffer for God, to be slighted or despised without rage and retaliation (see 1 Pet 2:21-23). The meek are those who submit to God's will, God's rule over them, and endure what must be endured for His sake (compare 26:39,42; John 18:11). The meek bend their necks to bear Christ's yoke and are willing to learn from Him (11:29; Luke 9:23).

Such people are the spiritually strong of the earth now, the blessed ones who will inherit the whole earth later. The greedy and the grasping, the self-assertive, the self-willed seekers after power and property and prestige will have no part in this earth when God gives it to the meek. Compare Ps 37:1,11. That whole psalm shows the difference between those who are meek and those who are not.

How is meekness to be obtained? The same way the other spiritual qualities are obtained – they can be produced only by the Holy Spirit as we yield to God. He does this by giving people a proper view of themselves and of others, and a proper attitude toward God.

**5:6** Righteousness is a great word of the Bible. The words "righteousness," "righteous," and "righteously" are used more than 500 times. These words mean whatever is right and just and true and good in God's eyes. Righteousness is opposed to all wrong and injustice and crookedness. God, His Kingdom, His aims and purposes, His works, His dealings with men, are all absolutely righteous (Ezra 9:15; Ps 11:7; 19:9; 36:6; 97:2; 145:17; Dan 9:14; John 17:25). And He requires men to be righteous if they would be in His Kingdom and His heaven.

This verse does not say blessed are those who hunger and thirst after pleasure or money or even spiritual experience. Sinful men (which is what we all are by nature) need righteousness more than anything else, and it is that which they must seek if they are going to exist in a happy state with God forever. What we desire and seek reveals what kind of people we are. Those who have become the children of God by faith in Christ (John 1:12,13) will desire righteousness. They will want to be righteous themselves and to see righteousness prevail on earth. God's Spirit will produce this desire in them.

If this is not our experience, at least to some extent, then we may be sure we know nothing of God's righteous kingdom. A person who has no hunger for food, no thirst for water is very sick indeed. Those who have no hunger and thirst for righteousness are spiritually dead.

The Bible does not teach renunciation of desire. On the contrary, it teaches us to have right desires and to desire passionately, hungrily, thirstily for right things. The kingdom of God is not for the self-satisfied but for the desperate, the aching, the one who wants it like the body craves for food and water. Those content with what they are, and willing to behave as everyone else in the world, will never know what true blessedness is.

See psalm 119 for an example of a man who hungers and thirsts for righteousness. To seek for righteousness means to hunger and thirst for the righteous God (see Ps 42:1,2; 63:1), and for a continual fellowship and right relationship with God. It is to hunger to be like the Lord Jesus who is the altogether Righteous One (Acts 3:14; 1 Pet 2:21,22; 3:18; 1 John 2:1). It is a strong desire to be finished with all that is dark, low, unworthy of God, and unholy. Such people will be filled. When? Progressively now in this life (2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:24; Phil 3:12). But completely at Christ's return (Rom 8:29,30; Eph 5:25-27; 1 John 3:1-3).

**5:7** This verse does not teach that God will be merciful to us, save us and bring us into His Kingdom, because we are merciful to others. The mercy that saves sinners has nothing to do with whether or not they were previously merciful. See Acts 9:1-6; 1 Tim 1:13,14. Salvation comes only by repentance and faith in Christ (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:3-6).

But those who are saved by God's mercy should show mercy to others. And such will have God's mercy following them all the days of their lives (Ps 23:6). This verse sets forth a spiritual law of God's kingdom which is taught elsewhere in the Bible (6:14,15; Ps 18:25,26; Gal 6:7). God does not lay aside spiritual laws with men after they experience His mercy and enter His kingdom. If people will not be merciful to others, what right have they to expect God to be merciful to them? This verse shows what real Christians should be, and indeed, what they are, to some extent. When God saves men He begins to make them what they should be. If we are not being made merciful, we reveal that He has not changed us and brought us into His merciful kingdom.

What does it mean to be merciful? It is more than to have feelings of compassion – it is to perform kind and helpful acts towards those in need (Luke 10:37; Eph 4:32; Heb 6:10; Jam 3:17). It means to forgive those who offend us and to do good

8 "Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 "Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.

to them. Compare 18:21-35; Luke 10:30-37. The supreme example of all this is the Lord Jesus Himself.

**5:8** To be pure in heart does not mean to be sinless now. If it meant that, then no one on earth would ever "see God." See 7:11; Rom 7:18; Gal 5:16,17; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8. Jesus taught all His disciples to pray "forgive us our sins" (Luke 11:4).

The Greek word translated pure can mean clean. It can also mean without adulteration – one thing without mixture. "Pure" milk is milk not mixed with water or anything else. "Pure" grain is grain with the chaff removed. "Pure" can also mean free from defilement and guilt. So a pure heart (that is, the inner state of a person) is one that is guilt-free, sincere, upright, without hypocrisy, undivided in its aims, motives and devotion, without a mixture of deceit, darkness, etc. See Jam 4:8. It is a heart fully set on God and righteousness (compare Ps 86:11; 1 Kings 15:14; 2 Chron 16:9).

To try to make the outer things of our lives pure is not enough (see 23:25-28). God wants us to be pure inwardly (Ps 51:6,10). It is the heart God and His people must deal with. He gives an undivided, clean heart. They must guard the heart above all (Prov 4:23; 2 Cor 7:1). The whole message of Christ aims at this very thing – purity, oneness of heart, and the vision of God. Purity of heart begins with repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 15:9). The Lord Jesus, because of the sacrifice of Himself for sinners, purges the conscience and purifies the inner person (Heb 9:14; 10:22). After that believers must walk in the light and renounce all God shows to be wrong (1 John 1:5-7).

"See God" – now believers in Christ have spiritual enlightenment and know God (John 9:39; 17:2,3,6; Acts 26:17,18; 2 Cor 4:4-6; 1 Pet 2:9). They see Him with their spiritual eyes. But eventually they shall see Christ in His divine glory (1 John 3:1-3; 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:3).

**5:9** Peace is another great word in the Bible, used nearly 250 times. The word appears 90 times in the New Testament, and in every book except 1 John. What does it mean to be a peacemaker? It is wanting peace, striving for peace in God's way. It does not mean trying for peace at the cost of truth or righteousness or justice. It is not saying "peace, peace" when there is no peace (Jer 6:14). It is not compromising with evil. True peace must be based on righteousness, and so there can be no peace to the wicked (Ps 85:10; Isa 32:17; 48:22).

What causes struggles, quarrels, fighting, wars between individuals, families, and nations? Sin – Gal 5:19-21; Jam 3:16; 4:1,2. What makes for peace? Setting men free from the bondage of their sinful

10 "Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when *men* revile you, and persecute *you*, and say all kinds of evil against

nature. Anything which promotes that – teaching men the truth of God, showing them how to be reconciled with God, etc – eventually makes for peace, if men respond. Peace with God and the peace of God in the heart will mean peace with others. God in Christ was the great peacemaker. See 2 Cor 5:18-21; Eph 2:14-18; Col 1:21,22.

Human peacemakers must understand that the real problem is sin, and the real remedy is Christ's Gospel. Peacemakers must also have the qualities in the preceding beatitudes. When men are like that they will take a strong stand for truth and righteousness and faith (Eph 6:10-17; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; Jude 3), but they will also try to live at peace with everyone and to promote peace between men (Rom 12:18; 14:19; 1 Cor 7:15; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 3:11).

Why shall peacemakers be called the children of God? Because God is the God of peace (Rom 15:33; Heb 13:20), and He was willing to bear any cost, go to any lengths agreeable with righteousness, to bring men into peace with Himself. When men are like Him in this, they shall be recognized as what they are – the children of the God of peace (v 16).

**5:10** This is the last beatitude – vs 11,12 add to it but do not give a new one. This blessing may sound strange to men in general, but it is true for all that.

"For righteousness' sake" – not for political or social or religious reasons, not for reasons of color, caste, creed, or because of fanaticism or error. Persecution for righteousness marks out the children of God from others (John 15:20,21; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 4:14-16). They are blessed because they are in the happy condition of being on God's side, of standing for God's righteousness and loving it enough to suffer and die for it. This is a blessed state indeed. Persecution comes to such people because the world is full of evil desires, pride, and hatred for the truth.

Sinful men do not want righteousness. They fight those who are for it, and resist the God of righteousness – John 3:19,20; 7:7; 15:18,24; Rom 1:29-32; 8:7; 12:2; 1 John 2:16; 3:12; 5:19 (remember that they persecuted and killed the righteous Son of God – Acts 3:13-15). The disciples of Jesus were righteous peacemakers, but they were despised, beaten, stoned, jailed and killed (Acts 5:40; 7:57,58; 12:1-4; 14:19; 16:22-24; 2 Cor 11:23-26; 2 Tim 3:10-12). Yet they were the blessed ones in the earth, and the kingdom of heaven was theirs. Their afflictions and troubles were for a little while, their blessedness is eternal (2 Cor 4:17,18).

**5:11** This is a continuation of the blessing in v 10. Jesus here shows that to be persecuted for righteousness is to be

you, falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven. For in this way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste, how can it be made salty *again*? Then it is good for nothing, but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand. And it gives light to all who are in the

persecuted for Him. One way men persecute the righteous is by lying about them and slandering them. But to be the kind of people the wicked hate actually is to be in a blessed condition.

**5:12** Being able to rejoice in persecution comes from the knowledge that to be persecuted for righteousness and for Christ, works good for His people. Compare Rom 8:17,18; 2 Cor 4:17,18; 1 Pet 1:6,7. The fact that God will reward His servants is seen often in the New Testament (10:41,42; 16:27; Mark 9:41; Luke 6:35; 1 Cor 3:8,14; Col 3:24; Heb 10:35; 2 John 8; Rev 11:18; 22:12).

"Before you" – see 23:34-37; Acts 7:52; Heb 11:35-38. Rejoicing in tribulation was a mark of the apostles – Acts 5:41; 16:22-25; Col 1:24; 1 Pet 4:13.

**5:13** God's people are the "salt" of the earth, not the "pepper" or the "sugar." The "you" here are those in God's kingdom, those who have the qualities set forth in vs 3-12, especially those who suffer for righteousness and Christ. But such people as "salt" do not make the world tasty to God! The meaning is different here. Salt preserves things, and God's people preserve the world from becoming totally corrupted, and from being destroyed by God's anger (compare Gen 18:26; 19:22).

"Trampled underfoot by men" – Christianity without the qualities listed in vs 3-12 is useless and deserves to be rejected and destroyed (Luke 14:34,35).

**5:14-16** The people described in vs 3-12 are a new creation of God to give spiritual light on earth. Christ was that light while He was on earth (John 8:12; 9:5). Now His followers are "children of the light" and must shine forth with His light which is in them (John 12:35,36; Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 4:4-6; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5).

**5:16** This is the best way to let light shine – not good talk, not good intentions, but good deeds. Many boast of enlightenment who are never kind or helpful to others, and who never glorify God by anything that they do. Such a boast from such people is an abomination to God.

"Father" – this is the name Jesus used above all others for God (about 170 times). The whole New Testament has the name above 350 times). It indicates that God is a person who loves, cares, protects, and

house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

17 "Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have come, not to destroy, but to fulfil *them*. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle will pass away from the Law until all is fulfilled. 19 Therefore whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches *men to do so*, he will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches *them*,

provides as an ideal father should. The name indicates also that He has spiritual children (v 9; John 1:12,13). We should do good that men might praise Him, not ourselves (compare 1 Cor 10:31).

**5:17** "The Law and the Prophets" was a term the Jews used to mean the whole Old Testament. The Lord Jesus is saying His teaching was in harmony with the OT, that its laws, types, sacrifices, prophecies pointed to Himself. All its spiritual principles, the full measure of its righteousness is fulfilled by Him. He came to accomplish the whole will of God revealed there. He is the fulfillment of all that the law and the prophets pictured, described, foretold, and promised (of course, this does not mean that all that is in the prophets was fulfilled at His first coming).

With Jesus now on the scene, the Old Testament is a more glorious book with its profound meaning brought to light; without Him it would be unfulfilled and void of much of its meaning. See Luke 24:27,44; John 1:45; 5:39,46; Acts 3:24-26; 13:27; 1 Pet 1:10,11. The whole book of Hebrews shows some of the ways in which the Lord Jesus fulfilled the OT.

"I have come. . . to fulfil them" – this is one of many reasons why Jesus came from heaven to earth. See also 9:13; 10:35; 20:28; Luke 19:10; John 6:38; 9:39; 10:10,11; 12:46.

**5:18** See how Jesus puts His stamp of approval on the Old Testament. See also 4:4; 15:3-6; 22:43; Luke 24:44; John 10:35. He obviously regarded it as the Word of God inspired by God's Spirit. Compare 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:1,2; 2 Pet 1:21. He was God incarnate and knew all things, so we should hold the same views of it that He had.

**5:19** Here again it is clear that from v 3 Jesus has been talking about those in God's kingdom, those who have become God's children by a new spiritual birth. We cannot enter God's kingdom by trying to keep the law He gave through Moses (Acts 13:38,39; Rom 3:21,28; 8:3; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:4-7). But after entering it there are spiritual principles which will be at work. These are His own commandments. "Least of these commandments" – we can hardly think that He is referring to the Ten Commandments of the Law, for there was no "least" among those commandments. There is much reason to think that He is

he will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will absolutely not enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of olden times, You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to the judgment. 22 But I tell you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause will be in danger of the judgment; and whoever says to his brother, 'Empty fellow', will be in danger of the Council; but whoever says, 'You fool', will be in danger of hell fire.

23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there

referring to His own commandments, two of which He has already given (vs 12,16), others which He was about to give.

**5:20** "Pharisees" – 3:7. Here Jesus teaches plainly that not all people, and not all religious people, are in God's kingdom. A certain kind of righteousness is insufficient. This is self-righteousness, the sort of righteousness people try to gain by trying to keep the law or by doing what they consider good works, the kind of righteousness we see in the Pharisees (23:1-28; Luke 18:10-14. See also Rom 10:1-4; Phil 3:7-9). The Pharisees and scribes (teachers of the law) were the religious leaders of the people, but the righteousness of the very least believer in Christ exceeds theirs, and must do so.

What is this righteousness that God requires if people are to be in His kingdom? It is a righteousness by faith in Christ which links believers with Christ and brings His Spirit into them. They become both righteous before God and changed inwardly so that righteous living is possible to them (Rom 3:24; 5:1-5; 8:3; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22-24). The rest of the Sermon on the Mount contrasts this righteousness which God approves with that which He rejects. Righteous behavior which comes out of a changed heart will be vastly superior to that which is produced by sinners from their own natures. Indeed, what kind of righteousness could sinners ever produce even by their mightiest efforts? See Isa 64:6.

**5:21-26** "Murder" – Ex 20:13. The law teachers and Pharisees would have restricted this commandment to the outward act of murder. Jesus speaks of the inner attitudes of the heart which can result in murder, of uttering words murderous in their contempt. He says the wrong sort of anger is like murder in the heart, and the person guilty of it is as much worthy of hell as the literal murderer (v 22). So men should be very careful in any matter, legal or otherwise that could result in anger, hate, the heart given to murderous thoughts. See 1 John 3:15.

**5:22** "I tell you" indicates that Jesus is speaking with absolute authority as the

before the altar, and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

25 "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way *to court* with him, so that this adversary will not at any time hand you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I say to you, you will by no means get out of there, until you have paid the last copper coin.

27 "You have heard that it was said to those of olden times, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 And if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw *it* from you, for it is better for you that one of your parts is lost than

Messiah and Son of God.

"Brother" – in the Bible this word is used to indicate various relationships. As well as a literal brother it may mean a fellow Jew, a fellow Christian, a fellow man.

"Empty fellow" – the Greek has "raca" – a word of contempt probably meaning empty, brainless or worthless.

"The Council" – the Sanhedrin. This was the Jewish High Court. There were 71 members of it made up of chief priests, elders and teachers of the law.

"Fool" – it is plain from this verse that to be in danger of hell one does not need to commit what men consider serious crimes. The Lord Jesus is pointing out the importance of the state of the heart.

"Hell fire" – 3:12; 7:19; 13:40,42; 18:8; 25:41; Rev 20:15; 21:8. "Hell" in Greek here is Gehenna. Note at Mark 9:48.

**5:24** The implication is that God will not accept our worship and gifts if there is something wrong in our relationship with others (especially with fellow children of God) that is our fault and that we can put right. If we make no attempt at reconciliation we give opportunity to the kind of anger that is like murder in the heart. That is why He begins these verses with the word "therefore."

**5:25,26** Here is another way in which God's people should live in peace with others. Hostility and quarrels over money or property are to have no part in their lives (vs 44,45). The Lord Jesus commands His people to reach an agreement with their opponents who want to sue them in court. If they do not obey, God will see to it that they have a great deal of trouble. Compare 1 Cor 6:1-8.

**5:27-30** "You shall not commit adultery" – Ex 20:14. Again Jesus goes beyond the literal command of the law and emphasizes the inner thoughts of the heart. When they abstained from outward acts of sin, the Pharisees thought themselves very good people and righteous in God's eyes. They were not careful about the inner life, the state of the heart (23:25-28). One reason God's children experience poorness of spirit, mourning, etc is because they know the very



*that* your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you. For it is better for you that one of your parts is lost than *that* your whole body be thrown into hell.

31 "It has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.

33 'Again, you have heard that it was said to those of olden times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your vows to the Lord.' 34 But I

desires that rise in their hearts show how sinful they are by nature (see Rom 7:7,8). All Jesus' teaching in this sermon, including these verses, is pointed at making people "blessed" – people with the qualities of vs 3-12.

"In his heart" – He is not teaching that those with lustful thoughts might just as well commit acts of adultery. He is not teaching there is no difference between inward thoughts and outward action. Outward acts of sins are far more damaging to others and to ourselves than inward desires. Hate of a brother is evil in itself, but the act of murder goes beyond that and robs the brother of life. Lust is evil, but adultery further pollutes oneself and drags another into sin, with all the evil results that will come from that. If one lusts one might just as well sin outwardly is a lie of Satan. Jesus' emphasis is on watching the heart as well as the outward action.

In vs 29,30 Jesus is not teaching the literal mutilation of the body as an aid to holiness. He knew, as we do, that it is not physical eyes or hands that offend or lead us into sin, and that gouging out an eye or cutting off a hand would not make us better people or less likely to sin. If the right eye is plucked out, the left remains. If both are plucked out the imagination of the sinful heart remains (15:19,20; Gen 8:21; Jer 17:9).

Sin is in the heart and the heart must be dealt with by full repentance and a complete break with the old life. Jesus is speaking in a striking way to emphasize an exceedingly important truth – a person should do anything necessary to keep out of hell, he should cut himself off from any sin, any temptation, any hindrance to entering God's kingdom. The person who will not do this does not value the kingdom of God as he ought, or fear the anger of God as he ought. Paul taught that lusts and sinful acts were like members of the body and must be put to death. See Col 3:5; Rom 8:13.

**5:31** "Divorces" – see also 19:3-9; Deut 24:1. Jesus' teaching is plain: there is only one reason that makes divorce acceptable to God – sexual immorality on the part of one of the married couple. Even then Jesus

says to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is God's throne, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King, 36 And you shall not swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your 'yes' be yes, and your 'no' be no, for whatever is more than this is from the evil one.

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you that you should not resist evil, but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take away your coat, let him have *your* cloak also. 41 And

does not demand divorce but only permits it. Remember this teaching is for those who have, to some extent at least, the qualities seen in vs 3-12. How can a person with those qualities divorce his wife or cast off a husband for any reason except the most serious offense? And even then there must be no haste to do so, but remembrance that both are sinners whom God has forgiven. Compare 6:14,15.

**5:33-37** "Swear" – refers to the voluntary (and often very careless) use of oaths in every day life to convince others that one is telling the truth. See also Jam 5:12. Jesus tells us to be men of our word, absolutely truthful in all we say and promise. As Jesus' disciples we must never say yes when we mean no, or say no when we mean yes. Lying and deception are hateful to God and have no place in God's kingdom. See notes at Ps 5:6; 15:2; Prov 6:16-19; Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9,10. And as God's children we should never take God's name in vain or use it lightly, but show proper reverence for His name and all that pertains to Him (Ex 20:7).

**5:37** "The evil one" – or it could be translated simply "evil." Lying, swearing, and using God's name in vain have their origin in the evil one, Satan (John 8:44), but come also from the evil in people's hearts and minds.

**5:38** Ex 21:24,25; Lev 24:20. That was the rule for the society, for the nation. It was the principle of perfect justice.

**5:39-41** "You" in these verses are Christ's disciples. He is speaking of a principle that should reign in the spiritual kingdom He sets up in His people's hearts. It has nothing whatever to do with how a nation governs itself. Governments must resist evil (see Rom 13:1-7). The principle here concerns the relationship of Christ's individual disciples to those who wrong them, not to the state's relationship to individuals, or to other states. Those in Christ's kingdom are to show forth the qualities of vs 3-12.

The desire for revenge is deeply rooted in man's sinful nature. Some people kill others for some insult or slight injury. One purpose of the law of Moses (Ex 21:24,25) was to prevent such a thing and promote perfect justice. Jesus goes further and



whoever compels you to go a mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour, and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies. Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who abuse you and persecute you, 45 so that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just

reveals the attitude His people should show in the face of injury and injustice. They are not to demand their rights, or think of self, but consider how to do good to those who injure them.

God's people must resist Satan (Jam 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9), and resist sin in the church (1 Cor 5:11-13; 1 Tim 5:20). But here Jesus is speaking of evil persons who wrong them as individuals. This surely does not mean that Christians should not protect their families and help others who are in danger from evil men. But they are not to fight those who would do them some injury or injustice, or seek vengeance on them. Those in God's kingdom are not to meet violence with violence, or force with force (26:52).

Jesus Himself pointed out the sins of the Jews and resisted the evil they did to God's house (see 21:12). But He did not resist those who spit in His face and beat His back and crucified Him (though He could have called angels to His aid (26:52,53). Followers of Christ should follow Him in their attitude to personal injuries. See 1 Pet 2:21-23. This passage of Scripture has nothing to do with passive resistance to achieve political purposes.

**5:42** The principle is the same as that in the above verse – reject self and represent God's spiritual kingdom which is one of grace, mercy, love and kindness. Disciples of Christ must think of others and their needs as He did. But should we give to a person who begs for money to buy intoxicating drink or drugs? Or to a crook who makes his living deceiving others? Surely our giving should not cause harm, or actually promote idleness, begging, or evil. The Lord Jesus wants us to be compassionate but not stupid. When people are in real need (6:2), we should help if we can. See 1 John 3:17,18. We may not be able to give what such people ask or all they ask, but we can give something. Compare Acts 3:6.

**5:43-47** Love is at the heart of God's spiritual kingdom. The King is the embodiment of love (1 John 4:8), and His rule is love (John 13:34) and everyone in God's kingdom must obey this rule. They are to aim at perfection of love (v 48. Compare 1 John 4:16-18). Love is the fulfilling of all God's law (Rom 13:8-10).

The Old Testament nowhere said the Jews should hate their enemy, but that was the

and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore be perfect, just as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

**6** "Watch out that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

traditional teaching of the religious leaders in Israel. It was actually contrary to such verses as Ex 23:4,5 and Prov 25:21. We cannot become God's children by practicing the principle of love, but if we are God's children, we show that we are such by practicing it (v 45). God loved His enemies (Rom 5:8-10; Col 1:21,22), and He does good to them.

"Pray for those" (v 44) – Luke 6:27,28. **5:46** Tax collectors were usually Jews who served the Romans (who ruled the Jewish people at that time). Their fellow countrymen considered them traitors. Also they had a reputation for greed. **5:47** Those in God's spiritual kingdom must act differently, be better, do more than those who are not. If they do not, what evidence is there that they are in it? See v 20.

**5:48** This is the only possible standard a perfect God could set before His people. God is to be their model, and not this fallen world. But only sinless people (if any could ever be found) could perfectly live up to it. However, everyone in the kingdom should aim to do so. Perfection in behavior is the goal set before Christians in other places in the New Testament. See 2 Cor 13:11; Col 1:28; 4:12; 2 Tim 3:17; Heb 13:21; Jam 1:4; 1 John 2:1,6. Aiming at perfection is not the same as achieving it – Rom 7:18,25; Phil 3:12; Jam 3:2.

Verses 39-48 reveal certain plain alternatives – who shall rule us, self or God? What principles shall we follow – the principle that self comes first and must be defended, revenged and promoted, or the principle that self must be denied, and God's kingdom put first? The constant theme of the Sermon on Mount is dying to self and being alive toward God; everything done to please Him, nothing to please self. Great motive power is needed to keep this sermon with its great spiritual demands. What is the only one that will work? See John 14:23,24.

**6:1** Men may see the righteous acts or charitable works of God's people and it is right that they should (5:16). But His people must not do them hoping men will see them and praise them. It is enough that God sees and approves. There must be no hypocrisy in God's kingdom, no using of religious acts to impress men, gain a name, or get praise.

2 "Therefore when you do charitable deeds, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, so that they may get glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your charitable deeds will be in secret. And your Father himself, who sees in secret, will reward you openly.

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that

they will be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and shutting your door, pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 But when you pray, do not use empty repetitions, as the pagans *do*. For they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 So do not be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him.

9 "Therefore pray in this way:

Our Father who is in heaven,

"Reward" – references at 5:12.

**6:2** Prov 22:9; Acts 20:35; Gal 2:10; Jam 2:15,16; 1 John 3:17,18. Notes and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15. Christ's disciples must not call attention to their giving. Standing with a rupee in one hand and a trumpet in the other is not the way for them. That is the way of hypocrites – vs 5,16; 23:5. Hypocrites do not do good deeds simply because it is their duty and privilege to do them. If others did not see or know of them, they would never do any good deeds at all. God will not honor such people, because they are not seeking God's honor. Compare John 5:44; 12:26; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 10:18; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4.

**6:3,4** In other words, tell it to absolutely no one, not even to yourself to take pride in it or to praise self. God's people do not need to keep a record of their good deeds – God will do that. Jesus is emphasizing again that those in His spiritual kingdom must renounce self and live for God alone, ignoring man's approval or blame. Acts of mercy must not become acts for applause.

**6:5,6** Prayer must be for God's ear alone. It is enough that He hears. Hypocrites are not concerned about God – they want to impress men. They may seem to be worshiping God, but are really worshiping themselves. Public prayer is good, but it has its dangers. It may sometimes be difficult to speak to God without trying to impress others who are listening. This may be one reason for Jesus' emphasis on secret prayer. It will be more direct, more real, with no temptation to impress others.

**6:7** Our praying should be neither mechanical or in ignorance. A name repeated over and over (see 1 Kings 18:26; Acts 19:34), or a formula of words constantly repeated, or piling up words to convince God to listen – such things have no power at all with God. God does not require our babbling to know what we need and give it to us. We do not need to wake Him up, or capture His attention (Ps 34:15; 121:2-5; 2 Chron 16:9). And we need not instruct Him about the things that are necessary for us to have. Christ's disciples do not have a God who is more persuaded to answer, the more words they speak.

**6:8** "Father" – note at 5:16. Some may ask, "if God knows what we need before we

ask, then why ask?" The answer is simple – we are to ask because He tells us to do so (v 9; 7:7; Luke 18:1; John 16:24). It is one of the ways in which God's people have fellowship with God, experience His joy, and obtain what is needed. It is a way which God uses to teach them many spiritual lessons. It is also a constant reminder that they are dependent on God for everything and that they should acknowledge it.

**6:9** The following prayer covers those things which should be of greatest concern to Christ's disciples. See what great truth, what important requests can be put in simple language and few words. Not everything God's people will pray for is here – just those things that should daily be in their minds. This prayer is a model, an example, a sample of how they should pray and what they should pray for. We may pray for many things besides those mentioned here, but we should never think we have gotten beyond the requests of this prayer.

The words "this day" and "daily" in v 11 indicate that the requests of this prayer are good and proper ones to make every day, and not just occasionally in church. The plural word "our" indicates that these requests are appropriate for two or more members of a family, or a number of believers, to make together. Perhaps it indicates also that an individual who privately prays alone the lines of this prayer (and this is surely a good thing to do) is to think of others along with himself – his or her family, or friends, or church, or an even wider circle of believers.

"Father" – see the note at 5:16. God's people are to have God-centered prayers not self-centered ones. And we should approach Him as our loving Father who is ready to listen to us and help us (7:9-11). When we pray we are to think clearly about the One we are speaking to. The words "in heaven" indicate majesty and greatness and transcendence. The Father in heaven is the great Creator of the universe, the all-powerful God who can hear every prayer and do all things according to His own will and purpose.

"Hallowed by your name" – name means God's nature and character, who and what He is. The desire that God be honored on earth should be the very first concern of every disciple of Jesus. This must come

hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done on earth,  
as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

before personal requests, not merely in prayer, but in life as a whole. Their prayers, desires, deeds and words should all be for God's glory, just as Christ's were (5:16; John 8:29; 17:4; 1 Cor 10:31). Is it not probable that many of our prayers remain unanswered because in our asking we do not put God's honor first in our thoughts and desires?

"Hallowed" means to be considered holy. God is the absolutely holy one, and those who pray to Him should keep this in mind. We should always want God's name to be honored and glorified in our own lives, in our families, and among the people with whom we associate. Also, perhaps, this is a prayer that God Himself will hallow His name, that He would bring about conditions among men that they would recognize the holy nature of the one true God, that He would cause people to respect and honor Him. Compare Ezek 36:23. Notes on God's holiness at Lev 20:7; Isa 6:3; Rev 15:4. **6:10** "Your kingdom come" – this concern also has to do with God, not with personal needs. But if God's kingdom (4:17) has already come, and Christ's disciples are in it, why should they pray that it might come? It has come now only in a hidden, spiritual sense in the hearts of His people. This prayer may express a desire for the spread of His kingdom in the world, that more and more people would submit in their hearts to God's rule. Or, more likely, it may be a prayer for God's kingdom to come openly and be manifest in all the earth (see 16:27,28; 25:31; Luke 21:31; 22:18, 29,30; Acts 1:6; Rev 11:15; 20:4-6). In this case it would be like praying for the return of the Lord Jesus (Rev 22:20).

"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" – is it not true that the will of God in heaven is done perfectly, immediately, heartily, joyously, faithfully, constantly? That is how we should want things in the whole earth, including in ourselves as individuals, in our families, and our churches. This prayer will have its complete fulfillment only when the prayer before it is fulfilled. Now everywhere in the earth the will of God is either unknown or resisted, disobeyed and despised. As individuals who pray this prayer we should make it the great concern of our life to know and do the will of God ourselves – Col 1:9; 4:12; Heb 13:20,21; 1 John 2:17; 5:14; Rev 2:26.

**6:11** "Our daily bread" – after first praying for the great matters that have to do with God, disciples may turn to requests for their own needs. Bread here signifies the basic necessities of life. Observe carefully that Jesus did not tell us to pray for riches, or even for many days' needs to be given in

12 And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom, and the power,

advance. Disciples are to recognize that their day by day life on earth is totally dependent on God, and look to Him in faith to meet their needs (vs 25-33).

This does not mean that disciples are to stop working and beg God for their food. See 2 Thess 3:10; 1 Tim 5:8. They are to work, but at the same time to recognize it is God's grace and not their mere working which keeps them supplied. Should the rich, and those who always have large supplies of everything they need, pray this prayer? Certainly. They too need to recognize that they are dependent on God for everything, and that what they have today can be gone tomorrow. See Prov 23:5.

**6:12** "Forgive us our debts" – compare this with Luke 11:4, where the wording is "forgive us our sins." Why has Jesus given us the same prayer in different words? Perhaps He meant the word "sins" to indicate things we have done, actual trespasses, sins of commission, and the word "debts" to signify what we have failed to do, sins of omission. However that may be, by comparing Matthew with Luke here we can see that debts toward God too are sins. We owe God perfect love and perfect obedience, and come short in our payments. The prayer Jesus taught us is not complete without confession of sin.

Keep in mind that this is a sample of the kind of prayer that all of His disciples should make, not only then, but throughout this whole age of grace. From this we judge that Jesus did not think that any of His disciples would reach a state of sinless perfection on this earth, that any of them would ever be completely beyond the daily need for forgiveness. It is plain that if day by day we need to ask for forgiveness, then day by day, either in what we do or in what we fail to do, or in what we think or desire, we are guilty of sinning and need forgiveness. Jesus would not tell us to ask for something we do not need, that did not relate to us.

On our proneness to sin and need of forgiveness see 7:11; Rom 7:18,21; Gal 5:16,17; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8; 1 Kings 8:46. On forgiveness see notes at vs 14,15; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-35; etc. Observe that we have a right to pray for forgiveness only if we forgive those who have offended us. If we do not forgive them, how dare we think that God should forgive us?

**6:13** "Lead us not into temptation" – God does not tempt men to sin. Temptation comes from Satan and from one's own heart (4:1-3; 1 Thess 3:5; Jam 1:13,14). And we must understand that we are dependent on God alone to keep us safe in time of temptation (1 Cor 10:13).

See David's prayer in Ps 141:4 – surely a

and the glory, forever. Amen.

14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 "Moreover when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, *putting on* a gloomy appearance. For they disfigure their faces, so that they may appear

prayer God delights to answer. God does try men (see notes at Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12), but that is a different matter. When we pray this prayer we are asking God to act according to His will, and so we are not asking Him to keep us from all trials. We are asking that He lead us not into temptation, that He would not lead us, who are so sinful and weak, in such a way that we fall into the hands of Satan the tempter.

One more fact we should understand – it is quite possible to pray like this and at the same time have a secret desire to be overcome by temptation and to sin. This, of course, is insincere and hypocritical praying, and in such a case we should not think that God is obliged to answer us and keep us from falling. But when we pray this prayer in the right spirit, we are setting ourselves against all temptation and sin, and against the desire to be tempted. And this we must do to be successful in the spiritual life.

"Evil" – this could also be translated "the evil one," meaning Satan. The author of these notes thinks that here the translation "evil" is better than "the evil one", because it is a more general, more inclusive term. It refers to any kind of evil, from any source. The prayer to "deliver us" is the reverse of the previous request about temptation. This is something God will surely do for the trusting, prayerful disciple of Christ. Jesus would not teach us to pray for something it was not God's will to do. In this prayer Christ wants us to acknowledge that God alone can deliver us from evil within or without or from Satan, that we cannot be delivered by our own strength and wisdom.

In this whole prayer we see the relationship which must exist between God and a disciple of Jesus. God is the mighty one, the loving Father who supplies everything needed; the disciple is weak and needy and must look to God for everything. God is to be honored, not the disciple, His will done, not the disciple's. All the disciple can do is ask – "give", "forgive", "deliver." Jesus is making abundantly clear our utter dependence on a loving God.

"Yours is the kingdom. . .Amen" – a very fitting conclusion to this prayer, or any prayer. See other notes on prayer at 7:7-12; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8; Rom 8:26,27; Eph 14:6,7; Col 1:9; 1 Thess 5:18; Heb 11:6; Jam 1:5-8; 5:16-18; 1 John 5:14,15; Gen 18:32.

**6:14,15** Compare Matt 18:21-35. This does not mean that men can earn God's

to men to be fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you openly.

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for

forgiveness by forgiving others. Forgiveness is a gift of God's grace (notes at 9:5-7; etc.). But who can receive this gift of forgiveness? Only those who repent and turn to Christ (3:2; 4:17; Luke 24:47), those in whom the Holy Spirit is working to produce the kind of people described in 5:3-12. One evidence of the Spirit's working in them is that they forgive others.

If people are not willing to forgive others they show they have not been forgiven themselves and have not received God's grace. And they will never be forgiven until they are brought to repentance and faith in Christ and are changed into the sort of people who forgive others. And for those who are already in God's kingdom, any refusal to forgive others is a very serious matter. Those guilty of it will experience God's frown and God's chastening until they learn to forgive.

**6:16** This means a voluntary fast for the purpose of seeking God, disciplining the body for the sake of one's spiritual life. Compare Ps 35:13; Isa 58:6,7; Joel 1:14; 2:12. That which should be used as a means to help the spiritual life can, if abused, reveal there is no spiritual life to help. To fast in an attempt to get man's praise is monstrous. Notice Jesus says "when you fast" – He regarded fasting as good and right. He fasted 40 days (4:1) and His disciples would fast (9:14,15).

**6:17,18** God rewards not every kind of fasting, but only that done from the right motives. True fasting has to do with a disciple's secret dealings with God. Others should not even be able to guess what is happening.

**6:19** "Treasures" – a word indicating all that men love and count as treasures, whether money or property of some sort, or anything else. The attitude which people should have toward such things appears also in other Scriptures – for example, Luke 12:16-21; 1 Tim 6:6-10,17-19.

"Moth", "rust" and "thieves" speak of the perishing nature of worldly possessions. They may be here today and gone tomorrow. If they are not gone tomorrow we may be; and what are we laying up in heaven which will endure forever? Observe that the Lord strictly forbids His disciples to lay up treasures here. Therefore to do so is disobedience to His instructions (and therefore sin) as well as foolishness.

**6:20** "Treasures in heaven" – the rewards God gives His servants (5:12). We store them up by service to God and acts of kindness and mercy to men (19:21; Ps

yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in or steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 "The light of the body is the eye. Therefore if your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore if the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or for your body, what you will put on. Is not the life

more than food, and the body *more* than clothing? 26 See the birds of the air. For they do not sow, they do not reap or gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his height?

28 "And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not work, they do not spin. 29 And yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not adorned like one of these. 30 Therefore, if God clothes the grass of the field like this, which today is *here*, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will he* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or, 'What will we drink?' or, 'What will we wear?' 32 (For the

112:9; Prov 19:17; 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Cor 9:15; 2 Tim 4:8; Heb 6:10; 1 Pet 5:4). We can do things on earth which will have eternal results. We can live for the sake of eternity rather than for our brief time here. **6:21** The Lord Jesus does not want us to love this world and its treasures, but to set our hearts on heaven. Compare Col 3:1,2; 1 John 2:15-17. There are only two possible kinds of treasures – the perishing ones in this world or the eternal ones in heaven. Which should a sensible person labor for?

**6:22,23** This is true in both the physical and spiritual realm, but the Lord Jesus is speaking of spiritual matters. The subject is the same as before – treasures. To fix the eye on something is to desire it. Good spiritual eyes see things as they are and desire the glory of God, the things of the kingdom of light, and the eternal rewards He gives to those who serve Him. Bad spiritual eyes do not see things as they really are, and desire the things of time, the things related to sin, self, and darkness. They see no glory of Christ and no value in salvation (2 Cor 4:4).

The direction in which the eyes of our mind and heart look determines whether we will be filled with God's light or the darkness of sin. There are only two possible kinds of vision – that which is set on the things of this world, or that which is set on the things of heaven. Compare 2 Cor 4:18; Heb 11:26,27. God will hold us responsible for where we keep our eyes (Luke 11:35).

**6:24** The subject is the same as that in vs 19-23.

"Money" – translated from a word which means riches or treasure. It signifies what men consider valuable in this world. The so-called treasures of earth can become a terrible master, a dictator that makes men serve them. They compel men to lie, cheat, steal and lose their souls. There are only two masters possible – God, or Satan who uses the "treasures" of earth to enslave men. See Satan's attempt to destroy Christ in 4:8,9. Any person, even one who thinks he is a Christian, who is serving money or worldly wealth of any kind, and says he is

serving God, is either deceived or a liar. The service of God is utterly, eternally opposed to the service of anything else (4:10).

Various countries have various gods and idols, but money is the universal idol of the world, the thing that people everywhere love, bow down to, and serve. The believer in Christ must renounce this idol as they do every other idol (compare Col 3:5; 1 John 5:21; Luke 14:33).

**6:25-34** These verses too are related to the subject begun in v 19. One reason unbelievers store up treasures on earth is because they want security, and they have no trust in God. Disciples of Jesus are not to be so. Theirs should be a life free of worry (Phil 4:6,7). Of course they should plan, and work, and do what they can to provide for their families (Gen 3:19; 2 Thess 3:10; 1 Tim 5:8). But their trust in God should be such that they are not anxious even about the basic necessities of life – food, water and clothing. If they worry it is because their faith is small (v 30). Believers are not to act like unbelievers, as though they had no heavenly Father to look after them (v 32). If disciples do their part, God will surely do His (v 33).

**6:26** Nature can teach us spiritual lessons. See, for example, Ps 19:1-4; Prov 6:6; 30:24-28. The God who is kind to birds will not forget His own children. But even birds do not sit on a limb and expect God to drop food in their mouths. They build their nests and gather the food God provides.

**6:29** Solomon was the richest of all Israel's kings and lived in the greatest luxury and magnificence (1 Kings 10:23; Eccl 2:7-9).

**6:30** "Little faith" – on four or more occasions Jesus spoke of His disciples little faith. See also 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20; Luke 17:5,6. Little faith does not mean no faith. Some have the faith that enables them to receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, yet not enough to escape their worries and fears, or to give them confidence in times of danger, or to accomplish seemingly impossible things by God's grace, or to help others as they might otherwise do.

**6:32** God wants His people to be different



Gentiles go after all these things.) For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Its own trouble *is* enough for the day.

**7** "Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. 2 For with the judgment you judge, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

from all others, a unique, trusting, happy people, who go after heavenly spiritual things.

**6:33** Disciples of Christ have chosen God as their master, not money, not the needs of the body, not anything of earth. They are to set their eyes on Him and His glory (vs 22-24). Their priorities are to be right. Their chief concern should be for God's kingdom and God's righteousness. They should care more about that than about their own needs.

To seek for God's kingdom cannot mean that disciples should try to enter it, for they are already in it. It means to seek the good of God's kingdom, its glory, its power and the rule of God more and more in themselves and in other people. Compare Rom 2:7. What is it to seek for God's righteousness? It does not mean to seek justification, because believers are already justified (Rom 5:1). It means to make His righteousness one of our chief concerns, to seek to be righteous in our personal lives as God is righteous, to have the right style of living that only He can produce in us (note at 5:6), to see His righteousness fulfilled in others and in our relationships with others. Those who put God first in all things will find that God takes care of them and gives them all they need (Phil 4:19).

**6:34** Compare Phil 4:6; 1 Pet 5:7; Ps 23:1. There are four good reasons seen here in Matt 6:25-34 why believers should not worry. First, the Lord Jesus three times forbids it (vs 25,31,34).

Second, worry is completely useless (v 27).

Third, worry makes believers act like unbelievers (v 32).

Fourth, believers have a heavenly Father to look after them and give them all they need (vs 30,33).

A fifth reason is implied – worry dishonors God. It is as if a person is saying "my heavenly Father is unable or unwilling to look after me." God does not deny that needs will occur or that troubles and difficulties will come. He only tells us to live one day at a time and have confidence in Him. See also John 14:1; Phil 4:6,7.

**7:1,2** "Do not judge" – compare Rom 14:1-4,10-13. This refers to judging in the sense of condemnation – harsh, severe, unloving criticism. It does not mean that

3 "And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and, look, a plank *is* in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, so that they do not trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

the church should not judge evil and exercise discipline. See Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:1-5,12,13. It does not mean that one should not use discernment. How could we obey the Lord's words in vs 6, 15 and 20, if we did not look carefully at others and learn what they are like from what we see? Jesus taught us to be kind, but not to be blind.

But we are not to try to take God's place and condemn others. If we condemn others we will be condemned. In this matter at least, others will treat us as we treat them. More importantly, God Himself will judge us. This does not mean He will condemn His children to hell if they judge others. It means He will judge and chastise us as His children. See 1 Cor 11:31,32; Heb 12:5-11; 1 Pet 4:17.

**7:3-5** As long as we have a harsh critical spirit we are incapable of helping others. Our very attitude is one "plank" we may have in our eye. Our high estimate of ourselves makes us like a blind oculist trying to prescribe glasses for others. Jesus calls such people "hypocrites" because those who judge others are guilty themselves (Rom 2:1), and have not faced themselves or judged themselves as they ought. God has not sent His children into the world as judges but as witnesses (Acts 1:8). Each disciple of Christ should think that others are better than himself – Phil 2:3. If we do that we will not condemn them.

**7:6** Jesus means there are some people in the world who in their behavior are like pigs and dogs – they want to roll in the mire of sin and indulge in moral filth (by "dogs" He meant the street scavengers of villages that we see in many parts of the world, not household pets). They are not interested in repentance or God's kingdom. Compare Ps 22:16; Isa 56:11; Phil 3:2; 2 Pet 2:22; Jude 10; Rev 22:15. Such people are thoughtless and greedy, and oppose truth and righteousness.

His people are to discern such, and refrain from giving them holy truth or wisdom's pearls – until they repent, if such a time ever comes. Does this mean God's people should not preach to the unconverted? Of course not (Matt 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47). But they must be discriminating and careful – wise as serpents and harmless as doves, knowing when to speak and when to be



7 "Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

9 "Or which one of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give

silent, and what to say and what not to say to various kinds of people (10:14,16. Compare Luke 23:8,9; Acts 13:46; 18:6). **7:7,8** Jesus gives these great promises to God's children. They are in the context of this Sermon on the Mount where we are already told what good things we should ask for and seek (6:9-15,33). So our praying should be in accordance with all that. The Bible does not give us sweeping promises that God will give us anything we ask for even if He knows it is bad for us. We should ask God for those things which will enable us to live according to His teachings. And for this we need a continual supply of God's grace to us, the power of the Holy Spirit, a pure, undivided heart, etc.

The words "seek" and "knock" indicate persistence in prayer. We should keep on seeking until we find, keep on knocking until God opens the door. Of course these verses do not teach us to ask men for what we need. Quite the opposite. We are to ask God. See also Ps 34:10; 69:32; Jer 29:13; Hos 10:12; Luke 11:5-11; 18:1-8; 1 Thess 5:17.

**7:11** "You then, being evil" – this is Jesus' word to His own disciples (Peter, James and John were there, and the other apostles. See 5:1,2). They were certainly no worse than other people – indeed, they were among the best people on earth. But Jesus is describing them as they were in the eyes of a holy God, and so He calls them evil (compare 19:17; Ps 14:1-3). Jesus was emphasizing the sinfulness of all men, including His own people. Wrong thoughts, bad desires, foolish and improper acts, failure to obey all of God's commands – all this is evidence of evil natures. And the disciples were not sinless in thought, word, and deed.

If anyone thinks he is superior to the original disciples, is he not making a huge mistake? Compare 6:12; Rom 3:9; 7:18,25; Gal 5:17; 1 Tim 1:15; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8; 1 Kings 8:46. When we approach God in prayer, we must not come with elevated views of our own righteousness (like the Pharisee in Luke 18:10-12), but conscious of the weakness and sinfulness of our natures, and aware that if we receive anything from Him it is because of His grace and mercy.

Observe one more thing here. Jesus did not call His disciples "evildoers" as He did false prophets (v 23 – a different Greek word is used here). To say that His disciples have

good things to those who ask him? 12 Therefore, in everything, whatever you want people to do to you, do the same to them. For this is the Law and the Prophets.

13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in through it. 14 Because narrow *is* the gate, and strait *is* the way that leads to life, and few there are who find it.

sinful natures is not the same as saying that they are living in sin. Our natures our evil, but we need not be evildoers. Christ's disciples have a new holy nature along with the old (Eph 4:22-24), and by God's grace they can get the victory over their evil natures and live for Him (Rom 6:12-14).

**7:12** The Lord Jesus revealed how gracious God is. He is a loving Father always giving good things and seeking our highest good. Now Jesus tells us to do likewise. This is not a mere rule to follow; it is a spirit of love to have. We must be what we should be before we can do what we should do. "Law and Prophets" means the whole Old Testament (5:17). The essence of the OT is seen in 22:35-40; Rom 13:8-10.

**7:13,14** Both the gate and way are narrow and restricted. Those who enter cannot take with them all the "baggage" of the world. Sin and selfishness and egoism, other gods and other ways must be left behind. Compare 5:29,30.

Entering the narrow way requires repentance (3:2; 4:17), denial of self (16:24-26), humbling of self to go God's way (5:3-5), and a willingness to accept the rule of the one true God in one's life (v 21; 6:9,10,33).

The narrow gate is the only way into God's kingdom, and the Lord Jesus Himself is both the "gate" and the "way" – John 10:7-10; 14:6. So faith in Him is the absolutely essential thing – John 3:36; 8:24; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Rom 3:21-25; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9. True faith in Christ will be joined with repentance, self-denial, and a willingness to submit to God. If these things are absent can faith be genuine? (See the note at Acts 22:10).

God's "narrow" way leads to life – spiritual life, eternal life with God – John 1:12,13; 3:16; 5:24; 6:47. But compared with the multitudes of earth "few" ever find this narrow way. This is because few will desire it or search for it, few are willing to repent, humble themselves and trust the Lord Jesus alone. The few who find God's way are those who want it above everything else, who cannot rest until they find it. And this is a result of God's work in their hearts.

Most people are in the "broad" way. This is the way of the world, the way of sinners, the way of the worship of many gods, or none, the way of living according to one's sinful nature, the way of doing what pleases self without concern for what pleases God, the way of ignorance of the truth, the way of rejecting the Lord Jesus who is the true way

15 "Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a rotten tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor *can* a rotten tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not produce good fruit is

(Deut 11:28; Jud 2:17; Ps 1:6; Prov 14:12; 21:2,8; Eph 4:17-19; Col 3:5-7). The end of that way is destruction. That means spiritual death, separation from God, and the lake of fire (3:10; 5:30; 25:46; Luke 16:22-24; 2 Thess 1:8,9; Rev 20:15; 21:8).

The Lord Jesus tells men to enter the narrow gate – not to admire it, or speculate about it. His disciples had already entered. Here He speaks to those who had not entered and calls them to make a decision, a decision based on all He had been teaching. Compare Ezek 18:30-32. See Luke 13:24.

"Strait" – this word does not mean "straight," but "affording little space" or "confined in area." It is translated from a Greek word that means "restricted" or "pressed together" or "confined." It is a different word than the one translated "narrow" in this verse. The way of Christ is certainly wide enough and large enough for all who truly want to be in it and who will submit to Him in faith, but too narrow, too restricted, too difficult for anyone else.

**7:15-20** The Lord tells us to watch out for false prophets because they may not be obvious. They may have the appearance of genuine servants of God (sheep's clothing), but they are servants of Satan. See 2 Cor 11:13,14. Their teaching and ways are destructive (they are like wolves, the natural enemies of sheep – John 10:12; Acts 20:29,30). Their fruit (their teaching and their activities which are a result of their teaching) will reveal what they are, and the disciples of Christ who have discernment will know what they are. Their nature will be manifest in what they say and do not say, in what they do and do not do. If they continually bear bad fruit they cannot be good trees.

The warning to watch out for false prophets comes just after Jesus's exhortation to enter the narrow way. False prophets will teach things contrary to the teachings of the Lord Jesus. They will present other ways and will try to keep people from entering the narrow way (23:13). Their end will be in accordance with their works (v 19; 3:10; 2 Cor 11:15). On false prophets see Jer 14:14,15; 23:25,26; Ezek 13:1-9; Matt 24:11,24; Rom 16:17,18; 1 Tim 4:1,2; 2 Tim 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Jude 4. **7:21-23** "Lord" – see notes at Luke 2:11; Phil 2:10,11. Here the subject is the same as in the previous verses – false prophets.

cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore, you will know them by their fruits.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons, and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew

They may use the word "Lord" when referring to Jesus, but they will not do what he says. Verse 21 does not mean that salvation can be gained by good works. God's will is that men should repent, put their trust in the Lord Jesus, submit to Him and do what He says (17:5; John 6:29; Acts 17:30; Rom 10:9,10. See the long note at Acts 22:10). False prophets do not do this. That which rules their lives is not the will of God but their own wills. They may speak much about the kingdom of God but they are not in it.

Many false prophets are deceived (v 22). They may think they are teaching the truth, but usually they do not know the truth, and are not trying to find the truth. They think the fact that they are prophesying and doing miracles is proof that they are in the kingdom of God. They will learn the true state of things on "that day" – the day of God's judgment.

Let us learn now that the ability to preach sermons is no sign of holiness, being able to do miracles is not evidence of salvation. Is it possible for those who are not true servants of God to prophesy, to give God's message to men, to perform miracles? Yes, it is possible. Judas Iscariot was a thief and like a demon (John 6:70,71; 12:6), and was no child of God. But he received power and authority from Christ like the other apostles (10:1-4). Balaam prophesied and proclaimed beautiful truth, but was an evil man (Num 22:1-7; 2 Pet 2:15. Another illustration of this is in John 11:49-52).

Here in Matthew 7 observe in v 23 that Christ will not deny what these false prophets will say. He knows very well that it is possible to be without salvation, and still be able to call Him "Lord" and do miracles in His name. Jesus will not say to them "I once knew you but I don't know you now." His words are "I never knew you." In other words, these false prophets were never His sheep, never belonged to Him, were never God's children (John 10:14,27).

Christ will call them "evildoers." The Greek words here mean those whose deeds are "lawless", those who do not follow righteous principles of behavior, those who transgress the ways of God. Even any good deeds they might do are done with the wrong motive. Selfishness is at the heart of all their actions, and since selfishness is evil, then what they do is evil. Such people have not learned a very basic lesson of the Bible – what they *do* is not as important as what

you. Depart from me, you evildoers.'

24 "Therefore, I will compare everyone who hears these words of mine, and does them, to a wise man who built his house on a rock. 25 And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, for it had *its* foundation on a rock. 26 And everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not do them, will be compared to a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 And the rain

they *are*. Character is more important than outward activity. If we are right on the inside, then our outer actions will also be right. But our outer actions may *seem* to be right to men when actually we are not right inside.

Those who do their works only for themselves will find in the end that all they will have is themselves – not Christ, not God, not salvation. A terrible end for such people is indicated by the words "Depart from me" – 25:46; 2 Thess 1:8,9.

**7:24-27** In verses 15-23 we see Christ's condemnation of false prophets. In these verses we have a warning against false hearers – those who hear the truth but do not obey it. Here a distinction is made between the wise and the foolish (see also notes on Proverbs 9:1-18). In this illustration both types of people have some of the same desires and aims – both types build a "house." Perhaps the word "house" signifies a person's whole life, especially his or her life as it relates to Christianity. The foolish man may be very wise when it comes to matters of the world or finance or politics or such things. But in matters of religion he is a fool.

The big difference between the houses the two men built is in the foundation. The foundation is a part of a house which may not be seen outwardly. Often it is hidden in the ground, and from there it supports the whole house. In the deep places of the heart of the wise man is the desire to obey the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit has enabled him to recognize his spiritual poverty and has humbled him. He has given him a thirst for righteousness. He prays sincerely that God's will be fulfilled in his life. The wise man has trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ and shows by his obedience that he has trusted Him.

But in the hidden places of the heart of the foolish man there is not this desire to obey Christ. So naturally he does not put into practice what Christ teaches. He has no inward drive to do so. His religion is entirely a surface thing without depth. The foundation of such a person's life is shifting sand. The only foundation for a genuine Christian life is Christ (1 Cor 3:11). The foolish man does not even consider building his "house" on this one foundation. The foundation he chooses is his own thoughts, or impressions, or feelings, or his own religious ideas or doctrines.

Jesus indicated here that every person's

came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it fell, and great was its fall."

28 And when Jesus had finished *speaking* these words, it happened that the people were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he taught them as *one who* had authority, and not as the scribes.

**8** When he had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him.

"house" is going to be tested. "Rain", "floods" and "winds" will test every part of it, and when it is tested the foundation on which it is built will be revealed. Oh, what a storm struck Job (Job chapters 1 and 2). How Jeremiah was battered (Lam 3:1-24). See what a wave struck Peter (Luke 22:54-62). What rough weather Paul faced (2 Cor 6:4-10; 11:23-29). See too the storms of Ps 66:10-12 and Heb 11:36-38. But if a man has built solidly on Christ his house will stand, nothing can destroy it. If it is not built on Christ nothing can save it.

Rain, wind, and flood may also speak of future judgment when every house will be tested and every foundation exposed. Many religious houses that people take pride in will fall in that day with a great crash. The reason is they were not built on Christ's teachings here in the Sermon on the Mount (v 26). Christ did not give His teaching in this Sermon or any other teaching, that we might merely admire it or listen to it, or speak or write about it, but that we might act according to it. If we do not do so, disaster is the only possible result. Let us make sure "our house" is built solidly on Him, that we trust Him only, love Him truly, and obey Him heartily.

**7:28,29** The reason for the amazement of the crowd was not simply in what Jesus said, but the way He said it. He did not quote this or that teacher as the authority for His teaching. He spoke with the authority God the Father gave Him. See in 5:22,28,32, 34,39,44 the phrase "I tell you." Compare John 7:16,17; 12:49,50. In God's kingdom He presents Himself as Christ the Messiah of Israel (5:17), as Lord, Son of God, and Judge (7:21-23). Now in all matters concerning God's kingdom, in the whole field of religion, in all that relates to the destiny of men, in heaven and on earth, He is the absolute authority (28:18; John 17:2; Phil 2:9-11).

**8:1** This is a chapter of miracles. In it the Lord Jesus shows His authority and power over human diseases (vs 1-17), in the matter of spiritual life (vs 18-22), over the forces of nature (vs 23-27), in the unseen world of spirits (vs 28-34).

All this is abundant evidence that He was just who He said He was – the Lord from heaven (John 3:13; 8:23). Christ's miracles showed forth His glory – John 2:11. They were evidence that God the Father had sent Him and that He was one with God (John

2 And, suddenly, a leper came and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

3 And Jesus put out *his* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed away. 4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you do not tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

5 And when Jesus went into Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, 6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

5:36; 10:37,38; 14:11; Acts 2:22). They were Christ's credentials, God's commendation – not in writing, but in action. They were proof that the kingdom of God had come (12:18).

The miracles of the Lord Jesus were not tricks which can be performed by a magician's art. He healed diseases like leprosy, generally regarded as incurable, opened blind eyes (9:27-30; 11:4; 20:34), walked on water (14:25), and raised the dead (Luke 7:11-15; 8:49-56; John 11:43,44). Jesus did more than teach; He revealed the power of God and the character of God in ways which were unmistakable.

This does not mean that all who do miracles have come from God (7:22; 24:24). The miracles of false prophets are evidence of the power of Satan; and the character of false prophets is clear to Christ's disciples. What they teach and how they live shows what kind of people they are.

**8:2** "Leper" – see note at Leviticus chapter 13. In the Old Testament certain diseases were pictures or symbols of sin, and their healing was a picture of spiritual healing. See note at Lev 13:1-44. Under the law some infections made a person "unclean" and he remained unclean until healed. See Lev 13:45,46. A request to be made clean was a request for healing.

**8:3** Jesus touching him was a demonstration of compassion and love. The holy King from heaven stretches out His hand to an unclean man to make him clean and whole. This is a picture of Christ's work in the spiritual realm also (John 15:3; Eph 5:25-27; Heb 9:13,14; 1 John 1:7). Observe His words, "I am willing." We never read in the Bible that the Lord Jesus ever turned away anyone who came to Him for help. He was always both willing and able to do what people asked of Him.

**8:4** Jesus never sought publicity or popularity – in fact, just the opposite (v 18; 9:30; 12:16; John 6:15). The man was sent to the priests so they could certify that his healing was real. Only then would they pronounce him "clean" and let him return to his home.

"That Moses commanded" – God gave

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof, but just speak the word and my servant will be healed.

9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *man*, 'Go', and he goes; and to another, 'Come', and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this', and he does *it*."

10 When Jesus heard *this*, he marvelled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel. 11 And I tell you that many will come from the east and west, and will sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness. There will be weeping

the command through Moses. See Lev 14:1-32.

**8:5** A centurion was an officer over one hundred soldiers in the Roman army.

**8:7** Again we see Christ's willingness to go anywhere and help anyone.

**8:8** Those who think they are most worthy of receiving something from the Lord are the least worthy; those who think they are least worthy are actually the most worthy. In God's sight humility and worthiness go hand in hand. Compare 5:3.

**8:9** The centurion had a wonderful faith in the power of the Lord Jesus, because he understood the nature of authority and was sure that God had given Jesus authority over diseases.

**8:10** Jesus was not surprised at the man's faith. But he counted that faith very remarkable, He admired it. In the account of Jesus' life on earth only two things made Jesus marvel – strong faith where naturally it would not be expected and unbelief where there should have been faith (Mark 6:6). People in Israel were the ones who should have had the great faith, not this foreigner. The Old Testament with its examples of God's love and power, and its promises concerning the Messiah, had been given to Israel (Rom 9:4,5).

**8:11** By "east and west" He meant peoples of all the earth. For the first time in the Gospel of Matthew Jesus indicates that His gospel and God's kingdom are for all the world, and not for one nation. Compare 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47; Acts 1:8. The centurion was the first fruit of a great multitude who would later enter the kingdom of Christ. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the first ancestors and the patriarchs of the nation of Israel. Their stories are found in Genesis chapters 12-50.

**8:12** "Sons of the kingdom" – a way of saying the subjects of the kingdom. These "sons of the kingdom" were those to whom the kingdom at first belonged, the nation Israel. The King (2:2) came to them, preached God's kingdom, described something of its character and demanded repentance and faith in Him. But they refused to submit to the King. The results

and gnashing of teeth."

13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way, and it will be done for you *just* as you have believed." And his servant was healed at that very hour.

14 And when Jesus had come into Peter's house, he saw *Peter's* mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and served them.

16 When evening came, they brought many who were possessed by demons to him. And he drove the spirits out with *his* word, and healed all who were sick, 17 that what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, who said, "He took our infirmities, and bore *our* sicknesses."

18 Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave an order to go away to the other side *of the lake*. 19 And a certain scribe came and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

20 And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of

man has nowhere to lay *his* head."

21 And another of his disciples said to him, "Lord, first permit me to go and bury my father."

22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead."

23 And when he got into a boat, his disciples followed him, 24 and, suddenly, a great tempest arose on the lake, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But he was asleep. 25 And his disciples came to *him* and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the lake. And there was a great calm.

27 But the men were amazed, saying, "What kind of a man is this that even the winds and the lake obey him!"

28 And when he arrived at the other side in the country of the Gergesenes, two demon-possessed *men*, coming out of the tombs, met him. *They* were so very fierce, that no one could pass by that way.

could only be disastrous for them. Compare 21:42-44. This is a warning Jesus often repeated – 13:42-50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.

"Darkness", "weeping" and "gnashing of teeth" indicate something of the misery of hell. See also 5:29,30; 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Mark 9:47-49; Luke 13:28; 16:19-31; 2 Pet 2:14,17; Jude 13. Eternal darkness will be the punishment of those who hate the light Christ brings (John 3:19,20). Gnashing of teeth may speak of both pain and rage against God's justice. Compare Ps 112:10.

**8:13** Men always receive what they trust God for. If we come to Christ with a large measure of faith we will receive a large blessing. Compare 9:2,22,29; 15:28; 17:20; 21:21; Mark 5:34; 10:52; 11:22-24. In this case the healing performed by Jesus was instantaneous, complete, and permanent.

**8:14** Peter was a married man, as, it seems, were all the original apostles of Christ. See 1 Cor 9:5.

**8:15** Christ's kindness towards us should produce a desire in us to serve Him.

**8:16** Christ's word had almighty power and authority behind it. Note on demon possession at 4:24.

**8:17** See Isaiah 53:4. That prophecy was fulfilled in Christ's healing ministry, not in His death on the cross. It speaks of His compassion, His identifying Himself with suffering people, and His power displayed in banishing their diseases.

**8:18** The lake is Galilee. The "other" side is the east side, away from His headquarters in Capernaum.

**8:19-22** "Scribe" – note at 2:4. The Lord Jesus never made His way appear to be easy, and He never tried to attract followers by lowering God's standards. Compare Luke 14:25-35. The man in v 9 was too hasty in

his decision. He had not counted the cost of being a disciple of Jesus. The man in v 21 was too slow in his decision. Both types of persons are still with us.

**8:20** The Lord Jesus used the name "Son of man" to refer to Himself about 80 times in the Gospels. It is a title taken from Daniel 7:13,14 and signifies the Messiah. It also signifies the real human nature of Christ the Son of God.

**8:22** In other words let those who have no spiritual life bury those who have died physically. The man meant he wished to stay at home until his father died. If his father had already died he would have been at home preparing to bury him. When Christ calls men to a special ministry they must be willing to obey Him without letting earthly ties and responsibilities interfere. Compare 10:37-39. See also Luke 9:61,62.

**8:26** Jesus' first task was to deal with the disciples – a harder task than stilling the storm. In dangerous or crisis situations little faith means much fear. Perfect faith means no fear. See also 6:30,34. Christ's disciples should not fear – all the forces of nature are in His control. Compare this verse with Ps 89:8,9 – there it is the LORD (Jehovah), the one true God, who stills the waves of the sea. Here it is the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah (Ex 3:14,15; John 1:1,14; 8:24,58; 10:11; Phil 2:6,10,11; Heb 1:10-12; and notes at Luke 2:11).

**8:27** Here is a question all should ask. The answer is given in the Bible. We can learn spiritual lessons from this literal miracle (as we may from all Christ's miracles). Life too has its storms which bring us into great danger. But if our trust is in Christ we need not fear – Ps 46:1-3; 93:3,4.

**8:28-34** For a fuller account of this see Mark 5:1-20. There attention is focused on one



29 And now they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the set time?"

30 And some distance away a large herd of pigs was feeding. 31 So the demons begged him, saying, "If you drive us out, let us go into the herd of pigs."

32 And he said to them, "Go." And when they came out, they went into the herd of pigs, and now the whole herd of pigs rushed down a steep place into the lake and died in the water. 33 And those who had been feeding them ran away and went into the city and told everything, and what had happened to those who had been demon-possessed. 34 And now the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they begged *him* to go away from their region.

**9** And he got into a boat, and crossed over and came to his own town. 2 And just then they

man of these two who were demon possessed. The region of the Gadarenes was an area southeast of the sea of Galilee. Note on demons at 4:24.

**8:29** Though men did not know who Jesus was, demons did know (Mark 1:24; 5:7), and were afraid. The "time" is the time God has appointed for their punishment. Compare 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6. God permits demons to act on earth for a time. He has not revealed to us the reason for this, but we can be sure that the all-wise God has a good purpose in it all. See 1 Chron 21:1.

**8:31** Apparently demons are anxious to inhabit bodies – any kind of bodies. Compare 12:43. Why did Jesus permit these demons to destroy a herd of someone's pigs? Under the law of Moses the pig was an "unclean" animal, and Jews were to have nothing to do with it (see Lev 11:7 and note on that chapter). If the owner of these pigs was a Jew, or if Jews were buying them for meat this would account for Jesus' behavior here.

**8:34** Evidently the fact that a great miracle had been performed and that two human beings had been wonderfully delivered meant little to them. The whole town wanted to get rid of Jesus. They thought of Him as a source of trouble and loss. So in every generation since then mankind has been divided into two camps. Those who welcome Jesus and those who want to get rid of Him. **9:1** Here Capernaum is called His "own town" because it was the headquarters for His ministry in Galilee.

**9:2** Notice it says "their" faith, not "his" faith only. Here is an example of how faith can work in bringing others to Christ. The man wanted physical healing. He received far more than that.

**9:3** They knew that God alone can forgive sins (Isa 43:25; 44:22). No prophet ever had this power. They did not know that Jesus was God incarnate, so they considered His

brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a cot. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, "Son, take courage! Your sins are forgiven you."

3 And now some of the scribes said to themselves, "This *man* is blaspheming."

4 And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? 5 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you', or to say, 'Get up and walk?' 6 But so that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins," he then said to the paralytic, "Get up. Pick up your cot and go to your house."

7 And he got up and left for his house. 8 But when the crowds saw *this*, they were amazed and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

9 And as Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

10 And now it happened, as Jesus was sitting

words blasphemy. Blasphemy is speaking against God, using His name in vain, attributing evil to Him, or trying to claim for self what belongs to God alone (such as His nature, authority, rights, and power). See Lev 24:14-16.

**9:4** Jesus being God in the flesh knew the thoughts of men. Compare 12:25; Luke 6:8; 9:47; John 2:25; Ps 94:11; Heb 4:12,13; Rev 2:23; 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron 28:9; 2 Chron 6:30; Jer 17:10; Ezek 11:5; Prov 15:11; Acts 1:24.

**9:5-7** Jesus proved He had God's authority to forgive sin by a display of God's power to heal. This miracle of healing is a picture of spiritual healing. Here we see that forgiveness was immediate, and all of grace – a gift of God to a helpless man (compare Acts 13:38,39; Rom 4:7,8; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 2:13; Heb 8:12; 1 John 1:9). Men may forgive offenses done against them (6:14, 15), but only God can forgive sins done against Himself, and in a very real sense all sin is against God (Ps 51:4).

Complete forgiveness of sin comes only when there is repentance and faith in the heart, and only God can see whether they are there. Jesus could see men's inner condition and could therefore pronounce forgiveness. The very purpose for which He came was to make God's forgiveness possible (Luke 24:46,47; Acts 13:38,39). Anytime, anywhere a person turns to Him in faith, he will find forgiveness of all his sins (12:31). If people sought for forgiveness with the same earnestness as they do for healing and for other things, the world would be far different than it is now.

**9:8** "Men" – the crowd did not understand that Jesus was more than a mere man.

**9:9** Compare 4:18-22. See also Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27,28 where Matthew is called Levi. He had a job the Jews despised, serving the ruling Roman government (5:46). But he became a great apostle and author of



at the table in the house, that many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said to them, "*The ones who* need a physician are not those who are well, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what *this* means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees often fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast. 16 No man puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, and the tear will become worse. 17 And men do not put new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wineskins will burst, the wine will

run out and the wineskins will be ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

18 While he was speaking these things to them, suddenly a certain ruler came and worshipped him, saying, "Just now my daughter has died, but come and put your hand on her, and she will live." 19 And Jesus got up and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

20 And, suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, came up behind *him* and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 For she said to herself, "If I can just touch his cloak, I will get well."

22 But Jesus turned around, and when he saw her, he said, "Daughter, take courage. Your faith has made you well." And the woman became well from that time.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the people making a commotion, 24 he said to them, "Go away, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they laughed at him. 25 But when the people had been put out, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got

this Gospel which bears his name. Such is the grace of God.

**9:11** "Pharisees" – 3:7. Here once again they showed that they thought themselves better than other men. They could not begin to understand why a holy person would want to associate with "sinners". Nor did they realize that in their unbelief and self-righteousness they were far more objectionable to Jesus than those they called sinners.

**9:12** What a beautiful answer! He means that all sinners are spiritually sick and that He has come to heal such. And as a doctor needs to be with his patients to help them, so He needed to be with sinners to heal them. It was not that He took pleasure in their company while they remained sinners or that He wanted to behave as they did.

**9:13** Jesus refers to Hos 6:6. God wants people to be merciful to others, as He is merciful. This is far more important than any ritual of religion could ever be. See also Matt 5:7. The righteous here means those who think they are righteous and holier than other people. Actually all are sinners (Rom 3:23), but not everyone understands this as they should. And Jesus has come to call sinners to forgiveness and salvation (Luke 19:10; John 3:17; 1 Tim 1:15).

**9:14** "Disciples of John" – 3:1; John 3:23-25.

**9:15** "Sons of the bridechamber" – the friends or attendants of the bridegroom. See what name the Lord Jesus gives Himself here – "bridegroom." Compare John 3:28-30; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-33. He is the spiritual bridegroom of the true Church and of the individual believer. See notes on Song of Songs. Compare psalm 45. Jesus does not deny the usefulness of

fasting (6:16). His disciples would fast after His departure (Luke 24:51).

**9:16,17** The Lord Jesus had come to do a new thing on earth, to provide a new garment of righteousness, a new wine of joy. The old Jewish religious forms and ways were not suitable for His new work. They could not contain the new truth and life Jesus brought. Truth is of more importance than antiquity.

**9:18** This ruler was a leader of a synagogue and his name was Jairus (Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56).

**9:20,21** This disease made its sufferer "unclean." See note at Lev 15:25-27. In Old Testament days it was one of the pictures or symbols of sin.

**9:22** See the power of faith. Faith is the belief that God will act according to His Word and His nature as revealed in the Bible. It is confidence in Him as a person. See Heb 11:1,6. Faith saves by bringing us into the presence of the One who saves and opens the way for Him to work.

"Courage" – a more accurate translation of the Greek word than "comfort."

**9:23** These players were musicians hired to play at funerals.

**9:24** "Sleeping" – if the ruler was right when he said the girl had just died, then Jesus meant that she was not permanently dead. Sleep is a word often used for the physical death of God's people in both Old and New Testaments (notes at John 11:11-14). It suggests that they will awake and rise again from the temporary state of death – 1 Thess 4:13-18.

**9:25** The laughing crowd will not see the glory of His working. Scoffers will not experience his power. This is one of the three recorded occasions of Jesus' raising the dead. The

up. 26 And the news of this spread throughout that whole region.

27 And when Jesus left there, two blind men followed him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us."

28 And when he went into the house, the blind men came to him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."

29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it *done* to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus gave them a strict order, saying, "See *that* no one finds out." 31 But when they left they spread the news about him throughout that whole country.

32 As they went out, suddenly, they brought to him a man unable to speak and demon-possessed. 33 And when the demon had been driven out, the

dumb *man* spoke. And the crowds were amazed and said, "Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel."

34 But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons through the prince of the demons."

35 And Jesus went around all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when he saw the crowds, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were feeble and dejected, like sheep which have no shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the labourers *are* few. 38 Therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

**10** And when he had called his twelve disciples to *him*, he gave them authority *over*

others are in Luke 7:15; John 11:43,44. But it is probable there were other cases (11:4,5).

**9:27** "Son of David" – see 1:1. This was a name for the Messiah of Israel. These blind men were expressing their faith that Jesus was the Anointed One.

**9:28** See again the importance of faith. Contrast Mark 6:5,6.

**9:29** Here is a principle the Lord follows in His work among men (v 22; Mark 11:22-24; Heb 11:6; 1 John 5:14,15).

**9:30** Again we see that Jesus did not seek fame (8:4), or indeed any benefit of any kind from His miracles. See also what He taught others in 6:1-4.

**9:31** It is true of so many that they will do what they want rather than what the Lord Jesus wants.

**9:32** Demon possession affects different people in different ways. Compare 8:28-32; 12:22. This does not mean that every mute or blind person, or epileptic is possessed by a demon. There are also other causes of such things.

**9:33** "Nothing like this was ever seen" – this was true of Israel and of all countries and all times. The miraculous healing ministry of the Lord Jesus and His apostles was unique in the history of the world.

**9:34** These Pharisees thus showed incredible hardness of heart and unbelief, and were taking themselves beyond forgiveness. See 12:24-32. The prince of demons is Satan.

**9:35** Here in a nutshell is the whole of Jesus' ministry (4:23,24).

**9:36** The reason why Jesus did what He did is here – compassion, love, pity for helpless men in their need (14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41;6:34; Luke 7:13; Heb 4:15). There were religious leaders in Israel who should have been shepherds to God's people, but they were like thieves and robbers (John 10:1,7,11-13). This is often true today also among people other than Jews.

**9:37** Compare John 4:35-38. There are great

and eternal rewards for those who serve God, but comparatively few people volunteer for the work.

**9:38** Here we can see something of the mysterious power of prayer. Why did Jesus tell them (and us) to pray like this? Will not God (the Lord of the harvest) send laborers into His harvest field whether His people pray or not? This is a question that may naturally come to mind, but it is not one we should ask. It is our business to do what the Lord says and leave the mystery of it to Him. God has appointed prayer as one of the ways His people can share with Him in His work. Let us make use of this means. It is enough to know that in answer to our prayers the Lord of the harvest will send laborers into His harvest fields.

**10:1** "Disciples" – this is a translation of the Greek word meaning learners, those under training. Learners were expected to put into practice the instructions of their teachers. Compare John 8:31. The original twelve disciples of Christ were those whom Christ chose to receive instruction and training as He went about in His ministry.

"Disciples" is the usual word in the Book of Acts for believers in Christ (Acts 6:11; 9:1; 11:26; etc). There it is used 26 times (the word "Christians" appears in Acts just twice, and "believers" 11 times). There is no way anyone can be a believer in Christ, a real Christian, without learning from Christ and being taught by God (see Isa 54:13; John 6:45; Eph 4:20-24; 1 Thess 4:9; Titus 2:11,12; 1 John 2:27. Compare the invitation of Jesus in Matt 11:28-30).

So in some measure all believers are disciples. They have turned to Christ to learn from Him and to obey His teachings, and the seed, at least, of discipleship is in their hearts. Of course, none of us is a perfect disciple, and the seed of discipleship planted in us when we first trust in the Lord Jesus needs to grow and develop. But this does not change the fact that all believers are disciples, and are called disciples in the Bible.

unclean spirits to drive them out, and to heal every kind of sickness and disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, his brother Andrew, James *the son* of Zebedee, his brother John, 3 Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew the tax collector, James *the son* of Alphaeus, Lebbaeus, who was named Thaddaeus, 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out, and commanded them, saying, "Do not go on *any* road of the Gentiles, and do not enter *any* Samaritan

It is important to keep this in mind when we study the teachings of Lord Jesus about discipleship.

What the Lord Jesus wants above all is to have followers who have chosen Him above everyone else, love Him above all, are constantly learning from Him and putting into practice what He teaches them. Nothing less than this can satisfy Him. See Luke 14:25-35.

**10:2-4** "Apostles" – the Greek word translated "apostle" means "a delegate," "messenger," "one sent forth with orders." Here for the first time the twelve original apostles of Jesus are listed. Observe that they were first disciples (learners) before they were apostles. What is the use of going to teach others if one has not been taught by Christ? Observe too that they received their authority directly from Christ and in His presence. He gave them authority to do just what He had been doing. He was preparing them to be the future leaders of the Church of the New Testament.

Christ chose His apostles to be His special representatives on earth, and to be able (along with all the writers of the New Testament) to give infallible teaching. In that sense of the word, there have not been any other true apostles after they passed away, and there are none now. They had a unique work to do and they completely finished it. See notes also at 16:19; Acts 8:15-17; 2 Cor 12:12.

**10:3** "Bartholomew" – probably the same as Nathaniel (John 1:45-51).

"Matthew" – he does not present himself as someone special but modestly refers to his old despised job of tax collector. The apostles were not concerned with man's honors. They were not like some Christian leaders today who love to be called "doctor" (even if the degree is unearned and undeserved), and parade their degrees and attainments. See the Pharisees in 23:6,7.

"Thaddaeus" – also called Judas (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13)

**10:4** "Simon the Canaanite" – the same as Simon the Zealot (Luke 6:16). The name "Zealot" probably means that Simon had formerly been a member of a party in Israel called the Zealots. They fought against Roman rule over the Jews. But it is possible, though not likely, that it means he was

city. 6 Instead, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

9 Provide no gold or silver or copper for your money belts, 10 or a bag for *your* journey, or two coats or sandals or staffs. For the workman is worthy of his food.

11 "And whatever city or town you enter, enquire who is worthy in it, and stay there *with* them until you go away. 12 And when you go into a household, greet it. 13 And if the household is

zealous in religion or in something else.

"Judas Iscariot" – elsewhere is called a thief and a "demon" (John 6:70,71; 12:6). His heart was never with Christ. He was concerned with himself and what material advantages he could obtain. Still the Lord Jesus called him to be with the other apostles and gave him authority to cast out devils and heal the sick. Compare 7:22,23. **10:5** The Gentiles were non-Jewish peoples. The Samaritans were people of mixed blood whose origins are seen in 2 Kings chapter 17. They lived in Samaria, an area between Galilee on the north and Judea on the south. The Jews for the most part hated the Samaritans and avoided them (John 4:9). But this is not the reason why Jesus forbade His disciples to preach to them. The time for preaching the gospel to them had not yet come (it did come later – John 4:1-42; Acts 8:5-25). The Jews were the people of God from the days of Abraham (Genesis chapter 12), and God made special covenants with them (compare Rom 9:4,5). So it was fitting at that time that the good news of God's kingdom should first be preached to them.

**10:6** See 9:36; 15:24.

**10:7** See 3:2; 4:17.

**10:8** These miracles were to be evidence that the kingdom of God was near. They were not to try to make money from the authority and power freely given them, but to freely use them for the good of others. Compare Acts 20:33-35; 1 Cor 10:33; 2 Cor 12:14,15. A simple life-style and self-denial were to be the marks of Christ's disciples. Notes at 3:4; Luke 9:23; etc.

**10:9,10** They were to give freely and accept what was freely given to them. Kindness would receive the reward of kindness. God's workers are worthy of the support of people who receive God's blessings through them (1 Cor 9:7-14; 1 Tim 5:17,18). If their shirt or sandals wore out they were to trust God to provide them with others.

**10:11** They were to be careful where they lodged and not accept every offer of hospitality which came to them. They were to seek out the worthy, not the wealthy. They were to have no money for inns and hotels. See also Luke 22:36.

**10:12,13** The customary greeting among Jews was "peace be to you." Peace would

worthy, let your peace come on it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoever does not receive you or listen to your words, when you leave that house or city, shake the dust off your feet. 15 Truly I say to you, in the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city.

16 "Look, I send you forth like sheep among wolves. So be as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men! For they will hand you over to the Councils, and they will beat you with whips in their synagogues, 18 and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, to *give* testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they hand you over, do not worry *about* how you will speak, or what. For at that very hour what you should say will be given to you. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

be the result in any home that received them and their message. Peace could not be with those who rejected their message, and the apostles were not to create the impression that it could.

**10:14** This was to indicate that there was no fellowship, no common ground between them and those who rejected Christ's message. It was a warning that the rejecters would be utterly left to themselves. Compare 23:38.

**10:15** "Day of judgment" - 11:22,24; 12:36; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:2,16; 14:10; 2 Pet 2:9; Rev 14:7; 20:11-15.

"Sodom and Gomorrah" - Gen 19:23-29; 2 Pet 2:6; Jude 7. The punishment of those places which reject Christ will be greater than Sodom's because their opportunities are greater, the truth preached to them greater, and the evidence for the truth greater. Greater privileges and opportunities mean greater punishment if rejected. Compare 11:20-24; Heb 2:1-4.

**10:16** "Wolves" - 7:15; Luke 10:3; John 10:12; Acts 20:29. The disciples needed to exercise discernment. Compare 7:6,20. And they must never behave in a way that their enemies might justly accuse or attack them. Compare 1 Pet 3:13-17; 4:12-16. From v 17 to the end of the chapter it seems Jesus looks beyond the comparatively brief Galilean ministry to their continuing ministry in later days. At that time there is no record of their arrest or of being brought before kings (vs 18,19). And the language of vs 21-23 hardly fits the brief ministry in Galilee. But these things all happened in the later ministry of Christ's apostles, as the book of Acts makes clear. Verse 23 may point to the very end of this age. The language suggests Christ's second coming.

**10:17** Christ's disciples must realize that there will always be opposition to His message, and that haters of the true God will hate them too - vs 21,23.

**10:19** This refers only to these special

21 "And brother will hand over brother to death, and a father *his* child, and children will rebel against parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all *men* for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For truly I say to you, you will not have gone over the cities of Israel before the Son of man comes.

24 "The disciple is not above *his* teacher, or the servant above his master.

25 "It is enough for the disciple that he is like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the owner of the house Beelzebub, how much more those in his household.

26 "Therefore, do not be afraid of them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 What I tell you in darkness speak in the light, and what you hear in

occasions and does not mean that in the ordinary course of their ministry they were not to think and prepare what they should say. In these days preachers who have time to properly prepare their sermons and do not do so, are usually not much worth listening to.

**10:20** See Acts 4:8,13. If God's Spirit speaks through them, the poor and uneducated can confound the great and the wise.

**10:21,22** Such is the nature of man. The preaching of the truth will arouse bitter hatred and persecution, even of blood relatives. The most natural ties of love will be snapped by religious intolerance and bigotry - v 36; John 15:18-21. God's servants must endure much opposition. They will not be saved because they endure, but enduring to the end will be a proof that their faith is real, and so they are saved (Matt 24:13; Heb 10:39; 1 Pet 1:5).

**10:23** Disciples must not try to force their message on others. If they are rejected let them go to other places where they might be received.

**10:24,25** "Beelzebub" - 2 Kings 1:2 - this name comes from the name Baal-Zebul, a god of the Philistines, which means "Baal the prince" or "Baal, the exalted one." Apparently the Jews mockingly changed the name to Baal-Zebub (which has come into English as Beelzebub), which means "Lord of the flies." The Pharisees gave this name to Satan. They said that Jesus got His power from him - 12:24; Luke 11:15; John 8:48. What can the followers of Jesus expect from the world that called Him demon possessed and killed Him? Let us be prepared (and be content) to endure dishonor, slander, and persecution for His sake. Notice that Jesus calls Himself here the head of a house and His disciples members of it. Compare Eph 2:19; Heb 3:1-6.

**10:26** The reason disciples should not fear is that their guru is the Lord of heaven and earth who will eventually bring the truth of

the ear preach on the housetops. 28 And do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Instead be afraid of him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So do not be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows.

32 "Therefore whoever confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven.

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

everything to light. Compare Psalm 37:6. See Luke 12:2,3.

**10:28** Heb 13:6. For believers in Christ the only proper object of fear is God Himself. They have eternal life with God, and nothing that men can do to them can have an eternal result. See notes on the fear of God at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**10:29,30** Since God observes the smallest details of His Creation, disciples should trust Him to look after everything that concerns them. Believers in Christ are to live a life free of worry, anxiety and fear – 6:25-34; 8:26; John 14:1; Phil 4:6,7; 1 Pet 5:7.

**10:32,33** Believers in Christ must openly stand for Him and confess Him as their Lord and Saviour (compare Rom 10:9,10). Not doing so is like disowning and denying Him. Silence indicates that faith is not real. Those who wish to be secret believers, and never speak of their faith in Jesus, are running a terrible risk. How can they be sure their faith is genuine? Far better to confess Him openly, even if it means suffering and death, than to go on in silence and at last stand before God disowned by Jesus.

**10:34** Jesus came to bring peace to those who receive and believe Him, and to make peace between them and God. But He did not come to bring peace to all on earth. For there can be no peace to those who reject Him (Isa 48:22), and there will be conflict between them and those who receive Him.

**10:35,36** See v 21. Truth divides those who believe it from those who do not. The fact they may be members of the same family has nothing to do with it.

**10:37** Compare Luke 14:26 where this is put even more strongly. If Jesus were not God He would have no right to speak so. Christ demands first place in our hearts, and we must be willing to choose Him instead of relatives (8:21,22). Truth is more important than family ties. Those who put family first, or self, or sin, or money, or anything else,

36 And a man's foes *will be* those of his own household.

37 "Anyone who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and anyone who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Anyone who finds his life will lose it, and anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.

40 "Anyone who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold *water* to drink in the name of a disciple, truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

cannot be His true follower (Luke 14:33). On Christ's deity see Phil 2:6.

**10:38** See notes at 16:24; Luke 9:23. The cross is a symbol of death. It was the Roman means of execution. Figuratively, to take up one's cross means to willingly go forward to the place of death to self and its desires, aims, and plans (compare 2 Cor 4:10-12; Gal 5:24). It means a mind to undergo whatever is painful or humiliating or mortifying to follow Christ. It is an attitude toward Christ and one's self which is at the basis of the true Christian life.

The believer is told to maintain this attitude daily (Luke 9:23). To try to carry one's cross without following Jesus is a hard and bitter thing. And renunciation of desire and the world, austerities, penance, etc, come to nothing good if we do not follow Him. But to carry our cross and follow Jesus because we trust and love Him is freedom and joy, for those who do so will find that Jesus is with them all the way.

**10:39** This means that those who live for self and their place in this world will lose eternal life, and those who choose Christ instead and die to self will find eternal life with God. We see what a powerful thing faith is – it can enable us to choose Christ over ourselves and others and everything in the world. See also Mark 11:24; Heb 10:39; 11:1,4,6; etc.

**10:40-42** They who receive Christ receive God the Father who sent Him, because He was one with the Father (John 10:30). They who receive Christ's disciples receive Christ because they are representatives of Christ, and He is one with them (Acts 9:1-5). His disciples are "little ones" – v 42; 18:2,3; John 13:33; 1 John 2:1. The world looks down on them. They are often lacking in wealth or learning or position or worldly qualification (1 Cor 1:26-29). To show kindness to them is to show kindness to Christ, and there will be a reward for even the smallest act of kindness. See also 5:12.



**11** And it came about when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples, that he left there to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 Now when John in prison heard about the deeds of Christ, he sent two of his disciples. 3 And they said to him, "Are you the one who was to come, or do we look for another?"

4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who does not stumble because of me."

7 And as they were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? Look, those who wear

fine *clothes* are in kings' houses. 9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is *the one* about whom it is written,

Look, I send my messenger before  
your face.

He will prepare your way before you.

11 "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist. But he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has been subject to violence, and the violent are taking it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. 14 And if you will receive *it*, this is Elijah, who was to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and

If we really believe this we will not be reluctant to help others who are Christ's disciples.

**11:2** John the Baptist had been put in prison by Herod, the ruler of Galilee and Perea (4:12; 14:3-5).

**11:3** "The one who was to come" was the Messiah (1:1) expected by the Jews. John's faith was sure and strong (John 1:26-34; 3:27-36). But he had been in prison for months, and Jesus had not behaved as most of the people thought the Messiah would behave. Jesus had not taken the throne of Israel, put the Romans to flight, and brought freedom, peace and prosperity to the nation. It was the common expectation among the Jews that the Messiah would accomplish such things. Compare Isa 9:6,7; 11:1-16, etc. And see John's own words in 3:11-15. It seems that John needed reassurance and encouragement, and the Lord Jesus gave them in the words which follow.

**11:4-6** Jesus is saying that He was performing the works of the promised Messiah (compare Isa 29:18; 35:5,6; 61:1), and that John should not doubt Him because things were not going forward as John had expected. John would have known and understood these words.

**11:6** Here is another "blessed" to add to the ones in 5:3-11. See also 13:16; 16:17; 24:46; 25:34; Luke 1:45; 11:28; John 20:29; Rev 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14. For Old Testament notes on "blessed" and "blessing" see Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1.

**11:9** Note on "prophet" at Gen 20:11; etc.

**11:10** Mal 3:1. See also Isa 40:3.

**11:11** John, great as He was, belonged to the old order of things under the law. The Lord Jesus brought in a new order of things, the spiritual kingdom of God. The least person who is in this kingdom is greater in position and privileges than John, but not greater in character or deeds. Compare John 3:28-30. There John speaks of the Bridegroom (Christ), the bride (those in the

kingdom of God), and the friend of the bridegroom (himself). In the life of the bridegroom the bride obviously has a higher position and greater privileges than the friend.

**11:12** John the Baptist, by his life and preaching, was a great force in God's hands to stir up the people to repentance and earnest striving to enter God's kingdom. Only those who were determined to enter it at any cost were able to do so. Is it any different now? The careless, those content with mere forms of religion, those lacking in the kind of forceful determination that God gives, will not enter God's kingdom. When God brings people into His kingdom He makes them want it very much.

**11:13** The "Prophets and the Law" mean the whole Old Testament. John was the last in a long line of such prophets, and God's messenger of a new age.

**11:14** John was not Elijah (John 1:19-21), but he came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Notice carefully the wording of this verse. Only if they would "receive it" could it be said that John was the Elijah who was to come (Mal 4:5). But the people as a whole were not willing to accept it, as Jesus clearly states in vs 16-19. So John was not the Elijah who was to come. If he had actually been Elijah, he would have been Elijah whether the people received it or not. In 16:11 Jesus indicates that Elijah is still to come and "restore all things." John was unable to "restore all things" because of the unwillingness of the people and their leaders.

**11:15** See 13:9.

**11:16-19** People of that day (Jesus probably was referring to the Pharisees and Sadducees) were like willful children playing the games of "wedding" and "funeral." They complained that John wouldn't dance to their tune, and that Jesus wouldn't weep on demand. They would not receive God's messengers and God's message through



calling to their companions, 17 And saying, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We wailed for you, and you did not mourn.' 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a heavy drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is justified by her children."

20 Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his miracles had been done, because they did not repent: 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say to you, In the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon

than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to hell. For if the miracles which have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that in the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you."

25 At that time Jesus responded and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to babes. 26 Even so, Father, for it was good in your sight. 27 "All things have been handed over to me by my Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and *those* to whom the Son chooses to reveal *him*.

them. They rejected everything. There was no pleasing them. Such people "play" at religion. They are fundamentally insincere. If God's man eats, that doesn't please them. If he does not eat, that doesn't please them either. And see the things they said about the one Jesus called the greatest of men and about the Lord Himself.

**11:18** Later they said the same thing about the Lord Jesus (John 8:48).

**11:19** See 9:11-13; Rom 5:8. If the Lord Jesus had not loved men who were lost in sin, there would be no hope for anyone. Their accusation rightly understood is actually a high recommendation of Jesus as the Saviour of sinners. The wisdom of God in sending John and the Lord Jesus, and their wisdom in their ministry, was demonstrated by the results they achieved. No complaints from a foolish people could change that.

**11:20** Repentance was a main emphasis of Jesus' preaching, the result He wanted to see - 4:17. See notes at 3:2; Luke 13:1-5. Without it His miracles and teaching would have no lasting effect on the people. It is good to be healed of some dread disease, but it is far better to repent at Christ's feet. It is good to see displays of God's glorious power, but it is far better to turn from sin and obtain His salvation.

**11:21** Korazin and Bethsaida were two towns in Galilee near Capernaum. Tyre and Sidon were two ancient and famous cities on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel. They were cities of the Gentiles, given to idolatry and greed, and God sent judgment on them. See Isa 23:1-5; Ezek 26:1-21; Amos 1:9,10.

"Sackcloth and ashes" indicate that they would have repented with deep sorrow. The cities of idolatrous Gentiles would have received Him better than cities of His own people Israel. Compare John 1:11.

**11:22** Note at 10:15.

**11:23** "Capernaum" - 4:13. They had great privileges - the Son of God Himself lived there.

"Hell" - in Greek "Hades" - the unseen realm of the dead, similar to the Hebrew "Sheol" (note at Gen 37:35).

"Sodom" - 10:15. For the most part the people of the cities where Jesus ministered were harder of heart than those of the worst cities of ancient times, cities notorious for wickedness.

**11:25** Though rejected by men, the Lord Jesus found much to praise God for. Here He praises Him for His wise dealing with men. God passes over those who are regarded (and who regard themselves) as people of wisdom and learning (such as the Pharisees and the teachers of the law), and chooses the humble, childlike nobodies of earth and reveals His truth to them. Compare 18:3; 1 Cor 1:19-29; Jam 2:5. A humble, teachable child can understand more of this truth than any intellectual proud of his intellect and unwilling to submit to God. If we are to know the truth, God must enlighten us and shine into our hearts, and give us a mind to learn from Him. Compare Luke 24:45; John 16:13; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17,18.

**11:26** Here is the best possible reason for anything. Compare Rom 11:36; 12:2; Eph 1:9,11.

**11:27** No mere man, no mere prophet could ever truthfully say these things. Here is the clearest evidence that Jesus thought Himself to be God in human form. See other references concerning this at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

"All things have been handed over to me" - 28:18; John 3:35; 5:19-27.

"The Son" - 3:16,17; John 3:16; 5:18-23.

"Knows" - observe carefully what Jesus says about the knowledge of God here. Only God the Father completely knows the Lord Jesus, is fully acquainted with all His ways, His nature and attributes. No man can fully understand Him. Only the Lord Jesus knows the Father, knows the infinite and eternal God absolutely and fully. This is because they have shared from eternity the same nature (1 John 1:1,14; 10:30; 14:9; 17:5; Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3).

And the Lord Jesus is the only one who can reveal God to men, and men can come to a measure of that knowledge only through Him (John 14:6; 17:2,3; 1 John 5:20). Jesus is speaking of true enlightenment of

28 "Come to me, all *you* who labour and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke on you, and learn from me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."

**12** At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields, and his disciples were hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and to eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

3 But he said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he and those with him were hungry? 4 How he went into the house of God, and ate the Showbread, which was not lawful for him,

or for those with him, to eat, but only for the priests? 5 Or have you not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? 6 But I tell you that *one* greater than the temple is here. 7 But if you had known what *these words* mean, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

9 And when he left there, he went into their synagogue. 10 And now a man was there who had a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbaths?" so that they might accuse him.

11 And he said to them, "Among you what *if* a man has one sheep, and it falls into a pit on the

the mind and heart (v 25), the direct knowledge of God. This knowledge of God is dependent on the Lord Jesus. All the above statements are either true, or else arrogant absurdity or terrible self-delusion. All the evidence says that Jesus spoke the truth. There is hardly a verse in the Bible that indicates the full deity of the Lord Jesus more plainly than this one.

Is it necessary to say that the knowledge of God He speaks of has nothing to do with Advaita Vedanta? In fact, it is fully opposed to it (see notes at John 10:30; 14:16,17; 15:21; Rom 8:16; 1 Cor 1:20,21).

**11:28,29** Now Jesus speaks of how He reveals the Father and to whom. He reveals the Father to those who feel their burden (especially the weight of their sins) and come to Him, to those who are willing to be united to Him, to those who will humbly, meekly learn what He has to teach. Such people, and only such, will come to the knowledge of the one true God. And see what He promises – rest, a rest from self-effort, vain seeking, and the burdens of an empty sinful life without hope. This is not rest *from* troubles, but rest *in* troubles. Compare John 16:33.

"Labour and are heavy laden" – or "weary and burdened" – a translation perhaps closer to the Greek.

**11:30** Compare 1 John 5:3. Trust, obedience and love, and His presence with us are what make His yoke easy and His burden light. Compare Acts 15:10 which speaks of the rules and regulations of the law. Yoked to Christ we find freedom and liberation and peace. His yoke is grace, not law. It is His strength and power, not self-effort on our part. Meekly learning from Him we come to more and more knowledge of God. Christ is both teacher and lesson. To be yoked to Christ is to be joined to one of perfect understanding and kindness and grace and love. How can it be burdensome?

**12:1** This was not stealing grain. The people of Israel, when passing through the fields of others, were permitted to eat what they needed. This was according to the law God

gave them (see Deut 23:24,25).

"Grain fields" – "corn" (KJV) was not grown in that part of the world at that time.

**12:2** Note on Sabbath at Ex 20:8-11. The Pharisees interpreted the law very strictly, and had a great many rules as to what could and could not be done on the Sabbath. To them gathering of food was work, and work was forbidden on the Sabbath. Healing also was work and forbidden (v 10).

**12:3,4** See 1 Sam 21:1-6. The meaning is that people and their needs are more important than rules, and that the hungry have a right to eat, even if the exact letter of the rules is ignored.

"Showbread" – the bread kept in the tabernacle or temple in the holy place – Ex 25:30.

**12:5** The priests worked when preparing and offering the Sabbath sacrifices. See Num 28:9,10. The Pharisees were readers of the Old Testament, but had little spiritual understanding of it. We see this again and again in their encounters with the Lord Jesus.

**12:6** Christ here calls Himself greater than God's temple. And His meaning here is that if the priests could break the rules of the Sabbath for the sake of the work of the temple, the disciples could ignore the rules for the sake of Christ's work, and at His direction. The disciples were on a mission with Christ when this event occurred.

**12:7** Note at 9:13.

**12:8** Jesus means Himself. See note on the Son of Man at 8:20. Again we see that Jesus was conscious of His divinity. Could a mere man or prophet, no matter how great, truthfully say that He was Lord of the Sabbath? The Sabbath and the laws relating to it were appointed by God Himself (Ex 20:1,8), and only God had the right to change the laws, or permit men to ignore them, or regulate the observance of the Sabbath in any way. Notes on Lord at Luke 2:11; Rom 10:9,10; Phil 2:10,11.

**12:10** The Pharisees thought it was not lawful to heal anyone on the Sabbath, unless his life was in danger.

**12:11,12** These words were an unanswerable

Sabbath. Will he not take hold of it and lift *it* out? 12 How much more important is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbaths."

13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored to normal, as sound as the other. 14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a meeting against him, *discussing* how they could destroy him.

15 But Jesus, knowing *this*, withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all, 16 and told them that they should not make him known, 17 so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

18 See my servant, whom I have chosen,  
my beloved, in whom my soul delights.  
I will put my Spirit upon him,  
and he will proclaim judgment to the  
Gentiles.

19 He will not quarrel or cry out;  
neither will any man hear his voice in  
the streets.

20 He will not break a bruised reed,  
and he will not quench smoking flax,  
until he sends out judgment to victory.

21 And in his name the Gentiles will trust.

22 Then one *who was* demon-possessed, blind, and unable to speak, was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the blind and mute both spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Is not this the son of David?"

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This *fellow* does not drive out demons except by Beelzebub the prince of demons."

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons drive *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

29 "Or else how can someone enter a strong man's house, and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. 31 Therefore I say to you, Every kind of sin and blasphemy

argument which the Pharisees made no attempt to answer.

**12:13** Jesus' authority and power were also unanswerable.

**12:14** See 26:4; 27:1; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:1; John 5:18; 7:10; 11:53. They preferred to try to destroy the truth rather than accept it. Their only answer to perfect reason and perfect goodness was murder. Such is the heart of man, even religious man. See Jer 15:19; 17:9.

**12:16** See 8:4; 9:30.

**12:17-21** See Isa 42:1-4. The Lord Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets (5:17). The ministry of Jesus was not loud and noisy. He preferred to work quietly, peaceably and without public clamor, contention, and show. Instead of calling for battle, He withdrew from His enemies. He knew that the important battles were spiritual ones, and that He would win the greatest battle of all on the cross, seemingly weak and defeated. And all this was in accordance with the words of God's prophet spoken several hundreds of years before.

**12:18** The Lord Jesus was the servant of God as well as the incarnation of God. See 20:28; Rom 15:8; Acts 3:25,26; Phil 2:6,7.

**12:20** He would continue in His meek and gentle ways until righteousness triumphed. Jesus did not behave as the Jews expected their Messiah to behave (as a mighty conqueror of their enemies). Yet the final victory would be His.

**12:21** This looks far beyond His ministry to the Jews. Other peoples would believe and

receive Him.

**12:22** Note at 9:32.

**12:23** Note on Son of David at 1:1.

**12:24** Note on Beelzebub at 10:25.

**12:25** See 9:4.

**12:27** Some followers of the Pharisees also drove out demons, or at least professed to do so. See Acts 19:13-16. They well knew that the prince of demons did not give power to drive out demons, and they could well judge the slander of the Pharisees.

**12:28** Note on kingdom of God at 4:17. The kingdom of God had come because the King had come, and one proof of this was His authority over demons.

**12:29** In this brief parable the strong man represents Satan; the one who carries off his possessions is the Lord Jesus; the possessions are people under Satan's control. The fact that Jesus was rescuing men from Satan's dominion was evidence, not that He was in league with Satan as the Pharisees said, but that He had bound Satan. Is Jesus then a robber? No, He takes back only what Satan first stole from God. He carries away lost and fallen men from Satan's kingdom and places them in His own glorious kingdom (Acts 26:18).

**12:30** Mark 9:40; Luke 11:23. This applies equally well to Satan and his demons or to men. In regard to Christ there is no neutral ground. He says the very attitude of not being for Him is proof of opposition.

**12:31** The first part of this verse is one of the great promises of the Bible, the second part is one of the most terrible warnings.

will be forgiven to men, but the blasphemy *against* the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven to men. 32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this *world* or in the world to come.

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad. For a tree is known by *its* fruit. 34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For the mouth speaks out of the overflow of the heart. 35 A good man brings out good things from the good treasure of the heart, and an evil man brings out evil things from the evil treasure. 36 But I tell you that in the day of judgment men will give an account for every idle word that they speak. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees

"Will be forgiven to men" means, of course, forgiveness will come to those who repent and trust in Christ. Then God will forgive the worst crimes, the most vile acts of which men are capable (Luke 24:47; Acts 13:38,39; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9). Notes on forgiveness at 6:12,14,15; 9:5-7.

"Blasphemy" – note at 9:3. From the context it appears that this one unforgivable sin, the blaspheming against God's Holy Spirit, is this: saying that the works of the Holy Spirit done by Christ are works of Satan. This involves a conscious, determined, willful rejection of Christ. It reveals a heart so hardened as to have no desire for repentance and to be incapable of it. And without repentance there can be no forgiveness – 3:2. Compare Heb 6:4-6; 1 Tim 4:2; 1 John 5:16. See the warning against hardness of heart in Heb 3:7-13.

**12:32** It is God who enables men to repent (Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim 2:25). It is the Holy Spirit of God working in men's hearts who leads them to repentance. When men harden themselves against Him and refuse to repent even when faced with the truth, and blaspheme Him, He will not do this work in them. And so such men will never repent, and so can never be forgiven.

**12:33** See 7:16. If the works of Christ were good, the Pharisees should understand that His character and nature are good. They should believe Him for His work's sake (John 5:36; 10:37,38).

**12:34,35** See 3:7; 23:33. They were the kind of people who commit the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit. Their hatred of truth and of light and of Christ hardened them against the work of God's Spirit and made them what they were. What is in a man's heart will eventually come out and show what sort of man he is. Compare Prov 4:23. Even the most silent of men will sometimes betray by words what he thinks and what he is.

**12:36** Careless words can reveal what is in a person better than careful, deliberate

answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a *miraculous* sign from you."

39 But he answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a *miraculous* sign. And no *such* sign will be given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And, look, a greater than Jonah *is* here. 42 The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it. For she came from the farthest parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And, look, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it walks through dry places, looking for rest

words. The tongue is a very powerful instrument and words have eternal results. Compare Prov 18:21; Jam 3:5,6.

**12:37** Our words are being recorded, and on the day of judgment they will be "played back." Our words (and notice v 36 – "every careless word") will be the basis of our judgment because they will reveal exactly what we are.

**12:38** Compare Mark 8:11; Luke 11:29-32. To humble and believing hearts Christ's miracles were evidence that He was the Messiah (8:1). Willful and determined unbelievers could not be convinced by the most spectacular of signs. Compare Luke 16:31.

**12:39** An adulterous generation is one spiritually unfaithful to God. See notes at Jer 2:2; Ezek 23:2,3; Hos 1:2. Such a generation was not prepared to trust God, His Word, and His Son.

**12:40** The Jews counted parts of days as full days. The Bible says that Jesus rose on the third day after His crucifixion (16:21; 27:64; Luke 24:7,21; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor 15:4). His resurrection is the greatest possible sign that He is the Messiah and Son of God. See notes at 28:6. The history of a brief part of Jonah's life is found in the Old Testament book of Jonah.

"Great fish" – there is no need to translate the Greek word as "whale." It means any kind of sea monster or huge fish.

**12:41** Here the Lord Jesus calls Himself greater than Jonah. Jonah showed no miraculous signs, yet Nineveh repented. That Gentile city responded to God, but God's own people Israel hardened themselves against Him in spite of many mighty works. On Nineveh see Jonah 1:2.

**12:42** 1 Kings 10:1. Sheba is a long way south of Israel. Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 3:10-12; 4:29-34), but his wisdom is as nothing compared to the wisdom of the Lord Jesus, God's Son.

**12:43** "Unclean spirit" – note at 4:24. Demons want to "rest" in some body or

and finding none. 44 Then it says, 'I will return to my house that I came out of.' And when it has come, it finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. This is how it will be with this wicked generation."

46 While he was still talking to the people, suddenly *his* mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak with him. 47 Then someone said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, asking to speak with you."

48 But he answered and said to the one who told him, "Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?" 49 And he stretched out his hand toward his disciples and said, "See my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, that one is my brother, and sister, and mother."

**13** The same day Jesus went out of the house, and sat by the lake. 2 And great crowds

other. See 8:31.

**12:44** "My house" refers to the man he left. "Swept and put in order" speaks of reformation of life without God. The house is "empty." The Lord Jesus is not within, God's Spirit does not live there.

**12:45** Reformation, and religion, and a clean moral life do not make men safe. If God's Spirit does not dwell within them, Satan can make them worse than they were before they reformed themselves. Christ in us is the only hope of salvation and safety (Col 1:27; Rom 8:9; Rev 3:20). Jesus applies this truth to that generation of Israel (23:35,36). As a whole it was the worst of all their generations. The people were very religious, and they no longer practiced idolatry as their fathers had done. But they had a devilish hatred of the Son of God and rejected and crucified Him. This was because God was not in them, and Satan had opportunity to occupy their "house", which he did and brought many demons with him.

**12:46** It seems that their object was to turn Him from His work and take Him to their home. See Mark 3:21,31,32 and 6:3. At that time His brothers had not yet come to believe He was the Messiah (John 7:5). Here it appears that even His mother Mary may have doubted Him temporarily.

**12:49,50** His meaning is that spiritual relationships are more dear, more important than family relationships. He said this had to be true of His followers (see 10:37), and it was fully true in His own life. If we are those who do His will, Christ counts us also as His mother, or sister, or brother. His disciples are His family. See Heb 2:11,12.

**13:3** The Greek word translated "parable" means a comparison of one thing with another. Jesus used parables to compare

gathered together to him, so he went into a boat, and sat down, and the whole crowd stood on the shore. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying, "Now a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they had not much soil. And immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched, and withered away, because they had no root. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up, and choked them. 8 But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9 Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

10 And the disciples came, and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

11 He answered and said to them, "Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, from him will be taken away even what he has.

the spiritual things of God's kingdom with natural, physical things. Parables are "earthly illustrations of heavenly truth." The Lord here compares Himself to someone who sows seed (see v 37). The seed He sows is the truth God has revealed (Luke 8:11. Compare 1 Cor 3:6; 9:11; 1 Pet 1:23). See His own explanation of this parable in vs 18-23.

**13:5** Here "stony places" is not good soil with some rocks scattered on top. It is rock beneath with a little soil on top. The seed did not get down into the good earth. The warmth of the sun germinated this seed quickly.

**13:7** Farmers generally will not sow seed among thorns or on a footpath or on rocky places. But those who sow the seed of God's Word will sow it in all the earth (Mark 16:15), and some will surely fall in minds and hearts not well prepared to receive it.

**13:8** Some soil is better and more productive than others.

**13:9** See 11:15; 13:43; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8; 14:35; Rev 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 13:9. This emphasizes the importance of what has been spoken.

**13:11,12** Jesus gives two reasons for His use of parables – one reason was to reveal the truth, the other was to conceal the truth. There are secret truths, mysteries about the kingdom of God which could be received only by those who had repented and believed in the Lord Jesus and entered the kingdom. Those, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, who had hardened their hearts against the truth and willfully rejected Christ, could not understand what He meant. Christ's way of speaking was in judgment on a rebellious and unbelieving nation (vs 12-15).

"Mysteries" – in the New Testament a



13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

14 "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says,

Hearing you will hear and will not understand,  
and seeing you will see and will not perceive.

15 For this people's heart has become fat,  
and *their* ears are hard of hearing,  
and they have closed their eyes,  
so that they would not at any time see  
with *their* eyes,  
and hear with *their* ears,  
and understand with *their* heart,  
and be converted, and be healed by me.

16 "But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see;

"mystery" is a truth which God reveals and which we could not know if He did not reveal it.

"Kingdom of heaven" - 4:17. Verse 12 does not speak of material things but the ability to understand spiritual truth. They who refuse the light that Christ brings will lose whatever light they may have had before. They who receive the light will become more and more enlightened. Jews who "did not have" did not have because they did not want to have, and refused to have (compare John 3:19,20; 9:39).

**13:13** Jer 5:20,21; Ezek 12:2.

**13:14,15** Isa 6:9,10. The people deliberately and willfully prevented themselves from turning to God. Refusing spiritual light inevitably leads to judgment. **13:16** Compare 16:17; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17,18. The ability to hear and understand spiritual truth is one of God's great gifts. Let us ask Him for it.

**13:17** Those men of God who lived before Christ came longed to see the Messiah and hear His words (compare 1 Pet 1:10-12).

**13:18-23** This is the first of His parables that Jesus Himself explained. It gives us hints as to how to understand all His parables. Parables have one or more principal points or purposes, often only one. In every parable we should try to lay hold of the principal point or points. The details of Christ's parables also may have meanings. We see that here in His explanation of the parable of the sower. It is even more plain in vs 37-43 where Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and weeds.

But we should not put such emphasis on the details that we lose sight of the main point or points. And we should never try to show our cleverness in trying to interpret the details. Compare note at Ex 25:9. Our interpretation should be simple and natural.

We should not try to get our doctrines from the parables. The plain teachings of Christ and the apostles give us doctrine. But we should understand that the parables

and your ears, for they hear. 17 For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

18 "Therefore listen to the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the one who received seed by the path. 20 But the one who received seed in stony places, is he who hears the Word, and immediately receives it with joy, 21 but he has no root in him, so lasts only for a while. For when pressure or persecution comes because of the Word, he immediately stumbles. 22 And the one who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the Word, and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. 23 But the one who received seed in the good

cannot be contrary to sound doctrine. We should look for Christ in the parables (as in all the Bible. Compare Luke 24:27,44). We should pay attention to the way Jesus introduced each parable, and the application at the end (if there is an application given).

We should apply the parables, as far as possible, to ourselves and our situation now. In them are spiritual lessons and moral principles for us all. We will not profit from the parables if we do not follow the truth we find in them.

In the parable of the sower the principal lesson concerns the different condition of men's hearts. In no case is there a change in the sower or the seed.

**13:19** Notice the words "does not understand." Compare v 23. Because of spiritual blindness and ignorance this kind of person is careless and unconcerned about God's truth. The evil one is Satan. He is eager to destroy God's Word from men's hearts. Satan's purpose appears in Luke 8:12.

**13:20,21** The picture here is shallowness and superficiality in regard to God's Word. This kind of man is religious only as long as it makes him happy. Trouble destroys his happiness and therefore his religion. There is no deep determination to go on to the end regardless of what might happen. There is no depth of discipleship, no persistent effort to learn the things of Christ and apply them.

**13:22** Worldly worries and concerns for wealth are like choking, destroying thorns (Mark 4:19 adds the words "desires for other things" and Luke 8:14 adds the word "pleasures"). This is one reason why Christ and His apostles taught that disciples should trust God for their needs and not worry, that they should set their hearts on spiritual, heavenly things, not on things of this world. See 6:19-34; Col 3:1-3; 1 Tim 6:9,10.

**13:23** The key word here is "understands." Compare v 19. It is not said that any of the others understood what they heard. But this



ground is he who hears the Word, and understands it. He indeed bears fruit. Some produce a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

24 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. 26 But when the blade sprang up, and began to produce a crop, the tares also appeared.

27 "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Then where have these tares come from?'

28 "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go

kind of person has been taught by God and has his spiritual eyes opened – Luke 24:45; etc. This makes all the difference. We can produce spiritual fruit only as we understand the teachings of the Bible, God's Word. What we do not understand we will not apply to our lives, and may quickly forget. God wants us to study and understand His truth. See Deut 6:6,7; Josh 1:8; Ps 1:1,2; 119:1; Prov 2:1-8; Acts 8:30-35; 1 Cor 2:12-16; Eph 1:17,18; 4:13,14; Col 1:9; 2:2.

"Fruit" – spiritual fruit is the only evidence of God's working in men's hearts. If there is no fruit there must be doubt whether anything real, valuable, and permanent is taking place. See John 15:1-6; Heb 6:7-12. But we should despair of no one. The poor conditions of heart described in this parable do not need to be permanent. Hard hearts can be broken, thorns can be uprooted. In this parable there is great encouragement for all who sow the Word of God in obedience to the Lord Jesus. There is good ground out there prepared by God, and eventually there will be a harvest. Compare 9:37; Ps 126:5,6; John 4:35.

The parable also contains a warning. We should be careful about the conditions of our hearts. We are responsible for their condition – whether they are unprepared or shallow and hard, or thorny. Compare Hos 10:12; Jer 4:3; Ezek 18:31; Joel 2:13; Prov 4:23.

**13:24-30** The Lord Himself explained this parable in vs 37-43. The "field" represents conditions on earth. The world belongs to God, and His purpose is to have His kingdom rule over all and every part of it. The good "seed" is not the Word of God as in the parable of the sower, but God's children, born of His Spirit into His kingdom (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8).

At present in the world and in the church there is a mixture of good and bad. The Greek word here translated "tares" means a kind of weed almost identical to wheat in appearance in its early stages (compare 2 Cor 11:13-15). They represent the children of Satan (v 38; see John 8:44; 1 John 3:8). God's enemy is Satan who "sows" evil men in the world. Generally

and gather them up?'

29 "But he said, 'No. While you are gathering up the tares you may also root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will say to the reapers, 'First gather the tares together and tie them in bundles to burn them. But gather the wheat into my barn.'"

31 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown, it is the largest of the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

speaking there are only two kinds of people on earth – those who are God's children and in His kingdom and those who are not.

**13:29** There can be no way for God's servants to rid the world of evil men, without at the same time destroying some good men. One reason is that it may not always be easy to distinguish between "weeds" and "wheat" in their early stages. In any case, who will do the separating and destroying? Apart from God Himself who has the wisdom or power? And we should always remember that "children" of Satan may in time become children of God (Rom 3:9; Eph 2:1-4; Titus 3:3-7).

**13:30** At the great harvest at the end of this age God will separate all His children from all Satan's children. Compare 25:31-46. Observe that Satan's children are gathered first. The final issue of the harvest will be the same as described in Matt 3:12.

**13:31,32** The main point of this parable is plain – though the kingdom of God had a very small beginning, it was to grow very large. It began its work in this age with Christ and a few disciples. Now it has spread throughout the earth. Christ is the one who planted the seed, His "field" is the whole earth, as in the parable of the weeds and wheat. The mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds planted by farmers (this is Jesus' meaning here – see Mark 4:31). The kind of mustard plant referred to here can grow as high as three meters.

In the Old Testament a tree was sometimes used as a symbol of a great kingdom (Ezek 31:6; Dan 4:20-22). Eventually, in the age to come, Christ's kingdom will fill the earth and replace all others (see notes on Dan 2:44,45).

In the OT birds sometimes symbolize nations and peoples (Isa 46:11; Jer 12:9; Ezek 17:22-24; see Ezek 31:3-6; etc). It seems likely that here they represent nations and peoples who become "Christianized" – greatly influenced by Christianity without becoming truly Christian – the birds are not branches of the tree. However it should be noted that in the parable of the sower birds stand for Satan and evil spirits (vs 4,19), and some think

33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until the whole was leavened."

34 Jesus said all these things to the crowd in parables, and without a parable he did not say anything to them, 35 so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

I will open my mouth in parables.  
I will utter things which have been  
kept secret from the foundation of  
the world.

36 Then Jesus sent the crowd away and went in the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain the parable of the tares of the field to us."

37 He answered and said to them, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of man. 38 The field is the world. The good seed are the children of the that here also they mean Satan's attempts to injure and destroy God's kingdom.

**13:33** There is large disagreement among scholars about the meaning of this brief parable. Some say it is a picture of the spread of God's kingdom in the world. Some say it symbolizes the inner working of God's Word in the individual and in the church as a whole. Others say it signifies the secret working of evil in the church, and link it with verses like 2 Thess 2:7. They point out that yeast (leaven) is often used in the Bible as a symbol of evil (see 16:12; Ex 12:8; 1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9), and that "woman" in theological matters may also symbolize evil teaching or apostasy (see Rev 2:20; 17:3; Jer 51:2,3,7).

Of course the kingdom of heaven is not evil in itself, but this may describe a certain aspect of the kingdom in this present age, and the apostasy that will permeate the visible church on earth. Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the "yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (see notes at 16:6,12). Perhaps this parable is a prophecy that the church would grow careless and that ritualism, traditionalism, hypocrisy, denial of Bible truth, carnal reasoning and unbelief (the Pharisees and Sadducees were guilty of all of these) would spread throughout all branches of Christianity.

**13:34** But at this particular time and occasion He used only parables. At other times, of course, He used the ordinary forms of speech.

**13:35** Ps 78:2. These hidden things were the secret truths of God's kingdom.

**13:37-43** Notice again that when the Lord Jesus explained a parable He gave significance to the details.

**13:38** Here "children of the kingdom" signify believers in Christ, those born again by God's Spirit (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8).

**13:41** God means for His kingdom to completely fill the earth (Isa 11:1-9; Dan

kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of man will send forth his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom everything that causes stumbling, and those who do evil, 42 and will throw them into a furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine out like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.

44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field that a man finds and hides *again*, and for joy over it goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that

2:35,44,45; 7:27; Rev 11:15; 19:15,16).  
**13:42** Notes at 3:10; 5:22.

**13:43** Prov 4:18; Dan 12:3; 1 Cor 15:40-44. We cannot yet imagine what glory this indicates - 1 John 3:1-3.

**13:44-46** Some think that in these two parables the "treasure" and the "pearl" signify the Church and the one who "found" them signifies Christ. This interpretation is most unlikely. It is much more probable that these parables signify two different kinds of men who find the kingdom of God. It seems that one of the points of the first parable is that the treasure was found unexpectedly. The man "found" it, evidently not knowing previously that it was there. And notice the words "hides again." Evidently the finder was afraid that someone else would get the treasure before he could secure it. How can all this refer to Christ?

The interpretation of this first parable also rests on the meaning of the word "field." If the field is the world as in v 38, then obviously a person does not buy the world to get the kingdom of God. But look carefully at the wording of vs 24 and 44 - v 24 has "his" (Christ's) field, but v 44 has "a" field. In v 38 "his field" is said to be the world. But is there any reason to think that "a" field is also the world? A field here seems to indicate any field, and possibly has no special meaning at all. At least we can say that it did not belong to the person who found the treasure, because he went and bought it. So the person can hardly refer to Christ who owns the world and does not need to buy it - in v 24 it is said to be His world already.

The seeker in the second parable was seeking after many pearls. He was in the business of buying and selling. Not so with Christ. He knew exactly what He wanted when He came to earth, and He was after one great thing all the time - the Church.

The wording of these parables suits

he had and bought it.

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the lake and caught every kind of fish. 48 When it was full, they pulled it to shore, sat down, and gathered the good into containers, but threw the bad away. 49 It will be just like this at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

51 Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."

52 Then he said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old."

53 And it happened *that* when Jesus had better the interpretation that we have here two brief pictures of individuals finding the kingdom of God. The first one finds it without deliberately seeking for it. Compare Rom 10:20 (Isa 65:1); 9:30,31. The kingdom of God is in this world but not obviously so. It is hidden from the great mass of men. But God directs the steps of individuals in ways they do not know, and suddenly they come upon this great treasure. The seeker after pearls represents a different kind of person. He is a thinker and has some knowledge of quality things. God has made him a searcher for truth, justice, beauty, wisdom, salvation. When he learns of the kingdom of God, when he sees it with enlightened spiritual eyes, he knows there is nothing to be compared with it.

Observe that the men in both parables sold everything to buy what they had discovered. But can the kingdom of God be bought? No (Acts 8:20; Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8,9). But it is still described as something to buy (Isa 55:1,2; Rev 3:18). In other words, there is a cost to the one who wants it, and that cost is everything one has (compare 10:37-39; Luke 14:26,27,33; Mark 10:28). To anyone who has seen its value and its beauty, the cost does not seem too high (Phil 3:7,8).

**13:47-50** This parable is similar to that of the tares and the wheat, but there are differences also. That one speaks of the gradual development of how things will be in this age. This one speaks of those caught in the gospel net, those who are somehow drawn into Christianity hardly knowing how.

Again we see that during this age, separation of the good and bad is not fully possible for men. Leaders in the church and believers may (and should) try to keep their local churches pure and unmixed with ungodly men (1 Cor 5:1,2,11-13; 2 Tim 3:1-5). But this will prove on the whole to be impossible to perfectly accomplish. There was a Judas among the twelve apostles, unsuspected by them, and the apostles later warned that evil men would get into the church (Acts 20:23-30; 2 Tim 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1,2). The final

finished these parables, he left there. 54 And when he came to his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where does this *man* get this wisdom, and *these* miracles? 55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, aren't they all with us? Then where does this *man* get all these things?"

57 And they were offended at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country and in his own house."

58 And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

**14** At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, 2 and said to his

and complete separation of the good from the bad (true from false Christians) will be at the end of this age. Compare vs 40-43.

**13:47** The Greek word for "net" signifies not a small hand net, but a great dragnet which could draw in a very large number of fish.

**13:51** They understood because He both opened the eyes of their understanding and explained His parables to them. So they could say "yes." See Mark 4:34. If they had not understood, would they not have asked for further explanations, as they did concerning the parable of the weeds and the wheat (v 36)?

**13:52** The Lord Jesus here indicates that His disciples must be teachers. Out of the vast storehouse of the Word of God they would present to people the old treasures of the Old Testament and the new treasures of the New Testament, as Jesus Himself was then doing.

**13:54** "His own country" – Nazareth and its environs. The parables had been spoken at the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum. In Nazareth Jesus was greeted with skepticism and scorn.

**13:55,56** These verses indicate that after Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary had other children.

**13:57** Compare Luke 4:24-30. They could not believe that a person of (seemingly) so ordinary a background, and low in the social order, could amount to much. People still frequently make such a mistake.

**13:58** See Mark 6:4,5. Their lack of faith in Him made it impossible for Him to do them the good He otherwise would have done. This is always the case. See the note at Ps 78:41.

**14:1** This Herod was a son of the Herod of 2:1. He ruled over Galilee and Perea and is called "king" in Mark 6:14. Here he is called "tetrarch" (which means a ruler of a fourth part). After the death of the first king Herod the area he had ruled was divided among his sons.

**14:2** Herod was an evil man. Here is evidence that his conscience was bothering him for what he did to John. He was afraid but, like so many others, he did not let his

servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has risen from the dead, and so miraculous powers are at work in him."

3 For Herod had seized John, bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4 For John said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 And though he wanted to put him to death, he was afraid of the people, because they counted him a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. 7 So he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. 8 And she, having been previously instructed by her mother, said, "Give me here John the Baptist's head in a dish." 9 And the king was sorry. Nevertheless because of *his* oath and those who were sitting at the table with him, he commanded that it be given *to her*. 10 And he sent *men* and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 And his head was brought in a dish and given to the girl, and she took it to her mother. 12 And his disciples came, took away the body, buried it, and went and told Jesus.

13 When Jesus heard *this*, he left there by boat to a deserted place alone. And when the

people heard *about it*, they followed him on foot from the cities. 14 And Jesus went out and saw a great crowd, and was moved with compassion for them, and he healed their sick.

15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the time is late. Send the crowd away, so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves food."

16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them *something* to eat."

17 And they said to him, "We have here only five loaves, and two fish."

18 He said, "Bring them here to me." 19 And he commanded the crowd to sit down on the grass, and he took the five loaves and the two fish, and, looking up to heaven, he blessed *them*, broke *them*, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the crowd. 20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up twelve basketfuls of the pieces that were left over. 21 And *the number of* those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

22 And immediately Jesus had his disciples get into a boat and go before him to the other side, while he sent the crowds away. 23 And after

fear turn him to God. Observe his belief in the resurrection of the dead. See notes on the resurrection at John 5:28,29.

**14:3** Herod had persuaded Herodias to leave Philip and live with himself. This was contrary to God's law (Lev 18:16).

**14:4** John was a courageous man who did not withhold God's message even from depraved rulers. See also 10:18; Acts 26:1,2.

**14:5** He wanted to kill John only because Herodias wanted him dead, but for some time protected him from her vengeful demands. He knew John was a righteous man, and he was afraid of both John and the people (see Mark 6:19,20).

**14:9** Note at v 5. One may be distressed at the actual act of killing a person, even though the wish had been in the heart.

**14:10,11** Here is the end of the man whom Jesus called one of the greatest of all men. Yet neither God in heaven nor the Lord Jesus on earth lifted a finger to prevent it. God does all things well and rules over all, but often His ways are mysterious (Isa 55:8,9; Acts 12:1-4; Rom 11:33). As for John, he had done his part in preparing the way for Christ (3:1-3; John 3:27-30), and his ministry was completed. So God gave him the great privilege of suffering and dying for Christ.

**14:13** Verse 23.

**14:14** See 9:35,36.

**14:15-21** This is the only miracle Jesus performed which is recorded in all four Gospels (except His resurrection from the dead). See Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-13. As with His other miracles this

one too was for the good of others, and showed not only His supernatural power but His compassion. This miracle was important also because of the truth it signified. Jesus based some teaching on it in John 6:26-59.

**14:17** It is always true that what His disciples have will not be enough in itself for the multitude, but He will accept it and use it in marvelous ways.

**14:18** This is what He says to us now about all we have.

**14:19** He first acknowledged publicly where His power came from. See 3:16; John 5:19-23. In expressing thanks to God the Father He is an example to us all - Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; Lev 12:13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12. See the work of the disciples here - they could not provide all that was needed, but they could give it out when the Lord provided it. This is true also in the work of His disciples in spiritual matters. There is enough food in Christ's gospel to feed the whole world! God wants distributors.

**14:20** It was the job of the disciples to serve the people. Then the Lord provided for the disciples. This will always be true. Compare 6:33; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor 9:8-10; Phil 4:19. Observe also that as they distributed to others the supply increased.

**14:21** Matthew alone records that there were women and children present. There may not have been very many, since the place was "remote" (v 15), but we cannot be sure about this.

**14:22** Mark 6:45.

**14:23** "To pray" - 19:13; 26:36; Luke 5:16; Heb 5:7; 7:25.

sending the crowds away, he went up into a mountain by himself to pray. And when evening came, he was there alone. 24 But the boat was now in the middle of the lake, tossed by waves, for the wind was against *it*.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the lake. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were alarmed, saying, "It is a spirit." And they cried out in fear.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered him and said, "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water."

29 And he said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strong wind, he was afraid. And beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me."

31 And immediately Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and caught him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

32 And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped him, saying, "You truly are

the Son of God."

34 And when they crossed over, they arrived at the land of Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent *word* out into all the surrounding countryside, and *people* brought to him all who were sick, 36 and begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak. And all who touched *it* became perfectly well.

**15** Then scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3 But he answered and said to them, "And why do you break the commandment of God by *following* your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, 'Honour your father and mother,' and, 'He who curses father or mother must be put to death.' 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to *his* father or *his* mother, 'Whatever of mine might have been useful to you is an offering *to God*,' 6 and does not honour his father or his mother, *it is all right*. In this way, by your tradition, you have made the commandment of God *to be* no longer in effect. 7 *You hypocrites!* Well did Isaiah prophesy about

**14:24** Sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee could be very dangerous to those out in boats. In this case, it was just another opportunity for Jesus to show His loving care for them, and His divine power.

**14:25** Here is another marvelous example of the miracles of Jesus – one that cannot be imitated by magicians and so-called godmen. One can either walk on water or one cannot. And doing so reveals supernatural power. See notes at 8:1; John 2:11. The fourth "watch" was 3 to 6 AM.

**14:26** They could not believe that flesh and blood could walk on water, and so thought Jesus must be some spirit or ghost. Compare Luke 24:36-39.

**14:28** Here we see something of Peter's character – impulsive and daring. Evidently he thought that if Jesus could walk on water He could make him also walk on it.

**14:29** This walking on water was not by Peter's power. Jesus can enable men to do many things they cannot do themselves. Compare 2 Cor 3:5.

**14:30** There is a lesson here in spiritual matters – as long as we keep our eyes on the Lord Jesus and trust Him only, we will be able to do the things He says, even things impossible to us otherwise. If doubts overwhelm us – if we take our eyes away from Him and become occupied with difficulties and dangers – we will fail and sink.

**14:31** Peter's faith was small and yet he walked on water! Learn that even a person of small faith can do impossible things as long as he trusts in the Lord Jesus to enable him. See 17:20. But doubt is ruinous. When his faith failed his feet failed.

**14:33** See 2:11; 3:17; 11:27; Luke 1:32,35; John 1:18; 3:16; 5:17,18; 10:36; 20:28. Observe that the Lord Jesus accepted their worship – a thing He would do only if He knew Himself to be the one proper object of worship (God). See 4:10. See also Luke 2:11; Phil 2:6. **14:34** This was on the west side of the Sea of Galilee.

**14:36** It was not a cloak which healed them, but Christ's power released in response to their faith – 9:20-22.

**15:2** The traditions of the elders were interpretations of the law of Moses and rules governing daily life drawn up by Jewish teachers. They had been passed on generation after generation. These religious leaders considered that people became ceremonially defiled by the common activities of daily life and needed to wash to remove this defilement. They were not concerned with any physical dirtiness of the disciples. They made washing a religious ceremony (Mark 7:2-4).

**15:3** Jesus was not concerned with the traditions of the elders. The commands of God were the important thing to Him. These religious leaders devised ways to get around God's plain commands, while insisting on their own traditions. Observe that Jesus is teaching the divine inspiration of the law. The commands which came through Moses were God's commands.

**15:4** Ex 20:16; 21:17.

**15:5,6** In other words, in the name of God, and pretending it was for God's sake, they broke God's commands. This is another example of man's fallen deceitful nature perverting God's ways.

**15:7** "Hypocrites" – 6:2; 7:5; 23:13.



you, saying,

8 This people draw near me with their mouth, and honour me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

9 But they worship me in vain, teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men."

10 And he called the crowd and said to them, "Listen and understand. 11 What defiles a man is not what goes into the mouth. But what comes out of the mouth, *this is what* defiles a man."

12 Then his disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?"

13 But he answered and said, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted, will be rooted up. 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch."

15 Then answered Peter and said to him, "Explain this parable to us."

16 And Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you still not understand that whatever goes in the mouth goes into the stomach

and is eliminated? 18 But the things which come out of the mouth come from the heart. And they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immorality, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are *the things* which defile a man. But eating with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

21 Then Jesus left there and went into the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And, suddenly, out came a Canaanite woman from that region and cried out to him, saying, "O Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me. My daughter is terribly demon-possessed."

23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us."

24 But he answered and said, "I was not sent *to anyone* except the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

25 Then she came and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, help me."

26 But he answered and said, "It is not right to take the children's bread, and throw *it* to the dogs."

27 And she said, "True, Lord! Yet the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

**15:8,9** Isa 29:13. Most men prefer to follow men's rules rather than obey God's Word, but many of them would like to be considered on God's side. There is a great deal of such "vain" worship on earth.

**15:11** His meaning is that real "uncleanness" is not physical but moral. It is not related to foods and washings, but to the heart and mind and spirit (vs 17-20). What use is it if we try to be "ceremonially" clean by washing the outside, and leave the inner person, the heart, full of wickedness? See 23:25-28. We need to be clean on the inside. See 5:8; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 1:9.

**15:13** God both plants and uproots plants. See 13:24-30; Isa 60:21; 61:3; Jer 1:9,10. Who besides God does any planting? – see 13:39.

**15:14** "Blind leaders" – 23:16,24; Rom 2:19. Many there are who are totally lacking in spiritual understanding who still think they are enlightened, and who try to guide others. And many people all over the world have fallen into religious "ditches" by following them.

**15:16** See 16:9; Luke 24:25.

**15:19** Jesus here reveals what man's heart is by nature. Every human being is born with a sinful nature which eventually reveals itself in one or more of the sins listed here. Since the streams are so bad what must the fountain be like! See Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Isa 64:6; Jer 17:9.

**15:21** See 11:21.

**15:22** She was descended from the original inhabitants of Canaan. See Gen 10:18; 15:20. Note on Son of David at 1:1. Note

on demon possession at 4:24.

**15:23** Jesus was not lacking in love and compassion for people other than Jews. That is not why He remained silent here. Compare His own words at 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47; John 3:16. But before He was ready to send His gospel throughout the world He had a work to do in Israel, and God sent Him specifically to do that work (v 24). Compare 10:5,6. As for this woman, it appears that He was testing her faith to bring out its strength and beauty, and from the beginning He planned to help her (it is likely that He went there with that very purpose in mind). The disciples were more concerned with themselves than with the need of this woman.

**15:26** "Children" here means the children of Israel, God's chosen people. The Greek word for dogs used here does not mean the scavengers of the streets, belonging to no one and sometimes used in the Bible as a symbol of wicked men (Ps 22:16; Phil 3:2; 2 Pet 2:22; Rev 22:15). The word here means little dogs – pet dogs kept at the house. Jesus was not showing scorn or insulting this woman. He was testing her and showing, perhaps, that the basis of prayer is not our merit. The tone of voice and the look on the face can be as important as words spoken, and there was something in Jesus' manner which encouraged her rather than discouraged her.

**15:27** The woman understood in some measure that the Jews were God's chosen nation, and that she was an outsider without any covenant relationship with God or claim on His mercy (compare Eph 2:12).



28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "Woman, your faith is great! It will be to you just as you wish." And from that hour her daughter was healed.

29 And Jesus left there, came near the lake of Galilee, and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. 30 And great crowds came to him. With them were *the* lame, blind, mute, crippled, and many others. And they put them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them, 31 so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

32 Then Jesus called his disciples and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have stayed with me now for three days, and have nothing to eat. I am not willing to send them away without eating, for they may faint on the way."

33 And his disciples said to him, "Where would we get enough bread in this wilderness to satisfy such a large crowd?"

34 And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish."

35 And he commanded the crowd to sit on the ground. 36 And he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke them, and gave *them* to

And wisely and humbly she used this for her advantage. And she knew that a crumb from the Lord Jesus would be greater than a whole loaf from anyone else.

**15:28** She showed the greatness of her faith by her persistence. She would not be stopped by silence (v 23), rejection by the disciples (v 23), teaching that seemed to exclude her (v 24), or any temptation to pride (v 26). She fully believed that Jesus could and would help her, and she determined to go on asking until He did. Compare Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8. Let us observe how important faith is to Jesus, how He commends it and rewards it (8:10; 9:22,29; 17:20; 21:21,22. See Heb 11:6).

**15:30** See 4:23,24; 9:35,36.

**15:31** See 9:8. The God of Israel is the only God there is (Deut 6:4; Isa 43:10,11; 44:6,8; 45:5,18). And one great purpose for Christ's activity was to bring praise to Him (compare Rom 15:8,9).

**15:32** See 9:36; 14:14. Observe that Jesus thought of their needs before they said anything about them. Compare 6:8.

**15:33** They speak as though the event of 14:15-21 had never happened. Did they think that was an event never to be repeated? Sometimes the dullness and smallness of faith in the disciples seems amazing – until we become aware of our own.

**15:36** See 14:19.

**15:37** When we give what we have to the Lord Jesus, our seven "loaves" may feed a

his disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the crowd. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up seven basketfuls of broken *pieces* that were left over. 38 And those eating were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 And he sent the crowd away, and got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.

**16** The Pharisees and the Sadducees came, and testing him asked *him* to show them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said to them, "When evening comes, you say, '*We'll have* fine weather, for the sky is red.' 3 And in the morning, '*Today we'll have* a storm, for the sky is red and overcast.' *You* hypocrites! You can discern the appearance of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times! 4 A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And he left them and went away.

5 And when his disciples went to the other side, they forgot to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said to them, "Watch out and be on your guard about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we did not bring any bread."

8 Knowing *this*, Jesus said to them, "O you of

multitude and mean seven times more coming back to us than we gave. See Luke 6:38. **15:38** Magadan was a town on the west shore of the lake of Galilee.

**16:1** Pharisees and Sadducees were divided in many things, but they joined together in one thing – opposition to Jesus. An evil cause can unite people as much as a good cause. See Luke 23:12. Note on Sadducees at 3:7.

**16:2,3** There were already many signs, but they had no heart to accept them. The prophecies of the Old Testament, the ministries of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus revealed that the days of the Messiah were with them. And the many miracles Jesus had performed revealed His supernatural power – 8:1. Those unbelievers deserved no special signs, and He would not give them any. They had not responded to the truth God had already given them.

**16:4** See 12:39.

**16:6-12** Here we have yeast (leaven) used as a symbol of something evil. See 13:33; Ex 12:8; 1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9. This occasion once again revealed dullness in the disciples. The Lord Jesus used a figure of speech which they should have understood. It seems that their minds were too much on literal bread. Occupation with physical needs and desires may make all of us dull hearers of God's Word.

**16:8** See 6:30; 8:26; 14:31. In the next two verses Jesus points out that they had no cause to be anxious or unbelieving about

little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you did not bring any bread? 9 Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves for the five thousand and how many basketfuls you picked up? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you picked up? 11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you about bread, but that you should be on your guard about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees?"

12 Then they understood that he told them to be on their guard, not about the yeast in bread, but about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

food, even though they had forgotten to bring any. He had twice miraculously provided food for great multitudes. Do we fall into the same anxiety and unbelief as theirs? Even after years of Christian experience, do we not sometimes need to be rebuked for lack of faith and understanding?

**16:12** By "yeast" Jesus meant false religious teaching. Just as yeast permeates all the dough where it has been put, false teaching can spread through a whole group of people, can corrupt an entire religious organization, can influence even a nation. Both Pharisees and Sadducees claimed to be followers of the true religion revealed by God, but they did not partake of its reality and spiritual life. Every church still needs to beware of such "yeast" wherever it may be found (see Rom 16:17,18; 1 Tim 4:1,2; 2 Tim 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1-3). Compare 13:33.

We see something of the false teaching of the Pharisees and the results of it at 3:7-9; 5:20; 9:11; 12:2,24,28; 15:1,2; 23:2-36. They said they believed the Bible was the Word of God and that there was one true God, but they emphasized ceremonies, traditions, mere outward observance of God's law and man-made rules. It all tended to self-righteousness and hypocrisy - Luke 12:1; 18:10-12. The Sadducees denied truth plainly revealed in the Word of God (Acts 23:8). Their ways resulted in worldly, carnal reasoning. Both of these groups were sunk in unbelief and hypocrisy. The same kinds of people, under different names, are still with us today.

**16:13** Caesarea Philippi was a town about 40 kilometers north of the lake of Galilee, near the highest mountain in the region - Mt Hermon. Note on Son of man at 8:20.

**16:14** When the Jews of Christ's day suggested He might be John or one of the prophets who had died, they were not expressing a belief in reincarnation but in resurrection - 14:1,2. On reincarnation see notes at Job 11:12; John 9:2,3.

**16:15** This is a question that still comes to us all. The answer we give to it is of the utmost importance.

**16:16** Note on Christ at 1:1; on Son of God at 3:16,17; John 3:16; 5:18-23. God is called "the living God" in contrast to dead idols, and

13 When Jesus arrived in the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?"

14 And they said, "Some say that you are John the Baptist. Some say, 'Elijah.' And others say, 'Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'"

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And also I tell you that you are Peter,

to the "gods" who exist only in peoples' imaginations. Notes at Ps 115:3-8; etc.

**16:17** "Blessed" - references are at 11:6. Here Jesus pronounces Peter blessed because God had enlightened him to understand the great truth concerning Jesus - that He was the Messiah and the (not "a") Son of God. He did not arrive at the truth by logical reasoning or by human teachers. It was no head theory. He had a direct revelation of truth from God. Compare 11:27; etc. Blessedness comes to all who are similarly enlightened to know the truth about the Lord Jesus. Compare 1 John 2:23; 5:1,5.

**16:18** The name Peter in Greek (Petros) means a small rock, a stone. The word for the "rock" on which Christ builds His Church (petra) means a large rock. So Christ is not saying He would build the Church on Peter. Such a magnificent structure requires more than such a weak and puny foundation. A comparison with other references to this subject makes this even more clear. See 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:19-21. Peter, together with all the apostles and prophets, was a part of the Church's foundation, but Christ Himself is by far the most important "rock."

"Rock" as used here in Matthew may mean the confession of Peter that Jesus was the Christ, the only Son of God. That is a foundation truth for anyone entering the fellowship of God's people.

In this verse the word "church" appears for the first time in the New Testament. The Greek word is "ecclesia" and comes from a verb which means "called out from." In the NT it is the word commonly used for an assembly of God's people. They are called out from the world to be a separate holy people - 1 Pet 2:9; 2 Cor 6:17,18; Rom 8:30; John 17:6.

"Hell" - in Greek "Hades." See note at Luke 16:23. In the Old Testament "gate" often signified the place where the leaders and rulers and judges met to decide matters relating to their town (Gen 34:20). Gates of Hades probably means here the counsels and plots and plans of all the leading powers and beings related to the realm of death, especially Satan who has the power of death (Heb 2:14). They will not be able to win their fight against Christ

and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. 19 And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

20 Then he ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ. 21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took him aside and began to and His Church.

**16:19** Jesus gave the keys to Peter as the leader of the twelve apostles. He was chosen for the special task of opening the kingdom of God to others. We see his use of these keys in his ministry to Jews (Acts 2:14-41), Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17), and Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48) – these were the only three groups of people that existed.

Let us learn the following: the doors to God's kingdom are now wide open, and anyone who will may enter. Once a door is opened keys are no longer needed to open it. The keys were given to Peter, not to his successors. Peter alone could do what he did. God used Peter as His instrument to open the door of His kingdom to all. And he did it once for all time. Now if there is any closing or opening of doors to do, the Lord Jesus Himself will do it. See Rev 1:8; 3:7.

Peter had more to do than opening the gate of God's kingdom. There were things to "bind" and "loose." That is, the affairs of the kingdom had to be administered and decisions must be made concerning things to be allowed or forbidden. It is important to see that in this work the other disciples had the same authority as Peter. See 18:18; John 20:23. Verse 19 could (and perhaps should) be translated "whatever you bind on earth will [already] have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven." This would mean that Peter and the other disciples would be agents to carry out decisions already made in heaven.

**16:20** The time had not yet come to announce what Peter had learned. It would have caused more obstacles to Christ's ministry, more opposition from His enemies, and bring about a crisis before the proper time (see John 7:30).

**16:21** For the first time Jesus taught His disciples what His principal work was to be. His chief reason for coming into the world was not to gather huge crowds, declare His divinity, become popular, and ascend a human throne. He came to die for sinners and rise again (20:28; Luke 24:46,47; John 1:29; 3:14; 10:11; 1 Cor 15:1-4). Note on resurrection of the dead at John 5:28,29.

**16:22** This shows how little the disciples at that time understood Christ's mission to the world. They thought He would be a mighty

rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from you, Lord! This shall not happen to you."

23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! To me you are a stumbling block, because you are not thinking of the things of God, but of the things of men."

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man, if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for

conqueror of their enemies, not a suffering saviour. Poor Peter! He thought he would be Christ's advisor! He rebuked Jesus, the one he had called the Messiah, the Son of God! Such was Peter, ascending one moment to the heights, falling to the depths the next moment. Did he imagine he knew better than Christ Himself what Christ should do? He was not the last person to fall into this error. There are still many who complain against God's ways as if they knew better than God how things should be done (see note at Ps 47:2).

**16:23** See 4:10. "Satan" – note at 1 Chron 21:1. The name means "opponent" or "adversary." Here Peter was opposing Christ in trying to keep Him from the cross. So Jesus justly rebuked him. He never used harsher language in speaking to any disciple. Peter was thinking in merely human ways. Men want ease, comfort, safety, prosperity for themselves and for those they love. They do not understand God's ways and plans. To mind the things of men may put us in opposition to the things of God. See Isa 55:8,9; Rom 8:5-8; 11:33,34; Phil 3:19; Col 3:1-3; Jam 4:4; 1 John 2:16,17. Let us learn from God rather than try to teach Him what He should do. If Christ had listened to Peter there would have been no sacrifice for sin, no resurrection, no gospel, no hope for anyone.

**16:24** Note at 10:38; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23. The denial of self is an essential part of true Christianity. This is contrary to all philosophies which teach the exaltation of self or assertion of self. According to the Bible self is fallen and sinful and worthy only of death (15:19; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 8:7,8,12,13; Gal 5:17,24; Eph 4:22; Col 3:5).

"Himself" does not mean just the body, but the whole person as he is by nature – all that he thinks, desires, and does. The person who lives for self cannot live for God, and living for God is the chief duty and privilege of men (1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:15).

**16:25** Note at 10:39. We must give up self for Christ. People may lose themselves in other things and for other reasons. Only when we give our life to Christ will we find true and abundant life.

**16:26** The world is a passing show (1 John 2:16,17), and we are here only for a little while (Ps 90:10; Heb 9:27). Even if we could gain

his soul? 27 For the Son of man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his deeds. 28 Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste of death until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

**17** And after six days Jesus took Peter James, and John his brother, and led them up into a high mountain by themselves, 2 and was transfigured in their presence. And his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him.

4 Then Peter, responding, said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you are willing, let us make here three tabernacles, one for you, one for it all, it would be the height of foolishness to chose that when we can have something far better and enjoy it forever – inheritance with Christ (Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21-23; 1 Pet 1:4; Rev 21:7). Yet many there are who throw away eternal life for a plot of land or a few pleasures. Even one of the original apostles chose a bag of money rather than eternal life (26:14-16; John 12:6. See also Gen 25:29-34; Heb 12:16,17).

**16:27** Here are two events in the future which are absolutely certain to occur – the return of Christ (19:28; 24:27,30; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16; Heb 9:28), and His judgment of men (25:31,32; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12). All of our choices and activities should be in the light of these two facts.

**16:28** Note on Son of man at 8:20. "Coming in his kingdom" here does not mean His second coming to rule over the earth. The best explanation seems to be that Christ is speaking of the establishment of His kingdom through His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, His sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the spread of His kingdom as recorded in Acts. This verse also seems to be related to His transfiguration which is recorded in the next chapter. Compare 2 Pet 1:16-18.

**17:1** This high mountain was probably Mt Hermon.

**17:2** The disciples were given a brief sight of Christ's glory (Mark 9:23; Luke 9:28,29; John 1:14; 1 Pet 1:16-18. Compare Rev 1:14-16). This was evidence that Christ would fulfill the promise of 16:27. The word "transfigured" means a change in the outer form or appearance that comes from within. Compare Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18 where the same word is used.

**17:3** Moses represented the law, the old covenant with its types and pictures of salvation. Elijah represented the prophets with their visions and promises of the kingdom of God. Moses died about 1400 years before this event. Elijah ascended to heaven nearly 900 years before it. Their appearance here demonstrates the Bible's teaching that people survive after

Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud covered them in shadow, and then a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him."

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were very frightened. 7 And Jesus came and touched them and said, "Get up and do not be frightened."

8 And when they had raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus alone. 9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus gave them an order, saying, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of man has risen from the dead."

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?"

11 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Elijah death. We know from Luke 9:31 what Moses and Elijah talked about with Jesus – His death. **17:4** Probably Peter's idea was to prolong the blessed experience on the mountain, to spend as much time as possible there in glory, away from the work, the strains, the problems of life on the plain. But see Mark 9:6. Once again he was minding the things of men (16:23). If Jesus had stayed on the mountain there would have been no salvation for men.

**17:5** See references to "cloud" at Acts 1:9. Here God the Father magnifies the Lord Jesus above Moses and Elijah, and so above all the great men of the Old Testament or any who ever lived. Jesus was the unique Son of God. See 3:17; etc. The eternal living God, the Creator of the universe, tells us to pay the utmost attention to the words spoken by Jesus and recorded in the Bible. Of all who ever spoke Jesus is most worthy of these words – "Listen to Him." Compare John 7:16,17; 12:49,50; Heb 1:1,2. The quality of our life on earth and our whole eternity is dependent on whether we listen to Him – John 10:3,16,27; Acts 3:23. Sad it is that many men listen to other men but refuse to hear the voice of God's only Son. **17:6** Compare Ex 3:6; Isa 6:5; Ezek 1:28; Dan 10:7-9; Rev 1:17.

**17:7** See 8:3,15; 9:29; 20:34; Dan 10:10; Rev 1:17. One touch by the Lord Jesus brings more blessedness than the whole world can give.

**17:8** What here happened to them literally should happen to us spiritually. When the sun rises the stars fade from view. One glimpse of Him and anyone else who ever lived must take a lesser place.

**17:9** The time to declare all the truth about the Lord Jesus had not yet come, but it would come later.

**17:10** "Elijah must first come" – this means appear before the Messiah, the Saviour. This teaching was based on Mal 4:5,6. The disciples believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but they did not understand why Elijah had not come to prepare His way.

**17:11** This seems to be an assertion that Mal 4:5,6 will be fulfilled in the future, that

indeed comes first and restores all things. 12 But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. In the same way the Son of man also will suffer at their hands."

13 Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

14 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him, knelt down to him and said, 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son. For he is a lunatic, and suffers miserably. For he often falls in the fire, and often in the water. 16 And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him."

17 Then Jesus answered and said, "Faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to me."

18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it went out of him. And the child was cured from that very time.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately, and said, "Why could we not drive it out?"

20 And Jesus said to them, "Because of your

Elijah will come before the day of the Lord – a day which has not come even yet. Note at 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10.

**17:12** Note at 11:14.

**17:13** "John" – at 3:1-12; 11:2-15; 14:1-12.

**17:15** "Lunatic" – or "moon-struck." It was a common idea in those days that the moon could cause some people to act in a crazy manner. Actually this boy's seizures were caused by a demon (v 18), but similar things, such as epileptic seizures, may occur also apart from demonic activity.

**17:17** That "faithless and perverse" generation was one of the worst in Israel's long history – 12:39; 23:33-36; Acts 2:40. This verse gives an indication that all the time Jesus spent on earth He suffered from the unbelief and disobedience of people. It was pain that brought to His lips the words "how long." Do we continue to give Him pain for the same reason?

**17:18** See 4:24; 8:29-34; 9:32,33.

**17:19-21** Verse 17; 6:30; 8:26; 14:31. Jesus had given them authority to drive out demons (10:1). Now, perhaps, for the first time they had tried and failed. It seems the reason was this: they did not have the same faith in Christ and His words as they had on former occasions. Perhaps this time they depended on a mere formula, or even on themselves (after God has enabled us to do something it is possible for us to begin thinking that we can do it without Him). Not all demons are alike. It seems some are stronger and more determined than others, and casting such out requires a stronger faith than is usually the case. Prayer and fasting can be aids to faith.

This illustration of the mountain shows the great power of faith. Actually it is not literal mountains that need to be moved,

unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith *as much* as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there', and it will move, and nothing will be impossible to you. 21 However this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

22 And while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man will be betrayed into the hands of men, 23 and they will kill him, and the third day he will be raised." And they were plunged into deep sadness.

24 And when they came to Capernaum, those who collected the *temple* tax came to Peter and said, "Doesn't your teacher pay the *temple* tax?"

25 He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus was the first to speak, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes? From their own children, or from foreigners?"

26 Peter said to him, "From foreigners." Jesus said to him, "Then the children are exempt. 27 But so we will not be a stumbling block to them, go to the lake, put in a hook, and take the first fish that

but obstacles and difficulties which are like mountains. And these will all yield when faith is strong enough. See also Mark 11:24; Rom 4:19-21; Hebrews chapter 11.

"Unbelief" (v 20) – some ancient manuscripts have here "little faith". Their unbelief on this occasion did not indicate a complete lack of faith in the Lord Jesus in everything, but a small faith mixed with unbelief, with the unbelief predominating at this time and in this matter.

**17:22,23** See 16:21. They did not understand His words, but realized that something terrible was going to happen. They did not know what His resurrection from the dead would mean (Mark 9:10,32; Luke 18:34). God's people sometimes grieve about something they could rejoice in if their understanding was better. See at Gen 50:20 an illustration of rejoicing instead of grieving.

**17:24** Ex 30:13; 2 Chron 24:9. This tax was for the upkeep and ministry of the temple.

**17:25** Collecting taxes from conquered peoples was the practice in the Roman Empire. Roman citizens did not have to pay.

**17:26** Christ was the Son of God and greater than the temple (12:6). There was no obligation for Him (or for His followers) to pay the temple tax. The children of God are free, and their giving to religious institutions should be voluntary. See 2 Cor 9:7. They are not to be in bondage to the law of Moses or to man-made rules (Gal 5:1,13). Of course these verses have nothing to do with the obligation of Christians to pay taxes to their government. See Rom 13:5-7.

**17:27** Here is another important principle for the children of God. They must not use their freedom in such a careless way that others are unnecessarily offended



comes up. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money. Take that and give *it* to them for me and you."

**18** At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 And Jesus called a little child to him, and set him among them, 3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted, and become as little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself like this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever receives one such little child in my name receives me. 6 But whoever is a cause of stumbling to one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck and *that*

(Rom 14:13,15,19-21). It would seem from this verse that neither Jesus nor Peter had the money on hand for this tax. The total for both was the equivalent of about four days wages for a laborer. The Lord Jesus voluntarily lived His life in poverty (8:20).

In this event see how God can control everything to meet His peoples' needs. Someone had once dropped a coin into the lake (or, for all we know, God created one at this moment). God caused the fish to get the coin in its mouth and come to the very place where Peter would throw out his line (compare Jonah 1:17; 2:10).

To meet the needs of His people God can use many ways, including miraculous ones. See also 1 Kings 17:4,9. The whole world is at His disposal (Ps 24:1; 50:10,11). Let us trust Him and be free from anxiety (6:25-34).

**18:1** This question revealed a big error in the thinking of the disciples – one still very common today. See 20:20,21; Mark 10:35-37. Compare Jer 45:5. It is exceedingly important that those who are tempted to desire great things for themselves learn the lesson Jesus taught here.

**18:2** Here was a living object lesson – a child simple, trusting, humble. Little children do not seek to be great.

**18:3** Mark it down as absolutely certain – those who are ruled by pride and those who seek for their own greatness will never enter God's kingdom, let alone be great in it (unless they repent and humble themselves). Compare 5:3,4; 20:25-28; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Prov 3:34; Luke 9:23; 18:13,14. The first condition for entering God's kingdom is the denial of self – see 16:24-26. All this is the exact opposite of the way men generally think by nature.

**18:4** See also 20:25-27. We can rise in God's eyes only by abasing ourselves and being willing to accept a low place, not by grand aims to promote ourselves and struggles for high positions. If we promote ourselves we may be able to achieve success in men's

he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 "Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! For of necessity there will be stumbling blocks, but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! 8 Therefore if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw *it* away from you. It is better for you to go into life lame or crippled, than having two hands or two feet to be thrown into everlasting fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pull it out and throw *it* away from you. It is better for you to go into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

10 "Watch out that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. 11 For the Son of man has come to save that which was lost.

12 "What do you think? If a man has a hundred

eyes, but not in God's eyes. This does not mean we should humble ourselves with the purpose of attaining greatness. This would be no humbling of self at all.

**18:5** Compare 10:40-42; 25:31-46.

**18:6** "A cause of stumbling" – the Greek here means to put an obstacle in the way of someone to cause him to fall. The translation of the NIV here "causes. . .to sin" seems misleading, by being too general. To teach another to sin is, of course, a terrible thing (the Jews regarded it as the worst of all sins), but to deal with a child (or anyone) in such a way that he (or she) is stumbled about the way of Christ is a very terrible sin indeed (compare 23:13; Acts 13:8). And the punishment for those who do so will also be terrible – unless they repent and find forgiveness through Christ (12:31). The Greek word translated "millstone" means a very large millstone, the kind pulled round and round by a donkey. Greeks and Romans actually inflicted this kind of punishment on the worst criminals.

**18:7** In this fallen world it is certain that temptations to sin will come to everyone. But this does not mean that men are not responsible when they tempt others. See what the real source of woe to the world is.

**18:8,9** See notes at 5:29,30. Jesus repeated important truths to impress them on His hearers. There are two words here about the punishment of hell not found in 5:29,30 – "everlasting" and "fire" (see also 3:10,12; 5:22; 7:19; 13:40,42,50; 25:41). The purpose of dealing with oneself drastically is to "enter life" – this means to receive eternal life now and to live in God's presence forever.

**18:10** It is all too easy to scorn and look down on the humble and weak. But God appoints His angels for special work in relation to people on earth, and one of them is to watch over God's little ones. See also Ps 34:7; 91:11; Heb 1:14.

**18:11** See Luke 19:10.

**18:12-14** A parable repeated in Luke 15:4-7 with certain changes in wording. See notes



sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go into the mountains, and look for the one that has gone astray? 13 And if it so happens that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine which did not go astray. 14 Just so, it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

15 "Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, alone, between you and him. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not listen, take with you one or two more, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses to listen to the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

18 "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and

whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.

19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I among them."

21 Then Peter came to him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "I do not tell you, 'up to seven times,' but up to seventy times seven.

23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he began to settle *them*, someone was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But since he had no *means* to pay off *the debt*, his master commanded that he, his wife and children, and all

there. We are not to vainly imagine we are better than those who leave the way and fall into sin and look down on them (v 10). There are two possible views about these sheep – they could represent unsaved men (compare Isa 53:6), or else believers in Christ who wander away (Ps 119:176).

Notice the following facts: the sheep here are all owned – they signify God's special property. That is, they are either saved people already, or those whom God has chosen to be saved (John 6:37; 10:16; 17:6; Eph 1:4). The wandering sheep will not be left to wander forever. Christ goes after them. Wandering "sheep" cause great activity in heaven. God's great heart cannot rest as long as there is a single one of His still wandering away. Those brought back are a cause of great joy to God. For other references to sheep and their shepherd see Ps 23; Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:11-16; John 10:1-29.

**18:15** "Between you and him" means not to tell others until it is clear that reconciliation is impossible. Gossip is not the way to bring peace. The object is to win the brother back to fellowship, not to show everyone how bad he is.

**18:16** Deut 19:15. This means keep trying to get him to accept the truth.

**18:17** "Church" here means the local group of believers. "Heathen" means one who does not worship the one true God, and "tax collector" here signifies one working for the enemies of his people (5:46). This verse means that if a member of a local church will not repent of wrong doing, he should be put out of the fellowship. The idea is to bring him to repentance by losing that which should be of great value to him – the fellowship of God's people. Compare 1 Cor 5:1-5; 6:1-7; 2 Cor 2:6,7.

**18:18** Here we see that all the disciples possessed the same authority to bind and loose as Peter was given in 16:19.

**18:19** This promise is in the context of church

discipline, and gives a word about the kind of prayer made by an assembly that God will answer. There must be oneness of mind, purpose, motive, and trust – a thing often difficult to achieve.

**18:20** The subject is still the local church. A church does not need to be large to have Christ there. Observe that Jesus promises He will be in many places at one time. Throughout the world a great many local churches meet in His name at the same time, and Jesus is with them all. Compare 28:20. This can be true only of God who alone can be in all places at once. Jesus was conscious that He shares God's nature. See Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**18:21** Verse 15. Peter thought that seven times to forgive a brother was surely all that God could require.

**18:22** This is the same as saying there is really no limit to the number of times God requires us to forgive others. The following parable gives a good reason for this: no matter how often God's children forgive others it is nothing compared to the number of times God has forgiven them.

**18:23-35** Here is one of the great passages on forgiveness in the Bible. We can learn some very important lessons from it.

**18:23** Note on kingdom of heaven at 4:17. God too keeps accounts concerning people and will settle those accounts. He does so because it is just and right to do so.

**18:24** "Talent" – originally meant a balance, then a measure of weight, and finally a sum of money in gold or silver equal to that weight. Our sin against God is compared to an enormous debt (see 6:12). The debt for this one man was the equivalent of some millions of dollars or a few crores of rupees.

**18:25** The amount the servant owed his master would be utterly impossible for him to pay, either in money or in services. In the same way, it is completely impossible for any of us to pay our debt to God. Shall we try to pay with good works? They are

that he had, be sold and payment made.

26 "Therefore the servant fell down and worshipped him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, and let him go, and forgave him the debt.

28 "But that same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. And he seized him and grabbed *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe.' 29 And his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 30 And he was not willing, but went and threw him into prison until he paid the debt.

31 "So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sad, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after calling him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you asked. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 And his master was angry and handed him over to the torturers until he paid all that was owed to him.

like filthy rags (Isa 64:6). What men regard as works of merit are worse than worthless in the eyes of the true God. A lifetime of good deeds would not blot out a single sin. Shall we give Him our money? One soul is worth more than the whole world (16:26). Silver and gold cannot purchase our forgiveness (Ps 49:7,8; 1 Pet 1:18).

We have absolutely nothing with which to pay our debt to God – nothing. The selling of people to pay debts was a way of the ancient world. See Lev 25:39; 2 Kings 4:1. But no selling of ourselves, or all who belong to us, could ever purchase forgiveness from God.

**18:26** In his desperation he was promising an impossible thing. And men will give God many such promises when they want something from Him – promises which they can never keep.

**18:27** There was only one way for such a debt to be erased. That was the way of free grace. In His compassion God completely forgives and cancels the repentant and believing sinner's debt toward Him. See Luke 24:46,47; Acts 13:38,39; Rom 3:23-26; Col 2:13; Titus 3:3-7.

**18:28-30** A hundred silver coins (denarii) was the equivalent of a hundred days' wages for a laborer, a very small amount compared to the other debt in this parable. This contrast between the two debts is meant to teach us that our sin against God, our "debt", is far worse than anyone's sin against us. This servant showed himself to be hard and ruthless. Grace shown him had not changed his heart.

**18:31** A Christian treating fellow Christians in such an unmerciful manner shocks and

35 "My heavenly Father will also deal with you in the same way, if each one of you, from your hearts, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

**19** And it happened *that* when Jesus had finished *saying* these words he left Galilee, and came into the region of Judea beyond Jordan. 2 And great crowds followed him, and he healed them there. 3 The Pharisees also came to him, testing him, and saying to him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every cause?"

4 And he answered and said to them, "Have you not read that he who made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, For this cause a man will leave father and mother, and be united to his wife, and the two will be one flesh? 6 So they are no more two, but one flesh. Therefore let not man separate what God has joined together."

7 They said to him, "Then why did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce and send her away?"

8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives. But from the beginning it was not so.

pains God's people.

**18:32** "Wicked" – 25:26; Jam 2:14; etc.

**18:33-35** God requires His children to be forgiving as He is forgiving – 5:7; 6:14,15; Eph 4:32; etc. This is a rule of the kingdom of God. If it is not obeyed there will be severe penalties to suffer somewhere, sometime. Perhaps this is the principal lesson the Lord taught here (v 35). Observe that forgiveness must be "from your heart", and not merely saying words.

God will punish an unforgiving person. The "tormentors" may refer to the sufferings and troubles of this life that will come to God's children if, perchance, they do not forgive others. Or, if the wicked servant is regarded as an unsaved man, they may refer to the pains of hell in the hereafter. The parable cannot mean that a saved person may lose his salvation if he does not forgive others. Saved people learn to forgive others (6:14,15), and they will not be lost (John 6:39,40; 10:28; Rom 5:9; Phil 1:6).

**19:2** See 4:23; 9:3.

**19:3** "Pharisees" – note at 3:7. They often tried to trap Jesus – 22:15,18.

**19:4** Gen 1:27.

**19:5** Gen 2:24.

**19:6** Eph 5:28-33.

**19:7** Deut 24:1-4. The Pharisees were trying to show that Jesus disagreed with the law of Moses and so condemn Him. But they misinterpreted Moses. Moses did not "command" divorce.

**19:8** Because their hearts were hard they did not want God's best, and they were permitted to behave in ways less than the best. Sometimes God gives men their desire when they insist on it, even though it

9 And I tell you, Whoever divorces his wife, except for *the cause of* sexual immorality, and marries another, is committing adultery. And whoever marries her who is divorced is committing adultery."

10 His disciples said to him, "If this is the case between a man and a wife, it is not good to marry."

11 But he said to them, "All *men* cannot receive this statement, only *those* to whom it has been given. 12 For there are some eunuchs who were born that way from *their* mother's womb, and there are some eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive *this*, let him receive *it*."

13 Then little children were brought to him, so that he would put *his* hands on them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, "Permit little children to come

is not good for them (Ps 106:14,15).

**19:9** See notes on divorce at 5:31,32.

**19:10** Apparently they thought that the provision for easy divorce was the only thing that made marriage tolerable! Their low view of marriage needed correcting.

**19:11** Those who are not Christ's disciples cannot be expected to behave in this matter as if they were. Christ's principles are the best and they are only for His people. Others will suffer the consequences of not being His disciples.

**19:12** "Made themselves eunuchs" – surely very few have literally done this, but if it is taken in the sense of abstaining from marriage, then no small number have done so.

"For the kingdom of heaven" does not mean abstaining from marriage in order to gain the kingdom, but to serve without hindrance in the kingdom (1 Cor 7:7,8,26,32-35). But this abstinence from marriage must be voluntary – not forced on anyone by any authority. Compare 1 Tim 4:1-3.

**19:13** In spite of 18:2-6 the disciples may not yet have realized how much He loved children and wanted to bless them.

**19:14,15** See 18:2-4. Jesus always had time for the weak and lowly. Children are welcome to come into His presence at any time and He delights to have them there. He laid hands on them and blessed them, but He did not baptize them. This passage does not teach infant baptism. Indeed, it has nothing whatever to do with baptism.

**19:16-29** Compare Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30. Matthew says this man was young (v 22); Luke says he was a ruler (Luke 18:18); all three Gospels say he was very rich. He had everything that many people desire – youth, position, authority, and wealth. But he was dissatisfied. Compare Eccl 2:1-11,17.

**19:16** This man had mistaken views about the way of salvation. He thought one could earn it by doing good deeds, or perhaps by

to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and went away from there.

16 And, suddenly, someone came and said to him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do, so that I may get eternal life?"

17 And he said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one *is* good but one, *that is* God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

18 He said to him, "Which?" Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not give false witness, 19 Honour your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

20 The young man said to him, "All these I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be

one exceptionally good deed. Note on eternal life at John 3:16.

**19:17** Jesus was not denying His own goodness. He was saying that if the man regarded Him as a mere human teacher he should not call Him good. All men are sinners (Rom 3:23), and Jesus called even His own disciples "evil" (7:11). This youth's understanding needed to be enlightened to realize that God alone is good, and that Jesus is good only because He is God incarnate and not a mere man (John 1:1,14,18). In other words, if Jesus is truly good He is God, and the youth needed to see this.

Then Jesus pointed him to God's commandments as a way to life. See Lev 18:5. Notes at Lev 18:5; Gal 3:12. Jesus is not teaching salvation by works. This would contradict His own and the Bible's plain teaching in other places (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; 14:6; Gal 3:10-12; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:3-7). He knew that neither this youth nor any man ever fully kept God's commandments. He has already said that none is good, and if men are not good they will be unable to keep God's good commandments. The young man much needed to understand this. One purpose of the law was to teach men their sinfulness (notes at Ex 19:21-25; Rom 3:20; 7:7; Gal 3:24). Jesus now shows this man that he had not really kept God's commandments, even though he said he had (v 20). **19:18,19** Ex 20:13-16; Lev 19:18. This last commandment should have opened the man's eyes to his sin, but it did not.

**19:20** He had no doubt lived a moral life and kept the outward forms of the ten commandments. He is an example of an ethical man not corrupted by the more gross sins. But he had not loved his neighbor as himself.

**19:21** The man said he had always loved his neighbor as himself. Yet he had kept his great wealth for his own use. Jesus is saying, "If you have love for your neighbor

perfect, go, sell what you have and give *the money* to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me."

22 But when the young man heard this word, he went away sad, for he had great possessions.

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And I tell you again, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

26 But Jesus looked *at them* and said to them,

you must prove it by your actions. Words are not enough." Does Jesus here demand that we all sell all we have and give it away? The answer is "yes", if a love of money and possessions is the sin that keeps us from following Him. And He demands that all disciples renounce all things in their hearts and give their hearts to Him (Luke 14:33).

There is another commandment which men should fulfill (22:37; Deut 6:5). This man failed to keep that one too. If he had loved God as he should have, he would gladly have given away everything for His sake. But the truth is, he did not truly love either God or his neighbor. He loved himself and his possessions.

"Poor" – see the concern of Jesus for the poor. Compare 11:5; Luke 4:18; 6:20; 11:41; 14:13. Note on "treasure in heaven" at 6:20,21.

**19:22** He was sad because he had failed the test and knew that he had failed. He wanted both eternal life and all he could selfishly enjoy in this life too, and found that Jesus would not accept this principle. Jesus will not permit selfishness to be the reigning principle in the lives of His disciples. They cannot serve both God and money (6:24). And we will all be tested on this point. In fact, we are continually being tested about what we will do with the money and possessions God has given us, whether they be much or little.

We should understand the answer of Jesus to this man who came to him asking for eternal life. Why did he not say to him "Believe in me and you will have eternal life?" (John 3:16; etc). In a way He was saying just that. He was showing that true faith in Him is a powerful force that breaks people free from the things of this world and causes them to value Jesus far above everything else and to receive Him as the Lord of their lives. See note at Acts 22:10. And He was showing that men need to repent of their lack of love for God and man and their clinging to other things. See notes at Matt 3:2; 4:17. If we are not willing to give all we have for Christ and eternal life, we show that we value what we have more than Him and that. And why should God give us something we value less than the pathetic

"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

27 Then answered Peter and said to him, "Look, we have given up everything and followed you. Therefore what will we have?"

28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, you who have followed me, in the renewal when the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has given up houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit everlasting life. 30 But many *who are* first will be

and passing riches of this world?

**19:23,24** The difficulty lies in man's sinful nature which selfishly clings to wealth and possessions and puts them above God.

**19:25** They knew that the desire for riches and possessions was almost universal. And they doubtless knew that in the Old Testament wealth was often a sign of God's blessing (compare Gen 24:35; Job 42:10).

**19:26** Here is a general principle which covers not just the case of the rich, but all men. Salvation is not merely difficult to men, it is utterly impossible to achieve by anything they can do (John 3:3-8; 6:44; Acts 13:38,39; Rom 5:6; 8:3; Jer 13:23). But God can do what men cannot do. And He saves men by grace alone (Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8,9).

**19:27** See 4:18-22. The question seems to mean "If worldly wealth is ruled out what remains as a reward?" Could he not imagine anything better than riches? The question does not show a spiritual mind, and Jesus in the parable of 20:1-16 rebukes it.

**19:28** "Renewal" – see Acts 3:21; Rom 8:19-22; Isaiah chapter 11.

"Throne" – 25:31; Luke 1:32,33; Dan 7:14; Isa 9:6,7; Ps 2:6-9. Twelve thrones speak of their authority with Him – Luke 22:28-30; Rev 3:21; 20:4. Does not the word "Israel" in this verse mean the literal nation of Israel? Compare Acts 1:6,7; Rom 11:25-29; Rev 7:4.

**19:29** Heartily following Christ is to move in a new spiritual realm. To disciples many people become like mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers and children. Many homes and fields are opened to them. Disciples enter into privileges and spiritual relationships a hundred times more blessed, more meaningful than they could ever have apart from Christ (compare 12:48,49; John 17:20-23; 1 Cor 3:21-23; 12:12-27). And their inheritance will be an even higher kind of life – eternal life (v 16).

**19:30** 20:16; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30. Many who hold high positions and are highly regarded in this world (and even in Christian circles) will find in the next world that they are at the very bottom, and those scorned and put down will be exalted to the highest place. This is a word of comfort to the lowly

last, and the last *will be* first.

**20** "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. **2** And when he had agreed with the labourers for a silver coin *for* the day, he sent them into his vineyard. **3** And he went out about nine in the morning, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, **4** and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will give you whatever is right.' And they went.

**5** "He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon, and did the same. **6** And about five in the afternoon he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day long?' **7** They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and you will get what is right.'

**8** "So when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the labourers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last

and those who lightly regard themselves, and a warning to lovers of power and position.

**20:1,2** Note on the kingdom of heaven at 4:17. This teaching is connected with the thoughts in the preceding chapter. See 19:27 – where Peter appears almost as a laborer trying to bargain for wages. In 19:30 Jesus teaches that a wrong attitude can cause the first to be last. In this parable He shows what should be the attitude of disciples ward God in the matter of service and rewards. The landowner signifies God. The vineyard signifies His work in the world. God is always looking for workers for His vineyard. Compare 9:36-38; 21:28. The word "agreed" suggests bargaining on their part.

"Silver coin" – in Greek "denarius" – this was the usual daily wage paid to laborers in those days.

**20:3** The third hour was 9 AM. It is a sad fact that even though there is much work in God's kingdom to do, many are doing nothing.

**20:4** There was no bargaining; they made no demands. They trusted the landowner and went to work. This is the attitude all Christ's disciples should have.

**20:6** The eleventh hour was 5 PM. There was only an hour before the day's work would be over.

**20:7** They were willing to work but had lacked opportunity. There are some laborers for God whom He calls late in their lives and who are able to work only a brief time.

**20:8** God will reward those who labor for Him – 5:12; 10:41,42; 16:27; 1 Cor 3:8,14; 2 John 8; Rev 11:18; 22:12.

**20:9** They worked only an hour but received a full day's wage. This revealed the kindness of the landowner. They had not earned a full day's wage but just as those who worked all day, they needed one. Such

*group* up to the first.'

**9** "And when those who *were hired* about five o'clock came, each of them received a silver coin. **10** But when the first *group* came, they supposed that they would receive more, but each of them too received a silver coin. **11** And when they received *it*, they complained against the landowner, **12** saying, 'This last *group* worked *only* one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and heat of the day.'

**13** "But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am not doing you any wrong. Didn't you agree with me for a silver coin?' **14** Take yours and go your way. I choose to give to this last *group* the same as *I gave* you. **15** Is it not lawful for me to do what I choose with what I have? Is your eye evil, because I am good?'

**16** "So the last will be first, and the first last, for many are called, but few chosen."

**17** And going up to Jerusalem Jesus took the twelve disciples aside on the way and said to them, **18** "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the

is God's grace. He will give a full reward for faithful work done for even a little while.

**20:10** On the basis of justice they had no right to expect more. They had agreed to one denarius (v 2). This parable does not teach that God always gives the same reward to all of His servants. That would be contrary to His teaching in places like 1 Cor 3:10-15. But when it pleases Him He may give equal rewards for service well done, whether it be for a long time or a brief time. But for a full reward work must be done in the right way and from a right motive.

**20:11,12** They showed the bad spirit that Jesus is teaching His disciples not to have. They grumbled against an act of kindness and goodness. The landlord was guilty of no injustice.

**20:13,14** The Lord will not be happy with complaining disciples who are envious of His goodness to others.

**20:15** This is a principal point of the parable. What God has is God's, and He may do with it as He pleases. He is perfectly free to show grace and kindness to whom He will. Those who trust Him, and are willing to labor for Him according to the word "I will give you whatever is right" (v 4), will find that God's heart is full of grace and goodness. They who have a bargaining spirit with God, or a grasping spirit, or a selfish, envious spirit, will find that they cannot change God's mind.

"Is your eye evil" – probably means "are you envious?"

**20:16** Those who entered the vineyard last became, it seems, first in the landowner's favor and esteem, and vice versa. Let us never forget that no matter how we work for God we are still "unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10), and really deserve nothing.

**20:17-19** Verse 28; 16:21; 17:23; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-33. Once again Jesus speaks of the chief reason He came to earth.



Son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes. And they will condemn him to death, 19 and hand him over to the Gentiles to mock and to beat with a whip and to crucify. And the third day he will rise again."

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's children came with her sons to him, worshipping *him*, and asking him for something. 21 And he said to her, "What do you want?"

She said to him, "Grant that these, my two sons, may sit in your kingdom, the one at your right hand, and the other at the left."

22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am going to drink, and be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to him, "We are able."

23 And he said to them, "Indeed you will drink my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. But to sit at my right hand and at my left, is not mine to give, but *it will be given to those* for whom it is prepared by my Father."

24 And when the ten heard *about this*, they were indignant with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 But it shall

not be so among you. But whoever wants to be great among you, must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave, 28 just as the Son of man came to serve, not to be served, and to give his life a ransom for many."

29 And as they were leaving Jericho, a great crowd followed him. 30 And, suddenly, two blind men sitting by the way side, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, son of David."

31 And the crowd rebuked them so that they would keep quiet, but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, son of David."

32 And Jesus stood still and called them and said, "What do you want me to do for you?"

33 They said to him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."

34 So Jesus had compassion *on them* and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

**21** And when they drew near Jerusalem, and arrived at Bethphage, at the mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied up and a colt with it.

**20:19** For the first time He foretells that it would be the Gentiles who would actually put Him to death and that the method would be crucifixion. On crucifixion see 27:22.

**20:20,21** Zebedee's sons – James and John – joined their mother in this request. See Mark 10:35-37. None of them had yet learned the lesson Jesus taught in 18:4; 20:16; etc. Nor, it seems, had they realized that Jesus was not then going to establish a visible kingdom on earth.

**20:22** See 26:39,42. Drinking His cup means to share in His rejection and sufferings. They said they could drink His cup, but little did they then realize what they were saying.

**20:23** Later they drank from His cup. James was imprisoned and put to death by Herod (Acts 12:1,2). Still later John was punished by banishment to Patmos (Rev 1:9). Indeed all the apostles suffered for their witness for Christ (Acts 5:18,40,41; etc.). God's way is suffering then glory (Rom 8:17; etc.).

**20:24** Did not they themselves want the chief places in the kingdom? Compare Rom 2:1.

**20:25-27** Verse 16; 18:4. Some lessons need to be taught again and again, even to the best of men. It is not those who selfishly strive for greatness whom God counts great, but the humble, the lowly servant of all. See Jer 45:5. There are two kinds of mentality. The "master" outlook and the "service" outlook. We must reject the one and cultivate the other, and write on our hearts this lesson Jesus taught. The disciples at that time were all for self-promotion. Jesus was for self-sacrifice. We know who was greatest.

**20:28** "Came to serve" – for other reasons why Jesus came to earth see note at 5:17. The Son of man (Jesus) was a willing, glad servant to God and to men – Isa 42:1; Luke 12:37; 22:27; John 13:13-16; Rom 15:8; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:7.

"Ransom" – the noun means that which is given to buy back from bondage. The verb means to pay a price to deliver something or someone. It is similar in meaning to the word "redeem." Compare Ex 21:30; Lev 25:50; Prov 13:8; Job 33:24; Hos 13:14. Men are in bondage to sin and Satan (John 8:34,44; Acts 26:18; Rom 6:16-18; Eph 2:1-3). The price to buy them back was the life of the Son of God. This is the great work He came to do (Rom 3:23-25; 1 Cor 6:20; Gal 3:13; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:19). What do the words a ransom "for many" mean? He died for all (1 Tim 2:6), but only those who believe and receive Him are actually delivered from bondage.

**20:29** "Jericho" – a town in the Jordan valley just north of the Dead Sea.

**20:30** Note on Son of David at 1:1.

**20:32** Cries for mercy from the poor and helpless always reach the ears of the Lord Jesus (8:3; Ps 34:6; Rom 10:12,13). This verse indicates His desire to serve and to help those who call to Him.

**20:34** See 9:36; 14:14.

**21:1** The mount of Olives is to the east of Jerusalem. From its top one can look down on the city.

**21:2,3** Here is an example of Christ's knowledge of what was going on in another



Untie *them*, and bring *them* to me. 3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them', and he will send them at once."

4 All this was done so that there might be a fulfillment of what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

- 5 Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look! Your King is coming to you,  
meek, and sitting on a donkey  
and a colt the foal of a donkey.

6 And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and had *him* sit on them. 8 And a very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road. Others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 And the crowds that went ahead and that followed, cried out, saying, "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

10 And when he came into Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred *and* saying, "Who is this?"

11 And the crowd said, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

place (see also John 1:47-50).

**21:4,5** Zech 9:9. The King rides into His royal city. This was an entrance suitable to the meek and lowly one (11:29), but not what men in general would count suitable. "Daughter of Zion" means Jerusalem. Note on "daughter" at Isa 1:8; 23:12.

**21:6,7** Christians have the privilege of serving a king who knows all that is going on and who gives them the clearest instructions. All they need to do is obey.

**21:8** Compare 2 Kings 9:13.

**21:9** Hosanna comes from Hebrew and was a prayer meaning "save." But it became a way of expressing praise, indicating that the one who could save was present. Note on Son of David at 1:1. Some were willing to accept Jesus as Messiah, God's appointed king (Ps 118:25,26).

**21:10,11** Jesus had spent very little time in Jerusalem and had little public ministry there. The leaders knew Him but many of the people did not.

**21:12** Mark 11:11,15-18; Luke 19:45-47; John 2:12-16. Jesus was gentle and humble in heart (11:29), but bold as a lion when God's honor was involved and mighty in strength to fight evil (Rev 5:5). Mark's Gospel makes it clear that this event occurred the day after Jesus entered Jerusalem.

**21:13** "Thieves" - Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11. Evidently in the very compound devoted to the worship of the one true and holy God, they were cheating the people who came to worship. Their greed and crookedness aroused the anger of God's holy Son. What makes a person angry is an indication of his character. Compare v 15. They were not the last of those who try to enrich themselves

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and drove out all those who sold and bought in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers, and the seats of those who sold doves, 13 and said to them, "It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, and saying, "Hosanna to the son of David!" they were very displeased, 16 and said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?"

And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, Out of the mouth of little children and nursing infants you have provided praise?"

17 And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there. 18 Now in the morning as he returned to the city, he was hungry. 19 And when he saw a fig tree along the way, he went to it, and found nothing on it except leaves, and said to it, "May no more fruit grow on you forever." And immediately the fig tree withered away.

under the cloak of religion (compare John 12:4-6; 1 Tim 6:5; Jude 11). And Christ is as angry about this now as He was then.

**21:15** Note on priests at Ex 28:1. They were not indignant because of the evil going on in the temple compound, but when great good was done there, and great glory to God resulted from it, they were angry. Such is man's fallen nature. Of course the thing that provoked them was others calling Jesus the Son of David - the Messiah of Israel. They did not want to accept this or hear it.

**21:16** "Have you never read?" - 12:3,5; 19:4; 21:42; 22:31. They claimed to be experts in interpreting the Old Testament, but were ignorant of many important matters. Such people are still with us. Jesus here quoted Ps 8:2.

**21:17** Bethany was a small town over the crest of the Mount of Olives to the east, about 3 kilometers from Jerusalem.

**21:18** See 4:2. Jesus had both a human nature and divine nature.

**21:19** It was the nature of fig trees that fruit appeared with full leaf, and sometimes before full leaf. If it had leaves it should have had fruit, even though it was early in the year for fig trees to have either leaves or fruit (Mark 11:13). The time was April, the full leaf and fruit bearing season was June. This tree was deceiving. It promised what it did not have. In some ways it was a picture of the nation of Israel or of the city of Jerusalem. Compare Luke 13:6-9. It is also a picture of any person, any church which professes much but produces little or nothing. What is the use of great foliage if there is no fruit?

Sometimes in the Bible trees symbolize

20 And when the disciples saw *this*, they were amazed and said, "How quickly the fig tree withered away!"

21 Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you will do not only *what was done* to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be moved, and thrown into the sea', it will be done. 22 And everything that you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

23 And when he came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him while he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?"

24 And Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you one thing. If you tell me this, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven', he will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'From men', we are afraid of the people, for everyone holds John to be a prophet." 27 And they answered Jesus and said, "We cannot tell."

And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. 28 But what do you think? A *certain* man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' 29 He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterwards he repented and went. 30 And he came to the second *son* and said the same thing.

nations or individuals (3:10; 7:16-20; Ps 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12; Jer 11:16,17; Ezek 17:22-24). It is not stated here in Matthew that this fig tree represents Israel, but it may be so. Israel certainly had plenty of "leaves" but little or no "fruit." Compare v 43; Isa 5:1-4.

**21:21,22** Observe that the lesson Jesus taught His disciples from this incident of the fig tree was not a lesson about judgment on Israel, but of the power of faith. Prayer without faith may lack power, but believing prayer will accomplish wonders – 17:20; Mark 11:23,24; Luke 17:6; Jam 1:6; 5:16. **21:23** They meant that Jesus' activities were not authorized by the religious leaders of the nation and that therefore He had no right to do as He was doing.

**21:24-27** Jesus knew these men were cowardly and dishonest. They did not want the truth, but were determined to oppose and defeat Him. So He put them on the horns of a dilemma. And He had nothing more to say to them when they revealed their character by their answer.

**21:28-32** This little parable was spoken to the Jewish religious leaders and its meaning is clear. It also is a help in understanding the incident of the fig tree in vs 18,19. The

And he answered and said, 'I *will go*, sir,' but he did not go. 31 Which of these two did the will of *his* father?"

They said to him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you with the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. And when you saw *this*, you did not repent afterwards, so that you might believe him.

33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it, dug a place for a winepress in it, built a tower, rented it out to vine growers, and went to a far country. 34 And when fruit season drew near, he sent his servants to the vine growers to get his share of the fruit. 35 And the vine growers took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

36 "Again, he sent other servants, more than the first *time*. And they did the same thing to them.

37 "But last of all he sent to them his son, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

38 "But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and take over his inheritance.' 39 And they caught him, threw *him* out of the vineyard, and killed *him*.

40 "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine growers?"

first son signifies the "tax collectors and prostitutes" of v 32. They made no pretense of being God's servants, but openly disobeyed Him and did as they pleased, but later they repented and did God's will. The second son signifies the religious leaders. They made great claims of obedience to God, but actually were not obedient, and did not repent of their inner disobedience and hypocrisy.

**21:33-40** This parable was also addressed to the Jewish religious leaders, and is very clear in meaning. Jesus was speaking of God's kingdom (v 43). The landowner (v 33) signifies God. The vineyard is the nation of Israel. See Ps 80:8-11; Isa 5:1-4; Jer 12:10. "Hedge" suggests separation from other nations (see Ex 19:4-6; Lev 20:24; 1 Kings 8:53). "Tower" (or "watchtower") suggests the earnest desire to protect the nation against enemies. "Winepress" signifies the intention to have a crop. "Vine growers" means the leaders of the nation.

"Went to a far country" – after planting Israel in Canaan by miraculous activity God seemed to withdraw to some extent behind the scenes. Those sent to enquire about fruit (v 34) were the prophets (Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5). In vs 35,36 we have a brief

41 They said to him, "He will bring those evil men to a bad end, and will rent out *his* vineyard to other vine growers who will give him the fruit in its season."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore I tell you, The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing its fruit. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken, but the one on whom it falls, it will grind him to powder."

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they saw that he spoke about them. 46 But when they looked *for a* way to seize him, they were afraid of the crowd, because they took him for a prophet.

**22** And answering Jesus again spoke to them in parables, and said, 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a

history of the way Israel treated the prophets God sent to them. See also 5:12; 23:30-37; Acts 7:52; Heb 11:36-38. The "son" of v 37 signifies the Lord Jesus. Verses 38,39 give a prediction of what the Jewish leaders would do to the Lord Jesus. Jesus wanted these leaders to apply the parable (v 40), to condemn themselves by their own words.

**21:41** Little did they know they were foretelling their own punishment.

**21:42-44** The Lord Jesus here brings out the spiritual application of the parable. He is the rejected "stone" of Ps 118:22,23. God would remove His vineyard (the kingdom of God) from the control of the Jewish nation which rejected His son (John 1:11), and give it to others. These were peoples of other nations who would receive Christ. They soon became the vast majority of all those in the churches (which is, of course, true to this day). Verse 44 reveals the doom of those who will not receive the Lord Jesus as Messiah and Lord and Saviour. Compare Acts 4:11; Rom 9:32,33; 1 Pet 2:6-8. "Scriptures" (v 42) – the Old Testament (John 2:22; 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16).

**21:46** They did not look for a way to repent and be saved from the threatened punishment revealed in this parable. They looked only for a way to silence the one who revealed their sin and unbelief. Learn from this what the fallen heart of man is like, and beware of falling into the same error.

**22:1** "Them" – 21:23,45.

**22:2** Note on kingdom of heaven at 4:17. Compare the following parable with Luke 14:15-24. This parable also is very clear in its teachings. The "king" is God the Father. The "son" is the Lord Jesus. The "wedding" suggests the great truth that the true Church is the bride of Christ (9:15; John 3:27-29; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-32).

marriage for his son. 3 And he sent out his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding, but they would not come.

4 "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited: Now I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and fattened animals *have been* killed, and everything *is* ready. Come to the marriage.'

5 "But they made light *of it* and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest took his servants, mistreated *them* and killed *them*.

7 "But when the king heard *of it*, he was angry, and he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding *feast* is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and invite everyone you find to the marriage.'

10 "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together everyone they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall*

**22:3** The "invited" signify the Jewish nation. They were God's chosen people and received the first invitation (10:5,6; 15:24). They refused to accept God's message (23:37-39; John 1:11; 5:40). In Old Testament times God continually sent His servants (Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5). In New Testament times He did likewise – 23:34; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8.

See the message God's servants have to deliver – everything was "prepared" and "ready." God's kingdom, the salvation He wants men to receive and enjoy, is altogether the work of God. It is prepared and ready in Christ. Men need not prepare anything but should come just as they are – 11:28; Isa 55:1-3; John 6:37; Rev 22:17.

**22:5** This was the reaction of many in Israel in those days (it is the same all over the world today). God invited them to an eternal feast of good things in Christ. They ignored God's invitation and occupied themselves with the things of this world.

**22:6** Others in Israel (as in many places in the world today) were more violent in their reaction – see 21:35,36; Acts 4:3; 5:18,40; 7:58; 8:3; 12:1-3; 14:5,19; 17:5; 21:30; 23:2. This showed a hatred for the King, His Son, and His servants (John 15:18-24).

**22:7** God's anger will surely come on all those who mistreat and persecute His servants and reject His invitations (compare 2 Thess 1:6-8). It came on Israel, and these words were fulfilled in 70 AD. Compare Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24. The army was the Roman army, but it was God's army too because He used it for His purposes. Compare Isa 10:5,6; etc.

**22:8,9** God will not have an empty house. If some refuse His invitation He will find others who will come. Here the Gentile nations are meant (8:10-12; etc).

**22:10** "Both bad and good" means people of good reputation and bad, those morally

was filled with guests. 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who was not wearing a wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, 'Tie him up hand and foot, take him away, and throw *him* into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 "For many are called, but few *are* chosen."

15 Then the Pharisees went away and plotted how they could trap him in *his* talk. 16 And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God in truth. And you do not show favoritism to anyone, for you do not regard a man's appearance. 17 So tell us what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test me, *you* hypocrites?

good and bad, keepers of the law and breakers of the law. Of course, in God's eyes none are good (19:17). All are sinners (7:11; Rom 3:23), but some are worse sinners than others. However, all are invited to come to Christ and receive salvation.

**22:11** The people who were there had come in directly from the streets. In the banquet hall they could not have had special wedding clothes on unless they had been provided by the king himself (compare 2 Kings 10:22). Therefore it seems clear that the man without wedding clothes had refused to accept the ones that the king had there for this purpose. These wedding clothes speak of the righteousness of Christ which God freely gives to all who receive Him as Lord and Saviour (compare Isa 61:10; Zech 3:1-5; Rom 1:17; 3:21-24; 10:10; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:7-9).

**22:12** This man is a picture of those who seem to accept God's invitation, but refuse His provision for righteousness. They ignorantly suppose their own righteousness is sufficient. There are many like this in the churches. When the king examined him he could not say a single word in his defense. He should have had on the proper garment and knew it. When such people stand before God they will be condemned, guilty and speechless.

**22:13** To refuse or neglect God's provision is a serious matter indeed, and will have terrible penalties. Compare Heb 2:3. On "gnashing of teeth" see 8:12; 13:42,50; 24:51; 25:30. What contrast here between this and the delights and rejoicing of the wedding feast.

**22:14** The Gospel invitation goes out to a great many, but only a comparatively few show themselves to be actually the chosen of God, the elect (Mark 13:20; John 6:37; 15:19; 17:6; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13).

**22:15-46** These verses record a series of questions. The first three were asked by

19 Show me the tax money." And they brought a silver coin to him. 20 And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription *is* this?"

21 They said to him, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

22 When they heard *these words*, they were amazed and left him and went away.

23 The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him, 24 saying, "Teacher, Moses said, If a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and have offspring for his brother. 25 Now there were seven brothers with us. And the first, after marrying a wife, died, and having no children, he left his wife to his brother. 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, up to the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman also died. 28 Therefore in the resurrection, of these seven whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

Jesus' enemies to try to trap Him. The last question was asked by Jesus and silenced His enemies. The questions asked by His enemies reveal the character and interests of the three kinds of people who asked them.

**22:15** See Luke 20:20.

**22:16** Herodians were a worldly, politically-minded group who supported the rights of the family of Herod to rule Israel. The Pharisees were usually opposed to them, but now sought their help to trap Jesus if possible (compare Luke 23:12). The words of the Herodians here reek with hypocrisy and flattery.

**22:17** The Romans with Caesar as their emperor ruled Israel and demanded taxes from them. If Jesus said they should not pay taxes He could be charged with treason. If He said they should pay taxes He would be charged with being on the side of Rome against the people of Israel.

**22:18** Jesus knew what was in men - 9:4; 12:25; Luke 6:8; 9:47; 11:17; John 2:24,25; 6:61,64; 13:11.

**22:19** "Silver coin" - in Greek "denarius", a Roman coin. On one side was the emperor's portrait, on the other was his name.

**22:21** If Caesar was ruling and minting the money in use, it was right to pay taxes to him for government administration. Compare Rom 13:1,6,7. People have duties to the state. But they should give to God their hearts, their worship, their offerings, their lives. The state has some claims on its citizens, God has far more. Both must be acknowledged.

**22:22** The very wise answer of Jesus amazed His enemies. But since they did not want the truth they went away to plot further things against Him.

**22:23** Note on Sadducees at 3:7. With their question they naively hoped to show that the doctrine of the resurrection was absurd, and that Jesus was foolish to believe it. Notes on resurrection at John 5:28,29.

**22:24** See Deut 25:5,6.

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "You blunder, not knowing the Scriptures, or the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they do not marry, and are not given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven. 31 But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

33 And when the crowd heard *this*, they were astonished at his teaching.

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *him a question* to test him, saying, 36 "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and

great commandment. 39 And the second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, "What do you think of Christ? Whose son is he?"

They said to him, "*The son* of David."

43 He said to them, "How then does David by *the Spirit* call him Lord, saying, 44 The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? 45 If David called him Lord, how then is he his son?"

46 And no one was able to answer him a word. And from that day on no one dared to ask him any more *questions*.

**23** Then Jesus spoke to the crowd and to his disciples, 2 saying, "The scribes and the

**22:29** The two errors of the Sadducees are still very common, even among Christian leaders and ministers – ignorance of the teachings of the Bible and of the power of God. Anyone ignorant of these two things will certainly fall into serious error in their thinking, even though they may be highly intelligent and well educated in other matters.

**22:30** Here Jesus affirms the truth of the resurrection. See also Luke 14:14; John 5:29; 11:25. But He says there will be a new order of things, a new kind of life for those who are raised from the dead. For them marriage will have no part. In this one matter they will be like the angels in heaven. This does not at all mean that in all other respects they become angels or like angels. **22:31,32** "God of Jacob" – Ex 3:6. Jesus could have used other Old Testament references which speak of the resurrection (Job 19:25,26; Ps 16:10,11; Dan 12:2; etc). But He quotes from the books of Moses because the Sadducees regarded them as having the greatest authority of any in the Bible. And He shows they had not even understood that portion of Scripture. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had all passed away. A person who is dead – body, soul, and spirit – can have no God, and God cannot be their God.

Jesus means that their spirits still live and await the resurrection, and that resurrection is needed if men are to be called fully living. And a person whose spirit has been separated from his body in death is not the full person God created and intended. This implies that God will unite an individual's spirit and body in the resurrection, and continue to be the God of the full person. God is not the God of decayed corpses.

**22:33** Verse 22; 7:28; etc.

**22:35** "Lawyer" – an expert in the law of Moses.

**22:36** This was a question sometimes debated by Jewish scholars of that day, and they were divided into various camps. This

lawyer (expert in the law of Moses) wanted to test Jesus' grasp of the law to see if He would commit Himself to one of these camps.

**22:37-40** Jesus passed the test. He went right to the very heart of the law and showed that the basis of all the commands God gave was love. Verse 37 is from Deut 6:5 and verse 39 is Lev 19:18. See also Rom 13:8-10.

**22:41-45** His opponents had asked Him questions. Now He would ask them some. The prevailing idea about the Messiah was that he would be a mere man who would ascend the throne of David and reign powerfully and gloriously over Israel. These questions of Jesus show that this idea was wrong. The Messiah was not to be a mere human descendant of David, but the Lord of David (the Hebrew word for Lord "Adonai" was often used in the Old Testament for God Himself). Here it means Jesus. See also Luke 1:43; 2:11; Acts 2:36; Phil 2:10,11; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:5.

**22:42** "Christ" means the Messiah promised in the OT. See notes on Son of David at Matt 1:1.

**22:43** Notice the words "by the Spirit." Jesus here confirms the divine inspiration of psalm 110, as He did the whole Old Testament at other times (4:4; 5:18; 15:3,4; John 10:35).

**22:44** See note at Ps 110:1. The Jews recognized that this psalm was about the Messiah.

**22:45** They well knew that fathers do not call their sons "Lord." But they could not explain why David did so.

**22:46** It was becoming obvious to everyone that He could answer all their questions, but they could answer none of His. They had tried to trap Him but were trapped themselves (compare Ps 57:6).

**23:1** The following denunciation of the religious leaders of that day was spoken somewhere openly in the temple compound. See 24:1.

**23:2** "Pharisees" – 3:7. "Sit in Moses seat" means they were regarded as the successors



Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, observe *it* and do *it*, but do not do according to their works, for they say, but do not do. 4 For they tie up heavy burdens, hard to carry, and lay *them* on men's shoulders. but they are not willing to *lift* one of their fingers to move them.

5 "But they do all their deeds to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge the borders of their cloaks, and love the places of honour at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and greetings in the market-places, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

8 "But you must not be called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call any *man* on the earth your 'father,' for one is your Father, who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers, for one is your Teacher, the Christ.

11 "But he that is greatest among you shall be

of Moses as teachers of God's law.

**23:3** Insofar as they truly taught the law of God given through Moses the people of Israel were obligated to obey them, even though they did not themselves obey the law. Compare 2:17-24. Practicing what one preaches must be the constant aim of every Christian leader (1 Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:3).

**23:4** For sinful men (and all men are sinful) the law of Moses was a burden hard to be carried. See Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1. Israel's religious leaders made it even harder to bear by interpreting it very strictly and adding a great number of rules and regulations. How different is the way of the Lord Jesus - 11:28-30!

**23:5** See 6:1-5,16. "Phylacteries" - these were tiny boxes in which they kept verses of Scripture. They wore them on their forehead or arm (compare Ex 13:9; Deut 6:8).

"Enlarge the borders" - or "tassels" or "fringes" (Num 15:38,39; Deut 22:12). These hypocrites thought that if they made these more conspicuous men would regard them as more pious. They missed the real purpose of phylacteries and tassels. God ordered their use as an aid to remembering to obey God's Word, not so that men could impress others.

**23:6,7** Here is another common error among religious leaders in general (including Christian leaders). Many love to be regarded highly, to have the places of honor, and to be called "reverend" or "doctor" or "bishop" or "father" or "master." Let us all beware of this. Let us remember the teaching of the Lord Jesus in vs 11,12; 18:4; 20:25-28; etc. Denying self, not exalting self, must be our practice (16:24; Luke 9:23).

**23:8** Rabbi means a respected religious teacher. The one teacher all Christians have is Christ (v 10). He appoints human teachers to teach His people (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 2:7; Heb 5:12), but they should recognize that their authority and

your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For you neither go in *yourselves*, nor allow those who are entering to go in.

14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers. Therefore you will receive the greater condemnation.

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel around sea and land to make one convert, and when he has become one, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound *by his oath*.' 17 *You* fools and blind! For

teaching come from Christ alone, and not exalt themselves.

**23:9** Jesus is not speaking of ordinary family relationships. We all have fathers and may call them such. But He is speaking of religious matters and is warning against the error of allowing a human being to usurp the place only God should have. There is always a tendency among people, even religious people, to make too much of men, too little of God.

**23:11** See 20:25-28.

**23:12** 1 Sam 2:8; Ps 18:27; Prov 3:34; Isa 57:15; Ezek 21:26; Luke 1:52; 14:11; Jam 4:6.

**23:13** "Woe" indicates terrible punishment when God brings them to account before His throne. The Lord pronounced this first woe against them because they tried to keep people from believing in Him, and He knew He was the only way into God's kingdom (Luke 11:52; John 9:22; 12:42. Compare Acts 13:8-11). This terrible sin is still common today. It will cause those guilty of it to sink to the lowest depths of hell.

See a very similar saying of Jesus at Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47. Their sin was cheating the helpless and then trying to cover up their crimes with religious activities. Compare Isa 1:10-17.

**23:14** "For a show" - this is the whole purpose of some people's religion, and all it amounts to.

**23:15** They did not try to turn men to God, but to themselves, and to make converts to their own group. This is an empty and foolish thing which men do for their own glory. It has no part in true Christianity. Compare Acts 20:30; 2 Cor 4:5. The Pharisees had great zeal, but it was misdirected and its results were disastrous. Their "converts" became worse than themselves. See what Jesus calls both teachers and converts - sons of hell. Compare John 8:44.

**23:16** "Blind" - on spiritual blindness see



which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold? 18 And, *you say*, whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is bound *by his oath*.<sup>19</sup> *You* fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift? 20 Therefore whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it. 22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him who sits on it.

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but you have neglected the weightier *matters* of the Law: justice, mercy, and faith. These you should have practiced, without neglecting the other. 24 Blind guides! *You* strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, so that the outside of

them also may be clean.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Just so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets, and decorate the tombs of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in *shedding* the blood of the prophets. 31 Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are the children of those who killed the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of *the guilt* of your fathers. 33 *You* snakes, *you* brood of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?

34 "Therefore, now I am sending prophets, and wise men, and scribes to you, and *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will beat with whips in your synagogues and persecute

vs 17,19,24; 15:14; John 12:40; 2 Cor 3:14; 4:4; 2 Pet 1:9; 1 John 2:11.

"Swears" – see 5:33-35. Here in vs 16-22 Jesus shows how the Pharisees in their spiritual blindness turned everything upside down and made much of the small, and little of the great.

**23:23** "Tithes" – Gen 28:22; Lev 27:30; Num 18:21; Deut 14:22; Mal 3:8. Again we see the Pharisees emphasis on very small matters and their utter neglect of the really important matters – Isa 1:17; Micah 6:8; etc.

**23:24** The gnat was the smallest of the animals regarded by the Jews as "unclean", the camel was one of the largest. See Lev 11:4,20-25. Pharisees strained their drinking water through a cloth to keep from swallowing a tiny "unclean" animal. In spiritual matters they paid much attention to tiny details but gulped down huge errors. In all this they were typical of many religious people.

**23:25,26** Here is another example of how the Pharisees were careful about small things and neglected the great. They emphasized the ceremonial and formal matters of religion (the outside of the "cup" and "dish"), and neglected the vastly more important inner state of the mind and heart. Evidently they could not see that before God the outer things of religion are of no use whatever to the person who is corrupt in his heart. Greed, self-indulgence, and inner uncleanness cannot be erased by ceremonial washings or observances of religious rules and regulations. Compare Isa 1:11-18; etc.

**23:27,28** Again Jesus points out the terrible error of emphasizing the outer things and neglecting the inner. He also revealed their purpose – they wanted to appear righteous

to men (v 5), but they did not care what God saw in their hearts. All their religious activity was to impress men and gain their greedy ends. The result was that those men who were so anxious to avoid any "uncleanness" from without, were full of uncleanness within. And they made others unclean. See note at Luke 11:44. May God give us all the good sense to recognize this evil and avoid it.

**23:29-32** Hypocrites and those who are ignorant of themselves may think they are better than others and that they are not the sinners their ancestors were. It is always a large error for anyone to think he or she is better than others (Luke 18:9; Rom 2:1; 3:9,23). The Pharisees should have known from the Old Testament that all are sinners and that people of one generation are likely to do as their fathers did. Each generation adds to the sins of previous ones, and the mass of guilt in any nation continually increases. At last one generation "fills up the measure" of sin, and God will not permit them to go any further, and judgment falls (Gen 15:16; 2 Kings 17:7-23; 2 Chron 36:15-19).

So it was with the Jews of Christ's day. They condemned their ancestors for murdering the prophets, but they themselves were plotting to murder the greatest prophet of all, the Son of God Himself.

**23:33** See 3:7; 12:34; Ps 140:3; Rom 3:13. **23:34** Jesus means the apostles, evangelists, and teachers He would send to preach and teach His gospel. Compare Luke 11:49. The Jewish leaders would treat them as their ancestors had treated the prophets of the Old Testament (10:17,23; 24:9; John 15:20,21; Acts 5:17,18,33,40; 7:57-60; 14:19).

from city to city, 35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. 36 Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *you* who kill the prophets, and stone those who are sent to you, how often I would have gathered your children together, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not *have it*! 38 Now your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, You will not see me from now on until you say,

**23:35,36** Abel was the first man ever murdered (Gen 4:8; Heb 11:4). There is no record of the murder of the Zechariah of Zech 1:1. Still he may be the one Jesus referred to here. Or Jesus may have referred to Zechariah the son of Jehoiada whose murder is recorded in 2 Chron 24:21,22. It is possible that this Zechariah also had an ancestor named Berachiah.

"Son of" may mean descendent of (1:1). The murder of Zechariah occurred some centuries before the Pharisees lived. Yet Jesus charged them with it. In other words, they were one with their ancestors in those acts of wickedness. Their hearts and thoughts and attitudes were no better. They were the last generation of many which had persecuted God's servants, and they were the worst of all. And they would pay the penalty for it (Luke 13:34,35; 19:41; 21:20-24. See note at Ps 79:8).

**23:37** "How often" – it was Jehovah, the God revealed in the Old Testament, who had longed to protect and bless and nourish the people of Jerusalem (Ps 102:12,13; 126:1; 132:13-17; Isa 37:32; 40:9-11; 49:14-16). Here Jesus says it was He Himself who had longed to do it. In other words, He knew He was the incarnation of Jehovah. He did not desire the punishment of Jerusalem. He was willing and, indeed, he was longing for Jerusalem's salvation. The lack of willingness was on their part. Compare John 5:40. **23:38** These words were spoken just before Jesus left the temple (24:1), and "house" probably means the temple. As happened once before, God was abandoning the Jews of Jerusalem to themselves (Ezek 10:4, 18,19; 11:22,23). Once again they had rejected Him and once again would have to suffer the consequences. As far as we know Jesus did not enter the temple again.

**23:39** Ps 118:26. When Jesus entered Jerusalem a crowd of His followers said these very words (21:9). But the majority, including the leaders of the nation, refused to say them and rejected their Messiah. Jesus here speaks of His second coming. Then Israel will receive Him. See Zech 12:10-14; Rom 11:26-29.

#### Note on hypocrisy

Matthew chapter 23 reveals very clearly the nature of religious hypocrisy. Let us

'Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the Lord.'

**24** And Jesus went outside, and was going away from the temple, and his disciples came to *him* to show him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone on another, that will not be thrown down."

3 And while he was sitting on the mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of your coming, and of the

measure ourselves by the following:

Hypocrites like to tell others what to do, but will not do those things themselves (vs 2,3).

They do not care how heavy the burdens they put on others – they lack compassion (v 4).

In religion their sole object is to get a reputation among men (v 5) – pleasing God is not in their thoughts.

They like any outward display that causes others to think they are pious (v 5).

They love for others to honor them (vs 6,7).

The purpose of their religious activities is to make converts for themselves, and they hope to make a name for themselves for zeal and success in the ministry (vs 14,15).

They are spiritually blind, but think they are quite capable of teaching others (five times Jesus called them blind – vs 16, 17, 19, 24, 26).

They substitute small things for great, and think highly of themselves for zealously following the small (vs 16-24).

They care little for justice and mercy for others, or being faithful themselves (v 23).

Their emphasis is on outer things, not the inner things of the heart, and if they appear all right to men, they do not care how filthy they are inside and in secret (vs 25-28).

They are ignorant of their own nature and boast in a goodness they think they have but do not have (vs 29-32).

Hypocrisy is not a small, insignificant or laughable sin. It is cruel and murderous, totally opposed to God and the true people of God (vs 33,34). The fate of hypocrites is clearly revealed in vs 32, 36, 38. Let us flee from any temptation to hypocrisy as we would from a deadly danger – which it is.

**24:2** Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6. This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD. The Roman general Titus and his army utterly destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

**24:3** Observe that the disciples asked three questions. In the words which follow the Lord Jesus answered all three. In Luke 21:7 questions about Christ's second coming and the end of the age are omitted (Mark 13:4 also omits them). In Luke 21:8-28 Jesus answered the question about the destruction of Jerusalem and said little about the end of this age. But in Matthew (it seems to this writer) we have His answers to the questions about the end of the age and His second

end of the world?"

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled, for all *these things* must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these *are* the beginning of birth pains.

9 "Then they will hand you over to suffering, and will kill you. And you will be hated by all nations

coming. In some respects the events of 70 AD are a picture of the situation as it will be at the end of this age.

**24:4** If Christians had heeded this warning there would not have been so many led astray throughout this age. Jesus knew how easily even the best of men can be deceived and how carefully they need to guard against it. Compare 7:10; Rom 16:18; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 3:1; Eph 5:6; Col 2:4; 2 Thess 2:3; Jam 1:22; 1 John 1:8; Rev 12:9; 20:8. It was more important for the disciples (and for us) that they be not deceived than that they should know what would happen at the end of this age.

**24:5** This was true before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and throughout this age. It will be true especially before Christ's second coming (vs 23-25).

"Christ" – or "Messiah" (also v 23).

**24:6-8** This was true before Jerusalem fell, and true ever since. Perhaps Jesus meant that there would be more of such things as the age came near its end. Christ's disciples should not be alarmed when such things happen, as though they were to be unexpected and strange.

**24:8** Notice the phrase "the beginning of birth pains." The new age to come will be ushered in by many pains and sorrows in this present age (compare Rom 8:22). And wars, famines, and earthquakes will be only the beginning of those pains that will come at the age's end.

**24:9** See 10:17,22; 23:34; John 15:18-21; 16:2,33. The Lord Jesus never promised His disciples that they would have an easy time in life. Nor did His disciples promise this to other believers (Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3; 1 Pet 4:12). The world which crucified Christ will not love those who live as He did and teach what He taught.

**24:10** Trouble, better than anything else, reveals what people are. It strengthens and purifies those who have faith. It reveals that others who merely profess to have faith really do not. If they ever really love God they will not start hating God's true people, no matter what trouble comes.

**24:11** Acts 20:30; Rom 16:17,18; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 4:3; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 2:18; 4:1. There will be dangers from without, even greater danger from within the church.

for my name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and will deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end will be saved.

14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come.

15 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea

**24:12** Wickedness both outside the church and within it will have a chilling effect on Christians. At the end few will still be zealous in their love for God and man, most will go the way of the churches of Ephesus and Laodicea (Rev 2:4; 3:15). We must always remember that when love is gone all is gone (1 Cor 13:1-3).

**24:13** See 10:22. This does not say "because" some endure to the end they will be saved. Salvation is not earned, is not a reward for enduring. Those who endure do so because God's salvation is at work in them; and those whom He has made new creations in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) He will enable to hold on to their faith to the end. See John 10:28; 17:11-15; Rom 5:3-5,9,10; 8:29,30; Phil 1:6; Heb 10:35-39.

**24:14** Note on God's kingdom at 4:17. Jesus preached the "good news" of the kingdom (4:23; 9:35). It is good news because it sets forth the reign of God among men and calls people to willingly submit to God and enter His kingdom. The preaching and teaching of the kingdom was prominent throughout the ministry of the apostles (Acts 8:12; 20:25; 28:23,31; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 1:12,13; 4:11; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1; Jam 2:5; 2 Pet 1:11; Rev 1:6,9).

This work is not yet finished but is going on throughout the earth. There are still some places, some tribes where the gospel has not gone. When every "nation" has heard it, the end of the age will come. In the Bible the words translated "nations" usually means simply non-Jewish peoples whoever and wherever they may be.

**24:15** When Christ spoke these words to His disciples the "holy place" could mean only the temple in Jerusalem. On "abomination of desolation" see Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. Some think this was completely fulfilled in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the temple. However, the abomination of desolation Jesus speaks of here is connected with the end of this age and His second coming. A comparison of v 14 with vs 29-31 makes this clear. The abominable desolation at the hands of the Romans was only a picture, a shadow of what is yet to happen at the end. Compare 2 Thess 2:3-12.

**24:16-21** In 70 AD Christians fled from

flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house, 18 and let him who is in the field not return to take his clothes. 19 And woe to those who are with child, and to those who nurse *infants* in those days! 20 But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on the Sabbath.

21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be *afterwards*. 22 And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the chosen those days will be shortened.

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ,' or, 'There,' do not believe *it*. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so that, if *it were* possible, they would deceive even the chosen. 25 Now I have told you beforehand. 26 Therefore

Jerusalem and escaped into the mountains across the Jordan river. But the tribulation to come at the end of this age will be greater and more terrible than that one, great as that was (Dan 12:1; Rev 7:14; 13:15-17). Verses 17,18 suggest the suddenness of the coming trouble. In 70 AD Titus besieged Jerusalem for many months. The reference to the "Sabbath" in v 20 is another indication that the land of Israel will be the focal point of the coming great tribulation. The distance Jewish leaders allowed people to travel on the Sabbath was less than a kilometer. In that future time in Israel all transportation may possibly be shut down on Sabbaths.

**24:21** This time of tribulation is still to come, as vs 29-31 make perfectly clear. We should not confuse it with the distresses and tribulations believers throughout this age have had to face (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3,4), though it will be similar in nature.

"Tribulation" – the Greek word means "affliction," "distress," "pressure." It is suffering due to the pressure of circumstances.

**24:22** Satan and evil men will not have time to do all they would like to do. Observe that God can regulate times and activities on earth for the sake of His special people, the "chosen."

**24:24** 2 Thess 2:9-11; Rev 13:13; 16:14; 19:20. Signs and miracles alone do not prove that those who do them are sent by God. If they do not preach the truth in accordance with the Bible there is no truth in them, and their signs and wonders are deceiving (7:22,23; Acts 8:9-11; 13:6). The "chosen" are enlightened to see the truth of Christ (notes on enlightenment at 11:27; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:18). They will not be deceived by false Christs.

**24:26,27** On Christ's second coming see 25:31; 26:64; Luke 12:40; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16 - 5:4; 2 Thess 1:6-10; Heb 9:28; Rev 1:7; 19:11-16.

**24:28** This comes after His warning about

if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the desert,' do not go out; *or*, 'Look! *He is* in the inner rooms,' do not believe *it*.

27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east, and shines as far as the west, so the coming of the Son of man will also be. 28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in the sky. And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather his chosen from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

false prophets and false Christs (vs 24-26). So it could signify that they are like scavengers who fall on a nation, or a society, or a church, at its death. Or it could indicate the nations of earth, sent by God in judgment, falling on another nation. Compare Isa 46:11; Ezek 39:4. Or it might mean the destruction of earth's armies at the return of Christ (Rev 19:17,18).

**24:29** The following verses prove that the "great tribulation" Jesus spoke of in v 21 was not that of 70 AD, but one coming at the end of this age. These signs will occur immediately after the tribulation but before the great and terrible "day of the Lord" – that time when God arises to punish the earth for its wickedness.

It is a mistake to confuse the great tribulation (which is caused by Satan and evil men) with the time when God pours out His wrath on the world. In our interpretation of prophecy it is important to understand this. Compare this verse with Acts 2:19,20 and Rev 6:12-14. See note on the "day of the Lord" at 1 Thess 5:2; etc. Something very striking is going to happen to the sun, moon, and stars before Christ's second coming. It will happen after the great tribulation and before the day of the Lord.

**24:30** Rev 1:7; Zech 12:10-14.

"Clouds" – 26:64; Dan 7:13; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 1:7. Christ's second coming will be quite unlike His first coming. Then He laid aside His glory and came in meekness and seeming helplessness – Phil 2:5-8.

**24:31** Compare Matt 13:30,41-43.

"Angels" – Gen 16:7.

"Trumpet" – 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16; Rev 11:15. Paul taught that the catching up of Christ's church to meet Christ in the air will be at the "last" trumpet.

"Chosen" – John 6:37; 17:2,6; Rom 8:33; Eph 1:4; Col 3:13; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2. "Chosen" or "elect" is a name for believers now in this Church age (in the Old Testament the whole nation of Israel was

32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch is still tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. 33 So in the same way, when you see all these things, know that he is near, *right* at the doors.

34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things are fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

36 "But as for that day and hour, no *man* knows, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37 But *just* as *it was* in the days of Noah, so the coming of the Son of man will also be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah went into the ark, 39 and did not know *what would happen* until the flood came, and took them all away, so the coming of the Son of man will also be.

"elect", chosen of God – Isa 45:4; 65:9).

Observe that Jesus mentions "winds" and "heavens" in this gathering of the elect, but says nothing of "earth." Does this suggest that these elect are somewhere above the earth? Not necessarily – compare Nehemiah 1:9; Deut 30:4; Isa 13:5. It seems this was not an uncommon way of speaking then when referring to an event on earth. And compare Mark 13:27, where the word "earth" is used. On "the four winds" see Dan 7:2; 8:8; 11:4.

**24:32,33** "All these things" – a fig tree may sometimes symbolize Israel (Jeremiah chapter 24; Joel 1:6,7; Hos 9:10. See also 21:19; Luke 13:6). But here the fig tree does not signify one thing or one event. It refers to "all these things" which Jesus foretold in this chapter.

"At the doors" – see Luke 21:28,31.

**24:34** The Greek word here translated "generation" may also be translated "race", and (it seems to the author of these notes) might well be so translated here. If so, it would mean that the race of Israel, the Jewish people, would not be destroyed. The generation living when Jesus spoke these words did pass away before all these things came to pass. No such things as described in vs 27-29 happened in the generation of the apostles. But some think that "generation" here means the generation living when the signs at the end of the age begin to take place. And this interpretation is certainly not impossible.

**24:35** Compare with 5:18. Jesus knew that both the law God gave, and His own words were the very words of God and would endure for all time.

**24:36** The general time just before Christ's coming can be known by the events Jesus foretold, the signs He tells us to watch for (v 33; Luke 21:28,31). But the exact time of His coming no one can predict. If Jesus is God (who knows everything) how could it be that He would not know the day and hour

40 "Then two will be in the field. The one will be taken away, and the other left behind. 41 Two *people will be* grinding at the mill. The one will be taken, and the other left. 42 So watch, for you do not know what hour your Lord comes.

43 "But understand this: If the owner of the house had known what time of the night the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.

45 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them food at the proper time? 46 When his master comes, blessed *is* that servant whom he finds doing so. 47 Truly I say to you, he will make him ruler over all his goods.

48 "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is putting off his coming,' 49 and begins to

of His coming? Rather we should say, since Jesus is God incarnate (John 1:1,14), He could choose not to know something if He wished. (In the same way, though He was all-powerful He could choose not to do things by His own power.) In any case, is it wise to insist that the Son of God is not free to limit His knowledge of a particular thing if He chooses to do so? Compare Gen 18:20,21. **24:37** "Noah" – Genesis chapter 6.

**24:38,39** Jesus here emphasizes the suddenness of the disaster that overtook the people of Noah's day, and the ignorance of the people then. They were abandoned to their own way of life, did not know what God was going to do, and did not want to know (compare 2 Pet 2:5).

**24:40,41** Verse 31.

**24:42** Verse 36; 25:13; Mark 13:37; Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 5:1-6; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; 2 Pet 3:12,13; Rev 3:3.

**24:44** In verse 42 Jesus says "watch." Here he says "be ready." These are two duties of His disciples regarding His coming. Actually they are more or less the same. See note at 25:13. "Watching" does not mean to be like spectators at some public event. We cannot know the exact time, so we are to be on the lookout and keep ourselves spiritually prepared at all times – 25:10; 1 Thess 5:6-8; 1 John 2:28.

**24:45** See 25:21,23. Jesus refers to pastors and teachers in the churches. They are to give spiritual food to God's people (John 21:15-17). This is far more important than trying to figure out the times and dates God has set (Acts 1:7). To feed God's people well much wisdom and faithfulness are required – 1 Cor 4:2; 2 Tim 2:2; Jam 1:5,6. **24:47** See 25:21,23; Luke 19:17,19; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21-23; Rev 21:7. This will take place at Christ's second coming.

**24:48-51** There are those who profess to be servants of God, who are pastors and teachers in churches, yet who are "wicked" and like hypocrites. Their doom is certain



beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come in a day when he is not looking for *him*, and at an hour he is not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with hypocrites. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**25** "Then the kingdom of heaven will resemble ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps, but did not take any oil with them. 4 But the wise took oil in their containers with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom delayed, they all got drowsy and fell asleep.

6 "And at midnight there was a cry: 'Look, the

(2 Pet 2:1-3; Jude 4,12-15).

"Gnashing of teeth" - 8:12.

**25:1** "Then" - at the end of this age, as chapter 24 shows. Note on kingdom of heaven at 4:17. The picture here is true to the customs of that day. The ten virgins were waiting for the bridegroom to come to the bride's house to conduct her to the wedding feast in the bridegroom's house. The bridegroom signifies the Lord Jesus. The bride, of course, is the true church made up of a great many individuals (see 9:15; Rev 19:6-8).

Who, then, are these ten virgins? Perhaps they are leaders in the church who are responsible for preparing the bride for the Bridegroom (the "servants" of 24:45-49. Compare Paul's statement in 2 Cor 11:2). Or perhaps these "virgins" may represent individuals in the outward professing church who think they are members of the true church and have hopes of sharing in Christ's kingdom. In this case, the wise and foolish would be a contrast between true and false Christians, those born again by God's Spirit (John 3:3-8), and those who are Christians in name only. In the Bible the word "virgin" used figuratively does not always signify the true people of God. See Isa 23:12; 47:1; Jer 46:11.

**25:2** What is meant by wise and foolish can be seen in 7:24-27. See also the contrasts between the wise and the foolish in Proverbs (1:7; 10:8,14; 12:15; 13:16; 14:1, 8,16; 16:22).

**25:3,4** It seems from this that those foolish ones never had oil. In the Bible oil can signify the Holy Spirit (note at Ex 27:20). Among those who say they are Christians the wise have the Holy Spirit, the foolish do not. In many ways the ten were very similar - all are called "virgins," all had lamps, all knew something of the truth, all thought they would be ready to meet the bridegroom, all went out to meet him. But the foolish ones were without the one essential thing - oil. Compare Rom 8:9; Jude 19. There are many who are outwardly Christian, inwardly not. They are like trees without fruit, clouds without rain.

**25:5** Observe that they all "fell asleep" - even the wise have not always been as alert

bridegroom is coming! Go out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps.

8 "And the foolish *ones* said to the wise, 'Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, or there may not be enough for *both* us and you. Instead, go to those who sell *oil*, and buy for yourselves.'

10 "And while they were going away to buy *it*, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage. And the door was shut. 11 Afterwards the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, Lord! Open to us.'

12 "But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I don't know you.'

13 "Watch therefore, for you do not know either the day or the hour when the Son of man

as they should have been. In church history there have certainly been some very "drowsy" times.

**25:6** At the time of the end there will be warnings and signs of Christ's near coming, and those will alert the church.

**25:8** They tried to light their lamps. Apparently the dry wick caught a flame but could not hold it. Without God's Spirit no one will have the inward grace and the light on his pathway that the genuine believer and true child of God has. Outward profession can never make up for inward lack.

**25:9** No person ever has too much of the Spirit of God. And no one can lend God's Spirit to others, or the experience of the light the Spirit gives on the way. It is a personal experience which must come from God. Each person must go to God and "buy" (compare Isa 55:1-3; Prov 23:23; Luke 11:13; Rev 3:18). This is figurative language. The Spirit of God is not for sale. No money can purchase an interest in Him (compare Acts 8:18-21). The purchase of this "oil" does not cost money - it costs ourselves (10:39; 16:24-26; Luke 9:23; 14:26,33). This is one reason why comparatively few people do this "buying."

**25:10** Christ will arrive just as He said He would. Then there will be a great "feast" for His believers - Rev 19:9. But the door of opportunity will be shut for those who heard the truth but did not act on it. Compare Luke 13:24,25; Gen 7:13,16; 2 Cor 6:1,2; Heb 3:7-11.

**25:11** Compare Prov 1:28-32.

**25:12** "I don't know you" - this is evidence that the foolish virgins represent unsaved people in the church. Compare 7:23. Contrast John 10:14; 1 Cor 8:3; 2 Tim 2:19.

**25:13** See 24:42,44. This is the one great application Christ makes of this parable - which does not mean there are not other lessons to be learned from it. "Watch" means to be spiritually prepared. In the parable all ten virgins went to sleep and were unconscious for a while, but five of them were still prepared for the announcement of the bridegroom's coming. It is God's Spirit in the heart who makes Christians prepared. Without Him all following of any religion, and



comes.

14 "For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man *planning* on a journey to a far country who called his own servants, and entrusted his goods to them. 15 And he gave five talents to one, two to another, and one to another, to each one according to his own ability. And immediately he went on his journey.

16 "Then the one who received the five talents went and traded with them and made another five talents. 17 And in the same way the one who *received* two, also gained another two. 18 But the one who received one went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 "After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And so the one who received five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. Look, besides those I have gained five more talents.'

21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few

things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

22 "Also the one who received two talents came and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. Look, besides those I have gained another two talents.'

23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

24 "Then the one who received the one talent came and said, 'Master, I knew you, that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter. 25 And I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have yours.'

26 "His master answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I have not scattered? 27 Therefore you should have put my money with the bankers, and *then* when I returned I would have received my own with

all effort to be good, and all trying to meet Christ the Bridegroom will be in vain. It is foolish in the extreme to try to make a Christian life without the one absolute essential for the Christian life – Christ's Spirit. Notes on the Holy Spirit at 3:11,16; John 14:16,17; etc.

**25:14** The "man" signifies Christ. His journey was to heaven. The "property" He entrusts to His servants are the things of His kingdom (21:43), His work on earth and the resources to accomplish that work.

**25:15** "Talents" – see note on the meaning of talent at 18:24. Here talents signify abilities, spiritual gifts and resources. Some of God's people have more of these than others (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11). But one main point of the parable is that equal faithfulness, even though abilities differ, will bring equal rewards. A talent was first a unit of weight (about 34 kilograms). Afterwards it became a unit of value amounting to 34 kilos of gold or silver – worth a great deal of money in any age.

**25:16-18** There are vast differences in the ways men use what God gives them. Compare Luke 19:13-21. In the case of these servants it was all a question of obedience or disobedience, faithfulness or unfaithfulness.

**25:19** "After a long time" – by such words was Christ not suggesting that His coming would not be in the immediate future? However that may be, He will return as certainly as the man in the parable returned.

"Accounts" – Rom 14:12; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 4:13.

**25:20** What will we be able to say when we stand before the Lord?

**25:21** The manner of our service on earth for God will have results that will reach into the ages to come. Notice again the emphasis on faithfulness – 24:45; Luke

16:10; 1 Cor 4:2. The reward for it will be great indeed – positions of trust and responsibility and honor in the future manifestation of God's kingdom, and a share in the joy of the Lord Jesus.

**25:23** Compare v 21. The whole basis of the master's approval was faithfulness in what was given, regardless of the amount given. It is not the business of those with little ability or resources or opportunities to envy those with much. They must serve the Lord heartily with what they have.

**25:24** He thought he knew the master, but surely he did not. In these words he actually slandered him to his face. People may think they know God, yet have all sorts of false ideas about Him.

**25:25** "I was afraid" – if he had truly been afraid of his master he would have been afraid of offending him by disobedience, afraid of wasting time and opportunities. Notes on the fear of the Lord at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7. The Christian who does nothing is not afraid of the Lord; more than likely he is afraid of work.

**25:26** The master calls him "wicked" because he did not obey his master (disobedience is wickedness), and "lazy" because he did not work for him. He had a sinful, slothful spirit and did not overcome it. See note on this at Prov 6:6-11; 15:19; 22:13; 24:30-34. Here the master was not saying that he was like this servant thought him to be. He was saying "Was this your estimate of my character? Did you really think I am like that? Then you should have been careful to act accordingly."

**25:27** If the man honestly thought he was incapable of doing anything profitable with the money, he should have put it in the hands of those who were capable.

interest.'

28 "Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. 29 For to every one who has will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from him who does not have will be taken away even what he has. 30 And throw the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

31 "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory, 32 and all nations will be gathered in his presence. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates *his* sheep from the goats. 33 And he will put the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.

34 "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the

**25:28** Faithfulness was further rewarded. The "ten-talent" man had proved he knew how to behave when something was entrusted to him.

**25:29** Compare 13:12.

**25:30** The wicked, lazy servant is here called "unprofitable." Compare Luke 13:6,7; John 15:1-6; Heb 6:7,8. If we are worthless in the Lord's work, wicked and lazy, we should not vainly imagine that He will accept us and reward us. He will never say "well done" to those who have not done well. See the doom of the "unprofitable." Compare 3:10,12; 8:12; etc.

**25:31** "Son of man" - 8:20.

"Glory" - 16:27; 19:28; 24:30; John 1:14; 12:41; 17:5; Rev 1:16.

"Throne" - 19:28; Luke 1:32. It seems there is a difference between what Jesus here calls "His throne" and the throne of God the Father where Jesus now sits - Rev 3:21.

**25:32** "All nations" - this phrase, if taken literally, will include both Israel and the other nations of the world. This separation must mean separating individuals from one other. No nation as a whole has fulfilled the picture Christ gives in vs 34-36. Some individuals in every nation have done so, but not any people in general. Not all individuals in any country, at any time, have been Christ's "sheep" (see John 10:1-16,27,28). This is the only place in the New Testament where goats are a symbol of unbelievers.

**25:34** "Blessed" - notes at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-10; etc.

"Inherit" - 5:5; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 6:9,10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Eph 1:11,14; Heb 6:12; Rev 21:7. Notes on God's kingdom at 4:17. How was the kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world? Since it is for men, and men were not in existence before the foundation of the world, the preparation was in the mind, purpose, and plan of God.

**25:35,36** We might expect the Lord to say "Inherit the kingdom because you believed in Me," for salvation is by grace through faith, and not by works (Eph 2:8-10; Titus

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me *something* to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. 36 I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and fed *you*? Or thirsty, and gave *you something* to drink? 38 When did we see you as a stranger, and took *you* in? Or naked, and clothed *you*? 39 Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and came to you?'

40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, anything you did for one of the least of these my brethren, you did for me.'

41 "And then he will say to those at the left

3:3-7). True, but God's judgment of men is always said to be about works (16:27; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12). He will judge us at last not merely by what we have said, or intended, or taught to others, but by what we have actually done or not done. Works prove the reality of faith, and faith without works is dead (Jam 2:14-19,26). The good works of God's children are not the cause of their being saved, but they are the evidence that they are saved.

Six works are here listed, but they only represent good works in general and do not exhaust all the possibilities. Compare this list with what some think are wonderful works in 7:22. The works Christ here approves are not striking or glamorous, or much noticed by men. This passage follows directly the parable of the talents and shows something of what Jesus meant by using the talents.

**25:37-39** "The righteous" - those who are righteous by faith and give evidence of it by works (5:6,20; Rom 2:7-11; 3:21-24; 5:1; 8:1-4). They know they have performed acts of kindness to others, but they do not have a high view of their own works. They well know they could have done much more and could have done better the things they did do. And they are not much conscious that every act they did for others was actually done for Christ, thinking they only did what they ought to do for fellow men. They were not trying to pile up merit, but helped simply because they had God's love in their hearts. Their helping others was not disguised selfishness (see 1 John 3:17,18).

**25:40** Who are these "brethren"? Evidently Jesus was referring to the "sheep" of v 32. See also Rom 8:29; Heb 2:11,12. We are told to do good to all men but especially to believers in Christ (Gal 6:10). What we do to them is what we do to Christ, for He and they are united (John 17:20-23; Acts 9:1-5). If we really believed this, would we be slow to perform acts of kindness and helpfulness to others?

**25:41** "Depart" - from the source of all blessedness and joy. Compare 7:23;

hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry, and you did not give me food. I was thirsty, and you did not give me *anything* to drink. 43 I was a stranger, and you did not take me in. *I was* naked, and you did not clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me.'

44 "Then they too will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not serve you?'

45 "Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, since you did not do *it* for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

46 "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

**26** And it happened *that* when Jesus had finished *speaking* all these words, he said to his disciples, 2 "You know that after two

2 Thess 1:9. The "cursed" are those who do not believe in Christ, and prove they do not by failing to do good works for His people (Gal 3:10-13; Heb 6:8; 2 Pet 2:14). God's curse will be on them forever.

"Fire" – 3:10,12; etc. Hell was not prepared for men but for Satan and his angels. But if men insist on following Satan and refusing God's truth and God's way, they will share the punishment of Satan. And they will deserve to share it – otherwise God would not send them to that place. Since sinners deserve such punishment, we should understand that sin is a much more terrible thing than men usually think it is. Note on the devil at 4:1.

**25:42,43** The emphasis in their judgment is not on the evil works they did (though those too will be judged – Rom 2:6,8,9), but on the good works they did not do. In other words, they reveal their lack of faith and salvation by what they neglect to do. The things they leave out of their lives show they have no love for Christ or His people. God's work of salvation in the heart of a any person impels him or her to do good works. Sins of omission are just as revealing as sins of commission, and just as worthy of judgment and punishment. Compare Num 32:23; Judges 5:23.

**25:44,45** In vain men will try to defend themselves. Their professed ignorance will not be acceptable as an excuse. The one relevant fact is this: needy, suffering people of Christ were in their neighborhood and they did not lift a finger to help them. And Christ takes this as neglect of Himself. From this we see again how Christ loved the poor, the weak, the needy. Compare 11:5; 19:21; Luke 4:18; 6:20; 12:33. When His people who are poor suffer, He suffers with them – Acts 9:5; Isa 63:9.

**25:46** There will be no altering of one's state after the judgment. Compare Luke 16:26; 2 Thess 1:9. Both the punishment of unbelievers and the life of believers with

days *the feast of* the Passover arrives, and the Son of man is *to be* handed over to be crucified."

3 Then the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and plotted together to seize Jesus by trickery, and kill *him*. 5 But they said, "Not on the feast *day*, or there may be a riot among the people."

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very valuable fragrant oil and poured it on his head, as he sat *at the table*. 8 But when his disciples saw it, they were indignant and said, "Why this waste? 9 For this oil might have been sold for a large *sum*, and *the money* given to the poor."

10 But aware *of this*, Jesus said to them, "Why trouble the woman? For she has done a good deed

God are eternal. On eternal life see John 3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47; etc.

**26:2** "Passover" – a very important feast of the Jews – Lev 23:5; Exodus chapter 12. God chose the time of the Passover for the death of His Son for sinners. And the time was very appropriate to signify the meaning of His death. The Passover lamb was a sacrifice to protect the children of Israel from judgment in Egypt. Jesus was the lamb of God, a sacrifice which takes away the sins of the world and so provides a way of escape from God's judgment against sin (John 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7).

**26:3,4** They behaved like this because of their ignorance of God, their hatred of the truth, because the Lord Jesus exposed their sinfulness, and because the wicked will always be opposed to the righteous (Ps 37:12; John 3:19,20; 7:7; 8:40; 15:18-21; 1 John 3:12). **26:5** At the time of the Passover great crowds flocked to Jerusalem from all over Israel. Jesus' enemies knew that many of those people admired Jesus. They feared trouble if they killed Him at that time.

**26:6** Simon was probably a man healed at some time by Jesus. Notice where Jesus the King from heaven (2:2; 27:11) spent time when He came to Jerusalem, the city of the great King (5:35). He chose the home of a humble man who had been an outcast, not some mansion, palace or fine hotel. Would that all who profess to be His followers were of the same mind (Phil 2:5-7).

**26:7** See John 12:2.

**26:8,9** It seems that the source of such a remark was the traitor Judas Iscariot (John 12:4-6). Apparently other disciples agreed with him. The perfume was very costly. Mark 14:5 says (in Greek) that it was worth 300 Denarii. One Denarius was the accepted daily wage of a laborer (Matt 20:2).

**26:10** The act of this woman was "good," because it was a pure expression of love. Those who have a fervent love for God are

to me. 11 For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me. 12 For when she poured this oil on my body, she did *it* for my burial. 13 Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told in remembrance of her."

14 Then one of the Twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, 15 and said, "What will you give me? I myself will hand him over to you." And they agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from that time he looked for an opportunity to betray him.

17 Now on the first *day* of the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying to him, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

18 And he said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'"

19 And the disciples did as Jesus ordered them, willing to pour out all they have at His feet. They do not worry about what it costs them or what others may say about it.

**26:11,12** If the disciples wanted to show their love and concern for the poor, there would always be opportunity. But the Lord Jesus was soon going to die, and it seems the woman knew that. It was the custom in those days to anoint the dead with spices and perfumes before burial (Luke 23:55 - 24:1; John 19:39,40).

**26:13** Her act is recorded for all time in God's word. So much the Lord delights in the love shown by His people.

**26:14,15** Only one motive for this act of base treachery is recorded in the Bible. Judas wanted money. John 12:6 reveals one thing he was willing to do to get it. His love of money, which he did not conquer, and perhaps did not even resist, in spite of the teaching of Jesus about it (6:19-21,24; Luke 6:20; 12:15-21; 14:33), completely ruined his character, helped to make him like a demon (John 6:70,71), and at last moved him to sell the Son of God. So see 1 Tim 6:8-10. Thirty silver coins was the usual value of a slave. See Ex 21:32; Zech 11:12.

**26:16** Judas was not overcome by a sudden temptation. He was deliberate and calculating in his betrayal of Jesus.

**26:17** Note at Lev 23:5,6. The Passover was considered the first day of the seven day observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

**26:18** All the time Jesus knew just when and how and why He would die (16:21; 20:28; John 7:30; 10:17,18; 12:23).

**26:21** From the beginning Jesus knew this also (John 6:64).

**26:22** Each of them knew something of his own sinfulness and weakness, but probably none (except Judas) thought he could betray Christ and so commit the worst of sins. Compare vs 33-35. They were sad at

and prepared the Passover.

20 Now when evening came, he sat down with the Twelve. 21 And as they ate, he said, "Truly I say to you, one of you will betray me."

22 And they became exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to him, "Lord, is it I?"

23 And he answered and said, "The one who is dipping *his* hand with me in the bowl, he will betray me. 24 The Son of man is going just as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

25 Then Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, "Teacher, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said *it*."

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed *it*, broke *it*, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat. This is my body."

27 And he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed

the very thought that anyone called a disciple would or could do such a thing.

**26:24** Judas in betraying Jesus was fulfilling the Scriptures (John 13:18; Ps 41:9). But Judas was free and responsible for his acts. God's foreknowledge did not interfere with His freedom to act. It is true of all who permanently refuse, reject or betray Christ that it would be better if they had not been born.

**26:25** It does not say that Judas was sorrowful (as the other disciples were - v 22). To keep up the pretense that he was like them, he asked the same question they asked even though he knew the answer.

**26:26** "My body" - Jesus did not mean that the bread became His body. This was quite impossible since He was there before them in His body. He meant that the bread was a symbol of His body. See notes at John 6:53-58. His body was soon to be crucified. The result of this event was eternal life and spiritual food to all who receive Him as Lord and Saviour. A literal eating of His flesh could not give spiritual life and food to anyone. The Bible is full of symbolism and figurative language, and we must recognize this or fall into many errors. See 16:6-12; John 6:35,53-58; etc.

**26:27,28** "Gave thanks" - 14:19. The wine in the cup symbolized the blood of the Lord Jesus soon to be shed on the cross. This shedding of His blood meant agony and sorrow to Him, but He gave thanks because He knew it was the way God the Father had appointed to save men and glorify Him.

The wine did not become His literal blood when they drank it. His literal blood still flowed in His veins and drinking it could bring no good to anyone. For salvation from sin men do not need anything physical. What they need is spiritual life in the inner person (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8). This comes by trusting in the Lord Jesus and believing

for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 But I say to you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives.

31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will stumble because of me this night. For it is written,

I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

32 "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

33 Peter answered and said to him, "Even though everyone stumbles because of you, I will never stumble."

34 Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times."

His blood was shed to take away our sins (John 3:16,36; 6:47,63; Rom 3:22-25; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18,19; 1 John 1:7).

"New covenant" – by His blood the Lord Jesus established this covenant. It is "new" in contrast to the old one God made at Sinai with Israel. See notes at Ex 19:5,6. On the new covenant see Hebrews chapter 8; Jer 31:31-34; 2 Cor 3:6-18. The old covenant was one of law and works. The new covenant is a one of grace. In it God promises forgiveness to all who trust in the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:46,47; Acts 13:38,39).

"Many" – this means the many who receive the Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior. He died for all, but only those who trust in Him receive the benefits of His death.

"Forgiveness of sins" – see 6:12; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-35; Eph 1:7.

**26:29** "Kingdom" – 4:17.

**26:30** Psalm 118 was often sung at the time of the Passover in Israel.

**26:31** Verse 56; Zech 13:7.

**26:32** See 16:21; John 10:17,18. Before His death He said He would rise from the dead. After His death He rose. This is the greatest possible evidence that He is the Son of God – Rom 1:4.

**26:33,34** Here is boastful self-confidence, or possibly the thought that he loved Jesus enough to overcome any temptation to deny Him, or ignorance still of the depths of his sinfulness and weakness, or perhaps all of these. Compare 1 Cor 10:12. Ignorance of ourselves, trusting in our own nature and strength can mean many a grievous fall.

**26:35** Peter was not alone in his self-confidence. They all still had much to experience before they were able to depend on God's strength and renounce their own. Observe Peter's unbelief of Jesus words, his flat denial that Jesus knew what He was talking about. This is another glimpse of the unbelieving folly which Christ's disciples sometimes displayed. When will we learn that not one word of the Lord Jesus will fall to the

35 Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, yet I will not deny you." And all the disciples said the same.

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy-hearted. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Wait here and watch with me."

39 And he went a little farther, and prostrated himself and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as you *will*."

40 And he came to the disciples, and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What, could you not watch with me for one hour? 41 Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation.

ground unfulfilled? And when will we see that our own opinions are completely worthless in matters He has already revealed?

**26:36** Gethsemane was a garden a short distance outside the walls of Jerusalem at the foot of the mount of Olives.

**26:37** The two sons of Zebedee were James and John (4:21).

**26:38** Here was a burden of sorrow so great it was pressing the life out of Him. What was the reason for such sorrow? He, the utterly Holy One, was about to bear the sin of the world on the cross, and to experience the punishment of that sin, and be forsaken by God the Father (27:46; John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21). He wanted these disciples to watch with Him. Did His human nature long for companionship in this hour of suffering? Certainly He wanted witnesses of this event.

**26:39** Prostrating Himself indicated great agitation, a sense of crisis, an agonizing desire for help. Compare Heb 5:7. The "cup" was a symbol of the terrible experiences which lay before Him. He was about to "become sin" (v 38), to drink the cup of God's wrath against human sin. This He had come to do (John 12:27; 18:11). But now that the moment had come the prospect was so dreadful, so appalling that His holy nature shrank from it. And He prayed that He might not have to drink that cup, if God could find another way to accomplish His purposes for men. But it was not possible, and even with His soul in agony (Luke 22:44) Jesus accepted the will of God the Father.

He here utters a prayer that all men should learn to pray. God's way, God's will is always best, and those who best accept it will be the most blessed, even though for a time it may mean suffering and loss.

**26:40** Verse 38. The Lord Jesus was fighting the greatest battle of His life, and, as usual, found no help from men. Compare Ps 22:11.

**26:41** The disciples were about to enter into a time of great trial. Sleeping was not the way to prepare for it. The flesh will always



The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cup may not pass from me, unless I drink it, your will be done."

43 And he came again and found them asleep, for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then he came to his disciples, and said to them, "Are *you* still sleeping and taking rest? Look, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Get up, let us go. Look, the one who is betraying me is near."

47 And while he was still speaking, suddenly Judas, one of the Twelve, came. And with him *was* a large crowd with swords and clubs, *coming* from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he who betrayed him had given them a signal, saying, "The one I kiss, he is the one. Seize him." 49 And immediately he came up to Jesus, and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came, put their hands on Jesus, and held him. 51 And, suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out a hand,

drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in its place. For all those who take up the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that now I cannot pray to my Father and he will immediately give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that say it must happen like this?"

55 At that same time Jesus said to the crowd, "Have you come out as against a thief with swords and clubs to take me? Daily I sat with you teaching in the temple, and you did not seize me. 56 But all this has happened, so that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him, and ran away.

57 And those who seized Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But Peter followed him, at a distance, to the courtyard of the high priest, went in and sat with the servants, to see the outcome.

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and the whole Council, were looking for false testimony against Jesus, to put him to death, 60 but did not

fail us in time of temptation. It is like a traitor in our own bosom. For our spirits to win the battle against temptation we need these two things very much – watchfulness and prayer (Eph 6:10,11,18).

**26:42-44** Verse 39. Three times Jesus prayed the same thing and then stopped. Compare 2 Cor 12:7,8. It is not wise for us to go on requesting God for something He denies three times.

**26:45,46** Jesus was fully prepared to face any pain or suffering that might come to Him, ready to die in the place of sinners. And this preparation was a knowledge and acceptance of God's will. So He made no attempt to escape from danger, or to satisfy the natural longing of His human nature to avoid pain and suffering and death. Knowledge and acceptance of God's will are the greatest preparation for anything anyone ever has to face. And how is God's will known? By studying His Word and by giving ourselves completely to Him as the Lord Jesus did (Rom 12:1,2; Col 3:16).

**26:47-49** The Jewish leaders were afraid of the people, and did not want to try to take Jesus in daylight surrounded by the crowds who eagerly heard Him. So they bribed Judas and hired mercenaries that they might capture Him in secret and at night. The mercenaries would not have known where Jesus might be, and might not have been able to recognize Him in the dark. So Judas, who knew Jesus' habits, led them and gave them a sign. No sign could have been more hypocritical, none could have shown more clearly Judas' fundamental depravity, insincerity, and amorality.

"Rabbi" is a Hebrew word meaning "My teacher." But Judas had never learned to behave like that from Jesus. In fact, it seems he learned very little of anything from Him. This is because he did not have a spiritual mind, one receptive to the truth.

**26:50** Notice the word "friend" (Ps 41:9). Some men hated Jesus, but He hated no one.

**26:51** John 18:10.

**26:52** See 5:9,10,39.

**26:53** A Roman legion was between three and six thousand men. All the armies of heaven would have come to the defense of Jesus if He had so prayed – not that He needed angels (John 10:17,18; 18:6).

**26:54** "Scriptures" – the Old Testament (John 2:22; 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16). He was referring to those which set forth His suffering and death. For example, see Isaiah chapter 53.

**26:56** See 5:17; Luke 24:25,26,44-46. "The disciples. . . ran away" – vs 31,35.

**26:57** "Priest" – Ex 28:1. The Romans ruled Israel, and the Jews had no king of their own, so the leader and judge of the people was the high priest.

**26:58** It was probably fear which kept him at a distance.

**26:59** "Council" – the Jewish court, the Sanhedrin – 5:22. This shows the depraved character of the leaders of Israel. They wanted to achieve their own ends and cared nothing for truth and justice. See the command of the law they professed to love and uphold – Ex 20:16; 23:1,7. Compare 1 Kings 21:1-16. The leaders of Israel were guilty of the same sin as one of the greatest enemies of Israel.

**26:60** This shows the perfection of Jesus'



find any; even though many false witnesses came forward, they did not find any. Finally two false witnesses came forward, 61 and said, "This *fellow* said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and build it in three days.'"

62 And the high priest got up and said to him, "Do you give no answer? What *is this that* they testify against you?"

63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest responded and said to him, "I put you under oath by the living God: Tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God."

64 Jesus said to him, "You have said *it*. Moreover, I tell you *that* hereafter you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of authority, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What need do we have of any more witnesses? See, now you have heard his blasphemy. 66 What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is worthy of death."

67 Then they spit in his face, and beat *him* with fists. And others slapped *him*, 68 saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who is the one who hit you?"

69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a *servant* girl came up to him, saying,

life. Even His bitter enemies could find nothing with which to accuse Him. See also 27:19; Luke 23:4; John 19:6; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22.

**26:63** Isa 53:7; 1 Pet 2:23. What was going on was plain to everyone, and there was no need for Jesus to say anything. He here set an example of how we should behave when falsely accused (5:11; 1 Pet 2:21). The high priest was not looking for the truth. He thought that Jesus was a mere man, and that if He said He was the Son of God they could have grounds to accuse Him. "Christ"—or "Messiah". See note at 1:1.

"Son of God" — 3:16,17; 11:27; John 3:16; 5:18-23.

**26:64** "You have said *it*" — in the idiom of those days this was a definite "yes." He would not defend Himself against false charges, but gave a clear answer to a question about His nature and office. He then connected His name for Himself ("Son of man" — 8:20) with a passage in the Old Testament about the Messiah, the anointed of God (Dan 7:13,14. See notes there).

**26:65** The high priest knew exactly what Jesus meant. Tearing his clothes was a sign of the alarm he felt — or pretended to feel. In spite of all the evidence of Jesus' life, teachings, and miracles, he refused to believe He was more than a mere man. So in his eyes, when Jesus said He was the Son of God, He was guilty of blasphemy. See also John 5:17,18; 8:58; 10:31-33.

**26:66** According to the law of Moses there were many offenses that deserved death. See note at Ex 21:36. Jesus was guilty of

"You were also with Jesus of Galilee."

70 But he denied *it* in front of *them* all, saying, "I don't know what you're saying."

71 And when he had gone out on the porch, another *servant* girl saw him, and said to those who were there, "This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man."

73 And after a while, those who were standing near by came up to *him* and said to Peter, "You also are certainly *one* of them, for your accent gives you away."

74 Then he began to curse and swear, *saying*, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, who said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out, and wept bitterly.

**27** When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people consulted together against Jesus to put him to death. 2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away and handed him over to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw none of them. They were basing their judgment on their interpretation of Lev 24:16.

**26:67** See here the hate of fallen human nature against the holy God (John 3:19; 7:7; 15:18,24; Rom 1:30). It is the hate of error against truth, evil against goodness, unrighteousness against justice, sin against holiness. And we should not think that by nature we are better than they (Rom 3:9,19; Eph 2:3). Their spitting on Him fulfilled Isa 50:6.

**26:68** They said this after they had blindfolded Him (Mark 14:65). The people regarded Him as a prophet (21:11,46). The leaders were mocking the idea.

**26:69-75** These verses are a fulfillment of Jesus' words in v 34. The Bible reveals people as they were and does not hide the sins and failures of God's servants. See Gen 9:21; 12:13; 27:18-26; Ex 32:2-4; Num 20:12; 2 Sam 11:1.

**26:73** Peter was a Galilean, and their way of speaking was different from that of people of Jerusalem.

**26:75** His own behavior cut Peter to the heart and overwhelmed him with a sense of failure and grief, which led to repentance. Compare 27:3-5; 2 Cor 7:10.

**27:1** See 26:66.

**27:2** Israel was ruled by Rome, the most powerful empire of that day. Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea where Jerusalem was situated. They took Jesus to Pilate because they did not have the authority to put anyone to death (John 18:31).

**27:3** 1 Tim 6:10. Judas did not repent and trust in God's mercy, as v 5 makes clear. He

that *Jesus* was condemned, felt remorse and brought the thirty pieces of silver back to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What *is that* to us? You see *to that*."

5 And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he left, went away and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them in the treasury, because it is the price of blood."

7 And they consulted together, and bought the potter's field with them, to bury foreigners in. 8 So that field has been called, "The field of blood" to this day. 9 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

And they took the thirty pieces of silver,  
the price of the one whose value was  
estimated,

whose price was set by the children  
of Israel,

10 And gave them for the potter's field,  
as the Lord ordered me.

11 And Jesus stood before the governor, and

added one more sin to his many other sins. His sorrow was only the worldly kind of sorrow, the kind that works death – 2 Cor 7:10. **27:4** Judas knew, as everyone else knew, that Jesus was innocent of any wrong doing (26:60). In the Bible there are other examples of wicked men who confessed they had sinned – see Ex 9:27; 1 Sam 26:21. Confession without forsaking sin is useless (Prov 28:13). Here the Jewish leaders showed themselves more hardened, merciless, and depraved than even Judas himself.

**27:5** Suicide is self murder, and the Jews rightly regarded it as a terrible sin. People have no more right to kill themselves than to kill others.

**27:6** They called it blood money because they paid it so they could take Jesus and put Him to death. They knew this was no fit offering for God. See how they were concerned to keep up outward forms even at the time they were determined to murder God's holy Son. Compare 23:23,24. Now if we reject Him what good are all our religious beliefs, customs and rituals?

**27:7-10** This was in fulfillment of Jer 32:6-9 and Zech 11:12,13. Jeremiah wrote of buying a field, Zechariah wrote of thirty pieces of silver and a potter (perhaps the words he spoke were originally spoken by Jeremiah but not recorded in his prophecy). Compare Acts 20:35 (a saying not recorded in the Gospels), and Jude 14 (not recorded in Genesis). But see how God works even in the minds and actions of ungodly, unbelieving men to fulfill His word. Compare John 11:49-53; Acts 2:22,23.

**27:11** Another accusation the Jewish leaders brought against Jesus was that He was trying to set Himself up as a literal King

the governor asked him, saying, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

And Jesus said to him, "You say *it*."

12 And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear how many things they testify against you?"

14 And he did not answer him a word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

15 Now at *that* feast the governor used to release to the people a prisoner, chosen by them. 16 And at that time they had a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. 17 Therefore when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas? Or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew that they had handed him over out of envy.

19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent a *message* to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I have suffered greatly in a dream because of him."

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor responded and

in Israel in opposition to Rome. See Luke 23:2,14; John 19:12.

"You say it" – in the idiom of the language this meant a definite "yes." But though Jesus answered "yes," He did not mean He had been trying for political power on earth – John 18:36,37.

**27:12-14** See 26:63; 1 Pet 2:23. Pilate had tried many cases, but probably had seen few, if any, accused persons who did not deny the charges against them, or at least make some sort of excuse.

**27:15** He did this each year at the time of the Passover.

**27:16** Barabbas was guilty of rebellion and murder (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19).

**27:17** Pilate said this hoping they would ask for the release of Jesus. He knew how to weigh evidence and he soon realized that Jesus was innocent and wished to have Him off his hands (Luke 23:4,7,16,22; John 19:12).

**27:18** See how deadly a sin envy is. Compare Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5. Let us beware of envy. It could lead us into opposition to God, and cause us to commit even terrible crimes (Prov 14:30; 27:4; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 3:3; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:26; Jam 3:14,16).

**27:19** Once again the innocence of Jesus is stated – this time from an unexpected source. But it did not prevent Pilate from having Jesus crucified.

**27:20** Crowds are often easily swayed by strong and unscrupulous leaders. God warns us about being swept along in a crowd to do evil ((Ex 23:2). When the crowd is bent on doing wrong, it requires great strength of character to stand against it and do what is right.

**27:21** They preferred a murderer to the holy Son of God (Acts 3:13,14). Let us not think

said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!"

22 Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" *They* all said to him, "Let him be crucified!"

23 And the governor said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let him be crucified!"

24 When Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but *that* instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed *his* hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous person. You see *to it*."

25 Then all the people answered and said, "His blood *be* on us, and on our children."

26 Then he released Barabbas to them, and when he had Jesus beaten with a whip, he handed *him* over to be crucified. 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's palace, and gathered the whole company of *soldiers* around him. 28 And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. 29 And when they had woven a crown of thorns, they put *it* on his head, and *put* a

reed in his right hand. And they knelt in front of him, and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 And they spit on him, and took the reed and beat him on the head. 31 And after mocking him, they removed the robe from him, put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon, and made him carry *Jesus'* cross. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, 34 they gave him wine vinegar mixed with gall to drink. And when he had tasted *it*, he refused to drink *it*. 35 And they crucified him, and divided his garments, casting lots, so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by the prophet,

They divided my garments among them,  
and cast lots for my clothing.

36 And sitting down they watched him there. 37 And they placed over his head this written accusation against him,

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

we are better by nature than those people. Instead let us learn what our fallen nature is like (Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9,19,23).

**27:22** Pilate's question is one all should ponder. What we do with Christ will determine our eternal destiny. If we receive Him, believe Him and love Him we will live with Him in heaven forever. If we do not, our portion will be in the lake of fire (25:41,46). To reject Him is to take the side of His enemies who crucified Him.

Crucifixion was a Roman form of execution. A horizontal beam of wood was fastened to a vertical beam. Then the feet of a person sentenced to death were nailed to the vertical beam, his hands to the horizontal beam, and the cross was lifted up and placed in the ground. It was a very cruel and barbarous form of execution. Jesus' worst enemies could not state a single evil act He had done (see also 26:59,60). All they could do was rage and shout against Him.

**27:24** This attempt to escape responsibility was useless. Pilate was there to administer justice. But in his sinful weakness he was willing to abandon a just man to a cruel death to pacify the Jews. In doing so he shared their guilt. There is never a way that we can wash our hands of the responsibility God puts on us. And sin and guilt can be washed away only in the blood of the One Pilate gave up to crucifixion (26:28).

**27:25** "Blood" means the responsibility for His death. They were willing to be guilty of the murder of Jesus and to make their descendants guilty as well. So great was their unreasonable hatred of Him. Men abandoned to sin would kill God if they could – indeed they did when He, incarnated in the Lord Jesus, put Himself in their hands.

**27:26** Pilate violated the laws of his country,

the law of God, and his own conscience. The flogging alone was sometimes enough to kill a man. In his depraved weakness Pilate gave Jesus up both to that and to crucifixion. **27:27-31** Pilate was also responsible for this. They were his soldiers. One accusation against Jesus was that He was making Himself a king (v 11). The mocking of the soldiers was related to this. The scarlet (or purple) robe was the color of royalty. The reed was a mocking symbol of a king's scepter. And kings have crowns, so they gave Jesus one. Jesus is the King of heaven, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16). Man's fallen nature would try to deny Him that and make a cruel mockery of it all. Let us learn what Rom 8:7 means.

**27:30** See 26:67.

**27:32** At first Jesus bore His cross (John 19:17). Was He unable to continue because of physical weakness caused by the beating He endured?

**27:33** Golgotha is the Hebrew name for Calvary and means the same ("a skull"). The place was outside the walls of Jerusalem.

**27:34** Ps 69:21. The idea was to stupefy those about to be executed and relieve their pains to some extent. Jesus chose to face the full force of sufferings for the sins of mankind.

**27:35** Verse 28. This fulfilled the prophecy of Ps 22:18. "They" means the Roman soldiers.

**27:36** Their job was to see that He died and that no one rescued Him before then.

**27:37** This was Pilate's work (John 19:19). He was mocking the Jews who had rejected Jesus as their king, but he wrote more truth than he believed or imagined. It was the custom when crucifying people to put the accusations against them on a board over

38 At that time two thieves were crucified with him, one at the right hand, and another at the left. 39 And those who passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save yourself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41 In the same way the chief priests also, with the scribes and elders, mocking *him* said, 42 "He saved others. Himself he cannot save. If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 "He trusted in God. Let him deliver him now, if he wants him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

44 Also the thieves who were crucified with him, in the same way heaped insults on him.

45 Now from noon there was darkness over all the land up to three in the afternoon.

46 And about three Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That is to say, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

47 Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, "This *man* is calling for Elijah." 48 And immediately one of them ran, took a sponge,

their heads.

**27:38** Isa 53:12.

**27:39-43** Ps 22:6-18 reveals the inner experience of the Lord Jesus at this time.

**27:40** Again they twist His words (26:61).

**27:42** The Lord Jesus could not save Himself, only because He would not. Compare 26:53. His very purpose in coming to earth was to give Himself to suffering and death as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (20:28). If He had listened to the taunt of the Jews and come down from the cross, no one would ever have been saved from sin, no one would have been able to enter God's holy heaven.

**27:43** Jesus' trusting in God did not mean deliverance from the cross. It meant something much greater – deliverance from the tomb and the bonds of death (28:6; Acts 3:15).

**27:44** One of these robbers later changed his mind (Luke 23:39-43).

**27:45** "From noon. . . to three" – this was a striking sign from God. It signified the realm of spiritual darkness Jesus entered as a just suffering for sinners. See Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Luke 22:53; Eph 5:8; Col 1:13; 2 Pet 2:4,17; Jude 13. Only Jesus knows what it cost Him, the Light of the world (John 8:12), to be plunged into darkness.

**27:46** "Forsaken me" – Ps 22:1. See note there. In this also Jesus was bearing the punishment sinners deserve (7:23; 25:41; 2 Thess 1:9). God the Father forsook Him. The light of God's face, the joy of His presence were gone. It was the Lord's will to crush Him (Isa 53:10), and He, made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), experienced God's

filled *it* with wine vinegar, put *it* on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. 49 The rest said, "Let *him* alone. Let's see whether Elijah will come to save him."

50 Jesus, when he had cried out again with a loud voice, gave up *his* spirit.

51 And immediately the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks split, 52 and the tombs opened up, and the bodies of many of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and came out of the tombs after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many.

54 Now the centurion and those who were with him guarding Jesus, seeing the earthquake and the things that happened, were very frightened and said, "This really was the Son of God."

55 And many women were there, watching at a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, performing service for him. 56 Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 When it was evening there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to

anger against sin.

**27:47** They did not understand His words.

"Elijah" – 1 Kings 17:1.

**27:48** Ps 69:21.

**27:50** John 19:30 tells us what He said. The Lord Jesus voluntarily gave up His spirit – no one was able to take it from Him (John 10:17,18).

**27:51** Another marvelous sign from God. For the significance of this veil see the note at Ex 26:31-33. Can we doubt that God Himself tore this veil in two pieces? The tearing of the veil meant that the way into God's presence was opened by the sacrifice of Christ – Heb 9:3,8; 10:19-22. About this time of day a priest would have been burning incense in the holy place in the temple.

**27:52,53** This is the only reference to this event in the New Testament. We do not know what happened to these saints after this. Fallen asleep (v 52) is a way of speaking of death often used in the Bible (notes at John 11:11,14; Acts 7:60).

"Holy city" – Jerusalem.

**27:54** The Roman soldiers confessed this, but the Jewish religious leaders denied it even after these events. Thus they showed themselves more hardened, more determined in their opposition to God's truth than the rough soldiers of a foreign power.

**27:56** See 10:2; Mark 15:40; Luke 8:2.

**27:57-61** "Arimathea" – a village about 30 kilometers from Jerusalem. Joseph is an example of a rich man who did enter the Kingdom of God. Compare 19:22-24. Joseph openly and boldly made known his connection with the Lord Jesus at a time when Jesus' closest disciples were confused

Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be handed over *to him*. 59 And taking the body Joseph wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and put it in his own new tomb, which he had cut out of the rock. And he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away. 61 And Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

62 Now the next day, the one following the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember that when he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' 64 Therefore, give an order that the tomb be made secure until the third day, or his disciples may come at night and steal him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last error will be worse than the first."

65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go

make *it* as secure as you can."

66 So they went and made the tomb secure, putting a seal on the stone and posting a guard.

**28** After the Sabbath, as dawn was breaking on the first *day* of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And, suddenly, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow. 4 And from fear of him the guards shook and became like dead *men*.

5 And the angel responded and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the

and fearful (John 20:19). Jesus' burial in a rich man's tomb fulfilled Isa 53:9.

**27:62** This was the Preparation Day for the Passover.

**27:63-66** These religious leaders brazenly called Jesus a "deceiver," though they had no evidence whatever for that, and much evidence to the contrary. Hate blinds men to the truth, and drives them to oppose it. In this case their hate was used by God to make the evidence of Christ's resurrection more clear and certain. For, because of them, the tomb where He lay was sealed and guarded. God is able to turn all the malice of men and the tricks of Satan to His own good purpose and to the blessing of His own people. See note at Gen 50:20. It is a striking fact that the enemies of Jesus remembered Jesus' words that He would rise again, but His own disciples did not!

**28:1** This was the third day after Jesus was crucified (Acts 10:40; 1 Cor 15:4).

"Sabbath" – Ex 20:8-11.

"The other Mary" – the mother of James and Joseph (27:56).

**28:2** "An angel of the Lord" – note at 1:20. The angel rolled the stone away from the door of the tomb, not so Jesus could get out, but so Jesus' disciples could get in and see that it was empty (v 6). Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

**28:3** Ezek 1:13,14; Dan 10:6; Rev 15:6; 18:1.

**28:4** Dan 8:17; Luke 1:12; 2:9. If men are so alarmed in the presence of an angel, what will they do when they stand before God Himself (Rev 20:11,12)?

**28:5** The greatest day in human history had dawned. It was a time for joy, not fear. But he did not tell the guards not to fear, only the women who were seeking for Jesus. Christ's disciples need not fear many things that other men fear. And what is a source of great joy to them may be a cause of dread to others (16:21; 27:23; 20:19; John 10:17,18).

**28:6** The Lord Jesus said He would rise from the dead, and He did so in spite of the attempts of His enemies to prevent it. Even for a person to predict that he will rise from the dead is an extraordinary thing, unheard of in the literature of the world. Actually rising again is a marvel without compare. Observe carefully the words of the angel. The total person of the Lord Jesus rose and came out of the tomb – His body, soul and spirit. The body which had died and been placed in the tomb was no longer there, and the women could see this for themselves.

By rising from the dead the Lord Jesus proved that He was the Son of God from heaven (Rom 1:4), and that He was no deceiver (27:63). He proved Himself the conqueror of death and the giver of eternal life as He had said He was (John 5:21-29; 11:25,26). For some other truth that can be learned from Christ's resurrection see 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Do we have any evidence that should cause us to doubt this word of God's angel "He has risen?" None whatever. All the evidence points to the fact that He did rise from the dead.

First, and most importantly, we have His own word for it (16:21; 17:23; 20:19; John 10:17,18; Luke 24:45).

Second, a large number of people saw Him after His resurrection, and these eye witnesses were willing to suffer and die for saying He had risen (as the book of Acts makes very clear. See also 2 Cor 11:23-27). The eleven original apostles were with the Lord Jesus for forty days. They saw Him, had conversations with Him, and heard Him teach. There was no possibility of being deceived in this matter. They knew beyond any shadow of doubt that Jesus who had been crucified, who had suffered death and been buried in the tomb, was risen and alive and with them.

Third, God worked with them in great power establishing the truth they proclaimed (Heb 2:3,4. See Acts 5:12-16; 9:40,41;



place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and now he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you."

8 And they hurried away from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to take word to his disciples. 9 And as they were going to tell his disciples, suddenly Jesus met them, saying, "Greetings." And they came *to him* and clasped his feet and worshipped him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brethren that they should go to Galilee, and that they will see me there."

11 While *the women* were going, some of the guard appeared, coming into the city. And they

20:9,10; 28:7-10; etc).

Fourth, millions of individuals in the world today have had their lives changed by the Lord Jesus, and testify that He is real and true and living.

For a fuller account of Jesus' appearances to these eye witnesses than we have in Matthew see Luke chapter 24, John chapters 20 and 21, and Acts 1:3-9.

**28:7** Verses 10,16. The order of events after Christ's resurrection is not clear. No Gospel records all of them, and each writer gives the account in the way God led him. It seems that the Lord Jesus appeared on at least eleven different occasions between His resurrection and ascension to heaven.

The order was probably like this: He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:14); then to women returning from the tomb without Mary Magdalene (Matt 28:9,10); then to Peter (Luke 24:34); then to two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:34); then to a group of disciples in Jerusalem when Thomas was absent (John 20:19); then to the same disciples again when Thomas was present (John 20:26-29); then to seven disciples at the lake of Galilee (John 21:1); then to a group of disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matt 28:16); then to more than five hundred at one time (1 Cor 15:6); then to James (1 Cor 15:7); finally to the eleven apostles on the mount of Olives (Luke 24:50,51; Acts 1:9-12).

Other unrecorded appearances there must have been, for He appeared to the apostles over a period of forty days (Acts 1:3), but these appearances are not recorded.

**28:8** Ps 2:11. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a source of joy forever to those who really believe it (Luke 24:52; John 20:20).

**28:9** John 20:17.

**28:10** The blessed truth of the resurrection should remove our fear and send us out to speak of it. "My brethren" means the disciples (12:48,49; Heb 2:11,12). They did not immediately set out for Galilee (they were very slow to believe in Christ's resurrection - Mark 16:11,13,14). So He appeared to them in Jerusalem (John 20:19-29).

reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. 12 And when they had met with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large *sum of* money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Say that his disciples came at night, and stole him *away* while we were sleeping. 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him, and make your *situation* safe."

15 So they took the money, and did as they were instructed. And this story has been spreading among the Jews to this very day.

16 Then the eleven disciples went away to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus

**28:11-15** Here is another example of hatred toward the truth leading men further away from truth. That the story invented by these Jews was utterly false soon became clear to those in Jerusalem and to people around the world. And the behavior of the disciples afterwards was not that of deceivers who stole the body of Jesus and hid it somewhere - they willingly suffered and died for their teaching that Jesus had risen from the dead.

**28:13** What strange instructions! If they were asleep how could they know what happened to the body of Jesus? Surely no law court in the world would accept such testimony.

**28:16** Verse 10.

**28:17** "Worshipped Him" - see 2:11; 4:10; 14:33.

"Doubted" - it does not say what they doubted, but it is clear from the Gospels of Luke and John that the appearance of Jesus after His resurrection was not altogether the same as before, and sometimes He was not immediately recognizable (Luke 24:16,31,36-43; John 20:15; 21:5). Jesus removed their doubts by coming near and speaking to them. But even to mention these doubts shows the honesty of the Gospel writers. If Jesus had not risen, but they were trying to convince people He had, would they have spoken of doubts and inability to recognize Him?

**28:18** "All power" - the Greek word also means authority. See John 3:35; 17:2; 5:22,23; Acts 2:32,33,36; Phil 2:9-11. The Lord Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16). Blessed are all those who receive Him as such and trust in Him (Ps 2:6-12). He is directing events on earth and fulfilling His purposes. This authority was "given" to Him. By whom? By God the Father who has a higher place in the administration of the universe than the Son (John 10:29; 14:28; 1 Cor 15:22-28).

Notice the all-inclusive words Jesus used in the last three verses of this Gospel - "all power" (v 18), "all nations" (v 19), "all things" (v 20), "always" (v 20). His disciples can go to all people groups, make disciples everywhere, and teach everything He commanded them because He has all



came and spoke to them, saying,

"All power is given to me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of

power and authority both in heaven and earth and will be with them always and everywhere, empowering them and using His authority and power on their behalf.

**28:19** Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8. In verses 19 and 20 Jesus commanded the apostles to do three things: Make disciples, baptize, and teach those who become disciples to do as they themselves had been commanded.

"Make disciples" – this is the meaning of the Greek word. The word translated "teaching" in v 20 is a different word altogether. To make disciples means his followers are to make disciples for Christ, not for themselves (as some preachers like to do). Because Jesus has authority over all people (John 17:2), His servants would be able to do what He here commands. Making disciples for Christ means to preach the gospel and proclaim the truth of God's Word (and live) in such a way that people trust in Jesus, begin to love Him above everything and everyone, and become willing to die to self and follow Him whatever the cost. If those in the ministry are not doing this they are not doing what Jesus ordered us to do. See notes on discipleship at Matt 10:1 and Luke 14:25-35.

"All nations" – this is the great missionary commission and task for every generation of Christians, and to be obedient to Christ believers must place this very high indeed in their list of priorities.

"Baptizing them in" – the word "them" refers only to the disciples that are made. Jesus did not tell His servants to baptize anyone else. The Greek word translated "in" may also be translated "into". See note on baptism at 3:6. Discipleship speaks of death to self and a new life in which Christ is the center and the chief object of love (Matt 10:37-39; Luke 9:23; 14:26,27;

the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you. And see, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

etc). Baptism also speaks of these two things. Compare Rom 6:3-6.

Since Jesus here declared that He wants disciples to be baptized, any believer today who wants to please Him should be baptized.

"Name" – the Lord Jesus now gives the final revelation of the name of God. "Name" is singular not plural, because Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three gods but one God perfectly united in nature and attributes. To reveal God's name is to reveal what God is like – John 17:6; Ex 34:5-7. God is a Trinity. See also 3:16,17; 11:27; John 1:1,14,18; 5:30; 10:30; 14:16,17; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6.

**28:20** "Teaching them" – those who become disciples in every generation need to be taught to obey all that the Lord Jesus taught and commanded. By becoming disciples they have started on the path of obedience. But they will need to understand more truth and become fully obedient to it. Faith, discipleship, and obedience are all closely linked together and no one should try to separate them (see Matt 7:21; 1 John 2:3-6; note at Acts 22:10; etc). The apostles took the command of Jesus very seriously and worked mightily to do just what He told them to do. This is clear from the book of Acts and the letters they wrote.

"I am with you" – this means not only with the apostles who were present then, but with their successors throughout this age, as is plain from the concluding words. Each generation needs faithful men to carry on the work of love that the apostles began. And Christ Himself will be with all of them always. In the first chapter of Matthew we have the announcement of the coming of Emmanuel – God with us (1:23). Here in the last verse is the promise that Emmanuel will be with His people to the end of the age. See also 18:20.

# The Gospel According to MARK

## Author:

Mark was a cousin of Barnabas and served Christ with Barnabas, Paul, and, according to tradition, especially with the apostle Peter. Compare 1 Peter 5:13. It is very probable that he learned many of the facts he records in this Gospel from Peter. Mark's other name was John (Acts 12:12).

## Date:

Some years after the death and resurrection of Christ. Some scholars believe that this Gospel was the first to be written, and it may be so, but we have no real proof for this.

## Theme:

Mark presents Christ as the Son of God (1:1) who became the Servant of God and man, and did mighty works among men (compare Acts 10:38; Rom 15:8,9). Twice He said that true greatness is in service to others (9:35; 10:42-45), and demonstrated this in His own life and ministry. Mark emphasized the deeds of Christ more than His teachings. For example, he wrote of 18 miracles of Jesus, but records only 4 of His parables (Matthew records 14 parables, and Luke has 15), and he includes no long discourses such as the Sermon on the Mount.

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**1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; **2** as it is written in the Prophets,

See, I send my messenger before  
your face,  
who will prepare your way before you.

**3** The voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.'

**4** John came baptizing in the wilderness, and preaching the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And the whole land of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him, and were all baptized by him in the Jordan river, confessing their sins. **6** And John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. And he ate locusts and wild honey.

**7** And he preached, saying, "After me one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to stoop down and loosen the strap of his sandals. **8** I indeed have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

**9** And it took place in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** And coming up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. **11** And a voice came from heaven, saying, "You are my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

**12** And immediately the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness. **13** And he was there in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts. And the angels ministered to him.

**14** Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, **15** and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and

believe the gospel."

**16** Now as he walked by the lake of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."

**18** And immediately they left their nets, and followed him.

**19** And when he had gone on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; and they were in the boat mending their nets. **20** And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers, and went after him.

**21** And they went to Capernaum. And immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught. **22** And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them like one having authority, and not like the scribes. **23** And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, **24** saying, "Let us alone! What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know you. You are the Holy One of God."

**25** And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him."

**26** And when the unclean spirit had thrown him into convulsions and cried out in a loud voice, he came out of him. **27** And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new teaching is this? For with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

**28** And immediately his fame spread all around through the region of Galilee. **29** And as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, with James and John they entered the house of Simon and Andrew. **30** But Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. **31** And he came and took her by the hand and

**1:1** The word "Gospel" is a translation of a Greek word which means "good news." The disciples of the Lord Jesus and Jesus Himself called it good news because it was God's message showing the way of salvation for men. On the meaning of the names "Jesus" and "Christ" see Matt 1:1. "The Son of God" – Matt 1:18; 3:16,17; John 1:18; 3:16; 5:18-23.

**1:2,3** Mal 3:2; Isa 40:3; Matt 3:3; 11:10.

**1:4** Matt 3:1-6; 9:5-7.

**1:5-11** Matt 3:4-17.

**1:12,13** See Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13. In this very brief account of Jesus' temptation Mark mentions one fact none of the other gospels does – the presence of wild animals. This suggests Jesus was in a solitary and dangerous place.

**1:14** Matt 14:3.

**1:15** Matt 3:2; 4:17.

**1:16-20** Matt 4:18-22.

**1:21** "Capernaum" – Matt 4:13.

**1:22** Matt 7:28,29.

**1:23** "Unclean spirit" – Matt 4:24.

**1:24** The demons knew that Jesus was absolutely unique in His person and His power.

"Holy one of God" is used in the New Testament only here, at Luke 4:34 and John 6:69. But the perfect holiness of the Lord Jesus is emphasized everywhere. See Luke 1:35; John 8:46; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21-24.

**1:25** Jesus had (and still has) complete power over all evil spirits (5:1-10; Luke 10:17).

**1:27** What amazed the people was not the fact of a new teaching, but the fact that Jesus backed it up with the mighty works of God. See note at Matt 8:1.

**1:29-34** Matt 8:14-17.

raised her up, and immediately the fever left her, and she served them.

32 And in the evening, when the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick, and those who were possessed by demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and drove out many demons. And he did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew him.

35 And in the morning, a great while before daylight, he got up, went outside and left for a solitary place. And there he prayed. 36 And Simon and those who were with him followed him. 37 And when they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is looking for you."

38 And he said to them, "Let us go to the next towns, so that I may preach there also; because I have come for this."

39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout Galilee, and drove out demons.

40 And a leper came to him and begged him, kneeling before him and saying to him, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing. Be clean."

42 And as soon as he spoke, immediately, the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. 43 And he gave him a strict warning and immediately sent him away, 44 saying to him, "See that you tell no one, but go show yourself to the priest, and as a testimony to them, offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded."

45 But he went out and began to talk about *it* freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a city openly, but was outside in deserted places. And they came to him from every quarter.

**2** And after *some* days he again went into Capernaum, and it was heard that he was in

the house. 2 And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not even near the door. And he preached the Word to them. 3 And they came to him, bringing a paralytic carried by four *men*. 4 And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they took off *that part of* the roof where he was, and when they had broken through, they let down the cot on which the paralytic was lying.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

6 But there were some of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why is this *man* speaking blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8 And when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were reasoning like this among themselves, immediately he said to them, "Why are you reasoning *about* these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up, pick up your cot, and walk?' 10 But that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins: (he said to the paralytic) 11 I say to you, Get up, pick up your cot, and go to your house."

12 And immediately he got up, picked up the cot, and went out in the presence of them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen *anything* like this."

13 And he went out again along the shore of the lake, and all the people came to him, and he taught them. 14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

15 And it happened, as Jesus sat *at the table* in his house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eating with tax collectors and sinners, they said to his disciples,

behave so. The crowds were getting so large, the opposition from religious leaders was getting so strong, that Jesus withdrew. He did not wish to bring on a crisis at this time. See John 7:30.

**2:1-12** See notes at Matt 9:1-8. Mark shows how the faith of the paralytic's friends revealed itself in great determination to overcome all obstacles. In this they are an example to us all. On persistence of faith see Matt 7:7,8; Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8.

**2:13,14** See Matt 9:9 where Levi is called Matthew. Levi was probably his original name and Matthew his new name as an apostle. Matthew is the Greek version of a Hebrew name meaning "Gift of the LORD" (Jehovah).

**2:15-17** Matt 9:10-13.

**1:34** Verse 25; 3:12; 5:43; Matt 8:4; 9:30; 12:16.

**1:35** Jesus often prayed (Matt 14:23; 19:13; 26:36,39; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:29; 22:32; John chapter 17; Heb 5:7). Sometimes He sought a solitary place to pray. He prayed both as a man to God and as God's unique Son. In other words both His divine and human natures were involved in His praying. Compare John chapter 17.

**1:38** See Isa 61:1. This is one of several reasons why He came from heaven to earth. For other reasons see references at Matt 5:17.

**1:39** Matt 4:23.

**1:40-43** Matt 8:1-4.

**1:45** Instead of obeying Jesus in gratitude for his healing, he did the opposite of what Jesus said. He was not the last person to

"How is it that he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"

17 When Jesus heard *this*, he said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

18 And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast. And they came and said to him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the sons of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then, in those days, they will fast. 21 Also no one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and the tear is made worse. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the wineskins, the wine will be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."

23 And it came about that he went through the grain fields on the Sabbath, and as they went, his disciples began to pick *some* heads of grain.

24 And the Pharisees said to him, "Look! Why are they doing what is not lawful *to do* on the Sabbath?"

25 And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need, and was hungry, he and those who were with him? 26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the Showbread, which is not lawful to eat, except by the priests, and also gave *some* to those who were with him?"

27 And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

3 And again he went into the synagogue. And a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him *to see* if he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him.

3 And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Stand up in the middle."

4 And he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath, or to do evil? To save life, or to kill?" But they kept silent.

5 And when he had looked around at them in anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored whole like the other.

6 And the Pharisees went out, and immediately plotted with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. 7 But Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a great crowd from Galilee and from Judea 8 and from Jerusalem and from Idumea and beyond the Jordan followed him. And when they heard what great things he did, a great crowd of those from around Tyre and Sidon came to him.

9 And he told his disciples that a small boat should be ready for him, because of the crowd, so that they would not press against him. 10 For he had healed many, so that as many as had afflictions crowded around him to touch him. 11 And when the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him, and cried out, saying, "You are the Son of God." 12 And he strictly charged them that they must not make him known.

13 And he went up into a mountain, and called *to him* those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 And he ordained twelve that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach, 15 and to have authority to heal diseases and to cast out demons.

16 And *to* Simon he gave the name Peter. 17 And *there were* James *the son* of Zebedee and

**2:18-22** Matt 9:14-17.

**2:23-28** Matt 12:1-8.

**2:27** "Sabbath" - Ex 20:8-11. The Sabbath was given so that men might have one special day each week to rest from their labors, and to worship their Creator and Redeemer. Many of the religious leaders of Jesus' day made their rules about the Sabbath more important than the needs of people. Jesus emphasized that human beings are more important than days and regulations. Compare Col 2:16.

**2:28** "Son of man" - Matt 8:20. "Lord" - Matt 12:8.

**3:1-6** Matt 12:9-14.

**3:5** He was angry and grieved at those who were willing to trample people in the dust to uphold man-made rules; who in the

hardness of their hearts would forbid healing and saving of life on the Sabbath, but would plot to kill on the same Sabbath. Anger and grief are often what Jesus must feel at the attitudes and actions of many religious people today also. Observe that godly anger against sin and injustice is right. It is to share in God's anger against such things (Num 25:3). Compare Ex 32:19,20; Eph 4:26.

**3:6** Matt 12:14. "Herodians" - Matt 22:16. **3:8** Idumea was an area southwest of Judea.

"Tyre and Sidon" - Matt 11:21.

**3:9** Matt 13:2.

**3:11,12** See 1:24,25,34.

**3:13-19** Notes at Matt 10:1-4.

**3:17** "Thunder" - it seems their disposition



John the brother of James (to them he gave the name Boanerges, that is, The Sons of Thunder), 18 and Andrew and Philip and Bartholomew and Matthew and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus and Simon the Canaanite 19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

And they went into a house. 20 And the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat bread. 21 And when his friends heard *of it*, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons he drives out demons."

23 And he called them *over*, and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan rises up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 27 No man can go into a strong man's house, and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

28 "Truly I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may impiously utter, 29 but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never have forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation."

30 He said this because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

31 Then his brothers and his mother came, and, standing outside, sent word to him, calling him. 32 And the crowd sat around him, and they said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are outside, looking for you."

33 And he answered them, saying, "Who is my mother, or my brothers?"

34 And he looked around in a circle at those sitting about him, and said, "See my mother and my brothers. 35 For whoever does the will of God, that one is my brother and my sister and mother."

tended to be a bit stormy. Compare Luke 9:54. **3:20** See 6:31.

**3:21** "Friends" – the Greek word used here means "those beside him," that is, those belonging to him. It could also indicate family or relatives.

"Out of his mind" – compare John 10:20. His zeal for God was so great, His desire to teach and help people so strong, that He sometimes seemed abnormal to ordinary people who had never experienced such things themselves. Compare John 2:13-17. For similar reasons some of His followers also in every century have been regarded as foolish or crazy. See Acts 26:24.

**3:22** The Jewish religious leaders had another explanation of Jesus' teaching and

**4** And again he began to teach by the lakeside, and a huge crowd gathered before him, so that he went into a boat, and sat out on the lake, and the whole crowd was on land by the lake. 2 And he taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching said to them,

3 "Listen! Look, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he was sowing it happened that some seed fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and ate it up. 5 And some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun came up, it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. 8 And other seed fell on good ground, and springing up and growing it yielded a crop. Some seed produced thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundredfold."

9 And he said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

10 And when he was alone, those around him together with the Twelve asked him about the parable.

11 And he said to them, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to those outside all *these* things come in parables, 12 so that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; that they might not be converted and *their* sins be forgiven them."

13 And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? But how then will you understand all parables? 14 The sower sows the Word. 15 And these are the ones by the wayside, where the Word is sown. But when they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the Word that was sown in their hearts. 16 And in the same way these are the ones who are sown on stony ground. When they hear the Word, they immediately receive it with joy. 17 But they have no root in themselves, and so last only for a time.

behavior. They said He was under the control of Satan.

"Beelzebub" – note at Matt 10:25. Everyone should decide what to believe about Jesus. Jesus was either mad or demon-possessed or a deliberate deceiver, or else He came from God and spoke the truth and did the works of God. All the evidence says He came from God.

**3:22-29** Matt 12:25-32.

**3:30** Verse 22; John 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20.

**3:31-35** Matt 12:46-50.

**4:1-20** Matt 13:1-23. Mark records slightly different words than Matthew to convey the same truth. In v 11 he uses the phrase "The kingdom of God" while Matthew has

Afterwards, when trouble or persecution comes because of the Word, immediately they fall. 18 And these are the ones who are sown among thorns; they hear the Word, 19 and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things coming in, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20 And these are the ones who are sown on good ground; they hear the Word and receive it and bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold."

21 And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not to be put on the lampstand? 22 For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed; nor has anything been kept secret that will not come to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

24 And he said to them, "Carefully consider what you hear. Whatever measure you use will be the one used for you; and to you who hear more will be given. 25 For to the one who has *more* will be given, and from the one who does not have, *even* what he has will be taken away."

26 And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man scatters seed in the ground, 27 and night and day he sleeps and rises, and the seed sprouts and grows; how, he does not know. 28 For the earth produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. 29 But

when the grain shows itself ready, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

30 And he said, "To what shall we compare the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we illustrate it? 31 *It is* like mustard seed, which, when sown in the ground, is smaller than all the seeds that are in the ground. 32 But when it is sown, it grows up and becomes the largest of all garden plants, and puts out great branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

33 And with many such parables he spoke the Word to them, as much as they were able to understand. 34 But he did not speak to them without a parable. But when they were alone, he explained everything to his disciples.

35 And the same day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."

36 And when they had sent the crowd away, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. And there were also other boats with him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already becoming full *of water*. 38 And he was in the back part of the boat, asleep on a cushion. And they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?"

39 And he got up and rebuked the wind, and

"The kingdom of heaven." Evidently the two phrases often have the same meaning. On this kingdom see note at Matt 4:17. Mark adds the words "otherwise they might turn and be forgiven" to Matthew's account in Matt 13:13 but omits verses 14,15. And Mark 4:13 is not found in Matthew. In v 19 Mark has words not found in Matt 13:22 – "The desires for other things." Desires for the things of this earth, good or bad, may be just as powerful in choking the influences of God's word in our lives as worry and wealth. Compare 1 John 2:16; Col 3:1,2. Luke gives other variations in his account of this parable (see Luke 8:4-15).

When there are differences in wording which of these three writers has given the accurate account? The answer is, all three. Jesus probably spoke more fully than any of them record, saying all that they have written down and even more. God's Spirit led each of the three to choose words and phrases in keeping with the overall emphasis and purpose of his Gospel. This is true of all the variations in language used by the writers of the Gospels in reporting the words and works of Jesus.

**4:21,22** These verses do not appear in Matthew chapter 13, but similar words are found in other places in that Gospel. See Matt 5:15; 10:26.

**4:23** Matt 13:9.

**4:24** Matt 7:2.

**4:25** Matt 13:12; 25:29.

**4:26-29** This parable is found only in Mark.

On a literal level, when good seed is planted in good soil there will be inevitable sprouting and growth. The fact that the sower does not understand the process does not affect it. Growth may be slow, but it is spontaneous, automatic. This is true also of the Kingdom of God working either in individual lives or in its working in the whole earth from beginning to the harvest. God's Word is the living powerful seed sown in men's minds and hearts. It will sprout and grow and produce a crop, though men may not understand how or be able to see it or control it. Compare 1 Cor 3:6,7; 1 Pet 1:23-25.

This is strong encouragement to preachers of the gospel, to teachers of God's truth. They should have great confidence in the power of the Word and working of God. But the fact that there is spontaneous growth does not relieve those who hear God's Word from responsibility – see vs 23,24.

"Harvest" – compare Matt 3:12; 13:30; Rev 14:14-16.

**4:30-32** Matt 13:31,32.

**4:33** Some things the disciples could not grasp. Compare John 16:12. Jesus used comparisons and illustrations to illuminate all His teachings. It is likely that He used many which are not recorded in the Bible. Compare John 20:30; 21:25.

**4:34** Verses 13-20 is one example of the explanations Jesus gave. Matt 13:36-43 is another.

**4:35-41** Matt 8:23-27.

said to the lake, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

41 And they were very afraid, and said to one another, "What kind of a man is this, that even the wind and the lake obey him?"

**5** And they came over to the other side of the lake, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he came out of the boat, immediately, out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit met him. 3 The man had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, not even with chains. 4 Because he had often been bound with shackles and chains, and the chains had been pulled apart, and the shackles broken in pieces by him. And no one could tame him. 5 And night and day, he was always in the mountains and in the tombs crying out and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus at a distance, he ran and worshipped him, 7 and cried out with a loud voice, and said, "What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I plead with you by God not to torment me."

8 For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit."

9 And he asked him, "What *is* your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name *is* Legion, for we are many."

10 And he begged him at length that he would not send them away out of the country. 11 Now a large herd of pigs was there feeding near the mountains.

12 And all the demons begged him, saying, "Send us into the pigs, so that we can go into them."

13 And immediately Jesus gave them

permission. And the unclean spirits came out and went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down a steep place into the lake (there were about two thousand of them), and were drowned in the lake. 14 And those who had been feeding the pigs ran off, and told *this* in the city and countryside. And they went out to see what had happened. 15 And they came to Jesus and saw the one who had been demon-possessed, the one who had the legion, sitting there clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

16 And those who had seen *it* told them what had happened to the demon-possessed man, and *also* about the pigs. 17 And they began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

18 And when he got into the boat, the one who had been demon-possessed begged him that he might be with him. 19 However Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your own family, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how he has had compassion on you." 20 And he left and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him. And everyone was amazed.

21 And when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, many people gathered to him. And he was near the lake. 22 And, suddenly, one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, came to him, and seeing him, fell at his feet 23 and pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. *Please* come and place your hands on her, so that she may be healed and live."

24 And *Jesus* went with him, and many people were following him and crowding him. 25 And a certain woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things from

**5:1-20** This is a fuller account of the event recorded in Matt 8:28-34. Matthew says there were two demon-possessed men. Mark singles out one of them for special notice, and so does not mention the other one.

**5:2** Notes on demon possession at Matt 4:24.

**5:3-5** This is a very vivid description of what demons can do to a person under their control. This man's violent behavior and strength may be attributed to the fact that he was possessed by a great many demons (v 9).

**5:7** It seems that demons always knew who Jesus was - 1:24,34.

**5:9** A legion in the Roman army was between three and six thousand men. Yet in vs 2 and 8 it seems there was only one spirit. This is probably because there was one who was the leader, the "commanding officer" of the legion of demons in the man, and Jesus dealt principally with that one.

**5:10** Compare Luke 8:31.

**5:15** They realized that Jesus had displayed some wonderful power, but they did not understand who He was and what His

purpose was - and the sad fact is they did not want to understand (v 17).

**5:19** "Tell them" - compare these instructions of Jesus with some others (1:44; 3:12). But circumstances in the region of the Gadarenes (v 1) were quite different from that in the land of Israel. The Gadarenes were not Jews, had no expectation of a Messiah, and Jesus was rarely there. There was no danger there of crowds hindering Him from accomplishing His mission. Now these words Jesus spoke to this man apply to all who have experienced the Lord's working in their lives.

**5:20** Decapolis is a Greek name meaning ten cities. The region of the Gadarenes was a part of the area called the Decapolis.

**5:21** He returned to the western side of the lake of Galilee.

**5:22-43** Here is a much expanded account of events found briefly in Matt 9:18-25.

**5:25** Verse 42. She had been suffering all the lifetime of Jairus' daughter.

**5:26** Her disease was beyond the ability of

many physicians, and had spent all that she had without getting any better, but got worse instead, 27 when she heard about Jesus, came in the crowd behind him and touched his cloak. 28 For she said, "If I just touch his clothes, I will get well." 29 And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that affliction.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that power had gone out of him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"

31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowds pressing around you, and you say, 'Who touched me?'"

32 And he looked around to see the one who had done this thing. 33 But the woman afraid and trembling, knowing what had happened inside her, came and fell down before him and told him all the truth.

34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed from your affliction."

35 While he was still speaking, they came from *the house* of the ruler of the synagogue and said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid, only believe."

37 And he allowed no one to follow him, except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. 38 And he came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw the commotion and those who were loudly weeping and wailing. 39 And when he had come in, he said to them, "Why are you making this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead, but asleep."

40 And they laughed at him. But when he had

put them all out, he took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with him, and went in where the child was lying. 41 And he took the child by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cumi," that is, by translation, "Little girl, I say to you, get up."

42 And immediately the child got up and walked, for she was twelve years *of age*. They were astonished, and their astonishment was great. 43 And he gave them strict orders that no one should know this, and said that something should be given her to eat.

**6** And he left there and came into his native place, and his disciples followed him. 2 And when the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and hearing *him* many were astonished, saying, "Where did this *man* get these things? And what *is* this wisdom that has been given him, that even such mighty works are performed at his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joses, Judah, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they were offended at him.

4 But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his native place and among his own relatives and in his own house."

5 And he could do no mighty work there, except that he placed his hands on a few sick folk and healed *them*. 6 And he marvelled at their unbelief. And he went around the villages teaching.

7 And he called the Twelve and began to send them forth two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. 8 And he ordered them not to take anything for the journey, except a staff, no bag, no bread, no money in *their* belt, 9 but *to* wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

10 And he said to them, "When you enter a

the doctors and medicines of that day. But her faith brought her to one greater than all doctors and human remedies. Compare Ex 15:26; Ps 103:3.

**5:30** Luke 8:46. The power of God flows through the Lord Jesus to meet the needs of men who have faith in Him. He did not want the woman to hide her faith, but wished to openly commend her for it and pronounce a blessing on her (v 34).

**5:34** Matt 9:22. One reason Jesus came into the world was to bring peace to troubled hearts - Luke 2:14; John 14:1,27; 20:19.

**5:35** These men were willing to abandon hope and tried to get Jairus to do the same. They did not realize that death did not take a person beyond the reach of the Lord Jesus. It was as easy for Him to raise the dead as to heal the sick and dying.

**5:36** Here are words for believers to write

across all the experiences of life. Fear unresisted can weaken or almost destroy faith; faith exercised can remove fear.

**5:39,40** Matt 9:24.

**5:41** Jesus spoke in Aramaic, a language similar to Hebrew commonly spoken in that area at that time.

**5:43** See 1:44; 7:36; Matt 8:4.

**6:1-5** Matt 13:54-58. Jesus' home town was Nazareth.

**6:5** Men's unbelief makes it impossible for the Lord Jesus to do all the good to them that He desires to do. The lack is not in Him but in them. God has appointed the way of faith to receive His special blessings (9:23; Matt 9:22,29; 21:21,22; John 11:40). See note at Ps 78:41.

**6:6** "Marvelled" - compare Matt 8:10 - the only other time when Jesus is said to have marvelled.

**6:7-11** Matt 10:1,9-14.

house anywhere, stay there until you leave the place. 11 And whoever will not receive you, or listen to you, when you leave there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."

12 And they went out and preached that men should repent. 13 And they drove out many demons, and anointed many sick *people* with oil and healed *them*.

14 And king Herod heard *about him*, for his name had become well-known. And he said, "John the Baptist has risen from the dead. Therefore these mighty powers are at work in him."

15 Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets *of old*."

16 But when Herod heard *this*, he said, "It is John, whom I beheaded. He has risen from the dead."

17 For Herod himself had sent out *men* and seized John, and chained him up in prison, because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. 18 For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

19 Therefore Herodias held it against him, and wanted to kill him, but she could not, 20 because Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he did many things. And he was glad to hear him.

21 And a day of opportunity came, when Herod gave a feast on his birthday for his nobles, military commanders and the leading *citizens* of Galilee. 22 And when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who were sitting with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you."

23 And he swore to her, "Whatever you ask from me I will give to you, up to half of my kingdom."

24 And she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist."

25 And immediately she hurried in to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a dish."

26 And the king was very sorry. *But* because

of his oath, and because of those who were sitting with him, he did not want to refuse her. 27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded that his head be brought. And the man went, beheaded him in the prison, 28 brought his head on a dish, and gave it to the girl. And the girl gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard *about it*, they came and took his corpse, and placed it in a tomb. 30 And the apostles gathered around Jesus and told him everything, both what they had done and what they had taught.

31 And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place, and rest a while." For many *people* were coming and going, and they did not have time even to eat.

32 And they went away alone by boat to a deserted place. 33 And the people saw them leaving, and many recognized him, and ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them, and gathered around him. 34 And when Jesus came out *of the boat*, he saw many people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.

35 And when the day was almost over, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. 36 Send them away, so they can go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy bread for themselves, for they have nothing to eat."

37 He answered and said to them, "You give them *something* to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred silver coins' worth of bread and give *it to* them to eat?"

38 He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish."

39 And he ordered them to have everyone sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 And they sat down in rows of hundreds and fifties. 41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed the loaves and broke *them* and gave *them* to his disciples to set before the *people*. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate, and were full.

43 And they picked up twelve full baskets of pieces *of bread* and fish. 44 And it was about five thousand men who ate the loaves.

**6:12** Observe that the preaching of repentance was a principal part of their message. See notes at Matt 3:2; 4:17.

**6:13** Jam 5:14.

**6:14-29** Matt 14:1-12.

**6:15** "Elijah" – Mal 4:5; Matt 11:14; 17:10; John 1:19-23.

**6:20** Herod was a weak man and did not

know what to do with this man whom he held in some awe and fear.

**6:30** This looks back to vs 7-13.

**6:31** See 3:20.

**6:30-34** Matt 14:13-21.

**6:34** Matt 9:36.

**6:37** "Two hundred silver coins" – the Greek has "two hundred denarii." One denarius



45 And immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side to Bethsaida, while he sent the people away. 46 And when he had sent them away, he went off into a mountain to pray.

47 And when evening came, the boat was out in the middle of the lake, and he alone on the land. 48 And he saw them straining hard at the oars, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he approached them, walking on the lake, and would have passed by them. 49 But when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, 50 for they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he spoke to them, and said to them, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

51 And he got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped. And in their hearts they were utterly amazed, beyond measure, and wondered. 52 For they did not consider *the miracle of the loaves*, for their heart was hardened.

53 And when they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret, and drew up to the shore. 54 And when they came out of the boat, the *people* immediately recognized him, 55 ran throughout that whole surrounding region, and began to carry the sick on cots to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went, into villages, or cities, or countryside, they placed the sick in the marketplaces and begged him *to let* them touch even the hem of his cloak. And as many as touched him were made well.

**7** Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him. 2 And when they saw some of his disciples eating bread with "defiled," that is, unwashed hands, they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands in a certain way, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 And *when they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And many other things there be, which they have received to keep, *such as* the washing of cups, pots, bronze vessels, and tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not behave according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

6 He answered and said to them, "Well has Isaiah

prophesied about you hypocrites, as it is written:

This people honour me with their lips,  
but their heart is far from me.

7 But they worship me in vain,  
teaching as doctrines the  
commandments of men.

8 "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men, *such as* the washing of pots and cups. And you do many other such things."

9 And he said to them, "You are good at setting aside the commandment of God, so that you can keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever curses father or mother, must be put to death.' 11 But you say that if a man tells his father or mother, 'Anything of mine that might have been useful to you *is* Corban' (that is, an offering *to God*), *it is all right*.' 12 And you no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother, 13 *thus* making the word of God without effect through your tradition, which you have handed down. And you do many such things."

14 And calling the whole crowd, he said to them, "Everyone listen to me and understand. 15 There is nothing that enters the man from outside that can defile him; but the things that defile the man are those that come from within him. 16 If any one has ears to hear, let him hear."

17 And when he came away from the people into the house, his disciples asked him about the parable.

18 And he said to them, "Are you also so lacking in understanding? Do you not see that whatever enters into a man from outside cannot defile him, 19 because it does not come into his heart, but into the stomach, and is eliminated?" (*By saying this* he declared all foods clean.)

20 And he said, "That which comes from within the man, that defiles the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, come evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustfulness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile the man."

24 And he got up from there and travelled to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and went into a house, but did not want anyone to know *it*. But he could not escape notice. 25 For a woman whose

was a daily wage for a laborer (Matt 20:22). **6:45-56** Matt 14:22-36.

**7:1-23** Matt 15:1-20.

**7:19** "All foods clean" – see Acts 10:9-16. The Old Testament rules for clean and unclean foods were to teach spiritual lessons. The time had come to do away

with the literal rules and to learn the spiritual lessons. Notes at Leviticus chapter 11.

**7:24-30** See Matt 15:21-28. Syrian Phoenicia was a strip of land lying along the Mediterranean Sea slightly to the north of Israel. At that time it was controlled by Syria. The Jews called the people there Canaanites.



young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him and came and fell at his feet. 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by race. And she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said to her, "First, let the children be filled. For it is not proper to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

28 And she answered and said to him, "Yes, Lord. Yet the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

29 And he said to her, "Because of this statement go *your way*; the demon has gone out of your daughter."

30 And when she arrived at her house, she found that the demon had left, and her daughter was lying on the bed.

31 And leaving the region of Tyre and Sidon, he came again to the lake of Galilee, through the middle of the region of Decapolis. 32 And they brought to him a person who was deaf and who had a speech impediment, and they begged him to put his hand on him. 33 And he took him apart from the crowd, and putting his fingers into his ears, he spit and touched his tongue. 34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 And immediately his ears were opened, and the ligament of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke clearly. 36 And he ordered them not to tell anyone, but the more *firmly* he ordered them, the more extensively they publicized *it*.

37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

**8** In those days the crowd being very large, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples and said to them, 2 "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them away fasting to their own homes, they will faint on the way, for some of them have come from a distance."

4 And his disciples answered him, "Where can anyone *get enough* bread here in the wilderness to satisfy these *people*?"

5 And he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks and broke *them*, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before *the people*. And they set *them* before the crowd. 7 And they had a few small fish. And he blessed *them*, and gave a command to distribute these *to them*. 8 So they ate and were satisfied. And they picked up seven basketfuls of the pieces of food that were left. 9 And about four thousand men had eaten. And he sent them away.

10 And immediately he got into a boat with his disciples, and went to the region of Dalmanutha. 11 And the Pharisees came out and began to question him, seeking a sign from heaven from him, testing him. 12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."

13 And he left them, got in the boat again and went away to the other side. 14 Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take along bread, and they did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. 15 And he warned them, saying, "Be careful! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we have no bread."

17 And Jesus, knowing *this*, said to them, "Why are you reasoning because you have no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Is your heart still hardened? 18 You have eyes. Do you not see? And you have ears. Do you not hear? And do you not remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of pieces did you pick up?" They said to him, "Twelve." 20 And when *I broke* the seven *loaves* among four thousand, how many baskets full of pieces did you pick up?" And they said, "Seven."

21 And he said to them, "How is it that you do not understand?"

22 And he arrived at Bethsaida. And they brought a blind man to him, and begged him to touch him. 23 And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when he had spit on his eyes and put his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything. 24 And he looked up

**7:29** Her reply was based on faith in the Lord Jesus (Matt 15:28).

**7:31** Sidon was an important town about 40 kilometers north of Tyre. The reason why Jesus first went north and then southeast to Decapolis is not given, but knowing what He is like, we may surely think that it was to help and bless some person or persons.

"Decapolis" – 5:20.

**7:33** See 8:23; John 9:6.

**7:34** The infirmities of men were a distress

to Jesus (Matt 8:17; Isa 63:9. Compare Rom 8:26). Ephphatha is a word in the Aramaic language (5:41).

**7:36** See 1:44; 5:43; Matt 8:4.

**8:1-10** Matt 15:32-39.

**8:10** Magadan (Matt 15:39) was located in this region.

**8:11-21** Matt 16:1-12.

**8:22** Bethsaida was a town on the northern shore of the lake of Galilee.

**8:24** There is no power in saliva to cure

and said, "I see men looking like trees, walking."

25 Then he put *his* hands on his eyes again, and made him look up. And he was restored, and saw everyone clearly. 26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, "Do not go into the town, or tell *this* to anyone in the town."

27 And Jesus and his disciples went away to the towns of Cesarea Philippi, and on the road he questioned his disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"

28 And they answered, "John the Baptist. But some *say*, 'Elijah', and others, 'One of the prophets.'"

29 And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said to him, "You are the Christ."

30 And he ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

31 And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he spoke this word openly. And Peter took him *aside* and began to rebuke him.

33 But turning around and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not thinking of the things of God, but of the things of men."

34 And when he had called the people, along with his disciples, he said to them, "Whoever wants to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel, will save it. 36 For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? 37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 Therefore, whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man will also be ashamed of him, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

blindness, nor was it necessary for Jesus to touch the man to heal him (Matt 8:8,13). Perhaps by such actions (also in 7:33) Jesus was encouraging faith.

**8:24,25** At first he could not see clearly. This is the only recorded time that Jesus healed anyone in stages. The reason for it is not given. Perhaps the man's faith was deficient at first and grew by this method Jesus used. Perhaps He wanted others in need of healing who would read about this, or hear of it, not to be discouraged if they are not healed in a moment. Jesus may choose to heal them by degrees. In the spiritual realm also men often are given slowly developing spiritual sight.

**8:27-38** Matt 16:13-27.

**8:38** Compare Matt 10:32,33; Rom 1:16. Pride or the fear of man or a desire to win

**9** And he said to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste of death, until they see the kingdom of God come with power."

2 And after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John and led them up into a high mountain alone by themselves. And he was transfigured in front of them. 3 And his clothing became shining, as exceedingly white as snow, as no one on earth bleaching them could whiten them. 4 And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter responded and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. And let us make three tabernacles, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 6 For he did not know what to say, for they were very frightened.

7 And a cloud came and covered them with shadow. And a voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."

8 And suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone, but only Jesus with themselves.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, he ordered them not to tell anyone what they had seen, until the Son of man had risen from the dead. 10 And they kept this word to themselves, questioning one another what rising from the dead meant.

11 And they asked him, saying, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?"

12 And he answered and told them, "Elijah indeed comes first and restores all things. And yet how is it written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be treated with contempt? 13 But I tell you that Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written about him."

14 And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great crowd around them, and the scribes questioning them. 15 And immediately, when they

the approval of others may make men ashamed of Christ and His Gospel.

**9:1** Matt 16-28.

**9:2-13** Matt 17:1-13.

**9:6** Luke 9:33. When we don't know what to say, it is usually better to say nothing. Yet from Peter's unwise remark we learn that the disciples recognized Moses and Elijah (who had both died many centuries before).

**9:12** The Lord points them to the Old Testament. See Isaiah chapter 53 and psalm 22.

**9:14-32** This is a fuller account of Matt 17:14-23. Matthew does not mention this argument. Since these disciples were unable to heal the demon-possessed boy, the argument probably had to do with that, and possibly had to do with the power of Jesus to perform miracles (compare 3:22).

**9:15** "Amazed" – possibly they were much

saw him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *him*, greeted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, "What are you asking them?"

17 And one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a mute spirit. 18 And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down. And he foams at the mouth and gnashes with his teeth. And he is wasting away. And I spoke to your disciples, so that they would drive it out, but they could not."

19 He answered him and said, "O unbelieving generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I endure you? Bring him to me."

20 And they brought him to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it threw him into convulsions. And he fell on the ground, and rolled around foaming at the mouth.

21 And he asked his father, "How long has it been since this came to him?" And he said, "From childhood. 22 And often it has tried to destroy him by throwing him into the fire, and into the waters. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

23 Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes."

24 And immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief."

25 When Jesus saw that the people were running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, "Mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and do not go into him again."

surprised at His sudden appearance.

**9:16** Jesus was not ignorant of the cause of the argument (Matt 9:4; John 1:47-49; 12:24,25; 21:17), but was encouraging the father of the boy to speak up.

**9:17,18** Observe here some of the symptoms of some cases of demon possession. See also vs 20,22,26.

**9:22** The man doubted the power of Jesus. Perhaps he thought that if Jesus' representatives (the disciples) could not do anything neither could Jesus do anything. Men may falsely judge the power and authority of Christ by seeing the weakness of Christians.

**9:23** Again we see the teaching of the Bible that faith opens the way for God to work, and unbelief hinders Him from working (6:5). Faith makes a channel for God's power. It is a hand that grasps omnipotence.

**9:24** The man was conscious of the weakness of his faith, of a mixture of belief and unbelief in his heart. And he cries to the Lord Jesus for help in this too (v 21). Jesus answered both his prayers. Do not all believers have the same struggle with unbelief this man had? Help will come from the same one who helped him (Heb 12:2).

26 And *the spirit* cried out, threw him into severe convulsions, and came out of him. And he was like someone dead, so that many said, "He is dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him to his feet. And so he got up.

28 And when Jesus came into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive him out?"

29 And he said to them, "This kind can go out by nothing except prayer and fasting."

30 And they left there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know *it*. 31 For he was teaching his disciples, and said to them, "The Son of man is going to be delivered up into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And after he has been killed, he will rise the third day."

32 But they did not understand this statement, and were afraid to ask him.

33 And he came to Capernaum. And in the house he asked them, "What was it you were disputing about among yourselves on the way?"

34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had been disputing among themselves about who *was* the greatest.

35 And he sat down and called the Twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, *he* must be the last of all, and servant of all."

36 And he took a child and placed him among them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 37 "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives not me but him who sent me."

38 And John answered him, saying, "Teacher,

**9:25** This evil spirit was a demon which robbed the boy of his ability to hear and speak. This is the only time it is recorded that Jesus forbade an evil spirit to re-enter a person, though, for all we know, He may have done so at other times. That evil spirits sometime may do so seems clear from Matt 12:43-45.

**9:29** It seems that some demons are more determined than others and that more earnest and persistent effort is required to drive them out.

**9:30,31** This teaching was not yet for the whole world, but only for His disciples. Now it is at the heart of the message His disciples declare to all the world (Luke 24:45; 1 Cor 15:3,4).

**9:32** Verse 10; 8:31-33. Though they were disciples they were still dull in spiritual matters – as many of Jesus' disciples today are. Compare Paul's wonderful prayer in Eph 1:17-19.

**9:34** Luke 22:24. See Jer 45:5.

**9:35** Matt 18:4; 20:26-28.

**9:37** Matt 18:5; 10:40.

**9:38** Among the disciples of Jesus there is always the danger of the spirit of narrowness and exclusiveness, the danger of

we saw someone who does not follow us driving out demons in your name, and we told him to stop, because he does not follow us."

39 But Jesus said, "Do not tell him to stop, for no one who does a miracle in my name, can soon say something bad about me. 40 For he who is not against us is for us. 41 For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward. 42 And whoever is a cause of stumbling to one of *these* little ones who believe in me, it would be better for him if a millstone were hanged around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

43 "And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that will never be quenched, 44 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life lame, than having two feet to be thrown into hell, into the fire that will never be quenched, 46 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out. It is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be thrown into hell fire, 48 where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. 49 For everyone will be salted with fire, and every sacrifice will be salted with salt.

50 "Salt *is* good. But if the salt loses its saltiness, what will you season it with? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

some thinking their group is the only true one and that only they have the right to do the work of God. This attitude that excludes others and counts them as unworthy is itself completely unworthy to be in any believer's heart. Compare Num 11:25-29; 1 Cor 1:10-13.

**9:40** This is the other side of Matt 12:30.

**9:41** Matt 10:40-42.

**9:42-47** Matt 18:6-9; 5:29,30.

**9:48** This is a quotation from Isa 66:24. Hell can be compared to a vast and terrible rubbish heap where fires continually burn and where worms living in the rubbish gnaw on the dead. There was such a rubbish heap outside the walls of Jerusalem in the valley of Gehenna. Gehenna is the very word translated "hell" in 12 places of the New Testament, all in Matthew and Mark, except once in Luke and once in James. Jesus gave an awful picture of the doom which awaits sinful human beings, and ignoring it is extremely foolish. See also Matt 5:22; Luke 16:23,24; Rev 20:14,15. All those who choose the rubbish and garbage of this world (Phil 3:8) and reject salvation through Christ, all those who make themselves vile and worthless will go to the rubbish heap of

**10** And then he got up and went into the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. and the people gathered around him again. And, as his custom was, he taught them again. 2 And the Pharisees came to him and asked him, testing him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?"

3 And he answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"

4 And they said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce *her*."

5 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation 'God made them male and female.' 7 'For this cause a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.' So then they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not divide."

10 And in the house his disciples asked him again about the same *matter*.

11 And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, is committing adultery against her. 12 And if a woman divorces her husband and gets married to another, she is committing adultery."

13 And they brought young children to him, so that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*.

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he was very displeased, and said to them, "Permit the little children to come unto me, and do not stop them,

the universe. This will be perfect divine justice at work.

How earnestly, then, should every human being "cut off" his sins and those influences which lead him to sin!

**9:49** It is difficult to discern the meaning of this verse and its connection with the verses before and after it. Salt and fire are joined together to describe something of what men will undergo. Salt preserves, fire consumes. Some scholars think the meaning is that the eternal fires of hell will always be consuming those who will always be preserved from being completely consumed. If "everyone" means literally all men the verse could mean that the lost will be salted with fire in hell, the saved will be purified with fire now (Ps 66:12; Mal 3:2; 1 Pet 1:7).

**9:50** Matt 5:13. Salt is here used as a symbol of discipleship to the Lord Jesus. Compare Luke 14:34 with its context. Peace is to be a mark of true disciples. Compare Matt 5:9.

**10:1-16** See Matt 19:1-15.

**10:1** See 2:13; 4:2; 6:6,34; Matt 4:23; Ps 24:4,5. The Lord Jesus still delights to teach people the truth.

for to such as these the kingdom of God belongs. 15 Truly I say to you, whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child, will not enter it."

16 And he took them up in his arms, placed *his* hands on them and blessed them.

17 And when he was going out on the road, one came running and knelt in front of him and asked him, "Good teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

18 And Jesus said to him, "Why are you calling me good? God alone is good, no one else. 19 You know the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother."

20 And he answered and said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these from my boyhood."

21 Then Jesus looking at him loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have, and give *the money* to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me."

22 And he was sad at these words, and went away grieving, for he had great wealth.

23 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!"

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

27 And Jesus, looking at them, said, "With men *it is* impossible, but not with God. For with God all things are possible."

28 Then Peter began to say to him, "Look, we

have left everything and have followed you."

29 And Jesus answered and said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brothers, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life. 31 But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first."

32 And they were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going in front of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And again he took the Twelve *aside*, and began to tell them what was going to happen to him,

33 "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be handed over to the chief priests, and to the scribes. And they will condemn him to death, and will hand him over to the Gentiles. 34 And they will mock him and whip him and spit on him and kill him. And the third day he will rise again."

35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him, saying, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

36 And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?"

37 They said to him, "Grant us that in your glory we may sit one at your right hand and the other at your left hand."

38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink of the cup that I drink of? And be submerged in the baptism that I am submerged in?"

39 And they said to him, "We can." And Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink of the cup that I drink of, and be submerged in the baptism that I am submerged in. 40 But to sit at my right hand and at my left hand is not mine to give, but *will be*

**10:15** Matt 18:3.

**10:17-31** See the notes at Matthew 19:16-30.

**10:17** He came eagerly and reverently, but still went away sad (v 22).

**10:21** Jesus now put a very severe test to this young man, but He did so because His divine love flooded His heart and He desired the man's highest good. We may be sure that when the Lord asks us to do something hard and painful to us, it is because He loves us, and because we very much need to do that thing.

**10:22** It is clear that this man put a higher value on what he had than on Christ and eternal life. Why should God give to anyone something they value so little? Compare Prov 4:7; Luke 14:33.

**10:24** "Children" - Jesus called them children because in a spiritual sense His disciples, though full-grown men, were like

little children to Him. See Matt 10:42.

**10:30** Persecutions too will follow those who follow Christ - Matt 24:9; Luke 11:29; 21:12; John 15:20; Acts 7:52; 1 Thess 3:4; 2 Tim 3:12. But they are not worthy to be compared to the glory they will receive - Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17.

**10:32-45** Matt 20:17-28.

**10:32** There was something in His manner and His face which filled His disciples with alarm.

**10:34** Compare Luke 9:51; Isa 50:7.

**10:35** Their mother was with them, and both she and they made this request (Matt 20:20,21).

**10:38** Like the word "cup," baptism here is used figuratively, as a symbol. Jesus is not referring to water baptism, but being immersed in trials and sufferings. Compare Luke 12:50.



*given to those* for whom it has been prepared.”

41 And when the *remaining* ten *disciples* heard *this*, they began to be very displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that those who are counted as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it must not be so among you, but whoever wants to be great among you, shall be your servant, 44 and whoever of you wants to be first must be the slave of all. 45 For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

46 And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.”

48 And many rebuked him so that he would keep silent, but he cried out even more, “Son of David, have mercy on me.”

49 And Jesus stood still and ordered him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart! Get up. He is calling you.” 50 And he, throwing aside his cloak, got up and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “Rabbi, *I want* to receive my sight.”

52 And Jesus said to him, “Go, your faith has healed you.” And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus on the road.

**11** And when they came near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives he sent off two of his disciples, 2 and said to them, “Go into the village opposite you. And as soon as you get into it, you will find a colt tied up, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring *it*. 3 And if any one says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say that the Lord needs it. And immediately he will send it here.”

4 And they went *their way* and found the colt tied by a door outside in the street and untied him. 5 And some of those who stood there said to them,

“What are you doing, untying the colt?” 6 And they told them just as Jesus had commanded, and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their cloaks over it. And he sat on it. 8 And many spread their cloaks in the road. And others cut branches off the trees, and spread *them* in the road. 9 And those who went in front, and those who followed, cried out, saying, “Hosanna! Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

11 And Jesus came into Jerusalem and into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, since the hour was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

12 And the next day, after they had left Bethany, he became hungry. 13 And seeing at a distance a fig tree that had leaves, he went to find out if there was anything on it. And when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not yet the season for figs.

14 And Jesus responded and said to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples were listening.

15 And they came to Jerusalem, and Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and buying in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 16 And he would not let anyone carry utensils through the temple.

17 And he taught them, saying, “Is it not written, ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a den of thieves.”

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard *this* and *began* looking for a way to destroy him, for they were afraid of him, because all the people were astonished at his teaching.

19 And when evening came, he went out of the city. 20 And in the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter, remembering, said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which you cursed has withered away.”

22 And Jesus in answer said to them, “Have faith in God. 23 For truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed, and thrown

**10:46-52** Matt 20:29-34. Matthew says two blind men were healed at this time. Mark singles out one of them for special notice (compare 5:1,2).

**10:51** The Hebrew word “Rabbi” means “my teacher” or “my guru.”

10:52 Again we see the power of faith in Christ (9:23; Matt 8:13; 9:22,29).

**11:1-11** Matt 21:1-9.

**11:10** God promised the kingdom to David and to his descendants forever. See 2 Sam

7:11-14; Matt 1:1; Luke 1:32,69.

**11:11** “The Twelve” – the twelve apostles (3:16-19).

**11:12-25** Matt 21:12-22.

**11:18** These priests loved their position, authority, and honor, and they were afraid Jesus was going to change all that.

**11:20** Matthew makes it clear that the previous day the fig tree withered to some extent. But now it was completely withered – “from the roots.”



into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will take place, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, whatever you ask for when you pray, believe that you will receive *it*, and you will have *it*.

25 "And when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive, so that your Father who is in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

27 And they returned to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders came to him, 28 and said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you the authority to do these things?"

29 And Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you one question. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 30 The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or from men? Answer me."

31 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 32 But if we say, 'From men?'" They were afraid of the people, for everyone held that John was, in fact, a prophet.

33 And they answered and said to Jesus, "We cannot tell." And Jesus, answering, said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

**12** And he began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard, set a hedge around it, dug out a place for a wine press, and built a tower. Then he rented it out to vine growers, and went to a far country. 2 And at harvest season he sent a servant to the vine growers so that he might receive *his share* of the produce of the vineyard from the vine growers. 3 And they seized *him* and beat him, and sent *him* away empty-handed.

4 "And, again, he sent another servant to them. And they threw stones at him, wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away, shamefully treated. 5 And then he sent another *servant*. And him they

killed. And *so they dealt with* many others, beating some, and killing some.

6 "So still having one son, his beloved *one*, last of *all* he sent him also to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

7 "But those vine growers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8 And they took him, killed *him*, and threw *him* out of the vineyard.

9 "Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those vine growers and give the vineyard to others. 10 And have you not read this Scripture? 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?'"

12 And they looked for a way to seize him, but were afraid of the people. For they knew that he had spoken the parable against them. And they left him, and went away. 13 And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.

14 And when they came, they said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are truthful, and do not care about anyone's opinion, because you don't look at anyone's outward appearance, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? 15 Should we pay, or should we not pay?" But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing me? Bring me a silver coin so I can see it."

16 And they brought it, and he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription *is* this?" And they said to him, "Caesar's."

17 And Jesus, answering, said to them, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God." And they were amazed at him.

18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him, and asked him, saying, 19 "Teacher, Moses wrote this for us: If a man's brother dies and leaves *behind* a wife, but leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 20 Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and dying left no children. 21 And the second took

**11:24** Again the Lord Jesus emphasizes the power of faith (2:5; 5:34; 6:5; 10:52; Matt 9:22). If we really believe that God has answered our prayer He will infallibly give what we asked. How is this faith possible? Not by trying to talk ourselves into thinking God has heard us when we believe He has not. True faith is our response to the Word of God, and a result of the Holy Spirit working in our heart. Compare Rom 8:26; 1 John 5:14,15. See Matt 9:22.

**11:25** Notice the words "stand praying." The

Bible does not say that one posture in prayer is better than another.

"Neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your sins" - compare Matt 6:14,15.

**11:27-33** Matt 21:23-27.

**12:1-12** Matt 21:33-46.

**12:13-17** Matt 22:15-22.

**12:15** See other references to hypocrisy at Matt 6:2,5,16; 7:5; 23:13,28; Luke 12:1; 19:15; 1 Tim 4:2; 1 Pet 2:1.

**12:18-27** Matt 22:23-33.

her as his wife, and died, and he also left no children. And the third also. 22 And the seven had her as a wife, and left no children. Last of all the woman also died. 23 Therefore in the resurrection, when they rise, among them whose wife will she be? For the seven had her as a wife."

24 And Jesus, answering, said to them, "The reason you are in error is because you do not know either the Scriptures or the power of God. 25 For when they rise from the dead, they will not marry or be given in marriage, but will be like the angels who are in heaven. 26 And concerning the fact that the dead rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' 27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. So you are greatly deceived."

28 And one of the scribes came, and hearing them debating and seeing that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"

29 And Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments *is*, 'Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord, 30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This *is* the first commandment. 31 And the second *is* like it, *namely* this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

32 And the scribe said to him, "Excellent! Teacher, you have spoken the truth. There is one God, and there is no one else besides him. 33 And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the soul and with all the strength one has, and to love *one's* neighbour as oneself, is

more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him *any question*.

35 And Jesus, while he was teaching in the temple, responded to them and said, "How is it the scribes say that Christ is the son of David? 36 For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.' 37 Therefore, David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?" And the common people heard him gladly.

38 And in his teaching he said to them, "Beware of the scribes! They like going around in long robes, and greetings in the marketplaces, 39 and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts. 40 But they devour widows' houses, and in pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

41 And Jesus sat opposite the treasury, and watched how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich cast in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two copper coins, which amounted to a penny.

43 And he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who put *money* in the treasury. 44 For all *of them* put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in everything, all she had to live on."

**13** And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher, see what kind of stones and what buildings *are here!*"

2 And Jesus in answering said to him, "You see these great buildings? There will not be one stone

**12:28-37** Matt 22:34-46.

**12:29** Deut 6:4. "Lord" – here refers to Jehovah – God's name in the Old Testament. **12:33** See 1 Sam 15:22; Hos 6:6; Micah 6:6-8.

**12:34** This man showed some spiritual understanding and some humility in confessing that the Lord Jesus had answered correctly. He was near God's kingdom, but not yet in it. No doubt there are many in every generation in a similar state. Note on God's kingdom at Matt 4:17.

**12:35** "Son of David" – note at Matt 1:1.

**12:36** Observe the words "by the Holy Spirit." See Matt 22:43.

**12:38,39** Compare Matt 23:5-7.

**12:40** They were outwardly pious, but secretly greedy and merciless, preying on the weak and helpless. Compare Matt 23:25-28. (The whole of Matthew chapter 23 is a fearless exposure of the mind and ways of religious hypocrites.)

**12:41** The treasury was in an outer court of the temple.

**12:42** The Greek word for coins here signifies the smallest coins in use in the country. She gave two coins, not even keeping one for herself. She did not consider even a half of what she had a sufficient offering to God.

**12:41-44** The Lord Jesus here teaches us some much needed lessons about giving to God. Now also He watches what we offer. Compare Heb 4:12,13. He is not impressed by the large offerings of the rich who keep far more for themselves than they give to God. In His eyes, the smallest possible gift to God may be far greater than large amounts. He regards the motive of the giver, and the cost and sacrifice involved in the giving. He sees not merely how much a person gives, but how much he keeps for himself. We may see here also that the Lord Jesus delights in the offerings given by poor believers. Compare 2 Cor 8:1-5,12. Notes and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15. **13:1-37** Matt 24:1-51.

**13:1,2** Even disciples of Jesus may too much admire the works of men and think they are

left on another, that will not be thrown down."

3 And while he was sitting on the mount of Olives across from the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew questioned him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things are about to be fulfilled?"

5 And answering them Jesus began to say, "Watch out that no one deceives you, 6 for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am *Christ*, and will deceive many. 7 And when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be troubled, for *these things* must take place, but that is not yet the end. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and disturbances. These *are* the beginnings of birthpangs.

9 "But be on your guard, for they will hand you over to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. And you will be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them.

10 "And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.

11 "But when they lead you away and hand you over, do not be anxious beforehand *about* what you will say, or meditate *about it*. But whatever is given you at that time, speak that, for it will not be you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

12 "And brother will betray brother to death, and father *his* son. And children will revolt against parents, and will cause them to be put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all men for my name's sake. But whoever endures to the end, he will be saved.

14 "But when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it should not (let him who reads understand), then those who are in Judea should flee to the mountains. 15 And the one who is on the housetop should not go down to the house, or enter *it* to take anything out of his house. 16 And the one who is in the field should not turn back to pick up his cloak. 17 But woe to those who are pregnant, and to those who are nursing *infants* in those days! 18 And pray that your flight will not be in winter.

19 "For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the

creation which God created until this time, and never will be *again*. 20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved, but for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened those days.

21 "And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is Christ' or, 'look, *he is* there,' do not believe *it*. 22 For false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and miracles, to deceive even the chosen, if *that were* possible. 23 But watch out! See, I have told you everything beforehand.

24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars of heaven will be falling, and the powers that are in heaven will be shaken.

26 "And then they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then he will send his angels and gather his chosen ones from the four winds, from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven.

28 "Now learn a parable from the fig tree. As soon as its branch becomes tender and produces leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So in the same way, when you see these things take place, know that he is near, even at the doors.

30 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away, until all these things have taken place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 32 But no one knows of that day and that hour, no, not even the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, but *only* the Father.

33 "Watch out, be alert and pray, for you do not know when the *set* time is. 34 *For the Son of man is* like a man in a far country who has left his house and has given authority to his servants and to each one his work, and has commanded the doorkeeper to keep watch.

35 "Therefore keep watch, for you do not know when the owner of the house will come, *whether* at evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning, 36 so that coming suddenly he will not find you sleeping. 37 And what I say to you I say to everyone, Keep watch."

**14** The *Feast of* the Passover and Unleavened Bread was two days away, and the chief priests and the scribes looked for a way

valuable because of their beauty. In the end all of man's grand works will come tumbling down. See Isa 2:6-22; Rev 18:9-24.

**13:11** Matt 10:19,20.

"Holy Spirit" – Matt 3:16; John 14:16,17; etc.

**13:12,13** Matt 10:21,22.

**13:14** Matt 24:15.

"Where it should not" – means the

temple. Compare 2 Thess 2:4.

**13:29** "Know that he is near" – this could also be translated "know that it is near."

**13:30** "This generation" – or "this race."

**13:32-37** This is an abridged version of Matt 24:36-51. The emphasis is on watching for the Lord's second coming (vs 33,35,37).

**14:1-72** Matt 26:1-75.

**14:1** "Passover" – Ex 12:11; Lev 23:50.

to seize him by deceit and put *him* to death. 2 But they said, "Not on the feast *day*, or there may be a riot among the people."

3 And while he was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, sitting at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of fragrant oil of spikenard. *It was* very valuable, but she broke the jar and poured *it* on his head. 4 And among them some were indignant, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred silver pieces and given to the poor." And they complained against her.

6 And Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good deed to me. 7 For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want you can do good to them. But you will not always have me. 8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint my body for burial. 9 Truly I say to you, in the whole world wherever this gospel is preached, what she has done will also be spoken of in memory of her."

10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray him to them. 11 And when they heard *this*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he looked for a way to betray him at an opportune time.

12 And on the first day of *the Feast of Unleavened bread*, when they killed the Passover, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

13 And he sent off two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. 14 And say to the owner of the house where he enters, 'The Teacher says, 'Where is the guest room where I will eat the Passover with my disciples?'' 15 And he will show you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared. Make preparations for us there."

16 And his disciples went off, entered the city, and found things just as he had told them. And they prepared the Passover. 17 And in the evening he came with the Twelve.

18 And while they were sitting and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, one of you who is eating with me will betray me."

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say

to him one by one, "*Is it I?*" And another *said*, "*Is it I?*"

20 And he answered and said to them, "*It is* one of the Twelve, *one* who is dipping with me in the bowl. 21 The Son of man indeed is going just as it is written about him. But woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would be good for that man if he had never been born."

22 And while they ate, Jesus took bread and blessed it. Then he broke *it*, gave *it* to them, and said, "Take, eat. This is my body."

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it.

24 And he said to them, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. 25 Truly I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."

26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives.

27 And Jesus said to them, "This night all of you will stumble because of me. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 But after I have risen, I will go before you to Galilee."

29 But Peter said to him, "Even though all stumble, still I *will* not."

30 And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, this day, this *very* night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times."

31 But he spoke even more strongly, "Even if I have to die with you, I will not at all deny you." And they all said the same.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane. Then he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

33 And he took Peter and James and John with him, and began to be very troubled and heavy-hearted. 34 And he said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and keep watch."

35 And he went a little farther, and prostrated himself on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, "Abba, Father, all things *are* possible to you.

**14:4** It was the disciples as a whole who said this (Matt 26:8), and Judas was the foremost in doing so (see also John 12:4,5. This may have been on a different occasion. See note at John 12:2).

**14:5** "Three hundred silver pieces" – the Greek here has "three hundred denarii," which was the equivalent of 300 days labor.

**14:11** Base betrayal and an opportunity to kill the holiest and best person who ever lived delighted them. Could any word bet-

ter reveal the total depravity of their character? To do evil reluctantly is one thing, to delight in it is another and far worse thing.

**14:12** "Killed the Passover" – the lamb – Ex 12:3-11. See John 1:29.

**14:13-15** Another example of Christ's ability to see events in their detail which had not yet happened.

**14:24** Matthew 26:28 gives the reason for this shedding of Christ's blood.

**14:27** Zech 13:7.

**14:36** "Abba" is a word in the Aramaic

Take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will."

37 And he came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not keep watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray, so that you will not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak." 39 And again he went off and prayed, and spoke the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them sleeping again (for their eyes were heavy), and they did not know what to answer him. 41 And he came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough. The hour has come. Look, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up. Let us go. See, the one who betrays me is at hand."

43 And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came. And with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, coming from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44 And the one who betrayed him had arranged a signal with them, saying, Whoever I kiss, he is the one. Grab him and lead *him* away under guard."

45 And as soon as he came, he went up to him immediately and said, "Rabbi, rabbi!" and kissed him.

46 And they put their hands on him, and seized him. 47 And one of those standing near by drew a sword and struck a servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

48 And Jesus responded and said to them, "Have you come out as against a thief, with swords and clubs to seize me? 49 I was with you daily, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

50 Then all his disciples deserted him and ran away.

51 And a certain young man wearing a linen cloth over *his* naked *body*, followed him. And the young men seized him. 52 And he ran away from them naked, leaving the linen cloth behind.

53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes were assembled with him. 54 And Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest, and he sat down with the

servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

55 And the chief priests and all the council looked for some testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but did not find any. 56 For many gave false testimony against him, but their testimony did not agree. 57 Then some men got up and gave false testimony against him, saying, 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made by hands, and in three days I will build another without hands.'"

59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

60 And the high priest stood up among *them* and asked Jesus, saying, "Will you give no answer? What *is it that* these *men* testify against you?"

61 But he kept silent and gave no answer. Again the high priest asked him, saying to him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed *One*?"

62 And Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What need do we have of any further witnesses? 64 You have heard this blasphemy. What do you think?" And they all condemned him *declaring him* to be worthy of death.

65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face and beat him with fists, and to say to him, "Prophecy." And the officers struck him with the palms of their hands.

66 And while Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by, 67 and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "And you were also with Jesus of Nazareth."

68 But he denied *it*, saying, "I don't know what you are saying. I don't understand it." And he went out on the porch. And the rooster crowed.

69 And the servant girl, seeing him again, began to say to those who were standing near by, "This is *one* of them."

70 And he denied it again. And after a little while, those who were standing by said to Peter again, "You certainly are *one* of them, for you are a Galilean, and your way of speaking is like that."

71 But he began to curse and swear, *saying*, "I don't know this man you are speaking about."

72 And the second time the rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus said to

language meaning "father." It was possible for God the Father to save Christ from suffering and death, but it was not His will. To rescue Christ would be to forsake the plan of salvation He had devised for men and to abandon them to their doom.

**14:51,52** Only Mark records this. It is likely that the young man was Mark himself. Otherwise it is very difficult to understand why he mentioned this event.

**14:54** Matt 26:58 tells why Peter went into

the courtyard.

**14:55** "Council" - the Sanhedrin - Matt 5:22.

**14:58** This is a twisting of Jesus' words found in John 2:19. Jesus did not say He would destroy the man-made temple.

**14:69** The whole group in the courtyard became suspicious of Peter, and several of them questioned him or spoke to others there about him - the servant girl (twice), another girl (Matt 26:71), a man (Luke



him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And thinking of it, he wept.

**15** And in the morning the chief priests immediately held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and they bound Jesus, led him away, and handed *him* over to Pilate. 2 And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And answering he said to him, "*It is as you say.*"

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things, but he gave no answer.

4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, "Will you give no answer? See how many things they testify against you."

5 But Jesus still gave no answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

6 Now at *that* feast he used to release to them *any* one prisoner whom they requested. 7 And there was *one* named Barabbas. *He was* imprisoned with those who had rebelled with him, and who had committed murder in the rebellion. 8 And the crowd began to cry out and ask *Pilate to do* as he had always done for them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you?"

10 For he knew that the chief priests had handed him over out of envy.

11 But the chief priests stirred up the people, so that he would release Barabbas to them instead.

12 And Pilate answered and said again to them, "What do you want me to *do to the one* whom you call the King of the Jews?"

13 And they cried out again, "Crucify him!"

14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" And they cried out all the more, "Crucify him!"

15 And so Pilate, wanting to satisfy the people, released Barabbas to them. And after he had Jesus whipped, he handed him over to be crucified. 16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall called the Praetorium. And they called together the whole *Roman* garrison. 17 And they dressed him in a purple *robe*, and wove a crown out of thorns, and put it around his *head*, 18 and began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19 And they beat him on the head with a stick, and spit on him, and bowing

*their* knees, they worshipped him.

20 And when they had mocked him, they removed the purple *robe* from him, put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

21 And they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. He was passing by, coming from the countryside.

22 And they brought him to the place called Golgotha, which is, being translated, The Place of a Skull. 23 And they gave him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, but he did not take it.

24 And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes, casting lots for them to determine what each one should take. 25 And it was nine in the morning when they crucified him. 26 And the inscription of the accusation against him was written like this:

#### THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 And they crucified two thieves with him, the one at his right hand, and the other at his left. 28 And the Scripture which says, "And he was numbered with the transgressors" was fulfilled.

29 And those who passed by hurled abuse at him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Aha, you who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, 30 save yourself and come down from the cross."

31 In the same way the chief priests also, together with the scribes, mocking him, said among themselves, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. 32 Let Christ the King of Israel now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe." And those who were crucified with him insulted him.

33 And when it was twelve noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

34 And at three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" This is, being translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

35 And some of those who stood near by, hearing *this*, said, "Look, he is calling Elijah." 36 And one of them ran and filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to him to drink, saying, "Leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down."

22:58), some who had been around the fire and especially a kinsman of the servant of the high priest (John 18:25,26). All of the Gospel writers mention some of them, none of the writers mention all of them. See note on 4:1-20.

**15:1** Matt 27:1,2. Matthew records the suicide of Judas, but Mark ignores it.

**15:2-47** Matt 27:11-61.

**15:14** See in Matt 27:25 the terrible thing the Jews now said.

**15:21** Evidently Alexander and Rufus were two individuals known to many of the readers of this Gospel in that day. We know nothing of them. A Rufus (possibly the same one) is mentioned in Rom 16:13.

**15:25** The third hour was nine - in Greek the third hour, that is, the third hour after sunrise.

**15:27** "Numbered with the transgressors" - Isa 53:12. The holy, spotless Son of God was regarded as a sinner.



37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and expired.

38 And the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion who was standing opposite him, saw that he cried out like this, and breathed his last, he said, "This man really was the Son of God."

40 There were also women watching at a distance. Among them was Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome 41 (when he was in Galilee, they also followed him, and performed service for him), and many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

42 And now when evening came, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honoured member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, arrived and went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

44 And Pilate was surprised that he was already dead. And calling the centurion, he asked him if he had been dead for some time. 45 And when he found *this* out from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And Joseph bought fine linen, took Jesus down and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a tomb which had been cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 And

Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses saw where he had been put.

**16** And when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet-smelling spices, so that they could come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning on the first *day* of the week, they arrived at the tomb just as the sun was rising. 3 And they said among themselves, "Who will roll the stone away from the door of the tomb for us?"

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 And going into the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a long white robe sitting on the right side, and they were frightened.

6 And he said to them, "Do not be afraid. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where they put him. 7 But go *your way*. Tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he said to you."

8 And they went out quickly and ran from the tomb, for they were gripped by trembling and amazement. They did not say anything to anyone, because they were afraid.

9 Now after *Jesus* rose early on the first *day* of the week, he first appeared to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. 10 And she went and told those who had been with him,

**15:37** "Expired" – a good translation of the Greek here. The expression "gave up the spirit" used by Matthew is different in Greek. **15:38** Matthew 27:51.

**15:42** At sunset the Jewish sabbath began and continued until sunset on the following day. During this period no work could be done (see Ex 20:8-11). Therefore Joseph wanted to get the body of Jesus down from the cross and bury it before sunset. The Sabbath mentioned here may have been the special Sabbath which began the seven day feast of Unleavened Bread, and not the regular Sabbath that came on Saturday. Some scholars suggest that Jesus died on Wednesday. Others have suggested Thursday. Others say the day was Friday. It is not a matter of the greatest importance, and we should not be dogmatic about it.

**15:43** "Council" means the Sanhedrin – note at Matt 5:22. Joseph had not sided with those members who demanded the death of Jesus (Luke 23:51).

"Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17.

**15:45** Jesus died six hours after being crucified. Often those crucified remained alive on the cross for two or three days. So before giving Jesus' body for burial he made absolutely certain that Jesus was dead. The Jewish leaders were also sure he was dead

– see Matt 27:62-66.

**16:1-8** Matt 28:1-8.

**16:1** This was a custom in preparing a body for burial. Evidently these women did not believe Jesus would rise from the dead.

**16:5** This was an angel who appeared as a man (Matt 28:2). On angels see Gen 16:7.

**16:7** The Lord Jesus had a special message for Peter who had denied Him. He did not want him to despair or think he was no longer regarded as a disciple. The Lord is sometimes most loving and considerate to those who have sinned the worst.

**16:8** This means they did not speak to anyone along the way until they came to the disciples (Matt 28:8; Luke 24:9,19).

**16:9-20** Some scholars say that these verses were not an original part of Mark's Gospel but were added later by someone else. It is true that some ancient copies of manuscripts do not contain these verses. However, others do have them, and there is no proof that the original Gospel did not have them. The author of these notes believes that whether Mark wrote these concluding verses, or someone else wrote them, God's Spirit inspired them and they are to be counted as a part of His Word.

**16:9** John 20:11-18; Luke 8:2.

while they were mourning and weeping. 11 And when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen by her, they did not believe *it*.

12 After that he appeared in another form to two of them as they walked along, going out into the countryside. 13 And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.

14 Afterwards he appeared to the Eleven as they sat at the table, and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 He who

believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will follow those who believe: They will drive out demons in my name; they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the Word with *the* signs following *them*. Amen.

**16:11** They should have believed in Christ's resurrection even without this witness. Christ Himself had told them He would rise from the dead (9:31; Matt 16:21; 17:22,23). But they persisted in their unbelief even after other witnesses spoke to them (v 12,13. See Luke 24:13-32). This is evidence that they were not credulous, superstitious people willing to believe anything without evidence.

**16:14** The "Eleven" were the 12 chief disciples minus Judas Iscariot (Matt 27:5). Observe that these disciples were flesh and blood, as we are, and had their faults and proneness to unbelief, as we all have. And they deserved the Lord's rebuke, just as we.

**16:15** This gospel is described in 1 Cor 15:1-8. Christ commands His disciples (then and now) to preach it to everyone on earth - Matt 28:18-20; Luke 24:47,48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8. Since Jesus died for all (2 Cor 5:14,15; 1 Tim 2:6; 1 John 2:2) He wants all to hear that He did. Every believer must do what lies in his or her power to see that all the world hears the gospel.

**16:16** Note on baptism at Matt 3:6. Salvation is by faith (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; Acts 16:31; Rom 1:17; 3:22,25; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9), plus nothing. Baptism is not essential for salvation, but those who trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour should be baptized and publicly acknowledge their faith. If a person says he believes Christ, and yet refuses to be baptized we have reason to doubt the genuineness of his faith. Notice Jesus does not say "whoever is not baptized" will be condemned, but "whoever does not believe." Compare John 3:17,18. "Condemned" here must mean condemned to hell.

**16:17,18** This does not mean that every one of these signs will accompany every single

believer throughout this whole age of grace. It is a matter of plain fact that many genuine believers have not experienced a single one of these, and this passage speaks of "those who believe", not of those who have exceptional faith or are more spiritual than other believers. It seems that these verses mean this: These signs would accompany the body of believers as a whole. Or it may mean these signs would be seen in the ministry of the apostles to whom Jesus spoke.

On driving out demons see Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:13-16.

On tongues see Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Cor 12:10,28,30; 13:1; 14:2-39.

On snakes see Luke 10:19; Acts 28:3-5 (this is not to say that anyone should deliberately pick up serpents to show what faith they have. Compare Matt 4:6,7).

There is no record in the New Testament of anyone being poisoned. This does not mean there were no cases in those days which remained unrecorded.

On healing of the sick see Acts 28:8,9; Jam 5:14,15.

We must understand that these signs were not given that men might show off their power or impress others with their godliness. We should understand also that these signs are in God's hands, and He may grant them or withhold them any time, any place He chooses. Some of these signs listed here in Mark are not found in the lists of spiritual gifts in Rom 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians chapter 12. See notes in those places.

**16:19** Luke 24:50,57; Acts 1:9-11; Ps 110:1. The right hand was the place of honor and authority. Compare Matt 28:18; Phil 2:9.

**16:20** Verses 17,18; Heb 2:4.

# The Gospel According to LUKE

## Author:

Luke was a doctor, a close friend and colleague of the apostle Paul, and often traveled with him on his missionary journeys. See Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 24; Acts 16:10-12; 20:5,6; 27:1.

## Date:

Luke wrote in the first century of this era some years after the death and resurrection of Christ, and before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

## Theme:

Jesus Christ is the Saviour whom God has appointed to provide salvation for the human race. Some of the key words in this Gospel are salvation (1:69,77; 2:30; 3:6; 19:9), and preaching the gospel (4:18,19,43; 7:22; 8:1; 9:2,6,60; 20:1). He began His ministry with the words from Isaiah 61:1,2, and revealed His work as seeking and saving the lost (19:10). Luke presents Christ as the Son of man. He writes more fully about some of the details of Christ's birth and life, and speaks of His true human nature more clearly, than the other Gospel writers.

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**1** Since many have undertaken to put together a narrative of those things which are most surely believed among us, **2** just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word handed them down to us, **3** it seemed good to me also, having had a perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write for you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, **4** so that you might know the certainty of those things in which you have been instructed.

**5** In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the *priestly* division of Abijah. His wife also *was* of the descendants of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth. **6** And they were both righteous in the eyes of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. **7** And they had no child, because Elisabeth was barren, and *by then* they were both well advanced in years.

**8** And it happened that while he was serving as priest in the presence of God in the order of his division, **9** according to the custom of the priesthood, the lot fell to him to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. **10** And all the assembled people were praying outside at the time

of incense.

**11** And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. **12** And when Zacharias saw *him*, he became agitated and was seized by fear.

**13** But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard and your wife Elisabeth will bear you a son. And you shall call his name John. **14** And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. **15** For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and will drink neither wine nor strong drink. And he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. **16** And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. **17** And he will go on before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

**18** And Zacharias said to the angel, "How can I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is well advanced in years."

**19** And the angel answering said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I am sent to speak to you and to bring you this good

**1:1** "Many" – others besides Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote accounts of the life of Christ. God did not choose to include these in the Bible.

**1:2** "Eyewitnesses" – he means the original disciples of Jesus. Compare John 15:27; Heb 2:3,4; 2 Pet 1:16; 1 John 1:1; Acts 4:20.

"The Word" – the Word of God. The disciples became servants of the Word by obeying it and proclaiming it. In John 1:1,14 Christ too is called "The Word."

**1:3** Luke did not write down unchecked stories, fables or old wives' tales. He lived during the time the events took place and carefully investigated everything. We know nothing about Theophilus. His name means "one who loves God."

**1:4** "Know the certainty" – this was Luke's purpose in writing, and God's purpose in having him write. The facts of Christ's life, death and resurrection, His works and words are given to us with complete accuracy by a careful, honest historian inspired by God. God does not want people to remain in unbelief or uncertainty about those matters. Compare John 20:31; 21:24; 2 Peter 1:16.

**1:5** "Herod" – Matt 2:1.

"Priestly division" – a thousand years before Zacharias, David, king of Israel, had organized the priests into 24 divisions. Abijah was in charge of one of these (1 Chron 24:10; Neh 12:12). Aaron was the first high priest of Israel (Ex 28:1-3). Zacharias is another spelling of Zechariah.

**1:6** "Blamelessly" – this means sincerely, faithfully. It does not mean they were without a sinful nature (see note at Matt 7:11).

**1:7** Verse 25; Gen 16:2; 25:21; 30:23; 1 Sam 1:2,5.

**1:8,9** Not all the priests were on duty at all times, but spent periods of time in their homes looking after their own affairs.

"Burn incense" – Ex 30:1,34-36.

**1:11** "Angel of the Lord" – notes at Matt 1:20; Gen 16:7.

**1:12** Compare Jud 6:22,23; 13:22; etc.

**1:13** "Afraid" – the righteous have nothing to fear, the wicked should fear everything. The name "John" comes from Hebrew and means "Jehovah is gracious."

**1:15** On John's greatness see Matt 11:7-14. The fact that he was not to touch wine, etc suggests John may have been a lifelong Nazirite. See Num 6:1-4. John is the only man in the Bible of whom it is said that he was filled with God's spirit from birth. God had a special work for John and was preparing him from birth to accomplish it. On the fullness of the Holy Spirit see notes at Acts 2:4; Eph 5:18.

**1:16** See 3:4-6; Matt 3:1-6.

**1:17** "Elijah" – Matt 11:14; 17:10-13. See Mal 4:5,6.

**1:18** These words indicated unbelief (v 20). This is another example revealing the truth that even the best and most righteous of people sometimes struggle with doubts and unbelief. See Gen 17:17,18; 18:9-12; Num 20:12; 1 Sam 27:1; Matt 14:31; 17:17; John 20:25. When God says something, when He sends a message to men, it will be absolutely true and men have no business to doubt it.

**1:19** Zacharias would have known the name "Gabriel" – Dan 8:16; 9:21.



news. 20 And now you will be silent, unable to speak until the day that these things are accomplished, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and were surprised that he stayed so long in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not speak to them. And they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he was making signs to them, and remained speechless.

23 And it happened that as soon as the days of his service were completed that he went to his own house, 24 and after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived. And she hid herself five months, saying, 25 "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me, in these days in which he has looked on *me with favour*, to take away my dishonour among men."

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came in to her, and said, "Be joyful, *you who are* highly favoured, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

29 And when she saw *him*, she was greatly troubled at his statement and wondered what kind

of greeting this could be.

30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31 And, see, you will be with child, and bear a son, and shall call his name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end."

34 Then said Mary to the angel, "How will this be, since I do not know a man?"

35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, also, that holy one who will be born will be called the Son of God. 36 And now your cousin Elisabeth has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing can be impossible."

38 And Mary said, "See the maidservant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

39 And Mary arose at that time, and hurried to a town of Judah in the hill country, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elisabeth.

41 And it happened that when Elisabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and

**1:20** This was both a punishment for unbelief and a sign that Gabriel had spoken the truth (which would encourage faith).

**1:21** The offering of incense usually took only a brief time. Afterwards the priest would come out and bless the people (Num 6:24-26).

**1:25** Barrenness was considered a disgrace in Israel - Gen 30:23; Isa 4:1. And Elisabeth had been barren (v 7). But the will of God for a woman can never be a disgrace. And some of the best of women have been barren - Gen 16:2; 25:21; 30:23; 1 Sam 1:2,5.

**1:26** "The sixth month" - from the beginning of Elisabeth's pregnancy.

**1:27** The following verses set forth the fact that the Lord Jesus was born of a virgin. This was in fulfillment of Isa 7:14. See notes there and at Matt 1:18-23.

"House of David" - Matt 1:1.

**1:28** God chose Mary for the high honor of being the mother of the Messiah, the Saviour of the world - this was a great sign of God's favor. Compare Gen 6:8; Acts 7:46.

"Be joyful" - the meaning of the Greek here. It was used as a greeting, so the KJV translated it "Hail." But this way of greeting is now no longer in use.

**1:29** Mary could not understand what all this might mean and what God would require of her. God's people are sometimes troubled when they should rejoice at God's wonderful working.

**1:31** Matt 1:1,31.

**1:32** "The Most High" is a name of the one true God that frequently appears in the Old Testament - Gen 14:19; 2 Sam 22:14; Ps 7:10; etc.

"Son of the Most High" - Matt 1:18; 3:17; John 3:16; 5:18-23.

"Throne of . . . David" - 2 Sam 7:11-16; Ps 89:3,4; Matt 1:1.

**1:33** Ps 45:6; 89:3,4; Isa 9:6,7; Jer 33:14-18; Dan 2:44; 7:14,27; Micah 4:7.

"House of Jacob" - the nation descended from Jacob - Israel (Genesis chapters 25-50).

**1:34** "Know" - the Jews sometimes used this word to indicate an intimate relationship. Mary was saying that she was a virgin.

**1:35** Note at Matt 1:18. This was no "marriage" between a god and a mortal woman (a thing that is found in the myths and legends of many countries). The unseen Spirit of God created in her the body and human nature of her son.

**1:37** It is not difficult for God to enable either an elderly barren woman (v 7) or a virgin to conceive and bear children. What men call miracles are to God as easy and natural as anything else He does (Gen 18:14; Job 42:2; Isa 40:29; 50:2; 51:9; Jer 32:17,27; Matt 19:26; Rom 4:21).

**1:38** Mary completely accepted God's will for her, confident that it could be only good. In this she is an example to us - compare Rom 12:1,2.

**1:41** See how God's Holy Spirit was so closely involved in all these events (vs 15, 35, 67).

Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and spoke with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 And why is this given to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? 44 For, now, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfilment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

46 And Mary said, "My soul exalts the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. 48 For he has had regard for the lowly state of his maidservant. For, see, from now on all generations will call me blessed. 49 For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and his name *is* holy. 50 And generation after generation his mercy *is* on those who fear him. 51 He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted the lowly. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering *his* mercy, 55 as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his descendants forever."

56 And Mary stayed with her about three

months, and returned to her own house.

57 Now the time had come for Elisabeth to have her child, and she gave birth to a son. 58 And her neighbours and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. 59 And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they would have named him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother responded and said, "No, he shall be called John."

61 And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name."

62 And they made signs to his father *to know* what he would have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote this: His name is John. And they were all amazed. 64 And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue *was loosed*, and he spoke and praised God. 65 And awe came on everyone who lived around them. And all these things that had been said were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. 66 And all those who heard *them* kept them in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be!" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, 68 "Blessed be

The events and the words spoken about them were signs that God was about to do something mysterious, wonderful and blessed in the earth.

**1:42** Verse 28. Only one woman in history could be chosen to be the mother of Christ, and Mary was that one. See also 11:27,28 and notes on "blessed" at Gen 12:3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; etc. God would now bring to Abraham's descendants, and to all the world, that which He had promised through Abraham.

**1:43** "Mother" – Mary was the mother of the Son of God only in the sense that she bore his physical body. Of course God in His eternal being, the uncreated Creator of all things, can have no mother. So to call Mary the "mother of God" is not a suitable use of language.

"My Lord" – only by the Holy Spirit could Elizabeth say this of the yet unborn Jesus. Compare Ps 2:11; 110:1; Matt 22:41-45; Acts 2:36; Phil 2:10,11.

**1:45** Verses 38,42.

**1:46-55** Mary's words, in beautiful poetic language, reveal a knowledge and love of God and a grasp of spiritual truth that made her a proper mother for the Messiah. Compare her words with Hannah's words in 1 Sam 2:1-10.

**1:46** There are more references to praise and prayer in Luke than in any of the other Gospels. Note on praise at Ps 33:1-3.

**1:47** Observe that Mary calls God her "Savior." Although she had the special honor of being the mother of the Messiah, she realized that she needed a Saviour just as

all other human beings do. This is the first use of the word "Saviour" in the New Testament. The word means "deliverer and preserver" – one who delivers people from their sins and keeps them safe.

**1:48** Verses 28,30,42.

**1:49** Ps 71:19, etc. On God's holiness see Lev 20:7; Isa 6:3; etc.

**1:50** Notes on the fear of God at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**1:51** Ps 98:1; Isa 40:10; etc. God is a spirit (John 4:24) and does not have a physical arm. This is poetic language describing God's power. See how God puts down the proud – Ex 18:11; 2 Sam 22:28; Ps 31:23; 94:2; 138:6; Prov 16:5; Isa 2:12-18; Jer 13:9; 49:16; Jam 4:6.

**1:52** 1 Sam 2:7,8; Matt 23:12.

**1:53** 1 Sam 2:5; Ps 107:9; 81:10,16; Matt 5:6.

**1:55** What fellowship in conversation, prayer, and study of God's Word they must have had together!

**1:59** Notes on circumcision at Gen 17:9-14. **1:60** Verse 13.

**1:64** Faith and obedience opened the mouth that unbelief had sealed (v 20).

**1:66** Verse 51; Gen 39:2; Acts 11:21.

**1:67** Verses 15,35,41. There are as many references to the Holy Spirit in Luke as in Matthew and Mark together. Inspired by God's Spirit Zecharias speaks of the future and foretells truth that had not yet been accomplished. See notes on prophesying at Gen 20:7; Num 11:25.

**1:68** "Redeemed" – notes at Matt 20:28;

the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people, 69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, 70 just as he said by the mouth of his holy prophets, who *prophesied* through the ages, 71 that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hands of all who hate us, 72 to perform the *acts* of mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, 73 the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, 74 that he would grant us that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, 75 in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give the knowledge of salvation to his people through the forgiveness of their sins, 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the sunrise from on high has visited us, 79 to give light to those who sit

in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

80 And the child grew, and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his appearance to Israel.

**2** And it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, *saying* that all the world should be registered. 2 (This census was first taken when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to be registered, each one to his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and line of David, 5 to be registered with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child.

6 And while they were there, it happened that the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn, a son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a

Ps 78:35. See also Rom 9:24; 1 Cor 1:30; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Titus 2:14; Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:18; Rev 5:9.

**1:69** Note on horn at 1 Sam 2:1; on house of David at v 32; Matt 1:1.

"Salvation" – 19:9; Acts 4:12; Rom 1:16.

**1:70** For example, Isa 9:6,7; Jer 23:5.

**1:71** This is similar to Old Testament language. See notes on enemies at Ps 3:7. God's people have far greater enemies than other human beings could ever be. See Eph 6:10-12; 1 Peter 5:8. From all such the Lord Jesus saves His people.

**1:72** Gen 22:16-18; Ps 105:8,9; 106:45; Ezek 16:60; Micah 7:20.

**1:74,75** This is always God's purpose in redemption. He wants a holy people who willingly, lovingly serve Him all their days. And He has provided in Christ all that we need to do so. Compare 2 Peter 1:3,4.

**1:76** Compare the word "prophet" with what is spoken of Christ in v 32. See what John's ministry was – vs 14-17; Matt 3:1-6.

**1:77** Without the forgiveness of sins there is no salvation and no true knowledge of salvation. Notes and references on forgiveness of sins at Matt 6:12; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-25.

**1:78** Forgiveness of sins can never be deserved, or earned by men. It comes only by God's grace, because of His mercy. Here the Lord Jesus is compared to a sun from heaven. Elsewhere He is compared to a star or a light – Num 24:17; Isa 9:2; 60:1-3; Mal 4:2; John 8:12; 2 Peter 1:19; Rev 22:16. The Lord Jesus came from heaven to save men (John 3:13; 6:38; 8:23).

**1:79** Isa 9:2; 59:9,10; Matt 4:16. When men had no light, no hope, no escape from darkness and death, Jesus came and brought light and peace. Peace is one of the sweet notes of the music of the Gospel

– 2:14; John 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Rom 5:1; 14:17; 15:13,33; Eph 2:14. By the inspiration of God's Spirit Zecharias sets forth two wonderful results of the life and work of Christ – spiritual light and peace.

**1:80** Until about the age of 30 John was a solitary man who did not live as ordinary men do (Matt 3:4). None was ever greater than he (Matt 11:11). But just as he was strong in spirit so can all believers be (Eph 3:16).

**2:1** Augustus was the emperor of the most powerful empire of that time – the Roman Empire. In those days it was usual to call that "the whole world."

"Registered" – from a Greek word which means to enrol or register as in a census.

**2:4** See Matt 3:1-6. The Messiah of Israel had to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). God used the decree of the Roman emperor to bring Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem where Jesus was born. God can (and does) use all the circumstances of life to accomplish His purposes.

"Bethlehem" is a Hebrew name and means "house of bread." From there came the one who is the "Bread of life" (John 6:35). Notice the emphasis on David – 1:27,32,69; 2:4,11. Note at Matt 1:1.

**2:5** See 1:27,35; Matt 1:18.

**2:7** Such was the first resting place of the Son of God, heaven's great King. It was His own choice, and that of God the Father. See His character revealed in Matt 11:29; Phil 2:5-8 (He is our example, and we should have the same attitude that He had). Bethlehem was a small town. There would have been few places to stay, and, because of the census, many visitors. But throughout Jesus' life there was often no room for Him anywhere – Luke 4:29; Matt 2:13; 8:20; John 1:11; 19:15.

manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same area shepherds staying in the fields, keeping watch over their flock at night. 9 And suddenly an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were very afraid.

10 And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for, see, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people. 11 For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *will be* a sign to you: You will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a great number of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on

earth peace, good will toward men."

15 And it so happened that when the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

16 And they hurried away, and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen *him*, they made known the word they had been told concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen; *it was* just as it had been told to them.

21 And when eight days were completed, at

**2:8** God, when He made announcement of the birth of His Son on earth (the greatest event in the history of the world up to that hour), passed over the religious leaders of the day, and ignored all those who were powerful, educated, or rich, and chose to reveal this world-changing event to poor and humble shepherds. Compare 1 Cor 1:26-29; Isa 57:15; 66:2. God's ways are not like ours (Isa 55:8,9), and we should be very glad they are not. We must learn from Him and try to follow His example. Jesus was born to be the great shepherd of the sheep (John 10:11; Heb 13:20). It seems fitting that His birth should be announced first to shepherds.

**2:9** "An angel of the Lord" – note at Matt 1:20.

"Glory" – God's glory was soon to appear in Christ (who is God's glory – Heb 1:3; John 1:14), and be revealed in the glorious Gospel of His grace (1 Tim 1:11). For the announcement of His birth how could the glory of the Lord not appear? A bright and shining event must be properly proclaimed.

**2:10** "Good tidings" – the angel brought the best news the world has ever had. After thousands of years of sin and suffering and longing and waiting, the Saviour of mankind was born. The way to great joy, the source of all true and holy joy, all everlasting joy appeared at last. Believers in Him know something of this joy now and will partake of it fully in all the vast ages of eternity (John 15:11; 17:13; Rom 14:17; 15:13; Phil 4:4; 1 Pet 1:8).

**2:11** Matt 1:21; Acts 4:12; 1 John 4:14. Jesus is called Saviour 16 times in the New Testament (see 1:47). See note on Christ at Matt 1:1.

"Lord" – observe what the angel calls Jesus. See also 1:43; Matt 22:41-45; Acts 2:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:10,11; Eph 4:5. In Greek the word is "Kurios." This is the word used in the New Testament to translate the word Jehovah, the most common name for God in the Old Testament. See the note at Ex 3:14,15. In the NT Jesus is

called Lord (Kurios) some hundreds of times. He is the Lord of all lords (Rev 19:16), and the whole Bible ends with a blessing in His Name (Rev 22:21).

The following references reveal that Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah God: Matt 3:3; 23:37; John 8:24,25,58; 10:11; 12:41; Acts 2:21; Rom 10:9,10,13; 1 Cor 1:31; 2:8; 10:4; Eph 4:10; Phil 2:10,11; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:10-12; Jude 5; Rev 19:16.

Other references that reveal that Jesus is God are at Phil 2:6. In the Old Testament see notes at Gen 16:7; Ex 3:14; Ps 23:1; 24:7-10; 96:10-13; Isa 6:1; 9:6; Zech 12:10.

**2:13** An event so full of interest to heaven, should surely awaken our interest, and our praise.

**2:14** The glory of God is the highest possible purpose for anything (Ps 19:1; 29:1,2; Isa 42:8; 43:7; 1 Cor 10:31; Rev 4:11), and the purpose for which Jesus came (John 17:4). We should recognize that the birth of Jesus brought great glory to God. Notice the order here – God first, then men. Jesus brought glory to God by bringing peace to men.

"Good will toward men" – the Greek phrase here has been translated in various ways, such as peace "among men with whom he is pleased" (NASB), "to men on whom his favor rests" (NIV). However it is translated, it is clear everywhere in the New Testament that peace comes only to those who receive God's Son as Lord and Saviour and so receive God's favor and salvation (1:79).

**2:17** The first to proclaim the good news of Christ's birth was an angel, the next to do so were lowly shepherds.

**2:20** This Gospel according to Luke is full of praise to God – 1:46,64; 2:13,28; 5:25,26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15,18; 18:43; 19:37; 23:47; 24:53. See note on praise at Ps 33:1-3. See one reason why the shepherds praised God. We may be sure that all that God tells us will turn out just as He has said (Ps 33:5; Titus 1:2).

**2:21** "Circumcision" – see Gen 17:9-14. The

the circumcision of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought him to Jerusalem to present *him* to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, that he would not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and praised God, and said,

29 "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word, 30 for my eyes have seen

your salvation, 31 which you have prepared before the face of all people, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." 33 And Joseph and his mother wondered at those things which were spoken by him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, "Look, this *child* is destined for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against 35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

36 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old, and had lived with a husband seven years from her marriage. 37 She was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not leave the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38 And she, coming in at that instant, gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of him to all those who looked for the redemption of Jerusalem.

39 And when they had performed all things according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40 And the

Lord Jesus was born of an Israelite mother, a descendant of Abraham, and so He was circumcised as all male children in Israel were.

**2:22** Lev 12:2-8.

**2:23** Ex 13:2,12,15; Num 3:13.

**2:24** This sacrifice was offered not for Jesus, but for Mary. And it revealed that she and Joseph were poor and unable to offer a more costly sacrifice. See Lev 12:8.

**2:25** He was looking forward to the coming of the promised Messiah. Compare Isa 40:1,2.

"Holy Spirit" - vs 26,27; 1:15,35,41,67. Notice all these activities of God's Spirit even before He came and filled the whole body of believers at Pentecost.

**2:27** Verses 22-24.

**2:29** Verse 26.

**2:30** He recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, the Saviour promised in the Old Testament who would bring salvation to His people.

**2:32** Simeon knew that Christ had come to enlighten all the nations of the world as well as Israel. See Isa 42:6; 49:6.

**2:33** Jesus was born of a virgin by the power of God (1:34,35). Joseph had no part in that, but he was counted the legal father of Jesus (3:23).

**2:34** Simeon here uttered a prophecy later perfectly fulfilled. Christ was always a stumblingblock to proud, hypocritical and unbelieving men (Matt 21:42-44; Rom 9:32,33; 1 Pet 2:7,8). They fell and what a fall it was - they put to death the Son of God, and God's wrath came on them (1 Thess 2:14-16). But Christ took humble, sincere, and believing people and raised them to great spiritual heights, and to heaven itself.

Now too the eternal destiny of people in every nation depends on how they respond to the Lord Jesus. But when He was on earth He was much "spoken against" - Matt 9:3,11,34; 12:24; 13:54-57; 26:65,66; 27:63; John 8:48.

**2:35** The way people behaved toward Jesus, the things His words and deeds stirred them to do and say, revealed their innermost thoughts. It was revealed to Simeon that Jesus would have to suffer and that this would mean suffering to Mary as well. She would see her son rejected, condemned and crucified as a criminal.

**2:36** For other women who prophesied see Ex 15:20; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Acts 21:9.

**2:37** Here is an example for aged women (and men too for that matter). To serve God it is not necessary to be strong and vigorous or able to be on the move preaching the gospel everywhere.

"Fastings" - Matt 6:16.

**2:38** Anna was an example to us all in these two matters as well.

"Thanks" - notes at Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

"Redemption of Jerusalem" - Isa 40:2; 52:9; 59:20,21.

**2:39** Verses 22-24. Luke does not mention the journey to Egypt (Matt 2:13-23). The writers of the four Gospels did not include all the facts they knew to be true (see the note on Mark 4:1-20). It is possible that they took Jesus to Nazareth and returned with Jesus to Bethlehem before they went to Egypt.

**2:40** Verse 52. The Lord Jesus grew to manhood in the normal way of all human



child grew, and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast. 43 And when they had spent the full number of days, as they were returning, the child Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his mother did not know *it*. 44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey, and *then* they looked for him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. 45 And when they did not find him, they turned back again to Jerusalem to look for him.

46 And it happened that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. 48 And when they saw him, they were amazed, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you."

49 And he said to them, "How is it that you have been looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"

50 And they did not understand the statement which he made to them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was in subjection to them, but his mother treasured all

these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

**3** Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he came into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

- 5 Every valley will be filled,  
and every mountain and hill will be brought low,  
and the crooked will be made straight,  
and the rough ways *will be* made smooth,  
6 And all flesh will see the salvation  
of God.'

7 Then he said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who has

beings, except that He never sinned in any way (Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 2:22), and He had exceptional wisdom – a truth made clear in vs 46,47. The grace of God upon Him did not make Him rich, it made Him strong in goodness and holiness and kept Him from harm and evil – a far more blessed and important thing than the material things desired by most people.

**2:41** "Passover" – Ex 23:14-17; Lev 23:4.

**2:42** Deut 16:16.

**2:46** Teachers here means religious teachers, gurus.

**2:47** Amazement was what people often experienced at the words and works of the Lord Jesus – Matt 8:28; 12:23; Mark 1:27; 2:12; 9:15; 10:32.

**2:48** By "Your father" Mary meant Joseph the legal father of Jesus (v 33).

**2:49** Jesus meant God the Father. Though He was only twelve He knew of His unique relationship as the Son of God to the Father. His reply to Mary suggests she should have known this and that there was no need to search for Him – that if He was anywhere in Jerusalem it would be in the temple.

**2:50** It seems that Mary was sometimes puzzled at things Jesus did and said and she thought deeply about what others said concerning Him (vs 19,33,51).

**2:51** Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law of God in all the relationships of life. He never

rebelled against their parental authority or did anything to dishonor them (Ex 20:12).

**2:52** Verse 40; 1 Sam 2:26. Though He was God's Son He grew up as a man and increased in wisdom as He grew. His growing in favor with God suggests that God was more and more pleased with Him, delighted in Him more and more – as earthly parents may be with maturing children.

**3:1** Tiberius was the emperor of the Roman Empire. At this time both John and Jesus were about 30 years old (v 23).

**3:2** Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas. The Romans appointed him high priest of the Jews. The Jews continued to recognize Annas as high priest along with Caiaphas. Ordinarily there would have been only one high priest.

"The word of God came" is language often used in the Old Testament. Compare Jer 1:2; Ezek 1:3; Hos 1:1.

**3:3-18** Matt 3:1-12.

**3:3** This does not mean that baptism brought either repentance or forgiveness of sins. They repented and confessed their sins and received forgiveness before they were baptized (Matt 3:6,11). For the forgiveness of sins repentance and faith are necessary (Matt 3:6; Mark 16:15,16). John's baptism signified this.

**3:5,6** Isa 40:4,5.



warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore, produce fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father,' for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 And even now the axe is put to the root of the trees, so every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

10 And the people asked him, saying, "What shall we do then?"

11 He answered and said to them, "He who has two coats should give to him who has none, and he who has food should do the same."

12 Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"

13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than what has been appointed for you."

14 Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort from anyone, or accuse *anyone* falsely, and be content with your wages."

15 And the people were in a state of expectancy, and everyone was wondering in their hearts about John, whether he were the Christ, or not.

16 John responded, saying to *them* all, "I indeed baptize you with water, but one more powerful than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to loosen. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 17 His *winnowing fan* is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his *threshing* floor, and will gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

18 And with many other exhortations he preached to the people.

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by John concerning Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 added this to them all: he shut John up in prison.

**3:10-14** Here is a description of some of the "fruit worthy of repentance" (v 8) – compassion, love, honesty, truthfulness, contentment, a lack of greed. These are some of the things God demands in those who would repent and live in fellowship with Him – things often ignored by many who profess to be servants of God.

**3:15** John 1:19,20. "The Christ" – Matt 1:1.

**3:18** For example, see John 1:29-35.

**3:19,20** Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:11.

**3:21** "As he prayed" – 5:16; 11:1.

**3:23** "As was supposed" – 2:23; 1:34,35. Luke makes it clear again that Joseph was only Jesus' legal father.

**3:23-38** This genealogy from David to Jesus differs from the version in Matthew 1:1-17. Why? A great many Bible scholars believe that Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, and Luke the genealogy of Mary. In this

21 Now when all the people were being baptized, it happened that Jesus also was baptized. And as he prayed, heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from heaven, which said, "You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased."

23 Now Jesus himself began *his ministry* at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, *the son of Heli*, 24 *the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Janna, the son of Joseph*, 25 *the son of Mattathiah, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai*, 26 *the son of Maath, the son of Mattathiah, the son of Semei, the son of Joseph, the son of Judah*, 27 *the son of Joannas, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri*, 28 *the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er*, 29 *the son of Jose, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi*, 30 *the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim*, 31 *the son of Melea, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David*, 32 *the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon*, 33 *the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah*, 34 *the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham*, the son of Terah, the son of Nabor, 35 *the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah*, 36 *the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech*, 37 *the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan*, 38 *the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God*.

case Joseph would have been the son-in-law of Heli. But the word "son" in the Bible can indicate several relationships (see notes on genealogies and relationships in them at Matt 1:1,8; Gen 5:5-32), and this seems the most probable interpretation.

Notice that Matthew gives Jesus' genealogy only from Abraham. Luke traces it all the way back to Adam. Matthew's purpose was to show that Jesus was the king of Israel. Luke shows His relationship with the whole of mankind.

**3:38** Adam, the first human being, could, of course, have no human father. He was a direct creation of God, and in this sense God was his father. See Gen 1:26,27; 2:7. Adam was not the unique Son of God as Jesus is (1:35; John 1:1,14; 3:16; 17:5).

In vs 23-38 the words "which was" (KJV) are not in the Greek.

**4** Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, **2** and was tempted forty days by the devil. And in those days he ate nothing, and afterwards, when they were ended, he became hungry.

**3** And the devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

**4** And Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

**5** And the devil, having taken him up on a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. **6** And the devil said to him, "All this authority I will give you, and their glory; for that has been handed over to me, and I give it to anyone I wish. **7** Therefore if you will worship me, all will be yours."

**8** And Jesus answered and said to him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and you shall serve only him."

**9** And he brought him to Jerusalem, set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. **10** For it is written, He will give his angels charge concerning you to guard you, **11** and in *their* hands they will bear you up, so that you will not at any time strike your foot against a stone."

**12** And Jesus answering said to him, "It is said, You shall not test the Lord your God."

**13** And when the devil had ended every temptation, he went away from him for a time. **14** And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and his fame spread throughout the whole surrounding region. **15** And he taught in their synagogues, being honoured by all.

**16** And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. **17** And he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the scroll, he found the place where it was written,

**18** "The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me,  
because he has anointed me to preach  
the gospel to the poor;  
he has sent me to heal the  
brokenhearted,  
to preach deliverance to the captives,  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are  
oppressed,

**19** To proclaim the acceptable year of  
the Lord."

**20** And he closed the book, and he gave *it* back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of all those who were in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

**22** And all testified about him, and wondered at the gracious words which came from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

**23** And he said to them, "You will surely tell me this proverb: 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard was done in Capernaum, do also here in your native place.'"

**24** And he said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. **25** But I tell you the truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when heaven was shut up for three years and six months, when there was a great famine throughout the whole land. **26** But Elijah

**4:1-13** Matt 4:1-11.

**4:2** Luke states that Jesus was tempted by the devil throughout the 40 days. Matthew wrote of only the three temptations that came at the end of the 40 days.

**4:6** Was Satan speaking the truth here? Jesus did not dispute it, and other verses in the Bible indicate it is true (John 12:31; 14:30; 1 John 5:19; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 6:12). How did Satan receive the authority and glory of the world? See note at Matt 4:9.

**4:13** Satan did not admit defeat, but hoped for another time and better results. So now he will run from believers when they resist him (Jam 4:7), but he will return again and again.

**4:14** Jesus had been somewhere in the wilderness of Judea. He now returns to Galilee fully equipped by God's Spirit for the work that lay before Him.

**4:15** Matt 4:23--25.

"Synagogues" – Matt 4:23.

**4:16** "Sabbath day" – Ex 20:8-11; etc. See Christ's custom. Compare Heb 10:25. He

read from the Old Testament – religious teachers visiting Jewish meeting places were often asked to read or speak.

**4:17** "Scroll" – pieces of writing material sown end to end and rolled up. This is the way the Jews wrote down the words of the Old Testament and kept them in their synagogues.

**4:18,19** See Isa 61:1,2 and notes there. The Jews regarded these verses as referring to the coming Messiah. Observe here the beautiful work which Jesus came to do.

**4:21** Jesus here clearly states that He is the promised Messiah of Israel. Note on Messiah at Matt 1:1.

**4:22** They were amazed but did not believe Him, as the following verses make clear. See also Matt 13:53-58.

**4:23** Jesus had made the town of Capernaum the headquarters of His ministry in Galilee and performed some striking miracles there – Matt 4:13,24,25; 8:1-17. **4:24** Matt 13:57; John 4:44.

**4:25,26** See 1 Kings 17:1,8-16.

was not sent to any of them, but to Zarephath, *a city of Sidon*, to a woman *who was* a widow. 27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, but none of them was cleansed, but *only* Naaman the Syrian."

28 And all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with rage, 29 and rose up, and pulled him out of the city, and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, so that they might throw him down over the cliff. 30 But he, walking right through the middle of them, went on his way.

31 Then he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on Sabbath days. 32 And they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with power.

33 And in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 saying, "Let *us* alone! What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

35 And Jesus rebuked it, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him." And when the demon had thrown him down among them, he came out of him, without hurting him.

36 And they were all amazed, and talked among themselves, saying, "What a message this *is*! For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." 37 And his fame went out to every place in the surrounding region.

38 And he arose and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's house. And Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever, and they made a request to him on her behalf. 39 And he stood over her and rebuked the fever; and it left her, and immediately she got up and served them.

40 Now when the sun was setting, all those

who had anyone sick with *any* of various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on each of them and healed them. 41 And also demons came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are Christ the Son of God." And he rebuked *them* and did not allow them to speak, for they knew that he was Christ.

42 And when day came, he departed and went into a desert place. And the people looked for him, and came to him, and tried to keep him from leaving them. 43 And he said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose." 44 And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

**5** And it happened that while the people were pressing around him to hear the Word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake. The fishermen had left them and were washing *their* nets. 3 And he entered one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from land. And he sat down, and taught the people from the boat.

4 Now when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep *water*, and let down your nets for a catch."

5 And Simon answering said to him, "Master, we have worked hard all night, and have caught nothing. Nevertheless at your word I will let down the net."

6 And when they had done this, they netted a great number of fish, and their net broke. 7 And they signaled to *their* partners, who were in the other boat, to come and help them. And they came, and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw *this*, he fell down at

**4:27** See 2 Kings 5:1-14. These two prophets, Elijah and Elisha, often suffered great trouble at the hands of the people of Israel, but God used them in great blessing to outsiders. In their days Israel forsook God and behaved worse than the idolatrous peoples around them. Jesus knew that the Jews would continue to be rebellious and unbelieving in His day and that His gospel would spread among non-Jewish peoples.

**4:28** These Jews looked down on all other people and were angry because Jesus was pointing out their faults as seen in history, and seemed to be putting other people above them.

**4:29** This was the first attempt (but not the last) the Jews made to murder the Son of God. The reason? He told them the truth, and through Him the light of God's holiness shone on their sinful hearts. See John 3:19; 7:7; 8:40.

**4:30** His time to die had not come and no

one could take His life until He chose. See John 7:30; 10:17,18.

**4:31-37** Mark 1:21-28.

**4:38-41** Matt 8:14-17. "Simon" – Peter.

**4:41** Matt 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; Mark 1:34.

**4:42-44** Mark 1:35-39.

**4:43** "Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17.

**5:1** Gennesaret was another name for Galilee. Here the words of the Lord Jesus are called the Word of God. See John 7:16,17; 12:49,50; 14:24; 17:8.

**5:4** The Lord Jesus knew where the fish were in the water, just as He knew everything else. See also John 21:4-7. Both these examples are object lessons teaching an important truth – in His kingdom, activity directed by Jesus is fruitful, but directed by self is fruitless.

**5:5** "Master" – the Greek word indicates one with authority.

**5:8** Peter realized that Jesus was no mere man, and he felt unworthy even to be in His

Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

9 For he was astonished, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish they had taken, 10 as also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners.

And Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on you will catch men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

12 And when he was in a certain city it happened that suddenly a man covered with leprosy, seeing Jesus, prostrated *himself* and implored him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

13 And he put out *his* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him.

14 And he ordered him not to tell anyone, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and as a testimony to them, make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded."

15 But the word about him spread even more, and great crowds came together to hear *him*, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. 16 And he withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

17 And as he was teaching, it happened that there were Pharisees and teachers of the Law sitting nearby, who had come from every town of Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was *present* to heal them. 18 And, suddenly, *some* men brought on a cot a man who was paralyzed. And they tried to bring him in and place *him* before him. 19 And when they could not find any way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop, and let him down on *his* cot through the tiles into their midst in front of Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, except God alone?"

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts,

answering he said to them, "What are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?' 24 But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins (he said to the paralyzed man), 'I say to you, get up, pick up your cot, and go to your house.'"

25 And immediately he got up in front of them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went to his own house, glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

27 And after these things he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me." 28 And he left everything, got up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made a great feast for him in his own house, and there was a large group of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. 30 But their scribes and the Pharisees grumbled against his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

31 And Jesus answering said to them, "Those who need a physician are not those who are well, but those who are sick. 32 I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

33 And they said to him, "Why do the disciples of John often fast and pray, and *the disciples* of the Pharisees also, but yours eat and drink?"

34 And he said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast, while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days are coming when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."

36 And he also told them a parable: "No one rips a piece from a new garment to *sew* on an old *one*; otherwise, both the new tears and the piece that was *taken* from the new does not match the old. 37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be destroyed. 38 But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and so both are preserved. 39 Also no one

presence. Compare Isa 6:5; Job 40:4; 42:6; Rev 1:17. In the light of Christ's holiness men see their own sinfulness. Peter followed Christ after this and did not really want Christ to leave him.

**5:9** Fishing was their business (Matt 4:18), but this one who had grown up in a carpenter's house in land-locked Nazareth had showed them where the fish were.

**5:10** Peter realized something of his sinfulness and unworthiness, but he was not to fear because of that. Actually this real-ization better equipped him to be a fisher of men. On "fishers of men" see Matt 4:19.

**5:11** Matt 4:18-22.

**5:12-14** Matt 8:2-4.

**5:16** "Prayed" - 3:21; 6:12; 9:28; Matt 14:23; 26:36; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Heb 5:7; 7:25.

**5:17-26** Matt 9:2-8.

**5:17** "Pharisees" - Matt 3:7. We might think that if the Lord was present in a place His power to heal would be present also, and in a sense this is true. But see Mark 6:5.

**5:19** Mark 2:4.

**5:27-32** See 9:9-13. Levi is another name for Matthew.

**5:33-39** Matt 9:14-17.

**5:39** How slow some people are to try the

drinking old *wine* will want the new immediately, for he says, 'The old is better.'"

**6** And this happened on the second of the first Sabbaths *after Passover*: He was going through the grain fields, and his disciples picked some grain and ate it, rubbing it in *their* hands.

2 And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

3 And Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read what David did, when he was hungry along with those who were with him, 4 how he went into the house of God, and took and ate the *consecrated* bread, and gave some also to those who were with him, which thing is not lawful to eat except by the priests alone?"

5 And he said to them, "The Son of man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

6 And this also happened on another Sabbath: He went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand had withered. 7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find a *reason* to accuse him. 8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Get up, and stand there in the middle." And he got up and stood there.

9 Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it?"

10 And looking around at them all, he said to

the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.

11 And they were filled with rage and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

12 And it happened in those days that he went out on a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples, and chose twelve of them, and called them apostles:

14 Simon (whom he also named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, 15 Matthew and Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, 16 And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also became a traitor.

17 And he came down with them and stood on the plain, along with his group of disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases, 18 along with those who were troubled by unclean spirits; and they were healed. 19 And the whole crowd tried to touch him, for power was going out of him and healing *them* all. 20 And he raised his eyes to his disciples, and said,

"Blessed *are you* poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 "Blessed *are you* who hunger now, for you will be filled.

"Blessed *are you* who weep now, for you will laugh.

22 "Blessed are you when men hate you, and

new wine of the gospel of Christ that brings forgiveness of sins, peace with God, joy, salvation, and eternal life. Their prejudices, intolerance of anything new, pride in the old ways, etc, make them scorn something they have never tried. It is wiser to do as David said in Ps 34:8.

**6:1-11** Matt 12:1-14.

**6:8** Matt 9:4; John 2:24,25.

**6:9** Mark 3:4

**6:11** See 4:28. Some very religious people because of pride cannot bear to be opposed and exposed for what they are.

**6:12-16** Matt 10:2-4.

**6:12** The Lord Jesus was very careful in His choice of the apostles. Above all He wanted the choice to be in accordance with the will of God the Father in heaven.

**6:15** "Zelotes" – "Zealot" – note at Matt 10:4.

**6:16** Jesus chose Judas Iscariot after a night of prayer and in full knowledge of his character (John 6:64,70).

"The brother of James" – the words "the brother" are in italics, indicating that they are not in the Greek. "Judas of James" is a literal translation of the Greek. This probably means that Judas was the son of James. But whether this James was the brother of Judas or his father, we do not know.

**6:17-19** Compare Matt 4:23-25.

**6:19** See 5:17; 8:46.

**6:20-49** This has been called the Sermon on the Plain because apparently Jesus preached it on a plain (v 17). It contains some of the same truth found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7), but usually clothed in different words. Also it contains truth He taught at other times, other places. The Lord Jesus taught some of the same truth more than once and in more places than one. Compare 11:2-4 with Matt 6:9-13 and 11:9-13 with Matt 7:7-11 and 12:22-31 with Matt 6:25-33.

**6:20** The words were spoken only to His disciples who had left everything to follow Him (5:11,28; 14:33; 18:28), not to all poor people whether or not they believe in Christ. Their gain (the kingdom of God) was far greater than any supposed loss. Compare Matt 19:27-30; Phil 3:7-9; 1 Tim 6:6-10; Prov 19:22.

**6:21-23** These verses indicate that the life of discipleship was very difficult and sometimes meant hunger, sorrow and fierce opposition from sinful men. But true and eternal blessedness was theirs. Compare Matt 5:6,10-12.

"Son of Man" – Matt 8:20.



when they exclude you, and insult *you*, and reject your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for, see, your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers treated the prophets in the same way.

24 "But woe to you who are rich! For you have received your comfort.

25 "Woe to you who are full! For you will get hungry. Woe to you who laugh now! For you will mourn and weep.

26 "Woe to you, when all men speak well of you! For their fathers did like this to the false prophets.

27 "But I say to you who are listening, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. 29 And to him who strikes you on *one* cheek offer the other also, and do not stop him who takes away your cloak *from taking your* coat also.

30 "Give to everyone who asks from you, and whoever takes away your goods do not ask him for *them* again. 31 And just as you want men to treat you, you treat them in the same way. 32 For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For sinners also love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? For sinners also lend to sinners, in order to receive as much in return. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil. 36 Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

38 "Give, and it will be given to you. Good

measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, men will pour into your lap. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

39 And he told them a parable, "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?

40 "The disciple is not above his teacher, but every one who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

41 "And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but pay no attention to the plank that is in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' while you yourself pay no attention to the plank that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

43 "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44 For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorn bushes, nor do they gather grapes from a briar. 45 A good man brings out what is good from the storehouse of good in his heart, and an evil man brings out what is evil from the storehouse of evil in his heart. For his mouth speaks out of the abundance of his heart.

46 "And why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? 47 I will show you what he is like who comes to me, hears my words, and does *according to* them: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock. And when the flood rose, the torrent burst against that house, but could not shake it, for it was founded on a rock.

49 "But he who hears, and does not do *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The torrent burst against it, and immediately it fell. And great was the ruin of that house!"

**6:24-26** These verses are not found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. These woes signifies pain, loss, and suffering to those who would not give up anything for Christ and who wanted the praises of men rather than the praise that comes from God. See John 5:44; 12:43; 1 Tim 6:9,10; Jam 5:1-4. Compare the woes in Isa 5:8-25.

**6:26** "False prophets" – Matt 7:15.

**6:27,28** Matt 5:44.

**6:29,30** Matt 5:39-42.

**6:31** Matt 7:12.

**6:32-36** Matt 5:46-47.

**6:36** Matt 5:48; Eph 4:32; Jam 2:13.

**6:37** Matt 7:1; 6:14.

**6:38** Observe very carefully the way Jesus appointed for us to receive an abundance – it is not asking others for it, but giving to

others. In some measure at least God will see to it that people give to us as He sees we deserve by our giving. Here is a great promise to believers who give liberally from what they have. See also 2 Cor 9:6-8; Ps 18:25,26; Prov 11:24,25; 22:29; Eccl 11:1. But surely Jesus was speaking of more than giving money or things. Believers can give their time, their labor, their counsel, their loving service to others. And if they do they will have a full reward in some way or other, at some time or other. **6:39** Matt 15:14.

**6:40** Matt 10:24,25; John 13:16.

**6:41-44** Matt 7:3-5,16-18.

**6:45** Matt 12:34,35.

**6:46** Matt 7:21; John 13:13; Mal 1:6. Obedience is the mark of a true disciple.

**6:47-49** Matt 7:24-27.



**7** Now when he had finished his whole discourse in the hearing of the people, he went to Capernaum. **2** And a certain centurion's servant, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. **3** And when he heard of Jesus, he sent Jewish elders to him, begging him to come and heal his servant. **4** And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, saying that the one for whom he should do this was worthy, **5** "For he loves our nation, and he has built us a synagogue."

**6** Then Jesus went with them. And when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. **7** So I did not even think myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. **8** For I too am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

**9** When Jesus heard these things, he looked at him with admiration, and turned around and said to the people who were following him, "I tell you, I have not found faith so great, not even in Israel."

**10** And those who had been sent, returning to the house, found the servant who had been sick, in good health.

**11** And a day later *this* happened: He went to a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and a large crowd. **12** Now when he was approaching the gate of the city, suddenly there was a dead man being carried out. *He was* the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her.

**13** And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her, "Do not weep."

**14** And he came and touched the coffin, and those who were carrying *him* stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, get up."

**15** And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And he handed him over to his mother. **16** And everyone was seized by reverential awe, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet

has arisen among us," and, "God has visited his people." **17** And this report about him spread through all Judea, and through all the surrounding region.

**18** And the disciples of John informed him of all these things. **19** And John, having called two of his disciples, sent *them* to Jesus, saying, "Are you the one who is to come? Or should we look for another?"

**20** When the men came to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come? Or should we look for another?'"

**21** And at that very time he cured many *people* of diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits, and gave sight to many *who were* blind.

**22** Then Jesus answering said to them, "Go your way and tell John what things you have seen and heard, how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. **23** And blessed is *he* who does not stumble because of me."

**24** And when the messengers from John had gone, he began to speak to the people concerning John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? **25** But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Look, those who are splendidly dressed and live in luxury, are in royal palaces. **26** But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet. **27** This is *the one* about whom it is written,

See, I send my messenger before your face,  
who will prepare your way before you.

**28** "For I tell you, Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist. But he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

**29** And all the people who heard *this*, and the tax collectors, declared God righteous, having been baptized with the baptism of John. **30** But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the purpose of God

**7:1-10** Matt 8:5-13.

**7:3** Judging from Matthew's account, the centurion himself came later.

**7:4** Compare this with what the man thought of himself (vs 6,7). It was surely a rare thing for the Jews to speak so well of a Roman, or anyone of another nation.

**7:5** "Synagogue" – Matt 4:23.

**7:11** Nain was a town about ten kilometers from Nazareth.

**7:13** See 19:41; Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; John 11:35,38; Heb 4:15.

**7:15** Thrice it is recorded that Jesus raised the dead to life – here, at 8:53-55, and at

John 11:43,44. See note on Jesus' miracles at Matt 8:3.

**7:16** See 1:64,65; 2:13,20,28; 5:25; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47; 24:53. This is a characteristic note in Luke's Gospel. Note on praise at Ps 31:1-3. They called Jesus a prophet (Matt 16:13,14; 21:11). They did not understand He was much more than a prophet (Matt 16:15-17).

**7:18-35** Matt 11:2-19. At that time John was in prison because of his preaching.

**7:29,30** These verses are not found in Matthew. Many of the common people had repented and gone to John to be baptized.

for themselves, not having been baptized by *John*.

31 And the Lord said, "To what, then, shall I compare the men of this generation? And what are they like? 32 They are like children sitting in the marketplace, calling to one another, and saying, 'We have played the flute to you, and you have not danced; we have wailed for you, and you have not wept.' 33 For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' 34 The Son of man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' 35 But wisdom is justified by all her children."

36 And one of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down at the table. 37 And just then a woman in the city, who was a sinner, knowing that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of fragrant oil, 38 and stood behind *him* at his feet weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and she kissed his feet, and anointed *them* with the oil.

39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, "If this man were a prophet he would know who and what kind of woman *this is* who is touching him; for she is a sinner."

40 And Jesus responded and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he said, "Teacher, say it."

41 "There was a certain moneylender who had

two debtors. The one owed five hundred silver pieces, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay with, he freely forgave them both. So tell me, which of them will love him most?"

43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the *one* whom he forgave most." And he said to him, "You have rightly judged."

44 And he turned to the woman, and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You gave me no water for my feet, but she washed my feet with tears and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. 45 You gave me no kiss, but this woman since the time I came in has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but this woman anointed my feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But the one who has been forgiven little, loves little."

48 And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 And those who sat at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

**8** And after this it happened that he went through every city and village, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve *were* with him, 2 and also certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary called Magdalene, out of whom seven demons had gone, 3 and Joanna the wife of

See Matt 3:5,6. But the religious leaders had rejected John's message – Matt 3:7-10. In doing so they had rejected God's good purpose for them.

"Lawyers" – note at Matt 22:35.

**7:36-50** Only Luke relates this incident. Matthew, Mark and John record another time when Jesus was anointed (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8).

**7:36** "Pharisees" – Matt 3:7.

**7:37** "Sinner" – this probably means she had been either an adulteress or a prostitute. But it is plain that she had heard Jesus' teaching, had repented and believed in Him (v 50).

**7:38** In this way she showed her repentance and faith and pure love for the Lord of glory (v 47).

**7:39** Probably the Pharisee never once considered that Jesus was more than a prophet. The way he regarded this woman was the usual way many Pharisees looked down on others. See 18:9-12.

**7:41** A "silver piece" – "denarius" – was a day's wage for a laborer (Matt 20:2).

**7:44-46** The Pharisee had not shown the hospitality usually shown to guests. Jesus was not complaining for His own sake, but was trying to teach this Pharisee a very

important lesson that had to do with much more than mere hospitality. But we should understand that the Lord Jesus well observes our attitude and behavior toward Him.

**7:47** She was not forgiven because of her love for God; she loved God because she was forgiven. This is the meaning of vs 41-43. By her behavior toward Christ she showed both that she was forgiven and loved God. Compare Matt 25:32-46. Notes on forgiveness at Matt 6:12; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-25; etc.

**7:48,49** Compare Matt 9:2-6.

**7:50** It was not her love for God which saved her and brought peace, nor was it her weeping on Christ's feet. It was her faith that saved her. Saved here means receiving forgiveness, deliverance from her sinful life, and being made right with God. See Rom 3:22-24; 5:1; Gal 2:16; 3:26; Eph 2:8,9.

**8:1** "Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17.

**8:2** She was called Magdalene because she was from Magdala, a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

**8:3** Jesus had nothing of this world's goods (Matt 8:20), and His disciples had left all they had to follow Him (5:11,28; 18:28). They did not perform miracles to feed themselves, and we never read that they took

Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and many others. These contributed to them from their possessions.

4 And when many people had gathered, coming to him from every town, he spoke using a parable:

5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trampled on, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell on rock; and as soon as it had sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 8 And other seed fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bore fruit a hundredfold."

And when he had said these things, he cried out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, "What does this parable mean?"

10 And he said, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others I give parables, so that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the wayside are those who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, so that they might not believe and be saved. 13 Those on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root. They believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among thorns means those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But that seed which fell on the good ground means those who, having heard the word with a suitable and good heart, keep it, and patiently bear fruit.

16 "No one, having lit a candle, covers it with a

utensil, or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a candle holder, so that those who come in may see the light. 17 For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come out. 18 Therefore take care how you listen, for whoever has, to him will be given; and whoever does not have, from him will be taken even what he seems to have."

19 Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And it was told him by someone who said, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you."

21 And he answered and said to them, "My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

22 Now it happened on a certain day that he went into a boat with his disciples. And he said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake."

And they set out. 23 But as they sailed, he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and their boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. 24 And they came to him and woke him up, saying, "Master, master, we are going to die!" Then he got up and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and they stopped and there was a calm.

25 And he said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "What kind of man is this! For he commands even the winds and water, and they obey him."

26 And they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is on the other side of Galilee. 27 And when he stepped out on the land, he was met by a certain man from the city, who had been possessed by demons for a long time. He wore no clothes, and did not stay in any house, but among the tombs.

up a collection, or asked for money. They received their support from those who wanted to give to them - 10:4-7; Matt 10:9-11. Compare 1 Cor 9:6-14; Lev 7:14. **8:4-15** Matt 13:2-23. This parable in Luke was told in somewhat different words and at a different time than the same one in Matthew chapter 13.

**8:5** "It was trampled on" is a phrase not found in Matt 13:4. It suggests a carelessness, even a contempt for the good seed of God's Word.

**8:6** In Matt 13:6 the emphasis is on shallowness of soil. Shallow soil cannot retain moisture, nor can shallow hearts retain spiritual showers that come from God.

**8:14** "Pleasures" is a word not seen in Matt 13:22. In the matter of choking God's Word sown in the mind, pleasures are just as successful as worries and riches.

**8:15** Here is more emphasis on the qualities

of the person who produces a harvest for God. By nature men do not have such a heart (see Matt 15:18-20; Jer 17:9). If anyone has a suitable and good heart it is because God has worked deeply in his heart, given him a new nature and made him a new person. See 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:1-10. Observe here that a harvest for God comes by keeping His word in the heart and persevering in His work. See 1 Cor 15:58. **8:16** Matt 5:14,15. Jesus is speaking of His disciples.

**8:17** Matt 10:26.

**8:18** Matt 13:12.

**8:19-21** Matt 12:46-50.

**8:21** See 6:47; 11:28; John 14:21. The Lord Jesus always put the emphasis where it belongs - on obedience to God's Word, actually doing what God says.

**8:22-25** Matt 8:23-27.

**8:26-37** Matt 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20.

28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and prostrated himself before him, and said with a loud voice, "What do I have to do with you, Jesus, *you* Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me!"

29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him; and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and fetters. And he had broken the shackles, and had been driven by the demon into the wilderness. 30 And Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him.

31 And they begged him not to command them to go into the Abyss. 32 And a large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the mountain. And the *demons* begged him to allow them to enter them. And he allowed them. 33 Then the demons went out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down a steep place into the lake and were drowned.

34 When those who tended *them* saw what had happened, they ran away and told *it* in the city and in the countryside. 35 Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. 36 And those who had seen *it* told them how he who had been possessed by the demons had been healed. 37 Then all the people from the surrounding region of the Gadarenes begged him to leave them, because they were seized by great fear. And he got into the boat and returned.

38 Now the man out of whom the demons had gone had begged him that he might stay with him. But Jesus had sent him away, saying, 39 "Go back home, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

40 And it happened that when Jesus returned, the people *gladly* received him, for they had all been waiting for him. 41 And just then a man named Jairus came. He was a ruler of the synagogue, and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and begged him to come to his house; 42 for he had only one daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as he went the people were almost crushing him.

43 And a woman having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her resources on doctors and could not be healed by any, 44 came up behind *him* and touched the hem of his garment.

And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

45 And Jesus said, "Who touched me?" When everyone denied it, Peter and those who were with him said, "Master, the people are crowding you and pressing *around you*, and are you saying, 'Who touched me?'"

46 And Jesus said, "Somebody touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out of me."

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and prostrating herself before him, she told him in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched him and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said to her, "Daughter, take courage. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

49 While he was still speaking, someone from the *house* of the ruler of the synagogue came saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Master."

50 But when Jesus heard *this*, he answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid, only believe, and she will get well."

51 And when he came into the house, he permitted no one to go inside except Peter, James and John, and the father and the mother of the girl. 52 And everyone was weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep. She is not dead, but is sleeping."

53 And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.

54 And he put them all outside, and took her by the hand and called out, saying, "Get up, child."

55 And her spirit returned, and she immediately got up. And he told them to give her food. 56 And her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

**9** Then he called his twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said to them, "Take nothing for *your* journey, neither staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two coats each. 4 And whatever house you enter, stay there and leave from there. 5 And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that town, shake the very dust off your feet as a testimony against them."

6 And they departed and traveled through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was

**8:31** The Abyss is a place of confinement for evil spirits and Satan – Rev 9:1,2; 20:1-3. Why did not God from the beginning confine all evil spirits to the abyss forever? See notes at 1 Chron 21:1.

**8:40-56** Matt 9:18-26; Mark 5:22-43.

**8:43** "Spent all her resources on doctors" – a thing often sadly true today also.

**9:1-6** Matt 10:1; 7:14.

**9:7-9** Matt 14:1,2.

done by him, and he was perplexed, because it was being said by some that John had risen from the dead, 8 and by some, that Elijah had appeared, and by others, that one of the prophets of old had appeared again.

9 And Herod said, "I beheaded John, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he tried to see him.

10 And the apostles, when they returned, told *Jesus* all that they had done. And he took them along and withdrew privately to a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. 11 And the people, finding out *about it*, followed him; and he received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing.

12 And when daylight began to decline, the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the towns and surrounding countryside and get food and lodging, for we are here in a deserted place.

13 But he said to them, "You give them *something* to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fishes, unless we go and buy food for all this people."

14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down, fifty to a group." 15 And they did so, and had them all sit down. 16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke *them*, and gave *them* to the disciples to set before the crowd. 17 And they all ate and were filled, and they gathered up twelve baskets *full* of pieces left over.

18 And it happened when he was praying alone *that* his disciples came to be with him, and he

asked them, saying, "Who do the people say I am?"

19 They answering said, "John the Baptist. But some *say*, Elijah, and others *say* that one of the prophets of old has appeared again."

20 He said to them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter, answering, said, "The Christ of God."

21 And he strictly warned and commanded *them* not to tell this to anyone, 22 saying, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

23 And he said to *them* all, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses himself, or is ruined? 26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, the Son of man will be ashamed of him, when he comes in his glory, and *in the glory* of his Father and of the holy angels.

27 "But I tell you the truth, there are some standing here who will not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God."

28 And it happened about eight day after these words that he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29 And as he prayed, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became bright *and* radiant. 30 And suddenly two men were talking with him. They were Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory, and spoke of his departure which he would accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 But Peter and those who were with him were weighed down with sleep: and when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him.

**9:8** Mark 6:15.

**9:10-17** Matt 14:13-21.

**9:11** "Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17.

**9:18-20** Matt 16:13-16.

**9:21** Matt 8:4; 16:20; Mark 8:20.

**9:22-27** Matt 16:21-28.

**9:22** Note on Son of Man at Matt 8:20.

**9:23** "Cross" – the cross signifies death (see notes at Matt 10:38; 16:24). The word "daily" is important. The proper attitude toward self and Christ must be constantly renewed morning by morning. If we try to do it once for all and then move away from it, or forget about it, we will go astray. And the proper attitude is this: self deserves death, Christ deserves our entire allegiance and service.

There is nothing here (or anywhere in the New Testament that the author of these notes can find) encouraging self-esteem, good thoughts about oneself, etc. Quite the opposite. We must esteem Christ, not ourselves; have good thoughts about Him, not about self. This is contrary to much we hear

from modern psychology, and, very often, from pulpits in our churches.

**9:24** Is any truth Jesus spoke more often recorded than this one? Matt 10:38,39; 16:24,25; Mark 8:34,35; Luke 14:26,27; 17:33; John 12:25. The repetition indicates its great importance.

**9:26** Matt 10:33; Mark 8:38.

**9:28-36** Matt 17:1-8.

**9:28** Luke says this happened eight days afterwards; both Matthew and Mark have six days. Evidently they counted only the days between the events of vs 18-27 and the transfiguration, while Luke included both those days.

**9:31** Luke alone mentions the shining appearance of Moses and Elijah and what they spoke about at that time – Christ's death in Jerusalem.

**9:32** Luke alone reveals the sleepiness of the disciples. Compare Matt 26:40,43. How dull the disciples could be at some of the most significant moments in human history! And none of us should think himself better



33 And it happened, as they were leaving him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tabernacles; one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah," not knowing what he was saying.

34 As he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him."

36 And when the voice had stopped *speaking*, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent, and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

37 And it happened the next day, when they came down from the hill, that many people met him. 38 And suddenly a man in the crowd cried out, saying, "Teacher, I beg you, look at my son, for he is my only child. 39 And, see, a spirit seizes him and he suddenly cries out. And it throws him into convulsions so that he foams *at the mouth*, and it batters him and scarcely leaves him. 40 And I begged your disciples to drive him out, and they could not."

41 And Jesus answered and said, "O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long will I be with you, and put up you? Bring your son here."

42 And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down in convulsions. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the child, and handed him back to his father. 43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while everyone was wondering at all the things that Jesus did, he said to his disciples,

44 "Let these words sink down into your ears; for the Son of man will be given into the hands of men."

45 But they did not understand this statement, and it was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it. And they were afraid to ask him about the statement. 46 Then a dispute arose among them about which of them would be the greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child and set him near him, 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me; for he who is the least among you all, he will be great."

49 And John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow along with us."

50 And Jesus said to him, "Do not *try to stop him*, for he who is not against us is for us."

51 And *this* happened when the time was approaching for him to be taken up to *heaven*: he set his face resolutely to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before his face. And they went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, because his face was set to go to Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just like Elijah did?"

55 But he turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of man has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*." And they went to another village.

57 And it happened as they were going along the road, that a certain *man* said to him, "Lord, I will follow you wherever you go."

58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay *his* head."

59 And he said to another, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

61 And still another said, "Lord, I will follow you, but first let me go say good-bye to those who are at my house."

62 And Jesus said to him, "No one, when he has

or wiser than they.

**9:36** Mark 9:9,10.

**9:37-42** Matt 17:14-18. Observe the symptoms that sometimes appear in those who are demon-possessed.

**9:44,45** Matt 17:22,23.

**9:46-48** Matt 18:1-5; 10:40; 20:25-28.

**9:49,50** Mark 9:38-40.

**9:51-56** This event is recorded only by Luke.

**9:51** See 24:51; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9. It required great determination for Jesus to go to Jerusalem knowing what faced Him there (vs 22,44).

**9:52,53** There was enmity between Samaritans and Jews. See John 4:9. Since Jesus was a Jew passing through their area they did not wish to receive Him.

**9:54** Mark 3:17. "Consume them" – James and John were probably well acquainted with 2 Kings 1:9-12, and they were indignant that Jesus was being dishonored. They did not realize that the situation in Elijah's time was entirely different from their own.

**9:55** They had heard the Sermon on the Mount, but their thoughts here were contrary to it (Matt 5:1-10).

**9:56** "The Son of Man has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" – Luke 19:10; John 3:17.

**9:57-62** See Matt 8:19-22 (vs 61,62 are not in Matthew).

"But first" (v 61) – like the man in v 59 this one had something else to do first. It would seem from this, and from what Jesus



put his hand to the plough, and looks back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

**10** After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before his face into every city and place where he himself was about to go.

2 Therefore he said to them, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the workers *are* few. So pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth workers into his harvest. 3 Go your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4 Carry neither purse, nor bag, nor sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. 5 And whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace *be* to this house.' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7 And stay in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house.

8 "And whatever city you enter, and are received, eat such things as are set before you. 9 And heal the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10 But whatever city you enter, and are not received, go out into its streets and say, 11 'The very dust of your city which sticks to us, we wipe off against you. But be sure of this, the kingdom of God has come near you.' 12 But I say to you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you,

said to him, that he did not have his priorities right. Does the answer of Jesus seem unreasonable? Nothing Jesus says seems unreasonable to those who trust Him and are eager to serve Him; everything may seem unreasonable to those without a heart for Him. It appears that the Lord Jesus discerned in this man a disposition to keep looking back. This is a ruinous habit, whether trying to plow a furrow, or doing God's work. Compare Phil 3:13,14; Heb 12:1,2. We must keep our eyes on the goal.

**10:1** Only Luke records this sending out of disciples other than the twelve chief disciples. The instructions Jesus gave them is similar to words He spoke in other places. **10:2** Matt 9:37,38.

**10:3** Matt 10:16.

**10:4** Matt 10:9,10. The Lord was on the way to Jerusalem (9:51), and the journey had to be accomplished speedily.

**10:5-12** Matt 10:10-15.

**10:9** Note on God's kingdom at Matt 4:17.

**10:12** "That day" – the day of judgment – Matt 10:15.

**10:13-15** Matt 11:20-24.

"Hell" – the Greek has "hades". See note at 16:23.

Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented a long time ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you.

15 "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to hell!

16 "He who listens to you listens to me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

17 And the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons submit to us through your name."

18 And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 See, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing at all will harm you. 20 However, do not rejoice because the spirits submit to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and educated, and have revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for so it seemed good in your eyes. 22 All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. And no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is, except the Son and *those* to whom the Son chooses to reveal *him*."

23 And he turned around to *his* disciples and

**10:16** See 9:48; Matt 10:40; 18:5; John 12:44; 13:20.

**10:17** See something of the power of Jesus' name – Matt 10:1; Mark 16:17; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18.

**10:18** The casting out of demons signified that the kingdom of God was near and that Satan's eventual defeat was assured. Compare Matt 12:22-29; John 12:31. Notes on Satan at Matt 4:1-11; 1 Chron 21:1.

**10:19** Jesus gave them authority over both literal snakes and scorpions and snake-like and scorpion-like demons. The chief enemy was Satan himself. See Mark 16:17,18; Ps 91:13; Eph 6:12; Jam 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8,9; Rev 12:10,11.

**10:20** The fact that they were saved and had eternal life was to be their reason for rejoicing, not the fact that they were able to display some authority or power.

"Written in heaven" – Ex 32:32; Heb 12:23; Rev 3:5; 20:12.

**10:21,22** Matt 11:25,26. Christ's joy is mentioned in only two other places in the Gospels – John 15:11; 17:13. See what made Him happy – God reveals His truth to simple and humble people and not to the high and mighty.

**10:23,24** Matt 13:16,17.

said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see. 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see *them*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *them*."

25 And suddenly a certain lawyer stood up and tested him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?"

27 And he answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself."

28 And he said to him, "You have answered rightly. Do this, and you will live."

29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

30 And Jesus answered and said, "A certain

*man* was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who stripped him of his clothes, wounded *him*, and went away, leaving *him* half dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest came down that way. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And so too a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked at *him* and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he traveled, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion on *him*, 34 and went to *him*, and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, and set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day when he was leaving, he took out two silver coins, gave *them* to the innkeeper and said to him, 'Take care of him. Whatever you spend extra, I will repay you when I come again.'

36 "Now which of these three, do you think,

**10:25** "Lawyer" – an expert in the law of Moses recorded in the Old Testament. His question was like the one in Matt 19:16. It is an exceedingly important question indeed, but not everyone who asks it is willing to accept the answer Christ gives.

**10:26** Jesus did not ask this because He wanted information, but to cause the man to speak out what he thought.

**10:27** This is an excellent reply. See Matt 22:36-40. The verses he quoted are from Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18.

**10:28** Merely knowing or quoting the truth of God does not bring eternal life to anyone. Compare Rom 2:13; Jam 1:22-25. The man had not practiced the truth he knew. We know this because he tried to justify himself (v 29), and because, as other men, he had sinned (Rom 3:23). If men did practice perfectly the two chief commands of the law, they would live, but they do not. Not a single person (except Jesus) has all of his life loved God with all his strength, etc., or his neighbor as himself.

**10:29** "Justify himself" – this is the grave error of a vast number of men. See 16:15; 18:9-12. They want to be thought be better than they are, and they do not wish to confess they are sinners, helpless to keep God's law. There is no hope for anyone until he stops justifying himself and acknowledges his guilt before God (Rom 3:19,20).

**10:30-37** Only Luke records this parable. On the surface it shows what is meant by "neighbor" and "love", and answers the second question of the law expert (v 29). But there may be a deeper spiritual application which answers the first question (v 25). If the answer to that question is not suggested by this parable then Jesus did not really give an answer to it to this man at all, which would seem surprising. But in making spiritual application it may be unwise to press the details too strongly. See notes at Matt 13:18-23.

**10:30** Jerusalem was about 800 meters

above sea level and Jericho was about 27 kilometers away and about 250 meters below sea level. Jerusalem was the city of God the great King (Matt 5:35). Jericho was the city under a curse (Josh 6:26). The steep and rocky road to Jericho provided good places for robbers to lurk. This world is a very rocky place, and Satan and his servants are out to take away all that men have (John 8:44; 1 Pet 5:8). They have stripped man of the righteousness God originally gave him, wounded him grievously and left him half-dead – possessing physical life but dead spiritually (Gen 2:17; 3:1-5; Eph 2:1-3).

**10:31,32** Notes on priests at Ex 28:1. On Levites see Num 1:47-50. Neither of these two loved his neighbor as himself. On another level we may say that priests and Levites (representing the Old Testament system of law and sacrifices) cannot really help a sinner robbed and wounded to death by Satan. See Acts 13:38,39; Rom 8:3; Gal 2:16; Heb 8:7,8; 9:9,10; 10:1-4,11.

**10:33-35** Notes on Samaritans at John 4:4-9. The Jews looked down on them and refused to have anything to do with them. This one showed what love means, what it means to be a neighbor. Evidently Jesus means that a neighbor is anyone we might meet, even a stranger, whether or not of another race, nation, color or religion.

The spiritual application of these verses answers the question in v 25. The man in the parable was dying and could not do anything to preserve his life or give himself new life. He was completely helpless. Compare Rom 5:6; 8:7; Eph 2:4,5. The Samaritan may speak to us of Christ who was despised and rejected of men (Isa 53:3), and was even called a Samaritan (John 8:48,49). The Lord Jesus does for helpless sinful men what they could never do for themselves – save them and give them eternal life (19:10; John 3:16,17; 10:27,28).

**10:36,37** In our attempts to find deeper

was a neighbour to him who fell among the robbers?"

37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy to him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, and do the same."

38 Now it happened, as they were traveling along, that he entered a certain village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and listened to his words. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and came to him and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to help me."

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is necessary, and Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her."

**11** And it happened that as he was praying in a certain place, when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

2 And he said to them, "When you pray, say,

Our Father who is in heaven,

Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

spiritual truth in this story let us not forget the application Jesus made to this expert in the law. This application is very practical. God demands that we actually show love to all. We must be ready to help those in need, regardless of who they are, and not just discuss the meaning of Christ's parables (Matt 5:43-48; John 13:34; Rom 13:8-10; Gal 6:10; 1 John 3:16-18).

**10:38** This village was Bethany, about 3 kilometers from Jerusalem. See Matt 21:17; John 11:1.

**10:40** Mark 4:38. She was rebuking the Lord Jesus, little knowing that He had a heart that cared for the whole world and desired the highest good of everyone. She was thinking only of physical work and her involvement in it. Her words mean "Pity me. I am working so hard, and you are keeping others from helping."

**10:41,42** Jesus did not mean that physical work, the preparation of a meal, etc, was useless and unnecessary. He was simply putting the emphasis where it belonged – He was to be with them for only a short time and had much truth to teach them. Mary seized the opportunity, Martha let other matters keep her from it.

**11:1** Praying was a continual practice of Jesus, mentioned more often by Luke than any other Gospel author (references at 5:16). The request of the disciples indicates they realized how little they knew about prayer. This realization probably came by observing Jesus' life of prayer. Now also disciples will

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins,  
for we also forgive everyone  
who is indebted to us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil."

5 And he said to them, "Which of you will have a friend, and will go to him at midnight, and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of *bread*, 6 for a friend of mine on his journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?' 7 And from inside he will answer and say, 'Don't trouble me. The door is now locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you *bread*.' 8 I say to you, Though he will not get up and give him the *loaves*, because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as many as he needs.

9 "And I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks it will be opened.

11 "If a son of any father among you asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks for* a fish, will he give him a snake instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks *for* an egg, will he offer him a

be aware of their need to learn to pray. Compare Rom 8:26. If we learn to pray we will be learning the most spiritual, the greatest and most blessed activity that human beings can do.

Notes on prayer at 18:1-7; Gen 18:32; Matt 6:5-13; Rom 8:26,27; Eph 1:17; 6:16; Phil 4:6,7; Col 1:9; 1 Thess 5:17; Heb 4:16; 10:19-22; 11:6; Jam 1:5-8; 5:16-18; 1 John 5:14,15.

**11:2-4** Notes at Matt 6:9-13.

"Everyone who is indebted to us" – that is, everyone who has not behaved toward us as they should have, everyone who has sinned against us.

**11:5-8** This story teaches the need of prayer and one essential element in successful praying – persistence. In ourselves we are as those who "have nothing" – nothing of spiritual value that can help others. And we come to Him who has everything. God is not reluctant to help those who come to Him (as the friend in this parable was), but He will test the genuineness of our faith (Matt 15:21-28; 1 Pet 1:7,8; Heb 11:6; Jer 29:13). He wants us to earnestly seek Him. And through our seeking Him and our persistent praying He will be better preparing us for the proper use of the things we ask of Him.

**11:8** "He will. . . give him as many as he needs" – God will do the same, as verses 9-13 make abundantly clear. See also Matt 7:7-11; Rom 8:32; Phil 4:19.

**11:11** Matt 7:9.

scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *the* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

14 And he was driving out a demon, and it was mute. And it came about *that* when the demon had gone out, the mute *person* spoke. And the people were amazed.

15 But some of them said, "He drives out demons through Beelzebub the ruler of the demons."

16 And others, testing *him*, demanded from him a *miraculous* sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is ruined, and a house *divided* against a house falls. 18 Now if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? *I say this* because you say I drive out demons through Beelzebub. 19 But if I drive out demons through Beelzebub, through whom do your sons drive *them* out? Therefore they will be your judges. 20 But if I drive out demons with the finger of God, without doubt the kingdom of God has come to you. 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his possessions are secure, 22 But when someone stronger than he comes upon him and overpowers him, he takes from him all that armour in which he trusted, and divides up the spoils. 23 He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

24 "When an unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it goes through dry places, looking for rest, and finding none, it says, 'I will return to my house which I left.' 25 And when it comes, it finds *it* swept and put in order. 26 Then it goes and takes *with it* seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and

they go in and live there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first."

27 And as he spoke these things, it happened that a certain woman in the crowd raised her voice, and said to him, "Blessed *is* the womb that bore you, and the breasts which nursed you."

28 But he said, "Instead, blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it."

29 And when even more people had gathered together, he began speaking, "This is an evil generation. They are looking for a *miraculous* sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet. 30 For just as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of man will be to this generation. 31 The queen of the south will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and now a greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now a greater than Jonah *is* here.

33 "No one lights a lamp and puts *it* in a secret place, or under a basket, but on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. 34 The light of the body is the eye. Therefore when your eye is good, your whole body is full of light; but when *your eye* is bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. 35 So watch out that the light that is in you is not darkness. 36 Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, with no part dark, the whole will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

37 And as he spoke, a certain Pharisee asked

**11:13** Matt 7:11 has "good gifts" instead of "the Holy Spirit." Jesus here is more specific and promises the greatest of all gifts – God gives the Holy Spirit to those who do not have Him. We should remember that Jesus gave this promise before the Holy Spirit was given to all believers as He is now – John 7:39. Now all who belong to Christ, all believers in Him, have the Holy Spirit – see Rom 8:9. But if anyone is struggling with doubts about whether he has the Holy Spirit living in him, let him look at these words of Jesus and see how willing God is to give His Spirit.

It seems to the author of these notes that this promise may also be used in seeking the fullness of the Holy Spirit, for it reveals God's heart, His gracious character that delights to give what we need. Surely God is just as willing to give the Spirit's fullness as He is to give His Spirit (for notes on the Spirit's fullness see John 7:37-39; Acts 1:5; Eph 5:18). This is one of the very greatest of God's "good gifts." This fullness is received by going in child-like faith to the Heavenly Father and asking and

receiving directly from Him (1 John 5:14,15).

**11:14-23** Matt 12:22-30.

**11:16** Verse 29; Matt 12:28.

**11:24-26** Matt 12:43-45.

**11:27,28** Observe here the teaching of the Lord Jesus on what makes people blessed. It is not any possible physical or family relationship. Blessedness comes only by a personal relationship to God, by obedience to His Word.

"Blessed" – Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-10; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:3.

**11:29-32** Matt 12:38-42.

**11:34-36** Matt 5:15; 6:22,23.

**11:35** Jesus puts responsibility on men where it belongs. Light here stands for truth, for spiritual understanding. God gives light to all, but men can love darkness rather than light, and they can back away from the light they have and turn into darkness the light that has shined on their minds (John 1:9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 12:46. Compare Rom 1:18-23,25).

**11:37** 7:36; 14:1. The Pharisees as a group were opposed to Jesus, but individually

him to eat with him. And he went in and sat down to eat. 38 And when the Pharisee saw *this*, he was surprised that he had not first washed before dinner

39 And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but your inner part is full of greed and wickedness. 40 *You* fools! Did not he who made the outside also make the inside? 41 But give away what is inside as charity, and then all things are clean to you.

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you give titles of mint and rue and every kind of herb, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you should have practiced without leaving the other undone.

43 "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the seats of honour in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces.

44 "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over unaware."

45 Then answered one of the lawyers and said to him, "Teacher, by saying this you are insulting us too."

46 And he said, "Woe to you also, *you* lawyers! For you load men down with burdens hard to carry, but you yourselves do not touch those burdens with one of your fingers.

47 "Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 In fact, you are giving testimony that you approve of the deeds of your fathers. For indeed they killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 Therefore, the wisdom of God also said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and *some* persecute, 50 so that the blood of all the prophets that has been shed from the foundation

of the world, may be required of this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Truly I say to you, it will be required of this generation.

52 "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."

53 And as he said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to oppose *him* fiercely, and to ply him with questions about more things, 54 setting a trap for him and seeking to catch *words* from his mouth, so they could accuse him.

**12** In the meantime, when multiplied thousands of people had gathered together, so that they trampled on one another, he began speaking first of all to his disciples,

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 For there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore, whatever you have spoken in darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

4 "And I say to you, my friends, Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after he has killed, has power to throw into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten in God's presence. 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid, for you are worth more than many sparrows.

some of them were very curious about Him and open to His message. See John 3:1,2. **11:38** Matt 15:2.

**11:39,40** Matt 23:25,26.

**11:41** They needed a cleansing from the greed and wickedness within them. This would result in giving their possessions to the poor. This is what Jesus was aiming at in His dealings with the rich young ruler (Matt 19:21-24). People changed in heart will no longer worry about ceremonial washings.

**11:42** Matt 23:23.

**11:43** Matt 23:6,7.

**11:44** Matt 23:27,28. It was considered defiling to walk on a grave (Num 19:16). So contact with these grave-like Pharisees made people unclean. What a blow this was at the pride of these religious leaders who thought they were better than everyone else!

**11:45** "Lawyers" – note at 10:25. Did his conscience tell him that their case was the

same as that of the Pharisees?

**11:46** Matt 23:4.

**11:47,48** Matt 23:29-32.

**11:49** Compare with Matt 23:34.

**11:50,51** Matt 23:35,36.

**11:52** They were the teachers, the gurus to whom the people listened. Instead of imparting true spiritual knowledge of God's Word, they perverted the Word and obscured the truth. They were neither the first nor the last to do so. And they tried to keep people from coming to Christ – Matt 23:13.

**11:53,54** They should have repented and wept out their confession before His feet. Instead they hardened themselves in their self-righteousness and pride.

**12:1** Matt 16:6,12.

**12:2,3** Matt 10:26; Mark 4:22; Heb 4:13; Ps 33:13-15; 139:11,12; Prov 5:21.

**12:4,5** Matt 10:28; Heb 10:31.

**12:6,7** Matt 10:29-31.



8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses me in the presence of men, the Son of man will also confess him in the presence of the angels of God, 9 but he who denies me in the presence of men will be denied in the presence of the angels of God.

10 "And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, he will be forgiven *for it*, but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven *for it*.

11 "And when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you will answer or what you will say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

13 And one in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14 And he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?"

15 And he said to them, "Watch out, and beware of greed, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses."

16 And he spoke a parable to them, saying, "The ground of a certain rich man was very productive. 17 And he thought to himself, saying, 'What will I do, because I have no room to store my crops?' 18 And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and there store all my crops and goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool, this very night your soul will be demanded from you. Then who will have those things which you have provided?'

21 "This is what he is like who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

22 And he said to his disciples, "Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about the body, what you will wear. 23 Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap. They have neither a storehouse nor a barn. And God feeds them. How much more valuable you are than the birds!

25 "And which of you by worrying can add a single cubit to his height? 26 If you, then, are not able to do what is least, why worry about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow. They do not work, they do not spin; and yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. 28 Now if God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *he will clothe you*, O you of little faith! 29 And do not be searching *your mind* for what you will eat, or what you will drink, and do not have an anxious mind. 30 For all these things the people of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you have need of these things. 31 But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things will also come to you.

32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell what you have, and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves which do not get old, an unfailing treasure in the heavens, where no thief comes near, no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**12:8,9** See 9:26; Matt 10:33; Mark 8:38; Rom 10:9,10. Men are not saved because they confess Christ, but by grace through faith (Eph 2:8,9). But those who are saved will confess Christ; it is one of the evidences that they have trusted and received Him.

**12:10** Matt 12:31,32.

**12:11,12** Matt 10:17,19.

**12:14** "Judge" - He did not come for that purpose—John 3:17; 12:47. When He comes again He will judge the world - Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1.

**12:15** This warning against greed is as much needed today as ever - 6:20; Matt 19:23,24; 1 Cor 6:10; Eph 5:3,5; Col 3:5; 1 Tim 6:9-11.

**12:16** "Parable" - Matt 13:3,18-23. This one is found only in Luke. The truth taught here is found throughout the Bible.

**12:17-19** This man's character is revealed by his words. There is no word here of thanks to God or of giving to God's work, no word about helping those in need. The man was self-centered, selfish and thought only of his own pleasure.

**12:20** The man thought he was wise - God thought him a fool (Isa 55:8,9). God considers detestable what sinful men

esteem highly (Luke 16:15). Selfishness is foolishness, leaving God out of one's thoughts and plans is foolishness, assuming that we may live for many years and live as we please is foolishness (Jam 4:13-17). It is wise to do as Jesus said in Matt 6:19-21. Our lives are in God's hands and He can take them when He pleases.

**12:21** This is the only place in the Bible this striking phrase "Rich toward God" is used. Compare vs 33,34; Prov 19:17. "Rich toward God" is the exact opposite of rich toward self (vs 17-19).

**12:22-31** Matt 6:25-33.

**12:29** Believers' hearts should be set only on God and His kingdom. See Col 3:1,2. Compare Phil 3:19,20.

**12:31** See Matt 6:33.

**12:32** This means "Do not be afraid to be poor, to have nothing, to be cast on God's grace for the necessities of life. God will not fail His people. He has given them places in His kingdom. He will surely give everything else they need" (Rom 8:32; Phil 4:19).

**12:33** See 3:11; 6:30; 11:41; 14:33; 18:22, 28. Treasures in heaven will last forever.

**12:34** Matt 6:19-21.



35 "Let your waist be belted, and *your* lamps burning, 36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master to return from the wedding, so that when he comes and knocks, they may immediately open the door to him. 37 When the master comes, *blessed are* those servants whom he will find watching. Truly I say to you, he will fasten his belt, have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. 38 And if he comes in the second watch, or in the third watch, and finds *them* like that, *blessed are* those servants. 39 And understand this: If the house owner had known what time the thief would come, he would have watched and not let his house be broken into.

40 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of man will come at a time that you do not expect."

41 Then Peter said to him, "Lord, are you speaking this parable for us, or for everyone?"

42 And the Lord said, "Who, then, is that faithful and wise manager, whom *his* master places over his household, to give *them their* food allowance at the proper time? 43 When his master comes, *blessed is* that servant whom he will find doing so. 44 I tell you the truth, he will make him ruler over all that he has. 45 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is postponing his coming,' and begins to beat the men servants and maidservants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, 46 the lord of that servant will come in a day when he is not looking for *him*, and at an hour he is not aware of, and will cut him in two, and will appoint him to a place with unbelievers.

**12:35** See the parable at Matt 25:1-13.

**12:37** Matt 24:42,46; 25:13.

**12:38** This refers to a time after Christ's second coming. Imagine the King of kings and Lord of lords, after He appears in glory, waiting on tables where His disciples sit! But, then, the Lord Jesus always delighted in humble service – 22:27; Matt 20:28; John 13:4,5,12-16, and appearing in glory will not change Him. Alas, that so many who claim to be His followers should be so different.

**12:39-46** Matt 24:43-51.

**12:47,48** In the day of judgment God will take into account the varying degrees of knowledge and opportunity that people have had.

**12:49** Fire is often used symbolically in the Bible – Ex 3:2; 13:21; 19:18; Deut 32:32; Ps 18:8; Matt 3:11. Here it may signify the persecutions and troubles that would accompany the spread of His gospel in the world. "Fire" may signify such things – Ps 66:12; Isa 43:2; Lam 1:13. But why would the Lord Jesus want such fire to come? Because He knew it was bound up with the advancement of His kingdom and the spread of His truth.

**12:50** By "baptism" here He meant the sufferings and death He was soon to be immersed in.

"Pressed" – Jesus experienced the

47 "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself*, and did not do according to his will, shall be beaten with many blows. 48 But he who did not know, and did things deserving a beating, will be beaten with few *blows*. For whoever has been given much, much will be demanded from him; and to whom much is entrusted, they will ask much more from him.

49 "I am come to send fire on the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how pressed I am until it is accomplished!

51 "Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? I tell you, no, division instead. 52 For from now on, in one house, five will be divided, three against two and two against three. 53 The father will be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

54 And he also said to the people, "When you see a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. 55 And when *you* see the south wind blowing, you say, 'It will be hot'; and it is. 56 *You* hypocrites! You can discern the appearance of the sky and the earth, but how is it that you do not discern the present time? 57 Yes, why don't you judge by yourselves what is right?

58 "When you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, *while* on the road, make an effort

compulsion of divine love which was determined that salvation should come to the human race. It pressed Him ever onward to face any suffering, even the death of the cross as a substitute for sinners.

**12:51-53** Matt 10:34-36.

**12:54** "The west" meant a cloud from the Mediterranean Sea bringing moisture.

**12:55** The south wind blew from the desert.

**12:56** The Lord Jesus was saying that the signs of a change in the spiritual climate were as plain as any sign indicating a change in physical climate. See 7:18-23.

**12:57** The people (v 54) should not permit others to tell them what to think and believe. The evidence that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, was clear and they should recognize it and act on it. It is a sad fact that many today also will not think for themselves about the evidence Jesus gives, but allow themselves to be led astray by some guru or other.

**12:58,59** The meaning of these verses may be quite different from the similar ones in Matt 5:25,26. The context here (vs 49-57) leads us to think so. The meaning may be as follows – the "magistrate" signifies God the judge of all men; the "adversary" signifies God's law which condemns men (compare Eph 2:13-17; Col 2:13,14) – or

to be delivered from him so he will not drag you off to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you in to jail. 59 I tell you *that* you will not leave there until you have paid the very last coin."

**13** At that same time some were present who told him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus in answer said to them, "Do you think that those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered this way? 3 I tell you, No. But unless you repent, you will all perish just as *they did*. 4 Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower in Siloam fell on them, do you think they were worse sinners than everyone *else* who lived in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, No. But unless you repent, you will all perish just as *they did*."

6 He also spoke this parable: "A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and looked for fruit on it, and found none. 7 Then he said to the man taking care of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and haven't found any. Cut it

possibly the one the Jews continually disputed with and regarded as an adversary – the Lord Jesus. The "prison" signifies hell (compare 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). The spiritual lesson is – be reconciled to God, His law and His Son while there is opportunity (2 Cor 5:18-21). **13:1** "Pilate" – 3:1; Matt 27:2. This incident is not recorded anywhere else. It gives us some insight into Pilate's character. He had people put to death while they were worshiping at the temple. The reason is not given.

**13:2,3** When great disasters come on people, we may be tempted to think they deserve those disasters because they were worse than others. See notes at Job 4:7-9; 8:3. This may actually be so in some cases (2 Peter 2:5-7). But this was not so in the case of these Galileans and often may not be so. The Lord Jesus wants us to learn a lesson from disasters – the need to repent and not to think we are better than those who suffer. Disasters could as justly come on us as on them. Note on repentance at Matt 3:2.

**13:4** Siloam was in Jerusalem (Neh 3:15; John 9:7). This incident is also not recorded anywhere else.

**13:6-9** This parable, found only in Luke, connects with the verses above and speaks of God overseeing the affairs of men and in His wisdom bringing judgment on them. He may use men like Pilate to do this, or falling towers, or any other means. See Lev 26:14-33; Deut 28:20-29; Jud 2:14,15; Isa 10:5,6; Jer 14:11,12.

**13:6** In speaking of the fig tree here the Lord Jesus may have had both individuals and the nation Israel in mind. See Matt 21:18-22 and notes. The man who had the

fig tree signifies God. The man who takes care of the vineyard signifies His servants or perhaps the Lord Jesus Himself. We may be sure that God is always observing what men do and do not do, and is always removing some from earth and patiently waiting for a limited time in the case of others. Every life without good fruit is in danger – Matt 3:10; 7:19; Isa 51:1-7; John 15:2,6.

down. Why should it use up the ground?' 8 And he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also until I dig around it and fertilize it. 9 And if it bears fruit, *good*; and if not, *then* after that you can cut it down.'"

10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. 11 And, suddenly, a woman was there who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and she was bent over and could not straighten up at all.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her* and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." 13 And he laid hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the synagogue responded with indignation because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, and said to the people, "There are six days in which men ought to work. Therefore come and be healed on those *days*, and not on the Sabbath day."

15 Then the Lord answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or *his* donkey from the manger, and lead *him* off to water? 16 And should not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom

fig tree signifies God. The man who takes care of the vineyard signifies His servants or perhaps the Lord Jesus Himself. We may be sure that God is always observing what men do and do not do, and is always removing some from earth and patiently waiting for a limited time in the case of others. Every life without good fruit is in danger – Matt 3:10; 7:19; Isa 51:1-7; John 15:2,6. **13:7** Men who do not bear fruit for God are simply taking up space on His earth to no purpose. Should He permit them to remain indefinitely?

**13:8,9** The man who took care of the vineyard by interceding for the fig tree delayed judgment at least for a while and, if the fig tree began to bear fruit, turned judgment away altogether. Compare Gen 18:22-33; Ex 32:7-14,31,32; Ezek 22:30,31. Where would any of us "fig trees" be, if the Lord Jesus didn't pray for us incessantly? (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

**13:10** "Synagogues" – Matt 4:23.

"Sabbath" – Ex 20:8-11.

**13:11** An evil spirit (demon) can cause various physical infirmities – Matt 9:32,33; 12:22; Mark 9:25. But this does not give us the right to think that every illness of every kind is the work of a demon.

**13:13** Matt 19:13; Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23; 16:18.

**13:14** Matt 12:2,9-14.

**13:15** He called them hypocrites here because they had two standards, one for themselves, another for others. And they cared more for the welfare of their animals than for human beings whom they were commanded in the law to love – Lev 19:18.

**13:16** She was a descendant of Abraham

Satan has bound now for eighteen years, be set free from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame. And all the people rejoiced because of all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 Then he said, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? 19 It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his garden, and it grew and became a large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches."

20 And again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until the whole was leavened."

22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and travelling toward Jerusalem. 23 Then someone said to him, "Lord, are only a few saved?" And he said to them,

24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will try to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the master of the house has gotten up and shut the door, and outside you begin to stand and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' he will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 26 Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' 27 But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from. Depart from me, all *you* evildoers.'

28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth

the forefather of the Jewish nation.

"Satan" – 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44; 12:31.

**13:17** "Put to shame" – Ps 25:3; 44:7; 78:66; 83:16; 132:18.

**13:18-21** Matt 13:31-33.

**13:23** Few will be saved in any one time compared with the whole population (Matt 7:14), but there will be many when the saved of all times and places are added together. Compare Rev 7:9.

**13:24** Jesus is saying that an individual should not speculate about the number of people God may save, but make sure he or she is among them.

"Strive zealously" – this is one word in the Greek. Everyone should attempt with great zeal and earnestness to enter God's spiritual kingdom. This does not mean that a person can gain entrance into it by hard work, or piling up merit, or some such thing. Rather, it indicates that there will be difficulties and obstacles in the way of those who would go through the narrow door into it, there will be opposing forces. Also it suggests that there is great danger for those who have not entered. It indicates also that there is something very great and wonderful to be received and experienced by those who enter, something worth all the struggle. See notes at Matt 7:13,14; 11:12.

when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrown out. 29 And they will come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and will sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and there are those who are first who will be last."

31 That same day some of the Pharisees came, saying to him, "Get out and leave here, for Herod wants to kill you."

32 And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Look, I drive out demons, and I perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I will reach the goal.' 33 Nevertheless I must go on today, and tomorrow, and the following *day*, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem."

34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to you, how often I would have gathered your children together, as a hen *gathers* her brood under *its* wings, and you were not willing! 35 Now your house is left to you desolate; and truly I say to you, you will not see me until *the time* comes when you say, 'Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

**14** And it happened when he went into the house of one of the leading Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched him closely. 2 And there in front of him was a certain

Compare Matt 5:29,30.

**13:25** The door of opportunity will not remain open forever – Matt 25:10,11; Prov 1:20-33.

**13:26** They should have understood that the opportunities they had to hear His Word only increased their guilt, since they did not obey it.

**13:27** Matt 7:23; 25:12.

**13:28-30** Matt 8:11,12; 19:30.

**13:31** Matt 14:1. Did they vainly imagine they could get rid of the Lord Jesus by frightening Him?

**13:32** A fox has a reputation of being a sly animal. But Jesus had no fear of Herod or anyone else as He went toward the goal set before Him. The Lord Jesus knew what He was going to do and what would happen to Him and how and when He would finish His course on earth – v 33; Matt 16:21; 17:22,23; John 7:30.

**13:33** This was spoken ironically. Many prophets had been killed in Jerusalem and Jesus knew He would die there, and not at the hands of Herod in some other place.

**13:34,35** Matt 23:37,38.

**14:1** "Pharisees" – Matt 3:7. They watched Jesus because of 13:10-17.

"Sabbath" – Ex 20:8-11.

**14:2** Dropsy is a disease that causes swelling of the limbs.

man who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus responded and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" 4 And they kept quiet. And he took *him*, healed him, and let him go, 5 and responded to them, saying, "Which of you who has a donkey or an ox fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" 6 And they could not give him an answer to these things.

7 And he told a parable to those who had been invited, when he observed how they chose the places of honour, saying to them,

8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit in the place of honour, for perhaps a man more distinguished than you has been invited by him, 9 and the one who invited you and him will come and say to you, 'Give this man your *place*,' and you, humiliated, have to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will have honour in the presence of those who sit to eat with you. 11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

12 Then he said to the one who invited him, "When you give a dinner or supper, don't invite

your friends, or your brothers, or your relatives or rich neighbours, for they may invite you in return, and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, for, because they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

15 And when one of those who were sitting with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is *he* who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

16 Then he said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper, and invited many. 17 And he sent his servant at supper time to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.'

18 "And they all with one *mind* began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I need to go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 And another said, 'I have married a wife, and so I can't come.'

21 "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house was angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.'

**14:3** Jesus knew the answer – 13:15,16; Matt 12:11,12. He was trying to make them think sensibly.

"Lawyers" – note at 10:25.

**14:7** Matt 23:6,7.

**14:11** Jesus here makes a spiritual application of the above. God is the one who will humble or exalt men, and He will do it taking into consideration their character and attitude – 11:43; 18:14; 20:46; Prov 3:34; 25:6,7; Matt 18:4; 23:12; Jam 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6.

**14:12-14** Jesus here gives a good principle to follow, but how many have ever followed it? It is one that the vast majority of people would rather hear than practice.

**14:14** "Repaid" – God will do this – Prov 19:17; 14:21; Matt 10:42.

"Resurrection of the righteous" – John 5:28,29; 1 Cor 15:22,23,51,52; 1 Thess 4:16; Rev 20:4-6.

**14:15** "Eat bread" – means to partake of a meal or feast. Compare Isa 25:6; Matt 8:11; 25:1-10; 26:29; Rev 19:9.

"Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17. Blessed indeed are they who will feast in it. But in the following parable the Lord Jesus points out that many people do not understand this and reject every invitation to come to that feast. Compare Matt 22:1-14.

**14:16** "A certain man" signifies God Himself. At first He sent His invitation to the Jews to whom Christ came – Matt 10:6; 15:24; Rom 1:16. Now He sends invitations to people all over the world – Matt 28:18-20;

Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47.

**14:17** Everything having to do with salvation and God's kingdom has been prepared by God Himself. Jesus is the feast God prepared. Compare John 6:27,33,35,53-58. All that people need to do is accept God's invitation and come to Him in faith.

**14:18** Here is an amazing thing! Who does not like to attend a great feast? These people behaved as if they had been invited to a very unpleasant occasion that had to be avoided at any cost. The reason for their behavior is found in verses like John 3:19,20; 7:7; 15:18; Rom 8:6,7; 2 Cor 4:3,4; Eph 4:18.

The excuses men make to keep from receiving Christ as their Lord and Saviour are as foolish as these recorded here. What sensible man buys a field without ever seeing it? Or buys oxen without seeing and testing them (v 19)? What sensible man would not think that perhaps his wife would like to go with him to a feast (v 20)? The truth is they simply did not want to go to the feast, and no excuse could conceal this fact.

**14:21** The man was sure to be angry. By refusing his invitation the invited ones were giving a terrible insult. And those who refuse God's invitation to salvation and blessedness and heaven are insulting Him. And will He not be angry? But in the end He will have His house full of guests, even though they may be poor and disabled in themselves. See 1 Cor 1:26-29.

22 And the servant said, 'Master, it has been done as you commanded, and still there is room.'

23 And the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedgerows, and compel *them* to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 For I tell you that none of those men who were invited will taste of my supper.'

25 And great crowds were going along with him. And he turned around and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 "For which of you, intending to build a tower,

does not sit down first, and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish it? 29 Otherwise, after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish *it*, everyone who sees *it* will begin to make fun of him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

31 "Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand *men* to meet the one who is coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 Otherwise, while the other is still a long way off, he will send a delegation and ask for terms of peace.

33 "So, in the same way, any of you who does not give up all that he has, he cannot be my disciple.

**14:23** This shows how God longs for the salvation of men. It is not enough for Him to prepare it all in Christ, and send out His invitations everywhere through Christ's servants. He uses every means to overcome people's reluctance to be saved. The great Creator pleads with His creatures to come for blessings which, if they displayed the slightest spiritual understanding, they should be rushing eagerly to obtain (Isa 55:1-3; Ezek 18:30-32; 2 Cor 5:18-21).

**14:24** This was a warning to the Jewish nation which was rejecting Him (compare Matt 21:43), but also to any individual who keeps refusing God's invitation to come to Christ.

**14:25** He knew that many in such crowds were not true followers. And many, doubtless, would misinterpret stories such as vs 16-23 and think that the requirements for discipleship were not very demanding. Now the Lord sets out to correct any possible misunderstanding. He gives three absolutely necessary requirements for those who would follow Him and learn from Him. These are:

The disciple's attitude toward others must be right (v 26)

His attitude toward himself must be right (vs 26,27)

And his attitude toward things must be right (v 33).

These requirements are inward attitudes of the heart, and they reveal the work of God there. They are not in any of us by nature, but are produced by the operation of the Holy Spirit when He brings people to true faith in Christ. Observe that the qualifications Christ demands for discipleship have nothing to do with intellect, education, position in society, nationality, or other matters men make much of.

**14:26** The Lord Jesus demands first place in His disciple's heart. See Matt 10:37. The order is Christ first, others second, self last (or indeed not at all - v 27). In many professing Christians, alas, this order is reversed - self first, others second, Christ last (or not at all).

"Hate" - we should compare this with Matt 10:37. Here it seems that "hate" means

"love less." Disciples should not literally hate anyone (Matt 5:43-48; 22:37,38). But our love for family members must sometimes seem like hate compared to our love for Christ. Love for Him will cause us to leave them, if necessary, to follow Him, to give our life to Him rather than to them.

"Hate. . . even his own life" - the disciple must not live for self. His love for Christ must be such that his love for himself seems like hate, and causes him to try to put all his selfishness to death. Compare Luke 9:23; etc.

"Disciple" - see note at Matt 10:1. To be a true believer is to be a disciple. How can we think that people become believers in Christ without being taught by Him (disciple means pupil, someone under instruction)? Those who want to be believers without being disciples are showing that they do not really love the Lord Jesus or His teaching. And if they do not love Him or His teaching is it not vain to regard themselves as believers? See 1 Cor 16:22.

**14:27** Matt 10:38; Luke 9:23.

**14:28,29** Discipleship is about building a life - a spiritual life for God (Matt 7:24). The person who does not meet the requirements will not be able to build and finish. Many seem to begin well who do not go on. This is because from the beginning their inner attitudes were not right.

**14:31,32** Discipleship is about a battle - a spiritual warfare (Eph 6:10-18). Those who do not meet Christ's requirements will not be able to win. The only way to defeat Satan is to love Christ above all. Compare Rev 12:11. Those who want to be disciples of Jesus should in advance consider carefully what is required to finish and to win (vs 28,31).

**14:33** The disciple's attitude toward things must be right (6:20:24; 12:15; Matt 6:19; 1 Tim 6:6-11). God will not give us the resources we need to finish the spiritual building, or win the war unless we are willing to give up all of our own resources for Christ. Compare Phil 3:7,8. This is an infallible principle - those who renounce will receive, those who greedily grasp will lose (Compare 9:24; 17:33; Matt 10:39; John 12:25).



34 "Salt is good. But if salt loses its taste, what will it be seasoned with? 35 It is not fit for the soil or for the manure pile. Men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

**15** Then all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners, and eats with them."

3 And he spoke this parable to them, saying, 4 "What man among you who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the pasture and go after the lost one until he finds it? 5 And when he finds *it*, he puts *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls *his* friends and neighbours together and says to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.'

7 "I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance.

Here is another – if we are not willing to give up all we have for Christ, this shows that we value what we have more than Him and His blessings. And why should God give us something that we value so little? Compare Prov 4:7; Mark 10:21,22. **14:34,35** Matt 5:13; Mark 9:50. To profess to be Christ's followers and to be lacking in the requirements for discipleship is to be like salt that has no saltiness. It is fit for nothing, and its end is to be thrown out (compare Matt 25:30). Christianity without discipleship, without sacrifice is not only useless, it is surely a source of amusement to the devil.

Every person who reads this should ask "Am I really a disciple of Christ? In the light of these requirements, do I even want to be a disciple of His?" The answer we give to such questions is exceedingly important and has eternal consequences.

**15:1** Note on tax collectors at Matt 5:46. "Sinners" were those who did not, like the Pharisees, pretend to be righteous and holy.

**15:2** See Matt 9:11-13. They complained when Christ did the very thing they should have done – Ezek 34:2-4; Zech 11:16.

"Pharisees" – Matt 3:7.

**15:3** Note on parables at Matt 13:1,18-23. **15:4-7** Notes at Matt 18:12-14.

**15:7** Note on repentance at Matt 3:2. See also Matt 9:13. The religious leaders complained about Jesus going after lost sheep (sinners – v 2). What brought grumbling and criticism from them brought joy to the whole of heaven.

"Who have no need of repentance" – are there any such? Yes, all those who are in heaven. On earth too there are many who have already repented of their wanderings and have come to Christ. And there are many who, like the Pharisees (18:9), think

8 "Or what woman who has ten pieces of silver and loses one piece, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds *it*? 9 And when she finds *it*, she calls *her* friends and neighbours together, and says, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece that I lost.'

10 "I tell you, in the same way there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

11 And he said, "A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the share in the estate coming *to me*.' And he divided *his* property between them.

13 "And not many days later the younger son gathered everything together, and went off to a far country. There he wasted his resources in wild living. 14 And when he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in need. 15 And he went and attached himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he longed to fill his

they do not need to repent when actually it is the thing they need most.

**15:8-10** The sheep was lost in the wilderness away from the fold (v 4). This coin was lost in the house of the woman. The sheep was lost because its foolish nature is to wander. The coin was lost due to the carelessness of the woman. The woman can hardly signify Christ (who is never careless), but she may well signify Christ's church. Both the lost sheep and lost coin represent the lost sinner, or possibly the backsliding Christian. And the result of the finding is the same – joy.

**15:11-32** The sheep was lost because of its foolish wandering, and the coin because of carelessness. The son made a deliberate choice to forsake his father's house and do his own thing. Compare Isa 53:6.

**15:12** This son represents those who have no thoughts for eternity, who want whatever they think is coming to them in this world, and want it now.

**15:13** He did not want his father around to restrain him in anything he wished to do. He is like those who want to act as they please without any restraining influence from God. His wild living speaks of what every person who forsakes God does in spiritual matters (though such may actually pile up material wealth) – their strength, time, power of thought, talents, etc, are all thrown away on vain and empty pursuits instead of used for God (Isa 55:1,2; Eccl 2:4-11).

**15:15** To Jews pigs were useless and unclean animals (Lev 11:7). This man fell to a very low place indeed. So has the sinner – he occupies himself with useless, unclean things (compare Isa 64:6; Matt 15:18-20; 23:27; Rom 1:24; 6:19; Eph 4:17-19; 1 Pet 1:18).

**15:16** What sinners get in this world is



stomach with the husks that the pigs ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

17 "And when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread and I am dying from hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against you, 19 and am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired men.'

20 "And he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, was moved with compassion and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against you, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him. And put a ring on his hand, and sandals on *his* feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill *it*. And let us eat and celebrate, 24 for this son of mine was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.' And they

began to celebrate.

25 "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and drew near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.'

28 "And he was angry and would not go in. So his father came out, and begged him. 29 And in answer he said to *his* father: 'Look, all these years I have slaved for you, and never disobeyed an order of yours. And yet you never gave me *even* a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours comes, who has consumed your possessions with prostitutes, for him you killed the fattened calf!'

31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right for us to celebrate and be glad, for this brother of yours was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found.'"

really nothing better than pig's food. See what Paul thought – Phil 3:8. And in the way that is most important, there is no one in the world who will help them or who can help them. Sin brings spiritual poverty and utter destitution, beyond the help of any except God – Rom 5:6; 7:18.

**15:17** People who forsake God and do their own thing are spiritually insane (Eccl 9:3), and need to come to their senses. Remembering his father's house helped this man to make some good decisions.

**15:18,19** This is the language of repentance – Matt 3:6; 1 John 1:9. And this is what Jesus has been speaking of from the beginning of this chapter – vs 1,2,7.

**15:20** See what God is like and how He treats sinners who come to Him. He gives no rebuke, no complaint, no punishment, but only a loving welcome.

"Kissed" – he received kisses rather than the kicks or the curses he deserved (compare Isa 55:7; John 3:16; 6:37; Eph 2:4,5; Titus 3:4,5; Jam 4:8).

**15:21** This is true of every one of us in our behavior toward God. We have all proved ourselves unworthy to be God's children (Ps 51:4,5; Isa 64:6; Rom 3:9-19). We need to recognize and humbly confess this.

**15:22** God gives the repenting sinner the best robe that even He has – Isa 61:10; Zech 3:4; Rom 3:21-24. The ring signifies acceptance and exaltation to a high place (see Gen 41:42; Est 3:10,12. Compare Eph 1:13,14; 2:4-7). God gives the repenting sinner signs that he has been accepted. The sandals may speak of the truth of Eph 6:15.

**15:23** The Jews were non-vegetarians and

to them the calf was a symbol of the best thing available for a feast. Jesus used a phrase that would best convey to them a special occasion for rejoicing. If we were telling the parable now, perhaps some of us in India would use different terminology to teach the same truth.

**15:24** The father says the boy was "dead." Compare Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1,5; Col 2:13; 1 Tim 5:6. Our spiritual death in sin is the reason why the new birth is absolutely necessary (John 3:3,5,7). This whole chapter teaches the joy and celebration in heaven over repenting sinners – vs 7,10; see Zeph 3:17. Every time a sinner turns to God is a special occasion to Him.

**15:28** This brother signifies the religious leaders of Israel who grumbled when Jesus brought sinners to God (v 2). And Jesus spoke all the parables in this chapter to them (vs 3,8,11). Such people have not disappeared from earth. In vs 28-30 we see some of the sins of this kind of people – anger when mercy was shown, self-esteem, envy when another was blessed, and what looks very much like hatred (he didn't even call the younger son "brother" – v 30, and he refused to go in to the feast. Compare 14:18; Matt 23:13. In God's eyes these sins are as bad as (or even worse than) the sins of the younger brother.

**15:31** Israel was God's special nation (Deut 7:6). The kingdom of God was in the hands of the Jews – Matt 21:43. See also Rom 3:1,2; 9:3,5. This elder son represents their leaders in Jesus's day. See what is said of believers now in 1 Cor 3:21-23. All that God has is theirs.

**15:32** Verse 24.

**16** And he also said to his disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a manager, and an accusation was made to him that this man was wasting his property. 2 And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.'

3 "Then the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking away from me this position of manager. I cannot dig. I am ashamed to beg. 4 I know what to do, so that when I am dismissed from the position of manager *people* will receive me into their homes.' 5 So he called each one of his master's debtors, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

6 "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and write fifty.' 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

**16:1** The accusation was of mismanagement which had resulted in loss to the rich man.

"Wasting" – in Greek the same word used in 15:13,30 about the prodigal son.

**16:4** He determined to make friends who would help him in the future after he lost his job.

**16:8** The master was not praising the manager's dishonesty – he would have hated that. But he could not help seeing how cleverly the manager provided for the future. The Lord Jesus then makes a comment on this.

"Children of this world" – an idiomatic way of saying "people of this world" – those tied to this fallen world, those who do not know God. The "children of light" are people joined to the light of the world, the Lord Jesus – Matt 5:14; John 12:36; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5. Worldly people act more shrewdly in worldly matters than God's people in heavenly matters. They think of their future on earth and many of them, as the manager in this parable, use wealth to make friends.

**16:9** Here Jesus gives the one lesson He wants us to learn from the parable. The people of light should use what they have of this world's goods in a wise and spiritual way to help people. Later such people will welcome them in heaven. This does not mean that salvation and heaven can be gained by helping people financially (see Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:5,6). It does mean that we can lay up treasure in heaven and meet people there whom we have helped on earth (compare Matt 6:19-21; 25:34-40; Ps 112:5,6,9; Heb 6:10).

"Money, that unrighteous thing" – the Greek literally has "unrighteous wealth." But here this does not mean wealth gained in a crooked or unrighteous way. It means wealth that is gained in this unrighteous

8 "And the master commended the unrighteous manager, because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this world are more shrewd among their people than the children of light.

9 "And I say to you, Make friends for yourselves through money, *that* unrighteous *thing*, so that when it fails, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. 10 He who is trustworthy in very little is trustworthy also in much, and he who is unrighteous in very little is unrighteous also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been trustworthy in the *matter* of money, *the* unrighteous *thing* who will entrust the true *riches* to you? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy in what belongs to another, who will give you *what could be* your own?

13 "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve *both* God and money."

14 And the Pharisees also, who were lovers of

world. And all that is connected with this unrighteous world is tainted to some extent with the world's unrighteousness.

**16:10** Lest anyone should think He was commending dishonesty in the above parable the Lord Jesus sets forth this exceedingly important principle. A person's character is revealed in small things as well as in large. See how the Lord applies this in 19:11-26; Matt 25:21-23. And all of us are being tested and revealed by what we do with money. Some Christians seem to think that if they believe the right doctrines it is all right for them to cheat, lie and swindle others. This is totally false and dangerous thinking. If dishonesty rules a person's life, can we really think that person knows and loves the Lord Jesus who is the Truth (John 14:6)? Loving Jesus surely means loving truth also. The Lord demands absolute honesty and faithfulness in whatever He puts in our hands (1 Cor 4:1,2). The believer's whole future position in God's kingdom depends now on this factor. Very terrible will be the future loss of those who are dishonest and unfaithful in money matters now.

**16:11** True riches are spiritual riches, eternal riches, riches of God's kingdom. The one who entrusts, or does not entrust, them to us is God.

**16:12** "What belongs to another" means earthly things entrusted to us. "Your own" means heavenly things which can become one's own in Christ (1 Cor 3:21-23; Col 1:12; 3:23-25).

**16:13** Notes at Matt 6:24. Here in Luke the subject is a wise use of worldly goods and faithfulness. There is only one way to be faithful and wise and that is to make God the master of one's life and to reject money as the master.

**16:14** These Pharisees, like many men today, instead of learning from the Son of

money, heard all these things, and they scoffed at him.

15 And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly prized among men is abomination in the sight of God.

16 "The Law and the Prophets *were proclaimed* until John. From that time the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone is forcibly pressing into it. 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one pen stroke of the Law to fail.

18 "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries her that who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery.

19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and delighted in luxury every day. 20 And there was a certain

beggar named Lazarus who was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "And it happened that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried. 23 And in hell he raised his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'

25 "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, just as Lazarus *received* bad things. But now he is comforted, and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great gulf has been

God, sneered at Him. Money was their master, and they were deceived into thinking it was a good one. Money is a good servant but a bad master. The love of it leads to destruction and ruin – 1 Tim 6:6-10. **16:15** See 10:29; 18:9; Matt 6:1,2,5,16. It is surprising that men think they can do anything and think anything they like, and God will not know it (Ps 10:11; 64:5; 73:11; 94:7-11). In the last words of this verse we have another principle which will be true as long as the world is occupied by sinful men. God despises what they think is great. Here the subject is the love of money – an attitude that God hates – but the principle applies to many other things highly regarded by men in general.

**16:16** Matt 11:12,13.

**16:17** Compare Matt 5:17,18.

**16:18** Matt 5:31,32. Jesus gives an example of the continuing force of God's law. It is very likely that many of the Pharisees had put away wives and married others. That may be the reason Jesus spoke these words here.

**16:19** In the following verses the Lord Jesus gives a powerful illustration to emphasize the truth He had already taught. It sums up much of Christ's teaching on the rich and poor. "A certain rich man" represents those who have not been faithful in using what God has given them (v 13), have loved money (v 14), and have highly valued what is detestable in God's sight (v 15). This rich man was guilty "every day" of using for himself the wealth that God had enabled him to have. This was misusing it. And he had no desire to help the poor (v 21).

**16:20** This is not, of course, the Lazarus of John 11:1-44.

**16:21** Lazarus was utterly destitute, but the rich man did not lift a finger to help him. In this way he showed his selfishness, hardness of heart, and contempt for God's Word which speaks everywhere of helping the poor (Lev 19:10; Deut 15:7,8; Ps 41:1; 82:3; 112:9; Prov 19:17; Mark 10:21).

**16:22** "Angels" – Gen 16:7.

"Abraham" – Genesis chapters 12-25. Abraham is called the father of all who trust in God – Rom 4:11,12. Going to "Abraham's bosom" indicates that the beggar was a believer as Abraham was. The words signify the place where God's people went after death. It is called "paradise" in 23:43. Not all poor people go to the place of blessedness – only the poor who trust in Christ, who have the faith Abraham had (Rom 4:16; 5:1).

**16:23** "Hell" – the Greek has "Hades." "Hades" is used 11 times in the Greek New Testament (Matt 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; 1 Cor 15:55; Rev 1:18; 6:8; 20:13,14). It is similar in meaning to the Hebrew word "Sheol" – see notes at Gen 37:35. For those who die in their sins it is a place of torment (v 25). Not all rich men go there. Abraham himself had been rich (Gen 13:2). But it is not easy for rich men to be saved – 18:24,25. This rich man went into a place of punishment because he was an unbeliever who showed his unbelief by the way he lived (vs 19,21). He was like the man in 12:16-21, and like those in Jam 5:1-5. He illustrates Matt 25:41-46 and 1 Tim 6:9,10. Observe that this rich man was "far off" from Abraham. Paradise and Hades were separated by a great chasm or void or abyss, but were close enough for those in one place to see into the other, and to hear one another.

**16:24** He who showed no pity now asked for pity. But he did not receive any mercy (Matt 5:7; 7:2; Ps 18:25,26; Gal 6:7). Observe that after death the rich man (as well as Lazarus and Abraham) was conscious. The soul does not sleep at death, only the body.

"Flame" – Matt 3:10; 5:22; 7:19; 13:40,42; 18:8; 25:41; Mark 8:43-39; Rev 20:15; 21:8.

**16:25** There is going to be a great reversal of things after death and after God judges the world.

**16:26** The state after death is irreversible,

fixed, so that those who would cross over from here to you cannot, nor can those *who are* there cross over to us.'

27 "Then he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, 28 (for I have five brothers) so that he can testify to them, so that they too will not come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the Prophets. Let them hear them.'

30 "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

31 "And he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

**17** Then he said to the disciples, "It is impossible for causes of stumbling not to come. But woe *to him* through whom they come! 2 It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3 Watch yourselves! If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

and there will be no getting out of the place of punishment. Compare Matt 25:46. Observe that Jesus' teaching in this story is contrary to the idea of reincarnation. See also Job 11:12; John 3:3; 9:3; Heb 9:27. After people go to the realm of the dead, they are never again reborn on earth – their spirits remain there until the resurrection of their bodies (John 5:28,29).

**16:27,28** Those in Hades may desire the salvation of relatives on earth, but their requests for them will not be answered.

**16:29** "Moses and the prophets" – this refers to that part of the Word of God we now call the Old Testament. Men alive on the earth must believe the truth God has revealed, and turn to God in repentance and faith.

**16:30** This is a vain hope, as Abraham says in the next verse. People's sinful hearts and unbelief are not so easily overcome.

**16:31** People who had refused to believe God's word were not convinced even when the Lord Jesus Himself rose from the dead (Matt 28:11-15). It is not signs and miracles that men need, but hearts made humble and believing and obedient (Matt 5:3-8).

**17:1,2** Matt 18:6,7.

**17:3** Matt 18:15.

**17:4** Compare Matt 18:21,22. Notice here the words "I repent."

**17:5** "Apostles" – Matt 10:2.

"Increase our faith" – at four different times Jesus had spoken to one or all of them of their "little" faith (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8. Some old manuscripts have the phrase "little faith" at 17:20 also). Recognizing the importance of faith, and the smallness of their own faith, and no doubt the need of more faith to be able to

4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day comes back to you, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

7 "But which of you who has a servant plowing or tending *the sheep* will say to him as soon as he comes from the field, 'Go and sit down to eat'? 8 But will he not rather say to him, 'Get things ready for me to eat, put your belt on, and serve me while I eat and drink. And afterwards you may eat and drink?' 9 Does he thank that servant because he did what he was ordered? I think not.

10 "So you also, when you have done all that you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done *only* what it was our duty to do.'"

11 And as he was going to Jerusalem, it came about that he travelled between Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entered a certain village, ten

practice all the sublime teachings Jesus had given them, they make this request.

**17:6** Compare Matt 17:20.

**17:7-10** In these verses Jesus seems to be changing the subject, but actually He is showing how faith may be increased. The way is not to think of ourselves as great ones, or to aim at self-esteem and self-confidence, or to try to feel good about ourselves as if God should be grateful to us because of our service. The way to greater faith is to think lowly of ourselves, as we ought to think (compare 1 Cor 3:6,7; 2 Cor 3:5; Eph 3:8. See notes on Rom 7:14-25 and 2 Cor 12:7-10). The way is to recognize not only that we are unworthy but that the Lord Jesus has the right to tell us what to do, and that we are to put His work first in our lives and obey Him without question.

When we renounce ourselves and make Christ the center of our lives and humbly submit always to His authority, we will find a steadily increasing faith in Him and in His ability to do things. Basically, it is not the believer's faith which works wonders, it is the One whom he or she believes and serves who works the wonders.

"Unprofitable" – the Greek word used here is used only once more in the New Testament, at Matt 25:30. It may also be translated "unworthy" or "worthless" or "useless." When believers have the proper attitude towards themselves their faith in the Lord Jesus can grow. Is it necessary to say that faith also grows by the study of the Bible with an obedient heart? See Rom 10:17.

**17:11** See 9:51.

**17:12** "Lepers" – see note at Lev 13:1. The reason they stood at a distance is in Lev 13:45,46.

men who were lepers met him. They stood at a distance, 13 and raised *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

14 And when he saw *them*, he told them, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And it came about as they went, that they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on *his* face at his feet and gave him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

17 And in response Jesus said, "Were not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? 18 No one is found returning to give glory to God, except this foreigner." 19 And he said to him, "Get up. Go on your way. Your faith has made you well."

20 And when he was asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come while being watched for. 21 Nor will they say, 'Look here!' or, 'Look there!', for, see, the kingdom of God is among you."

22 And he said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will want to see one of the days of the Son of man, and you will not see *it*. 23 And they will say to you, 'Look here!' Or, 'Look there!' Do not go out, or follow *them*. 24 For just as the lightning that flashes from one *part* of the sky shines to the other part of the sky, so also the Son of man will be in his day. 25 But first he must suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation.

**17:13** Who ever spoke such words in vain to the Lord Jesus? Compare Matt 8:2,3.

**17:14** Matt 8:4.

**17:16** "Samaritan" – Matt 10:5; John 4:9.

**17:17,18** Ingratitude is a grave sin and greatly displeases the Lord Jesus. See also Rom 1:21; etc. Notes on thanksgiving at Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 1 Thess 5:18.

**17:19** See 7:50; 8:48; Matt 9:22; 15:28.

**17:20,21** "Pharisees" – Matt 3:7.

"Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17. The Pharisees were thinking of some outward manifestation of God's kingdom such as is described in Isaiah chapter 11. Jesus' answer indicates that the kingdom of God had already come, but not in the way they expected. Compare Matt 3:2; 4:17; 5:3; 11:12; 12:28. He is speaking here of that aspect of God's kingdom which is spiritual and in men's hearts.

"Among" – some versions translate the Greek word used here "within." However, the kingdom of God was not within those Pharisees, not in their hearts. It was among them because the King was among them with some of His people who had received Him and His kingdom. In emphasizing here the unseen spiritual aspect of God's kingdom, Jesus was not denying that sometime in the future God's kingdom would come visibly (vs 24,30).

26 "And just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of man. 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark. And the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 *It will be* the same as it was in the days of Lot also. They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built. 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed *them* all. 30 It will be just like this in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 "In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods inside the house, should not go down to take them away; and he who is in the field also should not return.

32 "Remember Lot's wife.

33 "Whoever strives to preserve his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

34 "I tell you, in that night there will be two *people* in one bed. One will be taken, and the other will be left. 35 Two *people* will be grinding together. One will be taken, and the other left. 36 Two *people* will be in the field. One will be taken, and the other left."

37 And they answered and said to him, "Where, Lord?" And he said to them, "Where the *dead* body is, there the vultures will gather together."

**18** And he spoke a parable to them *to show* that men should always pray, and not lose

**17:22** Note on Son of man at Matt 8:20. He would go into heaven and His disciples would face great troubles and difficulties and long for His return.

**17:23** Matt 24:23.

**17:24** Matt 24:27.

**17:25** See 5:35; 9:22,43-45; 12:50; 13:32,33; Matt 16:21; Isa 53:3.

**17:26,27** Matt 24:37-39.

**17:28,29** Gen 19:1-28.

**17:31** Matt 24:17,18.

**17:32** Gen 19:17,26. When God's judgment begins to fall how foolish to be concerned for material things. But it seems that Lot's wife's heart was set on the things she was leaving behind. Let us make sure that our treasure is in the right place (Matt 6:19-21).

**17:33** Matt 10:39.

**17:34,35** Compare Matt 24:40,41.

**17:37** Matt 24:28.

**18:1** "Always pray and not lose heart" – see 11:3,5-10; 1 Thess 5:17; Eph 6:18. When we do not get quick answers to our prayers, or when they are not answered as we think they should be, we may be tempted to stop praying. If these temptations do not come out of our own minds and hearts, the devil will try to implant them there. Let us not give in to such temptations. Ceasing to pray results in defeat in life, and unfruitfulness in the service of God.



heart, 2 saying, "In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. 3 And there was a widow in that city, and she came to him, saying, 'Get me justice against my enemy.' 4 And he would not for a while. But afterwards he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God, or respect man, 5 yet because this widow is troubling me, I will get her justice, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.'"

6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7 And will not God obtain justice for his chosen *ones*, who cry out day and night to him, also bearing patiently with them? 8 I tell you that he will bring about justice for them quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

9 And he spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed

with himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men: robbers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all I get.'

13 "And the tax collector, standing at a distance, would not even raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *instead* of the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

15 And they also brought infants to him so that he would touch them, but when *his* disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them *near* and said, "Let little children come to me and do not forbid them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such *as these*. 17 Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will not enter it at all."

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, "Good

We must not give up no matter what may be our disappointments, no matter what remembrance of failure, no matter what guilt we feel about past sins, no matter what consciousness we have of our present sinful nature, no matter what thoughts which tell us that it is no use to pray, no matter that God seems far away, no matter that we seem to get no answers to our prayers, no matter what temptations to unbelief, no matter what our circumstances or mental condition or spiritual struggles. Giving up prayer is sin (compare 1 Sam 12:23), and leads to further sin. It is the way to despair and ruin in the spiritual life. So whatever we do or do not do, can or cannot do, let us continue to pray to the one true God, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**18:2** Psalm 82.

**18:7** The Lord Jesus is not at all saying that God is like this unjust judge. His meaning is that if even an unjust judge will give in to repeated requests for justice, how much more will the just and righteous Judge of the world bring about justice for His people who pray persistently, continually (and remember that this just Judge is also a loving and compassionate Father). Of course this does not mean that His people can demand anything they want, whether good for them or not, and get it if they keep on asking. But if they ask for good and right and just things, or anything according to His will they will get it. Compare 1 John 5:14,15.

**18:8** "Son of man" – Matt 8:20. On His second coming see Matt 16:27. The time preceding Christ's second coming will be a time of great trial and tribulation, when few will exercise much faith (Matt 24:9-12; 2 Thess 2:3; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 4:3,4).

**18:9** See 16:15; 7:39; 5:30; Prov 30:12,13; Isa 65:5; Jer 2:35. Such people both then and now remain ignorant

of the truth of Isa 64:6; Jer 17:9; etc. This ignorance is revealed in the Pharisee's prayer in vs 10-12. The enlightenment men need is to see themselves as they really are and God as He really is – holy and infinitely above all men.

**18:10** "Tax collector" – Matt 5:46.

**18:12** "Fast" – Matt 6:16.

"Tithes" – giving a tenth of what one received was taught in the Old Testament – Gen 28:22; Lev 27:30; Num 18:21. The Pharisees did such things (Matt 6:16; 23:23), but neglected far more important matters like justice, mercy and faithfulness and the two greatest commandment in the law (Matt 22:37-40).

**18:13** Here is a brief prayer indeed, but it went from the heart of this sinner to the heart of God. It reveals the kind of knowledge people need – to know their sin and to know that God is merciful. Let us learn that a feeling of our sinfulness and unworthiness does not disqualify us in prayer. In fact, just the opposite. It shows the work of the Holy Spirit in us and is pleasing to God. See Ps 51:17; Isa 6:5; 57:15; 66:2; Matt 5:3; 6:12. On God's mercy see Ps 51:1; Eph 2:4; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3. **18:14** This means that God counted the tax collector righteous and the Pharisee a sinner, though the Pharisee thought he was righteous and the tax collector knew he was a sinner.

"Justified" – means to count as righteous. See Rom 1:17; 3:21-28; 4:7,8. The man who mourned and confessed his sin went home without any sins whatever on his record. Jesus' words reveal God's way with men and we had better learn it (14:11; Matt 23:12; Jam 4:6).

**18:15-17** Matt 19:13-15; Matt 18:3.

**18:18-30** See notes on this incident at Matt 19:16-29; Mark 10:17-30.



Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? God alone is good, no one else. 20 You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honour your father and your mother."

21 And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth."

22 Now when Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have, and distribute *it* to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

23 And when he heard this, he became very sad, for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he had become very sad, he said, "How hard *it is* for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 And those who heard *this* said, "Who then can be saved?"

27 And he said, "Things that are impossible with men are possible with God."

28 Then Peter said, "See, we have left everything and followed you."

29 And he said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or parents, or brothers, or wife, or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not receive many times as much in this present time, and in the world to come, everlasting life."

31 Then he brought the twelve *near* and said to them, "Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man will be fulfilled. 32 For he will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked, insulted, and spit on. 33 And they will

beat *him with* a whip and put him to death; and on the third day he will rise again."

34 And they understood none of these things, and this statement was hidden from them, and they did not know what was being said.

35 And *this* happened when he had come near to Jericho: a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging. 36 And when he heard the crowd passing by, he asked what it meant. 37 And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38 And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me."

39 And those who were going in the front rebuked him, *telling* him to keep quiet. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me."

40 And Jesus stood still and ordered him to be brought to him; and when he had come near, he asked him, 41 saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" And he said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

42 And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you."

43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God. And when all the people saw *this*, they gave praise to God.

**19** And *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. 2 And a man named Zacchaeus was there, a chief tax collector. And he was rich. 3 And he tried to see who Jesus was, and could not because of the crowd, for he was short of stature. 4 And he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, since he was coming that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 And he hurried and came down, and

**18:31-33** Matt 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34.

**18:31** Jesus was referring to the prophets whose writings are recorded in the Old Testament. For example see psalm 22; Isaiah chapter 53; Zech 13:7.

**18:32** "Gentiles" – people other than Jews.

**18:34** See 9:45; Mark 9:32; Matt 16:22.

**18:35-43** Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52.

**18:35** Matthew and Mark say this happened while Jesus was leaving Jericho. Is there then a contradiction in this? No. The old city of Jericho was there though few people lived in it. Just south of it a new city of Jericho had been built. Matthew and Mark speak of Jesus leaving the old city of Jericho, Luke speaks of Him approaching the new one. See note at Mark 4:1.

**18:38** "Son of David" – Matt 1:1.

**18:42** Again we see the power of faith in Jesus (Matt 9:22; Mark 10:52).

**18:43** Praise to God is a constant theme of

Luke's Gospel – 1:64; 2:13,20; 18:43; 19:37; 24:53.

**19:1** See 18:35. This was the new Jericho.

**19:2** "Tax collector" – Matt 5:46.

**19:4** Many would think this was no proper and dignified behavior for a rich man, but it shows how anxious he was to see the Lord Jesus and how little He cared for the opinion of those who might laugh or sneer at him.

**19:5** The Lord had never met Zacchaeus but He knew where he was and everything about him. (Compare John 1:48-50; 2:24,25; etc.) He knew that Zacchaeus was lost in sin but open to the truth, and He knew what His own ministry was (v 10). Jesus had an inner compulsion to go to his house. It was the compulsion of divine love. See John 4:4. Compare 2 Cor 5:14.

**19:6** This is something the religious leaders of Israel and most of the people would not do (John 1:11).

received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw *this*, they all grumbled, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinful man."

8 And Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, half of my goods I am going to give to the poor. And if I have taken anything from anyone by fraud, I am going to give *him* back four times as much."

9 And Jesus said to him, "This day salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man has come to seek

and to save that which was lost."

11 And while they were listening to these things, he went on and told a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and because they thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear.

12 Therefore he said, "A certain nobleman went to a far country to receive a kingdom for himself and to return. 13 And he called his ten servants, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, 'Do business until I return.'

14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, 'We do not want

**19:7** Compare 18:9; 15:1,2; Matt 9:10-13; 11:19.

**19:8** Zacchaeus chose a new master that day and called Him "Lord." Up until then, his master had been money (16:13). He is one of the few rich men who enter God's kingdom (18:24,25), and he is in great contrast to the rich fool in 12:16, the rich man in 16:19, and the rich young ruler of 18:23. But he did not get into God's kingdom simply by saying Lord to Jesus (Matt 7:21). He revealed that he had a true faith in Him by what he did. Zacchaeus was willing to do what many were not willing to do (16:14; Matt 19:21-24). This showed the work of God in his heart.

"I am going to give him back four times as much" – see Lev 6:1-5; Num 5:5-7. Zacchaeus was willing to give back more than the law demanded. In this he was bringing forth fruits of repentance (note at Matt 3:8). Repentance is a radical change of attitude about things.

There are those in the church who obtain money or property by unjust means and crooked ways. When found out they want to be forgiven and accepted without making any attempt to pay back what they have taken. They want to be regarded as servants of God and at the same time enjoy the material benefits that came by their crookedness! This attitude does not show true repentance, and it will not be accepted by God, whatever others may decide about it. It is very important that believers try to make amends for any harm they have done to others.

**19:9** Observe that a great change in a person, bringing him from a state of sin to salvation and from death to life, happens very suddenly (John 5:24). Notes on salvation at Acts 4:12; Rom 1:16. By saying Zacchaeus was a "son of Abraham" Jesus meant Zacchaeus was not merely descended of Abraham, but a true son of Abraham who is the "father" of all who believe in Christ (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:11,16). And Zacchaeus, by the results of repentance that appeared in his life, proved that he had believed. We may well question whether anyone has believed in Christ if these results are lacking.

**19:10** "Son of man" – note at Matt 8:20. Here He gives one of the chief reasons why He came to earth (compare John 3:16,17). See also references at Matt 5:17.

"Lost" – 15:4-10,32; John 3:16. Lost means away from God, on the broad way that leads to destruction (Isa 53:6; Matt 7:13; Eph 4:18). If Jesus does not seek for lost human beings it is certain they will never be saved. They will never seek the true God on their own (Rom 3:11).

**19:11-27** This parable is similar in some ways to the one in Matt 25:14-30, but different in other ways. They were spoken at different times and places.

**19:11** "Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17. People thought the Lord Jesus would openly declare Himself the Messiah, the King of Israel, then throw off the yoke of the Roman government, and bring power and glory back to Israel. Jesus is saying that such a thing would not then happen. He would go away (v 12), and Israel would refuse to have Him as King (v 14). But He would return (v 15). In the meantime His servants had work to do (v 13).

**19:12** The Lord Jesus had noble birth indeed! See 1:35; Matt 1:1. The way the man was appointed king was the manner of things in Judea in those times. The Herods went to Rome and received their authority there. The authority of the Lord Jesus did not come from Rome but from heaven (Matt 28:18; John 17:2; Acts 2:33-36; Phil 2:9-11; 1 Pet 3:22). He is yet to return, but will do so at the proper time (Matt 16:27; Acts 1:22).

**19:13** "Servants" – signify all who are called Christ's servants (Rom 6:16-22), all who profess to believe in Him. The "nobleman" gave each of them money worth one "pound." In Greek the word is "mina." It was equal to about three months' wages for a laborer. In the parable in Matt 25:14-30, the servants were given much more and each a different amount. There are some matters in which all the servants of God are different, some matters in which they all are the same. Their faithfulness is tested in all matters – 16:10; 1 Cor 4:2.

"Business" – "Occupy" (KJV) – this means occupy yourselves in my business.

**19:14** This had actually happened thirty years before in the case of a man named Archlaous. But the parable refers to the Lord Jesus – the Jews declared to the Romans that they did not want Him to be their King (John 19:13-16), and they did not (for the most part) change their minds afterward

this *man* to reign over us.'

15 "And it happened that when he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that those servants, to whom he had given the money, be called to him, that he might know how much each man had earned through *his* business activity.

16 "Then the first came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has earned ten pounds.'

17 "And he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little thing, have authority over ten cities.'

18 "And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has earned five pounds.'

19 "And he said to him in the same way, 'Be over five cities.'

20 "And another came, saying, 'Lord, look, *here is* your pound, which I have kept laid away in a napkin. 21 For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.'

22 "And he said to him, 'I will judge you out of your own mouth, *you* wicked servant. Did you know that I was a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Then why did you not put my money in the bank, so that when I came I might have collected it with interest?'

24 "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the pound from him and give *it* to the one who

has ten pounds.'

25 "And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten pounds!'

26 "And *he said*, 'For I tell you that to everyone who has, *more* will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and execute *them* in front of me.'"

28 And when he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 And it came about when he had come near Bethphage and Bethany that at the mount that is called *the Mount of Olives*, he sent two of his disciples, 30 saying, "Go to the village opposite. When you enter it you will find there a colt tied up, on which no one has yet sat. Untie it and bring *it here*. 31 And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying *it*?' tell him this: 'Because the Lord needs it.'"

32 And those who were sent went off and found *it* just as he had told them. 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 And they said, "The Lord needs *it*."

35 And they brought it to Jesus, and they threw their cloaks on the colt, and they put Jesus on it. 36 And while he was going, they spread their cloaks in the way.

37 And now, as he was approaching the

(1 Thess 2:14-16).

**19:15** The Lord Jesus will openly be declared King, and He will return in glory, and no power in the universe will prevent it (Rev 11:15; 19:11-16). Then Christ will judge His servants – 1 Cor 3:12-15; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 11:18.

**19:16** He humbly attributed his success to the "pound" and not to himself. Compare 17:10.

**19:17** See 16:10. He had proved himself in a very small matter. The reward he received is out of all proportion to the small matter he dealt with. When God rewards His faithful servants they will receive great rewards indeed, even for seemingly small works (compare Matt 10:42). "Cities" suggests the reward will be a place of honor and authority in God's kingdom when it is manifested on earth. Compare 22:30; Matt 19:28; Rev 3:21; 20:6.

**19:18** Each servant received the same amount, which suggests that in the matter they were being tested about everything was equal. Why then the difference between the results achieved by this man and the first servant? It is very likely the first simply worked harder. Compare 1 Cor 15:10; Col 1:29; 3:23; 4:13. See the list of believers in Rom 16:3-12 – some worked, some worked hard, some worked very hard.

**19:19** His efforts and accomplishments were

not as great as the first servant's, so his reward was not so great (see Rev 22:12). Still it was a very great reward for such a small work.

**19:20-26** Matt 25:24-30.

**19:22** Matt 25:26 says that the servant there was lazy as well as wicked, and the same is probably true here. This servant was either lazy, and so disobeyed the one command his master gave him (v 13), or else he was willing to work but only for himself. God has called all believers to serve Him. But there are many called Christians who do all their work for themselves and none for the Lord Jesus (Phil 2:21). Lazy indifference to the Lord's commands, and giving oneself entirely to one's own affairs – both are disobedience. And disobedience is wickedness (1 Sam 15:22,23). Notice that this man was judged not merely for what he did but for what he did not do. Compare Matt 25:41-46.

**19:27** These men showed they were his enemies by rejecting him as king. So it is now. By rejecting the Lord Jesus as Saviour and King of their lives men reveal their hostility toward Him (John 1:11; 3:19,20; 15:18; Rom 8:7). It will not go well with such people in the day of judgment, as the closing words of this verse indicate. Compare 2 Thess 1:7-10; Rev 19:11-16.

**19:28-38** Matt 21:1-9.

**19:32-34** Mark 11:4-6.

descent from the mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed be the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

39 And some of the Pharisees out of the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."

40 And he answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these were to keep quiet the stones would immediately cry out."

41 And when he came near the city, he looked at it, and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this day of yours, the things *that would give* you peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you in which your enemies will build an embankment around you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side. 44 And they will level you, and your children in you, to the ground. And they will not leave in you one stone on another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

45 And he went into the temple, and began to drive out those buying and selling in it, 46 saying to them, "It is written, 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of thieves."

47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the leaders of the people looked for *a way* to destroy him, 48 but did not see what they could do, for all the people were hanging *on his words*, listening to him.

**20** And it happened on one of those days, as he was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel, *that* the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up, 2 and spoke to him, saying, "Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Or who is the one who gave you this authority?"

3 And he answered and said to them, "I will also

ask you one thing, and you answer me: 4 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?"

5 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 6 But if we say, 'Of men,' all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet."

7 And they answered that they could not tell where *it was* from.

8 And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

9 Then he began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, let it out to vine growers, and went into a far country for a long time. 10 And at *harvest* time he sent a servant to the vine growers so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vine growers beat him, and sent *him* away empty-handed. 11 And he sent another servant. And they beat him also, and treated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty-handed. 12 And he sent a third, and they wounded him also, and threw *him* out.

13 "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my dear son. Perhaps they will respect *him* when they see him.'

14 "But when the vine growers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, so that the inheritance may become ours.'

15 "So they threw him out of the vineyard, and killed *him*. What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and destroy these vine growers and will give the vineyard to others." And when they heard *this*, they said, "God forbid!"

17 And he looked at them and said, "Then what is this that is written?

The stone which the builders rejected,  
has become the chief cornerstone.

18 Whoever falls on that stone will be broken;

**19:38** See 2:14.

**19:39** Compare Matt 21:15,16.

**19:40** The occasion was so great that God would see to it that joyful sounds of praise would come from some source.

**19:41** Crucifixion and suffering awaited Him there, but He did not weep for Himself. He was called a "Man of sorrows" (Isa 53:3), but His sorrows were for the sad condition of others.

**19:42** Peace would have come by repentance and receiving Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour, but God was punishing them for their wickedness, and part of the punishment was to let them remain in ignorance. Compare Matt 11:25; 13:11-16; John 9:41.

**19:43,44** See 24:2; 21:6,20,24; Matt 24:2. This took place in 70 AD. The Roman army came and destroyed Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus was God incarnate but the people of Jerusalem treated Him like the worst of criminals. God's judgment on them was inevitable.

**19:45,46** Matt 21:12-16.

**19:47** See 22:2; Matt 12:14; 26:4; John 5:18; 7:1.

**19:48** See 20:19.

**20:1-8** Matt 21:23-27.

**20:1** "Gospel" – 2:10; 4:18; 8:1; 9:6; Matt 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:1.

**20:9-19** Matt 21:33-46.

**20:9** Matt 25:19.

**20:13** Matt 3:17.

but on whomever it falls,  
it will crush him to powder."

19 And at that time the chief priests and the scribes were anxious to seize him, but they feared the people; for they understood that he had spoken this parable against them. 20 And they watched *him*, and sent out spies passing themselves off as righteous men, so that they might seize on his words, with the aim of handing him over to the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they questioned him, saying, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and do not accept a person *to show him favoritism*, but truly teach the way of God. 22 Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why are you testing me? 24 Show me a silver coin. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "Caesar's."

25 And he said to them, "So give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

26 And they could not seize on his words in the presence of the people, and were amazed at his answer, and became quiet.

27 Then some of the Sadducees, who deny there is a resurrection, came to *him*, and questioned him, 28 saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if any man's brother who has a wife dies, passing away without children, that his brother should take his wife *in marriage* and raise up children for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers, and the first took a wife and died without children. 30 And the second took her as his wife, and died childless. 31 And the third took her; and in the same way *all* the seven died and left no children. 32 Last of all the woman also died. 33 So, in the resurrection, among these whose wife will she be? For seven had her for a wife."

34 And Jesus in answer said to them, "The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage. 35 But those who will be considered worthy to

obtain that world, and the resurrection from among the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. 36 Nor can they die any more, for they are like the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. 37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for to him all are alive."

39 Then some of the scribes answering said, "Teacher, you have spoken well."

40 And after that they did not dare ask him any question at all.

41 And he said to them, "How *can* they say that Christ is David's son? 42 And David himself said in the book of Psalms,

The Lord said to my Lord,  
Sit at my right hand,

43 until I make your enemies your  
footstool.

44 "So David called him Lord. How then is he his son?"

45 Then in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, 46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, and the seats of honour in the synagogues, and the chief places at feasts. 47 They devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

**21** And he looked up, and saw the rich men putting their gifts into the *temple* treasury. 2 And he also saw a certain poor widow putting in it two small copper coins.

3 And he said, "I tell you the truth: This poor widow has put in more than all of them. 4 For all these have put *money* into God's offerings out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."

**20:20-26** Matt 22:15-22.

**20:27-40** Matt 22:23-33.

**20:35** "That world" – or "that age" – the age to come.

"Resurrection from among the dead" – this may be a better translation than simply "resurrection from the dead." "From among" better indicates that when this resurrection takes place, some who have died do not rise at that time (they will rise later – Rev 20:5). See also Luke 14:14; Phil 3:11.

**20:36** God's children (John 1:12,13; 1 John 3:1,2) will never die – John 5:24,29; 6:50,51; 11:25,26; Rev 20:6.

**20:37** Ex 3:2,6.

**20:39** Pharisees would have said this because they believed in the resurrection and

opposed the Sadducees. See Acts 23:6-9. **20:40** Matt 22:46.

**20:41-44** Matt 22:41-45. "David's Son" – note at Matt 1:1.

**20:46** Matt 23:5-7.

**20:47** Mark 12:40.

**21:1-4** Mark 12:41-44.

**21:5-36** See Matt 24:1-44; Mark 13:1-27. In all three Gospels (Matthew chapter 24; Mark chapter 13; Luke chapter 21) the Lord Jesus foretold events concerning Jerusalem in answer to His disciples' questions. It should be noted that in Matt 24:3 there is a three-fold question, but in Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7 the question has to do only with the destruction of Jerusalem. It seems that in Luke especially we have more spoken of



5 And as some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and *donations*, he said, 6 "As for these things you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left on another. They will all be thrown down."

7 And they asked him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?"

8 And he said, "Watch out that you are not deceived, for many will come in my name, saying, 'I am *Christ*' and, 'The time draws near.' Therefore, do not go after them. 9 But when you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must first take place, but the end is not *to come* immediately."

10 Then said he to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, 11 and there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines, and plagues. And there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

12 "But before all these things, they will seize you and persecute *you*, handing you over to the synagogues and to prisons, and bringing you before kings and rulers for my name's sake. 13 And this will turn out to you as *an opportunity to give* testimony. 14 Therefore, settle *it* in your hearts not to imagine beforehand what answer you will give. 15 For I will give you a mouth *to speak* and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to contradict or resist.

16 "And you will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. And they will put

*some* of you to death, 17 and you will be hated by all *men* for my name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 In your patient endurance possess your souls.

20 "And when you see Jerusalem surrounded with armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside *the city* go out, and let those who are in the country not enter it. 22 For those are the days of vengeance, so that all things which have been written might be fulfilled. 23 But woe to those with child and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led away as captives to all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25 "And there will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress among nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, 26 men's hearts fainting in fear and in expectation of what is coming on the earth. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

27 "And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to take place, then look up and raise your heads, for your redemption is drawing near."

29 And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 As soon as they put

that event which took place in 70 AD, and in Matthew we have more concerning the second coming of Christ and the end of this age.

**21:5** Mark 13:1.

**21:7** Matt 24:3.

**21:8** They will claim that they are Christ and that the end of this age is at hand.

**21:12-15** Matt 10:17-20; Acts 6:9,10.

**21:16-19** Matt 10:21,22,30,31.

**21:20-24** Matt 24:15-21 is similar. But in Matthew the events begin with "the abomination of desolation", and issue in the "great tribulation" (v 21). And immediately after that Christ returns to earth (Matt 24:29,30). But here in Luke the events begin with armies surrounding Jerusalem and issue in the captivity of the Jews and the "times of the Gentiles." In other words, Matthew records events that will take place at the end of this age, but Luke wrote of those connected with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (see 19:41-44). The one is a small picture of the other.

**21:22** "Written" – means written in the Old Testament.

**21:24** In Old Testament days from Abraham onward, and during Christ's lifetime on earth, Israel was God's special nation, the

channel of His word, the center of His spiritual dealings, teaching and revelation on earth. After Israel rejected Christ God turned to the other nations of earth (the Gentiles) – Matt 21:43; 28:18-20; Acts 28:28; Rom 11:11-14. The "times of the Gentiles" is the same as this whole age (now more than 1900 years). They will end with Christ's second coming. At the present time (1999) Jerusalem is in the hands of Israel, but once again Gentile power will take control of it and trample it underfoot – Rev 11:2; Zech 14:2-4.

**21:25** With this verse the whole of the "times of the Gentiles" is passed over and the end of this age is brought before us. This is clear from the words of v 27 which connects those events with Christ's coming in glory. Notes at Matt 24:29.

**21:26** Rev 6:15-17.

**21:27** Matt 24:30.

**21:28** Matt 24:33. Believers living at the very end of the age will be able to recognize that the end is near.

"Redemption" – see note at Matt 20:28. Here it means the final redemption which Paul speaks of in Rom 8:23 and Phil 3:20,21.

**21:29-33** Matt 24:32-35.



forth *leaves*, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. 31 In the same way, when you see these things take place, know that the kingdom of God is near.

32 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away, until everything is fulfilled. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

34 "So watch yourselves, so that your hearts will not be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For it will come like a trap on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Therefore watch, and pray always, so that you may be counted worthy to escape all those things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man."

37 And in the daytime he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out and stayed on the mount that is called *the Mount of Olives*. 38 And early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him.

**22** Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. 2 And the chief priests and scribes were looking for a way to kill him, for they were afraid of the people.

3 Then Satan entered into Judas, surnamed *Iscariot*, who was numbered among the Twelve. 4 And he went his way, and discussed with the

chief priests and captains of *the temple guard*, how he might betray him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 And he promised, and looked for an opportunity to betray him to them when the crowd was absent.

7 Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover had to be sacrificed. 8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare for us to eat the Passover."

9 And they said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare *it*?"

10 And he said to them, "When you enter the city, look for a man to meet you, carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house that he enters, 11 and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room where I will eat the Passover with my disciples?' 12 And he will show you a large furnished upper room. Make preparations there."

13 And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. 14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles *sat* with him.

15 And he said to them, "With great longing I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves. 18 For I tell you I will not drink of the fruit of the

**21:31** "Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17. Here it means the outward manifestation of God's kingdom, the return of the King in glory.

**21:32** "Generation" – see note at Matt 24:34.

**21:34-36** These instructions are suited both to those living before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and to those living at the end of this age. But since He mentions the "whole earth" (v 35) He probably refers to the end of this age. In Matthew He compares the end time with the days of Noah (Matt 24:37-39).

**21:36** These words also seem to fit both the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the time of God's wrath coming on the earth at the end of this age (Revelation chapters 15, 16). Those who escape will not be those who are ignorant and careless and prayerless. If we wish to stand before Him without shame and condemnation we must abide in Him (1 John 2:28).

**21:37,38** This is how the Lord Jesus spent the final few days of His life on earth.

**22:1** Ex 12:1-20; Lev 23:4-8.

**22:2** "Priests" – Ex 28:1.

**22:3** John 13:27. There are many cases of demon possession recorded in the New Testament, but it is said only of Judas *Iscariot* that Satan himself, the chief of demons, entered him. It means that Satan completely possessed Judas to use him for

his own purposes. It is true, however, that Satan works to some extent in everyone who refuse to receive the Lord Jesus. See Eph 2:2 where Satan is called the ruler "of the power of the air." Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44; 12:31. **22:4-6** Matt 26:14-16; Mark 14:10,11; Zech 11:12.

**22:7** "Day of Unleavened Bread" – the first day of a period of eight days which began with the Passover.

**22:8-13** Mark 14:12-16; Matt 26:17-19.

**22:15** The Passover lamb signified their redemption and salvation. Because of Christ's coming sacrifice they were the people of God, and He delighted to eat with them at this time which spoke of that, even though it meant that He would have to suffer and die very shortly. Only His great love for them could bring Him delight at such an hour. Compare Heb 12:2.

**22:16** The sacrifice of Jesus the "Lamb of God" was the spiritual fulfillment of the Passover (1 Cor 5:7). It made possible the kingdom of God in men and with men. Now His unseen presence is among those who rightly observe the "Lord's supper" (1 Cor 11:23-26). The manifested presence of Jesus with His people will come when this age ends (Revelation chapter 19).

"Kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17.

**22:17-20** Matt 26:26-29.

vine, until the kingdom of God comes."

19 And he took bread, gave thanks, broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

20 After supper, *he did* the same with the cup, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.

21 "But, see, the hand of the one who betrays me *is* with mine on the table. 22 And indeed the Son of man is going just as it has been determined. But woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!"

23 And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.

24 And a quarrel started among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest.

25 And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' 26 But you *must* not *be* like *that*. Instead, the greatest among you must be like the youngest, and the leader like the one who serves. 27 For who *is* greater, the one who is seated at the table, or the one who serves? *Is it* not the one who is seated at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 You are the ones who have stood by me in my trials. 29 And I give you a kingdom, just as my Father gave *it* to me, 30 so that you

**22:21** From this it seems certain that Judas was still there when the Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, and that he partook of it.

**22:22** Matt 26:24.

**22:23** Judas was so skillful a hypocrite that they never suspected him (John 13:26-29).

**22:24** This was not a new dispute for them (see 9:46; Matt 18:1; Mark 9:33,34). Still it is a shocking revelation of their unspirituality and immaturity that they should renew the dispute on the very eve of Christ's crucifixion (but can we think that we are better than they?).

**22:25,26** Compare Matt 20:25-27.

**22:27** See Matt 20:28; John 13:3-5; Phil 2:5-7.

**22:28,29** Compare Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12; 1 Peter 4:13.

**22:30** Matt 19:28.

**22:31** Simon was another name for Peter. Satan's object was to shake and confuse and destroy Peter and the other disciples (the use of the plural in Greek for "you" indicates that the other disciples were included. When addressing a single disciple Jesus used the singular of the pronoun). But Peter was a special object of Satan's attack.

**22:32** Praying is something the Lord Jesus now does for all believers (John 17:9,15; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1). That is the reason why they will be kept in the faith to the end. This is a great encouragement to all who understand its meaning. Compare John

may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, now Satan has asked *to have* you, so that he can sift *you* like wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith will not fail. And when you have turned back again, strengthen your brethren."

33 And he said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you, both to prison and to death."

34 And he said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, before you will deny three times that you know me."

35 And he said to them, "When I sent you without purse, bag, and sandals, did you lack anything?" And they said, "Nothing."

36 Then he said to them, "But now he who has a purse, let him take *it*, and also a bag; and he who does not have a sword, let him sell his cloak and buy one. 37 For I tell you that this which is written must still be fulfilled in me:

And he was numbered among the transgressors,

for the things concerning me are going to be finished."

38 And they said, "Lord, look, here *are* two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough."

39 And coming out, he went, as was his

6:39,40; 10:28; Phil 1:6; Heb 10:39; 1 Peter 1:5. Notice Jesus said "when" you have turned back, not "if you turn back." Christ knew that His prayers for Peter would be answered. Doubtless His prayers for all His believers will also be answered - John 11:41,42. This is one very good reason why they will never perish.

**22:33,34** Matt 26:33-35.

**22:35** See 9:3; 10:4; Matt 10:9,10.

**22:36** By saying this Jesus indicated that times were changing, and that the disciples should expect more opposition and persecution and should be prepared to pay their own way (in contrast to Matt 10:11-14). By mentioning a sword Jesus was not suggesting the disciples abandon His previous instructions (Matt 5:11,12,38-41), and go on the warpath. He doubtless used "sword" in a figurative sense here, to indicate that great trouble lay ahead. To face this they should be mentally prepared (not with a literal sword). The Christian's armor is not physical but spiritual - Eph 6:10-18; 1 Pet 4:1. See Christ's condemnation of violence in Matt 26:51,52.

**22:37** Isa 53:12; Matt 5:17; Luke 24:44,45.

**22:38** They took Jesus' words literally (compare Matt 16:5-12; John 6:52; etc). Jesus, seeing their dullness, said nothing more at the time. The matter became clear to them later.

**22:39-46** Matt 26:36-46.

**22:39** They went to Gethsemane which was on the western slope of the Mount of Olives.

custom, to the mount of Olives and his disciples also followed him. 40 And when he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not get into temptation."

41 And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw away, and knelt down, and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

43 And an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him.

44 And being in a agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the ground.

45 And when he got up from prayer, and came to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, 46 and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray so that you will not get into temptation."

47 And while he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd *appeared*, and the one called Judas, one of the Twelve, was coming ahead of them. And he approached Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of man with a kiss?"

49 When those who were surrounding *Jesus* saw what was about to happen, they said to him, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?"

50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus in response to *this* said, "Permit even this." And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and captains of the temple *guard* and the elders, who had come to him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs, as if against a thief? 53 When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch out a hand against me. But this hour belongs to you, and the power of darkness."

54 Then they took him, led *him* away, and brought him to the high priest's house. And Peter followed at a distance. 55 And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had

sat down together, Peter sat down among them. 56 But a certain maid saw him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with him."

57 And he denied him, saying, "Woman, I don't know him."

58 And after a little while another saw him, and said, "You are also *one* of them. And Peter said, "Man, I am not."

59 And about an hour later another strongly insisted, saying, "It's the truth, this *fellow* was also with him, for he is a Galilean."

60 And Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, that he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." 62 And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

63 And the men who were holding Jesus mocked him, and beat *him*. 64 And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, "Prophecy, who is it that struck you?"

65 And they spoke against him many other blasphemous things.

66 And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their Council, and said, 67 "Are you the Christ? Tell us."

And he said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe *it*. 68 And also if I ask *you*, you will not answer me, or let *me* go. 69 From now on the Son of man will be sitting at the right hand of the power of God."

70 Then they all said, "Then are you the Son of God?"

And he said to them, "You *rightly* say that I am."

71 And they said, "What need do we have of any more testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth."

**22:43** Only Luke records this. Jesus was passing through an experience so dreadful, a trial so great, that His human nature, body and soul, were weakened by the strain. And He needed strength for the terrible events that still lay ahead.

"Angels" – Gen 16:7.

**22:44** "Agony" – an agonizing inner struggle that affected Him physically. Only Luke records this. How vividly it indicates the intensity of Christ's suffering and sorrow. The "cup" He had to drink was a very terrible one indeed. Compare Matt 26:38,39; John 18:11.

**22:45** Only Luke mentions the reason for this sleep of the disciples. Their sight of Christ's great sorrow brought sorrow to their own hearts, and they escaped it by

sleeping.

**22:47-53** Matt 26:47-56.

**22:48** Only Luke records this question, and the question in v 49.

**22:49** Jesus certainly did not answer "Yes" – note at v 36. See Matt 26:52,53.

**22:54** Matt 26:57,58.

**22:55-62** Matt 26:69-75; Mark 14:69.

**22:61** Only Luke records this. Indeed one look from Jesus was enough to break Peter's heart.

**22:63-65** Matt 26:67,68. Jesus was also mocked by Herod and his soldiers (23:11), and later by many others when He was on the cross (23:35,36).

**22:66-71** Matt 26:63-66.

**22:69** Ps 110:1; Acts 2:33,34; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3,13; 8:1.

**23** And their whole assembly got up and led him away to Pilate. **2** And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this *fellow* leading the nation astray and forbidding *people* to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a King."

**3** And Pilate asked him, saying, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him and said, "You say *it*."

**4** Then said Pilate to the chief priests and the people, "I find no fault in this man."

**5** And they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching among all the Jews, beginning with Galilee, to this place."

**6** When Pilate heard "Galilee," he asked if the man was a Galilean. **7** And as soon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also at Jerusalem at that time.

**8** And when Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had wanted to see him for a long *time*, having heard many things about him; and he had been hoping to see some miracle performed by him. **9** Then he questioned him with many words, but he gave him no answer.

**10** And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. **11** And Herod, together with his soldiers, treated him with contempt, mocked *him*, dressed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him back to Pilate.

**12** And the same day Pilate and Herod became friends with one another. Before that there had been enmity between them.

**13** And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, **14** said to them, "You have brought this man to me, as one

who leads the people astray, and, look, having examined *him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this man concerning those things with which you accuse him. **15** Neither has Herod, for I sent you to him and, *as you* see, nothing worthy of death has been done by him. **16** Therefore I will punish him and release *him*." **17** For it was necessary for him to release someone to them at the Feast.

**18** And they cried out all at once, saying, "Away with this *man*, and release Barabbas to us." **19** (He had been thrown into prison for some revolt in the city and for murder.)

**20** Therefore Pilate, wishing to release Jesus, spoke to them again.

**21** But they cried out, saying, "Crucify *him*! Crucify him!"

**22** And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no cause deserving of death. So I will punish him, and let *him* go."

**23** And with loud voices they insistently demanded that he be crucified. And their voices and *those* of the chief priests prevailed. **24** And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they demanded. **25** And he released to them the one who had been thrown into prison for revolt and murder, whom they had asked for. But he handed Jesus over to their will.

**26** And as they led him away, they laid hold of someone *named* Simon, a Cyrenian, coming in from the country, and they laid the cross on him, so that he might carry *it* after Jesus. **27** And a great crowd of people followed him, *including* women also who mourned and lamented him.

**23:1** Matt 27:1,2.

**23:2** Verse 14. This first accusation was false. The real rebel was Barabbas whose release these Jews asked for (v 19). The second accusation was also false. See 20:22-25. The third accusation, in the way they made it, was also false. It was true that He said He was the Messiah (22:67-70; Matt 26:63,64). But these Jews hoped they could get Pilate to misunderstand what this meant. The Lord Jesus was able to satisfy Pilate that He had not come to end Rome's rule over Israel (John 18:33-37).

**23:3** Matt 27:11.

**23:4** Verses 14,15,22; Matt 27:23; Mark 15:14; John 18:38; 19:6.

**23:6-12** Only Luke records this event. Pilate tried in this way to escape the responsibility of condemning Christ. Compare Matt 27:24.

**23:7** Herod was ruler of Galilee. See 3:1.

**23:8** 9:9. Herod was merely curious. He had no desire to learn God's truth or practice it. That is why the Lord Jesus said nothing to him (v 9). We see Herod's character in Matt 14:1-11.

**23:10** They were determined that someone in authority put Jesus to death; they didn't care who it was. See John 18:31.

**23:11** 22:63,64. Herod was superstitious and cowardly like Pilate, and wanted to escape from the responsibility of condemning Jesus to die.

**23:12** They had both been caught in difficult circumstances, being urged to condemn someone who they knew was innocent, and both showed insensitivity and brutality, and acted against their own laws, and the laws of God. Their weakness and wickedness drew their hearts together. See Acts 4:23-30.

**23:13-25** Matt 27:15-26.

**23:16** Pilate himself had repeatedly said that Jesus was innocent. For what reason would he punish Him? Punishment meant a terrible whipping that sometimes resulted in death (Matt 27:26).

**23:18** Matt 27:15,16.

**23:23** Wicked shouts prevailed over law and reason and conscience and humanity, as often happens.

**23:26-49** Matt 27:32-56; Mark 15:21-41.

28 But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. 29 For, look, the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' 31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what will be done in the dry?"

32 And others also, two criminals, were led out with him to be put to death.

33 And when they had come to the place that is called Calvary, they crucified him and the criminals there, one at the right hand, and the other at the left.

34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothing, and cast lots.

35 And the people stood watching. And even the rulers with them scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ, the chosen of God."

36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, 37 and saying, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

38 And above him there was an inscription, written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew letters:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 And one of the criminals who had been hanged reviled him, saying, "If you are the Christ, save yourself and us."

40 But the other in response rebuked him, saying, "Don't you fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong."

42 And he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

43 And Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

44 And it was about noon, and darkness covered all the earth until three in the afternoon.

45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the

**23:29** Only Luke records the facts of vs 27-31. The words mean that it would be better not to have children than to have them suffer what was to come on Jerusalem (19:41-44).

**23:30** They would think sudden destruction better than prolonged suffering. Compare Rev 6:16.

**23:31** Jesus was referring in vs 29,30 to things that would happen when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD. While He was still there in Israel things were spiritually "green" – there was still life and hope. After His departure the nation of Israel which rejected Him would become "dry" indeed – without any spiritual life.

**23:32** Matt 27:38.

**23:33** Matt 27:33-35. Note on crucifixion at Matt 27:22.

**23:34** The Lord Jesus was here practicing the truth He taught His disciples. See Matt 5:44. He never told others to do something He was not willing to do Himself (except to ask for forgiveness of sins – He never sinned and so could not do this). He came to bring forgiveness to others (24:46,47), and His first words after His crucifixion concerned forgiveness. This prayer was for the Roman soldiers who were the ones who actually crucified Jesus. They ignorantly supposed Jesus was another criminal. His prayer perhaps included the crowd of people who were there and hardly knew what was going on, yet sided with the priests in calling for His death. The prayer was that God would forgive them the act of crucifixion, not all the sins they had ever committed. For complete forgiveness, repentance is required (24:47; Matt 3:2).

**23:35** Matt 27:41-43. "Chosen of God" – Isa 42:1; 1 Peter 2:4.

**23:36** Ps 69:21; Matt 27:48.

**23:38** Matt 27:37.

**23:39** At first both criminals insulted the Lord Jesus (Matt 27:44). But one changed his mind about Him.

**23:40,41** This is evidence that repentance was at work in his heart. He did not defend himself, but confessed that his sins deserved crucifixion. And he could see that the Lord Jesus was innocent and different from themselves.

**23:42** Faith in the Lord Jesus was born in the heart of this criminal, and a remarkable faith it was. He saw that this condemned and crucified man was the Messiah of Israel with a kingdom God had given Him. He knew that Christ's death would not be the end, but that He would come into His kingdom. And he believed, guilty criminal that he was, that Jesus could and would show him mercy.

**23:43** "Paradise" – note at 16:22. The word points to a place of eternal joy and blessedness. In the case of this criminal we see all the basic requirements for any individual to be saved. He was saved without baptism, without any sacrament or ordinance of the church, and without any good works of any kind. He was saved immediately and went to Paradise on the day of his death – there was no waiting, no purgatory. If he had lived, doubtless he would have been baptized and done good works. But his salvation without them shows that they are not essential for salvation. It was all of God's grace through repentance and faith. See Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:3-7. Christ Himself and Christ alone is the channel of God's grace, and the only hope for anyone.

**23:45** This was a supernatural darkness caused by God, and not merely clouds obscuring the face of the sun. On the tearing of the curtain see Matt 27:51.



temple was torn in two.

46 And Jesus crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." And having said thus, he expired.

47 Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man."

48 And all the people who had assembled for that sight, seeing what had happened, beat their breasts, and returned. 49 And all those who knew him, and the women who followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

50 Now *there was* a man named Joseph, a Council member. *And he was* a good man and a righteous *one*. 51 (He had not consented to their decision and deed.) *He was* from Arimathea, a Jewish town, and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 This *man* went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen cloth, and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, where no one had ever been placed before.

54 And that day was the Preparation *Day*, and the Sabbath was drawing near. 55 And the women also, who came with him from Galilee, followed *him*, and saw the tomb and how his body was placed. 56 And they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils, and rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

**24** Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices that they had prepared. And some *other women were* with them. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 And they went in, but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

**23:46** Note at Ps 31:5; John 10:17,18.

**23:47** See Matt 27:54. Here we see another person in this Gospel praising God – 1:46,64; 2:13; etc. This Roman military officer recognized that Jesus was dying in peace, and that God had vindicated Him by signs from heaven. It is possible that God granted him on the spot a true faith in Christ. **23:48** See 18:13.

**23:49** Matt 27:55,56; Mark 15:40,41.

**23:50-56** Matt 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47.

**23:51** Luke 2:25-38. "Kingdom of God – Matt 4:17.

**23:56** Note at Mark 16:1. "Sabbath. . . commandment" – Ex 12:16; 20:10.

**24:1-10** Matt 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-10.

**24:4** Angels sometimes appeared in the form of men. Matthew speaks of only one angel, and Mark of a young man in white. This is not strange because sometimes only the spokesman is noted and the one with him is not mentioned. See note at Mark 4:1.

**24:7** "Again" – Matt 16:21; 17:22,23; Luke

4 And as they were greatly perplexed about this, it happened that suddenly two men in shining clothing stood near them. 5 And as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces toward the ground, the *men* said to them,

"Why are you looking for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he spoke to you while he was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'The Son of man must be given into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

8 And they remembered his words, 9 and returned from the tomb and told all these things to the Eleven, and to all the rest. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women who were* with them, who told these things to the apostles. 11 And their words seemed to them like idle talk, and they did not believe them.

12 Then Peter got up and ran to the tomb, and, stooping down, he saw the linen clothes placed by themselves, and left, wondering to himself at what had happened.

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, which was *about* twelve kilometers from Jerusalem. 14 And they were talking together about everything that had taken place. 15 And it happened that as they talked and discussed *this*, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

17 And he said to them, "What kind of discussion *is* this you are having as you sadly walk along?"

18 And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said to him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem? And don't you know the things that have been happening there in these days?"

9:22. He had said this to His disciples more than once while they were still in Galilee, and evidently at least once when these women were present.

**24:9** Mark 16:14.

**24:11** Mark 16:11.

**24:12** Perhaps Peter admitted to himself the possibility that Jesus had risen. John went with Peter and believed Jesus had risen when he saw the condition of things at the tomb. See John 20:3-9.

**24:13-35** Mark briefly mentions this (Mark 16:12,13), but only Luke records it in detail.

**24:16** God kept them from recognizing Jesus, but also it seems that His appearance was such after the resurrection that some could not easily recognize Him (vs 31,36,37; Matt 28:17; John 20:14-16,19).

**24:17** Jesus sometimes asked such questions – not because He did not know the answer, but because He wanted them to speak their thoughts.



19 And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the presence of God and all the people, 20 And how the chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we hoped that he was the one who would redeem Israel. And besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done. 22 Yes, and also some women of our group astonished us. Early they were at the tomb, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 And some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found *it* just as the women had said. But they did not see him."

25 Then he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. 26 Was not the Christ bound to suffer these things, and to enter his glory?"

27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures. 28 And they drew near to the village where they were going, and he made as if he was going further. 29 But they pressed him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening, and the day is far spent." And he went in to stay with them.

30 And when he had sat down at the table with them, it came about *that* he took bread, blessed

**24:19** Is this all they believed – that Jesus was a prophet?

**24:21** Notice the past tense of the verb "hoped." With the death of the Lord Jesus it seems their hopes had been destroyed.

**24:24** Reports of an empty tomb were not enough to convince these disciples that Jesus was alive. Like Thomas they wanted to see Him (John 20:25).

**24:25,26** They knew the writings of the Old Testament prophets, they thought they believed them, but they were foolish and slow in believing that those writings referred to the Lord Jesus. OT prophets wrote of both the suffering of the coming Messiah and His glory (Ps 22; Isaiah chapter 53; 9:6,7; 11:1-16; etc.). The Jews of that day expected the glory without the suffering. **24:27** Verse 44. Jesus now corrects their deficiency in understanding. Observe that the Old Testament is full of the Lord Jesus, from Moses (the first books of the Bible) onward. And the Lord Jesus will explain the OT to us too, if we are believing and obedient. He will do this by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15).

**24:28** He wanted them to invite Him into their home; He would not enter otherwise (compare Rev 3:20). And they invited Him in, not yet knowing who He was (compare Matt 25:34-40; Heb 13:2).

**24:30** See 9:16; 22:19.

**24:31** After His resurrection Jesus could

and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them. 31 And their eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished from their sight.

32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way and while he opened the Scriptures to us?"

33 And they got up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the Eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon."

35 And they told what *had occurred* on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. 36 And as they said this, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace *be* to you."

37 But they were startled and frightened, thinking that they were seeing a spirit.

38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see me have."

40 And when he had said this, he showed them *his* hands and *his* feet. 41 And while they still did not believe for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Do you have here any food?"

42 And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and a *piece* of honeycomb. 43 And he took *them*, and ate in front of them.

44 And he said to them, "These *are* the words

suddenly appear and disappear, even through locked doors (v 36; John 20:19). His body was the same body that suffered and died (vs 38-43), but wonderfully changed. Compare 1 Cor 15:35-44; Phil 3:21.

**24:32** The Lord Jesus still has power to set hearts aflame.

**24:33** Verse 9.

**24:34** Simon was Peter's original name. He was also called Cephas (1 Cor 15:5). This appearance of Jesus to Peter is not described in any of the Gospels.

**24:36** John 20:19. The door was locked.

**24:37** Compare Mark 6:49,50. They probably thought that only a ghost or spirit could come through a locked door.

**24:39** There were marks of the wounds that had been made in His feet and hands when He was crucified. These words of Jesus prove that His literal body had risen from the tomb. His resurrection was not some sort of spiritual resurrection (whatever that means). The same body which had been crucified and buried was now alive. It could be seen and touched and could assimilate food (vs 42,43).

**24:41** Verse 25. The disciples were men just like ourselves. They found it hard to believe something that seemed too good to be true.

**24:43** John 21:12-15.

**24:44** The Jews sometimes divided the Old Testament into two sections – the Law and

which I spoke to you, while I was still with you: that all things concerning me which were written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

45 Then he opened their understanding, so that they could understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; 47 also that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things.

the Prophets (v 27; Matt 5:17); sometimes into three sections – the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. And they arranged the books differently than the present OT. The book of Psalms was the first book of the third section. Christians now usually divide the OT into 4 sections – the books of Moses, called the Pentateuch (meaning five books – Genesis through Deuteronomy), the Historical Books (Joshua – Esther), the Poetical Books (Job – Song of Songs), and the Prophetical Books (Isaiah – Malachi). Predictions about Christ, and types and pictures of Christ, are found in all sections of the Old Testament. He made all this clear to His disciples – not in an instant, but over a period of 40 days (Acts 1:3).

**24:45** He still opens men’s minds to understand the Scriptures. Compare Isa 54:13; John 16:13; Eph 1:17,18; John 2:20.

**24:46,47** “Repentance” – 13:3-5; Matt 3:2,8; Acts 17:30.

“Forgiveness” – Matt 6:12; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-35; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9. There is no complete forgiveness of sins without repentance. See also Acts 5:31; 26:26:18. Christ suffering and dying as a sacrifice for sins, and rising from the dead, is the basis of forgiveness, and there is no other. This truth must be preached in all the world (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15), but was to be preached first to the Jews who had demanded His death – Acts 1:8; 3:26.

**24:48** John 15:27; Acts 1:8. The disciples

49 “And, look, I am going to send the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high.”

50 And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 And while he was blessing them it came about *that* he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they were continually in the temple, praising and extolling God. Amen.

as witnesses for Christ demonstrated their truthfulness and sincerity by willingly suffering and dying for their witness (Acts 5:40-42; 7:57-60; 12:1-4; 14:19,20; 2 Cor 11:23-26).

**24:49** See Acts 1:4. What God the Father had promised was the Holy Spirit (Isa 44:3; Joel 2:28; John 7:37-39; 14:16,17). Christ’s servants were not to vainly imagine they could do God’s work without God’s power. The book of Acts shows what they could do with God’s power. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual energy, strength, and influence which no man has by nature.

**24:50** Bethany was on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem.

“Blessed them” – Gen 12:1-3; Lev 9:22-24; Num 6:22-27; etc.

**24:51** Acts 1:9.

**24:52** Their minds were opened to understand the Scriptures, and the Lord Jesus risen from the dead was before them. They knew beyond doubt that He was the incarnation of God and worthy of worship. Compare Matt 28:17; John 20:28,29. Notice the connection between their knowledge of who Jesus is, their worship of Him and their joy. They did not become joyful by seeking joy but by believing in the Lord Jesus (compare 1 Pet 1:8).

**24:53** Luke concludes on the theme he emphasizes everywhere in this Gospel – praising God (1:46,64; 2:13; etc). Let us join them all in praising Him for the wonderful things He has done in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

# The Gospel According to JOHN

**Author:**

John was one of the original disciples of Christ. See Matthew 4:21,22. He does not mention himself by name in this Gospel, but calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (see notes at 21:20,24).

**Date:**

Sometime in the first century A.D., probably toward the end of that century.

**Theme:**

John himself gives the reason for writing this Gospel. See 20:31. He presents those words and deeds of Christ which most clearly prove who He is – God incarnate and the one anointed by God the Father to be the giver of eternal life to all who believe in Him. He records some events in Christ's life, some miracles of His, and a number of His teachings not found in any of the other Gospels. Some key words are: Father, Son, believe, eternal life, love, light.

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**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** This same *One* was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and without him not one thing was made that was made.

**4** In him was life, and that life was the light of men. **5** And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not comprehended it.

**6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify about

the Light, that all *men* through him might believe. **8** He was not that Light, but *was sent* to testify about that Light.

**9** *That* was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him. **11** He came to his own, and his own did not receive him.

**12** But as many as received him, to those who believed in his name, to them he gave the right to

**1:1,2** "Beginning" – 17:5; Gen 1:1; 1 John 1:1,2. When God made the universe the "Word" was already in existence. The universe had a beginning but the Word was eternal, one with the Creator of all things. The verses which follow, especially v 14, make it clear that the Word is the Lord Jesus Christ. "Word" suggests communication, speech. The Lord Jesus is the full expression of the mind of God, the completion revelation of God's heart, God's nature (v 18; 10:30; 14:9; Heb 1:3).

"God" in these verses (except for the phrase "the word was God") evidently means God the Father (note at Matt 5:16).

"With" – to say the Word was with God means that He was not the same as the Father. Two distinct persons are in view here.

"Was God" means He fully shared the nature of God. See other references about this truth in notes at Phil 2:6 and Luke 2:11. Verse 1 does not say that "the Word was a god," or "the Word was in some measure divine." Any such translation is false to the language of the original. The Greek plainly states that the Word (the Lord Jesus) was God. Father and Son are distinct persons, but (together with the Holy Spirit) are perfectly united in one Godhead, sharing the same divine nature (see notes on the Trinity at 5:30; Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14).

**1:3** Genesis chapter 1; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2. The Father worked through the Son in bringing the universe into existence. The world is not the work of some inferior god, but the creation of the only Supreme Power there is.

**1:4** The "Word" was not a mere idea in the mind of God, not some principle of God's action. The Word was a living person through whom all life in the universe came into being. See 5:26; 6:57; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15,16. And it is through Him now that men can receive new spiritual, eternal life – vs 12,13; 3:16; 5:24; 17:2; 20:31. Life is a constant theme of John's gospel, used 36 times. Light is another word often found in John. Here "light" means truth, spiritual reality. The Lord Jesus is the one who brings God's light to men (8:12; 9:5; 12:36,46). He enables us to see the truth about God, about ourselves, about salvation, about all the important things relating to spiritual life.

**1:5** God's light continually shines. The reason why men do not understand it is

given in 3:19; Rom 1:18-21; 2 Cor 4:4. **1:6** This John was not the author of this gospel, but John the Baptist. See notes at Matt 3:1; 11:1-15.

**1:7,8** Verses 15-36; 5:33.

**1:9** Verse 4 – the Lord Jesus was the "true" light in contrast to false lights – those who claimed to be the light or whom others regarded to be the light and who were not. Jesus is the true light because He enables men to see the truth about God, about salvation, etc. He sheds His light on all, to the whole world (8:12), though all will not receive it.

**1:10** "In the world" refers to His birth and life on earth. Men did not recognize their Creator. Sin had dulled their minds, killed their spiritual understanding, separated them from God and His ways. Compare Isa 1:2,3; Eph 4:18; Col 1:21.

**1:11** His "own" means Israel, the Jewish people. Not only did the world fail to recognize Him, His own nation, for the most part, refused to acknowledge Him (5:18,40; 7:47; 8:59; 19:6-15). But some of them did, as the next verse makes clear.

**1:12** Here is one of the great promises of the whole Bible. It includes certain very important truths. Men are not the children of God by nature – they must "become" His children. Compare 3:6; 8:44; Eph 2:1,2; etc. By nature they are created beings who, by their own choice, are in rebellion against their Creator and separated from God (Jer 17:9; Gen 8:21; Isa 24:5; 59:1,2; Rom 3:9-19). They can become God's children only by receiving the Lord Jesus who is the Word and who is the Light God has sent to men, the Lord through whom the worlds were made (which is the emphasis in the preceding verses), and the Saviour He has appointed (Matt 1:21; Acts 4:12). Receiving Him means believing Him.

"Believe" is one of the most important words of this Gospel (as it is of the whole Bible). In its various tenses it is used nearly 100 times, more than in any other book of the Bible. We receive Him by faith and become God's children by faith (3:15,16,36; 5:24; 6:47; Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9; Gal 3:26). Believing in His name is believing in Him – in what He is and who He is, and in what He has done, as revealed in the Bible.

"He gave the right" – salvation from beginning to end is God's gift. See 4:10; Rom 3:24; 4:4,5; 6:23; Eph 2:8.

become the sons of God, 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh, and lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John testified about him, and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is superior to me, for he was before me.'"

**1:13** "Born" – this means receiving a new spiritual life from God. It does not refer to their birth into the world in the past, or to another physical birth in the future. If we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, here and now we experience this new spiritual birth and become God's children. See John 3:3; 5:21,24; Eph 2:1-5; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23; 2:2; 1 John 3:9.

This does not come because of natural descent. No one is a child of God because his parents or ancestors were children of God (3:6). Each individual must personally receive Christ as Lord and Saviour and receive new life from God (compare Matt 3:9). Spiritual life cannot be passed on by physical means. And no person's will can in any way make another a child of God. Only God can do that and He does it only as men receive the Lord Jesus (v 12). God alone can produce spiritual children, and the whole of mankind is divided into two groups – those who are born of God and those who are not.

**1:14** "Word" – v 1. "Flesh" – God became a man and had flesh and blood, real human nature. Coming into the world He took the name Jesus. See Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35; Gal 4:4; Heb 2:14,17. The two natures of Christ are perfectly united in one person. The person of Christ (one person, two natures, the God-man) is a great mystery revealed by God, and so one we should receive by faith even though we cannot understand much about it.

"Lived" – or "tabernacled", as it could be translated.

"Glory" – this probably refers to both the transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16,17; Matt 17:1,2), and His life and ministry which they saw for three years and which was full of grace and truth and glorious activity from beginning to end (compare 2:11).

"Grace" – note at Rom 1:7. This is one of the great words of the New Testament. In it the grace of God is referred to more than 100 times. Some important references: v 17; Acts 15:11; 18:27; 20:24; Rom 1:7; 3:24; 5:2,20,21; 6:1,14; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 1:6; Eph 1:6; 2:5-10; 2 Thess 2:16; Titus 2:11; 3:7; Heb 2:9; 4:16; Jam 4:6; 2 Pet 3:18. Grace is the kindness of God in action. Grace is God giving salvation freely to undeserving sinners. He gives all they need to be saved and live for Him in this world and the next. Grace was God giving His Son to die for us and His Spirit to live in us. God's grace is revealed very clearly and wonderfully in Christ. See 2 Cor 8:9.

16 And from his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed *him*.

19 And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to

"Truth" – the revelation of truth is at the very heart of Christ's incarnation. John's Gospel alone uses the word 25 times (see 4:24; 8:31,32; 14:6,17; 16:13; 18:37). In the Old Testament also God is the "God of Truth" – Ps 31:5. Jesus is His incarnation.

"Only begotten" – in Greek this expression does not mean that Christ had a beginning. It is an emphatic way of saying that Christ was unique. He was one of a kind. It could be translated "one and only." God had only one Son who shared His nature and essence as God.

In this Gospel God is referred to as "Father" 122 times, much more often than in the other Gospels. Note on God the Father at Matt 5:16.

**1:15** Verses 6, 30. John was born before Jesus and his ministry came before that of Jesus. John is here speaking of the existence of Jesus before He came to earth.

**1:16** The Greek of this verse indicates grace continually flowing, one act of grace following another like the waves of the sea. And the one and only channel of this grace of God is the Lord Jesus.

**1:17** Law refers to the old covenant given at Sinai through Moses. It is the foundation of nearly all of the Old Testament. See notes at Exodus chapter 19. John does not mean there was no revelation of God's grace and truth in the writings of Moses. He means that in Moses' writings there is an emphasis on law, and in Christ we have the embodiment of grace and truth, the full blaze of spiritual light, the perfect display of grace. He is contrasting two ways – the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ. The law could not save men and it did not reveal all the truth men needed.

**1:18** Individuals sometimes saw a manifestation of God's glory, or His appearance in human form (Ex 24:9-11; 33:22,23; Isa 6:1). But no one ever saw God as He is in spirit, in His overwhelmingly glorious and holy essence (1 Tim 6:16).

"In the bosom of the Father" – this indicates the closeness, the love existing between the Father and the Son. Observe too that they are two distinct persons. Men cannot see God, but in the life and acts and words of the Lord Jesus we have a complete revelation of God's character. One of the great purposes He had in coming to earth was to reveal just what God the Father is like (compare 8:19; 10:30; 14:9; 17:6).

**1:19** John was becoming very famous and the religious leaders of Israel wanted to know



ask him, "Who are you?"

20 And he declared, and did not refuse to say, but declared, "I am not the Christ."

21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you that prophet?" And he answered, "No."

22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? So that we can give an answer to those who sent us, what do you say about yourself?"

23 He said, "I *am* the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way for the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said."

24 And they who were sent were of the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, saying, "Why do you baptize then, if you are not the Christ, or Elijah, or that prophet?"

26 John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but one is standing among you whom you do not know. 27 He it is, who coming after me, is superior to me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to loosen."

28 These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward

him, and said, "See the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who is superior to me; for he was before me.' 31 And I did not know him, but I have come baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

32 And John testified, saying, "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and remain on him. 33 And I did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I saw, and testify that this is the Son of God."

35 Again the next day after this John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and looking at Jesus as he walked by, he said, "See the Lamb of God!"

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 Then Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" They said to him, "Rabbi (which means, being translated, Teacher), where do you live?"

39 He said to them, "Come and see." They

what was happening. Note on priests at Ex 28:1.

"Levites" – Num 1:47-50.

**1:20** Note on "Christ" at Matt 1:1. John knew he was not that person and he did not try to claim such an honor for himself (unlike some today who try to make out they are great ones and accept men's honor as so-called godmen and whatnot).

**1:21** The Jews believed that Elijah would come again before Christ appeared (Mal 4:5). See notes at Matt 11:14; 17:10-12.

"The prophet" – the Jews based this question on Deut 18:15-19.

**1:23** Isa 40:3; Matt 3:3. John's aim was not to call attention to himself or make any claims of greatness. He was willing to be a mere voice which prepared the way for the Lord Jesus. He was glad to be nothing if Jesus could be everything to men (v 27; 3:30). In this he was an example to us all. It is humility God wants to see in us and not a desire to be famous or great or a craving to receive honor from fellow men.

**1:24** Note on Pharisees at Matt 3:7.

**1:25** Note on baptism at Matt 3:6.

**1:26** He meant the Lord Jesus. As yet no one had recognized Him as the Messiah, the Son of God. Compare vs 10,11.

**1:27** See Matt 3:11.

**1:29** The word "lamb" brings to mind the sacrifices described in the Old Testament. See Lev 1:2,10-14; 3:6-8; 14:12,21,24; Ex 12:3-13; Gen 22:7-14. John meant that God the Father would make the Lord Jesus a sacrifice to take away sin. Compare Rom 3:25; 1 Cor 5:7; Eph 5:2; Heb 9:26; 10:12; 1 Peter 1:19. This sacrifice would not be merely for individuals in Israel or for

the whole nation, as some of the sacrifices of the Old Testament were. It would be for the whole of mankind. The Lord Jesus took away the sin of man, all the burden of debt that man owed God. This does not mean that all men are saved. It means that the way of salvation and perfect forgiveness has been opened to all men.

**1:30** Verse 15.

**1:31** John did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah until God revealed it to him. But he knew what his work was – v 23.

**1:32** Matt 3:16. Notes on God's Spirit at 14:16,17.

**1:33** The one who sent John was God.

"Baptizes with the Holy Spirit" – Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5. This is an immensely important part of the activity of the Lord Jesus.

**1:34** Note on Son of God at 3:16; 5:18-23; Matt 3:16,17; 11:27.

**1:35-37** John did not want to make disciples for himself. He wanted men to be Jesus' disciples. See 3:26-30. In this too he is an example for us to follow. The word translated "disciples" means "learners." See note at Matt 10:1.

**1:38** The Lord Jesus does not want anyone to follow Him without good reason. Idle curiosity is not enough to make a disciple. Compare Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-27.

"Rabbi" – the usual term the disciples used of a guru. It means "my teacher." These two men indicated by their words that they wanted to be with Him and learn of Him – a desire all men should have but which comparatively few actually do have.

**1:39** This gracious invitation to those two men is now given to everyone in different words (7:37; Matt 11:28; Rev 22:17). By

went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him that day, for it was about four in the afternoon.

40 One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed *Jesus*, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means, being translated, the Christ).

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus saw him, he said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You will be called Cephas" (which by translation means, A stone).

43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found the one about whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

accepting His invitation we will see that His eternal home is by the side of the Father (v 18), and we shall live there with Him forever.

**1:40** Matt 16:17,18.

**1:41** The way the truth still spreads on earth is by one telling it to another from person to person. Compare v 45; 4:28-30; 15:27. Note on "Messiah" at Matt 1:1.

**1:42** "Cephas" is a word in the Aramaic language (a sister language to Hebrew, and spoken by the Jews in Israel in those days). Peter (Petros) means the same in Greek.

**1:43** Compare Matt 4:19-22; 9:9.

**1:44** Bethsaida was a town north of the Sea of Galilee.

**1:45** This showed some good knowledge of the Old Testament. Compare Luke 24:27, 44. He calls Joseph the father of Jesus. God was His real Father (5:17,18; Luke 1:35); Joseph was His legal father while He was on earth.

**1:46** Nathaniel's question reveals that the town of Nazareth was a place of no reputation, and completely insignificant.

"See" – a good word to all who are doubtful about Christ. Let them come, let them taste and they will understand His greatness and goodness (Ps 34:8).

**1:47** An Israelite indeed was one who was what a man of Israel should be in heart and life – without insincerity and hypocrisy. Compare Rom 2:28,29; Matt 3:9,10.

**1:48,49** Apparently the fig tree was far enough away that Jesus could not have seen Nathaniel or heard his words except by supernatural means. Nathaniel immediately understood this and called Jesus God's Son. "King of Israel" – notes at Matt 1:1; Ps 2:6; Isa 9:6,7.

**1:50** Observe that the Lord Jesus accepts these words of Nathaniel as true and says

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said about him, "See an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

48 Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

49 Nathanael answered and said to him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel."

50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."

51 And he said to him, "Truly, truly I say to you, hereafter you will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man."

**2** And *on* the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, 2 and both Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding.

3 And when the wine was gone, the mother of

that He will give much greater evidence of their truth. Compare 20:28,29.

**1:51** Jesus used this expression "truly, truly" 25 times in John's Gospel. In Greek the words are "amen, amen." Amen is a Hebrew word sometimes used by the writers of the New Testament. It comes from a verb meaning to sustain, to support, to be firm, stable, to be faithful, trustworthy, true, sure, certain, to be something one can lean on. Amen, if used as an adjective, means "firm, faithful." As an adverb it means truly. Doubled is emphatic – indicating something absolutely true, beyond doubting. Only in John's Gospel is the word found doubled. It is a very solemn and emphatic way of speaking. It seems Jesus used it when He uttered truth that might seem to people strange and difficult to believe.

Here Jesus is referring to Jacob's dream recorded in Gen 29:12. In the dream there was a ladder between heaven and earth. Jesus is saying He Himself is that ladder. He is the way God's communication and God's blessings come down to men, the way men can rise to God's presence. Nathaniel (and all of Christ's disciples) would see this in due course. Note on angels at Gen 16:7. Note on Son of man at Matt 8:20.

**2:1** Cana was a small town about 15 kilometers north of Nazareth. It seems from what follows that Mary the mother of Jesus was helping the host at the feast.

**2:2** The Lord Jesus approved the institution of marriage and honored it with its presence (compare Matt 19:4-6; Heb 13:4).

**2:3** In the midst of a formal and joyous occasion, this would have been very humiliating to the host. Mary expresses her concern and implies that Jesus might do something about it. Up to this event Jesus had performed no miracles, at least in

Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what have I to do with you? My time has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

6 And six stone waterpots were placed there, according to the custom of Jewish purification, containing eighty or a hundred and twenty liters each.

7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

public (v 11). But Mary knew He was no ordinary person (Luke 1:35).

**2:4** "Woman, what have I to do with you?" – using the word "woman" in this way was unusual, but not in any way disrespectful. Compare 19:26 (it is interesting that in the Gospels Jesus never once called Mary His mother). Here the meaning of Jesus' remark seems to be this: The Lord Jesus was beginning His ministry as the Son of God and as the Messiah of Israel. The old relationship He had with Mary in their Nazareth home was to be no longer in force, so He does not use the word "mother" when addressing her. She could have no influence on His decisions, and must not attempt to direct His activities in any way; He would get His directions from God the Father alone (compare Matt 12:46-50; John 4:34; 5:36; 8:28,29; 17:4).

As the servant of God He was behaving as He later called on His disciples to behave – Luke 14:25,26; Matt 10:37-39. For Christ the only important thing in life was putting God the Father first in everything, was knowing and lovingly doing the will of God, at whatever cost to Himself. And He would not permit any human ties, any personal aims or interests to influence Him in the slightest. He is our example.

**2:5** Jesus' manner of speaking evidently indicated to Mary that He was going to do something. Her word to the servants was appropriate to them then and, in a higher, fuller sense, to all men always. We can never go wrong by doing what the Lord Jesus tells us. We will certainly go wrong if we do not. **2:6** Mark 7:1-5.

**2:9** There is no description of the miracle itself. All we are told is that water went into the jars and wine came out. The wording in no way suggests that it differed from the wine drunk before, except that it was better. Wine is fermented grape juice. The Greek word for wine ("oinos") is used 33 times in the New Testament, including here, and is seen to be intoxicating when drunk to excess. This is clear from v 10, Eph 5:18, and Matt 9:17 (wineskins would not burst if there were no continuing fermentation).

Is it possible that what Jesus made was unfermented grape juice which miraculously tasted like real wine and completely deceived the master of the feast? There is no hint whatever in the Bible itself that this

8 And he said to them, "Now draw *some* out, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*.

9 And when the master of the feast tasted the water that had been made wine, and not knowing where it came from (but the servants who drew the water knew) the master of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 and said to him, "Everyone at first sets out the good wine, and the inferior *wine* after men are intoxicated. *But* you have kept the good

is what happened. In fact John 4:46 clearly states that Jesus "made the water into wine (oinos)." In any case, can we think that Jesus who is the Truth (John 14:6) and who hates all forms of lying and deception, would use deception in this the first of his miracles?

In those days the drinking of wine at meals was a common practice, and it was not regarded as harmful. Usually it was mixed with water – one part wine to three parts water. Some commentators have suggest that wine used in this way acted as a water purifier in that time when there were no filters, chlorination of water, etc. Of course, drinking wine in excess (or any other alcoholic drink) is everywhere condemned in the Bible. See notes at Gen 9:21; Prov 23:29-35; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:8; Titus 2:3.

The word "wine" is sometimes used in the Bible as a symbol of something good (Prov 9:1,2,5; Isa 55:1; Matt 26:37-39). In Matt 9:17 the Lord Jesus used "wine" as a symbol of the gospel. His gospel was new "wine" in contrast to the old covenant of the law. Here He makes wine from water that came out of jars the Jews used for washings related to their religion. This may be a little picture of what Jesus came to do: He came to establish His Kingdom of grace and joy which would replace the old covenant.

As for the drinking of wine now (or any kind of alcoholic beverage) Christians should follow certain principles clearly laid down for us in the New Testament. We should all study and practice Romans 14:1-4,10,13,19-23; 15:1-3; 1 Cor 8:9; 9:19-23; 10:23,24. In these days some Christians may be stumbled if they see or hear of other Christians drinking even a little wine. Therefore it is better to abstain completely than to indulge oneself and be a cause of stumbling to any of God's people. Loving one's brothers and sisters in Christ and trying to encourage their faith is the important thing, not eating and drinking (Rom 14:17). And giving our money to help those in need, or for the progress of the Gospel, is far better than using it for self-indulgence or self-pleasing.

**2:10** The man was making a statement about feasts in general. He is not saying that people at this wedding feast were getting drunk. The Lord Jesus would not have participated in a feast where the guests got stupefied by drink, nor would He have provided more wine for such.

wine until now.”

11 This, the first of *his miraculous* signs, Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, but they did not stay there many days.

13 And the Jewish Passover was at hand. And Jesus went up to Jerusalem, 14 and found in the temple *compound* those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting *there*. 15 And when he had made a whip out of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, together with the sheep and the oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned the tables, 16 and said to those who sold doves, “Take these things out of here. Do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.”

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written,

Zeal for your house has consumed me.

18 Then the Jews responded and said to him,

**2:11** “Signs” – in Greek there is only one word here, which can mean either signs or miracles or both – miracles that are signs. Eleven times in the Gospel of John the miracles of the Lord Jesus are called “signs.” This is because they are full of meaning; they point to spiritual truth. They are evidence that God was working through the Lord Jesus, that He was the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God, the King from heaven. They made known His power, grace and love. Their object was to lead people to faith in Christ. See v 23; 3:2; 20:30,31. They are parables, not in words, but in action. They were one way the Lord Jesus made God the Father known (1:17,18). See note on miracles at Matt 8:1.

“Glory” – 1:14. His disciples had already begun to believe. Because of this sign their faith increased and was confirmed.

**2:12** Capernaum was a town on the lake of Galilee. It became Christ’s headquarters in Galilee (Matt 9:1). Jesus’ brothers are mentioned in 7:3; Matt 12:46; 13:55.

**2:13** Notes on the Passover at Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:4-8.

**2:14-16** Matthew, Mark and Luke all record an event similar to this which occurred shortly before Christ’s crucifixion. See notes at Matt 21:12,13. John refers to a time toward the beginning of Christ’s ministry. It appears that Jesus twice cleared the temple of things which didn’t belong there.

**2:16** They had perverted the proper use of the temple and thought only of the profits they could make through it. Compare 1 Tim 6:5.

**2:17** Ps 69:9.

**2:18** Verse 11.

**2:19-22** These words of Jesus were later

“What *miraculous* sign do you show to us, since you are doing these things?”

19 Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

20 Then the Jews said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?”

21 But he spoke of the temple of his body. 22 So when he had risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them, and they believed the Scripture, and the words Jesus had spoken.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, on the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miraculous signs which he did. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all *men*, 25 and did not need anyone to testify about man, for he knew what was in man.

**3** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus at night and said to him, “Rabbi, we

twisted and used against Him at His trial (Matt 26:61). Jesus here very early in His ministry speaks of His death and resurrection. His body was a temple – the dwelling place of God (compare 1 Cor 6:19,20). They would put it to death but He would raise it. The Jews misunderstood Him and mocked. Even the disciples did not grasp His meaning until after His resurrection. See Matt 16:21,22; Luke 18:31-34.

**2:22** See 14:26. As used in the New Testament the word “Scriptures” means the Old Testament. “Scripture” in the singular may refer to a single verse or promise such as Ps 16:10.

**2:23** Verse 12. Believing in His name means to believe in Him, to receive Him (1:12).

**2:24,25** Some put their trust in His name but He did not put His trust in them. Jesus was God in the flesh (1:14) and had God’s knowledge of human nature – 1 Kings 8:39; Jer 17:9,10. There are several examples in this Gospel of His supernatural knowledge (1:48,49; 4:17,18; 5:42; 6:26; etc). He knew that all men have a sinful nature and that even believers are sometimes fickle, superficial in their faith, and unreliable. Even His closest and best disciples were often spiritually dull, did not always follow His ways, and were no help in the time of His greatest crisis (Matt 26:36-56).

**3:1** See note on the Pharisees at Matt 3:7. Nicodemus was a good representative of the religion of the Jews with its law-keeping, ceremonies and religious activities. In the conversation which follows, the Lord Jesus shows that all of that put together was not enough to make anyone a child of God.

**3:2** We do not know why Nicodemus came at night, but we do know that Jesus received

know that you are a teacher come from God, for no man can do these *miraculous* signs that you are doing, unless God is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time

into his mother's womb, and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be surprised that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but

him just as he was (compare John 6:37), and taught him some great truth – truth at the very heart of God's revelation in the New Testament. On "Rabbi" see 1:38. Evidently he regarded Jesus only as a teacher from God and not as the Messiah and Son of God. But he could see that the miracles Jesus did proved His connection with God. See notes at 2:11; Matt 8:1.

**3:3** The reply of Jesus is very abrupt. It is as though He was saying, "Do you really believe that? Then I will teach you what you need to know". Do we now say that Jesus is a teacher come from God? Then we too should let Him teach us, and examine very carefully every word of His in the Bible. On the phrase "truly, truly" see 1:51. On "born again" see note at 1:13.

"Again" – the Greek word means "anew" or "from above." The new birth does not mean reincarnation. The teaching that men are born again and again into this world in a physical way is contrary to Biblical teaching (notes at 9:1-3; Job 11:12; Luke 16:26). Even if repeated births were possible it could never result in new spiritual life. All men are sinners and repeated births would mean repeated lives of sin and greatly increased guilt.

By the new birth Jesus means a creative act of God here and now. This glorious work of God makes people new creations, spiritually alive and wonderfully changed in heart; it is like passing from death to life (5:24; 2 Cor 5:17,18; Eph 2:1-5). Without this no one can have any part in the kingdom of God. Jesus was saying to Nicodemus that without the new birth being born a Jew and keeping the law and observing ceremonies and being religious came to nothing. On the kingdom of God see note at Matt 4:17.

**3:4** Nicodemus either did not understand what Jesus was saying, or else he was questioning the possibility of it and was asking, "Can old men be radically changed?" There are still many religious leaders who are in the same condition as Nicodemus. The answer to such a question is that any person, young or old, can experience the new birth by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3:5-8** In these verses the Lord Jesus reveals how the new birth is brought about. It is produced in the individual by the Spirit of God. The expression "born of the Spirit", is here thrice (vs 5, 6, 8). The words "born of water" in v 5 have been interpreted in several different ways.

Some say "water" here stands for

purification as it often does in the Old Testament. See Ex 30:17-21; Num 19:9; 31:23; Ps 51:7-10; Isa 44:3; Jer 4:14; Ezek 37:25. Compare Ezek 36:25,26 with the words "born of water and the Spirit." Observe in Ezekiel that the "sprinkling of water" is something God does, not man. So it refers to the cleansing of the heart from sin, not to water baptism. Compare Titus 3:5 – there the new birth itself is called a "washing." It cleanses the heart as water cleanses the body. Water baptism is not there in the picture at all. Others say that "born of water" means born of the Word of God. They take water here to be a symbol of God's Word. As a basis for this they point to such verses as 15:3; Eph 5:26; Jam 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23.

Others say that "water" here is a symbol of God's Spirit, as in 7:37-39. They think that "born of water and the Spirit" is two ways of saying the same thing and saying it very emphatically.

Others think "water" here indicates physical birth into the world. As though Jesus was saying "Man's first birth was not enough; birth by God's Spirit is also necessary for entrance into God's Kingdom."

Others say that "water" here refers to the repentance and confession which are symbolized by water baptism (see notes at Matt 3:6).

Still others say "water" here means water baptism and insist that this is necessary for the new birth, that God's Spirit works with this ceremony to produce new life in people.

The author of these notes thinks there is something to be said for any of the above interpretations except the last one. Certainly the Lord Jesus never taught anywhere else that baptism is necessary for the new birth. The new birth occurs when individuals receive the Lord Jesus by faith (1:12,13), not when they participate in the ceremony of baptism. Baptism should follow the new birth; it does not produce it. Only God can perform the miracle of the new birth and He does so as people repent and trust in the Lord Jesus. And this is what is absolutely necessary for salvation and entrance into God's Kingdom.

**3:6** "Flesh" here means what man is by nature (see notes at Rom 7:5,18). Man can produce children like himself but can never produce new spiritual life (1:13). All his attempts to do so will come to nothing. Only God's Spirit can produce spiritual life (notice that the word "water" is now dropped).

**3:8** "Wind blows" – or "Spirit breathes." The work of God's Spirit and the inner life of those



cannot tell where it comes from and where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus answered and said to him, "How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "You are a teacher of Israel, and do you not know these things?"

11 Truly, truly I say to you, we speak what we know, and testify to what we have seen. And you do not receive our testimony. 12 I have told you earthly things, and if you do not believe *them*, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

born by the Spirit are both mysterious. They are like the wind which is unseen and unpredictable in its movements, and which is known to ordinary men only by its effects.

**3:9** Nicodemus is still puzzled. We should be glad for his question because in answering it the Lord Jesus gave him some very beautiful and important truth.

**3:10** As a teacher in Israel, familiar with the Old Testament, he should not have been so puzzled. He should have known the sinfulness of men and the need for a radical change in heart and life taught in many places there (for example, Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 13:23; 17:9). And he surely knew such verses as Jer 31:31-33 and Ezek 11:19; 18:31; 36:26. Today there are still many who have not learned the most vital truth themselves but who still try to teach others. Gross spiritual ignorance may be in the most educated and famous of men.

**3:11** When the Lord Jesus taught, He was not merely expressing opinions on religious subjects. He knew exactly what He was talking about, and spoke with divine authority (7:16,17; 8:38; 12:49,50; Matt 7:28,29). If we refuse to listen to Him the great loss will be ours.

**3:12** He had spoken to Nicodemus of water and wind and the new birth which takes place on earth and in men of the earth. Heavenly things are things more directly related to heaven. These He speaks of in the verses which follow – His own eternal dwelling place in heaven (v 13), His coming down to take away man's sin by the sacrifice of Himself (v 14), eternal life (v 15), and the love of the God of heaven and what it caused Him to do (v 16).

**3:13** In this verse He reveals how He can speak with such authority, and how He could speak of heavenly things. He is the only person born into the world who ever lived in the immediate presence of God in God's own home, in the highest heaven. And He came down from there with God's revelation for men. Compare v 31; 1:1,14; 6:38; 8:23.

"The Son of man who is in heaven" – compare 1:18. He came down from heaven and was a man among men. But at the same time He was in heaven. This could be true only of someone who is God, for only God can be in more than one place at the same time. Note on Son of man at Matt 8:20.

**3:14,15** See notes at Num 21:4-9. Moses

13 And no man has gone up to heaven except he who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of man who is in heaven.

14 "And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, 15 so that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 "For God did not send his Son into the world

lifted up the serpent, and people who were dying physically lived. For people dead in sin (Eph 2:1) to live spiritually it was necessary that Jesus be lifted up. This lifting up was on the cross (compare 12:32,33). In these verses the Lord Jesus links His sacrifice for the sins of men with the new birth. People can be born again and receive eternal life only because Christ was the Lamb of God bearing away the sins of the world (1:29). Sin destroys people and condemns them to eternal punishment. But when anyone repents and believes in Christ and His sacrifice for them, God's Spirit creates new life in them (v 5). And this holy spiritual life goes on forever.

**3:16** Here in one verse is the heart of John's Gospel, indeed, the heart of the Bible. God had pity and compassion for men lost and perishing in their sins. He does not love men because they are good or worthy of His love (if they were good and worthy they would not be perishing). He loves because it is His nature to love (see Ex 34:6,7; 1 John 4:8). And His love was not merely in words but in deeds. He proved His love once and forever by giving His only Son (Rom 5:8; Titus 3:3-5; 1 John 3:16; 4:9,10). And God's love was not for one nation only (as many Jews thought), but for the whole of mankind (2 Cor 5:19; 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim 2:3,4).

"His only begotten Son" – on "only begotten" see the note at 1:18. Christ is absolutely unique, fully sharing the very nature of God (1:18; Matt 3:17; Phil 2:6). God the Father did not give one Son among many to die for the world. He gave the only Son He had. Here was a gift indescribable in its greatness and value (2 Cor 9:15).

God's purpose in sending the Lord Jesus is here clearly revealed. Men were perishing in sin, and He wanted them to have eternal life. This life speaks of a quality of life and not just one that goes on forever. Eternal life is holy, spiritual life in fellowship with God, untouched by sin and death. The Lord Jesus here states again very plainly that there is only one way to obtain this life. It is by believing in Him (see also v 36; 1:12; 5:24; 6:47; 8:24). Faith in Christ makes all the difference between perishing forever in hell, or living eternally with God.

**3:17** See 12:47. God is the just Judge of the universe. The time will come when every person must stand before Him for judgment (Gen 18:25; Deut 32:36; 1 Sam 2:10;



to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He who believes in him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation: Light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come to the light, so that his deeds will not be exposed. 21 But he who practices truth comes to the light so that it may be revealed that his deeds have been done through God."

22 After these things Jesus and his disciples came to the land of Judea, and there he spent time

Ps 7:8; 9:8; 82:8; 96:13; Acts 17:30,31; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-13). But He sent Christ into the world for another purpose altogether – that is, to save men from just condemnation for their sins. Christ accomplished God's purpose by bearing their sins and condemnation Himself (1:29; 3:15; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).

Forty (40!) times in John's Gospel Jesus indicated that God had sent Him.

**3:18** Rom 8:1. Believers are fully forgiven, their sins are taken away in the sacrificial death of Christ, and they are counted as innocent and righteous (Rom 3:24,25; 5:1; Eph 1:7; Col 2:13; 1 John 2:12). So there is no condemnation for them. The case of unbelievers is entirely different. They are rejecting God's one and only remedy for their sins. They are even adding to their sins by refusing God's greatest gift, and calling God a liar by their unbelief (1 John 5:10). If such people do not repent and believe the Gospel, there can be nothing but condemnation for them. Observe once again the importance given to faith in the teaching of the Bible.

**3:19,20** The world as a whole already stands guilty and condemned before God (compare Rom 1:18-20; 3:9,19). Unbelievers do not have to wait until God's great judgment day for God's general verdict on their behavior. It is given in these two verses. They show by their actions what kind of people they are and how worthy they are of condemnation and punishment. In the person of Christ light has come into the world (compare 1:4-9; 8:12). He brought wonderful revelations of truth about God and men and salvation. But men in general did not love Him or the truth He brought. They loved something else – darkness.

Darkness signifies concealment, deception, ignorance, untruth, evil. Those who love such darkness will not love light. Light exposes them for what they are – sinners worthy of hell who can be saved only by Christ. And light makes it impossible for them to indulge in all the evil they desire to do. So they hate the light – that is, they hate Christ and His truth (this is no exaggeration, but the solemn truth which

with them, and baptized. 23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And *people* came and were baptized. 24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

25 Then an argument began between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, about whom you testified, the same man is baptizing, and everyone is coming to him."

27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it is given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves can testify for me that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I was sent before him.'

Jesus later repeated – 7:7; 15:18,23-25).

We should understand from this that the unbelief of men is not because they have valid reasons for unbelief, or because they are intellectually unable to believe, but because of the sin and darkness in them. The fault is not with their minds, but with their hearts and wills. Belief in Christ is a moral choice for goodness, holiness and truth, and most men are not willing to make this choice. They prefer sin to holiness, darkness to light, and self rather than Christ. **3:21** But there are some who want the truth and try to practice the truth. They have responded to God's Word and God has been at work in their hearts. They do not fear the light but come to it. They are those who believe the gospel and receive Christ. We see examples of such in the disciples and others in the four Gospels. And there are many such people today throughout the world.

**3:22** See 4:1,2.

**3:23** The exact location of Salim is unknown. The reason given for John's baptizing there is another indication that John baptized by immersion (Matt 3:6).

**3:24** See Matt 14:1-12.

**3:25** Mark 7:1-4.

**3:26** "Rabbi" – 1:38. Did they think John would be jealous or angry? If so, they were greatly mistaken. God sent John to bear witness to Christ (1:6-8). In the verses which follow we see him doing so in a marvelous manner. Far from being jealous of Christ he rejoiced in His success. He saw in it the fulfillment of his own ministry. His purpose was never to attract people to himself but to point them to the Lord Jesus. In this he is an example to us all.

**3:27** John well knew that God has for each of His people a position and a ministry, and that one should not strive for another's place or envy another, but be satisfied with God's appointment. Compare Num 11:26-29; Ps 75:6,7; Jer 45:5; Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:12-20.

**3:28,29** John knew his place and rejoiced in it. In 1:19-27 he had stated his ministry exactly. Here he describes Christ as a bridegroom and Christ's people as the bride. He

29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and listens to him, greatly rejoices because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine is complete. 30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease. 31 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 And he testifies to what he has seen and heard, and no man receives his testimony. 33 He who has received his testimony has certified that God is true. 34 For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit to *him* by measure.

saw himself only as the friend of the bridegroom. At a wedding the bridegroom and the bride are the important persons, not the friend. John was familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures that speak of the nation of Israel being the bride of Jehovah God (Isa 54:5; 62:4,5; Jer 2:2; 3:20; Ezek 16:8; Hos 2:19,20). In the New Testament Christ calls Himself the "bridegroom" (Mark 2:19), and His Church is compared to a bride (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:32; Rev 19:7).

**3:30** Here is an example of that love for Christ and that humility and denial of self which are so precious to God (Matt 3:11; 10:37-39; 18:4; 20:25-28).

**3:31** The one from "above" is the Lord Jesus - v 13; 8:23; 1 Cor 15:47. The one from the "earth" is John himself. This is one difference between the Lord Jesus and every other person.

**3:32** Verses 11-13.

**3:33** If we believe Christ's words we are saying that God is truthful. If we do not believe, it is the same as calling God a liar (1 John 5:10).

**3:34** Compare 7:16,17; 8:38; 12:49,50. "Spirit" here means the Holy Spirit - 1:32; Matt 3:16; Isa 11:1,2; 61:1. Notes on God's Spirit at 14:16,17.

**3:35** The mutual love of God the Father and God the Son, of one divine person for the other, is seen in all the Gospels, but is revealed more fully in John than in the others (Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; John 5:20; 10:17; 14:31; 15:9,10; 17:23, 24,26). The Father gave all power and authority to the Son. See 5:22-27; 17:2,6; Matt 28:18; Acts 2:36; Heb 1:2; Ps 2:6-12.

**3:36** This naturally follows from the preceding verses. God has ordained that Christ should give eternal life to those who believe in Him. He is the only one who can give it and this is the only way it can be obtained. See note on eternal life at v 16.

"Refuses to believe" - this translation brings out the meaning of the Greek, which could also be translated "does not obey," or "is rebellious against." It is a different word than the word translated "believes" earlier in the verse. The translation of the KJV here "believeth not" is also possible, but does not bring out the idea of disobedience or rebelliousness that is in the Greek word.

35 "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has everlasting life, and whoever refuses to believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."

**4** Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus himself *was* not *the one who* baptized, but his disciples), 3 he left Judea and went back again to Galilee. 4 And he had to go through Samaria. 5 Then he came to a city of Samaria called Sychar,

The translation "refuses to believe" suggests this attitude of disobedience, of wilful, stubborn unbelief. Believing in Christ involves submitting to Him, refusing to believe is continuing in rebellion and disobedience. See notes at Rom 1:5; Acts 22:10; etc.

"Wrath" - to reject Christ, to be disobedient to Him, is to choose sin. And the anger of God will always remain on all sin and all sinners (Matt 3:7; Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; 1 Thess 1:10; Rev 6:16,17; 19:15. See notes at Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11). His anger comes because of His holy, righteous nature which hates all evil. Every person will have either eternal life, or else God's anger remaining on him. There is no middle ground.

**4:1** "Pharisees" - Matt 3:7. Here John uses the word "Lord" for Jesus. In the New Testament Jesus is called Lord some hundreds of times, and many of these times the word means the one and only Lord of men, the great Lord of the universe (1 Cor 8:6; Rev 19:16). See the note at Luke 2:11.

**4:2** In the Gospels, Pharisees are nearly always seen as hostile to the Lord Jesus, and they eventually plotted to kill Him (7:32; 11:57; 18:3). Jesus knew their hearts (2:24,25), and He knew that the time for His death for sinners in Jerusalem had not yet come. He had no fear of them, but to avoid useless confrontations with them He left Judea.

**4:4** Samaria was the area between Judea and Galilee. It was inhabited by a people despised by most Jews (v 9. Note on Samaritans at 2 Kings 17:24; Matt 10:5). The route through Samaria was the shortest one between Judea and Galilee, but many Jews took the long route around the area to avoid contact with Samaritans. John says Jesus "had to go through Samaria." He had to go that way only if He were in a great hurry to reach Galilee, or if He had a work He must accomplish there. In the rest of the chapter we see He did have a work to do there, and a wonderful work it was! We see also He was not in a hurry (v 40). Another possible reason why He went through Samaria was to show that He did not share the Jewish prejudice against its people.

**4:5** Gen 33:19; 48:22; Josh 24:32.

near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Therefore, tired from *his* journey, Jesus sat on the well. It was about noon.

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water, *and* Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink" 8 (for his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food).

9 Then the woman of Samaria said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, are asking a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his children, and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever

drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never thirst, but the water that I give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life."

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I will not thirst, nor come here to draw."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband and come here."

17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have rightly said, 'I have no husband,' 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. In that you spoke the truth."

19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped on this mountain. And you say that the place where men ought to worship is Jerusalem."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor at Jerusalem. 22 You

**4:6** Jesus' tiredness here indicates His true human nature. As God He could not be tired (Isa 40:28). As a man a long journey on foot wearied Him as it would any man. On His two natures see 1:14; Heb 2:14-17. The sixth hour was noon.

**4:7** Again the Lord's human nature is indicated. Thirst is an experience of men, not of God.

**4:9** At first, to this woman, Jesus was simply a thirsty Jew. But as the story unfolds we see her developing understanding of who He is – someone who makes great promises (vs 10-15), then a prophet (v 19), and finally the Messiah (vs 25,26,29). Increasing understanding of who Christ is – this is a common experience of all believers (though, of course, not necessarily following the steps that woman took).

**4:10** Christ's purpose was to win this woman for God's kingdom. See how He captured her interest.

"Living water" means the new life He brings. It includes the new birth (3:5), eternal life (3:16), and God's Spirit to live in the hearts of believers (7:37-39). Observe that it is a gift (Rev 22:17), and can be had by asking the Lord Jesus for it. In fact only He can give it. In the Old Testament also water is used as a symbol of spiritual life – Isa 55:1; Jer 2:13; 17:13. **4:11,12** Apparently, the woman completely misunderstood Jesus' words. This happened often then and happens often now. She took His words literally. The term "living water" in common usage meant "water that flowed," as in a river or brook. It seems she did not realize that Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters.

**4:13,14** Jesus now tried to show her that He is speaking of spiritual things, not material water. There is no literal water which can

take away thirst permanently or spring up to eternal life.

"Never thirst" – this does not mean that believers do not desire a fuller experience of God or no more long for truth or righteousness (see Ps 40:1,2; 119:131; Matt 5:6). It means that having experienced the new birth and life through God's Spirit they need not thirst for those things again. They will have in their inner being a fountain which can satisfy their deepest longings. The life Jesus gives is like flowing water, vigorously springing up in the believer's heart. It is abundant life (10:10). How does one drink this water? Coming in faith to Christ, receiving Him as Lord and Savior in our hearts is what this drinking means. See 7:37,38. See also Jer 2:13 and 17:13 where the Lord says that He Himself is the spring of living water.

**4:15** Did the woman understand that Jesus was speaking of spiritual matters? If so, she did not reveal it. But perhaps a longing for spiritual life was rising in her heart.

**4:16** This remark does not seem to have anything to do with the previous conversation. But we can be sure it does. Jesus now leads her to see He is no ordinary man, and He brings to her remembrance her sinful life, which she must be willing to forsake if she would receive "living water."

**4:19** Note on prophet at Gen 20:7. She knew that sometimes God revealed to His prophets facts about others (see also Luke 7:39).

**4:20** She did not want to speak about the several men in her life. So she changed the subject.

"You say" – she meant the Jews in general.

**4:21-24** Her change of subject gave Jesus the opportunity to reveal to her some profound truth about worship: God may be

do not know what you worship. We know what we worship. For salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the time is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such *persons* to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming, who is called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things."

26 Jesus said to her, "I who am speaking to you am he."

27 And then his disciples came and were surprised that he was talking with the woman, but no one said, "What are you seeking?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"

28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29 "Come,

see a man who told me everything I ever did. Is not this the Christ?" 30 Then they went out of the city and came to him.

31 In the meantime his disciples urged him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."

33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him *something* to eat?"

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months *before* the harvest comes'? I say to you, Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest. 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 And in this that saying is true, 'One sows, and

worshiped anywhere (v 21), the place now has no significance (though once it did to some extent. See Deut 12:5; 2 Chron 6:6,7). God will be worshiped as the Father (vs 21,23; note at Matt 5:16). The Samaritans (and by implication other peoples and nations) did not really know what they worshiped (v 22). Compare Acts 17:23; Rom 1:21-23. They were not worshiping in accordance with the revelation God had given of Himself, as believing Jews were.

"Salvation is from the Jews" – the Jewish nation was the channel God chose to bring His revelation and His salvation to the world. The Lord Jesus was born a Jew. The worship God desires has no essential link with material objects, temples, so-called "holy" places, etc (vs 23,24; Acts 17:24,25).

True worship is in spirit. It must come from within the heart of those born again by God's spirit (3:5. No one else will know what the true worship of God is). God is Spirit and material things can never truly represent Him. Only in spirit can the One Eternal Spirit be really worshiped (this is one good reason He gave the command in Ex 20:4 and other places).

This worship must be in truth. It must be in accordance with the truth God has revealed about Himself and it must be sincere, and real, without hypocrisy. God seeks such worshippers. This is because God is love (1 John 4:8). He loves people and seeks their love. He desires their highest good and this can only come when they become true worshippers of the true God. God sees enough empty formal worship in the world and He desires something much better. Compare Ps 50:8-15; Isa 1:11-17. **4:25** "Messiah", "Christ" – Matt 1:1. The Samaritans (as the Jews) looked for the coming of the Messiah. It seems the woman is beginning to wonder if Jesus might be that Messiah. At least she is greatly impressed with His words (v 29).

**4:26** Jesus plainly states that He is the expected Messiah. See also 1:49,50;

9:37; 10:24,25; Matt 26:63,64.

**4:27** In those days usually a Jewish rabbi would not carry on a conversation with a woman or risk being seen alone with one. The Lord Jesus did not look down on women. He treated all human beings alike in their need, and did not worry about what others might say about Him. The disciples did not question Him. They were learning that He had good reasons for what He did.

**4:29** Verse 25.

**4:30** Her testimony stirred up great interest in the town. This is still a method God uses to bring people to Christ.

**4:32,33** Jesus meant spiritual food, but they took His words literally. Literal-minded people will have difficulty with many things Jesus said (for example see 6:52-58).

**4:34** Jesus found His highest satisfaction in doing God's work according to God's will (compare 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 9:4; 14:31; 15:10; 17:4). There is more joy in obedience to God, heartily doing His work, and leading others to faith in Christ, than in feasting on all the good things of the world.

**4:35** In Israel there was a period of about four months between the end of the sowing season and the beginning of harvest. Jesus is saying that they need not wait so long. At that time and in that place a "harvest" was there for the reaping. He was referring to the readiness of some of the Samaritans (and others) to believe in Him when they heard the truth. In our times too there is always a harvest ready somewhere, always people prepared by God to receive the Lord Jesus. God's servants should seek for them with zeal and confidence in God. The 2000 years from Christ's day to ours has been a time of continual spiritual harvest on earth.

**4:36-38** The Lord here gives some general truths about God's service. The reapers (those who lead many people to Christ) will have wages (v 36). We are not told what they are, but since they begin immediately ("even now") they speak of the satisfaction and joy and deep bonds of love and

another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap what you did not work for. Other men laboured, and you have entered into their labours."

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in him because of the word of the woman, who testified, "He told me everything that I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they begged him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his own word, 42 and said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of your word, for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

43 Now after two days he left there, and went to Galilee. 44 For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country. 45 Then when he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast. For they also went to the feast.

46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee, where he made the water into wine. And there

fellowship which result from winning souls for Christ (see Phil 4:1). But their wages will appear in eternity as well (see Dan 12:3; 1 Thess 2:19,20; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 22:12).

The "fruit" (people who come to faith in Christ by the efforts of the reapers) is not merely for this little time on earth but forever (v 36). If there is to be a harvest it is necessary that someone first sow the good seed of the Word of God. It may be the same person who reaps, but often it is someone else (vs 37,38; 1 Cor 3:5-9). The sower should not be jealous of the reaper but both rejoice together (v 36). In heaven they will both forever share Christ's joy in the harvest. In the light of all this let us be wise (Prov 11:30), and labor earnestly while we have opportunity (9:4).

**4:39** See the results of one woman's testimony! Let us be always ready to speak for Christ and see what God will do. All of God's servants are to be witnesses (compare Acts 1:8)

**4:42** While the Jews as a whole refused to believe that Christ was the Saviour (1:11), these Samaritans whom the Jews despised came into the knowledge of the truth. Note on "Saviour" at Luke 1:47. Jesus is the Saviour of all who trust in Him, no matter their race or country (1 Tim 2:3-6; Rom 1:16,17; Acts 4:12; Mark 16:15,16).

**4:44** Matt 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24.

**4:45** They welcomed him because of the miracles He did, but they did not honor Him as the Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

**4:46** See 2:1-11.

**4:47,48** Evidently this official thought of Jesus as a prophet, but did not believe in Him as the Son of God or as the Saviour of the world. The words of Jesus to him were a rebuke. Compare Matt 12:38,39; 16:4;

was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him, and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see miraculous signs and wonders, you will not believe."

49 The nobleman said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your son is living." And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, "Your son is living." 52 Then he asked them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." 53 So the father knew *that it was* at the same time when Jesus said to him, "Your son is living." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

54 This *is* the second *miraculous* sign that Jesus did after he had come from Judea to Galilee.

1 Cor 1:22. True faith trusts Christ's character and words without needing signs and miracles to support it. Compare v 41.

**4:49** The official did not defend himself, but simply appealed to Christ's compassion. Even when faith was weak such appeals never failed with the Lord Jesus during His ministry on earth. Can we think they will fail now?

**4:50** The official learned from Christ's rebuke in v 48, and was willing to believe Him without any sign.

**4:51,52** The word of Jesus was just as powerful as His presence. Compare Ps 107:20. The official at first thought Jesus had to go where the sick child was, but Jesus had no more difficulty healing at a distance than near at hand. Now He can heal from heaven as easily as if He were on earth in the flesh. If He does not always do so, it may be a lack of faith on the part of those who ask Him, or there may be wise purposes in each case which He does not choose to reveal.

**4:53** "Believed" probably means he believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Observe the progress of this man's faith. When he came to Jesus he had some faith in His ability to heal, based on Jesus' miracles. His faith rose higher and he was able to believe the word of Jesus without a sign. Then his faith was confirmed and increased and influenced his whole family. Christ healed the physical fever in the boy, and the spiritual fever of a weak faith in the official.

**4:54** "Sign" - notes at 2:11; Matt 8:1. Jesus was the incarnation of Jehovah God who heals diseases and preserves life (Ps 103:1-4; Luke 2:11), the creator of firm and living faith in the hearts of His people (Heb 12:2).



**5** After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. **2** Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, which in the Hebrew tongue is called Bethesda. It has five porticos. **3** In these lay a great multitude of infirm people, of blind, lame, and paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. **4** For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool, and stirred the water. Then, after the stirring of the water, whoever first stepped in was healed of whatever disease he had.

**5** And a certain man was there who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years. **6** When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had now been a long time in that condition, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

**7** The helpless man answered him, "Sir, when the water is stirred I have no one to put me in the pool. While I am moving, someone else steps down before me."

**8** Jesus said to him, "Get up. Pick up your cot and walk."

**5:1** "Feast" – Leviticus chapter 23.

**5:2** "Bethesda" – probably means "house of mercy."

**5:4** "For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred the water. Then, after the stirring of the water, whoever first stepped in was healed of whatever disease he had" – some manuscripts and some translations omit these words. However, it seems that these words are necessary to explain v 7, and the author of these notes does not think it is wise for translators to omit them. It is possible that by sending an angel to stir the water God reminded the people of Israel that healing came from heaven and that He was still the "Lord who heals" (Ex 15:26:26). For other instances of the Lord's use of water in healing see 9:7; 2 Kings 5:13,14.

**5:5** Judging from v 7 the man had some form of paralysis or lameness.

**5:6** The Lord Jesus often took the initiative when He was about to perform a miracle, but not always. Here it seems His purpose in asking this question was to awaken hope in this man. After 38 years and many disappointments his hope must have been dim.

In spiritual matters also Christ would ask us all the same question – "Do you really want to be healed from your sins? Do you have the desire to be saved?" It is those who hunger and thirst for God's salvation who will receive it. He causes us to desire what He wants to give us. See Matt 11:12 and note.

**5:7** Here is the picture of the helplessness of many who are poor, sick, and friendless. It also shows the selfishness of human nature. Each person was concerned with getting into the pool before anyone else could get there. The Lord Jesus, the God of

**9** And immediately the man was healed, picked up his cot and walked. And that same day was the Sabbath.

**10** Therefore the Jews said to the one who was cured, "It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for you to carry a cot."

**11** He answered them, "The same man who healed me said to me, 'Pick up your cot and walk.'"

**12** Then they asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your cot and walk?'"

**13** And the healed man did not know who it was, for a crowd was in that place and Jesus had slipped away secretly. **14** Afterwards Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are healed. Do not sin anymore, or a worse thing may come on you."

**15** The man left and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. **16** And so the Jews persecuted Jesus and tried to kill him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath.

**17** But Jesus responded to them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

the Bible, is a friend to the friendless, a helper to the helpless (Ps 10:14; 54:4; 72:12,13; 113:5-7; Isa 40:29; 41:17). Many of His miracles were acts of mercy toward the poor and needy.

**5:8,9** Observe that the power to heal was in the word of Jesus. See Matt 8:8. A helpless man could not pick up his cot and walk. But when Jesus commanded him to do so He enabled him to do so. In the very act of obedience healing came. And obedience was attempted because of faith in Jesus' word. Compare Mark 3:5; Luke 17:14.

**5:10** The Jews had many such rules. See Matt 12:2; 15:2.

**5:13** The Lord Jesus had no desire for publicity or for arguments with those unbelieving Jews (4:3).

**5:14** The Lord Jesus followed up the work He began. He does the same in the matter of salvation (see Phil 1:6). He cared about the man's spiritual condition and looked for him (compare Luke 19:10). In the words He spoke to him there is the suggestion that the man's disability was a result of his sin, and that there was danger he would continue in his sin. It was far more important for him (and for anyone) to be saved from his sins than to be healed of his infirmity.

**5:15** This man behaved unwisely. Did he not know that telling this to the Jews could bring trouble to the Lord Jesus?

**5:16** Jesus was not breaking the Sabbath, only their man-invented rules for the Sabbath. See notes at Matt 12:1-3. They did not care how many remained ill and helpless or continued in sin just as long as others kept their rules. Their character is seen in Matthew chapter 23.

**5:17** God the Father is never idle, even on the Sabbath. And Jesus the Son of God



18 Therefore the Jews tried even more to kill him, because not only had he broken the Sabbath, but also said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

19 In response Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing by himself, but *only* what he sees the Father doing. For whatever he does, the Son also does the same things. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he does. And he will show him greater works than these, that you may be amazed.

21 "For just as the Father raises the dead and

gives life *to them*, just so the Son gives life to whom he will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all *men* should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.

24 "Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears my word and believes in him who sent me, has everlasting life and will not come into condemnation, but has passed from death to life.

25 "Truly, truly I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of

was the Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8), and would not be bound by man's rules. He was saying God was His Father in a special sense that was not true of anyone else. Compare 10:30-33. They accused Him of blasphemy because they didn't believe He actually was the Son of God, and they knew that for ordinary men to claim to be God is the worst sort of blasphemy and worthy of death (see Matt 26:65).

**5:19-47** In this long passage the Lord Jesus sets forth His claim to be the Son of God (vs 19,20), speaks of some of the things He can and will do (vs 21-30), gives some of the evidence for His claim, and reveals why these Jews did not believe Him (vs 38-47). We have here very profound, very important truth.

**5:19** "Truly, truly I say" – see 1:51. Here Jesus teaches us that He is so united with the Father in nature and will and purpose that it is impossible that He should act independently. We can say, He can do nothing by Himself because He will not. It is unthinkable that he should. But He does all God the Father does. This means Jesus the Son also has all power, all wisdom, and the ability to be present and working everywhere at the same time. If He did not have this ability, He could not do all the Father does. And this shows that Jesus fully shares God's nature, that He is the incarnation of God (see references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11). Whatever is done in the universe the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit unitedly do it. Notes on Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14.

**5:20** See 3:35; 17:24. The mutual love of the Father and Son is seen often in the New Testament. It existed before the world was made and continues forever. The eyes of the Son are ever on the Father as He runs the universe and rules the world, and the Father hides nothing from Him. By "greater things" he meant greater than the miracles He had already performed.

**5:21** This may refer to the raising of individuals from the dead such as Lazarus (11:43,44) and others (Mark 5:35-43; Luke 7:11-15). But it is equally true that He is the Giver of eternal, spiritual life, raising people from their death in sin (v 24).

**5:22** The judgment of all men will be in the hands of the Lord Jesus, but this does not

mean that the Father will not participate in it (Acts 17:31). In everything they work together.

**5:23** See the Father's purpose in giving judgment into the hands of the Lord Jesus. Men must honor Jesus just as they would honor God the Father. Neither the Father nor the Son could ever desire this if the Son did not fully share the essence, the nature of God. Men should never give to any created being the honor that belongs to God alone. Observe what Jesus says here – if men are not honoring the Son of God they are not honoring God at all. Of course, they may say they are honoring Him and may even think they are.

**5:24** This is one of the greatest promises ever made to men. And it is preceded by words of solemn assurance – "Truly, truly I say to you." See notes on eternal life at 3:16,36. Observe that eternal life is the present immediate possession of the believer. 3:36 says this life comes to those who believe in the "Son." Here it says that it comes to those who believe in the Father who sent Him. Again we see the unity of Father and Son – to believe the one is to believe the other.

"Will not be condemned" – God condemns men because of their sins. The sins of believers are all forgiven. Christ has borne their condemnation, so they will not be condemned. See 3:18; Rom 4:8; 8:1. This surely indicates permanent safety. But it does not mean believers shall not face judgment about the deeds they have done after becoming believers. See 2 Cor 5:10. However, that judgment is concerned only with the giving or withholding of rewards (1 Cor 3:10-15), and not with deciding whether any of them must go to hell.

"From death to life" – because of their sins all men are in a state of spiritual death (Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1-3). When people believe in Christ, God makes them spiritually alive (1:12,13; Eph 2:5). They immediately pass from death to life. Notice the past tense of the verb. In this one verse we see that receiving eternal life, justification and the new birth, are all through faith alone – through faith in the Father who sent the Son to be man's Redeemer and Saviour.

**5:25** The "dead" here probably means the spiritually dead as in v 24. They hear Christ's

the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For just as the Father has life in himself, even so he has given to the Son to have life in himself, 27 and also has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.

28 "Do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear his voice, 29 and will come out. Those who have done good *will come out* for the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, for the resurrection of condemnation.

voice speaking to their inmost souls. They hearken to that voice, believe and obey that voice (compare 10:3,4,16,27). Only such will live spiritually. Jesus used this title "Son of God" of Himself three times in John – here, in 10:36 and in 11:4.

**5:26** "Life in Himself" means that God is self-existent. He calls Himself "I am" (note at Ex 3:14,15). He is the living one from all eternity who gives life to all created beings. Men are a different matter. Their life comes from a source outside themselves. Jesus is not a mere man, possessing only a human nature. He is God's Son who has life in Himself just as God the Father has. And Jesus is the source of life to others (v 21). This is another way of saying He shares the nature of God.

**5:27** "Son of man" – Matt 8:20. Because Jesus humbled Himself and became a man and lived among men and thoroughly knows all men He is the best qualified to be the judge of men. And God has exalted Him to be this judge (compare Acts 17:31).

**5:28,29** Here the Lord Jesus declares that God will raise all men from the dead. Notice the word "graves" in v 28. He is not here speaking of the giving of spiritual life as in v 24. Raised from the dead here means that the spirits of those who have died will be reunited with their dead bodies and those bodies will rise. See also Dan 12:2; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor 15:20-22; Rev 20:4-6,11-15.

Jesus says there will be two kinds of resurrection for two very different kinds of people. We might think He would say the two kinds of people are those who believe in Him and those who do not. This is certainly true, but because He put it in another way here we can learn an important truth. That is, doing good is a mark of the believer, doing evil is a mark of the unbeliever. Believers have been born again (1:13) and made entirely different from what they were before, and from unbelievers in general (2 Cor 5:18). The evidence that this is so is their doing good (Matt 7:17,18; 25:31-46; Rom 2:6-11; James 2:14-26).

Unbelievers may sometimes do what they consider good works. But their motives are wrong even in that, and they are constantly guilty of doing the evil of rejecting God's Son, disobeying God's Word, and living

30 "I can do nothing by myself. As I hear, I judge. And my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of the Father who has sent me.

31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies about me. And I know that the testimony which he gives about me is true.

33 "You sent to John, and he testified to the truth. 34 But I do not receive testimony from man. I say these things that you might be saved. 35 He

according to their fallen sinful nature. They shall rise from the dead only to face condemnation and punishment. Believers will rise to enjoy eternal life.

Jesus does not say that the resurrection of both the good and evil will take place at the exact same time, only that the resurrection of both will certainly take place sometime in the future. Rev 20:4,5 indicates that there will be an interval between the two resurrections. 1 Thess 4:13-17 and 1 Cor 15:51-53 speak only of the resurrection of believers, probably because only that sort of resurrection takes place at the time Paul refers to there.

**5:30** Observe in vs 19-30 that God the Father sent the Son, He shows the Son what He does (v 20), and He gives authority to the Son (vs 22,27). The three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in the Godhead share the same nature and are equally God, but there is an order in their activities. In authority the Father is greater than the Son (10:29; 14:28); the Son and the Father sent the Holy Spirit (14:26; 15:26; 16:7), possibly indicating that in the Godhead they are in a higher position than He. But in nature and essence and mind and love and purpose the Three are absolutely one God. If the question arises how can these things be? We can only answer that they are revealed to be so in the Bible, and so we believe them even though we cannot fully understand them.

**5:31** In Jewish law a man's own testimony was not accepted in court. Others had to bear witness about him. Two or three witnesses were required either to condemn him or clear him (see 8:17; Deut 19:15). Jesus is saying that if there is no evidence for His claims except His own word the Jews should not believe Him. He then speaks of other witnesses for Him. He points this out for their sake, not for His (v 34). He well knew who and what He was.

There are four witnesses – John the Baptist (v 33), the works Jesus did (v 36; 8:18), God the Father (v 37), and the writings of the Old Testament (vs 39,46).

**5:32** He probably meant God the Father (v 37), though some think He meant John the Baptist (v 33).

**5:33** See 1:19-34.

**5:35** "Light" – compare Matt 5:14-16. John did just that.

was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

36 "But I have a greater testimony than John's. For the deeds which the Father has given me to finish, the very deeds that I am doing, testify about me that the Father has sent me.

37 "And the Father himself, who has sent me, has testified about me. You have not heard his voice at any time, or seen his form. 38 And you do not have his word dwelling in you. For you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

39 "You search the Scriptures, for by them you think you have eternal life. And these are they which testify about me, 40 and you are not willing to come to me that you might have life.

41 "I do not receive honour from men. 42 But I

know you, that you do not have God's love in you.

43 "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.

44 "How can you believe, *you* who receive honour from one another, and do not seek the honour that *comes* from the only God?

45 "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is *someone* who accuses you, *the same* Moses in whom you trust. 46 For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

**6** After these things Jesus went over the lake of Galilee (which is *the lake* of Tiberias),

**5:36** Men are known by what they do (Matt 7:15-20). The works Jesus did testified to who and what He was (see 2:11; 3:2; 10:25,37,38; Matt 8:1; 11:4-6).

**5:37** See 8:18; 1 John 5:9. The Father bore witness to the Son through the prophecies of the Old Testament (see note in the Topical Concordance in the back of this Bible under the heading "Jesus Christ, O.T. prophecies concerning"). Also before Jesus' birth the Father bore witness through an angel (Matt 1:20-23; Luke 1:26-35), at His baptism and transfiguration by direct voice (Matt 3:17; 17:5), and all through His life by working with Him in His mighty works (14:10; Acts 10:38).

**5:38** They had God's word (the Old Testament) and they diligently studied it (v 39), so it was in their minds. But it was not in their hearts. It did not live in them and make them alive (compare Ps 119:11).

**5:39** "Scriptures" (or "Scripture") is a word often found in the New Testament (53 times). It means "writings" and usually signifies the books of the Old Testament (but see 2 Pet 3:16). The Old Testament is full of prophecies, pictures and types of the Lord Jesus. See v 46; Luke 24:27,45,46.

**5:40** They thought they had eternal life but they did not, and they would not come in faith to the only one who could give them spiritual life (v 21; 3:36). So many people today are like them.

**5:41** Unlike so many religious leaders (v 44), the honor and glory that men might give meant nothing to Him. He never tried to please men that they might praise Him. His whole aim is seen in 8:29. And He is our example in this as in all things.

**5:42** Jesus knew what was in men – 2:24,25. And He knew that if they had loved God they would have loved Christ (8:42). Their hatred of Him revealed their hatred of God (15:24). Though, if asked, would they not have said they loved God? And actually they might have thought they did. Jer 17:9 is always true.

**5:43** "In my Father's name" – this means that Jesus came on the authority of God

the Father and fully represented Him. To come in one's own name means to come on one's own authority and to represent one's self (though such people may say they represent God or Christ). Many there are who do so. See Matt 24:24. The chief of all such will be the antichrist (2 Thess 2:3,4).

**5:44** The character of those described here makes it impossible for them to believe in Christ. They themselves are the center of their existence, and their hope is that men will praise them, that they will be honored by fellow human beings in the field of religion or education or whatever their special interest is. God really does not have the slightest place in their hearts. See the opposite of this in Gal 1:10.

**5:45** Jesus did not come to "accuse" or judge (3:17). Moses was their accuser. He meant that the God-inspired writings of Moses (the first five books of the Bible) condemned them. This was because they did not really believe what he wrote (though they may have thought they did) and did not practice the truth he recorded.

**5:46** Compare 1:17; 7:19; Luke 24:27,45,46. Here is a very clear statement that Moses wrote down what we have in the books of Moses and that he wrote of Christ (v 39). See Ex 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Num 33:2; Deut 31:9.

**5:47** This is a question neither they nor anyone else could ever answer. Let us learn from the above verses that there is great and wonderful evidence for the claims of Christ to be God's Son. Indeed there is no evidence like it for anyone else in the whole history of mankind. Let us all go where the evidence leads, and trust the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. If we do not the great loss will be ours.

**6:1-15** This is the only miracle the Lord Jesus did which is recorded in all four of the Gospels (not counting His resurrection from the dead). This indicates its great significance and importance. See notes at Matt 14:13-21. But John alone speaks of the nearness of the Passover (v 4), and calls this miracle a "sign" (v 14). Christ's words

2 And a great crowd followed him, because they saw the miraculous signs which he performed on the sick.

3 And Jesus went up to a mountain, and sat there with his disciples. 4 And the Passover, a Jewish feast, was near.

5 When Jesus raised *his* eyes and saw a great crowd coming to him, he said to Philip, "Where will we buy bread for them to eat?" 6 And this he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.

7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred silver coins' worth of bread would not be sufficient for each of them to have a little."

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 9 "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two small fishes. But what are they among so many?"

10 And Jesus said, "Have the men sit down." Now there was plenty of grass in the place, so the men, about five thousand in number, sat down.

11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed *them* along with the fish to the disciples, and the disciples to those who were sitting down, as much as they wanted.

12 When they were full, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the pieces that are left, so that nothing is wasted."

13 Therefore they gathered *them* and filled twelve baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

14 Then the people, seeing the *miraculous* sign Jesus did, said, "Truly this is the prophet who should come into the world."

later in the chapter show us the reason for this.

**6:2** Matt 9:35.

**6:4** "Passover" – Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:4-8.

**6:6** For us also the Lord always has in mind what to do, but He will test our faith, love, and obedience. Compare Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12; 1 Pet 1:6,7.

**6:7** Mark 6:37. If Philip had an answer to the problem he didn't state it. Apparently he did not yet grasp the fact that nothing was impossible to the Lord Jesus.

"Two hundred silver coins' worth" – in Greek "200 denarii." One denarius was a laborer's daily wage.

**6:11** "Thanks" – see Matt 14:19.

**6:14** "Sign" – 2:11. What was this miracle a sign of? People thought it signified that the great prophet written of in Deut 18:15-18 was in their midst. This was true, for Jesus was that prophet, but the miracle signified the Lord Jesus as one come down from heaven (v 33), the bread of life (v 35), and the "Passover" for His people (vs 53-56).

**6:15** They had no understanding of His purpose and mission, no faith in Him as the Son of God. They were thinking only of

15 So Jesus, knowing that they would come and take him by force to make him king, again went into a mountain by himself.

16 And when evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, 17 and entered a boat and were crossing the lake toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus had not come to them. 18 And the lake was stirred up because of a great wind that blew. 19 So when they had rowed about five or six kilometers, they saw Jesus walking on the lake, and drawing near the boat, and they were afraid.

20 But he said to them, "It is I. Don't be afraid."

21 Then they willingly received him into the boat. And immediately the ship was at the land where they were going.

22 The day following, when the people who stood on the other side of the lake saw that there had been no other boat there, except the one his disciples had entered, and that Jesus did not go with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples had gone away alone 23 (however other boats *now* came from Tiberias near to the place where they ate, after the Lord had given thanks), 24 so when the people saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they also got into the boats and came to Capernaum, looking for Jesus. 25 And when they had found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

26 Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw the *miraculous* signs, but because you ate the

a worldly kingdom which would replace Roman rule in their land and bring peace and prosperity. Jesus would have none of that. He was not interested in establishing a political system, a worldly kingdom. His aim was far higher than that. He had come to die for the sins of the world, to bring forgiveness and spiritual life to fallen men.

**6:16-21** This miracle is found also in Matthew and Mark. Notes at Matt 14:22-33.

**6:21** This sign pointed to one who is not bound by the forces of nature but has absolute control over them. Compare Ps 107:23-30; Matt 8:23-27.

**6:22** The crowd did not understand how Jesus had been able to cross the lake (v 25).

**6:24** They did not search for Jesus because they knew who He was, or for spiritual reasons of any kind. See v 26.

**6:25** "Rabbi" – 1:38.

**6:26** The Lord Jesus knew their hearts (see 2:24,25) and was not happy about their motives for seeking Him. They had no spiritual understanding or concern, but were only anxious to get something for their physical needs. They are examples of so many today who try to be Christians for the wrong reasons.

loaves, and were filled. 27 Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for that food which lasts to everlasting life, which the Son of man will give to you, for on him God the Father has set his seal."

28 Then they said to him, "What shall we do, that we might perform the works of God?"

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

30 Therefore they said to him, "Then what *miraculous* sign will you show that we can see, and believe you? What deed will you perform? 31 Our fathers ate manna in the desert. As it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

**6:27** The Lord tells them what should be their most vital concern. It is not for the things of this brief life, but for eternity, not for the body but for the soul. See also Matt 6:31-33; 16:26; Isa 55:1,2.

"Everlasting life" – 3:16. Observe that the Son of man (note at Matt 8:20) gives this good "food", but that they should "labour" for it. This does not mean salvation is by works (Eph 2:8,9). It means that men should make every effort to seek from Christ what He gives and make every effort to see that they truly believe Christ and receive this gift (v 29). Compare Matt 11:12; Heb 4:11; 2 Pet 1:10.

**6:28** It seems they misunderstood Christ's word about "labour." Lacking spiritual understanding they thought salvation and eternal life must be earned by good works. But see 4:10; Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:5.

**6:29** The Lord corrects their false view. God requires that men trust in Christ for salvation (1:12; 3:15,16,36; 5:24). And trusting in Christ is very reasonable and right, for God sent Him into the world. Forty times in John's Gospel alone the Lord Jesus said God sent Him. How many times does He have to say something before men will believe Him?

**6:30,31** Matt 16:1-4; 1 Cor 1:22. Jesus had already given signs which pointed to the truth about Himself, but these people had not believed Him. In v 31 they refer to the manna in the desert (Ex 16:11-18,35). It seems they were comparing what Jesus did with that. Jesus had fed the five thousand one meal. In Moses' time God fed a whole nation for 40 years. Jesus used ordinary bread. God in Moses' time sent manna from the sky. The Jews believed that when Messiah came He would again supply manna from heaven, but Jesus had not done that.

**6:32** It was God who caused the manna to fall. And Moses could not give them a bread from heaven that would produce eternal life. Only God could do that, and He has done so by sending His own Son. The manna was only a picture of the spiritual bread God gives, which is the true bread for spiritual life.

32 Then Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, Moses did not give you that bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

34 Then they said to him, "Lord, always give us this bread."

35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst. 36 But I told you that you have seen me and do not believe."

37 "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will not at all send away."

**6:33** Observe that the bread of God is a person, a person who came from heaven and gives spiritual life to mankind (v 35).

**6:34** Compare 4:15. They had no spiritual understanding of what He was saying and did not believe Him (v 36).

**6:35** Jesus makes it clear that He has not been speaking of some substance like manna which they can gather and eat. He has been speaking of Himself (vs 48,51). In this Gospel on a number of occasions Jesus used the words "I am" in connection with some truth or other about Himself or His ministry (6:35; 8:12; 10:7,9,11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1,5). Also He used the words by themselves (8:24,58. See notes there). Here when He compares Himself to bread He signifies that He is to men's minds, hearts, and spirits what literal food is to the body.

**6:36** Verse 64; 5:38; 8:45; 10:25.

**6:37** Another very great promise. It shows that we partake of the bread of life by coming to the Lord Jesus. This is the one and only way to obtain spiritual life (3:36; 5:40; 14:6; Rev 22:17). Coming to Him does not mean traveling anywhere physically but means trusting in Him, coming in faith, and not coming in unbelief with wrong motives as they had done (vs 24,26). It means a movement of our hearts toward Him, a turning to Him in spirit.

Those who come He will never send away. The words are very emphatic. No matter who or what or where a person is, if he or she comes to Christ, Christ will receive Him. No one should worry about the first part of this verse and think Christ may not receive him if God has not chosen him. His very coming to Christ is proof that God has chosen him. It is true that God has given some individuals to Christ out of the masses of mankind (10:29; 17:6).

Before a person comes to Christ no one can know whether he or she is one of these. But all God's chosen will come in faith to Christ, and by coming will prove that God the Father has given them to Christ. See notes at Rom 1:6; 8:29,30. The sinner wanting salvation should not be concerned with God's secret purposes, but simply come to Christ (Matt 11:28). Whoever wants to



38 "For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of the Father who has sent me, that of all whom he has given me I should lose none, but should raise them up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him, will have everlasting life. And I will raise him up at the last day."

41 Then the Jews grumbled about him because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

42 And they said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? Then how is it that he says, 'I came down from heaven?'"

43 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 No man can

come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him. And I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Therefore, everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to me. 46 Not that any man has seen the Father, except he who is from God, he has seen the Father.

47 "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in me has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which comes down from heaven which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

52 Therefore the Jews argued among

come to Him may do so, the way is open to all (Rev 22:17).

"Send away" – this is one meaning of the Greek word which also means "cast out", "drive away", "turn away", etc. We may be absolutely certain that Christ will never do any of these to the person who comes to Him.

**6:38** Note at 4:34. Five times in this chapter the Lord Jesus says He came down from heaven (vs 33, 38, 50, 51, 58). Let us believe Him. If we truly believe Him we will not stumble at anything He ever said. For other reasons why Jesus came to earth see note at Matt 5:17.

**6:39** "The last day" here means the time of the resurrection of believers at the end of this age (note at 5:28,29). Jesus teaches that believers are a gift to Him from His Father and that He will take care of this gift and lose no part of it. In vs 40,44 Christ states definitely without qualifications that He will raise up all believers. This means He will complete the work of salvation He has begun and not fail in a single case. Here is absolute security and safety for believers. It is based on the power and love of the Son on of God, and the will of the Father. Compare 10:28-30; Rom 5:9,10; 8:29,30; Phil 1:6; Heb 7:25.

**6:40** "Sees the Son" – besides meaning seeing with one's eyes, the Greek word may suggest mental perception. Now we cannot see Jesus with our physical eyes as He was then, but we can have spiritual enlightenment that enables us to view Him with the eyes of our spirits. Compare Heb 11:27; Matt 11:27. Note on eternal life at 3:16.

**6:41** Jesus gave them marvelous teaching, wonderful promises, such as had never been heard on earth before. And all they could do was grumble and object. Such is the sinful, unbelieving heart of man.

**6:42** See also Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3. They were ignorant of the nature of Christ's birth (Matt 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35). And they did not know, and did not want to know, how Jesus came from heaven.

**6:43** Grumbling is not the way to arrive at

the truth. It only adds to men's sins.

**6:44** See v 37. Sinful man without God's help is not able to understand Christ's words or believe in Christ or come to Christ. But unbelievers are still responsible, guilty, and condemned (3:18-20). He says four times that He will raise all believers on the last day (vs 39, 40, 54). He speaks emphatically to indicate the certainty of this fact.

**6:45** Isa 54:13; Jer 31:34. See notes on God as teacher at Ps 25:4,5. Everyone who learns from God will come to Christ, everyone. It is in vain for a person to claim God is his teacher if he does not trust in Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

**6:46** See 1:18. Observe again the distinction between these two persons in the Godhead – one has seen, the other has been seen.

**6:47** A statement Jesus repeated several times (v 40; 3:15,16; 5:24). Believe Him and rejoice.

**6:48** Verse 35.

**6:49-51** The unbelieving Jews thought Moses was superior to Jesus (vs 30-32). Here Christ shows the opposite is true. The manna Israel ate did not give them spiritual life, or even keep them living physically very long (v 49). But Christ as the "bread" from heaven gives spiritual life which goes on forever. And the manna was only for one people, but what Christ gives is for the whole world (v 51).

In v 50 He says that if a person eats this bread from heaven he will not die. See also 11:26. But do not believers in Christ die physically? Yes, but they will never die spiritually. They have already passed from death to life (5:24). Even their physical death is usually not called death in the New Testament, but a "sleep." See Acts 7:60; 1 Cor 15:6; 1 Thess 4:13. See note on death at Gen 2:17.

**6:51** The Lord Jesus meant that His body would be a sacrifice to take away the sins of the world (see 1:29; 3:15), and that through believing in Him men would obtain spiritual life.

**6:52** As usual these unbelievers did not



themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

53 Then Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood, lives in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father has sent me, and I live because of the

grasp what He was saying. They had no spiritual understanding and took His words literally. Compare 3:4; 4:15. Jesus often used figures of speech which must not be taken in a literal manner (v 35; 4:10; 8:12; 10:7; 15:1; etc). This is true in the verses which follow.

**6:53-58** In this section Jesus speaks of His flesh and blood four times and says that men must eat His flesh and drink His blood; that they are "real" food; that He is "bread" and that people must "eat" Him. Obviously He did not mean for people to take His words literally. See verse 63. He was standing before them and it was not possible for them to eat Him without being guilty of murder and cannibalism – neither of which Jesus ever dreamed of teaching. We are not to think we should literally eat His flesh or drink His blood, just as we are not to think He was literal bread. He was using figures of speech to teach spiritual truth. He did not mean He must be literally eaten any more than He meant He was a literal door (10:7), or a literal vine (15:1). The Old Testament absolutely forbids literally partaking of blood (Gen 9:4; Lev 17:10-14; 19:26).

What spiritual truth was Jesus teaching? The same as in v 51 with an additional reference to His blood. By "blood" He meant His blood which was to be shed on the cross, His life given as a sacrifice for men's sins (see Matt 26:27,28; Rom 3:25). What does it mean to eat His flesh and drink His blood? It means to believe that His sacrifice really was for us and takes away our sins (Rom 3:25; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12-14; 1 John 1:7); it means to receive His Spirit into our hearts by faith. It is a spiritual eating and drinking, and it brings us spiritual life.

Some people have taught that this whole passage refers to the Lord's Supper or Communion (Matt 26:26-29; 1 Cor 11:23-32). There are serious objections to this. These verses may give the spiritual meaning of Communion, but the New Testament nowhere teaches that men must take part in that ordinance in order to obtain spiritual life. If it did, what would be the fate of the thief who believed on the cross (Luke 20:40-43), or of other believers throughout history who may not have partaken of the Lord's Supper, or children who have not? And Jesus states very definitely in v 53 that those who do not "eat" His flesh and "drink" His blood have "no life in them." And how

Father, even so he who eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven; not as your fathers ate manna, and are dead. He who eats of this bread will live forever."

59 He said these things in the synagogue, while he was teaching in Capernaum. 60 Then many of his disciples, hearing this, said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can understand it?"

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, he said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 *What*, then, if you see the

can we even dream that spiritual life comes by taking something into the mouth?

Very obviously Jesus is referring to spiritual realities. And we should understand that it is very possible to partake of the Lord's Supper and yet not spiritually by faith "eat" His flesh or "drink" His blood. And it is possible by faith to "eat" His flesh and "drink" His blood without partaking of the Lord's Supper.

**6:53** By using the word "unless" Jesus shows He is speaking of something absolutely essential for salvation. See also 3:3; Matt 18:3; Luke 13:3. These are all things without which no person will have spiritual life, be saved, enter God's Kingdom, or go to heaven. Concerning this we have the most solemn words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

**6:56** The believer is in Christ (Rom 6:11; 8:1; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1-4); and Christ is in the believer (2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:27; 3:11; Rev 3:20). Each lives in the other – 17:20-23. Their lives are forever bound up together.

**6:57** It is just as certain that believers are spiritually alive through Christ as it is that He is alive because of God the Father. The living Father, the living Son, and living believers are all linked together.

**6:60** This was said by some of Christ's own disciples, not by His Jewish enemies. This does not refer to His twelve closest disciples, but to those who sometimes followed Him to hear His teaching. Some of those who said this did not really believe in Him (v 64), and by leaving Him showed they did not believe (v 66. Compare 1 John 2:19).

What Jesus taught in vs 53-58 is wonderful to those who have spiritual understanding and believe Him. But it is indeed a "hard teaching" to unbelievers. They certainly do not like to be told that the only way of salvation is Christ's sacrifice for them and that they must "eat" Him or be lost forever. When they said it was a "hard teaching" they meant hard for them to accept. For the true believer nothing Jesus ever said is hard to accept, though some of it may be hard to understand. Christ's teaching here separated His true disciples from the false (except for Judas Iscariot who was not separated until later).

**6:61** Compare v 41.

**6:62** Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9.

Son of man ascend where he was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh *is of* no use. The words that I speak to you are spirit and *they* are life. 64 But some of you do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who did not believe, and who would betray him.

65 And he said, "Therefore I told you that no one can come to me unless it is given to him by my Father."

66 From that *time* many of his disciples went away and did not walk anymore with him.

67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Will you also go away?"

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that you are

the Christ, the Son of the living God."

70 Jesus answered them, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a demon?"

71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. For it was he, *who* was one of the twelve, who would betray him.

**7** After these things Jesus went about in Galilee, for he did not want to go about in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was at hand.

3 So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, so your disciples can also see the deeds you are doing. 4 For no man does things secretly while he seeks to be known publicly. If you are doing these things, reveal yourself to the

The question seems to mean, if they were to see Christ's ascension into heaven would they then be more offended or would they believe Him? "Where he was before" means with God the Father in heaven (v 38; 1:1; 3:13).

**6:63** "Spirit" – God's Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Only He can give spiritual life (3:5-8; 2 Cor 3:6). Here Christ indicates that a literal eating of His flesh could do no possible good. Spiritual life does not enter a person through the mouth. It is given directly to man's spirit.

"The flesh does not help at all" is a very general statement, and may also mean no flesh of anyone and no physical efforts by anyone can produce spiritual life. Nothing connected with human nature can do it (1:13).

"The words that I speak" refer to the words above, but they apply also to all the words of Christ. How can words be "spirit" and "life"? In the sense that God's Spirit uses them to give spiritual life. The Spirit enables people to understand Christ's words, believe them, and act on them, and so obtain life. Through Christ's words He awakens people to their need, causes them to hope in Christ's promises, and opens their hearts to receive His life.

**6:64** See 2:24,25. Before Jesus chose Judas Iscariot as one of His disciples He knew that Judas would betray Him (vs 70,71). Then why choose him? To fulfill the Scriptures and the plan of God. See Matt 26:24.

**6:65** The Lord Jesus had performed a great miracle and spoken marvelous words, but many continued in their unbelief. Now the Lord repeats the reason for this (v 44). Here is the reverse side of v 37. All that the Father has not given Him will not come to Him.

**6:66** How quickly some men can move from the attitude of v 15 to this! They wanted a Jesus whom they could control, who would do what they planned, and give them what they thought best. They could not accept

His "hard teaching" (v 60), and Jesus had exposed their unbelief. So off they went to their own ways. We must follow Jesus for the right reason, or sooner or later we too will leave Him.

**6:67** Jesus knew the twelve disciples would not leave. He wanted them to say what was in their minds. Doubtless this was a time of testing for them.

**6:68** Peter was the spokesman for the group (Matt 16:15,16; 17:4; etc). Here he expressed what was in the minds of them all (except Judas). He gives the right reason for following Christ. They had believed Christ's words; they were convinced He was what He said He was; they could not leave Him. For the true believer there is never any place to go, anyone to go to, away from Christ.

**6:69** "The Christ, the Son of the living God" – the disciples had come to a considerable understanding of who Jesus is.

**6:70,71** Judas was not a literal demon, but he allowed Satan to influence his life so much that he behaved like one. See also 12:4-6; 13:2,26,27. The nature of Judas is described in Ps 109:2-19 (in Acts 1:20 Peter applies v 8 of this psalm to Judas).

**7:1** Verse 32; 5:16,18; 8:37,40; 10:31. The Lord Jesus was not afraid to die. Indeed He came for that very purpose (3:15; 10:17,18; 12:27; 18:11; Matt 20:28). But His time for that had not yet come (v 30).

**7:2** Notes at Lev 23:33-43. This feast took place annually in Jerusalem.

**7:3** See 2:12.

**7:3-5** They knew He could do miracles, but they did not yet believe He was the Son of God or the Messiah. So they vainly imagined they could give Him advice. The advice was that He should go to the center of Jewish life (Jerusalem in Judea) and openly try to assume the leadership of the Jews. At this time they completely misunderstood His purpose and work. Later on at least two of them, James and Jude (Judas – Matt 13:55) became His true followers (Acts 1:14; James 1:1; Jude 1).

world." 5 For not even his brothers believed in him.

6 Then Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but for you the time is always right. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me, because I testify about it, that its deeds are evil. 8 You go on up to the feast. I am not going just yet to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come."

9 After he said these words to them, he stayed in Galilee. 10 But after his brothers had gone, then he also went up to the feast, not openly, but secretly.

11 Then the Jews looked for him at the feast, and said, "Where is he?"

12 And there was much grumbling among the people concerning him, for some said, "He is a

good man"; others said, "No, on the contrary, he deceives the people." 13 However no one spoke openly about him for fear of the Jews.

14 Now about halfway through the feast Jesus went up to the temple and taught. 15 And the Jews were astonished, saying, "How does this man understand *the* writings, never having studied?"

16 Jesus answering them, said, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. 17 If anyone chooses to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God, or *whether* I speak on my own. 18 He who speaks on his own is seeking his own glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19 Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you keep

**7:6** This means that it was all right for them to go to the feast any time they wished, but it was better for Him to wait a while (v 8).

**7:7** For the first time Jesus plainly stated that the world (unbelieving men in general) hates Him (see also 15:18,23,24), though He had implied it in 3:20. And He gives the reason for the hatred – men do not like to be told their actions are evil. They hate to be exposed for what they are. The world could not hate His brothers because at that time they still belonged to the world, and so could not stand against it.

The word "world" is used more than 70 times in John's Gospel, more than in any other book of the Bible. Christ revealed that the world is lost (3:16), in darkness (3:19), hates God (7:7; 15:18,23), is ruled by Satan (8:44; 12:31), is unable to receive God's Spirit (14:17), and is sinful and unbelieving (16:8-11). In two verses of his first letter John described the world (1 John 2:16; 5:19). See also notes at Rom 12:2; Jam 4:4; 1 John 2:16.

**7:10** Jesus always knew just when to do something and how it should be done.

**7:11** Christ's enemies expected Him to come and were puzzled at His absence.

**7:12** Here are two totally differing opinions about Jesus. If He was good He would not deceive people; if He deceived people He was not good. If He was good and therefore did not deceive people then His teachings are true. His enemies said He was a deceiver (Matt 27:63). But they could not offer any evidence whatever for that statement. There is massive evidence to show He was good and no deceiver (compare 5:31-40).

**7:13** Others (even Christ's disciples) sometimes showed this same fear (9:22; 12:42; 19:38; 20:19). Such fear is bondage. Compare Prov 29:25.

**7:14** He openly began to teach when He knew it was the right time to do so.

**7:15** Matt 7:28,29; Luke 2:47.

"The writings" or "letters" – Most likely they were referring to the Old Testament. They meant He had not studied under a rabbi in their schools. They considered Him

(the Son of God, the "Word", and Creator of the universe), an uneducated person! Compare Acts 4:13. See Col 2:3.

**7:16** Jesus did not invent His teaching and it did not come from other men. It came from God the Father who sent Him. See also 12:49; 17:8. Since Jesus was honest we should believe Him about this and accept His teaching as the very words of God. Forty times in this Gospel Jesus insisted that He had come into the world from God the Father (3:16,17; 4:34; 5:24,37; 6:39,44,57; etc).

**7:17** Here Jesus gives a way whereby any person can find out whether He spoke the truth of God. Sincere commitment to do the will of God, the Creator of the universe, is the only way to obtain true spiritual knowledge. And *anyone, anywhere* who does so will come to know that Jesus taught the very truth of God. People sometimes express doubts about the possibility of knowing the truth because there are so many different religions, sects, and teachings in the world. But in this verse Jesus gives us an infallible way to find the truth. Compare Matt 6:22.

The problem with men is not what they call intellectual difficulties, but with their will, their purposes. It is because they do not wish to do God's will that they remain in spiritual ignorance (3:19,20). Do we really want to do God's will no matter what it is, or where it leads us? If our answer is "no" we should not be surprised if the truth continues to elude us. If our answer is "yes" we will learn the truth and the truth will set us free.

**7:18** Jesus is speaking about two different kinds of religious teachers. They who seek honor for themselves will not be concerned about the truth of their teaching. They will teach man-invented doctrines if that pleases people and causes people to honor them. But other teachers will seek the honor of the God of truth (Ps 31:5). Their whole concern is to teach God's truth whether people like it or not. The Lord Jesus knew that He was the second kind of teacher (8:49,50).

**7:19** These Jews prided themselves that they

the Law? Why do you seek to kill me?"

20 The people answered and said, "You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill you?"

21 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one deed, and you are all amazed. 22 Therefore *consider this*: Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry at me because I have made a man completely well on the Sabbath? 24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge *with* righteous judgment."

25 Then some of the *people* of Jerusalem said, "Is not this the one whom they are seeking to kill? 26 But, look, he is speaking openly, and they say nothing to him. Do the rulers really know that he is the Christ? 27 However we know where this man is from. But when Christ comes, no man will know where he is from."

28 Then Jesus cried out in the temple as he was teaching and said, "You both know me, and you know where I am from. And I have not come on my own. But he who sent me is true. Him you do

not know. 29 But I know him, for I am from him, and he sent me."

30 Then they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time was not yet come. 31 And many of the people believed in him, and said, "When Christ comes, will he do more *miraculous* signs than the ones this *man* has done?"

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to seize him.

33 Then Jesus said to them, "I will be with you only a little while, and *then* I will go to him who sent me. 34 You will look for me, and will not find *me*, and you will not be able to come where I am."

35 Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does he intend to go, that we will not find him? Will he go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? 36 What *kind* of statement is this he has spoken, 'You will look for me, and will not find *me*, and you will not be able to come where I am?'"

37 In the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is

kept the law of Moses, but not one of them actually did. They showed their utter failure to do so by plotting to kill the Lord Jesus. This was breaking one of the chief commands of the law (Ex 20:13). Jesus is saying that the reason they did not receive the truth He taught was that they were not willing to do God's will even in the most basic matters.

**7:20** Here they were guilty of lying. They well knew they were trying to kill Him (v 32; 5:18). And they were guilty of the worst possible slander against the Son of God (see also 8:48; 10:20). See notes at Matt 12:24,31,32.

**7:21-23** The Lord here refers to the miracle recorded in 5:1-9. These Jews complained bitterly against Jesus because He had healed a man on the Sabbath (5:10,16. See also Matt 12:9-14). Yet they themselves practiced circumcision on the Sabbath if it fell on the eighth day after the birth of a boy (see Gen 17:9-14; Lev 12:3). They thought it all right to wound on the Sabbath but not to heal.

**7:24** They were quick to condemn because they were faulty in judgment.

**7:25-27** These ordinary people were uncertain about the Lord Jesus. It seems His teaching had made a good impression on them and they wondered whether the Jewish leaders had abandoned their plan to kill Him and were about to accept Him as the Messiah of Israel. But they themselves could not accept this because they knew Jesus had come down to Jerusalem from Galilee and they thought that no one would know where the Messiah would come from. But in this they were mistaken (see Micah

5:2; Matt 2:1-6).

**7:28,29** Jesus took this opportunity to tell them the truth about where He came from. They would have said Galilee or Nazareth. He insisted once more that He came from God. If they had known God they would have recognized this, but they did not.

**7:30** Jesus came from heaven to die, to give Himself as a sacrifice for man's sins. Not only so, the very time that He should do so was fixed, and that time had not yet come.

**7:31** "Signs" - 2:11. Some believed the evidence and so believed in the Lord Jesus.

**7:32** "Pharisees" - Matt 3:7.

**7:33** Verse 16.

**7:34** In other words, their day of opportunity would come to an end. Compare Prov 1:24-28; Hos 5:6,15; Amos 8:11,12. He meant He would be in heaven and they could not go there.

**7:35,36** As usual the unbelievers did not understand His words. They could think only of things related to this world.

"Dispersion. . . Greeks - not Gentiles, but Jews who had gone from their own land and settled among Greek-speaking people.

**7:37,38** Compare 4:10,13,14. This wonderful promise is to all, and it was spoken loudly and emphatically. Here by comparing v 37 with v 38 we see that "drinking" is believing in Christ (apply this to 6:53-56). The Scripture mentioned in v 38 does not mean a single verse, but a truth implied by several verses - Isa 44:3; 55:1,2; 58:11. In Jer 2:13 and 17:13 the Lord says that He Himself is "the spring of living water." We see the streams of living water flowing from within the apostles and servants of Christ in the book of Acts. We

thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his innermost being streams of living water will flow." 39 (But he spoke this about the Spirit, whom those who believe in him would receive; for the Holy Spirit had not yet been *given*, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.)

40 Therefore, many of the people, when they heard this statement, said, "Surely this is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will Christ come from Galilee? 42 Has not the Scripture said that Christ will come from the seed of David, and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

43 So there was a division among the people because of him. 44 And some of them wanted to seize him, but no one laid hands on him. 45 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why haven't you brought him?"

46 The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man."

can read of these streams in the history of the Church. And we can experience them ourselves if we "drink" of Christ. See Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32; Eph 5:18.

**7:39** Notes on the Holy Spirit at 14:16,17; etc. He is the flow of spiritual life from believing hearts. The Holy Spirit was active in Old Testament days and in the days of Christ on earth (Gen 1:2; Ex 31:3; Num 11:25; 24:2; Jud 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 1 Sam 16:13; 2 Sam 23:2). But the Father and the Son sent Him in full measure after the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ (14:16,17,26; Acts 1:4,5; 2:1-4). One name we might give to this era since Christ is "The era of the Holy Spirit."

"Glorified" – this verb is found 23 times in this Gospel – far more than in any other New Testament book. It always refers to the Lord Jesus, or God the Father. Jesus did not send the Holy Spirit until after His death and resurrection. There could be no Pentecost without Calvary. The life-giving streams of God's Spirit could flow only because of the cross.

**7:40** Deut 18:15-18.

**7:41** "Christ" – Matt 1:1.

**7:42** They were correct (Micah 5:2), but they were ignorant of the fact that the Lord Jesus had been born there (Matt 2:1; Luke 2:4-7).

**7:43** The Lord Jesus is still the cause of division among people everywhere. Those who trust Him will be divided from those who do not. Compare Matt 10:34-36.

**7:45,46** Verse 32 records the sending of these guards. They were unable to obey the Pharisees' orders because they were overwhelmed by the power of Christ's teaching. Compare Matt 7:28,29.

**7:47** Verse 12.

**7:48** These hardened unbelievers actually

47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this people who do not know the Law are accursed."

50 Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus at night, being one of them) said to them, 51 "Does our Law judge any man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and see, for no prophet arises out of Galilee."

53 And every man went to his own house.

**8** Jesus went to the mount of Olives. 2 And early in the morning he returned to the temple. And all the people came to him, and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had made her stand in the center, 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the Law commanded

thought that their unbelief was evidence that Jesus was a deceiver! That Jesus could not be speaking the truth because they had not put their stamp of approval on Him!

**7:49** They thought that only people ignorant of the law of Moses could possibly believe in Jesus! Little did they know that the law and the whole Old Testament pointed to Jesus (5:39,46; 1:45; Luke 24:27,45,46), indeed that it was He who gave the law to Moses and caused the whole Old Testament to be inspired. They were the ignorant ones.

**7:50** They thought no Pharisee or Jewish leader had believed in Jesus, but they were wrong in this also. Here was one – see 19:39-42 (also 12:42). The other Pharisees did not know this because Nicodemus had not been a bold witness.

**7:51** The question was reasonable and in harmony with the law itself. Though he did not stand very boldly yet he did stand and was willing to stand alone. However, it only provoked the ignorant scorn of these arrogant unbelievers (v 52).

**7:53** They saw they could do nothing at the time against Jesus and so dispersed.

**8:1-11** The author of these notes believes these verses were a part of the original Greek manuscript, though some scholars dispute this.

**8:3** "Pharisees" – Matt 3:7. We are not told how the woman was caught. It is possible they deliberately trapped her in order to lay a trap for Jesus (v 6).

**8:4** They called Him "Teacher," but they would not accept anything He taught. Compare Luke 6:46.

**8:5** The law does say this, but it says also that the man must be killed (Deut 22:22-24; Lev 20:10). It seems significant that they did not bring the guilty man. Could he have been one of their own? It is likely



us to stone such *women*, but what do you say?"

6 They said this, testing him, that they might have *some reason* to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *his* finger, *as though he did not hear them*.

7 So when they kept on asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him *be the first to* throw a stone at her." 8 And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9 And those who heard *that*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one after the other, beginning with the oldest and *on* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the center. 10 When Jesus straightened up and

saw no one except the woman, he said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more."

12 Then Jesus spoke again to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

13 Then the Pharisees said to him, "You testify for yourself. Your testimony is not valid."

14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Though I testify for myself, my testimony is *still* valid, because I know where I have come from and where I am going. But you cannot tell where I have come

they were sure that Jesus would try to save this woman from the law's judgment. If He did, they thought this would be setting Himself against the law of God.

**8:6** This is not the only time they tried to trap Him. See Matt 22:15. It is useless to speculate about what Jesus wrote or why. No man knows. There is enough in the Bible that is clear and spiritually profitable. Let us emphasize those things.

**8:7** This wonderful answer turned the situation completely around. Those on the attack against the woman and against Jesus were defeated, and had to leave the field of battle. They had dug a pit for Him but fell into it themselves. Compare Ps 7:14,15; 57:6; Prov 26:27.

**8:9** Though many of the Pharisees were self-righteous and thought themselves better than others (Luke 18:9-12), not one of them could claim to be sinless. They knew the Old Testament (Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9), and though they had stifled their consciences many times, that inner voice was not completely dead and silent.

**8:10** Those who had accused her had departed, and there was no one to bring evidence against her. So even according to the law it was proper to let her go free. See Deut 17:6,7; 19:15.

**8:11** See 3:17. If Jesus had come to condemn sinners, then all – this woman, the Pharisees, the people in general, and His own disciples would have been condemned, for all were sinners (Rom 3:9,19,23; Matt 7:11). But Jesus came to seek and save the lost, not to condemn and punish them (Luke 19:10). Was Jesus then saying that sinning does not matter? Absolutely not. He knew that sin is an awful thing and that He had come to suffer and die as a sacrifice to take sin away (1:29; 3:14; 6:53-58; 10:11). See what He says to this woman – Leave your life of sin. See also 5:14; Matt 4:17; Luke 13:2,3. Does this sound as if sin does not matter? If the Lord Jesus forgives our sin it is not that we might go on sinning, but that we might stop sinning. See Matt 1:21; Ps 130:4; Rom 6:14; 1 John 2:1.

**8:12** "I am" – v 24; 6:35.

"Light" – 1:4; 3:19,20; 12:35,36; Matt 4:16; Luke 1:79; 2 Cor 4:6; 1 John 1:5; 2:8. Jesus is the light God has given for the whole world. What the sun is to the physical earth that Jesus is to the world of men. His life, His deeds, and His words reveal the truth about God and men and salvation and what God does and what men should do. This light reveals the difference between the real and the unreal, the true and the false. It shows the way to heaven.

But this light will be effective only for those who follow Christ (the Greek word indicates continuous following). Following means trusting and obeying. If we shrink back from Him we will remain in darkness and ignorance about the most important things of life. The followers of Jesus are in the light now and will see many truths they could not see otherwise, and they know where they are going. Unbelievers are in the dark now (and so all they can do is deny the light and speculate about spiritual things), and, if they do not repent and turn to the light, will go into eternal darkness (Matt 8:12; 22:13; 2 Pet 2:17; Jude 13).

The phrase "light of life" may mean light which is life (or alive), or which gives life, or which comes from life, or which shines on life, or perhaps all of them. Here is a question of great importance: Do we really want the light that Christ gives, or are we content with our darkness?

**8:13** Were they trying to use Jesus' own words against Him (5:31)? Notice that they had nothing to say about light. They were content with their darkness. In hostility and unbelief they were demanding that Jesus give proof that He was the light. Actually, in the nature of things, light does not need to give proof of its existence. All it needs to do is shine. Shining is itself proof of light. Darkness may deny that light exists, but that denial is not evidence there is no light but only that there is darkness.

**8:14-18** In 5:31 Jesus said that if He gave witness concerning Himself apart from other witnesses, His witness alone would not be enough. No court of law would accept such



from and where I am going. 15 You judge according to the flesh. I am judging no one. 16 And yet if I do judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me *judge together*. 17 It is also written in your Law that the testimony of two men is valid. 18 I am one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me gives testimony about me."

19 Then they said to him, "Where is your father?" Jesus answered, "You do not know me, or my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

20 Jesus spoke these words near the treasury, as he was teaching in the temple. And no one laid a hand on him, for his time had not yet come.

21 Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going my way, and you will look for me and will die in your sins. You cannot come where I am going."

22 Then the Jews said, "Will he kill himself? For he says, 'You cannot come where I am going.'"

23 And he said to them, "You are from below; I

am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am *he*, you will die in your sins."

25 Then they said to him, "Who are you?" And Jesus said to them, "Just who I have been telling you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to say, and to judge concerning you. But he who sent me is faithful, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard from him."

27 They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father.

28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things just as my Father has taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, for I always do those things that please him."

30 As he spoke these words, many believed in him.

witness. Here He says His witness is true because of two things – He knows where He came from and where He is going, and God the Father is a witness on His behalf. See also 5:36,37.

**8:15,16** See 7:24; 3:17.

**8:17** Deut 19:15. The testimony of two men was accepted under the law. Should we not accept the testimony of God the Father and His Son?

**8:19** Compare 10:30 and 14:9. The Son of God and God the Father were so united in nature, essence, character, mind, and purpose that to know the one was to know the other. See also 1:18; Heb 1:3. See other references on Christ's deity at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. These Pharisees did not know Christ. Though they saw and heard Him their prejudice and unbelief made it impossible for them to understand who He really is.

**8:20** See 7:30.

**8:21** See 7:33,34. Here Jesus adds the fearful words "You will die in your sin." This is fearful because to die in sin is to be lost forever. The Bible does not teach that there will be opportunities to be saved after death. And men are not born on earth again and again. See Heb 9:27. Individuals live but once on earth and die but once. See notes at 9:13; Job 11:12; Luke 16:19-31; Heb 9:27.

**8:22** See 7:35,36. Could they really imagine that Jesus would commit suicide? This question reveals how ignorant they were of Him and His Father (v 19).

**8:23** Here the Lord Jesus gives the difference between Himself and everyone else. We are of the earth; He is from heaven (3:13; 6:33,38,50,51). See also 1 Cor 15:45-47.

**8:24** Here Jesus plainly says that the only way to avoid dying in one's sins and being lost is to believe Him. Compare 3:36.

"I am" – the word "he" is not in Greek,

but is added to make a proper English sentence. The Greek has simply "I am." "I am" is the way God spoke in the Old Testament – Ex 3:14; Isa 43:10, and it seems clear that here Jesus is saying He is God, revealed as Jehovah in the Old Testament. It is even clearer in v 58. And He says that if men will not believe this they will die in their sins. For other references that show Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah see the note at Luke 2:11.

**8:25** The Lord Jesus had repeatedly said that God was His Father (2:16; 3:16,18; 5:19-23,26; 6:40). And they understood this to mean that He was claiming to be God – naturally enough, since a son shares the same nature as his father.

**8:26** He did not come to judge the world, that is, pass final judgment on it, condemn it to punishment (3:17). But He saw what the conduct of others was like and had the authority to speak the truth about them.

**8:27** Again we see the blindness of unbelief.

**8:28** "Son of man" – Matt 8:20.

"Lifted up" – He was referring to the cross (3:14), but the words can also mean "exalted", and may include the idea of His resurrection and ascension. Only after these events did many of the Jews and even some of the Jewish leaders come to know who He was and followed Him (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7; 21:20). Many others no doubt knew they should follow Him but would not. Of course the unbelieving Jewish nation did not willingly and knowingly exalt Him, but exaltation was a result of what they did to Him.

"Taught me" – 7:16; 12:49,50. All that Jesus taught came directly from God the Father.

**8:29** The chief purpose of His whole life was to please God the Father, and He perfectly fulfilled it (note at 4:34).

**8:30** From the verses which follow we can

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and were never in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will become free?'"

34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly I say to you, whoever sins is a slave of sin. 35 And the slave does not remain in the house forever, but the Son remains forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you are seeking

to kill me, because my word has no place in you. 38 I speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

39 They answered and said to him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the deeds of Abraham. 40 But now you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I have heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You are doing the deeds of your father."

Then they said to him, "We were not born of fornication. We have one Father, God *Himself*."

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your

see that their faith was very shallow. See also 2:23-25; 12:42,43. They believed certain facts about Jesus but this belief did not reach their hearts and change their lives.

**8:31** Disciples are those who choose the Lord Jesus as their teacher, who learn from Him in order to obey, who follow where He leads. Here He says only those who continue to do this are true disciples. The proof of discipleship is in perseverance. Some appear to begin well, but soon leave Christ's teachings and go their own way. See John 6:66. Such were never true disciples, not "disciples indeed." Compare 1 John 2:19.

**8:32** Christ came to set men free (Luke 4:18). What is this freedom? Not political freedom, not freedom from physical slavery, but freedom from the bondage of sin (v 34). Along with that He gives freedom from guilt and punishment (Rom 6:18,22; Titus 2:14; Heb 9:15,26), from the condemnation of God's holy law (Rom 8:1,2; Gal 3:13; 5:1), from fear of death (Heb 2:14,15; Ps 49:15; 1 Cor 15:56,57), from the chains of the world and its empty way of living (Gal 1:4; 1 Pet 1:17,18), from the bonds of possessions (Phil 4:11-13; 1 Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5), from any tie that would prevent us from fully following Christ and serving God (Luke 14:26-33). It is spiritual freedom He gives. And it is a "glorious liberty" (Rom 8:21) which is possible only in the way of Christ.

How does Christ give this freedom? Through the knowledge of the truth. A true disciple comes to know Christ who is the Truth (1:17; 14:6), and the truth about Christ - who He is and why He came to earth and what He accomplished here. He will also learn the truth about himself and about salvation and the meaning of other great teachings Christ has given. This knowledge of the truth is the only way to liberation.

Men are held in bondage by the lies of Satan and other men (especially lies in the area of religion), by sin, by unbelief and by ignorance of the truth of Christ. Note at 15:21; etc. The truth that sets men free is Christ's truth alone.

**8:33** See Matt 3:9. This was pride of race. Because Abraham, the forefather of the Jewish nation, was great they vainly imagined this made them great. But vs 39,40 shows that spiritually they were not

Abraham's descendants. Family pride or racial pride will get us nowhere with God.

"Free" - as usual they misunderstood the Lord Jesus. They thought He was speaking of freedom from physical slavery.

**8:34** Jesus now speaks so plainly no one can fail to understand. How many there are who think that by casting off the restraints of God's Word and going their own way that they are obtaining freedom! But by trying to be free to do as they please, to enjoy their pleasures to their hearts' content, they are making their own chains and becoming enslaved to a very cruel master indeed - sin.

**8:35** This is true of any family, including God's family. Those who are still slaves of sin have no real part in God's family, as a son has.

**8:36** Slaves cannot liberate themselves. If they could they would not be slaves. Slaves need someone apart from themselves, someone who is not a slave, to set them free. This Christ did and continues to do (Matt 1:21; Acts 26:17,18; Rom 6:16-18,22; 8:2,21; Gal 5:1).

**8:37** By descendants He meant physical descendants. Jesus knew all about their plots to kill Him - 5:18.

**8:38** Christ was always in God's presence - v 28; 1:1; 5:19,20.

"Your father" - Satan (vs 41,44).

**8:39,40** They insisted that Abraham was their "father", and probably meant that this was true in a spiritual sense as well as physical. Jesus says their behavior shows this could not be true. The Bible (in Genesis chapters 12-24) reveals what Abraham was like, and these Jews were certainly not like him.

**8:41** It is not clear why these Jews said this. Perhaps they meant only that they were direct descendants of Abraham both physically and spiritually and were worshippers of the true God (in the Old Testament the worship of other gods is said to be like fornication and adultery). Notes at Jer 2:1; Ezek 16:31-34; 23:2,3; Hos 1:2. They knew that God was the Father of the nation of Israel (Isa 64:8; Mal 2:10). Here they claim the same for themselves as individuals. But saying it is so does not make it so.

**8:42** Many say and like to think they are

Father, you would love me, for I set out and came from God. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not understand my speech? Because you cannot hear my word. 44 You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to fulfill the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not remain in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar, and the father of *lies*. 45 And because I tell *you* the truth, you do not believe me.

46 "Which of you convicts me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? 47 He who belongs to God hears God's words. So you do not hear *them*, because you do not belong to God."

48 Then the Jews answered and said to him, "Do we not rightly say that you are a Samaritan

God's children. But do they love the Lord Jesus? If they do not they are not the children of God, whatever they may think. And what is it to love the Lord Jesus? See 14:15,23,24. It is impossible to love God and not love the Lord Jesus whom God sent into the world.

**8:43** Why were they unable to hear? Because spiritually speaking they were deaf, blind, and dead. They loved darkness (3:19), and God's judgment was on them (Matt 13:11-15).

**8:44** Verses 38,41. Physically they were the children of Abraham, but in spiritual matters the children of Satan (Matt 13:38. Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-11; 2 Cor 11:14). Satan was at work in them (Eph 2:2). They obeyed Satan, in many ways were like him, and belonged to him. They revealed this by their behavior toward the Lord Jesus. Let us learn from this that men may have a wonderful ancestry, be very religious (as these men were), say they are the children of God, and yet be sons of Satan. Such is the deceitfulness of the human heart and its desperate wickedness (Jer 17:9). Jesus here reveals two things about Satan – he is a murderer and an utter liar.

"A murderer from the beginning" may refer to the way he tried to destroy Adam and Eve (Gen 2:17; 3:1-4), or to the murder of Abel, which Satan doubtless inspired Cain to commit (Gen 4:8). It is not exaggeration to say Satan is the murderer of the human race. Because of the sin he tempted Adam and Eve to commit death came to them and to all their descendants (Rom 5:12).

Satan is also a liar, and he leads the whole world astray with his lies (Rev 12:9). He lies about God, about Christ, about men, about salvation, about religion, about anything that he thinks will enable him to trap and ruin men. He works especially in the field of religion. The sad fact is that far more people believe Satan's lies than the

and have a demon?"

49 Jesus answered, "I have no demon, but I honour my Father, and you dishonour me. 50 And I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks *it*, and judges. 51 Truly, truly I say to you, if a man keeps my word, he will never see death."

52 Then the Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham is dead, and the prophets *also*, and you say, If a man keeps my word, he will never taste death. 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham who is dead? And the prophets are dead. What are you making yourself *out to be*?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing. It is my Father who honours me, concerning whom you say that he is your God. 55 And you have not known him. But I know him,

truth Christ taught. And many worship Satan either knowingly or unknowingly (Matt 4:8,9; Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20; Rev 9:20).

"Father of lies" – all liars are taking Satan's side and are opposing the God of truth (Ps 31:5). And they will pay the penalty for this deadly sin – Rev 21:8.

**8:45** Notice the word "because." If Jesus had told them lies they would have believed Him! But they had already believed Satan's lies and hated the truth and would not, could not, believe it. See 5:44 also.

**8:46** Neither they nor anyone else was ever able to prove that Jesus sinned (Matt 27:23; Luke 23:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22-24). In the next verse He gives the reason why they did not believe Him.

**8:48** Defeated in argument they rage and use slander. This is a usual way with the ungodly. Four times they said Jesus was demon possessed (7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20). See also Matt 12:24. They called Him a Samaritan because they despised the Samaritans (4:9) and considered them heretics. They thought it was a big insult to call a person a Samaritan.

**8:49** Jesus, though He was a Jew, evidently did not consider being called a Samaritan an insult and didn't bother to deny it. He did not look down on any people.

**8:50** He was not concerned that men give Him the honors He deserved. His whole aim was to glorify God the Father (5:41; 7:18; 12:28; 17:4).

**8:51** Note at 6:49-51. He was not speaking of what men call physical death. He did not want to close the discussion without another great promise for anyone willing to receive it. It is similar to 5:24; 6:50; 11:25,26. To keep His word means to receive it, trust it, obey it.

**8:52,53** As usual they misunderstood Him. **8:54** Verse 50; 17:5; Acts 3:13; Phil 2:9-11.

**8:55** Verse 19; 15:21; 16:3. This was their whole problem. Because of this lack

and if I should say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I know him and keep his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. And he saw *it*, and was glad."

57 Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

59 Then they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the temple, passing

of knowledge they were arguing in the dark. **8:56** He shows again how different they were from their great ancestor. Abraham rejoiced at Christ's day; they tried to kill Christ. Abraham looked forward with joy to the coming of the Messiah. It is possible that God gave him a special vision of that coming day. If so, it is not recorded in the Bible.

**8:57** Actually, Jesus was only about 33. They meant that Jesus had not even reached a full age. Abraham lived about 2000 years before this event.

**8:58** The words "truly, truly" mean that Jesus was about to make another very solemn and important statement.

"I am" – notes at v 24; Ex 3:14. The Lord Jesus is declaring the same truth that begins this Gospel (1:1), that He is God, Jehovah God. See also Luke 2:11; Phil 2:6,10,11.

**8:59** See 5:18. They thought Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and making false claims. See Matt 26:63-66. Actually He merely spoke the truth, but they in their darkness refused to believe it. Jesus left them, not because He was afraid, but because He knew His time had not yet come (7:30).

**9:1** In the four Gospels Jesus healed blindness more than any other malady (Matt 9:27-31; 12:22; 15:30; 21:14; Mark 8:22-26; 10:46-52; Luke 7:21). In the Old Testament we see that it is God who makes men blind or gives them sight (Ex 4:11; Ps 146:8). We see there also that healing of the blind would be associated with the coming of the Messiah (Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7). One of John's purposes in writing this Gospel was to show that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of God (20:31). This chapter contributes to this purpose.

The miracle recorded here is also a "sign" (v 16; 2:11). The spiritual truths it signifies are these: men are born into the world spiritually blind. By nature they cannot "see" the truth about themselves or about God or about salvation. And it is the Lord Jesus who gives spiritual sight to people (v 39). This is the true enlightenment every person needs. See v 39; 8:12; Ps 36:9; Acts 26:15-18; 2 Cor 4:4,6; Eph 1:17,18; 5:14; 1 Pet 2:9.

**9:2** Among the Jews it was a common idea that a person's own sins were the cause of any sickness or disability that might come to him. This attitude appears also among

through among them, and so went out.

**9** And as *Jesus* was passing by, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, "Teacher, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "Not *because* either this man or his parents sinned, but that the work of God might be revealed in him. 4 While it is day, I

Job's friends (notes at Job 4:7-9; 8:3; 18:5-21). The disciples were trying to understand if this applied to a person born with some defect. Was the man's blindness a punishment that came because of his parents' sin? or did the man somehow sin himself before he was born? The Jewish rabbis of the time speculated about the possibility of an unborn baby sinning while still in its mother's womb.

Also there may have been speculation in those days about the idea of reincarnation – that every person experiences multiple births and that his sins (or righteous acts) in a previous life affect his condition in this present life. There is no reason to think the disciples believed either of these speculations (compare Job 11:12; Heb 9:27). But they were curious as to why this man was born blind. Observe that they were not suggesting some way to help him. They were not showing compassion. He was to them just an object for theological discussion.

**9:3** The Lord Jesus denied the speculations of the disciples. He is not denying that the parents or the son were sinners as all men are sinners (Rom 3:23). He is saying that the cause of the man's blindness was not connected with their sins.

The teachings of the Lord Jesus are contrary to the doctrine of reincarnation. If He had believed that doctrine, or thought it had any significance at all in explaining man's life on earth, this was the perfect opportunity to say so. Instead, He denied the very basis of the doctrine – that a person's own sins in any supposed previous life affect what he will be in this life. What the Lord taught in Luke 16:19-31 also is opposed to this doctrine. See also the note at John 3:3.

Jesus says that the man was born blind for a much higher purpose that the disciples imagined. A mighty work of God was about to take place in the man, and glory and honor would come to God through it. God may have the same purpose in any sickness, disability or defect that brings suffering to us. It may be that a similar work of God will be revealed in us. Or a different work which will also glorify Him – a work in the heart that will make us humbly, faithfully, joyously endure any kind of suffering for Him (16:33; Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3; 2 Cor 4:16-18; 12:9,10; Col 1:24; 1 Pet 4:13).

**9:4,5** See 8:12. While Christ was on earth

must do the works of him who sent me. The night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

6 When he had said this, he spit on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which, being translated, means Sent). So he went away, washed, and came seeing.

8 Therefore the neighbours and those who previously had seen that he was blind, said, "Is not this the one who sat and begged?"

9 Some said, "This is he"; others said, "He is like him". But he said, "I am *the man*."

10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

11 He answered and said, "A man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' And I went and washed, and I got *my* sight."

12 Then they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I don't know."

13 They brought the one who had previously been blind to the Pharisees. 14 And it was the Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes.

15 Then once more the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and *can* see."

16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This

man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such *miraculous* signs?" And there was a division among them.

17 They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about the one who opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?"

20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. 21 But we do not know by what means he now sees, and we do not know who opened his eyes. He is of age. Ask him. He will speak for himself."

22 His parents spoke these *words* because they feared the Jews. For the Jews had already agreed that if any man confessed that he was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age. Ask him."

24 Then once more they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise. We know that this man is a sinner."

25 He answered and said, "I do not know whether he is a sinner or *not*. One thing I know: I was blind, now I see."

His presence made the darkness like day (Matt 4:16; Luke 1:78,79). But He had only a short time to finish His work. The night was coming (Luke 22:53). It would remain until He comes the second time (compare Rom 13:12; 2 Pet 1:19).

**9:6,7** Sometimes Jesus healed at a distance (4:50), sometimes by a touch (Matt 8:3,15). Here He did something different and used a substance (see note at Mark 8:23). He will do what He will do, and we cannot predict how He will work or tell Him He must work in one way or another.

**9:13** "Pharisees" – Matt 3:7.

**9:16** "Sabbath" – Matt 12:9-14. These Pharisees did not let themselves marvel at the power and compassion of the Lord Jesus. They only wanted to find fault with Him. Their view was this: Jesus had broken one of their rules for the Sabbath so He must be a wicked man! A few of them could not agree with that view. They knew that the power of God had been displayed in this healing.

**9:17** He believed that Jesus was sent by God and represented God. Later he came to understand that Jesus was much more than a prophet (vs 35-38).

**9:18** The enemies of Jesus did not want to believe this miracle took place and so they tried to ignore all the great evidence for it. Very often what people believe has nothing to do with facts and evidence, but comes

out of their desires and prejudices.

**9:20-23** They knew it was Jesus who had given sight to their son but they were not bold and honest like him. Fear of others keeps people from standing for the truth (12:42,43). Verse 22 reveals how those who reject the Lord Jesus may persecute believers when they have power to do so. They often use unjust pressure, fear, and threats to turn people from the truth (Acts 4:18,21; 5:17,18,40; 7:57,58; 8:3; etc). Don't we see this happening very often in this country?

"Synagogue" – Matt 4:23. Being put out of the synagogue meant to become a social and religious outcast.

"Christ" – Matt 1:1.

**9:24** These Pharisees were determined to discredit the Lord Jesus. Their words "Give glory to God" does not mean that they were concerned for God's glory. They were either charging this man to tell what they thought was the truth, or else saying "do not give any honor to Jesus." They told this poor man the horrible lie that Jesus was a sinner. However they had no evidence for this at all (8:46). But haters of the truth and malicious men act as if they think evidence is unnecessary.

**9:25** He had definite opinions about whether Jesus was a sinner (vs 30-33), but before speaking of that he wanted to establish one fact once and forever: he had been blind



26 Then they said to him again, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

28 Then they insulted him, and said, "You are his disciple, but we are the disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses. *As for this fellow*, we don't know where he is from."

30 The man answered and said to them, "Why here is a marvellous thing! You don't know where he is from, and *yet* he opened my eyes. 31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does his will, he hears him. 32 Since the world began it has not been heard that any man opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

and Jesus had given him sight. This was a fact he could not doubt. The same is true when men receive spiritual sight from the Lord Jesus. They know it has happened. Millions of believers in Christ through the centuries and throughout the world can say "I was spiritually blind and the Lord Jesus gave me sight."

**9:26** They were baffled and frustrated but would not give up.

**9:27** His question is pure sarcasm.

**9:28** They display the usual method of proud men whose reasoning is opposed and defeated (7:48). But insults and abuse do not answer a single good argument or do away with a scrap of evidence. They meant they were followers of the law Moses wrote down, but actually they were not. See 5:45-47; Matt 23:1-3. They proudly proclaimed themselves as Moses' disciples and yet were plotting to kill the One about whom Moses wrote (1:45; 5:46; Luke 24:27,44). This is another illustration of Jer 17:9.

**9:29** They could have known where Christ was from, but refused to believe Him when He told them (6:41,42; 8:23-25).

**9:30** This answer of a poor illiterate man has more wisdom in it than that displayed by all these very religious and highly educated Pharisees put together. Often the sound sense of simple men of faith puts to shame the reasoning of so-called experts. The reason for this may be seen in Matt 11:25,26; Ps 8:2; 119:99; Isa 54:13; Jer 31:34; 1 Cor 2:12; 1 John 2:20,27.

**9:31** The Pharisees knew the teaching of the Old Testament on this. See Ps 66:18; Prov 15:29; Isa 1:15. But in this case they were not willing to go where this truth led.

**9:32** There is no case recorded in the whole Old Testament.

**9:33** They wanted to talk theology. So he gave them his well-reasoned theological conclusion.

**9:34** These men of much learning were not able to overturn this simple man's

34 They answered and said to him, "You were utterly born in sins, and do you teach us?" And they drove him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

36 He answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?"

37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen him and it is he who is talking with you."

38 And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped him.

39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see might see, and that those who see might be made blind."

40 And *some* of the Pharisees who were with him heard these words and said to him, "Are we also blind?"

41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you

conclusion. So again they abuse him (v 28). **9:35** Note at 5:14. He will seek and find all His own and will draw near those who have been cast out by men because of their faith.

**9:36** He was prepared to believe the truth when revealed, unlike most of the Pharisees then. So God prepares individuals everywhere to receive the Lord Jesus (6:37,44).

**9:37** See 4:26. The Lord delights to reveal the truth about Himself to the humble and childlike (Matt 11:25-27).

**9:38** The Lord Jesus often accepted the worship of men (Matt 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9,17). He knew that only God should be worshiped (Matt 4:10), so in accepting worship He was showing that He knew He was the incarnation of God.

**9:39** He did not come to sit as judge and condemn men to punishment. But His very coming as the light of the world resulted in judgment (3:17-21). It divided people into two groups - those who came to the light and those who did not, those who were given sight and those who were blinded. In this verse Jesus is obviously speaking of spiritual blindness and sight. When He says those who "see will become blind", He means those who have light, who think they see and even pride themselves on seeing, will be made completely blind (compare Matt 13:14-16). This was a judgment they brought on themselves by refusing the light of Christ. For other reasons why Jesus came to earth see note at Matt 5:17.

**9:40** They thought they were the only ones who could see. It never struck them that they could possibly be blind. Understand man's heart (Jer 17:9), sin's deceitfulness (Heb 3:13), and Satan's power (2 Cor 4:4).

**9:41** Men are responsible for what they do with the light God gives them. Compare 12:35,36; Matt 6:22,23; Luke 11:35. These Jews had the light of the Old Testament, the "light of the world" was in their midst, and they had the light God gives to all men everywhere - 1:9; Rom 1:18-20.



would have no sin, but now you say, 'We see,' so your sin remains.

**10** "Truly, truly I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice. And he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 And when he brings

If they had been totally blind and had never had a ray of light they would not have been responsible, nor guilty of rejecting light. But they were proud of their knowledge and not willing to admit their need. And they willfully rejected the light they had. So God could not overlook their guilt.

In spiritual matters it is better to have no knowledge and light at all than to have it and not put it to proper use (compare 2 Pet 2:21). Those who are called Christians who have much truth but do not practice it are more worthy of condemnation than those who never heard of Christ. The more light we have the greater our sin if we do not follow it.

**10:1** There is no change of scene from the last verses of chapter 9, and the Jews and the blind man are mentioned in vs 19-21, so we may assume that in vs 1-18 Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees. They considered themselves teachers and shepherds of the people of Israel (Matt 23:2,3; Rom 2:17-21). In this chapter Jesus teaches that He is the true shepherd of God's people and the Pharisees were like thieves and robbers and wolves – bent on using the sheep for their own gain or else destroying them. In other words, the Pharisees were false and selfish shepherds. In some Old Testament passages God Himself says He is the shepherd of His people and describes false shepherds in very severe language. See Ps 80:1; Isa 40:10,11; 56:9-12; Jer 23:1-4; 25:32-38; Ezekiel chapter 34; Zech 11:4-17.

Here in 10:1-18 Jesus was using an illustration to teach spiritual truth. The sheep, of course, are Christ's own people, those who believe and obey His voice (vs 15-29). Christ Himself is both the gate and the true shepherd of His people (vs 7,11). Thieves, robbers, and the wolf all represent people who want to prey on the sheep for their own benefit, either secretly or openly.

**10:2** The true shepherd of God's people will enter in the proper way. God will appoint him and bring him into the ministry of shepherding.

**10:3** Verse 27; 18:37. Believers in Christ can know when He speaks to them, and they can distinguish His teaching from that of any other teacher. And they desire to obey His voice. What is meant by leading them out? Out to streams of water and pasture land. See Ps 23:1,2.

**10:4** A good shepherd does not drive his sheep but leads them to the place they

out his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 And they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers."

6 Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door for the sheep. 8 All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door.

should go. Christ leads His people from earth to heaven and He knows each step of the way they should go, and has gone before them through everything that can happen to them (compare 1 Pet 2:21-25; Heb 12:1-3).

**10:5** "Stranger" – here signifies a false teacher. Followers of the Lord Jesus have the ability to discern between the false and the true. They can know that any teaching contrary to the teachings of Jesus must be false and dangerous. They see in it the voice of a stranger trying to lead them astray (Rom 16:17,18; Heb 13:9). The more they know and understand Jesus' teachings the more they will be able to discern the voice of strangers. If anyone professing to be a sheep departs from Christ to follow false teaching it is an example of 1 John 2:19.

**10:6** Often in this Gospel we see the Jews failing to understand Jesus' words (6:41,42,52; 7:35; 8:22,27). They were not His sheep (v 26) and so lacked spiritual understanding.

**10:7** "I am the door" – this figure of speech is based on the method of shepherds and their sheep in those days. A shepherd would bring back his sheep to the pen and inspect each one as it passed through the opening into the pen. When all were inside he would lie down across this opening. Nothing and no one could come or go without passing over his body. He was the "door" or gate. Jesus is the one "door" of salvation (this is what He is speaking of – v 9). No one can get into the "sheepfold" of God's people except through Him. See 14:6. Compare Matt 7:13,14.

**10:8** "All who came before me" – the Lord Jesus did not mean His prophets in Old Testament days. Men like Moses, Samuel, and David were very good undershepherds serving God the Chief Shepherd (Ps 78:70-72). God Himself raised up such leaders for His people. Here Jesus meant those who came without being sent by God who yet claimed to be true shepherds (some of whom may have claimed to be "gates" for people to come to God). Many came on their own for their own purposes and professed to be prophets, etc (see Jer 23:21). Such was the situation in Israel in Christ's day. In the matter of religion there were plenty of "thieves" and "robbers" about (as there are now also), but apart from Himself there was no shepherd worthy of the name (Matt 9:36).

**10:9** "He will be saved" – this is what Jesus

If anyone enters through me, he will be saved and go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, to kill and to destroy. I have come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* in great abundance.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. 12 But the hired man who is not the shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away. And the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hired man runs away, because he is a hired man and does not care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd and know my *sheep*, and my *sheep* know me. 15 *Just as the*

Father knows me, even so I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 "And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must also bring them. And they will hear my voice, and there will be one fold *and* one shepherd. 17 This is why my Father loves me: because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from my Father."

19 So there was a division again among the Jews because of these statements. 20 And many of them said, "He has a demon and is mad. Why do

is talking about in this illustration of sheep and shepherd – salvation in all its varied aspects (Rom 1:16). Pasture speaks of the nourishment which Christ gives to His people. Their coming and going suggests freedom and safety in all the matters of life. The sheep pen, the pasture, and all else is owned and ruled by the good Shepherd. The best comment on this verse is the whole of Psalm 23.

**10:10** "Thief" – false teachers and unsaved selfish shepherds "steal," "kill," and "destroy." They try to steal the glory that belongs only to God (7:18; Matt 23:5-12), and try to take God's word from men (Matt 15:6-9; Jer 36:23-25; Gal 1:6,7). In this way they try to destroy men (Matt 23:13-15). And such people have often been guilty of actual killing (Matt 23:34-37; etc). Quite different is the purpose and work of the Lord Jesus. He wants men to have eternal life, spiritual life. This is why He came from heaven to earth. Everywhere in this Gospel is this emphasis on life (1:4; 3:16,36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:35,47,51; 11:25; 14:6). For other reasons why Jesus came to earth see note at Matt 5:17.

**10:11** In the Old Testament Jehovah God was the Shepherd (Ps 23:1; Isa 40:10,11). In this verse the Lord Jesus says He is the Shepherd. This is more evidence that He knew Himself to be the incarnation of Jehovah God. See also 8:24,58; 12:41; Luke 2:11. "Gives his life" means His death on the cross.

**10:12** "Hired" – these are people who minister to God's people only for money or personal benefits. They have no love for the sheep (v 13).

"Wolf" – false prophets. See Matt 7:15,16; Acts 20:29-36.

**10:13,14** Between Christ and the "sheep" there is mutual knowledge as real as that between the Father and the Son in the Trinity. Christ's people know Him because of the direct spiritual revelation He gives of Himself to them (see Matt 11:27). They do not receive a full knowledge of Him in a moment, however. It is an ever-increasing knowledge that comes as they trust and obey and follow Him (see also Eph 1:17; Phil 3:10; 2 Pet 3:18). But the teaching

of Jesus here is simply the fact that all of His "sheep" actually do know Him. This is far more than having knowledge about Him. It indicates an initial meeting with Him and continuing fellowship with Him (1 John 1:3). Of course, this is a spiritual meeting and fellowship.

**10:16** He is referring to individuals from other nations and peoples who would later come to believe in Him. Though they had not yet heard the gospel or believed it, He knew they would in the future. He says He will bring them into the company of His people. This He is doing through His servants throughout this whole age of grace.

"One shepherd" – the one flock in this era is the Church of the Lord Jesus. Not just Jews but people of all nations are in it, and He alone is the true Head of the church (see Eph 2:11-22).

**10:17** For the third time Jesus speaks of laying down His life (vs 11,15). It is the most important thing He did for His sheep, the greatest possible display of love (15:13; Rom 5:6-8; 1 John 4:10). God the Father loved the Son from all eternity (5:20; 17:24). But Christ's giving Himself to death for His people was a special reason why the Father loved Him. For this reason He highly exalted Him (Phil 2:8,9).

**10:18** Jesus speaks of His rising from the dead (Matt 16:21; 28:6). No one was able to take His life unless He permitted it (19:10,11; Matt 26:53). And no one could prevent Him from rising from the dead. Both these events were God's will for Him and Jesus had authority over His own death and resurrection.

**10:19** See 7:12,43; 9:16.

**10:20** 7:20; 8:48,52; Matt 4:24. They thought Him mad because they did not believe He was who He said He was. And it is perfectly true that no fully sane and honest person could say the things Jesus said about Himself unless they were true. He either spoke the truth or He was indeed crazy. Every person has to decide what he will believe. By calling Jesus demon-possessed and mad they did not have to account for the evidence He presented (v 25; 5:31-47). This is the easy way of trying to get rid of the arguments of an opponent.

you listen to him?" 21 Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's portico.

24 Then the Jews surrounded him and said to him, "How long will you make us doubt? If you are

the Christ, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you did not believe. The deeds that I do in my Father's name testify about me. 26 But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I told you.

27 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 And I give to them eternal life, and they will never perish, neither will anyone

**10:21** Some had better sense than the others. But even these were not willing to follow the Lord Jesus. Speaking a few words in His favor is not at all the faith and commitment He requires.

**10:22** This dedication festival looked back to 165 B.C. to the re-dedication of the temple after it had fallen into enemy hands.

**10:24** Note on "Christ" at Matt 1:1. They wanted Him to speak plainly, not so they could believe Him, but so they could accuse Him of making what they considered false claims.

**10:25** Jesus had not used the words "I am the Christ, the Messiah of Israel," but some of His words plainly meant this. No one but the Messiah could have honestly said such things as 5:16-47; 6:32-58; 8:12,23-29; 10:7-18. And His miracles were part of the evidence He presented - v 38; 5:36.

**10:26** See 8:44.

**10:27** These truths He had already given (vs 3,14,16). Christ's sheep are those people who have been born again (3:3-8). They have a new spiritual nature and so they can hear Christ's voice and follow Him. To follow Him means to trust and obey Him. Faith and obedience are the twin marks of His people, and without them men cannot be real Christians at all.

**10:28** "Eternal life" - this is the present possession of believers (3:36; 5:24). They do not earn eternal life by following Christ. They follow Him because they already have eternal life in them.

"Never perish" - Christ here makes a plain statement that all of His sheep are safe and secure forever, that their salvation is eternal. See also 6:39,40,54,56; 17:11,15; Rom 5:9,10; 8:30-39; Phil 1:6; Heb 7:25; 1 Pet 1:3-5. This doctrine is also sometimes called "the perseverance of the saints." Observe carefully the wording of vs 27,28. It does not read like this: "If my sheep listen to my voice and if they keep on following me, I will give them eternal life and they will never perish." There is no "if" in Christ's words. The safety of the sheep is not based on any condition other than that they be sheep. And it is the mark of sheep that they listen to the Shepherd's voice and follow Him. If they do not they are not sheep. And the real sheep are safe and secure simply because they are in the good Shepherd's care. Their eternal safety does not depend on what they do, but on what He does.

But is it not possible for believers to stop believing and permanently forsake Christ?

If they did they would perish, but Christ says they will never perish. This implies what is plainly taught elsewhere - that God who gave them faith at the start (Phil 1:29; Eph 2:8; Heb 12:2) will keep them believing to the end. See Luke 22:31,32; Rom 5:9,10; 8:37; Phil 1:6; 1 Pet 1:5. Compare Jer 32:40.

But do not sheep sometimes wander away? And if one does, will not that one be finally lost? Temporarily a true sheep may wander away, but the Lord Jesus revealed what He does in such a case: He goes out and brings the sheep back (see Matt 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7). Actually if even one true sheep can be lost, what security is there for any of us? If it is possible for one to wander away and be lost, then it is possible that any of us who believe in Christ may finally be lost.

We should not think that by nature we are better than others, and so assume that we will be safe even if other sheep perish (compare Matt 7:11; Rom 7:14-25; 1 Tim 1:15; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8-10). If our salvation depended in any way on us then those of us who know ourselves best would have most reason to fear the eventual loss of it, indeed, would have most reason for complete despair. In many ways we are all weak, foolish, sinful, and failing sheep. If the keeping of our salvation were to depend on us, how could any of us finally be saved?

This matter of the eternal salvation and security of the sheep comes down to one very important question: Is their security altogether dependent on the Shepherd, or in some measure on themselves as well? Is it not plain that Jesus is teaching here that it depends altogether on Himself? And is it not reasonable to think that Jesus chose to call believers "sheep" because literal sheep are among the most helpless of animals and incapable of guarding themselves against the attack of enemies? How grateful we should be that our salvation depends on our Good Shepherd and that we are safe forever in His hands.

But does not this teaching of security promote sin? Won't the sheep, thinking they are safe forever, start doing what they please? That way of thinking is not the attitude of true sheep. They are already doing what they please - they want to follow Christ, and they do so, and are sad only that they do not follow Him better than they do. If they do not want to follow Him, they are not sheep. The knowledge that

snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who gave *them* to me, is greater than all. And no *one* is able to snatch *them* out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one."

31 Then again the Jews took up stones to stone him.

32 Jesus responded to them, "I have shown you many good deeds from my Father. For which of these deeds do you stone me?"

33 The Jews answered him, saying, "We do not stone you for a good deed, but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If he called those to whom the Word of God came, 'gods,' and

the Scripture cannot be broken, 36 do you say about him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37 If I do not do the deeds of my Father, do not believe me. 38 But if I do, though you do not believe me, believe the deeds, so that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in me, and I in him."

39 Therefore once more they tried to seize him, but he escaped out of their hand, 40 and went away again beyond Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and he remained there.

41 And many came to him and said, "John did no miracle, but everything John said about this man is true." 42 And many believed in him there.

they are safe promotes holiness in the sheep – the holiness that is not based on the fear of being lost, but on love for the good Shepherd and confidence in His love and power.

"My hand" – to get Christ's sheep away from Him requires a stronger arm than His. No evil men, not Satan himself can steal Christ's sheep from Him. Christ is the good Shepherd. For any shepherd to keep his sheep two things are necessary – an earnest desire to do so, and the ability to do so. Christ has this desire and this ability in the fullest measure. The sheep are safe because of who and what He is. Christ's people are a special gift of love from His Father (6:37; 17:6). He will do all in His power to keep this gift – and His power is limitless. It is unthinkable that He would lose any of them.

**10:29** Two almighty hands enclose Christ's sheep. Here is double security. See Col 3:2 – the life of believers is hidden in the depths of God Himself. And who can remove it from there?

"Greater than all" – see 14:28.

**10:30** This does not say and does not mean that the Son and the Father are one and the same person. The word "one" is neuter gender in Greek and indicates the truth that the two are united in one essence, that they share the same nature – 1:1. Other references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. On the Trinity see 5:30; Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:6.

Jesus' teaching here is not at all the same as the teaching of Advaita Vedanta. Advaita teaches that all men are one with God, that man's spirit and God's Spirit are one and the same. Jesus is not saying this and does not mean this. He is saying that He, the only Son of God, is one with the Father. He taught repeatedly that He was unique and not as other men – 3:15; 8:23,24; etc.

**10:31** See 5:18.

**10:32** His miracles were signs pointing to the truth He spoke in v 30. These hardened unbelievers denied all He said about Himself, denied all the evidence He presented, and insisted that He was a mere man. But they were right in two things – in

the law the penalty for blasphemy was death, and for a mere man to claim to be God is blasphemy, a fearful sin worthy of death (Lev 24:16; Num 15:30). It will be the very sin of the coming "man of sin" (2 Thess 2:3,4). In the Bible the true God presents Himself as the Creator of men and far above them in every way (Gen 2:7; Num 23:19; Ps 9:19,20; Isa 40:22-26). But these Jews were terribly wrong in thinking Jesus was a mere man.

**10:34** Ps 82:6. See notes on that psalm.

**10:35** "Whom" – he states who the "gods" of Ps 82:6 were. Here the Lord Jesus upholds the full inspiration and authority of the Old Testament ("Scripture"). See also Matt 4:4,7,10; 5:17,18; 15:3; 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 24:44. He referred to the Old Testament as the "Word of God."

**10:36** His answer to them is plain and compelling. God Himself called mere men "gods" and "sons of the Most High" in Ps 82:6. This was not blasphemy. Then how could it be blasphemy for the unique Son of God Himself to say that He was that Son? In psalm 82 God was honoring those leaders of Israel by giving them titles in accordance with their high position. But He honored Christ by setting Him apart as His very own and sending Him into the world (see also 3:13-17; 5:37; 6:57; 8:29).

**10:37,38** The Lord Jesus not only said He was God's Son and one with Him, He demonstrated it. His miracles backed up His words (2:11; 5:36; Matt 8:1; 11:4,5). He is saying if the Jews would believe the evidence of His miracles they would come to faith in Him. The phrase "the Father is in me and I in the Father," is the same in meaning as v 30 – the Father and the Son are perfectly united in the same nature. They are not two distinct Gods but two persons in the one Godhead.

**10:39** Nothing Jesus could say would convince these hardened, prejudiced and unreasonable men.

**10:40** See 1:28. This was east of the Jordan river.

**10:41** "John said" – 1:26,27,29-34.

**10:42** People away from the hardened core

**11** Now a certain *man* was sick. *He was* Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was *this* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

3 Therefore his sisters sent *word* to him, saying, "Lord, look, he whom you love is sick."

4 When Jesus heard *this*, he said, "This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, that through it the Son of God might be glorified."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that he was sick, he remained two days more in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that he said to *his* disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8 *His* disciples said to him, "Teacher, lately the Jews tried to stone you, and will you go there again?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours

in a day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

10 But if a man walks in the night, he stumbles, because there is no light around him."

11 He said these things, and afterwards he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep. But I will go to awaken him from sleep."

12 Then his disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better."

13 However, Jesus spoke of his death. But they thought that he spoke of resting in sleep.

14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

16 Then Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that *Lazarus*

of the Jewish religion at Jerusalem were more open to Christ's teaching and more prepared to believe.

**11:1** The name Lazarus is a form of Eleazar and means "God has helped." Bethany was a village on the Mount of Olives just east of Jerusalem.

**11:2** See 12:3. There are several women named Mary in the Gospels – 19:25; Matt 1:18; 27:56.

**11:3** This is what all believers should do in time of trouble. Evidently Jesus knew the members of this family well and had shown special affection for them. The sisters did not even need to give Lazarus's name.

**11:4** Observe that even one whom Jesus especially loved fell sick. The Lord did not prevent it or heal him, though He had healed multitudes of others. See also Job 2:4-8; 2 Cor 12:7-10; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Cor 4:20.

"Glorified" – compare 9:3. Observe that when God's Son is glorified God is glorified. The death of Lazarus was another opportunity for the Lord Jesus to demonstrate His grace and power. The mighty miracle of raising him from the dead was another "sign" (2:11) that He was the Messiah the Son of God.

**11:6** Though the Lord Jesus loved them He did not rush to their home to help and comfort them. He had something better in mind and wanted it to occur at a better time. They who leave their case in His hands and await His time will always receive His best for them. Delays are not denials. For what He knows are good reasons He sometimes permits us to suffer (2 Cor 4:17; 12:7-10; Rev 2:10; note at Job 3:20). His waiting like this in the case of Lazarus may have been intended as a trial of faith for the sisters and His disciples. Compare 1 Pet 1:6,7.

**11:7** Judea was the province of which Jerusalem was the capital.

**11:8** "Rabbi" – 1:38.

**11:9,10** Compare 9:4; 12:35. Jesus is

saying that God appoints a time to finish a work, and those who walk in the light God gives have nothing to fear. He knew what He was doing, and they should move ahead with Him in the light.

**11:11** "Friend" – see 15:14,15. "Asleep" here means dead (v 14). The death of the body is spoken of in this way in both Old and New Testaments (6:50; Deut 31:16; Dan 12:2; Matt 27:52; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor 7:39; 11:30; 15:6-18; 1 Thess 4:13,14). The expression suggests life after death and resurrection from the dead – those asleep in the night awake in the morning (Dan 12:2). This does not imply that the dead are not conscious – see Luke 16:22-26; Rev 6:9,10. It is not the soul which sleeps but the body. "Wake him up" means raise him from the dead. Compare 5:21.

**11:12,13** As so often Jesus' words were taken too literally and therefore misunderstood.

**11:14** Compare 3:4; 4:11,15,32; 6:52; Matt 16:6. Here is another example of Christ's supernatural knowledge. The message that came to Him said only that Lazarus was sick. See also 1:48-50; 2:24,25.

**11:15** The Lord Jesus was going to perform a mighty miracle which would result in an increase of faith in the disciples. This was the cause of rejoicing, not the fact that Lazarus was dead.

**11:16** "Thomas" – Matt 10:3. Both Didymus and Thomas mean "twin." He was one of the original apostles (Matt 10:3). It seems he was sure that if Jesus returned to Judea He would be killed and they with Him. He was prone to look on the dark side of things and to doubt when he should have believed (14:5; 20:24-27), but he was willing to die with Christ or for Him.

**11:17** Lazarus must have died shortly after the sisters sent their message (v 3). The message must have taken a day to reach



had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about three kilometers away. 19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. 20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him, but Mary *still* sat in the house.

21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now whatever you ask of God, God will give *it* to you."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, even though he dies, yet he will live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that

you are the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world."

28 And when she had said this, she went away and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you."

29 As soon as she heard *this*, she quickly got up and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha had met him. 31 Then the Jews who had been with her in the house comforting her, when they saw Mary getting up quickly and going out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

32 Then when Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she fell prostrate at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 So when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he groaned in spirit and was troubled, 34 and said, "Where

Him; He waited two days before starting His journey and it took another day for Him to reach Bethany.

**11:19** Evidently this family was well-known and highly regarded.

**11:20** Martha was the more active of the sisters, Mary the quiet one (Luke 10:38-42).

**11:21** She meant that Jesus would have healed Lazarus if He had been there. But can we think He would have? We can see (as Martha could not at the time) that He had something greater in mind. And we know that He does not always choose to heal people. The Lord has always been with His believers (Matt 28:20); indeed, He has been in them (17:23; 2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:27), yet through the centuries they have all died and many have suffered much sickness and pain.

**11:22** She knew the Lord could do marvelous things, but it is very doubtful that she thought Jesus would raise Lazarus to life then. See v 39. She believed Lazarus would rise on the day of resurrection (v 24), but that is a different matter. See note at 5:28,29. Perhaps the thought that Jesus might possibly raise Lazarus then was trying to find root in her mind and she was struggling to believe it. It seems that Jesus' words to her in vs 23,25,26 were to encourage her to believe it.

**11:25** See 5:21-29. The Lord Jesus has God's own life in Him and He is the life of believers (Col 3:3,4). It is in Him and in Him alone that men can obtain eternal life (3:16,36; 6:53,54; 14:6). He is also the resurrection. He is saying He had the power and authority to raise anyone at any time He chose, including Himself (5:21; 10:17,18). Believers in Christ will live forever in God's presence (14:3; 1 Thess 4:17). Death is not the end of life for them but only the beginning of a far better life

(2 Cor 5:6-8; Phil 1:21-23).

**11:26** See 5:24; 6:50,51. Believers die physically but live eternally. Spiritual death (Eph 2:1) can never touch them. Observe again the emphasis Jesus puts on believing in Him. See 3:15,16,18; 6:40; 8:24; 10:37,38.

**11:27** "Christ" – Matt 1:1.

"Son of God" – 1:34,49; 6:68; 20:31; Matt 3:17; 16:16. Here we see that Martha's faith was very true and firm.

**11:30** It seems that the Lord waited there so that He could see Mary alone to comfort her and encourage her faith. But the Jews followed her and gave little time for that.

**11:32** Verse 21. Both Martha and Mary spoke as if Christ's bodily presence was necessary for healing to take place. But see 4:47-53; Matt 8:5-13.

**11:33** Why was He so moved, so troubled? Perhaps because He entered fully into the sorrow of His friends who were suffering (compare Isa 63:9). Perhaps He sorrowed for Lazarus who must be brought back from a state of peace only to die again at some future time. Perhaps Jesus was thinking of death in general, how it entered the world because of sin and as an enemy crushed and enslaved the whole human race (Rom 5:12,21; Heb 2:14,15). Perhaps He was thinking of the price He would very shortly have to pay to defeat this enemy, death – His own dying in agony on the cross for the sins of the world. Perhaps He was thinking of so many who would die in sin and be lost forever in spite of His sacrifice. Perhaps it was at this moment that He made His earnest prayer for the raising of Lazarus (v 41), and His prayers were not cold and unfeeling (compare Heb 5:7. Compare too the prayers of Christ's Spirit for believers – Rom 8:27).

**11:34** Asking this question does not mean that Jesus did not know. See v 14, which is



have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

37 And some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

38 Then Jesus, again groaning in himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be a bad smell, for he has been dead four days."

40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God?"

41 Then they took away the stone *from the*

*place* where the dead was lying. And Jesus raised *his* eyes, and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 And I know that you always hear me, but because of the people standing here I said *this*, that they may believe that you have sent me."

43 And when he had said this, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

44 And he who had died came out, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and with his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Free him, and let him go."

45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in him. 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees assembled the council, and said, "What shall we

just one example of His supernatural knowledge. Compare God's question to Adam in Gen 3:9.

**11:35** This is the shortest verse in the Bible, but one of the longest in meaning. The Creator of the universe, the Savior of men is no cold, unfeeling, impersonal deity. He loves, He cares, He weeps for men in their misery (Luke 21:41-44; Jer 48:31,32; Ex 2:24,25).

**11:37** Verses 21,32. They were all correct. Jesus could have kept Lazarus from dying, but He had another purpose in mind (v 4) which they did not yet understand.

**11:38** Verse 33.

**11:39** He who raised Lazarus could have caused the stone to roll away of itself. But He gave them a small part in the work of raising the dead. And they could testify later that their hands had taken away the stone and that inside the tomb the dead body of Lazarus lay. Obviously Martha did not understand what Jesus was about to do, and could see no sense in removing the stone. All she knew was that Lazarus was undoubtedly dead and not merely in a coma. The body had started to decompose.

**11:40** Verse 4. In the conversation between Christ and Martha these exact words do not appear, but we cannot assume that everything He said is written down. He may, however, have been referring to the words of vs 25,26. Observe in this verse that faith comes first, then seeing. Men want to reverse this - 4:48.

**11:41** "Looked upward" - 17:1. Posture in prayer is not the important thing. It is the state of the heart that matters.

"I thank you" - Matt 14:19; Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

"You have heard me" - evidently He had prayed specifically that Lazarus might be raised from the dead.

**11:42** He knew God the Father always answered His prayers because He always prayed in the will of the Father (compare 1 John 5:14,15). He gave thanks publicly

to the Father for hearing His prayer because He wanted the Jews there to know an important truth - He was not raising Lazarus on His own initiative; the miracle was evidence that God had sent Him.

**11:43** He called in a loud voice not so Lazarus could hear but so all the people could hear. Here was no magic, no mantra, no muttered spells. Jesus simply gave a clear word of command to a dead man. And, as He said in 5:21-27, the dead lived again.

**11:44** Here is a mighty miracle done publicly in the presence of many people and in broad daylight. It reveals that the Lord Jesus has authority over life and death. In 5:21-27 He said He had this authority. Here He proved it. He has power in the physical realm - He raised a body dead four days and decomposing. He has power in the spiritual realm - He called back the spirit of the dead man where it rested and reunited it with his body.

"Free him" - another example of His giving others a part in the work. In this way they could come in close contact with Lazarus, see and remove the very grave clothes wound about him, touch the flesh that had been decomposing now made whole and new. They could know that what they saw was no fake miracle, no hallucination.

**11:45** They believed in Jesus because of the evidence. They could not escape the facts. He had shown forth the power of God and they knew it.

**11:46** Apparently these people refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah in spite of this miracle, and they wanted to see what the Pharisees would do. Even so mighty a miracle did not overcome the hostility, prejudice, and unbelief of those hardened in their sins (see Luke 16:31). This is seen clearly in the verses which follow.

**11:47** "Council" - the Jewish High Court called the Sanhedrin - Matt 5:22. They admitted the fact that Jesus was performing these signs and miracles. The evidence was so strong and clear that they could not deny it

do? For this man is performing many miraculous signs. 48 If we let him alone like this, everyone will believe in him. Then the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

49 And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 and do not consider that it is expedient for us, that one man die for the people, and not that the whole nation perish."

51 And this he did not say on his own, but being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for that nation, 52 and not only for that nation, but also that he would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. 53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put him to death.

54 Therefore Jesus no more went about openly among the Jews, but went from there to a region near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and

remained there with his disciples.

55 And the Jewish Passover was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. 56 Then they looked for Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Will he not come to the feast?"

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command that if anyone knew where he was, he should report *it* so that they could seize him.

**12** Then six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus, who had died and whom he raised from the dead, was *living*. 2 There they made a supper for him, and Martha was serving, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of fragrant oil of spikenard, very costly, and anointed

(compare Acts 4:15-17). But they were not willing to go where the evidence led them. Indeed they could not, for it was not the truth they wanted but what they thought was personal benefit (see also 5:44). No amount of evidence will convince those who are determined not to believe in Christ.

**11:48** See what an excuse they made for their rejection of Christ! They were afraid that if the mass of people believed in Christ they would make Him their leader and rebel against the Roman Empire which was ruling their country then. Then, they thought, the Romans would come in great force and bring disaster on Jerusalem, the temple, and the whole nation. They were afraid of men but had no fear of God (Rom 3:18).

And this fear of the Romans was not justified. The Lord Jesus had already refused to be a political leader (6:15). His kingdom was not of this world (18:36). His purpose was to establish a spiritual kingdom in people's hearts, not to lead a political rebellion against Rome. But see the hypocrisy and wickedness of these people. They suggested that they were the ones to save the nation, and at the same time were hoping to kill God's Son. Eventually the very thing they feared came on Jerusalem, not because the nation accepted the Lord Jesus but because it rejected Him. See Matt 23:37-39; 24:1,2; Luke 19:41-44.

**11:49** Caiaphas meant that they did not understand what the situation required. In the next verse he plainly stated what he thought they needed to do.

**11:50** Here he boldly gives his solution – "one man die", and he meant that Jesus was a troublemaker who would stir up the Romans to take action against the Jewish nation, and so He had to die. He was no more interested in truth and justice than the Pharisees or Pontius Pilate (18:38).

**11:51,52** Here is a very remarkable thing. An unbeliever, an unsaved man, a rejecter

of Christ, uttered a prophecy of spiritual things – the formation of Christ's church. It is plain that he did not know that God was using him to utter a prophecy. He spoke out of the unbelief and wickedness of his heart, but his words meant far more than he could imagine. He spoke as the high priest of God's nation Israel, and God used him in that office to give counsel concerning His Son that had very great consequences. For other examples of bad men prophesying see notes at Numbers chapters 23,24 and 1 Sam 11:9-11. God can use any instrument He chooses to accomplish His purposes.

**11:53** Previously they had attempted to kill the Lord Jesus (5:18; 8:59), but then they were acting on the impulse of the moment. Now they began to plot the best way to do it.

**11:54** Jesus did not act in fear. He knew that His time to die had not yet come (7:30), and He had things to accomplish before it did come.

**11:56** This is an indication of the fame of Jesus at this time. He was the great object of conversation among those who had come from all over Israel to the feast.

**12:1** Notes on the Passover at Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:4-8. Here we begin the record of the last week of Christ before His crucifixion. The time had come for Him to die for the sins of the world. God had chosen both the time (at this Passover), and the place (Jerusalem), and the Lord Jesus was fully prepared to do the Father's will.

**12:2,3** Compare Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9. Some scholars are sure that John described a different event than that found in Matthew and Mark.

"The fragrance" – compare Phil 4:18; Lev 1:9; etc. Though now our gifts of love to Christ may not have the literal fragrance of perfume, they are a fragrant smell, a pleasing aroma to God.

the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

4 Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray him, said, 5 "Why wasn't this oil sold for three hundred silver coins, and given to the poor?"

6 He said this, not because he was concerned for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money bag, and he used to take what was put in it.

7 Then Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She has kept this for the day of my burial. 8 For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me."

9 Now a great many Jews found out that he was there, and they came, not only because of Jesus, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 But the chief priests made a plot to put Lazarus also to death, 11 for because of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

12 The next day, many people who had come

to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took palm tree branches and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel, coming in the name of the Lord!"

14 And Jesus, when he had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written,

15 Do not fear, daughter of Zion.

See, your King is coming,  
sitting on a donkey's colt.

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about him, and *that* they had done these things to him. 17 Therefore the crowds that were with him when he called Lazarus out of his tomb, raising him from the dead, were giving testimony *about it*. 18 For this reason the people also came to meet him, for they heard that he had performed this *miraculous* sign.

19 Therefore the Pharisees said among themselves, "Don't you see that you are accomplishing

**12:4** Matthew and Mark do not mention it was Judas who said this.

**12:5** "Three hundred silver coins" – in Greek "300 denarii." A denarius was the usual day's wage for a laborer (Matt 20:2). Observe that acts of unselfish love for Christ can be misunderstood and criticized by others. Judas could understand hoarding money or using it for selfish purposes, but could not understand how Mary could pour out so much wealth at Christ's feet out of mere love, hoping for nothing in return.

**12:6** What a contrast there is in these verses – Mary poured out the best she had because she loved Christ; Judas wanted only to get more money for himself because he loved that. There are still these two types of people in the world. As for Judas, he was not the sort who was once tempted, stole something but repented later and fought his weakness. No. Money which God's people gave for the work of God he willfully, habitually took for himself. He loved money more than honor, decency, truth, or Christ. Money was his motive in betraying Christ (Matt 26:14-16). His love of money was one of the traits which made him like a demon (John 6:70,71).

Judas is a terrible example of what can happen to those who give themselves to this lust (see 1 Tim 6:5,9-10). And he was but one of many people, both out of the Church and in it, who have ruined their lives, dishonored God, and lost their souls for money. Alas, how many there are even in Christian work who cannot be trusted with money, who will only prove themselves, like Judas, to be thieves! But see how the other disciples regarded Judas – they trusted him and let him be the treasurer of their group.

Notice also in this verse the hypocrisy of Judas – he cared nothing for the poor but he pretended that he did. His idea was that money for the poor would come through his hands and he could take some of it for himself. At the smell of money the Son of God, His wonderful teaching and miracles, and His offer of eternal life, became as nothing to Judas – nothing but a way of making more money. He completely ignored the teachings of the Lord Jesus on this subject (Matt 6:19-21, 24; Luke 6:20,24; 12:20,21,33). If we ignore them we may become like Judas. It is always better to be poor than to lie, cheat, or steal – Prov 19:22.

**12:7,8** Note at Matt 26:10-13.

**12:10,11** Here is another glimpse into the nature of these unbelievers (and unbelievers in general). They could not deny that Jesus had raised Lazarus. The evidence was too clear, too powerful. But rather than move in the direction the evidence pointed they preferred to destroy the evidence. Compare Jer 36:1-26.

**12:12-15** Matt 21:4-9; Mark 11:9,10; Luke 19:37,38. Each of the four Gospels records somewhat different words spoken by the crowd. Which is correct? All are correct. No Gospel has all the words spoken, but each has some of the words actually spoken. Compare 19:19. Note at Mark 4:1-20.

**12:14** Matt 21:1-3.

**12:16** "Glorified" – this refers to His death and resurrection from the dead. After that the disciples understood a great deal that they had not understood before. Compare Luke 24:45.

**12:18** "Sign" – 2:11.

**12:19** This incident seemed to confirm their

nothing? Look, the world has gone after him."

20 And among those who came up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."

22 Philip came and told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, "The time has come for the Son of man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this

world will keep it to life eternal. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there my servant will also be. If anyone serves me, *my* Father will honour him. 27 Now my is soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this reason I have come to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name."

Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, "I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again."

29 Therefore the people who stood there and heard *it* said that it thundered. Others said, "An angel spoke to him."

30 Jesus responded and said, "This voice did

worst fears (11:47,48).

**12:20** The Passover was a Jewish festival. Greeks (and those of other nations) would not have been allowed to take part in any way in Jewish festivals unless they became converts to Judaism. That there were such among the Greeks we know from verses like Acts 17:4.

**12:21** These were the first of a great many Greeks and people of every nation who would want the same thing in years to come. And if they believe in Christ they will have their request granted (Rev 7:9; 22:4).

**12:22** Philip thought such a request needed consultation with a fellow disciple. We are not told whether the request of these Greeks was granted or not. But Jesus used the occasion to speak of His death – an event He knew must take place before Greeks or anyone else could have a place in heaven or see God.

**12:23** Verse 16; see 17:1,5.

**12:24** "Truly, truly" – 1:51.

"If it dies. . . much fruit" – this is true of literal grain, true of God's way with His people on earth, and true of the Lord Jesus Himself. And certainly He is speaking of His own death and the results that would come from it. If He had refused to die for men, there would never have been eternal life for anyone. The Lord Jesus would have remained alone – there would not have been "many brethren" made in His image (Rom 8:29; Heb 2:10-15). But this is a principle that applies also to any of God's servants in the world – real fruitfulness and spiritual life to others comes out of death to self. Compare 2 Cor 4:8-12.

**12:25** The Lord gave this same truth in slightly different words on a number of occasions. Evidently it is one of His most important sayings, and we ignore it to our great peril. See Matt 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; 17:33. Here in John He makes it even more emphatic by using the word "hate." Compare Luke 14:26. And by using the words "eternal life" He makes it abundantly clear that the real choice is between this present brief life and life with God in eternity. We must decide what we will value, what we will live for – this world or the next.

**12:26** See 10:27. No one is serving Christ

who does his own thing in his own way. Those who follow Christ will be where He is in this world, for He is their Shepherd who leads them where they should go. And if this means trials, dangers, sufferings and a martyr's death, He will be with them and they with Him in all of that. His followers will be with Him in the next world too and throughout eternity. This is what He prayed for them (17:24) and this is what they will have.

Christ's servants may meet with much injustice, persecution, humiliation and dishonor in this world. They may be despised and rejected of men as their Master was. Their honors are still to come. The eternal God Himself will exalt, praise, honor and reward Christ's servants (5:44; Matt 25:21; Rom 2:6-10; 8:18; Heb 6:10; 1 Pet 5:1,4; Rev 22:12). Any loss they face here He will more than make up then. So we must choose what honors to pursue, whose praises we desire – those that come from men or those that come from God.

**12:27** "Hour" – the coming hour of His sufferings and death. The thought of being a sacrifice for the world's sin, bearing man's guilt and facing God's anger against it, caused anguish to Christ. Compare Matt 26:37,38; Luke 22:42-44. But He would not pray to be delivered from it unless it was God's will. And He knew it was not.

**12:28** As in His prayer later in Gethsemane His concern is for the glory of God the Father, not His own glory; the Father's will not His own will. He was willing to endure the cross so that the Father might be glorified. All His followers must learn to pray like this. See Matt 6:9,10. This is the third time in the Gospels that God spoke from above (Matt 3:17; 17:5). God had glorified His name all through the events described in the Old Testament, all through the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. Now He would glorify it through the death and resurrection of Christ.

**12:29** Ex 19:16-19; Ps 29:3.

"Angels" – Gen 16:7. It seems that some distinguished the words, others did not. But all knew something very unusual had happened.

**12:30** Christ did not need to be told what He already knew so well. But men need to

not come because of me, but for your sakes. 31 Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out. 32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* to me."

33 He said this to indicate what death he would die.

34 The people answered him, "We have heard from the Law that Christ will remain forever. How can you say, 'The Son of man must be lifted up?' Who is this Son of man?"

35 Then Jesus said to them, "The light will be with you only a for a little while. Walk while you have the light, so darkness does not overtake you. For he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may be children of the light." Jesus spoke these things and went away and hid himself from them.

37 But though he had performed so many

*miraculous* signs in front of them, still they did not believe in him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke might be fulfilled,

"Lord, who has believed our report?  
And to whom has the arm of the Lord  
been revealed?"

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again,

40 He has blinded their eyes  
and hardened their heart,  
so that they would not see with *their*  
eyes,  
or understand with *their* heart,  
and be converted, and be healed by me.

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw his glory and spoke of him.

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they

be told it very emphatically.

**12:31** Christ was about to die in the place of guilty men, as the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world (1:29). This means that it was the whole world of mankind that deserved to die. The cross was like a pronouncement of judgment about this. It is as though God were saying to the world, "Because of your sins you are guilty and worthy of death. By the death of my Son in your place I declare this verdict. And you will condemn yourself by crucifying my Son, thus proving my verdict is right" (3:18,19).

"Ruler of this world" – Satan. See 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12. For most readers today "ruler" probably brings out the meaning of the Greek word better than "prince." Satan is ruling in the darkness which men love (3:19), in the hearts of sinful men who do not know the one true God. Notes on Satan at 8:44; 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10. By "thrown out" the Lord Jesus did not mean thrown out of the world, for Satan is still very much in it (1 Pet 5:8), and he will not be thrown out of it until Christ comes again (Rev 20:1-3).

The meaning seems to be this: by the cross He would accomplish redemption for men, and this would mean Satan's eventual overthrow. In every land men formerly ruled by Satan would turn to God, and eventually the whole world would submit to God's rule and reflect God's glory (Isaiah chapter 11; etc). The cross is the basis of all this. The cross which seemed at the time to be Satan's victory meant his utter defeat.

**12:32** Compare 3:14; 8:28.

"Lifted up" – refers to the cross. By drawing all men to Himself He does not mean that all men will be saved (see 8:24; Matt 7:13,14; 25:46; Rev 21:8). He means that He will draw men from all nations, peoples, tribes to Himself and not just those of the Jewish nation (compare Rev 7:9).

**12:33** He knew from the beginning that He would die on a cross.

**12:34** They were probably referring to verses such as Ps 89:36; 110:4; Isa 9:7; Dan 7:14. They knew Jesus often called Himself "the Son of man", and wondered what He meant by the name, and whether the Son of man was the same as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Note on "Son of man" at Matt 8:20.

**12:35** By "light" He meant Himself (v 46; 8:12; 9:5). The sad condition of very large numbers of people everywhere is revealed here – they do not know where they are going.

**12:36** This means to trust Christ and so become children of God who is "Light" (1 John 1:5). It is only by receiving Christ the light and believing in His name that anyone can become a child of God (1:12,13). The phrase "sons of light" also suggests those who have the quality of light, who have come to the light and love the light, who are light-bearers themselves. Compare Matt 5:14-16; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5.

**12:37-40** All through this Gospel we see the unbelief of many of the Jews. No evidence Christ gave could convince them. Their unbelief was unreasonable and strange. But here is an explanation for it. They were fulfilling Old Testament prophecy – Isa 53:1 and 6:10. And their unbelief was a judgment of God on them for their sins. The nation had long chosen the way of unbelief; now God abandons them to it. See note at Matt 13:14,15.

**12:41** In Isa 6:1-3 Isaiah wrote that he saw the LORD (Jehovah in Hebrew) and that the whole earth was full of the LORD's (Jehovah's) glory. Here John says that Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See also 8:24,58; 10:11; Luke 2:11.

**12:42,43** Was the faith of these men real?



did not confess *him*, so they would not be put out of the synagogue. 43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in me, does not believe in me, but in him who sent me. 45 And he who sees me sees him who sent me. 46 I have come, a light, into the world, that whoever believes in me would not remain in darkness. 47 And if anyone hears my words, and does not believe, I do not judge him, for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 He who rejects me and does not receive my words, has one that judges him. The word that I have spoken, it will judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say, and what to speak. 50 And I know that his command is everlasting life. Therefore whatever I speak, I speak just as the Father has said to me."

**13** Now before the Passover Feast, Jesus, knowing that the time when he should go

Perhaps there was a seed of true faith which later sprouted and grew and made them braver. But we can hardly help being doubtful of those who say they believe and yet who are ruled by fear and the desire for the praises of men. See Matt 10:33; Rom 10:10.

**12:44,45** Could Jesus have expressed His oneness with God the Father more clearly? Compare 10:30; 14:9. To believe Jesus is to believe God, to see Him is to see God. **12:46** Verses 35,36; 8:12; 9:5. On why Christ came to earth see note at Matt 5:17. **12:47** See 3:17.

**12:48** The "last day" is the day of judgment God has appointed. See references at Matt 10:15. One of the books that will be opened at that time (Rev 20:12), it seems, will contain the words of Christ. These words we have in the four Gospels. If we do not act on what they say we bring condemnation on ourselves. Compare 7:21-23.

**12:49** Compare 5:19; 4:34. The teachings of the Lord Jesus are in the exact words, and doubtless in the forms of speech and expression that God appointed. Anyone who quarrels with them is quarreling with the one true God who gave them.

**12:50** "Everlasting life" – a constant theme of this Gospel (1:4; 3:16,36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:47; 10:10). Christ was very careful to speak the very words God the Father gave Him. The issues involved were very important. These are the last words of Christ's public ministry, and they put the stamp of God's authority on all that He had ever said. He is the Word of God (1:1) and He spoke only God's words.

**13:1** "Passover" – Exodus chapter 12; Lev 23:4-8. At last the time of Christ's departure had come. See 7:30.

"Loved" – His whole life and ministry were

from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 And supper being ended, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and went to God, 4 got up from supper, took off his outer garments, took a towel, and wrapped *it* around himself.

5 After that he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe *them* with the towel which had been wrapped around him.

6 Then he came to Simon Peter, and Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you will not understand now, but afterwards you will understand."

8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."

9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not only my

a demonstration of His love. Now He was about to show His people the height and depth and length and width of it (Eph 3:18).

"His own" – means His followers, those whom God the Father had given Him (John 6:37; 17:6).

**13:2** "Devil" – Matt 4:1. "Judas" – 6:70,71; 12:6; Matt 26:14-16.

**13:3** "Into his hands" – compare 3:35; 10:18; 17:2; Matt 28:18.

**13:4,5** He knew He was God the Son, had come from God the Father, and was returning to Him. Yet He here performed the work of the lowliest servant. This shows His humility and desire to serve rather than be served. See Matt 11:29; 20:25-28; Phil 2:6-8. How different was He from many now who profess to be His servants and disciples!

**13:6-8** To Peter it did not seem fitting that one he knew to be the Christ the Son of the living God (Matt 16:16) should perform the task of a menial servant. Even though Jesus told him this act had a meaning which he would later understand Peter flatly refused to allow it. Peter's words on the surface may seem to indicate humility, but they reveal a certain arrogance as well. Did he think he knew better than the Lord Jesus what should be done? (See also Matt 16:22; Isa 40:13,14).

Who is any mere man to refuse to accept what the Son of God would do for him? There may be many of His ways with us we do not understand now, but we must humbly allow Him to minister to us as He wishes (Rom 11:33,34). Some day we will understand the meaning of all He does with us, in us, to us, for us. There is a spiritual meaning behind His words "no part with me." He is saying that it is necessary to cleanse His disciples from sin if they are to have



feet, but also *my* hands and *my* head!"

10 Jesus said to him, "He who has had a bath needs only to wash *his* feet. *He* is completely clean. And you are clean, but not all *of you*." 11 For he knew who would betray him, so he said, "You are not all clean."

12 So after he had washed their feet, taken his garments, and sat down again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord. And you say rightly so, for I am *that*. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.

16 "Truly, truly I say to you, the servant is not greater than his lord, nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. 18 I do not speak about all of you. I know whom I have chosen. But that the Scripture might be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.'

fellowship with Him. See 1 John 1:7-9.

**13:10** These believers in Christ had complete cleansing from sin when they first trusted in Christ. This is called the "washing of new birth" – Titus 3:5; John 3:5. Those who have this do not need to have it again and again. In fact, they cannot have it again and again. Birth is a once and for all thing, and the Bible nowhere speaks of new spiritual birth being received by an individual more than once.

But in their Christian walk in this sinful world their spiritual "feet" may get dirty – sin may cling to them and need washing away (see Luke 11:4; Ps 51:4; Rom 7:18,19; Jam 3:2). This Christ does as often as needed (compare Eph 5:25,26). By saying not everyone of them was "clean" Jesus meant that Judas had never experienced the washing of the new birth (Titus 3:5). He was still filthy in heart, mind and soul.

**13:11** See 2:24,25.

**13:12** He washed the feet of all including those of Judas the traitor – an illustration of how to deal with enemies. Compare Matt 5:43,44; Rom 12:17-21. The question the Lord asked has to do with the spiritual meaning of what He had done. He did not need to ask if they understood the physical act.

**13:13** "I am that" – Luke 2:11. Since He is both Teacher and Lord no one should try, like Peter, to instruct Him or tell Him what to do.

**13:14** The author of these notes does not believe that the Lord Jesus was appointing another ordinance to the Church such as baptism and communion. He was speaking of the humble service each believer should be willing to perform for any other in the ordinary matters of life, whether washing of feet or any other service. He may mean also that believers are to try to help other

19 Now I tell you before it happens, so that when it happens, you will believe that I am *he*.

20 "Truly, truly I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me."

21 When Jesus had said this, he was troubled in spirit and testified, saying, "Truly, truly I say to you, one of you will betray me."

22 Then the disciples looked at one another, in doubt about whom he spoke. 23 Now one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was leaning against Jesus' chest. 24 So Simon Peter gestured to him, that he should ask who it was he was talking about.

25 Then he, leaning back against Jesus' chest, said to him, "Lord, who is it?"

26 Jesus answered, "It is *the one* to whom I give a piece of bread, when I have dipped *it* in *the dish*." And when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave *it* to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

27 And after the piece of bread, Satan went into him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you are

believers find cleansing from any sin that may cling to them in their Christian walk. This they might do by speaking God's Word to them (15:3), and leading them to find cleansing through the Lord Jesus (1 John 1:9).

**13:15** In this, as in everything, Christ is our example – 1 Pet 2:21-23; 1 John 2:6.

**13:16** See Matt 10:24,25.

**13:17** There is a blessing of God which comes only by doing what Christ says – Luke 11:28. Mere hearing is not enough (Jam 1:22,23). Notes on blessing at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12.

**13:18** See 6:70,71. See Ps 41:9.

**13:19** See 8:24,28,58. When Christ's disciples later understood that He knew the future and was not a mere victim of treachery but the complete master of the situation, their faith was confirmed, strengthened and enlarged.

**13:20** Matt 10:40; Mark 9:37; Luke 9:48; 10:16. Those whom Christ sends are His ambassadors, His representatives (2 Cor 5:20). To accept them is the same as accepting the Father and the Son who sends them. But when people present themselves as Christ's servants we must make very sure that God has sent them. Satan has his own servants and ambassadors whom he sends into the world and into the churches (2 Cor 11:13-15; Acts 20:29).

**13:21** See 11:33; 12:27. Knowing what was going to happen did not make Jesus cold and stoical.

**13:22** They were all (except Judas) utterly amazed. None of them, it seems, had suspected Judas for a moment.

**13:23** This person was probably the apostle John. See also 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20.

**13:27** Luke 22:3. Before this, Satan had put the idea of betrayal in the mind of

going to do, do quickly."

28 Now no one at the table knew the reason why he said this to him. 29 For some of *them* thought, because Judas had the money bag, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *the things* that we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then, having received the piece of bread, immediately went out. And it was night.

31 Therefore, when he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and will immediately glorify him. 33 Little children, I will be with you

only for a little while. You will look for me, and, as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' Now I say this to you.

34 A new commandment I give to you, That you love one another. As I have loved you, you *must* also love one another. 35 By this all *men* will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Now you cannot follow me where I am going, but you will follow me later."

37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for your sake."

Judas (v 2), and Judas had long been following the ways of Satan (6:70; 12:6). Now Satan possessed him completely – a terrible fact which brought Judas to a terrible end (Matt 27:3-5). Jesus' words to Judas show that His time had come and He was prepared to endure the act of betrayal; let Judas not waste time about it (7:30; 12:1).

**13:29** See 12:6. The dullness of the disciples is sometimes surprising.

**13:30** Judas knew what Jesus meant even though the others did not. It was then literally night outside, spiritually night in Judas, the beginning of the hour of darkness on earth (Luke 22:53). It would seem that Judas went out after the events of Matt 26:26-29. See Luke 22:20,21.

**13:31** "Son of man" – Matt 8:20. The time had come for the Lord Jesus to endure a terrible death on the cross. His betrayer has gone out to do his betraying, and the next day Jesus would die. How does He regard this? As glory. How can it be glory? It reveals those qualities of His which will bring Him the greatest honor – His undying love for God and for mankind, His humility, His purity, and His other excellent virtues. Jesus is nowhere more glorified than in His death on the cross (and, of course, in His resurrection afterwards), for it was there that His character was most clearly revealed. And God the Father was glorified in Him because the Father and the Son were completely united in nature and character and in all that happened.

**13:32** This refers to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Because Jesus willingly endured the death of the cross God raised Him up and highly exalted Him at His own right hand in heaven (Acts 2:32,33; 3:13-15; Phil 2:6-11).

**13:33** This is the only time Jesus called His disciples "little children." It indicates His tender love for them. Compare 1 John 2:1,12,13,18,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21. See also Matt 18:2,3.

**13:34** On the night before He died one of the things uppermost in His mind was the need of all His disciples to love one another. And He did not merely request or advise them to do so – He issued a command.

This command He gave three times (15:12,17). See also Rom 13:8; Gal 5:13,14; Eph 5:2; Phil 2:2; Col 2:2; 1 Thess 3:12; 4:9; Heb 13:1; Jam 2:8; 1 Pet 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 1 John 3:11,18,23; 4:7.

"New" – the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself is one of the two greatest commandments in the whole law of God (see Matt 22:35-40). Why, then, does Jesus call His commandment "new"? He is commanding something higher and better than the law. He has created a new group of redeemed people later known as the Church. The love each member is to have for every other is something special, something beyond the love and kindness one should show to neighbors. It is a love based on Christ's love to them. Christians are not merely to love fellow believers as they love themselves but as Christ loved them. And how did Christ love? To the uttermost, willingly giving His life for them. See 1 John 3:16. His was completely holy and pure love, unselfish love, unfailing love, divine love. See the note at 1 Cor 13:1. This is the kind of love believers in Christ are to receive from God and show to others.

**13:35** If Christians love one another, this will be evidence to people outside the Church (and to themselves – 1 John 3:14) that they are true Christians, real followers of Christ. People will not be convinced of this if Christians bite and devour one another (Gal 5:15), cheat and deceive each other (1 Cor 6:8), etc, as so often happens.

**13:36** The disciples were very dull in understanding spiritual matters before the event described in Luke 24:45. He had told them more than once of His approaching death (Matt 16:21; etc). Notice here that Peter passed completely over Christ's command about love and questions Jesus about a thing He said before. Now many Christians would rather speculate about what Christ does than earnestly strive to do what they should do. Of course Christ was speaking of His ascension into heaven.

**13:37** It seems Peter still did not understand Christ's meaning. And he did not understand his own nature. See Matt 26:31-35. We can learn from this that there may

38 Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for my sake? Truly, truly I say to you, the rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times.

**14** "Do not let your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

2 "In my Father's house are many dwellings. If *this* were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

be much ignorance of one's own heart in even the most prominent disciples of Christ. How many of us are aware that the seeds of every sin are planted deeply in our fallen nature? How many are self-confident and boastful when they should bow humbly in the dust? See Jer 17:9; 1 Cor 10:12; Prov 16:18.

**13:38** Though men themselves may not know what is in them, Christ knows – 2:24,25.

**14:1** There were several matters that could cause them to be troubled. Their master was going away. Peter was soon to deny that he knew Him. None of them knew what was going on, only that something strange and difficult was about to happen (this they could judge from the words of the Lord recorded in Matt 26:26-35). But He tells them not to be troubled, and gives in this chapter a number of reasons why they should not be (vs 1,2,3,13-14,16,27). The first is that He is trustworthy. This is the way whereby His people can always overcome the temptation to be troubled, worried and agitated about events – trust in God and trust in Christ. They could not be in control of circumstances, but He was, and in that they could find rest of heart. Compare Matt 6:25-27; Phil 4:6,7; 1 Pet 5:7.

**14:2** Here is another reason why they should not be troubled. They had a glorious, eternal future in heaven. With such a prospect they should not allow the things of time and the world to weigh too heavily in their thoughts. Peter had asked where He was going. Here Jesus gives a direct, clear answer. There was work in heaven which He would do for them.

**14:3** See 17:24; 1 Thess 4:17. Here is another reason why they should not allow themselves to be troubled. Though He was going away He was also coming back. See Matt 24:26,27; 25:31; 26:64; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16 – 5:4; Rev 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:12.

**14:4** They did not think they knew the way (v 5), but actually they did know it because they knew Jesus Himself who is the way. And they had already taken the way that leads to heaven – faith in Him (1:12,13; 3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47).

**14:5** This disciple is often called "doubting Thomas" because of 20:24,25. But he was

4 And you know where I am going, and you know the way."

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. And from now on you know him, and have seen him."

8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it will be sufficient for us."

also honest, open, without hypocrisy. He would not pretend to know something or to believe something he did not know or believe.

**14:6** Here is one of the best known and most important sayings of the Lord Jesus.

"The way" – He is not one way among many, but the only way there is. It was not His disciples but He Himself who insisted He was the only way to God's presence. To be true to Him His disciples must teach the same thing that He taught (compare 3:36; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim 2:5). Many people do not like this teaching of Jesus, but not liking it will not change it. Far better it is to decide to like it, because Jesus is the Truth and does not lie. He Himself said that He is the only Son of God (3:16), the one they must receive to have spiritual life (6:53), the one men must believe or else be lost forever (8:24), the only "door" for God's people and the only Shepherd (10:7-11). Let us believe Him because of who He is and because of the evidence He has shown.

"Truth" – the Lord Jesus is the embodiment of God's truth, the incarnation of the God of truth (Ps 31:5). There is not the slightest hint of deception, guile, or darkness in Him. And it is He who said that He is the Truth who said that He is the Way.

"Life" – 11:25. This does not mean, of course, physical existence, and He is not at all saying that in some way He is the life of all men and all creatures. He is saying that He shares the life of the one true God (5:26), and He is the one who gives eternal life to men (5:21; 17:2), and this life is in Him alone (1 John 5:11,12). By receiving the Lord Jesus into our hearts and lives by faith, all that He is becomes ours and we are in the Way, believe the Truth, and have the Life. If we reject Him we will never be in the way to God, or believe the truth, or have eternal spiritual life, or arrive in peace in the presence of God in heaven. We may be certain of this because we have the word of the Son of God Himself.

**14:7** Jesus meant that if they had really understood who and what He is they would have known God the Father also. See 1:14,18; Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. But up to that time their faith and spiritual understanding were weak.

**14:8** Perhaps Philip's desire was something

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been such a long time with you, and you have not yet known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. *Then* how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who lives in me is doing these things. 11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father is in me; or else

believe me because of the deeds themselves.

12 "Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in me, he also will do the deeds that I am doing; and he will do greater deeds than these, because I am going to my Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father will be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in my name, I will do *it*. 15 If you love me, keep my commandments. 16 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you

like that of Moses in Ex 33:18 – a vision of God Himself.

**14:9** "Seen the Father" – compare 10:30; 12:44,45; 1:18; Heb 1:3. To see Jesus is to see what God the Father is like. They share the same nature. They are members of the same Godhead. Jesus is the only person on earth who has ever been able to say this truthfully.

**14:10** These words signify a complete and perfect union of Father and Son in the one Godhead. And this is something Philip should have believed because of truth Jesus had already taught. The words and works of Jesus were the words and works of God (7:16; 12:49).

**14:11** If Philip was not willing to take Christ's word for it, he should look at the evidence Christ gave and then believe. Christ once spoke to the Jewish leaders in the same way – 10:37,38.

**14:12** What things could possibly be greater than the things Christ had done? He could not be speaking of miracles because the miracles they later did were in no way greater than His. Only one work of theirs was in any way "greater" than those He had done. This was the work of preaching that resulted in the conversion of multitudes of both Jews and Gentiles, of going into all the world and proclaiming the gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15) and making disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19). When He was on earth He confined His ministry to a very small area, and saw comparatively few people come to a true faith in Himself. Having gone to the Father He sent the Holy Spirit to enable His disciples to do "greater" works and spread His gospel to the ends of the earth.

**14:13,14** Here is another reason why His disciples should not be troubled (v 1). This is a very wide promise with very clear restrictions. Effective prayer must be in Christ's name. No other name, no other mediator, is needed. Since He Himself will answer any prayer we make in His name, then it is plain we need no help from anyone else in heaven or on earth to get answers to our prayers. See also the note at 16:27.

"Name" here signifies all He is and stands for, His nature, His character, His will, His authority. His will (and all else we know of Him) is revealed in His teachings, so prayer should be made according to them. Many requests made to Him are not granted because they fall short in this. The Lord Jesus answers prayer with a grand purpose

in mind – the glory of God the Father. We should want answers to our prayers on the same high basis. Compare Matt 6:9,10. If our motives are right we may ask for big things in His will and get big answers. See also 15:7; 1 John 5:14,15. Compare Jer 33:3; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8; Eph 6:18; Heb 4:16; Jam 5:16.

**14:15** This is three times repeated – vs 21,23. This verse is surely closely connected with the promise given above. If we ignore or disobey His commandments how can we pray in His name? And how can we say we love Him? Deeds, not words, are the proofs of love. Obedience is the evidence, not tears, fine feelings, or knowledge of love. The way to find out if we really love Christ is to go through His commandments and see whether we are actually obeying them – commands such as 13:13-17,34; Matt 5:16,23,24,34,39-42,44; 6:1-6,19,20,25; 7:1; 9:38; 16:24; 18:15,21,22; 19:4-6; 20:25-27; 24:42,44; 28:19. To "keep" them means to put them into practice. Let us examine our lives to see whether we really love Christ. Love must be at the heart of the believer's relationship with Him.

**14:16** Here is another reason His disciples should not be troubled (v 1) – Christ's prayers for them and the coming of the Holy Spirit to be in them. On Christ's prayers for His people see Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25.

"Comforter" – the Greek word has a broad meaning. It means "someone called alongside to help." It often indicated a helper in legal matters, someone to speak in another's defense, possibly a mediator or intercessor. In the New Testament the word seems to suggest a Friend who advises believers in all matters relating to righteousness and sin, a counselor, one who helps and comforts them and represents them before God. The Lord Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit, as is clear from vs 17,26. He calls Him "another" Comforter. Up until then He Himself had been their Comforter (in Greek this very word is used of Jesus in 1 John 2:1. There it is translated "Advocate." See also Isa 9:6, where He is called Counselor). Now He promises to send another like Himself, but who is a different person (this is indicated by the word in Greek translated "another"). See also 7:39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5,8; 2:1-4.

Observe that this Comforter, this divine Friend of believers will be with them "forever." He will never leave them or

another Comforter, that he may stay with you forever. 17 *He is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see him, and does not know him. But you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you without comfort. I will come to you. 19 After a little while, the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I *am* in my Father, and you *are* in me, and I *am* in you.

21 "He who has my commandments and keeps  
forsake them.

**14:17** God is the God of truth – Ps 31:5; Titus 1:2. The Lord Jesus is Himself the Truth (1:17; 14:6). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (15:26; 16:13). Truth is at the core of His being. He loves truth, speaks only the truth and leads believers into all truth (16:13). By "world" Jesus means the world in its sin and darkness, the world that refuses to receive Him as Lord and Saviour. The world may use expressions like "the divine spirit," "the spirit of life," "the spirit over all," etc, but the world does not know the Holy Spirit of the one true God and cannot receive Him.

The disciples of Jesus did know the Spirit. They were born of the Spirit (1:12,13), and knew the Spirit's working in the ministry of Jesus and in their own service (Matt 10:1,19,20; 12:28). He had been with them. The time was near when He would be in them – would live in their physical bodies (1 Cor 6:19). This is not true of all men, but only of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. See Rom 8:16; Gal 3:2; Eph 4:18; Jude 19.

The spirit which every individual has from birth is not God's Spirit. It is a spirit God created, and each individual has a different spirit separate from all others. God's Spirit is eternal, uncreated, and comes to live only in those who receive the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Saviour – Gal 3:1-5,14. The world has a spirit, but it is not the Spirit of God. See Eph 2:2.

Observe in this verse how Jesus uses the personal pronoun ("He" and "Him") when speaking of God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not a mere influence emanating from God. He is a divine person just like the Father and the Son, and is one with them in nature and attributes. Just as we should not refer to Jesus as "it", so we should not refer to God's Spirit as "it."

**14:18** Jesus came to them after He rose from the dead (chapters 20,21). In a sense He came at Pentecost when the Spirit of God came to them (in Rom 8:9 He is called the "Spirit of Christ"). But here He may be referring to His second coming (v 3).

**14:19** His disciples saw Him after His resurrection (20:20,29; 1 Cor 15:5-8). This is strong evidence indeed that Jesus is who He said He is and that all His teachings are true. Note at Matt 28:6.

"You also will live" – compare Rom

them is the one who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will reveal myself to him."

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If a man loves me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him. 24 He who does not love me will not keep my teachings. And the word that you are

5:9,10; Col 3:3,4. The hope of life for His disciples was bound up with His resurrection – 5:21,26; 6:47,54; 11:25,26.

**14:20** "That day" – the period of time just after His resurrection. Then they would understand what unity He was bringing them into – v 10; 17:21-23. Christ in believers and they in Him is a constant theme of the letters of the apostle Paul (Rom 6:3-8; 8:9-11; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20; Eph 1:1). **14:21** Verse 15. The Lord Jesus is emphasizing the relationship between His believers and Himself and God the Father. It is a relationship of love expressed on their part by obedience, and on His part by some clear revelation of Himself. Only those who experience it will know what it is. God has a special love for His obedient loving children. He loves them infinitely, completely, totally, eternally. All His thoughts toward us are thoughts of love. All His actions toward us are done in perfect love. This is a family relationship of love, a delight in loving. God so loved the world that He sent His Son, and He has great compassion and pity on those lost in sin, but He cannot give full expression of His love to those who remain in rebellion against Him as He does toward His believing obedient people.

**14:22** Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13. He and the other disciples hoped that Jesus, as the Messiah of Israel, would gloriously manifest Himself to the nation and to the world, take the reins of power in His hands and reign. See Luke 24:25,26.

**14:23** Again He puts the emphasis on obedience – vs 15,21. The importance the Lord placed on this truth is indicated by the fact that He uttered it three times in so brief a time. The promise He gives here is one of the greatest in the whole Bible. It reveals the desire of God to live with His people, to fully express His love toward them in action. See note and references at Exodus 25:8. And He promises He will do this now with those who love the Lord Jesus. Observe how the Lord says both He and His Father will come to live with each one who loves Him. Being in many places at the same time is possible only to God, and if Jesus were not God He could not do this. Jesus is one with the Father in nature, but He again clearly distinguishes Himself from the Father as a person. See other references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**14:24** By this we know the true condition of



hearing is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. 25 These things I have spoken to you, being *still* present with you. 26 But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and will cause you to remember everything I have said to you.

27 "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled, do not let it be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and will come *again* to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, 'I go to the

Father.' For my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it takes place, you might believe. 30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father, I do just as the Father commanded me. Arise, let us leave here.

**15** "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. 2 Every branch in me that bears no fruit he takes away, and he prunes every

those who only read the Bible or listen to Bible messages and profess to be Christian, yet who do not do what the Bible says.

**14:26** This was a special promise to His original disciples. See also 16:13. The Holy Spirit would enable them to teach what Jesus taught (and to write it down – though this is not specifically stated). To get the truth to the world Jesus did not depend on the ability of His disciples to remember what He had said. His Spirit would teach them all they needed to know and bring to their remembrance "everything" Jesus said. It is true also that the Spirit of God teaches all believers (1 Cor 2:10-13; 1 John 2:27). On God as teacher see note at Ps 25:4,5; etc.

Notice carefully the name given to God's Spirit here. He is the "Holy" Spirit, absolutely pure, separate from sin, one with the God of holiness. Note on "holy" at 17:17-19; Lev 20:7. Notice too that the Spirit is not the same person as the Father or the Son. The Father "sends" Him (v 16), in Christ's name. Note on the Trinity at Matt 3:16; etc. **14:27** Here is another reason why His disciples should not be troubled (v 1). Jesus is the Prince of peace (Isa 9:6). He came to make peace between God and men (2 Cor 5:19,20; Col 1:20,22). But here He speaks of the peace of mind and heart He gives believers (16:33; Phil 4:6,7; Col 3:15; 2 Thess 3:16). What so many people long for and cannot find Jesus freely gives to His disciples and removes all reason for fear.

**14:28** They loved Him, but if their love had been what it should have been they would not have been thinking of themselves. Their thoughts would have been of Him and the finishing of the work He came to do, and the blessed state that awaited Him in the Father's presence. See how Jesus here distinguishes Himself from God the Father. The Father is not greater than the Son in nature or attributes, for Father and Son share these (v 9; 8:24,58; 1:1; 10:30). But the Father is greater in position and authority. See 5:19-27; 12:49. The Father does the showing, giving, sending and the commanding. The Son does the seeing, the receiving, the coming in subjection to the Father and the obeying.

**14:29** See 13:19.

**14:30** "Ruler" – Satan – note at 12:31. The

Lord Jesus was sinless, had never yielded to any suggestion or temptation of Satan. There was nothing in Jesus that Satan could claim as his own; there was no way he could influence the way He lived His life.

**14:31** It would soon seem as if Satan had some hold on Christ. The hour of darkness (Luke 22:53) had arrived. Jesus would be accused of blasphemy and be executed as if He were a criminal. But the explanation for all that is not in any seeming hold of Satan on Him, but in Jesus' obedience to the Father's will (10:17,18). Jesus had told His disciples that obedience was the proof of love (vs 15,21,23). Here He gives that proof in His own life. He was not as many teachers who teach one thing and practice another.

**15:1** In the Old Testament the nation Israel is compared to a vine. See Ps 80:8-17; Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21; Ezek 15:1-8; 19:10-14; Hos 10:1,2. But it turned out to be a corrupt, wild vine, not producing the fruit God wanted. It behaved as a false or unreal vine. By saying He is the true vine, Jesus teaches that He, and not the corrupt nation, is the source of true spiritual life and fruitfulness. The one who "planted" Him on earth and takes care of the "branches," is God the Father.

**15:2** The subject of this illustration is the fruitfulness of believers, not their salvation (vs 4,5,8). Jesus does not here define the kind of fruit God wants, but it is seen in other places in the Bible (Matt 3:8; Rom 6:22; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 5:9; Phil 1:11; Heb 6:7-10; Prov 11:30). Many professing Christian workers who point to what they call success in the ministry are proud, unholy, dishonest, unkind, and unspiritual. Jesus does not call their seeming success "fruit." The fruit God wants to see is believers becoming like Christ, and serving like Christ.

"Takes away" – Jesus was not teaching that true believers will lose their salvation if they fail at some time to bear fruit. Compare 5:24; 6:37-40,54,56; 10:27-29. We should never take language in a parable or allegory Jesus told and try to overthrow His plain statements in other places. Here He does not define what He means by "takes away," nor does He say when or how it takes place. He is merely emphasizing by very strong language the desire of God



*branch* that bears fruit, that it might bear more fruit.

3 "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I *will remain* in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so you also cannot, unless you remain in me. 5 I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who remains in

me, and I in him, he will bear much fruit. For without me you can do nothing. 6 If a man does not remain in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And men gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

7 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you will ask what you want, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified in this, that you

the Father for fruit. Should we not think God sees to it that every believer bears some fruit and works in us that it might increase.

Perhaps Judas Iscariot is an example of a branch taken away. And he was no true believer (6:70,71; 13:10). Perhaps those believers mentioned in 1 Cor 11:30, and the man in 1 Cor 5:4,5 are examples of this "taking away."

This whole picture of vine and branches may possibly refer to the visible church made up of all who profess to be Christians, both true and false. A reason for thinking so is this: in the Old Testament the "vine" Israel was the whole nation made up of believers and unbelievers, the good and the bad. And often in their history most of them were bad, and were eventually "taken away." See Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21,22; Hosea 10:1,2. Compare Romans 11:17-21 which speaks of being "broken off." If anyone professes to be a Christian and does not bear fruit for God, but "bad" fruit, we have strong reason for suspecting his claims are false. Compare Matt 7:16-20.

"He prunes" or "trims" – how does God do this? What is His "knife"? This pruning means chastisements, difficulties, afflictions, troubles of various sorts. He works in our hearts, minds, circumstances and experiences to trim away what is useless and make us more what we should be. See 2 Cor 12:7-12; Heb 12:4-11; Ps 66:10-12. See note on afflictions and troubles at Job 3:20.

**15:3** See 13:10; 17:17; Eph 5:26; 1 Pet 1:22; Ps 119:9,11. The Word of God properly applied to minds, hearts, wills and consciences will produce a cleansing.

**15:4** Compare vs 9,10. The word "remain" (or "abide") means to stay in one place. It is used ten times in vs 4-10. This is some indication of its importance in this context. The one place believers are to stay in is Christ. Stay in Him as plants in the ground of His love (Eph 3:17), as members of His body (1 Cor 12:12,13), as stones in His temple (Eph 2:20-22), as members of His household (Heb 3:6), and as branches in Him the Vine. He tells believers to stay in Him. Does this imply that they may not or that some will not? Not necessarily. It implies that God will enable them to do so – otherwise He would not command it. It implies also that He wants them to know their freedom. Remaining in Christ is something believers do consciously, willingly. They are not puppets or robots. God wants them to apply their minds and wills to the

business of being Christians.

The spiritual life is not automatic but dynamic. It is not a life of mutual compulsion between Christ and His people but one of mutual love. Believers are in Christ and remain in Him because they want to do so. He chose them and they choose to follow Him. They love Him. Their freedom does not cause them to leave Christ but to remain in Him. Compare 6:67,68. Christ's true disciples, in a sense, were free to go away from Him just as the others did, but they would not. And it was God's work in them that produced this determination not to go away. See Phil 1:6; 2:12,13. And what God did in them He does in all believers. 1 John 2:24 reveals the way we can be sure of remaining in Christ – we must let His truth remain in us and continue to believe what He revealed.

**15:5** "Much fruit" – this will result because the life and power of Christ will flow through them. Any attempt to serve Him without truly abiding in Him will come to nothing in God's eyes, though there may be much activity and seeming success. "Nothing" here means nothing truly spiritual, nothing of the kind of fruit God wants. There is much activity in the churches (not to speak of the religious world in general) which comes to nothing good because it is not done in Christ and does not have the flow of His life in it.

**15:6** He is speaking of what happens to literal branches cut from a vine. He does not say that some believers may not remain in Him and that if they do not they will be burned in the fires of hell. That will be the fate of unbelievers, like Judas Iscariot, but not of believers. See Matt 3:10,12; Rev 21:8. If any believer fears it might happen to him let him be sure to take hold of all the truth Christ taught and remain in Him. Then he will certainly not fall away.

**15:7** "What you want" – 14:13,14; compare Ps 37:4. Jesus is not giving a method by which believers can be a success in the world's eyes, get rich, or have all the pleasures and comforts to be found on earth. He is giving the way of spiritual success and effective prayer. If Christ's words rule the heart of a believer his desires will be under the control of the Holy Spirit, and he will want what Christ wants him to have. And believers ruled by Christ's words will pray as Christ taught (for example, Matt 6:9-13). Compare Col 3:16,17; 1 John 5:14,15.

**15:8** Fruit bearing is not for the honor of the one who bears the fruit, but for the glory of God. In other words, God is glorified by

bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

11 "These things I have said to you that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full. 12 This is my command, that you love one another, as I have loved you. 13 No man has love greater than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you. 15 From now on, I will

not call you servants, because the servant does not know what his lord is doing. But I have called you friends, for everything that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

16 "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another. 18 If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before *it hated* you. 19 If you belonged to the world, the

His work in believers. Compare Matt 5:16; 1 Cor 1:31; 4:7; 10:31; Phil 1:11. The person who seeks honor from men because of what he thinks is fruit bearing is not yet bearing the kind of fruit God wants.

**15:9** See 5:20. Since Christ's love for His people is like the Father's love for Him, we may be sure it is deep, true, everlasting, and indescribably wonderful.

"Remain in my love" – Jude 21. This obviously implies conscious, determined effort, a willing obedience to His commands. It means for believers to behave in such a way that He can justly demonstrate His love to them in their daily lives.

**15:10** See 14:15,21,23. Those who love Christ will obey His commands, and those who obey His commands will remain in His love. Here is a circle of love very meaningful to those inside it, but incomprehensible to those without. Believers are to settle down in this new dwelling place of God's love and get better and better acquainted with the Master of the house by doing what He says. Observe that Christ Himself remained in the Father's love by obedience. And believers will remain in His love in the same way. No doubt some believers are more obedient than others. Perhaps none are always completely obedient (Jam 3:2), and none completely disobedient. The extent to which they are obedient will affect how much they will consciously experience and enjoy His love.

**15:11** Jesus was the "man of sorrows" (Isa 53:3). In the Gospels it is written that He wept (11:35; Luke 11:41), but never that He laughed. Did He have joy? Certainly – a deep inner joy that had nothing to do with outward circumstances (17:13; Luke 10:21). It was a joy that came from perfect obedience to God's will (compare 4:34). This joy He wants all of His people to experience. And obedience is the only way to experience it. What joy can there be if our consciences are always condemning us for disobedience?

**15:12** See 13:34. Repeated for emphasis.

**15:13** He is speaking of what He Himself was about to do. See 10:11,17,18. He died also for His enemies (Rom 5:6-10), but that is not the point here. He is speaking to His friends and saying that the greatest proof

of His love to them is the laying down of His life. See also 1 John 3:16.

**15:14** God incarnate looks for friends. Here He defines what true friendship with Himself means – obedience. In other words, this friendship is not among equals – one is the Lord from heaven, the others are mere men called to follow Him. Rebellion, disobedience and refusal to obey are not marks of friendship but of enmity against God. In the kind of friendship Jesus speaks of there must be oneness of mind, heart, and purpose.

**15:15** Christ's disciples are not like ignorant slaves who must obey, but knowledgeable friends who want to obey. See here that Christ again states that His teachings were a direct revelation from God the Father – 7:16,17; 12:49; 17:6-8.

**15:16** "I have chosen" – see Mark 1:16-20; 2:14; 3:13,14. Compare Eph 1:4. But the disciples showed their willingness to be chosen.

"Your fruit should remain" – this is what all true servants of God want. Compare Ps 90:17. Fruit produced under Christ's direction and in Christ will last forever.

"My name" – 14:13,14.

**15:17** Verse 12; 13:34. Repeated again for further emphasis.

**15:18,19** "World" – this is the unbelieving world which does not obey the true God. See 1 John 2:16; 5:19. That world is in darkness and wishes to remain there.

"Hates you" – Christ's disciples carry Christ's light which the world strongly objects to (see 3:19,20; Matt 5:14). They belong to God, not to the world. Sin at its heart is hatred of the one true and holy God, and all those connected with Him. So it is not surprising that the world will be unfriendly and antagonistic to Christ's disciples. It would be surprising if it were not so. Compare Ps 37:12; Prov 29:27; Amos 5:10; 1 John 3:12. A world that hates God and His Son will not love God's own people. If we say we are Christ's followers and the world loves us we should be alarmed, for this is evidence that we do not really belong to Christ but to the world. But if we are hated by the world because we belong to Christ we should count it an honor (1 Pet 4:14-16). And we should know that the very reason the world hates

world would love its own. But you do not belong to the world. I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

20 "Remember the word I spoke to you, 'The servant is not greater than his lord.' If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. 21 But they will do all these things to you for my name's sake, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He who hates me hates my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them deeds

which no other man did, they would not have sin. But now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this happens that the word that is written in their Law might be fulfilled, 'They hated me without a cause.'

26 "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes out from the Father, he will testify about me. 27 And you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.

**16** "I have said these things to you so that you will not stumble. 2 They will put you

us is the reason God especially loves us.

**15:20** See 13:16. Christ's servants have no right to expect better treatment than Christ had to endure (1 Pet 4:1). The world will sometimes show its hatred by persecuting God's people. But some individuals in the world will receive Christ's teaching. We see both of these truths fully illustrated in the book of Acts.

**15:21** The world has gods and lords in abundance, but does not know the one true God (8:19,55; 16:3; Acts 17:22,23; 1 Cor 1:21; Eph 4:18). This ignorance is not the same as the ignorance spoken of by Advaita Vedanta. That teaches that man's spirit and God's Spirit are one and the same, and that ignorance of this keeps men in bondage, and knowledge of it liberates them. This whole idea is completely opposed to the teaching of the Bible. See also 10:30; etc.

**15:22** "They would not have sin" – whether Christ had come or not men would have been sinners (Rom 3:9-19,23; 5:12). And certainly the Jews who rejected Him were full of sin (8:24,40,44; Matt 23:3,13-15,25,28,32-36). The meaning seems to be this: such sins as the Jews were guilty of, God in mercy could have passed over (Rom 3:25), if they had not committed the sin of rejecting His Son. To reject Christ is to reject the only way of forgiveness. He is speaking here of the Jewish nation which was God's special people (Deut 7:6). God had appointed sacrifices by which He could pass over their sin and forgive them (Leviticus chapters 1-7). But the sin He could not pass over was the willful rejection of Himself (Lev 26:18,21,23, etc; Num 15:30,31; Deut 30:15-20). Christ's coming to them revealed their character as nothing else could have done. Their love of darkness and their hatred of God were made very clear (3:19,20). Their cloak of religion could not conceal their evil. They could not offer the excuse that they didn't know what they were doing. Let us learn that rejecting light is a very dangerous thing. Compare Prov 1:24-31; Luke 12:47,48.

**15:23** Again He speaks of the absolute oneness of God the Father and the only Son of God – 10:30; 13:20; 14:9,10. The person who loves and serves the one, loves and serves the other. The person who rejects and

hates the one, rejects and hates the other. **15:24** Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament did mighty miracles but none had done what Jesus did – giving sight to the blind, feeding great multitudes with a handful of food, raising a man who had been dead four days, etc. The Jews rejected Him in the face of great evidence that He was the Son of God from heaven (5:31-40). This was the one sin that made it impossible for God to forgive the rest of their sins. The hatred of God, that often lies unrevealed in the sinful heart of men (Rom 8:7), in their case was brought out into the open.

**15:25** Ps 35:19; 69:4. He did nothing to injure them. His mission was to save men and bring them into God's eternal blessing. Who ever has good reason to reject and hate the Lord Jesus Christ?

**15:26** "Comforter" – 14:16,17.

"I will send" – this is further evidence that Christ is God. Who but God could send the Spirit of God? Observe the Trinity in this verse. Compare 14:26. Notes at Matt 3:16; etc.

"Testify" – 16:14; Rom 8:16; 1 John 5:6. The Spirit testifies silently in the minds, hearts, and consciences of people. Also He works with and in human witnesses who speak aloud and He makes their testimony effective (see Matt 10:20; 1 Pet 1:12).

**15:27** "You also will testify" – this is one of the chief reasons why Christ chose His disciples and left them in the world. See the fulfillment in the book of Acts (Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39,41; 13:31). They were not to be afraid of the hatred and persecution He spoke of here in vs 18-21. From the beginning they saw all that He did and heard all that He said. They were completely qualified witnesses. Compare Acts 1:21,22; 2 Pet 1:16-18. Here in this chapter we see the privilege and responsibility of Christ's disciples in three different relationships – they were to remain in Christ (v 4), love one another (v 12), and witness to the world (v 27).

**16:1** He told them what to expect so that they would not be surprised and stumble in their faith when trouble came. Compare v 33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 4:1. These warnings are for us as well.

**16:2** See 9:22; 12:42. "Synagogue" – Matt

out of the synagogues. Yes, the time is coming when whoever kills you will think that he is doing God a service. 3 And they will do these things to you because they have not known the Father or me. 4 But I have told you these things so that when the time comes, you can remember that I told you about them. And I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 "But now I am going away to him who sent me, and none of you ask me, 'Where are you going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless

4:32. Is it possible for religious people to consider murder of Christ's servants a service to God? Can it be that people's thoughts become so twisted? Yes, indeed. And the Jewish leaders did just what Jesus said they would do. See Matt 23:34; Acts 7:54-60; 8:3 with 26:9-11; 14:19. Have not other people also done the same thing many times since then? They have, and are still doing it.

**16:3** Here is the root cause of many crimes committed in the name of religion - ignorance of the one true God. See 8:19,41-44; 15:21. Many people think they know God though they do not, and some will defend their views of God even to the extent of killing those who tell them the truth and oppose their false views. In this way they think they are serving God! See Jer 17:9; Matt 15:19; Titus 1:16.

**16:4** While He was with them, men directed their anger and hatred against Him. After He returned to heaven that anger and hatred would come against His disciples.

**16:5** Peter had used the words "where are you going?" (13:36), but he was only expressing surprise that Jesus was going anywhere at all. His question was not a serious inquiry about where Jesus was going; he (like the others) was only upset at the thought of parting from Jesus (v 6).

**16:7** Could anything be better than to have the physical presence of Christ with us? His disciples would have said "No!" but He says "Yes!" The reason? If Christ had not died, risen again, and ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit (the Comforter - 14:26) would not have come to live in them and to anoint them with power for the work they had to do. Compare 7:39. Christ's Spirit in them was better than His physical presence with them. Why He could not grant them the Spirit in that way before He went away He does not say. Enough for us to know that this was God's plan and appointment. It seems likely that He wanted it to be clear to all that the giving of the Spirit was based on His death, resurrection and exaltation.

**16:8** Jesus gives this as a further reason why it was better for Him to go away. The Spirit would come and do a work of convincing men throughout the world, and not merely in the little corner of the world

I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. But if I go away, I will send him to you.

8 "And when he has come, he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; 9 of sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However when he,

where Jesus in the body had His ministry. He would teach them the truth about sin and righteousness and judgment, and rebuke them for their false views of these matters. And He would convince the world that the views of the Jews about Jesus were totally false and that Christ and His work were very different from what they thought. A result of the Spirit's convicting work is seen in Acts 2:37.

**16:9** The Holy Spirit would convince men everywhere that those who in unbelief rejected and crucified Christ had committed a huge sin. Further, He convinces individuals that for anyone anywhere to willfully refuse to believe Him has its roots in sin and is of the essence of sin. In the Bible unbelief is everywhere shown to be worthy of condemnation and punishment (3:18,36; 8:24; Mark 16:14,16; 2 Thess 1:8; 2:12; Heb 3:12,18; 4:11; 11:31; Jude 5; Rev 21:8). But only the Holy Spirit can convince men of this.

**16:10** The meaning seems to be this: after Christ ascended into heaven the Holy Spirit would convince men that Christ was no deceiver, no blasphemer (as the Jews charged), but an absolutely righteous person. Compare Acts 3:14,15. Further, He would convince men of their own need of righteousness, and that through the cross God had provided a way to make men righteous (see Rom 3:21-26).

**16:11** "Ruler of this world" - Satan - note at 12:31. The cross of Christ was a judgment on sin, a condemnation of it wherever it is found. Sin is so terrible that it required the death of the Son of God to free men from it. Satan (the ruler of this world) is the embodiment of sin. He promotes it and rules men through it. With the judgment of sin on the cross Satan and all he stands for was openly condemned. This shows that God will judge all who remain in sin, who side with Satan against Him. On judgment see Matt 10:15; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:2,16; 14:10; 2 Pet 2:9; Rev 14:7; 20:11-15.

**16:12** Christ leads His people step by step into the deep truth of God. He does not tell them all the truth at once because they cannot take it all in. The disciples often revealed their inability to grasp all that Christ told them when He was on earth.

**16:13** See 14:17,26. The Holy Spirit taught

the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears. And he will show you things to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take from what is mine and show *it* to you. 15 All things that the Father has are mine. Therefore I say that he will take from what is mine and make *it* known to you. 16 In a little while you will not see me, and then, in a little while you will see me, because I am going to the Father."

17 Then *some* of his disciples said among themselves, "What is this that he is saying to us, 'In a little while you will not see me, and then, in a little while you will see me,' and, 'Because I am going to the Father'?" 18 So they said, "What is this that he is saying, 'In a little while'? We don't know what he is saying."

19 Now Jesus, knowing that they wanted to ask him, said to them, "Are you asking among

yourselves about what I said, 'In a little while you will not see me, and then, in a little while you will see me'? 20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice, and you will be pained, but your pain will be turned to joy. 21 A woman when she is giving birth has pain, because her time has come. But when she has brought forth the child, she no longer remembers the suffering, for joy that a man has been born into the world. 22 And so you now have pain. But I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no man will take your joy from you.

23 "And in that day you will ask me nothing. Truly, truly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* to you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. 25 I have said these things to you in figurative language. But the time is coming when I will no

the disciples all the truth of God and His kingdom that God wanted His people to know. The New Testament is the revelation of this truth. Now the Spirit uses the Word of God and teaches individual believers the truth that has been once and for all revealed. He lives in them and enlightens their minds (1 John 2:27; Eph 1:17,18). With a promise like this every believer should seek the enlightenment which God's Spirit gives, and depend on the Spirit to teach him. On God as teacher see notes at Ps 25:3,4; etc.

"Things to come" – the Holy Spirit knows the future and revealed to them those things in the future which God wanted His people to know. And they wrote them down for us in their letters and in the book of the Revelation.

**16:14** See 15:26. Any teaching which does not glorify the Lord Jesus is not of God. This is one way we can judge any religious teaching. The Spirit will make the things of Christ real to Christ's disciples. Compare 1 Cor 2:9-16.

**16:15** The Lord Jesus did not mean that the Spirit would not reveal anything about God the Father. To speak of the things which belong to Him is the same as speaking about the things which belong to the Father – they are the same things. See 17:10. Observe the Trinity in this verse. See Matt 3:16,17.

**16:16** There seem to be two possible meanings here. The Lord Jesus would die and be concealed from them in the tomb. On the third day He would rise and appear to them again. This was certainly true. But perhaps He was referring to His ascension into heaven after which His disciples would see Him no more until His second coming when they would see Him again. The words in v 10 seem evidence for this second view. It is probable that in the verses which follow Jesus meant both things. He had a message here for the disciples before His

death on the cross, and a message for all believers now awaiting His coming.

**16:17** Verse 10.

**16:18** What became clear after Christ's death and resurrection was obscure and perplexing before.

**16:20** The death of Christ was a deep grief to His friends, but a joy to His enemies.

**16:21,22** The days following the death of Christ were like the birth of a new age. The disciples would see it and see Him and be glad. They would have the joy He gave them and have it permanently (15:11; 20:20; Luke 24:52; Rom 14:17). There is a sense in which this applies to believers now as they wait for the return of Christ from heaven. His second coming too will be like the birth of a new age. See Matt 24:8; Rom 8:19-22. Compared to the joy that believers will know then their time here on earth, while the Lord is in heaven, is like sorrow. See Matt 9:15; Rom 8:18,23; 2 Cor 4:17; 6:10; 1 Pet 1:6; Ps 42:1-3.

**16:23** Jesus taught them many truths after His resurrection and enabled them to understand the Old Testament (Luke 24:44, 45; Acts 1:3). If there is a message here for believers now it is that when Christ comes again everything that has troubled and perplexed them will be made clear. Compare 1 Cor 13:12.

"In my name" – note at 14:14.

**16:24** See 14:13,14. Up until then the disciples had asked Christ directly or else prayed directly to God without using Christ's authority or without considering Him as a mediator. Now through Christ believers have the great joy that comes because God answers their prayers. It is one of the ways they experience His reality and know His grace and love.

**16:25** He meant that after His resurrection He would teach them about God the Father. This is a work that was a delight to Him then and still is, one great work He came to do



longer speak to you in figurative language but will tell you clearly about the Father. 26 At that time you will ask in my name, and I do not tell you that I will ask the Father for you, 27 for the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father and entered the world. Now I am leaving the world and going to the Father."

29 His disciples said to him, "See, now you are speaking clearly and not speaking in figurative language. 30 Now we are sure that you know all things and do not need any man to ask you *anything*. Because of this we believe

that you came from God."

31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 Look, the time is coming, yes, has already come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave me all alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 "These things I have told you so that in me you might have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world."

**17** Jesus spoke these words, raised his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has

(1:18; Matt 11:27).

**16:26** The meaning seems to be this: it would not be necessary for Him to repeat their requests to God the Father. Praying directly to the Father in His name would be sufficient for them. Of course He was not denying that He would make intercession for them about other matters. See Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25.

**16:27** "The Father himself loves you because you have loved me" – this refers to the special "family" love that God has for His people (14:21). Through their faith in Christ believers become the children of God (1:12,13). Jesus is saying here that such may go directly to God and know that God will hear them. Compare Heb 10:19-22. Since believers do not need even Christ Himself to present their requests to God, it is absolutely certain that they need no one else. God is a loving Father to them and gladly gives them all they need when they come directly to Him (Matt 7:11; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19). No saint, no person of any kind living or dead is needed to persuade God the Father to be kind to His people or to hear their prayers. See also 14:13 and note.

**16:28-30** The Lord Jesus had said before this that the Father had sent Him, that He was going to the Father, and that He was not of this world (5:36; 6:38; 8:23; 14:28). For some reason His disciples did not fully understand what He had said, though they believed Jesus had come from God (v 27). Here the truth strikes their minds with more power.

**16:31,32** "Will leave me" – Jesus well knew that their faith was still feeble and that they were weak. That same night they fulfilled His words (Matt 26:31,56; Mark 14:50). But though they forsook Him He did not forsake them. As always He went on loving them and praying for them. Compare Matt 12:20; Luke 22:31,32. Afterwards He restored them and went on teaching them and helping them to grow. He was most clearly the good Shepherd (10:11) when they most clearly showed themselves to be bad sheep. His love and care for His people now will be no less.

**16:33** "These things" – all that He has been saying from 14:1 onwards.

"Peace" – 14:27. Observe where peace is found. He said "in me." Nowhere else is

permanent peace obtainable.

"Tribulation" – He tells them plainly that the life of discipleship is not one of ease and pleasure and success in this world. Christ never promised any of His believers that they would escape tribulation or distress. He warned them of persecution and death for His sake. See 15:18-21; 16:1-4. His faithful servants must follow Him in this and preach the same truth as He did. Compare Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3,4.

"Take courage" – they were to be encouraged, confident, and fearless because of two things: in the midst of trouble they could have peace, and they could know that the final victory belonged to Christ and to them in Christ. Trouble in the world would give way to eternal glory (2 Cor 4:17).

"The world" – He knew that the very next day He would be condemned to death and crucified. Yet He makes a statement like this. It is plainly the word of one who knew He had come from heaven and was going to heaven, and that His death for sinners was not defeat but the foundation for His victory over the world of darkness and evil. Compare Phil 2:8-11; Col 2:15.

**17:1** Here we see God the Son on earth as a man (1:14) praying to God the Father in heaven. But v 5 makes it clear that He is speaking as the eternal Son of God. He is a person distinct from the Father, as this whole prayer makes abundantly clear. See also Matt 3:16,17 and Phil 2:6. This prayer is one of the very great and profound chapters in the Bible, perhaps the most remarkable and blessed of all. Jesus prayed as the God-man, as the one Mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), as the great High Priest of His people (Heb 4:14-16; 7:24,25). In this prayer He makes request only for Himself (vs 1, 5), and for believers in Him, not for others (vs 9, 20). He asks only one thing for Himself. For believers He asks for everything they need to insure their salvation and eternal blessedness.

First, He prays that God the Father will keep them (vs 11-16).

Second, He prays that the Father will sanctify them (vs 17-19).

Third, He prays that they might be



come. Glorify your Son so that your Son may also glorify you, 2 as you have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

perfectly united with Himself and with each other (vs 21-23).

Fourth, He prays that they might all be brought to heaven at last to see His glory (v 24).

Christ prays only in accordance with God's will, and so God the Father grants all these requests of His Son (see 11:24; 1 John 5:14,15). He prayed that believers might understand that the things He requested for them are theirs and be filled with joy (v 13).

This is the only recorded prayer of any length we have of His in the New Testament. Here we see the matters which are closest to His heart. In this way He teaches us something of what we might pray for when we think of the people of God (though, of course, being mere human beings none of us can use all the language of this prayer). The things He desired for them we should desire.

"The hour has come" – 7:30; 12:23.

"Glorify" – the only thing He asks for Himself. In v 5 He reveals more of what He meant by it. He wished to enter again into the glory that was His before the universe was created, the honor and position and state He laid aside when He came to earth (see Phil 2:5-7; 2 Cor 8:9). He was asking God to raise Him after His death and exalt Him to God's right hand in the glory of heaven. Or we could interpret this in another way: To glorify means to exalt, honor, make one known as great. So Jesus requested the Father to make people on earth aware of His true nature – that He was God incarnate, the Saviour of the world. This was not a selfish grasping after glory and honor (see again Phil 2:5-7). There were very important reasons why Christ asked the Father to glorify Him.

First, the time for it had come. The next day He was to die. It was God's appointed plan that He should leave His glory in heaven and after suffering and dying for sinners should re-enter His glory (Luke 24:26).

Second, He wanted the Father to glorify Him that He might glorify the Father. He was not thinking of His own glory for His own sake. In fact, He would never have considered any glory for Himself whatever if it did not bring glory to the Father (7:18; 8:50). But it would bring no honor to the Father if the enemies of the Son triumphed and death held Him in the grave.

Third, He needed to be glorified to exercise the authority God had given Him and to accomplish His work – v 2.

This He could not do unless He was raised from death to God's right hand. So He wanted to be glorified not merely for the

4 "I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was.

6 "I have revealed your name to the men whom

Father's sake, but for the sake of all believers. These three things are closely tied together – God's glory, Christ's glory, and the good of God's people.

**17:2** "Authority" – or "power" – 3:35; Matt 28:18. See the purpose of His authority (to give eternal life to believers – 3:16; 5:21; 6:40). See what immense authority the Lord Jesus has in this world. He can so arrange circumstances in and among the nations of the world, and so work in the minds and hearts of people that the result will be that all the Father has given Him will infallibly receive eternal life.

**17:3** "Eternal life" – 3:16. This is the only time He defined it. It is to know the only true God.

This knowledge of God no one has by nature (see notes at 15:21; 16:3; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 4:17,18). In giving people the gift of eternal life the Lord Jesus enables them to know both God the Father and Himself (compare Matt 11:27. See John 8:19 where He links knowing God with knowing Himself). Eternal life is much more than merely living forever. It means a quality of life – a life in communion with God, knowing God, trusting Him, obeying Him, honoring Him, loving Him, serving Him forever (compare Rev 21:3; 22:3-5). This knowledge of God is direct, a knowledge of enlightenment and experience (2 Cor 4:6).

"Only true God" – Jesus is not excluding Himself and the Holy Spirit; He is excluding all false gods, all idols made by men (see Ps 115:3-8; Isa 44:6,8; 45:18). In fact, He includes Himself when He says that eternal life is knowing Him just the same as knowing God (see 8:19; 14:8,9). Eternal life is in Jesus (1 John 5:11) – indeed, it *is* Jesus (11:25; 14:6; 1 John 5:20). And we must know Him to have this life. Spiritual knowledge lies at the heart of true Christianity – Eph 4:17,18; 2 Pet 1:3; 3:18. This knowledge Jesus speaks of is nothing like the so-called knowledge that Advaita Vedanta speaks of. See note at 15:21; etc. Those who really know the one true God know themselves to be but men, creations of God, infinitely below God in every way.

**17:4** His purpose was always to glorify God the Father, and this purpose He fulfilled (4:34; 7:18; 8:29).

**17:5** Here is a clear declaration by Jesus Himself that He lived before the universe came into being, and a plain statement that He is a person distinct from the Father. See also 1:1-3; Micah 5:2. God answered this prayer of His Son. See Acts 2:32,33; 3:13-15; Phil 2:9-11.

**17:6** In vs 6-10 He says eight things about His people and adds three more in vs 14,18.

you gave me out of the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me. And they have kept your word. 7 Now they have come to know that all things which you have given me are from you. 8 For I have given to them the words which you gave me, and they have received *them* and have known with certainty that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.

9 "I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10 And all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep through your own name those whom you have given me, so that they may be one, as we *are*.

All these things are good and all are true of all believers. He does not speak of their sin and failure, the smallness of their faith, their only partial obedience. He does not accuse His people to His Father, He defends them (Rom 8:33,34; 1 John 2:1). He takes the highest possible view of them and presents them to His Father in the best possible light.

"I have revealed your name" – 1:18; Matt 11:27. "Name" indicates nature and attributes. See Ex 34:6,7. Jesus revealed what God is, not merely by words, but in His life and actions.

"Whom you gave me" – He is speaking of those who had believed in Him. God chose them out of the world. Believers are not better by nature than others. They are all from the fallen race of humanity. There was nothing holy or good about them that caused God to choose them (see Rom 3:9,19; Eph 2:1-3). But God called them to leave the world and to follow Christ to the world above (Gal 1:3). They are no longer "of the world" (v 14; Phil 3:20). At first they belonged to God the Father. In a sense all people belong to God for He created them (compare Ezek 18:4). But believers belong to God in a special sense – Acts 18:10; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:2 (compare Ex 19:4-6; Deut 7:6). He chose them before the world came into existence. God gave all of them to the Lord Jesus. Believers are God's gift of love to His Son, a special treasure He gave Him to keep and delight in. Will He not then keep every one of them until all are safe in heaven? The Bible indicates that He will – see vs 11,12; 10:28; etc.

He says believers "obeyed" God's word. They listened to Christ's words which were the very words of God, and they obeyed them. They were not perfect and did not perfectly keep God's word. But the desire and tendency of their lives was to keep it, and Christ, overlooking their failures, says they did keep it. This is true of all believers. What about those who say they are believers yet who do not obey His word? They are not true believers (see 8:31,47; 10:26,27; Matt 7:21; 1 John 2:3,4).

**17:7,8** These two verses give us more facts about all believers – they know certain truth, receive it and believe it. They know that God has sent Jesus and was behind all that Jesus did and said. And they gladly accepted the words Christ gave them from the Father. They knew that Jesus Christ is the absolute authority for all they believed. Observe the plural – "words" – in v 8. See also 12:49,50.

Compare Matt 4:4.

**17:9** Here is a seventh truth about believers – Christ makes them a very special matter of prayer. He did not (and, in the very nature of the case, He cannot) pray for the world of unbelievers as He prays for them.

**17:10** Here is an eighth truth about believers – Christ is glorified through them. His love and mercy are glorified in dying for them. His power and grace are glorified in saving and changing them. His patience is glorified in bearing with them. His name is glorified by their witness in the world, etc. They are weak and sinful but still Christ is glorified through them. This is one great purpose God had in choosing them – Eph 1:5,6,12. Through believers glory comes to both the Father and the Son. We should be conscious of this truth and gladly set out to promote their glory in everything (1 Cor 10:31).

**17:11** God gave His own "name" to Jesus (compare 5:26,27). God granted that the nature, power, and authority of God should dwell in His human body (Col 2:9). In this verse we have the first request Jesus made for believers. It is repeated in different words in v 15. He asks God to protect them, to keep them from evil, so that they be not lost as Judas Iscariot was (v 12).

One reason why God needs to keep believers is seen here – they are still "in the world". God chose them "out of" the world (v 6), and they are not "of" the world (v 14), but they are still "in" it, and the world still hates them (v 14). The world is full of temptations, deceiving spirits, and dangers (1 Pet 5:8). It is opposed to truth, faith, love of God and all else precious to believers. See 1 John 5:19. Spiritually speaking it is a dark and dirty place and it is easy to get defiled in it and lose one's way. And believers themselves are often weak and foolish, and struggle with their own sinful natures (Rom 7:18; Gal 5:17; 1 John 1:8) – there is something in them which would betray them to the world and the devil. How, then, can believers be safe?

There is perfect safety because God in answer to the prayers of His Son keeps them – see Luke 22:31; Rom 5:10; Heb 7:25. His almighty power is at work for them – 1 Pet 1:4,5; Prov 18:10. He has begun a good work in them, and will finish it – Phil 1:6. Jesus the Son works with the Father in keeping believers, and it is the absolute will of God that the Lord Jesus keep them (6:39). Will He fail to do God's will in this? Compare 4:34. Believers are sheep put in

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. I have kept those whom you gave me, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

13 "And now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world, so that they might have my joy in them to the full. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them,

His care. Will He not preserve them? See 10:28. He prays for them continually. Will His prayers not be heard? See 11:42. The answer to the prayers of Christ are not based on the good behavior of believers, or on their continuing in faith. The opposite of this is true – their good behavior and continuing in faith are dependent on His prayers.

**17:12** While on earth the Lord Jesus kept all His believers. He did not keep them from weakness, foolishness, temptations and trials, nor even from all sin (see 18:10,11; 19:25; Luke 22:24,31,32; 24:25; Matt 16:22,23; 26:69-75). But even when they were grievously failing, Jesus was keeping them. He kept them in a state of salvation in spite of their sin. He kept them believing in Him in spite of their weak faith and occasional unbelief. Now Jesus asks God the Father to keep them as He Himself had kept them. Did Jesus fail to keep Judas Iscariot "the son of perdition"? Was there an exception in His keeping of believers? No. Jesus is not saying that God had saved Judas and given Judas to Him and He had lost him.

To make clearer the meaning here perhaps we could translate this last sentence like this: "None of them has been lost. But the son of perdition *has been lost* so that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Not one of those God gave to Jesus was lost. But one who was among them and counted as one of them was lost. See vs 6-10 for a description of true believers, the kind of people God gave to Jesus. Judas does not fit that description. From the beginning Judas' character made him worthy of destruction. See 6:64,70 where it is clear that Judas was not a believer.

"Son of perdition" – the Greek word translated "perdition" means "destruction" or "utter ruin" or "lostness." "Son of" was the way the Jews spoke to indicate the character of a person, or the destiny of a person. A son of destruction is a man whose character is destructive, a man tied to destruction, and prepared for it (compare Rom 9:22,23). A "son" of destruction is surely not a "son" of God. Judas was not saved and then lost, was not a true believer who became an evil man and betrayer of Jesus. There is no proof that he was ever a true believer – all the evidence points to the opposite of this. And Jesus does not keep all who say they are believers or seem to be believers, but only those who really are believers.

"Fulfilled" – see 13:18; Ps 41:9; 109:4-

because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

15 "I am not praying that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil *one*. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them through your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, even so

13; Zech 11:12,13.

**17:13** "Joy" – 15:11; Luke 10:21. This prayer of Jesus rightly understood brings great joy to the hearts of believers. We should have the same joy and confidence Paul revealed in 2 Tim 1:12; 4:18.

**17:14** See 15:18,19. Both the Lord Jesus and His believers belong to the kingdom of God, to the world above, to heaven, not to this world (Phil 3:20).

**17:15** Why does He want believers to be left in the world? See v 18; 15:27; 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Pet 1:7; 2:9.

"Keep" – v 11.

**17:17-19** Here is the second request the Lord Jesus makes for believers. The Greek word here translated "sanctify" has a very wide meaning. Basically it means "to set apart," usually for a good purpose or religious use. It means the same as the Hebrew word translated "sanctify" or "make holy" in the Old Testament (see note at Lev 20:7). It came to mean also "dedicate" or "consecrate", and then "to purify", "to make holy". In what sense did the Lord Jesus use the word here? He may have meant all these, but probably the principal meaning of this prayer for believers is that God would dedicate or consecrate them, set them apart for Himself and His work on earth. This meaning is clearly the one in v 19 (see also 10:36). Jesus did not need to be purified and made holy, but He consecrated Himself to do God's will on earth. And He prayed that God would consecrate believers in this same way. See the words of 15:3 – the disciples were already "clean" before Jesus prayed this prayer for them.

It is true that if believers are to be equipped to do the will of God they need to be purified in their thoughts and motives. So it may be that Jesus was asking for that too for them. But it seems the principal meaning here is this: Christ was praying that His Church as a whole, the body of believers of which He is the Head (Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18) be consecrated by God to be His holy people (1 Pet 2:9). Here in vs 17-19 we can learn seven things about this sanctification.

First, it is something God does in answer to the prayer of Christ. So He infallibly does it (11:42). The answer can be seen later in verses like Jude 1 and 1 Cor 1:2.

Second, it is something God does for all His children (v 20), not for just a select few. If God hears Christ's prayer for some believers He hears it for all of them. If He answers and sanctifies some, then He

I have also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 "I am praying not only for these, but also for those who will believe in me through their words,

sanctifies all.

Third, the sanctification of believers is a result of Christ sanctifying Himself (v 19). Christ consecrated Himself to be the sacrifice to take away sin (1:29). Because of that believers are sanctified, set apart, consecrated to God. See Heb 10:10; 13:12. For an Old Testament illustration see Lev 8:10-15,30.

Fourth, the sanctification of believers is something like the sanctification of Christ (v 19). When did Jesus sanctify Himself? See 10:36-38; Heb 10:5-7. When are believers sanctified? When they are united to Christ by faith to become God's temple on earth (Eph 2:21; 1 Cor 3:16).

Fifth, the sanctification of believers has to do with the mission of the church to the world (v 18; 20:21). They are called out of the world (v 6) and are not of the world (v 14), but God sanctifies them to send them back into the world.

Sixth, sanctification is a work God does "by" or "in" (the Greek can mean either) the truth. Notice here what truth is. It is God's Word. And where is God's Word to be found? Only in the Bible. Truth is the means God uses to sanctify believers and it is the sphere in which they live. For references and notes on the inner purity and holiness Christ desires for us see Matt 5:8; Rom 6:11-14; 8:12,13; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:22-24; 5:1-7; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:14-16,22; 1 John 3:3.

Seventh, the sanctification which Christ requested for believers is absolutely essential. If it were not, Christ would not have prayed as He did. He prayed only for those things God wills for believers.

**17:20** The Lord Jesus prayed in advance for all believers in all generations. He desired the same things for us now as for His disciples then.

**17:21-23** Verse 11. Here is the third request He made for all true believers – oneness. In vs 20-23 we learn the following things about it.

First, it is a oneness that God gives in answer to Christ's prayer (11:42). It is not something men create or that church leaders can establish, and Christ has not asked them to do so.

Second, it is a oneness of a certain kind of people only – true believers, those described in vs 6-10. So it is not an organizational unity that men create and which includes multitudes of nominal Christians to be found in churches in every country.

Third, it is a oneness of all believers without exception, whatever generation they may live in, whatever church they may belong to, whatever their country or race (v 21 – "all").

21 so that they all may be one; as you, Father, *are* in me and I *am* in you, that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.

22 "And the glory which you gave me I have

Fourth, this oneness in some ways is like the oneness of God the Father and the Son (v 21). That is, it is a perfect union, a oneness of life.

Fifth, this oneness is actually *in* the Father and the Son. Obviously this is something far different from organizational unity, and far superior to it. As God was in Christ and Christ in God, so all believers are in them (v 21. See 1 Thess 1:1; Rom 6:5). This is the only kind of oneness Christ prayed for here.

Sixth, this oneness comes about only because Christ is in them (v 23). Believers are joined eternally with Him and with each other. If He is not in them there is nothing men can do to produce the oneness He prayed for. If He is in them there is nothing they need to do to bring it about.

Seventh, this oneness is perfect (v 23).

Eighth, this oneness is connected with the glory Christ has given them (v 22). He does not define this glory, but it may mean the glory of being God's children and His representatives on earth. Or it may mean the glory that is theirs because they are in Christ the glorified One (v 1,5. See also Eph 2:5,6; Col 3:3,4). The fact that Christ has chosen believers for glory in Him makes them one. For God's answer to this prayer see 1 Cor 12:12,13 (see also 1 Cor 6:15,17; Rom 12:5; Eph 1:22; 4:15,16; 5:29-32). The Holy Spirit came and baptized all believers into the spiritual body of Christ and made them one with Him and with each other. Each time an individual believes, Christ's prayer is answered again – the Holy Spirit still unites every believer to Christ and His spiritual body, the true Church of the living God. This oneness is a fact which men can recognize but cannot create, improve on, or destroy.

Ninth, this oneness produces certain results (vs 21,23). "That the world may believe. . . that the world may know" – many people think this has not been the result of the oneness God has created for believers and demand another kind of unity – a unity of all Christians in one Church organization with one earthly head. But there has been a progressive fulfillment of Christ's prayer and desire. When He uttered these words the world outside Israel had heard almost nothing about Him. In one generation His disciples spread the good news all over the Roman Empire and to other places in the world, and multitudes had believed. The process is still going on today wherever Christ's believers stand together to preach the truth. And the end is not yet. At His coming all that He wants the world to know will be fully revealed. It is certain that if the union of all believers in the spiritual body

given them, so that they may be one, just as we are one; 23 I in them and you in me, so that they may be made perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me, and have loved them just as you have loved me.

24 "Father, I desire that those whom you have given me, also be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory which you gave me. For you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25 "Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have come to know that you sent me. 26 And I have made our name known to them, and will make *it* known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

**18** When Jesus had spoken these words, he went away with his disciples over the Kidron valley. A garden was there, which he and his disciples entered. 2 And Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often went there with his disciples. 3 Judas then, taking a group *of men*, and officers from

of Christ has not produced the result He wanted, no union of believers and unbelievers in one super church organization will accomplish it.

Tenth, believers should recognize this oneness they possess and manifest it. This truth is only implied here but taught elsewhere. See Eph 4:1-6.

**17:23** God loves believers as much as He loves Christ, the Son of God! Compare Rom 5:8; Eph 2:4; 1 John 3:1,16.

**17:24** Here is the fourth request Christ makes for believers. He asks God to make sure that all believers get safely into His presence, to have the vision of His glory. This prayer will certainly be answered as all of Christ's other prayers are answered. Christ's prayers were not mere expressions of hope which may or may not be realized. "Glory" is the final step in the process of their salvation, and because He prayed for it, and because they are united to Him who is glorified, God counts it as already accomplished. Compare Rom 8:29,30; Eph 2:6. See in this verse that God the Father loved Christ the Son before the creation of the world. Again we see a distinction between Father and Son, and the eternal love between them.

**17:25** Christ here utters two truths found everywhere in the Bible – God is absolutely righteous, and men in general do not know Him (1:10; 8:19,55; 15:21; 16:3).

**17:26** The fact of Christ's living in believers is linked with the revelation He gives them of God the Father. Without the one there will not be the other. On this revelation see v 6; Matt 11:27. Observe also that God's love for Christ is in believers (Rom 5:5; 2 Cor 5:14; 1 John 2:5; 4:12,16).

the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches and weapons.

4 Therefore Jesus, knowing everything that would come upon him, went out and said to them, "For whom are you looking?"

5 They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am." And Judas, who betrayed him, also stood with them.

6 Then as soon as he said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Then he asked them again, "Who are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am *he*. So if you are looking for me, let these go their way," 9 so that these words he spoke might be fulfilled: I have lost none of those whom you gave me.

10 Then Simon Peter drew the sword he had, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword in the scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given me?"

12 Then the group *of men*, the commander,

**18:1** The Kidron is a valley between the city of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives to the east of the city. The "garden" was the garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:36). For other events which took place there see Matt 26:36-46.

**18:3** Matt 26:47. The event described in Matt 26:48,49 happened either at this time or after Jesus' words in v 8.

**18:4** "Happen to him" – 3:14; 6:64; 13:1,3,11,18; Matt 16:21.

**18:5,6** He made no attempt to escape, but boldly confronted His enemies. He knew that His time had come (7:30; 17:1). And He was voluntarily laying down His life (10:17,18).

"I am" – see 8:24,58. Jesus is the great and eternal "I am" revealed in the Old Testament. See Exodus 3:14. Soldiers would not have fallen to the ground unless the power of God was present and caused them to do so. Jesus here demonstrated that He could easily have overcome His enemies and escaped if that had been His desire. Compare Matt 26:53 where He speaks of 12 legions of angels.

**18:8** In the time of His great trial His thoughts were for His disciples (compare 13:1).

**18:9** See 6:39; 17:12. There the meaning is to preserve them spiritually, to keep them from being lost. Here the meaning is that He kept them from physical danger and trial. But there is no contradiction. In the process of keeping His people from being spiritually lost He keeps them from facing trials and temptations too great for them to bear (compare 1 Cor 10:13).

**18:10** Matt 26:51-54.

**18:11** Matt 26:39,42.

**18:12,13** Only John records the fact that



and the Jewish officers seized Jesus, bound him, 13 and led him away first to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. 14 Now Caiaphas was the one who counselled the Jews that it would be good for one man to die for the people.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple. That disciple was known to the high priest, and he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. 16 But Peter stood outside at the door. Then that other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the girl on duty at the door, and brought Peter inside.

17 Then the girl on duty at the door said to Peter, "Aren't you also *one* of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not."

18 And the servants and officers stood there, having made a charcoal fire, for it was cold and they were warming themselves. And Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

19 The high priest then asked Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.

20 Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in the synagogue and in the temple, where the Jews always come, and I have said nothing in secret. 21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. Look, they know what I said."

22 And when he said this, one of the officers

who stood nearby slapped Jesus and said, "Do you answer the high priest like that?"

23 Jesus answered him, "If I spoke wrongly, testify about what is wrong, but if I spoke rightly, why do you strike me?"

24 Now Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Then they said to him, "Aren't you also *one* of his disciples?" He denied *it*, and said, "I am not."

26 One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of *the one* whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?"

27 Peter then denied *it* again, and immediately the rooster crowed.

28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor, and it was early morning. They themselves did not go into the palace, to keep from being defiled, so that they could eat the Passover.

29 Then Pilate went out to them, and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?"

30 They answered and said to him, "If he were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over to you."

31 Then Pilate said to them, "You take him and judge him according to your Law." Then the Jews said to him, "We are not allowed to put anyone to death".

32 So that the word of Jesus, which he spoke

they brought Jesus to Annas before taking Him on to Caiaphas (v 24). Annas had also been high priest (Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6).

**18:14** See 11:49-52.

**18:15** The Bible does not tell us who this other disciple was, but many Bible scholars believe he was John. See 20:2,3,4,8.

**18:17** See 13:38; Matt 26:69-75.

**18:19** He was trying to find something with which to accuse Jesus. The high priest was not conducting this enquiry according to Jewish law. According to that law witnesses for the defense of the accused should have been called first, then witnesses for the prosecution.

**18:20,21** Jesus meant that they should have proceeded according to the law and called witnesses. He had taught in public and many had heard Him. Even the things He said to His disciples privately were not secret things contrary to His public teaching.

**18:22** This too was illegal.

**18:23** The Lord Jesus is saying again that they (who claimed to uphold the law) should conduct the investigation according to the law.

**18:24** It is almost certain that Caiaphas was in another part of the same building. The building was the palace of the high priest (v 15).

**18:25-27** Matt 26:71-75.

**18:28** Matt 27:1,2.

"So they could eat the Passover" - Exodus chapter 12. See the hypocrisy of these Jews. They had plotted to kill the Son of God, and had acted contrary to their own law in an attempt to condemn Him. But here they were worried about ceremonially defiling themselves by entering the house of someone who was not a Jew (the Jews regarded Romans and all non-Jews and their houses "unclean." Compare Acts 10:28). This was more important in their eyes than the awful uncleanness that comes from sin in the heart (compare Matt 15:1,2,16-20; 23:25-28). There are many religious people today very much like them - zealous for ceremonies but careless about ethics and morals. See also Isa 1:11-17.

**18:29** "What accusation" - a reasonable question since they brought Jesus to Pilate for judgment.

**18:30** This was an unreasonable answer. See what these hypocrites called the Lord Jesus without the slightest evidence for it - "evildoer."

**18:31** The Romans, who ruled the country, permitted the Jews to judge certain kinds of cases, but not to crucify offenders. And these Jews wanted Jesus to die on a cross, condemned by the Romans.

**18:32** See 3:14; 8:28; 12:32,33.



to indicate what death he would die, might be fulfilled. 33 Then Pilate went back into the palace, called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

34 Jesus answered him, "Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you about me?"

35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own people and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight, so that I would not be delivered up to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here."

37 So Pilate said to him, "Are you a king, then?" Jesus answered, "You *rightly* say that I am a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, that I might testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth pays attention to my voice."

38 Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went back out to the Jews and said to them, "I find no fault *at all* in him. 39 But you have a custom that I should release to you one *prisoner* at the Passover. So do you want me to

release to you the King of the Jews?"

40 Then they all cried out again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber.

**19** So then Pilate took Jesus and *had him* whipped. 2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put *it* on his head. And they put on him a purple robe, 3 and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and they struck him with their hands.

4 Then Pilate went out again, and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no fault in him."

5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, "See the man!"

6 So when the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify *him*! Crucify *him*!" Pilate said to them, "You take him and crucify *him*, for I find no fault in him."

7 The Jews answered him, "We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that statement,

**18:33** The Jews accused Jesus of trying to set Himself up as a king and of rebelling against the Roman rule in Judea (see Luke 23:1,2). So this question.

**18:34** Jesus wanted Pilate to be more clear and specific in his question. Was Pilate asking whether Jesus was trying to be a worldly king with the purpose of overthrowing Roman rule, or some other kind of king?

**18:35** Pilate is saying he knows nothing except what the Jews have said to him. He does not want to accept their accusations without evidence and so questions Jesus.

**18:36** "My kingdom" – Jesus is saying that His kingdom is heavenly and spiritual and not political and military (note at Matt 4:17). As evidence He says that His followers did not prevent the Jews from arresting Him; and how could he be a political ruler of the Jews when it was the Jews who arrested Him?

"Now. . .not from here" – does not the word "now" suggest that things will be different at some time in the future? Compare Rev 19:11-16.

**18:37** As the king in God's spiritual kingdom Jesus sends forth the truth, not armies. He wants to conquer men's hearts and minds with spiritual power, not their lands with physical force. Everywhere in this Gospel there is this emphasis on truth (1:14,18; 3:21; 4:24; 8:32; 14:6,17; 16:13; 17:17). See what the Lord says here – everyone who wants the truth, loves the truth, and practices the truth, will listen to Christ and do what He says. Everyone. The opposite is, of course, true – they who do not want the truth will not listen to Him. Compare 8:47; 2 Thess 2:10.

**18:38** Pilate did not wait for an answer. And

there is no reason to think that he wanted an answer, or cared about the truth. That is the real tragedy of Pilate (and of many today also). Pilate knew very well there was no evidence that Jesus had committed any crime (19:4,6; Matt 27:18,23; Luke 23:4,13,14).

**18:39,40** See Matt 27:15-21; Luke 23:19.

**19:1** We see how much Pilate cared for truth – he ordered punishment for a person he knew was completely innocent.

**19:2,3** Matt 27:27-30.

**19:5** Pilate's purpose was to show how absurd it was to accuse Jesus of leading a rebellion against Rome. And so he tries to display Him as weak and helpless, more deserving of pity than condemnation and crucifixion.

**19:6** Nothing would move the hearts of these hardened sinners to show compassion or to seek justice. When Pilate told them to crucify Jesus he must have been speaking with anger and sarcasm. Both he and they knew that they had no authority to crucify anyone (18:31).

**19:7** This too showed their utter disregard for truth. They were twisting the law they referred to here (Lev 24:16). It is true that if Jesus (or anyone else) was not really God's Son and yet said He was God's Son, or God, He was a blasphemer and worthy of death. But all the evidence pointed to the truth that He really is God's Son, and since that is true there was no law forbidding Him to say so. See also 5:18; 10:31-36; Matt 26:63-66.

**19:8** The Romans on the whole were a superstitious people and believed in a great many gods. They believed also that the gods sometimes came down as men, and that in

he was even more afraid, 9 and went back into the palace and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then Pilate said to him, "You are not speaking to me? Don't you know that I have power to crucify you and power to release you?"

11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power *at all* against me unless it were given to you from above. Therefore he who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

12 And from then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king is denying Caesar."

13 Therefore, when Pilate heard that statement, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the *day* of The Preparation of the Passover, and about six o'clock. And he said to the Jews, "See your King!"

15 But they cried out, "Away with *him*! Away with *him*! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

16 So then he handed him over to them to be

such cases it was not easy to recognize them. It is likely that Pilate began to fear that the innocent, dignified, patient Jesus was some kind of "god."

**19:9** Jesus had already told Pilate where He was from and why He had come (18:36,37). He had no more to say about this to a person who did not want the truth.

**19:10** It seems that Pilate's pride was offended. The rulers of this world often like to think they are great and powerful and can do as they please.

**19:11** Jesus is not silent about Pilate's mistaken view of things. "From above" means from heaven, from God. God is the great king over all the earth and Pilate could do nothing if God did not permit it. Compare psalm 2; 47:1,2; Isa 40:21-23; Dan 4:34,35. Pilate sinned grievously in all this, but the one who handed Jesus over to Pilate (Caiaphas the high priest - 18:28) sinned even more. In committing sin there can be various degrees of guilt. Compare Luke 12:47,48.

**19:12** It seems Pilate became convinced that Jesus was at the very least a man of God, and he worried about putting Him to death. Caesar was the emperor of the Roman Empire, the person who had appointed Pilate as governor of Judea. If Caesar thought Pilate was opposing him and promoting some kind of rebellion, it would be the end of Pilate, and Pilate well knew it.

**19:15** "No king but Caesar" - again the hypocrisy and sinfulness of these Jewish leaders is revealed. They hated the rule of Rome over their country. And they knew

crucified. And they took Jesus and led *him* away. 17 And he, bearing his cross, went out to a place called *The Place* of a Skull, which is called Golgotha in Hebrew.

18 There they crucified him, and two others with him, one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

19 And Pilate wrote an inscription and had it put on the cross. And *this is what* was written:

JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 Then many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

21 Then the Jewish chief priests said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, I am the King of the Jews.'"

22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his clothes and divided them into four parts, a part to each soldier, and also *his* tunic. Now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. 24 So they said among themselves, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it, *to determine* whose it shall be," so that the Scripture might be

that according to their own Scriptures God was king over Israel (Ex 19:3-6; Deut 33:5; 1 Sam 8:7; Ps 10:16; 149:2). To get the Lord Jesus crucified they were willing to say anything no matter how outrageous. But in saying those words they were unconsciously uttering a truth - they had completely rejected the rule of God in their lives, and God was not king in their hearts.

**19:16** Pilate knew Jesus was innocent and he was afraid he was making a grave mistake. It was his duty to judge justly. But his knowledge, fears, and duties were as nothing before another fear he had - the fear of offending Caesar and losing his position. Being gripped by that fear, truth and justice had no chance with him (compare Prov 29:25). Pilate did not have the fear of the Lord which would have kept him from condemning the innocent. Anyone who fears men more than God, or loves his position more than truth is in terrible spiritual peril and in grave danger of God's judgment.

**19:17-22** Matt 27:31-38. John says Jesus carried His own cross. He started out with it, but along the way the soldiers compelled someone else to carry it. Only John mentions that the "accusation" against Jesus was written in three languages, and that the Jews protested to Pilate about the wording of it. God used Pilate to write a truth Pilate himself did not understand, for Jesus was indeed the Messiah of Israel, the great King promised in the Old Testament (note at Matt 1:1).

**19:23,24** "Cast lots" - Ps 22:18.

fulfilled, which says,

They divided my clothing among them,  
and cast lots for my garment.

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

25 Now near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 Therefore when Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, see your son."

27 Then he said to the disciple, "See your mother." And from that time that disciple took her to his own *home*.

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst."

29 Now a jar full of sour wine was standing

there, and they soaked a sponge in the sour wine, put it on a hyssop *stick*, and put *it* to his mouth.

30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

31 Then, because it was the Preparation *Day*, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was an important day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first *man* and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, 34 but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

35 And he who saw *this* has given testimony,

**19:25** This sister was probably the Salome mentioned in Mark 15:40, the mother of Zebedee's sons, mentioned in Matt 27:56. If so, she was John's own mother.

"Magdalene" – 20:10-18; Luke 8:2; Matt 28:1. The word indicates that this Mary was from the town of Magdala.

**19:26,27** "The disciple whom he loved" – 13:23. Even in that hour when Jesus was suffering and dying for the sins of the world, He thought of the needs of someone else. When He said to this disciple "Here is your mother" He was not saying that Mary was the "mother" or patroness of all God's people (such an idea is utterly without basis in the Bible). It means simply that He knew Mary's need of a home and put her in the care of a trusted disciple. From this it seems that by then Mary's husband Joseph was dead.

**19:28,29** See Ps 69:21. Many prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the sufferings and death of Christ. Nothing happened by accident, everything had some purpose of God. Remember that Jesus was suffering in the place of sinners, bearing their punishment (references at v 30). His thirst on the cross was a part of that. Compare Luke 16:22-24. Jesus thirsted that believers might have the water of life (4:14; 7:37,38; Rev 22:17), and not thirst in eternity (Rev 7:16,17).

**19:30** What was finished? Surely He meant that the whole purpose which brought Him into the world was accomplished (4:34). This purpose He Himself expressed in different words at different times. See 3:14-17; 6:51; 10:10,11,15,17; 12:23,24,31-33; 17:4; 18:11 (Matt 26:39); Matt 20:28. John the Baptist put it like this: "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). Other writers of the New Testament put it in other words. See Rom 3:25; 5:8; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:15,19; Gal 1:4; Eph 5:2; Phil 2:8; Col 1:20-22; 1 Tim 1:15; Heb 1:3; 2:14,17; 9:12,14,15; 10:10,14; 13:12; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 4:9,10; Rev 1:5,6.

"It is finished" means His sacrifice and sufferings for sinners were finished. He had taken away the sin of the world. He had redeemed His people with His blood. He had made salvation and liberation from sin possible for everyone. This work is finished. All that is left for sinners to do to gain salvation is to repent and truly believe the gospel (Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47). Since the work He came to do was finished, there was no need for Him to remain any longer suffering on the cross. So He voluntarily released His spirit. Compare 10:17,18; Luke 23:46.

**19:31** Verse 14; Deut 21:22,23. They did not want the land defiled by a dead body left overnight on the cross. They were not concerned that they themselves were horribly defiled by their murder of God's Son. Compare 18:28; Matt 23:24. Usually Romans left the bodies of crucified criminals on their crosses as a warning to others.

"That they might be taken away" – breaking the legs brought death more quickly to those who were crucified. It caused their bodies to sag, and their chests to constrict. This made breathing much more difficult and brought on death by suffocation. The Jews wanted to make sure Jesus was dead before evening.

**19:33** The Lord Jesus died earlier than anyone expected. See Mark 15:44,45.

**19:34** It seems the soldiers thought there might possibly have been a spark of life left in Jesus and wanted to make sure of His death. This spear thrust alone would have killed Him if He had not died earlier. Any flow of blood and water from a body, as described here, is unusual. This event can remind us of the water of life Jesus gives (4:34; 7:37,38), and that His shed blood alone makes it available to us. Also we should note that in the Old Testament blood was for atonement (Lev 17:11), water was for cleansing (Ex 29:4; 30:18-20). Compare also 1 John 5:6-8.

**19:35** It seems the writer of this Gospel is

and his testimony is true, and he knows that he speaks the truth, so that you might believe. 36 For these things were done that this Scripture might be fulfilled:

Not one of his bones will be broken.

37 And again another Scripture says,  
They will look on him whom they  
pierced.

38 And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus.

39 And Nicodemus came also (*the man* who at first came to Jesus by night), and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a forty-five kilograms *in weight*. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in strips of linen, with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is in burying.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been placed. 42 So they placed Jesus there because of the Jewish Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

speaking of himself. As one who actually saw what happened he declares that Jesus was dead and that this unusual event occurred.

**19:36** See Ex 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20. **19:37** Zech 12:10.

**19:38-42** See Matt 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; Luke 23:50-54. Only John says that Joseph had kept his faith secret while Jesus lived.

"Nicodemus" – 3:1,2; 7:50,51. Christ's closest disciples were nowhere to be seen at this time (compare v 19), but these two who had tried to hide their faith now come out into the open. It is probable that the things they saw and heard at the crucifixion strengthened their faith in Jesus. The large amount of spices (v 39) would have been very expensive, and is an indication of the love and high regard Nicodemus had for the Lord Jesus.

**20:1** The authors of all four Gospels record the great fact of the resurrection of Christ. However, they do not use the same words or write all the same details or refer to all the same individuals who appear in one or another of the Gospels. For example, here John speaks of Mary Magdalene coming to the tomb, but Matthew says that another Mary came with her. Mark says Salome also came along, and Luke wrote of several women and names Joanna. Which of these accounts is correct? All of them. Saying that one of them came to the tomb is not the same as saying that the others did not. (See the note at Mark 4:1-20.)

**20** Early on the first *day* of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord away from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him."

3 Therefore Peter and that other disciple set out, going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first. 5 And stooping down *and looking in*, he saw the strips of linen lying *there*, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter, following him, arrived and went into the tomb, and saw the strips of linen lying *there*. 7 And *he saw* the cloth that had been around his head, not lying with the strips of linen, but rolled together in a place by itself. 8 Then that other disciple, who had first reached the tomb, also went in, and he saw and believed.

9 For they still did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

11 But Mary stood outside at the tomb, weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down

**20:2** "We – she is including the other women who had come with her. They did not understand that the Lord Jesus would rise from the dead and supposed that His enemies had removed His body. Indeed, none of His disciples had understood His words or the Old Testament Scriptures about His resurrection.

**20:3** They knew that the disciples had not removed His body and they wanted to find out what had happened. We should be as eager as they to know the true facts about it. They are given to us in the New Testament.

**20:6-8** Joseph and Nicodemus had wrapped these strips of linen around the body of Jesus (19:40). If men had come to steal the body it is not at all likely they would have neatly removed these strips and folded the burial cloth that had been around His head. They would have been in a hurry and would either have taken the body wrapped up as it was, or would have torn the linen strips and the cloth off and let them fall anywhere. John immediately understood this and believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.

**20:9** See Ps 16:10; Isa 53:10-12; 1 Cor 15:4.

**20:11** This was Mary Magdalene (v 18). She followed the disciples back to the tomb and became the first to see the Lord Jesus after He rose from the dead. It is interesting that His first appearance was to her and not to His mother or to any of the apostles. He had compassion on a woman whose knowledge was little and whose faith was weak,

and looked into the tomb, 12 and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him."

14 And when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She, thinking he was the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him off, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned around and said to him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

but whose love was strong.

**20:12** The other women who had come at first with Mary had seen only one angel. That one was outside the tomb seated on a stone (Matt 28:1-7). The two Marys saw were inside the tomb and had not been there when Peter and the other disciple went in. They probably had the appearance of men. Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

**20:13** The Jewish people placed much emphasis on the proper burial of the dead. Mary was grieved, thinking that grave robbers had been at work and had shown disrespect to the dead body of Jesus.

**20:14** See also 21:4; Matt 28:17; Luke 24:16,37. It seems that after His resurrection Jesus did not look exactly the same as He did before it, so Mary did not immediately recognize Him. And of course she was not expecting to see Him at all. It is also possible that her head was bent as she wept and she did not look at His face.

**20:15** Jesus well knew the answer to this. Compare 6:5,6; 11:34. Was there a gentle rebuke in this question? Compare Luke 24:5. (Sometimes in their ignorance of what God is doing Christ's disciples weep when they should rejoice.)

"Gardener" – the tomb was in a garden (19:41) and Mary might have expected a gardener to be about the place.

**20:16** She had not recognized Him but she knew His voice, and realized also that no strange man could call her by name. Perhaps the moment of recognition came when she turned again and looked more closely at Him.

**20:17** "Do not cling to me" – Mary probably fell on the ground and grasped His feet. Compare Matt 28:9. Jesus' reply seems to mean this: "You do not need to hold on to me. I am not going away immediately. You will have an opportunity to see me again." Or it may possibly mean – "Do not try to keep me here on earth. I must ascend to heaven to completely fulfill God's plan for the salvation of men."

17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had said these things to her.

19 Then on the evening of the same day, it being the first *day* of the week, while the doors were locked where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among *them* and said to them, "Peace *be with you*."

20 And when he had said this, he showed them *his* hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Then Jesus said to them again, "Peace *be* to you. As *my* Father has sent me, even so I send

"Brothers" – this almost certainly refers to His disciples, not His brothers according to the flesh (2:12; 7:3,5,10). Compare Matt 12:47-50; Heb 2:10-12.

"I am ascending" – 14:28; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11.

"My Father. . . your God" – Jesus did not say "Our Father and our God." God is the Father of Jesus in a different way than He is the Father of believers. Jesus is the eternal Son of God (1:1,14,18); believers are frail human beings, made children of God only by God's grace shown in the new birth (1:12,13).

**20:18** Mary Magdalene became the first to bear witness to others of the resurrection of Jesus.

**20:19** "Fear" – a short time before they had seen Jesus crucified by their enemies, and they did not know what was going on concerning Him. Remember too that they were not yet filled with the Holy Spirit – an event which removes fear and gives great boldness.

"Jesus came" – Christ's body risen from the dead could go through locked doors. That body was the same body as before (vs 20,27), but greatly changed. Evidently He could appear and disappear as He pleased (Luke 24:31,36,37). See 1 Cor 15:42-44; Phil 3:21.

"Peace" – a word in accordance with His purpose for coming to earth (Luke 2:13,14; 14:27).

**20:20** Verse 27. He was proving to them that He was indeed their Lord Jesus and that His crucified body had risen from the dead. Compare Luke 24:36-43. Their rejoicing when they saw Him fulfilled His word to them in 16:20-22. All their joy and hopes had died when He died (Luke 24:21). Now they spring to life again at His resurrection. Compare 1 Pet 1:3.

**20:21** "I send you" – see 17:18; Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48. He would send His disciples forth with authority to represent Him as He represented God



you."

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them* and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 The sins of everyone you forgive are forgiven them; *the sins* of anyone you do not forgive are held *unforgiven*."

24 But Thomas called Didymos, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the print of the nails in his hands, and put my finger into the nail prints, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

the Father. They would go with the same gospel He preached. And like Him they would go with God's Spirit (v 22).

**20:22** This symbolic action signified that He was the source of life, power, and the Holy Spirit. He was sending them forth and He would spiritually qualify them for the work they had to do. It is interesting to compare this verse with Gen 2:7. It would seem that in some sense they now received the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that they had not had the Spirit with them before. Even in Old Testament times believers knew something of the presence and work of God's Spirit (Ex 31:3; Jud 3:10; 1 Sam 10:6; 16:13; 2 Sam 23:2; Ps 51:11; etc). But now the Lord Jesus was giving God's Spirit in a new way. It is likely that at this time they were given special wisdom and understanding in the Scriptures. Compare Luke 24:45. He may have been giving the Spirit as an indwelling presence (7:39; 14:17). And it is clear that He was giving them authority to minister as His representatives. Later He would grant them the Spirit in an even greater measure (Acts 1:4,5; 2:1-4).

**20:23** Compare Matt 16:19; 18:15-18. The Lord Jesus was speaking to the representatives and human founders of His church. This means that the Church on earth (made up of all true believers in Christ), having received God's Spirit, will be able to proclaim what sort of men are forgiven and what sort are not forgiven. The Greek here could be translated something like this: "Those whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven; those whose sins you let remain unforgiven have not been forgiven." The meaning is: It is God in heaven who forgives sin or not (note at Mark 2:7. See also Ps 103:3; 130:4). And it is God who determines what sort of people shall be forgiven and what sort will not be. And He has already determined this - Luke 24:46,47; Acts 10:43; 13:38,39; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9. God forgives those who repent and trust in Christ. Forgiveness is a gift of His grace. It is the work of the Church to proclaim this truth.

Compare 2 Sam 12:13 for something similar in the Old Testament. God said of prophets in the Old Testament that they would do things when the meaning plainly

26 And after eight days his disciples were again inside, and Thomas *was* with them. The doors were locked *but* Jesus came and stood among *them*, and said, "Peace *be* to you."

27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and reach your hand here and put *it* into my side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God."

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

is that they would declare them (see Jer 25:15-26). And this is true in the case of the apostles. By preaching Christ's gospel they opened the door of forgiveness to all who would believe, they shut the door to all those who would not believe. They pointed individuals to God who forgives sins. In Matt 6:12; Luke 11:4 the Lord Jesus taught us whom we should ask for forgiveness of sins. The Church or any member of it can say to anyone on earth "If you repent and believe in the Lord Jesus all your sins are forgiven; if you do not repent and believe they are not forgiven." And they can say to all believers "If you confess your sins to God He will forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness." Christ did not appoint from among Christians any special group of people as priests who alone could pronounce such truth. All believers in Christ are priests, all can speak the truth of forgiveness (see 1 Pet 2:5,9).

**20:25** This is why he is sometimes called "Doubting Thomas." He should have been willing to believe the testimony of the other disciples. But the desire for certainty is not to be condemned.

**20:26** Verse 19.

**20:27** See how loving and compassionate the Lord is even to weak and doubting disciples. He was showing him (and all of them) a real body with the unmistakable marks of crucifixion still on it. And Jesus insisted that Thomas accept the evidence for His resurrection. "Do not be unbelieving but believing" is a word that comes to all of us today.

**20:28** God turns His people's failures to some good. Because of the doubts of Thomas, and Christ's revealing Himself to him, we have this great expression of faith. Thomas, as a Jew instructed in the Old Testament, and taught by Jesus Himself for three years, knew very well that there was only one God and that to have any other god was the worst of sins (Matt 4:10; Ex 20:1-4; Deut 6:4,5; Isa 43:11; 44:6; 45:5). When he called Jesus "Lord" and "God" he was expressing his conviction that Jesus was the incarnation of the one true God, the Jehovah of the Old Testament. See also 1:1,14,18; 5:17,18; 8:24,58; 10:30-33; other references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**20:29** See how the Lord Jesus accepts his



30 And indeed Jesus performed many other *miraculous* signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, you might have life through his name.

**21** After these things Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples at the lake of Tiberias. and he revealed *himself* in this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other disciples of *Jesus* were together.

3 Simon Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing." They said to him, "We will also go with you." They went out and immediately got into a boat. And that night they caught nothing. 4 But when morning came, Jesus was standing on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any food?" They answered him, "No."

6 And he said to them, "Cast the net on the

right side of the boat and you will find *some*." So they cast *it there*, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the large number of fish.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he wrapped *his* outer garment *around him* (for he had removed it), and threw himself into the lake. 8 And the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about a hundred meters), dragging the net with fish.

9 As soon as they reached land, they saw a charcoal fire there, and fish laid on it, and bread.

10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

11 Simon Peter went up to the boat, and dragged the net full of large fish to land. They totaled a hundred and fifty-three, but though there were so many, the net was not broken.

12 Jesus said to them, "Come *and* eat." And none of the disciples dared *to* ask him, "Who are

words. In other words, He agrees with Thomas that He is Lord and God. If Jesus did not know He is Lord and God it is inconceivable that He would have done this. Mere men, if they are good men, do not accept divine honors (compare Acts 14:13-15).

"Blessed" – this blessing comes on all of us today who believe as Thomas did – that Jesus rose from the dead and that He is Lord and true God and that He is that to us. Compare Rom 10:9,10. (On "blessed" and "blessing" see notes at Gen 12:3; Num 6:23-27; Ps 1:1-3; 119:1; Matt 5:3-10; etc.) The opposite is also true – God cannot pronounce His blessing on those who do not believe this. See 3:18,36; 8:24.

**20:30** "Many other" – 21:25. Some of these signs are recorded in the other Gospels. John made a special selection of Jesus' miraculous signs for a special purpose.

"Signs" – 2:11.

**20:31** Here are three very important truths.

First, there is something wonderful to believe – that Jesus is the one anointed by God as the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world, and that He is God's Son sharing God's very nature (notes at Matt 1:1; etc.).

Second, there are very good reasons for believing this – the miraculous signs Jesus gave, including His resurrection from the dead.

Third, there is the result of believing this – life, true spiritual life, eternal life in His name (3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47). In this way John sums up several of the most important truths of this Gospel.

**21:1** "Tiberias" – another name for the Sea of Galilee. He had told His disciples to go to Galilee (Matt 28:7,10). After His resurrection Jesus spent forty days with His disciples in various places (Acts 1:3).

**21:2** The sons of Zebedee were James and John (Matt 10:2).

**21:3** The bodily presence of the Lord Jesus was not always with them in those days. The disciples were poor men who had always worked for a living (Matt 4:18-22; Acts 3:6). Peter's purpose may have been to earn some money for their expenses while they waited for the Lord to appear. There is no indication in these verses that any of them intended to abandon the Lord's work. And there is nothing wrong with those who preach the gospel while having another job to earn a living (Acts 18:3; 20:34,35; 2 Thess 3:7-10).

**21:4** See 20:15; Luke 24:17.

**21:5** "Children" – 13:33.

**21:6** For a similar miracle see Luke 5:4-10. The Lord Jesus knows the place of every fish in the sea and every star in the sky (Isa 40:26). There is a lesson here for "fishers of men" (Matt 4:19). If Christ does not direct and bless their efforts their labor is without result. He knows where all future believers are and how to reach them.

**21:7** Peter's attitude at this miracle was quite different than it was at the other (Luke 5:8). He had learned many things since then, both about himself and about the Lord Jesus.

**21:9** The Lord from heaven was cooking breakfast for His disciples. Compare 13:3-5; Matt 20:28. See also Luke 12:35-37. His heart, His love, His desire to help them were not changed.

**21:11** The disciples would have been able to sell these fish and have money for expenses. And the Lord even kept the net from being torn. Many times since then, in all generations and in miraculous ways, the Lord has provided for His servants. Matt 6:31-33 and Phil 4:19 give truth for all time.

**21:12** Compare Rev 3:20. Here the

you?" knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then came, took the bread and gave it to them, and also the fish.

14 This was now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after he had risen from the dead.

15 So when they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs."

disciples were surely filled with awe and wonder in the presence of the risen Son of God, and hardly knew what to say.

**21:13** Not only did He cook the food, He served them as well. His resurrection did not remove His humility and His desire to serve men (Heb 13:8).

**21:14** "Third time" – this means His appearances to a group of His original disciples. There were other appearances to the women and to others – 20:19,26.

**21:15-17** Peter had denied the Lord three times (18:17,25,27). How terribly he felt about it is indicated in Matt 26:75. Now three times the Lord questions him about his love. This must have brought to Peter's mind his denials and his self-confidence which led to them. And it was good for him to face himself and recognize his weakness and folly and sin. It was especially Peter whom Satan "sifted" (Luke 22:31). So now it was especially Peter whom the Lord dealt with. But in dealing with Peter He was teaching the other disciples (and us) very important truth. Though the Lord did reawaken Peter's grief, that was not His chief purpose – which was to restore and confirm his commission.

"These" – in the Greek here, as in the English, it is not possible to know whether Jesus meant "these men" or "these things." So this phrase could be interpreted in three different ways – "Do you love me more than these disciples love me?", or, "Do you love me more than you do these disciples?" or, "Do you love me more than fish and fishing?"

The first of these interpretations seems most likely. Peter had been very outspoken in his affection for Christ (13:37), and compared himself very favorably with the other disciples (Matt 26:33). Jesus' question seems to mean "Now, after your bitter experience, after learning something of your weakness, will you be inclined to say you love me more than these others do?" The second of the possible interpretations is not likely, but compare Matt 10:37,38. It is also possible to love human friends more than we love the Lord from heaven.

If we take the third interpretation given above, the meaning would be something like this: "Do you prefer the old life and its ways to me and my ways? Are you willing to reconfirm the decision you made when you became my disciple?" (v 19; Matt 4:18-20; 19:27).

16 Again he said to him the second time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you." He said to him, "Take care of my sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Truly, truly I say to you,

Whatever meaning we take, one thing is perfectly clear. In the relationship of a disciple with the Lord Jesus one matter is of supreme importance – love for Him. Compare 1 Cor 13:1-3; 16:22. In proportion to the love we have for Him we will be able to serve Him acceptably.

There are a number of motives that cause people in Christian work to do what they do. The motive may be simply to have a job, a career; or simply to make money; or a sense of duty; or a desire to do some good in the world. But the only motive that can satisfy Christ is the one He speaks of here – love for Him. Motive is extremely important in Christian work. Without the proper one, on the day of judgment no doubt it will be seen that all religious activities have been nothing but "wood, hay and straw" (1 Cor 3:12,13), or even worse than these.

"Feed my lambs" – this means that Peter was to nourish new and inexperienced believers with the Word of God (see 1 Pet 2:2). Notice the order here – first love, then service. Love must be expressed in action. See 14:15,23. If we love Christ we will love His people (1 John 4:20). Service without love is terribly defective (1 Cor 13:1-3).

**21:16** "Take care of" – this means more than simply to feed. It means to be a loving shepherd to Christ's people, to look after their welfare in every way, especially in spiritual matters. In saying this was Jesus elevating Peter above the other disciples? Not at all. They too, and many others besides, were to be teachers, shepherds, and feeders of God's flock – see Eph 4:11-13; 1 Pet 5:1-4. And Christ alone is the Chief Shepherd.

**21:17** "Third time" – perhaps he was grieved because he remembered his three denials of the Lord, or because he felt the Lord was doubting that he loved Him.

"You know all things" – compare 2:24,25; Heb 4:13. Peter's saying this indicates his belief that Jesus was God incarnate. Who else knows all things? And Jesus accepted these words as He did the words of Thomas in 20:28.

"Sheep" – this probably means mature believers. Compare v 15. No believer ever gets so mature that spiritual food is no longer needed, or that he cannot still get such food from other servants of God.

**21:18,19** Here the Lord indicated that Peter

when you were young, you fastened your belt around you and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you get old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten your belt and take *you* where you will not want to go."

19 He said this, indicating the kind of death by which he would glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said to him, "Follow me."

20 Then Peter, turning around, saw coming behind them the disciple whom Jesus loved, who also had leaned against his chest at supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays you?"

21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "Lord, and what *will* this man *do*?"

would grow old and die. It is not easy to reconcile this with the teaching that Christ could have come back any moment during the lifetime of the apostles. After uttering this prophecy could the Lord have returned before Peter grew old and died?

"Glorify God" – earlier Peter denied Christ, but he would be steadfast in death and at last fulfill his own word (13:37). According to tradition Peter died by crucifixion. Christ's last word to Peter here was like His first words to him (Matt 4:18,19), and confirmed His original call to be a disciple.

**21:20** See 13:23. The disciple whom Jesus loved was one of the seven who went fishing (vs 2,3). We know he was not Peter, and it is unlikely he was any of the others, except John himself.

**21:21** The meaning seems to be – "What is his future? Will he also grow old and be led where he does not want to go? If I am to die by violence, will my brother John go the same way?"

**21:22** There is a rebuke here that is a warning to every servant of God. The Lord reminded Peter that his chief concern should be his own present responsibility toward the Lord, not the future of someone else. Jesus is not teaching here that we should not have a loving concern for fellow believers (compare 13:34; 1 Cor 12:25,26; Gal 6:2). But one may have an improper curiosity about Christ's plans for others. And it is all

22 Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you? You follow me."

23 Then this statement went around among the brethren, that that disciple would not die. But Jesus did not tell him that he would not die, but, "If I want him to remain until I come, what *is that* to you?"

24 This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things. And we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did. If every one of them would be written down, I suppose even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

too possible to be taken up with what others may do and neglect one's own duty simply to follow the Lord.

**21:23** "To you" – how careful we should be in trying to interpret the words of the Lord Jesus! Here is an illustration of how a simple statement of Jesus can be misunderstood and twisted in meaning by adding a thought to it which is not there at all. See how John places emphasis on the exact words Jesus spoke. Compare Prov 30:5,6.

**21:24** Here we learn the identity of the disciple whom Jesus loved (v 20). He was the author of this Gospel. There is evidence that this was the apostle John, and no evidence that it was any of the other disciples.

"We" – it is not clear why we have a change to the plural here. If another disciple added this sentence to what John wrote we do not know who it was.

**21:25** "Other things" – 20:30; Matt 8:16; 9:35; etc.

"Books" – precious as such books would be, God knew they were not necessary for us. We have what He wanted us to have. And what He has given is quite sufficient for the purpose God had in mind. We will do well to give thanks for what He has given, and to make it a chief part of our study throughout our lives, and to make every effort by His grace to put it into practice.

# THE ACTS

of the Apostles

**Author:**

Luke. See the introduction to Luke’s Gospel and compare Acts 1:1 with Luke 1:1.

**Date:**

Probably sometime between 60 and 63 AD.

**Themes:**

The early history of Christ’s Church, the spread of the Gospel of Christ in the first thirty years after His death and resurrection from the dead, Christ’s continuing work on earth after His ascension into heaven. A key verse is 1:8. The name “Acts of the Apostles” was not given by Luke to this book. This name was given to it later on by others. A title that would have been more descriptive of the reality is “The Acts of God’s Spirit through the Apostles” or “The Continuing Acts of Christ through His Apostles.”

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Paul before governor Festus .....	25:1-12
Paul before king Agrippa .....	25:23 - 26:32
Paul's journey to Rome .....	27:1 - 28:16
The storm and the shipwreck .....	27:13-44
On the island of Malta .....	28:1-10
Paul in Rome .....	28:16-31

**1** O Theophilus, I produced the former account about all that Jesus began both to do and teach, **2** until the day in which he was taken up, after he had given commandments through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. **3** To them also he showed himself alive after his suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them forty

days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

**4** And, having met with *them*, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise from the Father, "which, *he said*, "you have heard from me. **5** For John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

**1:1** "Theophilus" – Luke 1:3. The acts and teaching of Jesus recorded in the Gospels were only the beginning of His ministry. After His death, resurrection and ascension He continued His work through His servants. We have a record of some of these things in Acts – 2:33; 3:6,16,26; 4:10,30; 5:31; 7:56; 9:3-16; 18:9,10; 26:15-18. Compare Matt 28:20; Mark 16:20.

**1:2** Verses 9-11; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51. Notes on the Holy Spirit at Matt 3:16; John 7:39; 14:16,17,26; 20:22. Also see the references at Gen 1:2. The word "apostles" means "those who are sent forth with orders."

"Whom he had chosen" – Matt 10:2; Mark 3:13-19; 6:12-16.

**1:3** "Showed himself alive" – see note at Matt 28:6.

"His suffering" – His crucifixion and death. Compare 2:24; 17:3; 26:23.

"Many infallible proofs" – Jesus not only said in advance that He would rise from the dead (Matt 16:21; 17:23; John 10:17,18; etc), He actually rose from the dead and proved many times over that He had done so (Matt 28:16-18; Mark 16:12-14; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-29; 21:1; 1 Cor 15:5-8). And this proof was so convincing that the apostles were happy to suffer and die preaching this truth. It became one of the central themes of all their teaching. They proclaimed this truth everywhere (2:24,32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 10:40; 13:30,31; 17:31), and large numbers of people in Jerusalem, where these events took place, who knew what had happened, believed them.

"Forty days" – this verse is the only place in the Bible that gives us the length of time between Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven. In Luke 24:44-47 we have some of the things Jesus taught during this time.

"The kingdom of God" – Matt 4:17. See also Acts 1:6; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,31.

**1:4,5** The apostles of Christ would not be qualified for Christ's service until they received the power of the Holy Spirit. Their knowledge of the facts about Christ and their understanding of the Old Testament alone would not make them ready for the task before them.

"The promise from the Father" – see Luke 11:13; 24:49; John 14:16,17,26. The promise is that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. See Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16. According to the apostle Paul believers receive this promise of the Father by faith in Christ and by no other

way. See Gal 3:2,14.

"Baptized with the Holy Spirit" – four different expressions are used to describe what the disciples received on the day of Pentecost –

here: "baptized with the Holy Spirit"  
v 8: "when the Holy Spirit comes on you"  
2:4: "filled with the Holy Spirit"  
10:47: "received the Holy Spirit."

All four references speak of the same event described in 2:1-4. It is important to see this.

On that day Christ gave them God's Spirit in a new way. This was like immersing them in the Spirit, or pouring the Spirit on them (2:33; 10:45), and the result was that their whole inner being was filled with the Spirit, and they received power to live the Christian life and to witness and serve God as they ought. They began to live and move in God's Spirit, to be inspired, motivated, and controlled by God's Spirit. From that time to this, individuals receive God's Spirit when they believe in the Lord Jesus (see John 7:37-39; Gal 3:2; Eph 1:13). If they have not received Christ's Spirit, who is the Spirit of God, they do not belong to Christ; that is, they have not really believed in Him or been born from above (see Rom 8:9).

According to 1 Cor 12:12,13 every believer has been baptized with God's Spirit into the Body of Christ (or baptized "by" or "in" God's Spirit – the Greek word can mean any of these, and the same word is used there that is used here in Acts). This too happens when they receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. They no longer have to wait for this as the original apostles had to wait for God's appointed time for the coming of the Spirit. God had chosen that day of Pentecost to begin this era of the Spirit, this age of grace, this new work in the earth. Now, since it has begun and has been going on for these many centuries waiting is no longer necessary.

After receiving the Holy Spirit by receiving Christ, and, at that same time, being baptized by the Spirit into Christ's Body, every believer should earnestly seek to be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). There is only one baptism of the Holy Spirit, but believers may be filled again and again. And recognizing that we have the Spirit living in us, that we have been baptized with the Spirit, if we have reason to think that we are not filled with Him, we should seek the fullness of the Spirit with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

There are only a few references in the



6 So when they met together they questioned him, saying, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 And he said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the dates which the Father has put under his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be witnesses for me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth."

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they were looking, he was taken up and a cloud received him from their sight.

Bible which use the words "baptism with [or in, or by] the Holy Spirit." The words of John the Baptist are recorded in the four gospels (see Matt 3:11). Then we have Jesus' words here. Peter quotes these words in Acts 11:16. Then we have Paul's words in 1 Cor 12:13. That is all.

**1:6** The Lord Jesus had been teaching them for forty days about God's kingdom (v 3), and He had opened their minds to understand the Old Testament (Luke 24:45). They asked this question on the day Christ ascended into heaven - v 9). So they did not ask this question in ignorance, but understanding what God's plan for the nation of Israel is. They knew that God had taken the kingdom from them (Matt 21:43). But from what Jesus had taught they did not doubt that God would some day turn the nation back to Himself and exalt it to a place of prominence and power in the world. (See 3:19-21; Isa 2:2-4; 14:1-2; Zech 14:16-21.) But the disciples did not know when God would do this. Observe that they did not ask "will you restore the kingdom to Israel?" but "are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

**1:7** The Lord did not correct their view that He would restore the kingdom to Israel. Since He had been teaching them for forty days about the kingdom, it is evident that He wanted them to understand all the facts thoroughly. They were going to be His representatives on earth, the teachers of His Church. If they had been wrong in their belief that He would restore the kingdom to Israel, can we doubt that He would have told them so? Can we think He was willing to leave them with a mistaken opinion about a basic matter? But all He did was to inform them that it was not their business to know times and dates. In this way He sanctioned their view about Israel and God's kingdom.

**1:8** Verse 5. Power here means supernatural energy and ability. To be God's witnesses in a hostile world, to live and speak and serve as they ought, they needed more power than they possessed by nature, and more than they had received as a result of the new birth (John 1:12,13; 3:3,5,8). The same is true today. They needed and we need the Spirit's fullness.

"Witnesses" see Luke 24:48; John

10 And while they looked steadily toward heaven as he went up, suddenly two men stood by them in white clothing. 11 And they said, "You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same manner as you have seen him go into heaven."

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is a Sabbath day's walk from Jerusalem. 13 And when they arrived, they ascended to the upper room where they were staying. Peter, James, John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James

15:27; Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; 13:31; 22:15; etc. A witness is someone who tells others what he has seen or heard or knows by experience. Apostles proclaimed the facts of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension - facts they themselves had seen with their own eyes. And they taught what they themselves had heard Him teach. Taking this verse we can divide the book of Acts into three parts - witness in Jerusalem (chapters 1-7), witness in Judea and Samaria (chapters 8-12), witness to other parts of the world (chapters 13-28). This witness to the truth still continues.

Now God's servants everywhere in the world proclaim the truth they have learned from the testimony of the original apostles who saw and heard the Lord Jesus. They can testify also to a personal experience with Christ.

**1:9** See 2:33; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Phil 2:9-11. Only here is a cloud mentioned in connection with Jesus' ascension. In the Bible a cloud sometimes symbolizes the presence and glory of God (Ex 13:21; 16:10; 19:9,16; 24:15; 34:5; 40:34,35; Lev 16:2; 1 Kings 8:10,11; Isa 4:5; 19:1; Matt 17:5; Rev 10:1; 14:14). The Lord Jesus had vanished. From now on His disciples had to live by faith, not by sight. Where did Jesus go? Into heaven to the right hand of God (2:33; 3:21). How far away is heaven? Probably very near (see 7:55,56). It is a spiritual realm unseen by the eyes of human beings on earth, but it may exist alongside this material world.

**1:10** Compare Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; John 20:12.

**1:11** These words seem to mean something like this: Jesus was going into heaven and would remain there for a time. He would not immediately come back so there was no reason for them to stand there looking for Him. In the meantime there were things they should be doing. On Christ's second coming see Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; John 14:3; etc.

**1:12** The Mount of Olives is about one kilometer east of Jerusalem. Jewish teachers had determined the limits of how far Jews could walk on their rest day.

**1:13** This was probably the same room we see in John 20:19,26.

the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the brother of James, 14 these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

15 And in those days Peter stood up among the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 16 "Men and brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke in the past through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was the guide for those who took Jesus. 17 For he was numbered with us, and was allotted a part in this ministry."

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of his wickedness, and there, falling headlong, the middle of his body burst open and all his entrails spilled out. 19 And this became known to all who lived in Jerusalem, so that field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.

20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms,

Let his dwelling be deserted,  
and let no one live in it.

**1:14** Doubtless they were praying for what Jesus had promised them – vs 4,5,8; Luke 11:13; 24:49. A number of women had also believed in Christ – Luke 23:49,55; 24:1,10. Mary the mother of Jesus was now staying with John (John 19:26,27). This is the last mention of her in the Bible. She completely fades from view, and her Son fills the vision of the Church. Jesus' brothers (Matt 13:55) at first did not believe Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel (John 7:5). After His resurrection, they believed and joined His disciples. These all waited ten days for the coming of God's Spirit. Now that His Spirit has come there is no need to wait for Him to come. But now, too, waiting on God and seeking His face prepare the heart for the Spirit's fullness.

**1:15** "Disciples" – see notes at Matt 10:1. Though Jesus had taught wonderful things in Jerusalem, and performed amazing miracles, only 120 people joined themselves to the apostles to form the first group of believers there. There were doubtless other believers who for one reason or another did not yet join this group. Five hundred believers are mentioned in 1 Cor 15:6, but probably most of them were in Galilee. In contrast to this, 3000 repented and believed the gospel on the day of Pentecost (2:41. Compare John 14:12; 16:7,8).

**1:16** Peter had the same high view of the Old Testament that the Lord Jesus had. He believed it was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God and had to be fulfilled. Compare 4:25,26; Matt 4:4; 5:17,18; 15:3,6; Luke 24:44-46; John 10:35.

**1:17** Matt 10:1-4.

**1:18,19** Matt 27:3-8. The chief priests bought the field, but evidently did so in the name of Judas. Judas "purchased" it in the sense that it was the money he received for

And,

Let another take his position of  
overseer.

21 "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning with the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us, one must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."

23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabas whose surname was Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which of these two you have chosen 25 to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell by his transgression to go to his own place." 26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

**2** And when the day of Pentecost had fully come they were all with one accord in one place.

betraying Christ that was used for the purchase. He hanged himself but, it would seem, either the rope or the limb of the tree broke, and he fell to the ground with the result described here.

**1:20** Ps 69:25; 109:8.

**1:21,22** See the emphasis on their actually seeing what Jesus did and hearing what He taught. Compare John 15:27.

**1:23-26** Did they behave wisely in all this or did they make a mistake? Matthias appears no more in the New Testament. Observe that "they" proposed two men. The drawing of lots had to indicate one of them, whether the Lord chose him or not. It is not written that they prayed before they proposed the two names, only afterwards. And would not their choice between only two men limit the Lord in His choice? It seems to the author of these notes that the Lord later appointed Paul as one of the twelve apostles (Rom 1:1,5; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:8-10; 2 Cor 12:12; Gal 1:1), and he cannot imagine that the name of Matthias will appear on the foundations of God's city (Rev 21:14) and Paul's name be absent. On casting of lots see Lev 16:8; Josh 18:6,8,10; 1 Sam 14:42; Neh 10:34.

**1:26** "Apostles" – note at Matt 10:2.

**2:1** "Pentecost" means "fiftieth." It was one of the festivals of Israel and was called also the Feast of Weeks (see notes on Lev 23:15-21). It came fifty days after the feast of the Passover. It was a harvest festival. It was very fitting that the Holy Spirit should come on that day and begin the great harvest of bringing people to repentance and faith in Christ (v 41).

This particular day of Pentecost when the Spirit of God came upon the waiting disciples was one of the greatest days in the whole of human history. It was a new beginning

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them divided tongues like fire, and sat on each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them *ability* to speak.

5 And there were living at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this sound was heard, a crowd came together, and was bewildered because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 And they

were all amazed and marvelled and said to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 Then how does each of us hear in our own language in which we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, and strangers from Rome, Jews and converts to Judaism, 11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." 12 And they were all amazed and perplexed, and said to one another,

on earth in God's work among men. A new age – the age of grace, the age of God's Spirit – was inaugurated. The time when Christ's gospel should go to the ends of the earth began that day. It is not surprising that God granted very striking signs indicating that that time had begun. Compare the beginning of the age of Law in Exodus 19:16-19.

**2:2** In Greek, as in Hebrew, the same word means both wind (or breath) and Spirit. So it was natural for wind to become a symbol of God's Spirit (John 3:8; Ezek 37:9-14), and fitting that the coming of the Spirit was announced by the sound of a powerful wind.

**2:3** The Jews for centuries had recognized fire as a symbol of God's presence (notes at Ex 3:2). The fire was a sign to each disciple that God's Spirit was present with all the others. "Tongues" of fire was an indication of what their principal work was to be. They were God's spokesmen (1:8, etc), and their power for speaking was God's Spirit. The coming of the Spirit was a fulfillment of the word of the Lord Jesus (1:4,5; Luke 24:49; John 14:16,17,26; 16:6).

**2:4** "Filled with the Holy Spirit" – the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which Jesus had promised them in 1:5, and which they now received, produced this result. See notes at 1:5; see also Eph 5:18. Being filled with God's Spirit is of great importance for believers. The signs which accompanied the filling on the day of Pentecost are not the important things. God may give signs or withhold them as He pleases, but He will infallibly give the Holy Spirit and His fullness to those who seek Him in faith (v 39; Luke 11:13). God nowhere in the Bible instructs us to seek for the signs that appeared then (compare Matt 12:38,39), and nowhere in the Bible does He command us to be baptized with the Spirit or to seek for that (it is important to see this), but He does command us to be filled with His Spirit.

Can a person know he is filled with the Holy Spirit if there are no accompanying signs? Certainly. He can know by faith (1 John 5:14,15), faith based on God's promises. And his experience afterwards will confirm that he is filled with the Spirit – he will have power for holy living and for witness and service (see also Eph 5:19-21).

See v 11 on the meaning of "to speak in

other tongues" as the disciples did that day. The Greek word here translated "tongues" means both physical tongues and languages. The phrase could be translated "began to speak in other languages."

**2:5-13** These God-fearing Jews were natives of Judea (v 9), or had lived abroad and had returned to Jerusalem – some to live there and others on a visit probably for the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. Fifteen different lands are mentioned, from what is now called Iran on the east to Rome on the west. There were two different sorts of people gathered there that day. Some were "bewildered" (v 6), "amazed" (v 7), and "perplexed" (v 12). They knew something strange and wonderful was occurring and could offer no explanation for it. Others were sure they knew all about it (v 13). They were the sort of people who reject or laugh at anything that is new or strange and think they have the answer to everything. One of the greatest days of human history had dawned, but all they could do was mock. In any generation those who are filled with God's Spirit will meet both kinds of people.

**2:7** The Jews of Galilee spoke with an accent which identified them to other Jews (Mark 14:70).

**2:11** This is thrice repeated (vs 6,8). God gave those disciples the instant ability to speak foreign languages which they had never learned. Their words were clearly understood by those who heard them (whether the disciples themselves understood what they were saying is not revealed). Some people teach that speaking in tongues is the essential sign that always accompanies the baptism of God's Spirit. We see here that when the apostles spoke in "tongues" they were speaking known languages which people there understood.

If this is the sign that always accompanies Spirit baptism, then we would have to say that this experience must be extremely rare indeed in our day and very uncommon in the whole history of the Church. But we know that a great many people have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit without speaking in "tongues" (languages unknown to them). On "signs" see notes on v 4.

For other references to "tongues" see 10:46; 1 Cor 12:10,28,30; 13:1,8;

"What does this mean?"

13 Others, mocking, said, "These men are full of new wine."

14 But Peter, standing up with the Eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "You men of Judea, and all *you* who are staying in Jerusalem, let this be known to you: listen to my words, 15 for these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* nine in the morning. 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 And it will happen in the last days,  
 God says,  
 I will pour out of my Spirit on  
 all flesh,  
 and your sons and your daughters will  
 prophesy,  
 and your young men will see visions,  
 and your old men will dream dreams.  
 18 And in those days I will pour out of

my Spirit on my servants and my  
 maidservants,  
 and they will prophesy.

19 And I will show wonders in heaven  
 above,  
 and signs in the earth below,  
 blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.  
 20 The sun will be turned into darkness,  
 and the moon into blood,  
 before that great and renowned  
 day of the Lord comes.

21 And it will be *that* whoever calls on  
 the name of the Lord will be saved.

22 "You men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth *was* a man proved true by God to you through miracles and wonders and signs which God did through him among you, as you yourselves also know. 23 He was delivered up by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, *and* you took

14:5,6,18,21,22,23,39.

**2:13** This accusation that the disciples were drunk is very meaningful. "Drunk" means to be under the influence or control of alcohol. The disciples were under the influence and control of God's Spirit. The crowd could see that their behavior was not what people regarded as normal and usual. Compare Eph 5:18. The filling with God's Spirit lifts people far above what men regard as ordinary.

**2:14** As he often was when Jesus was on earth Peter here is the spokesman for the twelve apostles. And here begins the first sermon of this new era. Its themes are the Holy Spirit, and the death, resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2:15** God-fearing Jews did not drink wine in the morning. They drank wine only with meat and ate meat only in the evenings.

**2:16** Verses 17-21 are taken from Joel 2:28-32 (the last part of v 32 is omitted). "This is what was spoken" means that on that day of Pentecost God fulfilled His promise to send His Spirit.

**2:17** The phrase "in the last days, God says" is not in the Hebrew of Joel 2:28, which has only the words meaning "And afterward." Sometimes in the New Testament the expression "the last days" or "last times" refers to a time beginning with Christ's first coming and extending to His second coming – Heb 1:3; James 5:2; 1 Peter 1:20; 2 Peter 3:3; 1 John 2:18 ("the last hour"); Jude 18. God promised to pour out His Spirit on "all people." Pentecost was only a partial fulfillment of this, for only Jews and Jewish converts received the Spirit then. We see a further fulfillment at Acts 8:17; 10:44,45; 19:6. As the gospel of Christ spread around the world people from more and more countries received God's Spirit, and this process will go on until the end of this age (v 20). "Sons" and "daughters", "young" and "old" without distinction will receive God's Spirit.

Notes on prophecy at Num 11:25. On

visions and dreams see 18:9,10; Gen 15:1; Num 12:6.

**2:18** "My servants" – God does not give His Spirit to the world in general, but to those who trust Him and so become His servants. See John 14:17.

**2:19,20** The day of the Lord begins at the end of this age and includes Christ's second coming. See notes at Isa 13:6-13; Joel 1:15; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10. The signs in the sun and moon are associated with that day in other places (Isa 13:9,10; Matt 24:29,30; Rev 6:12-17). The signs mentioned in v 19 can be seen in Rev 8:7,8,10; 9:2,17,18; 16:3,4,8. From the context here in Acts we may judge that the work of God's Spirit described in vs 17,18 will continue until the day of the Lord begins.

**2:21** See Isa 55:6,7; Rom 10:12,13; 1 Cor 1:2. To call on the name of the Lord means here to ask Him for salvation, to turn to Him in repentance and faith. Peter soon reveals who he means by Lord. In Joel the word in Hebrew is Jehovah. Peter means the Lord Jesus (v 38). This is just one indication among many in the New Testament that Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See other references at Luke 2:11. **2:22** Verses 14-21 was a word of explanation about the questions raised in vs 12,13. Here Peter comes to the heart of His message. Christ appointed him as a witness (1:8) and the Holy Spirit empowered him for this work (2:4). Now he testifies, and his words are full of Christ. He begins with Him and ends with Him. Jesus of Nazareth was "approved" by God the Father (see John 5:36; 10:37,38. Notes on signs and miracles at John 2:11; Matt 8:1).

**2:23** God sent the Lord Jesus into the world with the very purpose that He should die on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of men (Matt 20:28; 26:27,28; John 1:29; 3:14-16; 6:51; 10:11). But wicked men did

*him* and by wicked hands crucified and killed *him*.  
24 God raised him up, setting *him* free from the anguish of death, because it was not possible that he would be held by it. 25 For David speaks concerning him,

I saw the Lord always before  
my face,  
for he is at my right hand,  
so that I might not be shaken.  
26 Therefore my heart rejoiced and my  
tongue was glad.  
Moreover, my flesh will rest in hope,  
27 Because you will not leave my soul  
in the realm of the dead,  
nor will you allow your Holy One to see  
corruption.  
28 You have made known to me the ways  
of life.  
You will fill me with joy by your  
countenance.

29 "Men, brethren, let me speak freely to you about the patriarch David. He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that

God had sworn with an oath to him, that of his descendants according to the flesh, he would raise Christ up to sit on his throne, 31 he, seeing this in advance, spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in the realm of the dead, nor did his flesh see corruption.

32 "This Jesus God has raised up, and we are all witnesses of this. 33 Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself said,

The Lord said to my Lord,  
Sit at my right hand,  
35 Until I make your enemies your  
footstool.

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made that same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men, brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus

the crucifying and were guilty because of it.

**2:24** Matt 28:6. It was impossible that death should hold the Lord Jesus because it was God's plan that it should not. God had given Him authority over death (John 10:17,18).

**2:25-29** Now Peter shows that Christ's resurrection was in fulfillment of Ps 16:8-11 (see notes there). If Christ had not risen, the Scriptures would have been broken, and this too is impossible (John 10:35; Matt 5:17,18).

**2:27** "The realm of the dead" – in Greek "Hades," in Hebrew "Sheol" – see note at Gen 37:35.

**2:29** Peter shows that Ps 16:8-11 was not fulfilled in David's case (1 Kings 2:10-12). David did not rise from the dead.

**2:30** 2 Sam 7:8-16; Ps 89:3,4,20-37. David was a very great prophet and in his psalms by the inspiration of God's Spirit foretold many things concerning Christ (Luke 24:44). Notes on "prophet" at Gen 20:7.

**2:31** "Christ" – Matt 1:1.

"Realm of the dead" – in Greek "Hades."

**2:32** "Witnesses" – 1:8.

**2:33** Eph 1:19-21; Phil 2:9-11. The "right hand" is the place of honor.

"Holy Spirit" – John 14:16,17,26. The Lord Jesus still "pours out" the Holy Spirit where and when He wills. He has full authority (Matt 28:18; John 17:2).

**2:34,35** This is a quotation from another great psalm concerning Christ – Ps 110:1. This is the third quotation in Peter's brief message. Christ had opened His disciples' understanding and taught them the Scriptures (Luke 24:44,45).

**2:36** The Old Testament Scriptures Peter

quoted show that Jesus is Christ, the Messiah of Israel, the "Lord" in the sense of "master" or "owner" (this is the meaning in Ps 110:1). God appointed His own Son who shares His very nature (John 1:1) to be Messiah and Lord. This was the startling news Peter brought to the nation who had rejected and crucified Christ (John 1:11; 19:6).

**2:37** See 16:29,30. The Holy Spirit working in the minds and consciences of these Jews produced this result. He still works in a similar way today, and only He can do so. Compare John 16:7-11. Their words indicate repentance.

**2:38** Notes on repentance and baptism at Matt 3:2,6; Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3. Unlike John's baptism Christian baptism is associated with the name of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit. See also 19:5. Peter is not teaching that baptism is essential for the forgiveness of sins. He well knew that forgiveness was not dependent on any work or ceremony that men can do. It comes by God's grace and is received through faith. See notes on forgiveness at Matt 16:12; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-35; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9; Isa 55:7.

"For the forgiveness of sins" – the translation of this phrase made by some – "so that your sins may be forgiven" (NIV, 1978 edition) – was not a good translation. That wording suggests that baptism comes before the forgiveness of sins and that those repenting Jews would receive forgiveness by receiving it. But this is not the teaching of the New Testament. For any sinner repenting, forgiveness comes first, then baptism.



Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are far off, *to* as many as the Lord our God will call."

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted, saying, "Save yourselves from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly

received his word were baptized. And the same day there were added *to them* about three thousand souls.

42 And they persevered in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came on every soul. And many wonders and *miraculous* signs were done

The Greek word translated "for" is "eis." It has a wide range of meaning – "for", "in", "into", "unto", "concerning", "about", etc (but "so that" seems a strange translation of this word). Here it should be translated in accordance with the general teaching of the New Testament on the subjects of forgiveness of sins, baptism, and salvation. So a good translation would be "*concerning* the forgiveness of sins." In 2:25 the same Greek word (eis) is translated "concerning" ("about" in the NIV). Forgiveness and baptism are related to each other, but baptism is not needed to bring the forgiveness of sins.

Peter's meaning here seems very clear – "Change your mind about who Jesus is, turn from your wicked rejection of Him as the Lord from heaven, the Messiah of Israel and Son of God. In accordance with His nature, office, and authority ("name") be baptized as an open declaration of your faith in Him, and as a sign of the forgiveness of sins which He freely gives to those who believe in Him."

Baptized for the forgiveness of sins does not mean to be baptized in order to obtain forgiveness of sins. Compare this verse with Matt 3:11. There the same Greek word is used (eis) and is translated "for." It is very clear that John did not baptize people so that they would repent, but because they had already repented (v 6). Now also baptism should be given only to those who have already repented and received the forgiveness of sins. See Acts 10:44-48 – Cornelius and those with him received the Holy Spirit (and so, of course, forgiveness of their sins) before they received baptism.

Baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" means on His authority as Lord and Christ (v 36). Peter was not giving a formula that has to be spoken as people receive baptism. Compare Matt 28:19.

Observe that God gives the Holy Spirit as a "gift." Compare John 7:37-39; 14:16,17; Gal 3:2. Notice also in this verse that Peter does not present Jesus as Saviour but as Lord and Christ (v 36), and demands that they repent of their rejection of Him as such. See the note at 22:10.

**2:39** The promise of God's Spirit was made first to the Jews, but is for all people everywhere. On God's call see Matt 9:13; Rom 1:6; 8:28-30; 1 Cor 1:9,24,26; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:1,4; Col 3:15; 2 Thess 2:14; 1 Tim 6:12; Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 2:9,21; 2 Pet 1:38.

**2:40** Observe here the work of a faithful, Spirit-filled minister of God's Word. Peter was not content to lay out the facts

concerning Christ. He warned people about the dangers of rejecting Him and pleaded with them to receive Him. Every generation is a "perverse generation" (though that one was probably worse than many – Matt 23:33-36; Phil 2:15), and the need to warn and plead with people is always there.

**2:41** Accepting Peter's message means they believed in the Lord Jesus and received Him as Lord and Christ, and Saviour from sin (vs 36,38). Having believed and so received forgiveness and eternal life (John 3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47) they were baptized as a sign and public declaration that they had believed. The 3000 who did so were in Jerusalem among leaders who had rejected and crucified Christ. The evidence for Christ's resurrection was so complete, the witness of the apostles in the Holy Spirit was so powerful, that they believed in spite of all dangers and possible future troubles.

**2:42** "Persevered" – the Greek word means "to be strong towards," and so to "steadfastly continue." This was the evidence that their faith was genuine. See notes at Matt 7:17-27; John 15:1-8; 1 Cor 15:1,2; Col 1:23; Heb 3:6,14.

Observe the four things these believers devoted themselves to. They were not content to merely hear the gospel, say they believed it, and go their own ways. And the apostles were not content to have them do so. Jesus told them to make disciples and to teach them (Matt 28:18-20). Here we see them doing that. They were forming these believers into a local church and giving them every opportunity to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus (2 Pet 3:18). The "apostles' teaching" is what Christ had told them to teach. The whole New Testament is a record of it. Fellowship is also very important for Christian growth and service – fellowship with Christ and His people (1 Cor 1:9; Phil 2:1; 3:10; 1 John 1:3,6,7). It means opening the heart and mind to others and sharing in service, struggles, troubles, joys (Rom 12:15,16). It means loving one another as Christ loved (John 13:34). It means to speak to one another of the things of Christ (Eph 5:19).

"Breaking of bread" probably refers to the Lord's Supper when believers also ate together (v 46; 1 Cor 11:17-26). Hardly anything is more important than prayer for maintaining a spiritual life (see Luke 18:1; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6,7; 1 Thess 5:17,18; Jude 20).

**2:43** "Every soul" may include those outside this new fellowship of believers. God was present with His people in a wonderful



by the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together, and had everything in common. 45 And *they* sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to everyone, as each one had need.

46 And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and broke bread from house to house, and ate their food with gladness and sincerity of heart, 47 praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved.

**3** Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, three in the afternoon. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was being carried to beg from those entering the temple (daily they laid him at the temple gate which is called Beautiful). 3 He saw Peter and John about to go into the temple and asked for money. 4 And Peter, together with John, fixed his eyes on him and said, "Look at us." 5 And he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

manner, and this often brings a sense of fear and awe to people. God gave the wonders and signs to confirm the truth the apostles had been preaching (Heb 2:3,4). They signified that the same Lord Jesus who had done such things in His time on earth was still present and active with His apostles (1:1,2). See notes on miracles and signs at Matt 8:1; John 2:11.

**2:44,45** This was a voluntary expression of love (4:32-35). No one commanded it. Compare 5:1-4. Of course, it has nothing to do with political communism (which has been something imposed on the masses of people by a few leaders, often without the desire or consent of the people). These believers in Christ were showing their oneness which had been created by God's Spirit (John 17:20-23; 1 Cor 12:12,13).

**2:46** They had no church building and met where they could. A meeting once a week was not enough for these fervent believers. They loved to hear more of God's Word, to pray, and have fellowship together. All that came out of an inner state of heart – glad and sincere.

**2:47** Because of the condition of their hearts, praising God was as natural as breathing. Note on praise at Ps 33:1-3. People outside the Church could see their sincerity and love, and viewed them with favor, though the religious leaders of Israel did not (4:1-3). Is it any wonder that every day some believed in the Lord Jesus and joined them in the fellowship? Would not the same thing happen in our day if we were like these early Christians?

**3:1** Three in the afternoon was the time when the Jewish priests in the temple began their evening prayers and offerings.

**3:4** They were trying to prepare the man for something exceptional.

6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaped up and stood, and walked, and went with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 And they knew that it was he who sat begging at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

11 And while the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico that is called Solomon's, greatly astonished. 12 And when Peter saw *this* he responded to the people, "You men of Israel, why are you surprised at this? Or why do you look so intently at us, as though by our own power or holiness we caused this man to walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our

**3:6** We see here the material poverty of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Compare Matt 4:18-22; 19:27; Luke 6:20. In this they were like their Master – Matt 8:20. But they were rich in spiritual power. Often, it seems, that as the possessions and wealth of believers increase their spiritual power decreases. The Lord gave perfect instructions in Matt 6:19-21. "In the name of" means by Christ's authority and power. Peter was acting as Christ's representative – John 14:13,14; 20:21.

**3:7** Peter's action worked together with his words to produce faith and healing in this man.

**3:8** The early disciples healed many people (5:15,16; 8:7; 14:8-10; 19:11,12; 28:8,9). But we nowhere read that they had special meetings for healing. They sometimes healed those they met in their work, or those who came to them while they were engaged in their ministry of preaching and teaching. Notice here that this lame man did not praise Peter, but God. He knew it was God who had done the healing, not Peter.

**3:10** See 2:7,12; 10:45; 12:16; 13:12; Matt 8:27; 9:8,33; 12:23. Are people ever amazed at anything we do or say, seeing the power of God's Spirit at work in us?

**3:11** Solomon's portico or colonnade was on the east side of the outer court of the temple.

**3:12** Peter seized this opportunity to preach the truth of God. He did not point men to himself or try to increase his fame by this event. He knew that God had enabled him to perform the miracle and wanted only God to be honored. See also 14:8-15.

**3:13** The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was a common name in Israel for the one true God (Ex 3:6). The reason can be seen in Genesis chapters 12-50. God glorified Jesus in His resurrection and ascension.

fathers, has glorified his Son Jesus whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be given to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead. Of this we are witnesses. 16 And his name, through faith in his name, has made this man strong, *this man* whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *is granted* through him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as your rulers also *did*. 18 But those things which God foretold through the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ would suffer, he has fulfilled in this way. 19 Repent, therefore, and be converted, so that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing might come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that he might send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you previously. 21 Him heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things, which God has spoken

through the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brethren. You must listen to him in everything he says to you. 23 And it will be *that* every soul who will not listen to that prophet will be destroyed from among the people.'

24 "Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who followed *him*, all who spoke, likewise foretold these days. 25 You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed.' 26 God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him first to you to bless you, by turning each one of you away from his sins."

**4** And as they were speaking to the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple *guard* and the Sadducees came up to them. 2 *They* were upset that they taught the people and preached

"You delivered up and denied" – Peter is only reminding them of something they well knew, with the purpose of bringing them to repentance.

**3:14** "The Holy One and the Just" – a title of the Messiah (7:52; 22:14; 4:27,30; Mark 1:24; Jam 5:6; 1 John 2:20). It also indicates Christ's deity (Rev 15:3,4. Only God is innately holy). Jesus was both the servant of God and God incarnate (references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11). See whom the Jews preferred to Him (Mark 15:6-15). **3:15** "Prince" – the Greek word here signifies an originator, a founder, an author, as well as prince or leader. Jesus is the "author of life." This also indicates Christ's deity. See John 5:19-27.

"Witnesses" – observe again what the apostles called themselves and what they testified about (1:8; 2:32).

**3:16** All their emphasis was on Jesus – His name and His power. Let us follow their example.

**3:17** John 15:21; 1 Cor 2:7,8; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 4:18.

**3:18** Luke 24:25-27,44-47.

**3:19** "Repent" – 2:38; Matt 3:2; Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30. This is essential for anyone who would have his sins "blotted out" – erased from the record.

**3:20** This verse with the preceding one states that God has appointed Christ as the Messiah of Israel (2:36), and seems to indicate that Christ will not return to be their king until Israel is willing to repent and receive Him.

**3:21** God has set a time for everything, and nothing will take place until His time comes (1:7).

"Restoration of all things" – 1:6; Matt 19:28; Rom 8:18-23; Isa 11:1-16; Ezek

37:1-28; etc.

**3:22,23** Deut 18:15,18,19. Peter means that this promised prophet is the Lord Jesus. Come to pass (KJV) is not in Greek.

**3:24** Peter (as Christ Himself did) emphasized that Christ's coming was according to God's promises in the Old Testament (Matt 5:17; Luke 24:25-27,44-47; John 5:39).

**3:25** By "you" Peter meant the Jews. Compare Rom 9:4,5. They were the physical descendants of Abraham to whom God gave the promises of blessing (Gen 12:3).

**3:26** "His Son Jesus" – Peter affirms that the blessing promised through Abraham has been brought to men by the Lord Jesus. See also Gal 3:6-9,14. God demonstrated this by raising Him from the dead. Then He sent Him first to Israel His chosen people (13:46; Rom 1:16). The way He sent Him was by sending His Spirit to speak through His apostles.

"To bless you" – this is what God loves to do and why He sent His Son into the world. Observe here what is meant by God's blessing – being turned from all sin and evil. Compare Matt 1:21; Gal 1:3,4; Titus 2:13,14; 1 Pet 2:24. This is the greatest of all God's blessings and without it there is no permanent blessing at all. Notes on blessing and blessed at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12; Luke 11:28; Gal 3:9,14; Eph 1:3.

**4:1** When Jesus was on earth the priests of the temple were among His worst enemies (Matt 16:21; 20:18; 21:15,23,59; 27:1,12,41,62). The apostles also had to face their enmity.

"Sadducees" – Matt 3:7.

**4:2** The Sadducees did not believe there was such a thing as a resurrection from the

through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they seized them and put *them* in custody to the next day; for it was now evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand.

5 And it happened on the next day that their rulers, elders and scribes, 6 and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all the relatives of the high priest, gathered together in Jerusalem. 7 And when they had placed *Peter and John* among them, they asked, "By what power, or by what name, have you done this?"

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "You rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 if we this day are being examined about the good deed done to a helpless man, and how he was healed, 10 be it known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead, by him this man stands here before you whole.

11 "This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is no salvation through any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated (23:8).

**4:3** This speaks of the kind of nation Israel was then – men were jailed and faced death for delivering the best news the world ever had (5:17,18; 12:1-4). It is still happening today in some nations of the world.

**4:4** See 2:41.

**4:6** Matt 26:3,57; Luke 3:2; John 18:13,24.

**4:7** They doubtless knew the answer to their question, but were looking for ways to accuse them.

**4:8** Peter took this question as an opportunity to preach Christ. Compare Matt 10:16-20.

**4:9** See how he points out their character to them – they were the sort who would accuse people for showing kindness to cripples!

**4:10** See 3:6,12. These leaders had hoped they were rid of Jesus once and for all (Matt 27:65-67; 27:22,23,62-64).

**4:11** Ps 118:22; Matt 21:42-44.

**4:12** The apostles taught this to others because Jesus had taught it to them. See John 14:6; 10:7,8; 3:16-19,36. Salvation is one of the great words of the New Testament. It includes the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47), the new birth (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8), liberation from the bondage of sin (John 8:32-36), being counted righteous by God (Rom 1:16; 3:21-28; 4:7,8), and eternal life (John 3:16) in the presence of God forever (John 14:3; etc).

**4:13** Their courage was a result of the knowledge of Christ's resurrection and the filling of the Holy Spirit. Nothing else is a

cated and untrained men, they were amazed and understood that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go out of the council *meeting*, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them *is* evident to everyone living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. 17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us strictly warn them not to speak from now on to anyone in this name."

18 And they called them and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

21 So when they had threatened them some more, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people. For everyone glorified God for what was done. 22 For the man on whom this miracle of healing was performed was over forty years old.

23 And being let go, they went to their own *group*, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 And when they heard

sufficient explanation. Just after Christ's death they were far from courageous (John 20:19). Once Peter could not face up to a servant girl (Matt 26:69,70). Now he can face with great boldness the wrath of Israel's wicked leaders and death itself (v 29; 5:29-33,41,42). This is what Christ can do and does do with ordinary people. And these leaders recognized the source of their teaching and boldness – the Lord Jesus.

**4:16** See the hardness of heart of these men. They knew the miracle had taken place, but refused to believe in Christ who had performed it through the disciples. Compare John 15:24.

**4:17** "This name" – they meant Jesus, but they did not want to utter His name.

**4:18** How futile this command to Spirit-filled disciples! Can the wind be stopped by holding up a hand?

**4:19** See 5:29. Christians should obey their rulers in all things except when their commands are contrary to God's Word (Rom 13:1,2). In such case they must obey God and take the consequences.

**4:20** A Spirit-filled disciple of the Lord Jesus can no more refrain from speaking for Him than breathing. Compare 2 Cor 5:14; Jer 20:9.

**4:21,22** The same event caused some to make threats, others to praise God.

**4:23** "Their own group" was the group of believers in Christ.

**4:24** Their prayer was to the Creator of the universe (Genesis chapter 1; John 1:1-3;

that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, "Lord, you *are* God who has made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who through the mouth of your servant David has said,

Why did the nations rage,  
and the people plot vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up,  
and the rulers were gathered together  
against the Lord,  
and against his Christ.

27 "For truly against your holy son Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, gathered together, 28 to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined beforehand should be done. 29 And now, Lord, see their threatenings, and grant to your servants that with all boldness they may speak your word, 30 by stretching forth your hand to heal, and *giving power* that *miraculous* signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy son Jesus."

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they had met together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Heb 1:1,2), the only God there is.

**4:25,26** Observe their conviction that it was God's Spirit who spoke through David. They had this teaching from the Lord Jesus (Matt 15:3,6; 22:43; John 10:35; Luke 24:45). The quotation is from Ps 2:1,2. See notes there.

**4:27** Luke 23:6-13.

**4:28** See 2:23. "Determined beforehand" in Greek is the same word translated "pre-destinated" in Rom 8:29,30 and Eph 1:5,11, and "ordained" in 1 Cor 2:7 – the only other times in Greek the word is found in the New Testament.

**4:29** Verse 13.

**4:30** Though it meant much trouble for them, they prayed that God would continue to do through them what He had been doing. All this is strong evidence that they knew Jesus had risen from the dead, and that they themselves had nothing to do with the removal of His body from the tomb (Matt 27:64; 28:6; etc).

**4:31** See 2:2-4. They were filled again. The filling of God's Spirit is not a once for all thing that cannot be repeated.

**4:32-35** See 2:44,45. They did this, notice, because they were "of one heart and one soul." They had the same thoughts and purposes about Christ and His work and loved fellow believers as themselves.

**4:33** So much for the threats of Israel's religious leaders. Observe again that the preaching of Christ's resurrection was at the heart of their message – 1:22; 2:24,32; 3:15,26; 4:2,10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30;

32 And the large number of those who believed were all of one heart and one soul. None *of them* said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there any among them who was in need, for all who had lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds from the things that were sold, 35 and laid *them* at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each one as he had need.

36 And Joses, whom the apostles named Barnabas (that is, being translated, Son of Encouragement), a Levite from the country of Cyprus, 37 had land *but* sold *it* and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

**5** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 and kept back *part* of the money, his wife also being aware *of it*, and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the money for the land? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was *the*

17:18,31; 23:6.

**4:36** See 9:27; 11:22-25,30; 12:25; 13:1,2.

"Levite" means of the tribe of Levi, a tribe of Israel set apart by God for the service of the temple (Num 3:5-10). Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean Sea west of Lebanon.

**5:1,2** God's church was holy in conduct, filled with His Spirit and witnessing. Nothing could stop its work, its increase – nothing but sin. Here was an attempt by Satan to introduce sinful ways into the church. Evidently, Ananias and his wife told the apostles that they were giving the full amount they had received (v 8). They wanted the reputation for being generous without actually being generous. They wanted others to think they were more spiritual than they actually were. This is hypocrisy. Compare Matt 6:2-4; 23:5-7.

**5:3,4** There was no requirement for them to sell their property and give any of the amount to the Church (2:44,45). Observe that the lie Ananias told came from Satan. See John 8:44. Satan suggested it and Ananias gave in to the suggestion. Notice too that to lie to God's people is the same as lying to God. In fact, all we do to them is as if we did it to Him. See 9:4,5; Matt 25:34-46; Mark 9:37. On lying see notes and references at Ex 20:16; Ps 5:6; 15:2; 51:6; Prov 6:16-19; 12:22; Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9; Rev 21:8,27; 22:15. Let everyone who is tempted to lie take into account the above facts. Lying is a very foolish and wicked and dangerous thing.

*money* not in your control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

5 And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and breathed his last. And great fear came on all those who heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wrapped him up, carried *him* outside, and buried *him*.

7 And it was about three hours later that his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?"

And she said, "Yes, for so much."

9 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and will carry you out."

10 Then she fell down immediately at his feet, and breathed her last. And the young men came in, found her dead, and carried *her* out and buried *her* beside her husband. 11 And great fear came on the whole church, and on

everyone who heard these things.

12 And many *miraculous* signs and wonders were performed at the hands of the apostles among the people. And they were all together with one accord in Solomon's Portico. 13 And among the rest no *man* dared to join them, but the people regarded them highly. 14 And more *and more* believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. 15 So then they brought the sick out into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the very least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also crowds came from the cities around Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits. And every one of them was healed.

17 Then the high priest and all those who were with him (who were of the sect of the Sadducees) rose up, filled with indignation, 18 and seized the apostles, and put them in the public prison. 19 But at night the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, 20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak

**5:5** The death of Ananias was God's judgment on him, not a result of anything Peter did. Lying and hypocrisy are like a deadly poison. Ananias's sin was a serious threat to the life of the church, and the situation demanded a severe remedy.

"Fear" – fear of offending God and of the punishment hypocrisy and lying deserve, is a very healthy thing. See notes on the fear of God at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**5:9** God revealed to Peter that His judgment was going to fall on her also. Peter gave her an opportunity to change her story and repent, but she lied to his face. Observe that their sin was testing the Spirit of God. See Deut 6:16; Matt 4:7; Ex 17:7; Ps 95:7-11.

**5:11** When Christians are afraid to sin the church will be holy and surge forward in its work. In the very beginning of this era of grace and the Holy Spirit, God was revealing that grace does not mean that sin is something that should be overlooked and go unpunished. He has given here once for all an example indicating what He thinks of hypocrisy, deceit and lying in the church – in God's eyes they are worthy of death. This does not mean that God put to death every person in the church who was guilty of these. One example was enough to put fear into the whole group of believers. It should be enough for us also. What else should be required for us to learn that God hates all lying and deceitfulness, and that anyone who practices such things is in grave danger?

At the beginning of the old dispensation of law also God set forth an example of what He thought of disobedience to it. See Num 15:32-36. At the beginning of the conquest of Canaan also God set forth an example.

See Joshua chapter 7. Sin tolerated in a local church is the greatest danger to that church. It is like cancer which can eventually kill the whole body.

The word "church" in this verse means the group of believers called out from the surrounding people to be the people of Christ. Note at Matt 16:18.

**5:12** See 2:43; 3:11.

**5:13** Verse 11.

**5:14** A holy, witnessing church will see sinners converted to Christ. After the judgment on Ananias and his wife the church moved forward again to new victories. Compare Joshua chapter 8.

**5:15** Neither Peter nor his shadow had any power to heal (3:12). God chose this way to honor the apostles in the eyes of the people and to establish the truth of their teaching. Now their teaching has long since been established and the New Testament given to us. There is no longer any need to establish the truth again through someone else, or to give signs and wonders and miracles to do it.

**5:16** Here the gospel of Christ begins to spread beyond Jerusalem.

"Unclean spirits" – note at Matt 4:24.

**5:17** "Sadducees" – Matt 3:7. Note on jealousy and envy at Matt 27:18; Prov 27:4; Gal 5:26.

**5:18** See 4:3.

**5:19** "Angel of the Lord" – notes at Matt 1:20; Gen 16:7. God sends angels to minister to His people (Heb 1:14). Here is just one example of what they can do. But they do not always deliver believers from trouble (12:1,2; 24:27; 2 Cor 11:23-27).

**5:20** They were not delivered so that they could retreat in fear to their homes and keep



to the people all the words of this life."

21 And when they heard *that*, they went into the temple early in the morning and taught.

But the high priest, and those who were with him, came and called together the Council and all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 23 saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the keepers *were* standing outside at the doors, but when we opened *them*, we did not find anyone inside." 24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple *guard*, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered where this would lead.

25 Then someone came and told them: "Look, the men you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." 26 Then the captain with the officers went and brought them without *using* force; for they were afraid of the people, that they might throw stones at them.

27 And when they had brought them, they placed *them* before the council, and the high priest asked them, 28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And, look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood on us."

29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered

and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed by hanging *him* on a tree. 31 God exalted him to his right hand as Prince and Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things, and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

33 When they heard *that*, they were enraged and plotted to kill them. 34 Then a man stood up in the council *meeting*, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, respected by all the people, and gave an order that the apostles be put outside for a little while. 35 Then *he* said to them, "You men of Israel, take care to yourselves what you intend to do about these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all those who followed him were scattered, and *it* came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all those who obeyed him were scattered. 38 And now I say to you, withdraw from these men, and let them alone. For if their purpose or work is of men, it will come to nothing. 39 But if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it, and perhaps you will be found even to fight against God."

quiet. Here the gospel is called "This life" – it brings new life to people (John 3:16; 5:24), and causes them to live in a new way (2 Cor 5:17).

**5:21** Obedience was the mark of their faith – obedience at any cost.

"Council" – the Sanhedrin – Matt 5:22.

**5:26** Matt 21:46; Luke 22:2. These religious leaders still cared nothing for justice. They tried to rule but were ruled themselves by envy, hatred and fear.

**5:28** "This name", "this man" – Jesus. Note at 4:17. How foolishly and unreasonably they accused the apostles. They themselves were already fully guilty. See Matt 27:24,25.

**5:29** See 4:19. Here is a principle that should govern every believer in Christ when there is a conflict between God's commands and men's. Obedience meant for them persecution, imprisonment and, at last, death, but they held firm to this principle.

**5:30** See 2:23; 4:10. Peter uses "tree" for the cross (see also 10:39; Gal 3:13; 3:29; 1 Pet 2:24). Compare Deut 21:22.

**5:31** See 2:33-36. "Prince" here means "Leader" or "Head." Observe again that repentance and forgiveness go together, and both are a gift Christ gives (2:38; Luke 24:47; 2 Tim 2:25).

**5:32** See 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33. The Holy Spirit witnessed by doing miracles through the apostles, by giving the apostles authority and power in their witness, and by speaking to the hearts of those who heard it.

Observe the connection between obedience and receiving God's Spirit. In other places we are told the Spirit comes by asking (Luke 11:13), and by faith (Gal 3:14). Peter is speaking of the obedience of faith in the Lord Jesus. See John 6:29; Rom 1:5. To believe in Christ is to obey God's will. Faith is not possible except when there is a decision to submit to Christ and a willingness to obey Him. Faith does not arise in a rebellious heart that will not yield to God. God gives His Spirit to those who are willing to obey Him, and in order that they might obey Him. See also Matt 7:21; Rom 10:9,10. **5:33** This is the unreasonable reaction of men who loved darkness rather than light (John 3:19,20; 10:31; 12:10,11; 15:18-20).

**5:34** "Pharisee" – Matt 3:7. Gamaliel was the guru of Saul of Tarsus before Saul became Paul the apostle (22:3).

**5:36,37** These are events not recorded in the Bible.

**5:38,39** God used this advice to cool the anger of the Jewish leaders and to free the apostles from death at that time. But actually Gamaliel was not right in his first statement. Many systems of human thought and religion, and many works of Satan go on for centuries, and seem to succeed and increase. But Gamaliel was right from the standpoint of eternity. Everything that has its source in mere man will eventually come to nothing (compare Isa 2:10-22).



40 And they agreed with him. And when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded them not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

**6** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint among the Grecian *Jews* against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve called the whole group of the disciples *together*, and said, "It is not *agreeable to* reason that we leave the word of God, and serve *at* tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, look among yourselves for seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,

Gamaliel's words in v 39 are always true, and he aptly described what many did then (and still do) – "fighting against God."

**5:40** This was a severe punishment. They gave them 39 lashes with a whip on their backs (Matt 27:26; 2 Cor 11:24).

**5:41** What a difference it makes to be right with God and to love the Lord Jesus Christ! Such people can count shame and disgrace as joy (John 16:33; Matt 5:11,12; Jam 1:2; 1 Peter 4:12-16). Here these apostles were beyond humiliation and the pride that brings the feeling of humiliation.

**5:42** Threats of death, severe punishment, imprisonment – none of these can stop the Spirit-filled servant of the Lord Jesus (4:20; 8:1,4; 14:19,20; 16:22-31).

**6:1** Observe that those in the early church were called disciples. See notes at Matt 10:1; 28:19. We should not imagine that they were perfect people. Here we see them divided into two camps. The Grecian Jews here were Christians who spoke Greek instead of Aramaic (or Hebrew) and who had probably been born, or lived at one time, in other countries. Aramaic was the common spoken language in Jerusalem. It was similar to Hebrew. Those Christians who spoke it were discriminating against those of Grecian background. Some believers were forgetting the unity once enjoyed (2:44-47), and following their fallen nature (compare 1 Cor 3:1-4).

Discrimination against other Christians because of language, color, race, nation, social or financial position, or any other thing is wrong. It comes out of the sinful nature of man. In Christ none of those things has any importance (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). If they cause us to discriminate against fellow believers and form little cliques with those of our own background, we are sinning against Christ who abolished these distinctions and commanded love and unity to us all (John 13:34; Eph 4:3).

whom we may appoint to this duty. 4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

5 And these words pleased the whole group, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas a convert from Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles. And when *the apostles* had prayed, they laid hands on them.

7 And the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly, and a large group of the priests was obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. 9 Then there arose certain men belonging to the synagogue that is called *the Synagogue* of the Freedmen, and Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those of Cilicia and Asia, and disputed with Stephen.

**6:2** "Twelve" – the eleven original apostles and Matthias (1:26). They knew that if they distributed the food themselves they would be just and fair to all, but God had given them a different ministry and they dared not leave it (compare Rom 12:3-8).

**6:3** Observe that those in the church were to choose these men; the apostles did not appoint them on their own. But is it necessary to be "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" to "serve at tables"? Yes, if it is to be done as God wants it done. To do any service for God as it ought to be done requires wisdom and His Spirit's fullness. No one can live an hour as God wants him to live without these. So Eph 5:18; Jam 1:5.

**6:4** Prayer and the Word of God are the two chief things for all whom God has called to preach. Either one without the other will result in a maimed ministry.

**6:5** "Convert" – this means that he was first a convert to Judaism then to Christianity.

**6:6** The apostles showed their approval of the choice of the people in this way and set them apart for the work.

**6:7** If Jewish priests wanted to become followers of Christ they had to renounce their former views of Him and forsake the views of the high priest who still opposed Him. That they did so indicates how powerful the evidence was for the resurrection of Christ and for the coming of God's Spirit.

**6:8** The man chosen to "serve at tables" soon discovered other gifts in himself. God may use a person in marvelous ways who is faithful in some ordinary task, and there is no telling what may eventually be the ministry of a man filled with God's Spirit.

**6:9** These were Jews who had once lived in those foreign parts.

"Freedmen" – this is a better translation for today than "Libertines" (KJV). The Greek word means people set free from slavery. The usual meaning of the word "libertine" today is someone who is sexually immoral and promiscuous, who acts without restraint.

10 But they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke.

11 Then they privately instigated men to say: "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and *against* God."

12 And they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the Law, and *they* came up and seized him, and brought *him* to the Council. 13 Then *they* produced false witnesses who said, "This man never stops speaking blasphemous words against this holy place, and the Law. 14 For we heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered to us."

15 And everyone who sat in the council, looking steadily at him, saw his face as *if* it were the face of an angel.

**7** Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?" 2 And he said, "Men, brethren, and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him, 'Go away from your country, and from your people, and come to the land that I will show you.'

4 "Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. From there, when his father died, *God* caused him to move to this land where you now live. 5 And he gave him no inheritance in it, no, not *enough* to set his foot on. But he promised that he would give it as a possession to him and to his descendants after him, when *Abraham still* had no child. 6 And God spoke in this way, that his descendants would be strangers in a foreign land, and that they would

enslave them and mistreat *them* for four hundred years. 7 And I will judge the nation to which they are enslaved, God said, 'and afterwards they will come out and serve me in this place.' 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so *Abraham* became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day. And Isaac *became the father of* Jacob, and Jacob *became the father of* the twelve patriarchs.

9 "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him, 10 and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favour and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his house.

11 "Now a famine came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great trouble. And our fathers found no food. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers the first *time*. 13 And during the second *time* Joseph became known to his brothers and Joseph's people became known to Pharaoh. 14 Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his family to *Egypt*, seventy-five people. 15 So Jacob went down to Egypt and *there* died, he and our fathers, 16 and were carried over to Shechem, and placed in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor *the father of* Shechem.

17 "But when the time drew near to *fulfil* the promise that God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and increased in number in Egypt, 18 until another king arose who did not know Joseph. 19 He dealt treacherously with our people and mistreated our fathers, making them throw

**6:11** Being defeated in argument they used the tricks evil men often use (Matt 26:59; John 8:48,59; etc).

**6:12** "Council" – the Sanhedrin – Matt 5:22.

**6:14** Compare Matt 26:61.

**6:15** It was plain to them all that Stephen was innocent, sincere and powerful. But these haters of truth were concerned only in getting rid of him. Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

**7:1** In the speech which follows Stephen does not refer directly to their accusations. Instead he gives a brief account of Israel's history beginning with the father of the nation, Abraham, and gives special emphasis to Moses through whom God gave His law. In this way he answers the charges that he had spoken against God, Moses, the law and the temple (6:11,13,14) – he shows that his teaching was in accordance with the Old Testament. All along he has one end in view – to show that the nation was always rebellious against its God-appointed leaders, and that this rebellious spirit was displayed to the full in their murder of the Lord Jesus. Stephen showed very great courage in speaking like this before the religious court

of the Jews which had condemned Jesus to death. The explanation of his boldness is found in 6:5.

**7:2** "God of glory" – a name found in Ps 29:3. The story of Abraham is found in Genesis chapters 11-25.

**7:5** Gen 12:7; 15:2-6; 17:8.

**7:6,7** Gen 15:13-16.

**7:8** Gen 17:9-14; 21:1-5; 25:26; 35:23-26.

"Patriarchs" – the sons of Jacob, the forefathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

**7:9** Gen 37:4,11,28.

**7:10** Gen 41:39-43.

**7:11,12** Gen 41:53 - 42:3.

**7:13** Gen 43:15; 45:1,2,16.

**7:14** Compare Gen 46:26. There the number in Jacob's family in Canaan is given as sixty-six, apart from his son's wives. Counting the nine wives of Jacob's sons still living in Canaan the figure comes to seventy-five. (Judah's wife was dead – Gen 38:12, and, according to tradition, Simeon's wife also).

**7:15** Gen 46:5-7.

**7:16** Gen 23:14-18.

**7:17-19** Ex 1:6-14.

out their infants so they would not live.

20 "At that time Moses was born. *He* was a very fine *child*, and nurtured in his father's house for three months. 21 And when he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was powerful in words and in deeds.

23 "And when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one *of them* suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. 25 For he supposed his brethren would understand that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to make peace between them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you harm one another?'

27 "But the one who was harming his neighbour shoved him away and said, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Will you kill me, as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' 29 At this word Moses fled, and was a foreigner in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

30 "And when forty years had passed, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw *it*, he was amazed at the sight. And as he drew near to look *at it*, the voice of the Lord came to him, 32 *saying*, 'I *am* the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Then Moses trembled, and did not dare to look.

33 "Then the Lord said to him, 'Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have seen, yes, I have seen the oppression of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'

**7:20-22** Ex 2:1-10.

**7:23-29** Ex 2:11-15, 21-22; 18:3.

**7:25** This is a theme Stephen now begins to emphasize – the people of Israel revealed in their history that they were often ignorant of God's plans and rejected the leaders God appointed for them.

**7:30-34** Ex 3:1-10.

**7:35** Notes on this angel at Gen 16:7; Ex 3:2.

**7:36** This verse covers Exodus chapters 7 to 17 and parts of Numbers chapters 14 to 21.

**7:37** Deut 18:15 – this prophet was the Lord Jesus.

**7:38** Far from speaking against Moses (6:11), Stephen honored him. And he calls the law "living oracles" – compare John 6:63; Lev 18:5.

35 "This *is that* Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' He *is the one* God sent *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 He brought them out, after showing wonders and *miraculous* signs in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years.

37 "This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brethren. You must listen to him.' 38 This is he who was in the church in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us.

39 "Him our fathers would not obey, but rejected, and in their hearts turned back again to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us. For *as for* this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idol, and were happy with the works of their own hands. 42 Then God turned away and gave them up to worship the *starry* host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the Prophets,

O house of Israel,  
did you offer to me slain beasts and  
sacrifices *during* forty years in the  
wilderness?

43 You even took the tabernacle of  
Moloch,  
and the star of your god Remphan,  
images which you made to worship.  
So I will carry you away beyond  
Babylon.

44 "Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, as *God* had appointed, telling Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen. 45 Having received it in turn, our fathers brought it with Joshua to the land of

**7:39** See notes on vs 1, 25. Stephen will show that as Israel dealt with the prophet Moses so also they dealt with the great prophet Moses foretold (v 37). Though the people of Israel left Egypt their thoughts and desires were still there (Ex 16:1-3; Num 14:1-4).

**7:40, 41** Ex 32:1-6.

**7:42, 43** Stephen is referring to the Greek translation of the Hebrew of Amos 5:25-27, but does not give an exact quotation. His purpose was simply to show that God gave up Israel to false worship because of their disobedience and rebelliousness. See notes on the worship of stars at Deut 4:19; 17:3-5; Ezek 8:16-18; Gen 1:14-18.

**7:44** Ex 25:1-9.

**7:45** Joshua chapter 3; 18:1; 1 Sam 2:22; 2 Sam 6:17.

the Gentiles, whom God drove out from the presence of our fathers until the days of David. 46 He found favour with God, and wanted to see *to the building of* a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 47 *But it was* Solomon *who* built him a house.

48 "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands; as the prophet says,

49 'Heaven *is* my throne,  
and the earth is my footstool.  
What house will you build me?  
says the Lord,  
Or what *is* the place of my rest?  
50 Has not my hand made all these  
things?'

51 "You stiffnecked *people*, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. You *are* just like your fathers. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they

killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered. 53 You have received the Law administered by angels, and have not kept *it*."

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed *their* teeth at him. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God."

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed at him all together, 58 and dragged *him* out of the city, and pelted *him* with stones. And the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul.

59 And they stoned Stephen *as he was* calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 And he knelt down and cried out with a loud

**7:46** 2 Sam 7:1-5. Note on "God of Jacob" at Ps 146:5.

**7:47** 1 Kings chapter 6.

**7:48-50** The Jews attached great importance to the temple in Jerusalem. One of the charges they made against Stephen was that he spoke against it (6:13,14). Evidently, he had been speaking in a way that indicated his conviction that the temple itself was not the important thing but the God whose name was there, and that lives of holiness and obedience were greater than ritual and ceremonies (compare Isa 1:12-20). He here quotes from Isa 66:1,2 to show that his views were in accordance with the Old Testament. Those verses conclude with the words "But to this man I will look: to him who is lowly and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word." Stephen does not quote these words but they may well have been in his mind. Did he not see the huge contrast between the kind of person described in those words and the Jewish leaders before Him? It seems that this (and the inspiration of God's Spirit in his heart) accounts for the sudden outburst against them beginning in the next verse.

**7:51** Stephen resolved to speak the truth as the Lord Jesus had done, regardless of the consequences. Stiffnecked means stubborn and rebellious.

"Uncircumcised in heart and ears" – see Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; Jer 4:4. Their hearts were not made new, so they were unable to hear the Word of God and obey it (Jer 6:10; Matt 13:14,15). To say they were like their fathers (ancestors) was to condemn them utterly (vs 39-43; Matt 23:32). Charging them with resisting God's Spirit brings to mind Ps 106:33. This was always the great sin of Israel and these Jewish leaders knew that – but they did not want to apply this truth to themselves.

**7:52** Matt 23:33-39. The Just One is Christ (3:14).

**7:53** They accused him of speaking against

the law (6:13), but they, professing to honor the law, had broken it repeatedly and, as it were, trampled it under their feet (Matt 23:1-3; 15:3-9; Rom 2:17-24).

**7:54** He may have had more to say but they didn't wait to hear it. Compare 5:33; Ps 35:16; John 3:20. Those who gnash their teeth at God's messengers will one day gnash them for another reason (Matt 8:12; 13:42).

**7:55** The fullness of God's Spirit is what made Stephen the fearless man of God he was and caused him to speak as he did (6:5,8,10). God gave him a special vision at the time of his persecution and death.

**7:56** "Look" – did he think others could see what he did (it being real to him)? It would seem that heaven is so near that men could look right into it if God gave them the ability (1:9).

"Son of man" – Matt 8:20. Compare these words of Stephen with Jesus' own words before the same Council (Matt 26:64).

**7:57** Learned, religious men when faced with unwanted truth can behave as violently, recklessly and unjustly as anyone else. These men could not stand to hear words that honored Jesus whom they hated (John 15:18-25). So they refused to hear the very thing they needed to hear and believe.

**7:58** They had no right under Roman rule to put anyone to death (John 18:31), but in their rage they ignored this. They thought (or professed to think) that Stephen was a blasphemer and that it was their duty to put him to death (John 16:2; Lev 24:13-16). The "witnesses" were those who had heard and accused him. Here we see Saul in their camp, but soon he would be proclaiming the truth that then he wanted to overthrow.

**7:59** Luke 23:46. He evidently believed in the deity of the Lord Jesus. Who but God could receive his spirit (Ps 31:5; Eccl 12:7).

**7:60** Luke 23:34. The fullness of God's Spirit

voice, "Lord, do not put this sin to their account." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

**8** And Saul consented to his death. And at that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem, and except for the apostles, they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. **2** And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial* and made great lamentation over him. **3** As for Saul, he raised havoc in the church. Going into every house and dragging off men and women, he committed *them* to prison.

**4** Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. **5** Then Philip went down to a city of Samaria, and preached Christ to them. **6** And the people with one mind gave attention to the things Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. **7** For unclean

spirits, crying with loud voices, came out of many that had been possessed *by them*, and many were healed who had been paralyzed and was lame. **8** And there was great joy in that city.

**9** But there was a certain man named Simon who had been practicing sorcery in that city, amazing the people of Samaria, and claiming that he was someone great. **10** They all, from the least to the greatest, gave him *their* attention, saying, "This man is the great power of God." **11** And they held him in high regard, because for a long time he had amazed them with magic arts. **12** But when they believed Philip as *he* preached the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. **13** Then Simon himself also believed. And when he was baptized, he stayed close to Philip, and was astonished, seeing the miracles and signs

made him like the Lord Jesus in this also. He fulfilled the law of love Jesus taught in Matt 5:43-48. It should be an encouragement to all of us that Stephen in a very short time became like the Lord Jesus in so many ways. He is a striking example of the truth of 2 Cor 3:18. "Sleep" is

sometimes used for death in the Bible – the body sleeps, the spirit goes to God (John 11:11,14; 1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:14). **8:1** Evidently the Jewish leaders turned against the advice of Gamaliel (5:38,39), and decided that force was the only way to stop the spread of Christ's Gospel. And Saul, who had been a student of Gamaliel (22:3), was one of the chief instruments of the persecution which followed (v 3; 9:1,2). Saul's "consent" to the murder of Stephen does not mean necessarily that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish council. It may mean nothing more than the fact that in his heart he was in full agreement with it. It is interesting that the apostles remained in Jerusalem. Perhaps Christ's enemies, though eager to destroy Christ's lambs, were afraid to fall on the shepherds He had appointed for them.

**8:3** "Into every house" – compare 20:20,21. **8:4** Did the leaders think that the wind of trouble would blow out the fire in the church? Instead, it scattered the fire, and flames began to leap up in many parts of the land. The history of the church reveals that persecution does not stop Christ's witnesses but actually can aid in the spread of the gospel. Persecution endured joyfully reveals the sincerity of believers, the reality of their faith and life in Christ (5:40-42). **8:5** This Philip was one of those chosen with Stephen to "serve at tables" (6:1-6), not the apostle Philip. The note on Stephen at 6:8 applies also to him. Notes on Samaria at Matt 10:5; John 4:4; 2 Kings 17:24. The Samaritans had been prepared for this by the visit there of the Lord Jesus Himself (John 4:4-42). This was a big step in the spread of the gospel – for the first time (as

far as we know) Christ's disciples preached outside the Jewish community. Thus they began to fulfill Acts 1:8.

**8:6** Note on "signs" at John 2:11. They had the result in Samaria that God intended – they made people eager to hear the preaching of the gospel.

**8:7** Note on unclean spirits at Matt 4:24.

**8:9-11** Simon was a person, it seems, very like some of the so-called godmen of India. Consider the following. He practiced magical arts and did (or pretended to do) wonders and miracles (compare Matt 24:24; Ex 7:22; 8:7). He put himself forward as some great one. He accepted honors that should be given only to God. And he was able to impress and amaze everyone including men in high positions.

There were great differences between him and Philip. He proclaimed himself, Philip proclaimed Christ (vs 3,12). He preached his own thoughts, Philip preached the Word of God (v 14). He wanted to be "great." Philip sought no greatness for himself but only for Christ (see Matt 20:25-28; Jer 45:5). Another difference was that the things Simon performed were not real miracles but only magician's tricks, and were doubtless for the purpose of amazing others. Philip performed real miracles which displayed the power of God, and he had the purpose of helping others in their illness and misery (v 7). Simon himself could see this difference (v 13).

**8:12** Observe that this says "they believed Philip," not "they believed in Christ." They believed that Philip was a man of God and that he was teaching the truth, and they were willing to join the followers of Christ. But whether they came to a living faith in the Lord Jesus at that time is not clearly revealed. But we know they did not yet receive the Holy Spirit (v 16).

**8:13** It is not said of Simon either that he believed "in Christ." It seems clear from vs 20-23 that he did not. He was only greatly impressed by the power of God that Philip



which were done.

14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who, when they arrived, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 (for as yet he had not come down on any of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me also this power, *so* that everyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

20 But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 You have neither part nor share in this matter, for your heart

is not right in the sight of God. 22 Therefore, repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to God. Perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness, and the bondage of sin."

24 Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of these things which you have spoken come upon me."

25 And when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

26 And the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise, and go southward to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is *in* the desert." 27 And he arose and went, and *there* saw a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasure. He had come

displayed. Not everyone who takes baptism is a true believer in Jesus. Being baptized by a man of God does not make a person a man of God or even a believer.

**8:14** The apostles, of course, wanted to know what the real state of things was in Samaria and put their stamp of approval on any work truly of God.

**8:15-17** It seems that here is an instance of Peter using the "keys" of the kingdom of heaven and once and for all opening the door to the Samaritans as he did to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and to the Gentiles in chapter 10. See note on Matt 16:19. It was very important to establish the authority of the original apostles of Christ as the bearers of the true Gospel. This is one way God chose to do this – by giving the Holy Spirit by the laying on of their hands (the giving of signs, miracles and wonders was another way – Heb 2:4).

Now the authority of the apostles has long been established, the gospel has been fully revealed and written down for everyone in all eras, and the kingdom of God is opened once and for all to every kind of people. The apostles exercised their authority, founded the New Testament Church and gave us God's Word for the Church. They alone were God's chosen instruments for this, and God worked with them in special ways to demonstrate this. They had their work and they finished it. It does not need to be done again, and it cannot be done again. See also notes at 2 Cor 12:12.

There are now no authoritative and inspired apostles, and there is no need for one to lay hands on anyone to receive God's Spirit. God's Spirit is now received directly from God when a person receives the Lord Jesus by faith (1 Cor 12:12,13; Eph 1:13; Gal 3:14). If anyone is afraid he does not have God's Spirit he should go directly to God about this matter (Luke 11:13). All believers have full access to God even as the apostles had then (Rom 5:1,2).

**8:18,19** Since Simon offered money it is likely that he thought he could make money if he had this ability. At least he would gain more power over people and more fame. There is a word now in English that comes from this man and his request. The word is "simony" and means the buying or selling of high positions in the church, the object being to gain influence or power or to make money. It is similar to what now goes on in some Christian circles – men giving bribes to others to vote them into places of leadership in the church. This is a totally corrupt practice which can never have the blessing of God.

**8:20-23** These harsh words indicate how terrible Simon's sinful desire was. They also show that he had not yet repented, trusted in Christ and been made right with God. True believers will not perish with their money (John 10:28), and new believers are not like Simon in the other ways Peter describes him.

**8:24** This does not say Simon repented. He was fearful of punishment, but this is not the same thing as repentance (Matt 3:2,8).

**8:25** Compare Matt 10:5. A new day had dawned.

**8:26** "Angel" – 5:19; Matt 10:20; Luke 1:11,26. Gaza is on the Mediterranean coast southwest of Jerusalem.

**8:27** Notice that Philip was willing to leave a flourishing work of God in Samaria and go anywhere else God told him to go. The people called Ethiopians then occupied an area somewhat north of the present one. It included a part of southern Egypt and northern Sudan. In those days nations used eunuchs as court officials. This one knew of the true God and His temple in Jerusalem and had come a long way to worship Him (compare Matt 2:1,2). Though he was a Gentile by race, it is very likely that he was a convert to the Jews' religion. There were such people in many parts of the world who had abandoned their gods and idols, turned to the God of Israel, and had become



to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and was returning, sitting in his chariot and reading Isaiah the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and meet this chariot."

30 And Philip ran there to *him*, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 And he said, "How can I, unless some man guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
and like a lamb silent before his  
shearer,  
so he did not open his mouth.

33 In his humiliation his justice was  
taken away.

And who will declare his generation?  
For his life was taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch responded to Philip, and said, "I ask you, who is the prophet speaking this about? About himself, or about some other man?"

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at the same Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

36 And as they went down the road, they came

converts to Judaism (compare 2:11). If this eunuch had not been such a person why would he have wanted to make that long journey to Jerusalem? There is another reason for thinking he was a Jewish convert – the "keys" to open the kingdom of God to the Gentiles were not given to Philip but to Peter who used them as recorded in chapter 10.

**8:28** Worship alone did not satisfy the desires of this man for truth.

**8:29** The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit. His speaking is an indication of His personality. See notes at John 14:16,17. See how clearly he can direct those who are yielded and obedient to Him.

**8:31** The man was a foreigner with little knowledge of the teaching of the Old Testament and of the coming of Christ. Men still need someone to explain the word of God to them.

**8:32,33** Notes at Isa 53:7,8. Surely we see the hand of God in this too. The man was reading in the very place in all the Old Testament which most clearly states the reason for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

**8:34,35** Philip, being full of the Holy Spirit (6:3-5), and taught by the apostles (2:42), well knew whom Isaiah spoke of. Compare Luke 24:26,27,45,46.

**8:36-38** Notes on baptism at 2:38; Matt 3:6; 28:19; Mark 16:16.

**8:39** Compare this action of God's Spirit with 1 Kings 18:21; 2 Kings 2:16; Ezek 3:14; 8:3. Observe in this whole account of Philip and the Ethiopian how different God's ways

to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, *here is* water. What prevents me from being baptized?"

37 And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 And when they had come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so the eunuch did not see him again. And he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip appeared at Azotus, and passing through *that area* he preached in all the cities until he came to Caesarea.

**9** And Saul, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 And as he traveled he came near Damascus. And suddenly there shone around him a light from heaven. 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

5 And he said, "Who are you, Lord?"

are from man's (Isa 55:8-9). The Ethiopian had just come from Jerusalem where some of the apostles and many believers lived. Yet God directed none of them to teach him. Instead he brought Philip all the way from Samaria to do so, and then took him away again very suddenly. But whether here or there, whether by using a Philip or another, God will surely see to it that any person who wants the truth will have it.

**9:1** See 8:1,3; 22:9-11; Phil 3:6.

**9:2** "Way" – the way of Christ (John 14:6). Damascus, the capital of Syria, was an ancient city about 200 kilometers northeast of Jerusalem. Evidently the gospel of Christ had already spread there (compare 2:5). Saul determined to destroy Christ's church wherever it was found.

**9:3** The hour had come for God to change the greatest enemy of the church into the greatest teacher of the church. This was a marvelous display of God's grace, mercy and love. See 1 Tim 1:12-16; 2 Tim 1:9. Paul's whole life was changed in a single incandescent moment.

**9:4** To persecute Christ's believers is to persecute Him. In fact, whatever we do either against them or for them we do against Him or for Him. They are the body of which He is the Head (1 Cor 12:12,13; Eph 1:22,23; Col 1:18). It is not possible to persecute the "body" or any member of it without persecuting the "Head" at the same time. Compare Matt 10:40; 18:5; 25:34-46; Luke 9:48; John 17:20-23.

**9:5** "Who are you, Lord?" – Paul is aware

And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads."

6 And he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" And the Lord *said* to him, "Arise, and go into the city, and it will be told you what you must do."

7 And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no one. 8 And Saul rose up from the ground. And when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought *him* to Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank *anything*.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias."

And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

11 And the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for *a person* called Saul of Tarsus. For see, he is praying, 12 and has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

that whoever it is speaking with him has authority to tell him what to do. See the note at 22:10. How the answer to his question must have struck Paul – Jesus! How it must have turned all his thoughts upside down in a single moment!

**9:6** Paul had just asked a question which he tells us about in 22:10 (see note there). The question indicated Paul's submission to the Lord, and willingness to obey. In 26:16-18 Paul reveals that the Lord told him something of what he would do.

**9:7** See 22:9.

**9:8** The brilliant light blinded him physically; a greater light had shined into his heart and given him spiritual sight – 2 Cor 4:6.

**9:10** Ananias means "Jehovah is gracious" (in Hebrew, "Hananiah"). He was a Jew who had believed in Christ – 22:12. Note on visions at Gen 15:1.

**9:11** Tarsus was a town in the area that is now called Turkey. It was Saul's home town (9:30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3). We see in this verse what Saul had been doing since the Lord appeared to him – praying. What he began then he continued for the rest of his life and became an example to all of us in how to pray and what to pray for (16:25; 20:36; 22:17; Eph 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Phil 1:3-11; Col 1:9-12).

**9:12** It is interesting that the Lord Jesus chose to appear to Saul near Damascus rather than near Jerusalem where the apostles were, and that He used an unknown believer rather than one of them. See Isa 55:8,9.

**9:13** "Saints" – as used here this means "holy ones", those whom God has separated for Himself from the rest of mankind. It is another name for believers – Rom 1:7; etc.

13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to put in chains everyone who calls on your name."

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel for me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

17 And Ananias went and entered the house, and, putting his hands on him, said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, *that is*, Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming, has sent me that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received *his* sight at once, and got up, and was baptized. 19 And when he had taken food, he was strengthened. Then Saul stayed some days with the disciples who were at Damascus.

20 And immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But all who heard *him* were amazed, and said, "Is not this

**9:15,16** In these two verses the Lord gives the essence of Paul's life and work described in chapters 13-28. He was a "chosen vessel." See 26:16-18; Gal 1:15; Eph 3:2,7,8; Col 1:25; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 1:11. Suffering for Christ was an integral part of all his ministry and he learned to rejoice in it – 2 Tim 1:12; 1 Thess 3:3,4; Col 1:24; 2 Cor 7:4; 4:16-18; Rom 5:3. He realized that in God's present kingdom on earth being permitted to suffer for the King's sake is a mark of His great favor – Matt 5:10-12; Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29.

**9:17** It seems from this that Saul received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of Ananias's hands (though the language does not make this absolutely certain). Acts records different ways in which men received the fullness of God's Spirit – directly from God (2:1-4; 10:44,45), by the laying on of the hands of the apostles (8:17; 19:6), and, in this one case here, probably by the laying on of hands of an ordinary disciple. Sometimes this happened before water baptism, sometimes after. God's Spirit worked as He pleased, and no one could predict His manner of working.

We should observe that the Lord clearly and specifically commanded Ananias to do as he did. No one without such direct instructions from the Lord should presume to do such a thing. Notice he called Saul "brother", thus accepting him into the fellowship of believers.

**9:18** "Baptized" – see 2:38; Matt 3:6; Mark 16:16.

**9:20-22** Because of the vision he saw of the Lord, because of the filling of the Holy Spirit, Paul came into an understanding of the Old Testament which he had never

the one who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and came here for that same purpose, that he might take them in chains to the chief priests?" 22 But Saul increased all the more in power, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.

23 And after many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, 24 but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him at night and let *him* down through *an opening* in the wall in a basket.

26 And when Saul came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles, and told them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 And he was with them in Jerusalem, coming in and going out. 29 And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and debated with the Grecian *Jews*, but they tried to kill him. 30 When the brethren *came to know this*, they brought *him* down to Caesarea, and sent him away to Tarsus.

31 Then the churches throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit increased in number.

32 And it came about as Peter passed through

all *areas of the country*, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33 And there he saw a certain man named Aeneas who had kept to his bed for eight years and was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up, and make your bed." And immediately he got up. 35 And all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and deeds of charity which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room. 38 And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, asking *him* to come to them without delay.

39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood next to him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.

40 But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed, and, turning toward the body, said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her *to them* alive. 42 And this became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43 And it came about that he stayed many days in Joppa with a tanner *named* Simon.

gained by all his studies with Gamaliel (22:3; Gal 1:14).

"This name" - see 4:17; 5:28.

**9:23-25** See 2 Cor 11:33. This was only the first of many attempts the Jews made to stop Saul (v 29; 13:45; 14:5,19; 17:5,13; 18:6; 21:27-31). The sufferings which were to be a part of his life (v 16) had begun.

**9:26** Gal 1:15-19. They had not seen Saul for about three years, and had only heard rumors of him. Their fear was natural.

**9:27** Barnabas lived up to the meaning of his name (4:36. See also 11:22-24). At the time, it seems, in Jerusalem there were only two who were called apostles (Gal 1:18,19 - but it is possible Paul was speaking of a different time in Galatians).

**9:28** Boldness is a mark of those filled with God's Spirit (4:13,31).

**9:29** Verse 23.

**9:30** Verse 11.

**9:31** The Jewish leaders had discovered that persecution would not destroy the church or stop its witness, and they must have been astonished when the chief persecutor himself became a disciple of Jesus. Notes on the fear of the Lord at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**9:32** Lydda was a town about 40 kilometers

northwest of Jerusalem near Joppa.

**9:34** He did not say "Simon Peter heals you." See 3:6,12.

**9:35** Miracles alone cannot produce faith (Luke 16:31), but God may use them to convince people that He is near and active. Notes on miracles at Matt 8:1; John 2:11.

**9:36** Joppa was a port on the Mediterranean Sea about 55 kilometers from Jerusalem. Tabitha is Aramaic, Dorcas is Greek. They both mean "gazelle." She was an example of what every Christian should be in service to the poor. Unfortunately few follow her example. On helping the poor see Gal 2:10; Matt 19:21; 2 Cor 9:9.

**9:38** It seems they had hope that Peter could restore Dorcas to life.

**9:40,41** Compare Mark 5:21-24; 35-43; John 14:12,13. This is one of only two cases in the book of Acts of the raising of the dead. For the other see 20:7-12. Though the Lord rarely performed this miracle it was no more difficult for Him than any other.

**9:42** They recognized that it was the Lord Jesus who had raised the dead, not Peter. See 3:12.

**9:43** Jewish teachers considered tanning an unclean trade, but this did not bother Peter in the least.

**10** There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian *Regiment*. **2** He was a devout *man*, and one who feared God together with all his household. He gave charitably to *poor* people, and prayed to God constantly. **3** About three in the afternoon, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in to him, and saying to him, "Cornelius."

**4** And when he looked at him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your charitable deeds have come up as a memorial in God's presence. **5** And now send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, who is called Peter. **6** He is a guest of Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you should do."

**7** And when the angel who spoke to Cornelius had left, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier from among those who were in constant attendance on him. **8** And when he had told them all *these* things, he sent them to Joppa.

**9** The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near to the city, about twelve noon, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. **10** And he became very hungry and wanted to eat, but while

they were preparing *the food*, he fell into a trance, **11** and saw heaven opened, and an object like a large sheet bound by its four corners being let down to the earth and descending toward him. **12** In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the air. **13** And a voice came to him: "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

**14** But Peter said, "Not so, Lord. For I have never eaten anything that is unholy or unclean."

**15** And the voice *spoke* to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, do not call unholy." **16** This was done three times, and the object was taken up again into heaven.

**17** Now while Peter was wondering what the meaning was of this vision he had seen, the men who were sent by Cornelius asked for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, **18** and called, and asked if Simon who was called Peter was staying there.

**19** While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are looking for you. **20** So get up and go down. Go with them without doubting at all, for I have sent them."

**21** Then Peter went down to the men who were

**10:1** Luke records the raising of Dorcas in seven verses. He gives far more space to the story of Cornelius and his family - 10:1 - 11:18 (sixty-six verses). This shows its importance. This is the first time any of the apostles had taken the gospel to the Gentiles (v 45. Samaritans were considered half-breeds and a different class of people). And it was Peter who used the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" for the third time (Matt 16:19). Caesarea was a port on the Mediterranean Sea, a little more than 100 kilometers northwest of Jerusalem. It was named after Augustus Caesar, emperor of Rome (Luke 2:1). Cornelius was a Roman non-commissioned officer in the army in charge of one hundred soldiers.

**10:2** Evidently he did not worship the many gods of Rome. From some source or other he had learned of the one true God and sought Him. He was a deeply religious man who demonstrated his sincerity by good works. But he had not yet received salvation (11:13,14). In this story God would teach us again that salvation is not by religion, or sincerity, or good works, or prayers, but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (16:31; John 1:12; 3:16,36; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:4-7).

**10:3** Notes on visions and angels at Gen 15:1; 16:7.

**10:4-6** God had been at work in Cornelius, preparing him to hear and believe the gospel. His prayers and deeds were a "remembrance" to God of his sincerity, but also of his need of more truth. So God gives specific instructions so that he might receive the truth he lacked. When people follow the light God gives them God observes it

and gives them more light until they receive the full truth of Christ. Those who refuse the light will go into deeper darkness - John 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:39.

**10:9-16** God had prepared Cornelius to hear the truth. Now He prepares His messenger to deliver the truth to him. These two things have a central place in God's unceasing work in the world. Happy are those who have a part in it.

**10:13,14** Peter as a Jew had always followed the instructions of the Old Testament about "clean" and "unclean." See Leviticus chapter 11. He could not understand or accept immediately a command to disobey those instructions. He was now an experienced apostle who had been filled with the Holy Spirit, but see how he still says "no" to the Lord. Compare Matt 16:22; John 13:8.

**10:15** See Matt 15:11; Mark 7:18,19 and notes; Rom 6:14; 7:4; 1 Tim 4:3-5. For this New Testament era God lifted the ban on certain foods that were "unclean" in Old Testament days.

**10:16** "Three times" - compare John 13:38; 21:15-17.

**10:17,18** God's timing of events is always perfect.

**10:19** On God's Spirit speaking see 8:29.

**10:20** The Spirit knew how reluctant Peter would be to go with them because they were Gentiles, so he specifically instructed Peter not to hesitate to go. The Jews regarded Gentiles as "unclean" just as they regarded certain foods as "unclean" (Lev 11:1). The spiritual meaning of the vision Peter saw was that this attitude too must pass away (v 28). God's Spirit in the Church does not tolerate prejudice against people because

sent to him by Cornelius, and said, "See, I am the one you are looking for. For what reason have you come?"

22 And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a righteous man who fears God, and *who has a good reputation among all the Jewish people*, was instructed by God through a holy angel to send for you to his house, and to hear your words." 23 Then he invited them in, and showed *them* hospitality. And the next day Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the next day after that they entered Caesarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them, and *he* had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in Cornelius met him, and prostrated himself at his feet, showing reverence. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up! I too am just a man."

27 And talking with him, he went in, and found that many had gathered together. 28 And he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to associate with someone of another race or to visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone unholy or unclean. 29 Therefore I came without objecting, as soon as I was sent for. So my question is, what is your reason for sending for me?"

30 And Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour. And at three o'clock I was praying in my house, and, *lo and behold*, a man stood before me in shining clothes, 31 and said,

of their race or country of origin (see note at 6:1).

**10:23** This shows that Peter had learned the lesson God was teaching him. The Jews considered that they became unclean by contact with Gentiles (v 28; 11:2,3). But the men needed to rest from the fifty kilometers journey from Caesarea, and Peter received them.

**10:24** He realized Peter would speak matters of great importance and wanted all those he loved to hear his message (v 33).

**10:25,26** "Peter raised him up" – Cornelius did not know that showing such reverence to a man was not right, but Peter did know, and emphatically refused it – as all God's servants should. None of us should ever prostrate ourselves at the feet of another human being, no matter how famous and exalted he may be. And none of us should ever let another human being prostrate themselves to us. Only God is worthy of such reverence. Compare Rev 22:8,9.

**10:28,29** Verses 15,20. The old order of things was passing away. The Jews who had become followers of Christ must no longer think they should have nothing to do with those of other races.

**10:34,35** "God shows no favoritism" – see Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; Jam 2:1; 1 Pet 1:17.

"Cornelius, your prayer is heard, and your charitable deeds are remembered in the presence of God. 32 Send, therefore, to Joppa and call Simon, who is called Peter. He is a guest in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak with you." 33 So immediately I sent for you. And it was good of you to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear everything that God has commanded you to say."

34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, "In truth I see that God shows no favoritism, 35 but in every nation he accepts those who fear him and practice righteousness. 36 The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, 37 that message, you know. It was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism that John preached: 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, *and how* he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

39 "And we are witnesses of everything he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging *him* on a tree. 40 God raised him up on the third day, and showed him openly, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *that is*, to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one who was ordained

"Practice righteousness" – Peter was not teaching salvation by works. He well knew as all the apostles did that God saves men by grace through faith (see what he says in 15:11). He also knew that God accepts anyone anywhere who responds to the truth given to them and tries to follow it, and that He will lead them on to more truth (vs 4-6). When a person takes one step toward God, he will find that God also steps nearer (compare Luke 15:17-20; Jam 4:8. He will also find out later that it was God who enabled him to take that one step toward Himself).

**10:36** "Peace" – see Luke 1:79; 2:14; John 14:27; 16:33; 2 Cor 5:18-21.

"Lord of all" – the Lord Jesus Christ is Lord over every human being – though few recognize this and receive Him as such (2:36; Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 1:20-23; Phil 2:9-11).

**10:37** Matt 3:1-6.

**10:38** Matt 3:16,17; 4:23,24; 9:35; Luke 4:16-21.

**10:39** Acts 1:8. Peter uses "tree" for the cross (5:30).

**10:40** See 2:32; 3:15.

**10:41** John 15:27; 20:19,20; 21:9-14; 1 Cor 15:5-8.

"Ate" – Luke 24:42,43.

**10:42** Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15.



by God *to be* the Judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that through his name whoever believes in him will receive the forgiveness of sins."

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all those who heard the Word. 45 And all those believers who came with Peter, who were circumcised, were astonished, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak in tongues and praise God.

Then Peter responded, 47 "Can anyone forbid water to prevent baptism to these who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they begged him to stay for some days.

**11** And the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those *believers* who were circumcised opposed him, 3 saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them."

4 But Peter started from the beginning and explained *the matter* to them in an orderly way, saying, 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. A certain object like a

"Judge" – 17:31; John 5:22,23,27; Matt 25:31-33.

**10:43** Luke 24:26,27,45-48. "Forgiveness of sins" – Matt 6:12; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-25; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9; Isa 55:7.

**10:44** This is an ideal way to have one's sermons interrupted. Compare the words "came on all" with 1:5,8; 2:4.

**10:45** "Circumcised believers" – here means Jews who had become Christians.

"Gift. . . Holy Spirit" – 2:38; 5:32; 15:8.

**10:46** "Speak in tongues" – or "languages." Because of this the Jewish believers recognized that the Holy Spirit had been given to these Gentiles. This immediate outward evidence was necessary to convince them that God had indeed poured out His Spirit on people other than Jews – a thing that had never happened before. The circumstances were very unusual, and so God gave them an immediate sign that it had happened, for God wanted these Gentile believers to be accepted by the Jewish believers.

Speaking in tongues here must mean the same as it did in 2:4-11 – that is, speaking in foreign languages they had not learned. There is no indication whatever that this in any way differed from what the apostles did on the day of Pentecost. Cornelius and his relatives were Romans and their native tongue was Latin. They may have known a few words of Aramaic, Hebrew, or Greek, but suppose that with great fluency they

large sheet descended, let down from heaven *by its* four corners, and it came to me. 6 As I looked intently into it, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

8 "But I said, 'Not so, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

9 "But the voice from heaven responded to me again, 'What God has cleansed, do not call unholy.' 10 And this was done three times, and everything was taken up again to heaven.

11 "And see, at that moment three men arrived at the house where I was, sent to me from Caesarea. 12 And the Spirit told me to go with them, without doubting at all. Also these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13 And he told us how he had seen an angel in his house, who stood and said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, who is called Peter. 14 He will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'

15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as *he had* on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 Since, then, God gave them the same gift as *he did* to us,

suddenly began to speak one of these languages, or perhaps some other language the Jewish believers were familiar with – this would have been the kind of convincing evidence they needed. They must have spoken in a language that the Jewish believers could recognize as a real language, or these believers would not have identified this speaking in tongues with the same ability exercised by the apostles (see note on 2:11). Some rush of sounds from their mouths which could not be recognized as a human language would not have been the kind of evidence they needed.

**10:47** Observe carefully that these people received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized and without anyone laying hands on them. See note at 9:17.

**10:48** Notes on baptism in Christ's name at 2:38; 19:5.

**11:2** Circumcised believers were Jews who had become Christians.

**11:3** See 10:23,28. Instead of rejoicing in the coming of Gentiles to Christ, these men criticized God's instrument in the Gentiles' conversion. Complaining about God's servants instead of rejoicing in their ministry is too often the way of many Christians. Compare Paul's attitude in Phil 1:15-18.

**11:14** Note at 10:2. In spite of their piety and prayerfulness they needed salvation – Rom 3:23.

**11:15** See 10:44; 2:4.

**11:16** See 1:5.

**11:17** See 10:45; 2:38,39.



who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

18 When they heard these things, they fell silent, and *then* glorified God, saying "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life."

19 Now those who were scattered by the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to no one except the Jews. 20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.

22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem. And they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. 23 When he came and saw the grace of God, he

was glad and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should stay close to the Lord. 24 For he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and many people were added to the Lord.

25 Then Barnabas departed to Tarsus to seek for Saul. 26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for a whole year they met together with the church, and taught many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

27 And in those days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And one of them, named Agabus, stood up and indicated by the Spirit that there would be a great famine throughout the whole world. This came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, each one according to his ability, decided to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea. 30 This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

**11:18** Understanding the reasons for the behavior of others of God's servants sometimes brings the proper attitude of mind and heart. It did in this case.

"Life" – here means spiritual life, eternal life – John 3:16. Notice it is God who gives repentance – 5:31; 2 Tim 2:25.

**11:19** See 8:1,4. Phoenicia was the land north of Israel along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea containing the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Cyprus is a large island in the Mediterranean northwest of Tyre and Sidon. Antioch was a large city in Syria nearly 25 kilometers from the coast (actually it was the third largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria). It became a very important center of Christianity in the first century. The reason these believers told the message only to Jews is because they did not yet understand that God had opened the door of salvation to other people also.

**11:20** It does not say when this happened or why these men decided to preach to the Greeks. It seems very likely that it was after they heard of the events of chapter 10. **11:21** This is what preachers need – the hand of the Lord with them, working in their behalf.

**11:22** "Barnabas" – 4:36; 9:27.

**11:23** What does it mean "saw the grace of God"? He saw what the grace of God had produced, spiritual fruit. See John 15:1-6. Barnabas had the gift of being able to encourage others (compare Rom 12:6-8). See what Barnabas encouraged them to do. If we are not close to the Lord in our hearts we are not close to Him at all.

**11:24** Here is a description of what every preacher and teacher of God's Word (and every believer) should be. Barnabas is one of only two men the New Testament calls "good" (the other is in Luke 23:50). This

does not mean that no one else was good. See Matt 5:45; 7:17,18; 12:35; Luke 8:15; Rom 15:14; 1 Pet 2:18. The goodness of God's people is not theirs by nature (see Matt 7:11; Rom 7:18). God alone is innately good (Matt 19:17), and He alone can make them good (Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9). On the fullness of God's Spirit see 1:5; 2:4; Eph 5:18. The fullness of God's Spirit will lead to fullness of faith, and the results of that will be spiritual success and victory in God's work.

**11:25** 9:30.

**11:26** Notes on the "Church" at 5:11; Matt 16:18. It was outsiders who first called the followers of Christ "Christians." It was natural for them to do so. They thought "Christ" was a proper name (instead of the title it is – see Matt 1:1), and added the Latin suffix to it making it "Christianous," meaning those who were connected in some way to Christ. In Acts Christ's people are called "disciples" (6:1), or "saints" (note at 9:13), or "brothers" (9:30), or "believers" (10:45). In fact, in the whole Bible except for this one place, only Agrippa (26:28) and Peter use the word "Christian" (1 Pet 4:16. Perhaps Peter used the word because others called them that and not because it was his custom).

**11:27** Notes and references on prophets at Gen 20:7; etc.

**11:28** God's Spirit revealed the future to Agabus. See also 21:10,11. Claudius was the Roman emperor 41-54 AD.

**11:29** It is a great thing when Christians are "disciples" and not Christians in name only. Compare their good work with 2 Cor 8:1-5.

**11:30** They did more than pass a resolution. They acted on it. Compare 2 Cor 8:10,11; Jam 2:15; 1 John 3:17,18; Matt 25:34-46.

**12** Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hands to trouble some in the church. 2 And he had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. That was *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread. 4 And when he had arrested him, he put *him* in prison and handed *him* over to four groups of four soldiers each to guard him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

5 So Peter was kept in prison, but prayer to God for him was made without ceasing by the church. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that same night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains. And the guards at the door were watching the prison. 7 And suddenly the angel of the Lord stood over *him*, and a light shone in the prison. And he tapped Peter on the side, and got him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off *his* hands.

8 And the angel said to him, "Fasten your belt, and tie on your sandals." And so he did. And he said to him, "Put your cloak around you and follow me."

9 And he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he saw a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city. It opened to them by itself, and they went out and on down one street, and suddenly the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter came to himself he said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent his

angel and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the Jewish people."

12 And when he had considered *the matter*, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was called Mark. There many were gathered together praying. 13 And when Peter knocked at the door of the entryway, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 And when she recognized Peter's voice, for joy she ran in without opening the gate, and reported that Peter was standing at the gate.

15 And they said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept on stating that it was so. Then they said, "It is his angel."

16 But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished. 17 But he, gesturing to them with *his* hand to keep quiet, told them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

18 Now as soon as it was daylight, there was no small stir among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19 And when Herod had a search made for him and did not find him, he examined the guards, and gave orders that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there*.

20 And Herod was greatly displeased with *the people* of Tyre and Sidon, but they all came to him with one accord, and having made a friend of Blastus, a personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's *country*.

**12:1** This Herod was the grandson of the one in Matt 2:1. He was godless, as all the Herods were.

**12:2,3** James was one of the original apostles (Matt 10:2). No reason is given for the difference in Herod's treatment of these two apostles. The meaning of it all is hidden in the secret counsels of God who rules over all. Herod was an Edomite (a descendent of Esau - Gen 25:29,30). He tried to please the Jews because he wanted a successful reign over them. In general the Jewish people disliked all the Herods. Note on Feast of Unleavened Bread at Lev 23:4-8.

**12:4** Probably he planned to try Peter on some invented charge of blasphemy.

**12:5** As appears from vs 15,16 their prayers were more earnest than believing. Still, weak as their faith seems to have been, God answered. This should be an encouragement to all who pray to the true God. Prayers with little faith are far better than no prayers at all.

**12:6** Herod was determined that Peter should not escape.

**12:7-11** Compare 5:18-24. An angel could just as easily have saved James from the

sword as Peter from prison.

**12:12** Verse 5. Mark became the author of the Gospel which bears his name. Other references to him are v 25; 13:5-13; 15:37-39; Col 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Tim 4:11; 1 Pet 5:13.

**12:13,14** She, at least, believed God had answered their prayers.

**12:15,16** Their thinking that the girl was out of her mind for believing God had answered their prayer, and their subsequent astonishment are indications of their unbelief or weak faith.

"His angel" - compare Matt 18:10. Evidently they thought an angel could represent a person, take on his appearance, and be mistaken for him. There is no basis in the Bible for this belief.

**12:17** The James in this verse was a half-brother of the Lord Jesus (1:14; Matt 13:55). He had become the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

**12:19** According to Roman law if a person escaped, his guards had to suffer the punishment that would have come to him.

**12:20** Tyre and Sidon were cities on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel.

21 And on a set day Herod, dressed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave a speech to them. 22 And the people shouted out: "*It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!*" 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give God the glory. And he was eaten by worms, and breathed his last.

24 But the word of God grew and increased.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had finished *their* ministry, and took with them John who was called Mark.

**13** Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they were engaged in ministry for the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to *do*." 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went to Seleucia, and from there sailed to Cyprus.

**12:22,23** Herod knew very well the Old Testament teaching about the one true God, and was aware that no man has the right to accept divine honors (Ex 20:1-6). He paid the penalty for his pride. Compare his behavior with that of Paul and Barnabas in 14:11-18, and Peter in 3:12-16 and 10:26. We must have right views of God and of ourselves. Otherwise we may fall into the error of Herod and be judged as he was.

**12:24** The Herods of this world, and all opponents of the truth, come and go. The Word of God goes on doing its work and will stand forever – Matt 5:18; 24:35; Ps 37:35,36; Isa 40:6-8.

**12:25** Verse 12; 11:29,30. They returned to Antioch.

**13:1** The gifts of prophesying and teaching were two of the greatest gifts God gave the church – Rom 12:6,7; 1 Cor 12:28; 14:1; Eph 4:11-13.

"Herod the tetrarch" – Matt 14:1.

**13:2** Notes on fasting at Matt 9:14,15; etc. Observe here again the personality of the Holy Spirit. See 8:29; 10:19; John 14:16,17. He calls men for specific work in God's kingdom. In Antioch those He called for missionary service were the two most qualified men in the whole church for preaching and teaching. Happy are those who know what the Holy Spirit has appointed them to do. Notice that the church was to cooperate with the Spirit by recognizing His choice of individuals and setting them apart for the work.

**13:3** Laying on of hands here indicated their recognition and approval of the call that came to these two, and their identification with them.

**13:4** For the church to send men for service

5 And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. And they had John as *their* assistant.

6 And when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they met a certain sorcerer and false prophet who was a Jew named Bar-Jesus. 7 He was with the proconsul of the country, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man who called for Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for this is his name by translation) opposed them, trying to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then Saul (who *is* also *called* Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him, 10 and said, "*You are* full of all kinds of deceit and trickery, *you* child of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness! Will you not stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, look, the hand of the Lord *is* against you, and you will be blind, not seeing sunlight for a time." And immediately a mist and darkness fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

12 When the proconsul saw what had been done, *he* believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

is useless if the Holy Spirit does not send them.

"Cyprus" – 11:19.

**13:5** Salamis was the chief city of the island. They went first to the Jews as was their custom – v 46; Rom 1:16. John was Mark's other name – 12:12.

"Synagogues" – Matt 4:23.

**13:6** Paphos was the capital city of the island. The name Bar-Jesus means "son of Joshua" (Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua). This Bar-Jesus was an apostate Jew – he had turned away from the teachings of the true God. God forbade the Jews to have anything to do with sorcery. See notes at Deut 18:10-13.

**13:7** "Proconsul" here means the Roman governor on the island. All intelligent men should want to hear the Word of God as he did.

**13:8** Trying to keep others from believing in the Lord Jesus is one of the worst of sins. See Matt 23:13. "Elymas" was another name for "Bar-Jesus."

**13:9** Here is the first use of Saul's other name, Paul, the name by which he was always known thereafter.

"Filled with the Holy Spirit" – 2:4; 4:31; 6:3,5; 11:24.

**13:10** Sometimes God's Spirit will enable His servants to see clearly a person's character and to speak harsh truth in a bold way.

"Child of the devil" – see Matt 13:38; John 8:44. Elymas had long been perverting the Lord's ways by his practice of sorcery.

**13:11** If God is against us who can be for us? See the reverse of this at Rom 8:31.

**13:12** See 2:43; 5:12-14; 8:6,13; 9:34,35,41,42.

13 Now when Paul and his companions sailed from Paphos they went on to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem. 14 And when they left Perga they came to Antioch in Pisidia. There they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent word to them which said: "Men, brethren, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, speak."

16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand, said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen. 17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they lived as foreigners in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm brought them out of it. 18 And for about forty years he endured their behaviour in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he distributed their land to them through the casting of lots.

20 "And after that he gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterwards they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin. He ruled for forty years. 22 And when he removed him, he raised up for them David as their king. He also gave testimony about him, saying, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all I want.'

23 "From this man's descendants God,

according to his promise, has raised up for Israel a Saviour, Jesus. 24 Before his coming, John first preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And when John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the one. But, see, someone is coming after me and I am not worthy to take the sandals off his feet.'

26 "Men, brethren, children of the family of Abraham, and whoever fears God among you, to you this message of salvation has been sent. 27 For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not recognize him or even the voices of the prophets who are read every Sabbath day, have fulfilled them by condemning him. 28 And though they found in him no cause for death, still they asked Pilate to have him killed. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead. 31 And he was seen for many days by those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are his witnesses to the people.

32 "And we declare to you the glad tidings that the promise which was made to the fathers, 33 God has fulfilled for us their children by raising up Jesus. As it is also written in the second psalm,

You are my Son,  
this day I have begotten you.

34 And concerning the fact that he raised him

**13:13** Perga was about 20 kilometers inland from the southern coast of what is now called Turkey. No reason is given why John Mark left them, but Paul did not think he had any good reason at all (15:38,39). By deserting them Mark missed some great things on this first of Paul's missionary journeys, and was rejected for his next journey. **13:14** This Antioch was an important city about 160 kms north of Perga.

"Synagogue" – Matt 4:23. This indicates there was a colony of Jews in Antioch.

**13:15** See Luke 4:16,17; 14:1. It was not unusual for Jews who were strangers to be asked to give messages in the synagogues. **13:16** "You who fear God" – probably means Gentile converts.

**13:17-19** In three verses Paul covers 450 years of Jewish history recorded in six Old Testament books (Genesis – Joshua).

**13:20** Samuel was the last of the judges and the first man after Moses called a prophet.

"Judges" – see the introduction to the book of Judges.

**13:21** See 1 Sam 8:5; 9:1,2; 10:1.

**13:22** See 1 Sam 16:1,13; 2 Sam 2:4; 5:1-5. Note on "according to my own heart" at 1 Sam 13:14.

**13:23** Paul's purpose in referring to Israel's history was to show his orthodox belief in

the revelation God had given, and to bring his hearers to consider the Lord Jesus. Here he states in so many words that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. God's promises concerning Him begin at Genesis 3:15 and go on to Malachi 3:1.

**13:24,25** Matt 3:1-6; John 1:19-27.

**13:26** Abraham was the forefather of the nation and all Jews were descended from him.

**13:27** See 2:23; 3:17,18. Most Jews in that day did not understand what they read in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. But God used even the sinful ignorance of the Jewish leaders to fulfill His Word. Compare Gen 50:20.

**13:28** Matt 27:1,2,11-26.

**13:29** Luke 23:53; 24:26,27,46.

**13:30** Matt 28:6.

**13:31** See 1:3-8; 1 Cor 15:3-8.

**13:32-35** Paul presented Jesus as the fulfiller of Old Testament promises (compare Matt 5:17). He refers to three OT verses – see these verses and the notes on them: Ps 2:7; Isa 55:3; Ps 16:10.

"Sure mercies of David" – mercies God promised to David, one of which was that a descendant of his whom God calls his son would inherit his throne, and that this throne would last forever (see 2 Sam 7:14). Paul's argument is that if Israel's Messiah (Christ)

from the dead, never to return to corruption, he spoke like this:

I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35 Therefore he said also in another *psalm*,

You will not allow your Holy One to see corruption.

36 "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried near his fathers, and saw corruption. 37 But he whom God raised up, saw no corruption.

38 "Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins, 39 and in him all who believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware, therefore, that this which is spoken about in the Prophets does not come on you:

41 Look, you despisers, and wonder, and perish,  
for I do a work in your days,  
a work that you will not at all believe,  
though a man declares it to you."

42 And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these things might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout converts *to Judaism* followed Paul and Barnabas who spoke with them

and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next Sabbath day almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with envy and, contradicting and blaspheming, opposed the things Paul was saying.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas became bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. But seeing that you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, see, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For thus the Lord commanded us:

I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you would be the source of salvation to the ends of the earth."

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord spread throughout all that region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their borders. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

**14** And in Iconium it happened that they went together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving

had not risen from the dead, He could not have received these blessings promised to David.

**13:36,37** See 2:25-32. "Fell asleep" – John 11:11-13.

**13:38** See 2:38; 26:18; Luke 24:47. "Forgiveness of sins" – see references at 10:43.

**13:39** Being justified is the other side of being forgiven. It means that God counts people righteous and innocent of all sin. This is one of the wonderful truths Paul later developed in Romans and Galatians (Rom 3:20,24,28; 5:1,9; 8:30; Gal 2:16; 3:11,24). Everywhere he insists that justification comes only by faith in the Lord Jesus. The law of Moses cannot justify but only condemn – Ex 19:21-25; Rom 3:19,20; Gal 3:10.

**13:40,41** The gospel is "good news" only for those who believe it. So Paul gives a severe warning. Compare 2:40. Paul warns them to be careful that their attitude be not the same as in the days of Hab 1:5.

**13:43** "The grace of God" – grace is another word Paul much emphasized – 20:24,32; Rom 1:7; 3:24; 5:1,2,15,20,21; 6:14; Eph 3:1; Titus 2:11-15; 3:7.

**13:44** This means the Gentiles were the large majority of the crowd.

**13:45** Compare 5:17; 7:9; Matt 27:18; Prov 27:4. None of them had ever been able to draw such a crowd, or to capture the interest of people so powerfully, so they envied Paul and Barnabas – a thing not unknown in our day.

**13:46** See 3:26; Rom 1:16. Note on "everlasting life" at John 3:16.

**13:47** Isa 49:6. "You" refers to Christ.

**13:48** God's appointment to eternal life is through faith. These Gentiles showed by their believing in Christ that God had chosen them. Compare John 6:37,44; 17:2; Eph 1:4.

**13:50** "Devout" – religious or pious people who do not know the Lord Jesus can be stirred up by evil and unscrupulous men to persecute God's true servants. See John 16:2,3.

**13:51** Compare Matt 10:14. The important town of Iconium was about 130 kilometres to the southeast.

**13:52** The gospel of Christ when truly believed always results in joy (8:8; 16:34; Luke 2:10; 24:52; Rom 14:17; 15:13; 1 Pet 1:8), and opens the way to experience the fullness of God's Spirit (2:4; Eph 5:18).

**14:1** See 13:14,15.

**14:2** Rom 8:7; 1 Thess 2:14-16.

"Brethren" – in the New Testament this is



Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and poisoned their minds against the brethren. 3 Therefore, for a long time they stayed *there*, speaking boldly in the Lord, who gave testimony to the word of his grace by granting *miraculous* signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 4 But the multitude of the city was divided and part *of them* sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. 5 And when there was a violent attempt made by both *some* of the Gentiles and *some* of the Jews with their rulers, to treat *them* outrageously and stone them, 6 they were aware of *it*, and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the region that lies around *them*. 7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man disabled in his feet, who was a cripple from his mother's womb, and had never walked. 9 This *man* heard Paul speak. Paul looked intently at him and, perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 said with a loud voice, "Stand up on your feet." And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men." 12 And they called Barnabas, Zeus; and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief

speaker. 13 Then the priest of Zeus, whose *temple* was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and with the people wanted to offer a sacrifice *to them*.

14 When the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *of this*, they tore their clothes, and rushed in among the people, crying out 15 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We too are men, with the same nature as you, and we proclaim to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God who made heaven and earth and the sea, and everything that is in them. 16 In times past he let all nations walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless, he did not leave himself without testimony, for he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." 18 And with these words they could hardly restrain the people from offering a sacrifice to them.

19 Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there and won over the people, and they stoned Paul and dragged *him* out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 However, as the disciples stood around him, he rose up and came into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

a common term for those who had become Christians. It suggests the close relationship that exists in the family of God. Believers in Christ are all members of one family and have the same Father.

**14:3** They stayed no doubt to strengthen the believers for the persecution they knew would come.

"Signs and wonders" – 2:43; 5:12; 8:6; John 2:11; Heb 2:4.

**14:4** Matt 10:34-46; John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19.

**14:5-7** They stayed as long as they could and left when it was wise. Their death would not have benefited anyone – though they did not fear death (Phil 1:21-24; Heb 2:14,15). Lystra was a Greek town about 30 kilometers south and slightly west of Iconium.

**14:9,10** Sometimes the Holy Spirit enables His servants to recognize faith at work in others.

**14:11,12** These people believed in many gods, as Greeks in general did. Zeus was the name Greeks gave to the one considered the chief god. Hermes they considered the messenger of the gods. The KJV here (but not the Greek) has Jupiter and Mercury. These were the names the Romans gave those gods.

**14:13,14** Compare 12:21-23. They saw that an awful thing (the worship of men) was about to be done and did all they could to stop it. Tearing of their clothes was to show their dismay to the crowd (2 Sam 13:31; Job 1:20; Matt 26:65). How different were these true servants of God from those in

every era who like to think they are gods or even God Himself.

**14:15** See 3:12; Rev 22:8,9; Matt 4:10. Here are important words. They made a clear distinction between God and gods. God is "living"; He is the Creator of the universe. The gods and sacrifices to them are "useless things" that men should turn from (compare Ps 115:2-8; Isa 40:18-26; 44:9-20). And this was a part of the gospel they brought to people.

**14:16** See 17:30. "In times past" God was working with the nation of Israel and was giving to them the revelation of His will. For that time He permitted other nations to go their own way, not because that way was good (compare Rom 1:18-32), but because the time had not then come to send His servants to preach to them (though there were exceptions like Jonah).

**14:17** Even when the nations were without God's revelation in the Bible, they had the revelation of God's goodness in nature. See Ps 19:1-4; Rom 1:19,20.

**14:18,19** See the fickleness, the changeableness, the ignorance of people. Whom they would worship one day they stoned the next! See Jer 17:5,9. But there were permanent results from this visit to Lystra – 16:1.

**14:20** See the courage and determination of those filled with God's Spirit. Paul went right back to the place where men tried to kill him in a very painful way (also v 21). Compare 4:13; Prov 28:1. Derbe was a town nearly 80 kilometers southeast of Iconium.



21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, *and* encouraging them to continue in the faith, and *teaching*: "We must enter the kingdom of God through much trouble." 23 And when they had ordained elders for them in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they believed. 24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

26 And from there *they* sailed to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had *now* finished. 27 And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And there they stayed a long time with the disciples.

**15** And certain men who came down from Judea taught the brethren, *and said*, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 Therefore, after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they decided that Paul and

**14:22** Both the Lord Jesus and His apostles taught that believers would face troubles in this world (John 16:33; 1 Thess 3:3,4; 1 Pet 4:12), and revealed the attitude they should have toward them (Matt 5:10-12; 1 Pet 4:13). When we face troubles or persecutions or tribulation we as believers should not ask "why"? Rather if such things do not come we should ask "why not"? Paul speaks here as if God's kingdom were in the future – he means the kingdom when it comes openly and in glory. Notes at Matt 4:17; etc.

**14:23** See 13:2,3. "Elders" here means those who would have the leadership and oversight of the church (1 Pet 5:1-3). Surely their appointment was in consultation with the group of believers, as in 6:5,6.

**14:24,25** See 13:13. Attalia was the chief port of the province of Pamphylia.

**14:26** See 13:1-3.

**14:27** They emphasized that it was God who moved on the hearts of the Gentile peoples and brought them to faith – it was not their own doing.

**15:1** These men were Jews who professed to be followers of Christ but were in error about a very basic and important matter. They thought that the Church was to be confined to the Jewish community, and that to receive Christ's salvation other peoples had to become Jews by conversion – that is, they had to be both Christians and Jews. This meant to them circumcision and keeping the law of Moses (v 5). See note

Barnabas and some others among them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. 3 And *so*, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, telling of the conversion of the Gentiles, and *thus* they produced great joy in all the brethren. 4 And when they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church and *by* the apostles and elders, and they reported everything that God had done with them.

5 But some *belonging* to the sect of the Pharisees who believed got up and said this: "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses."

6 And the apostles and elders met together to consider this matter. 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Men, brethren, you know that some time ago God made a choice among us that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, gave testimony to them by giving to them the Holy Spirit, just as *he did* to us, 9 and made no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now then, why do you test God by trying to put a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the

on circumcision at Gen 17:9-14.

**15:2** Paul and Barnabas saw a great danger in this teaching and strongly opposed it. They well knew that salvation was by God's grace through faith in Christ, and was not based on ceremonies and law keeping. Paul dealt with this matter very thoroughly in the letters to the Romans and Galatians (see Rom 3:27-4:25; Gal 1:6-9; 2:1 - 6:15).

**15:4** See 14:27.

**15:5** Verse 1. These Pharisees professed to be Christ's followers and were in the church.

"Pharisees" – note at Matt 3:7.

**15:7** Chapter 10.

**15:8** See 10:44-47. Compare Gal 3:2-5.

**15:9** In other words, God did not say to the Gentiles, "I will not save you, and will not give you my Spirit unless you get circumcised and keep the law of Moses."

"Purifying their hearts by faith" – God gave them faith and used that faith as an instrument to make their hearts pure. They had needed nothing more to make them acceptable to God. See note on purity of heart at Matt 5:8.

**15:10** Peter means that when God had revealed His will by His clear leading, resisting His will and complaining about His ways of doing things is to test Him. See also Matt 4:7; Ex 17:7. In Gal 5:1 Paul called the law a "yoke of bondage." Both of these apostles knew that Christ's "yoke" was enough (Matt 11:29,30), and that His yoke is the opposite of bondage.

**15:11** Peter was in full agreement with Paul

Lord Jesus Christ we will be saved, just as they."

12 Then the whole assembly kept silent, and gave *their* attention to Barnabas and Paul, who told what miracles and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. 13 And after they became silent, James responded *by* saying, "Men, brethren, listen to me. 14 Simon has declared how God for the first *time* visited the Gentiles to take out from *among* them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written,

- 16 After this I will return,  
and rebuild the tabernacle of David,  
which has fallen down.  
And I will rebuild its ruins and I will  
set it up,  
17 So that the remainder of men may  
seek the Lord,  
and all the Gentiles, who are called by  
my name,  
says the Lord, who does all these things.

18 "From the beginning of the world all of God's works are known to him.

19 "Therefore, in my judgment, we should not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, 20 but that we write to them that they should abstain from *food* polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. 21 For Moses for a long time has had

those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day."

22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, *along* with the whole church, to send men chosen from among themselves to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas, called Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. 23 And they wrote these things by them:

"The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greetings to the Gentile brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. 24 Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with *their* words, disturbing your souls, saying, 'Be circumcised and keep the Law' (we gave no *such* instruction to them), 25 it seemed good to us meeting together with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our dear *brothers* Barnabas and Paul, 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who will also tell *you* the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay no greater burden on you than these necessary things: 29 That you abstain from foods offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. You will do well if you keep yourselves away from these *things*. Farewell."

30 So when they were sent away, they came to Antioch. And when they had gathered the large number *of believers* together, they handed over

in this most vital matter (11:43; 13:38,39; Rom 3:21-24; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9).

**15:12** Their aim was to convince all these Jewish Christians that God was at work among the Gentiles just as He was among them, and quite apart from the law of Moses.

**15:13** See 12:17; 21:18; Gal 1:19. This James was the half-brother of Jesus and a leader of the Jerusalem church.

**15:14** "Simon" was Peter's other name.

"To take out from among them a people for his name" – this is a work God is still doing. See the meaning of "Church" at Matt 16:18.

**15:15-18** James said that the prophets of the Old Testament also spoke of the conversion of the Gentiles. He then refers to Amos 9:11,12 (see notes there). It does not seem that his purpose in this was to state that that Scripture was completely fulfilled in the conversion of some Gentiles in his day, but simply to show that the conversion of Gentiles was no strange thing, was not contrary to God's Word.

**15:19** He agreed with Peter (v 10). There was no point in loading the whole law onto Gentile believers.

**15:20,21** The things James mentions were very common practices among the Greeks and Romans, but forbidden in the Old Testament. There were synagogues here and there in the lands of the Gentiles where

the gospel had gone (13:14; 14:1). James and all Jews would know of the prohibitions of the Old Testament. His meaning seems to be that Gentile Christians should not needlessly offend Jews by doing things they hated.

This is a principle for all times for all Christians to follow in relation to the various kinds of people they live among. Compare 1 Cor 9:19-23; 10:32; 2 Cor 6:3. The prohibition against eating flesh with blood in it goes back before the law of Moses (Gen 9:4). Sexual immorality is condemned everywhere in the Bible, and certainly should never have any place in any believer's life (Ex 20:14; Matt 5:27,28; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3). On foods offered to idols see 1 Cor 8:1,4,10; 10:19,28; Rev 2:14,20. **15:22** Other references to Silas – v 40; 2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thess 1:1,2; 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Pet 5:12.

**15:23** Antioch was the chief city of the provinces of Syria and Cilicia, and the place where this dispute about the law began.

**15:24** They assured the Gentile believers that the apostles had not been behind the false teaching they had heard.

**15:28** They were sure that the Holy Spirit had led them in their united decision.

**15:29** Observe that there is nothing here about the Gentile churches keeping the Sabbath. Even these Jewish believers did

the letter. 31 When they read *it*, they rejoiced for the encouragement *in it*. 32 And Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with many words. 33 And after they had stayed *there* a while, they were sent back by the brethren in peace to the apostles. 34 However, it pleased Silas to remain there. 35 Paul and Barnabas also stayed on in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 And some days afterwards Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing." 37 And Barnabas was determined to take John, who was called Mark, with them. 38 But Paul did not think it was good to take him with them, *the one* who left them at Pamphylia, and did not go with them to the work. 39 And the dispute was so sharp between them, that they parted from one another. So Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus, 40 and

not consider this was important for Gentile believers.

**15:31** It was encouraging that the teaching that had troubled them (vs 1,5) was not true.

**15:32** Note on prophets at Gen 20:7.

**15:35** For the moment at least, in that place false teaching had been defeated. But the same teaching infected the churches in Galatia and something similar has troubled some Christians from time to time ever since then.

**15:36** It was not enough for Paul to preach the gospel, win men to Christ and then leave them forever. He had a shepherd's heart (2 Cor 11:28,29), and is an example to every servant of Christ.

**15:37,38** See 13:13. Mark was a relative of Barnabas (Col 4:10). This may have influenced him in his insistence that they take him along with them. Sometimes even among the people of God family relationships are given too much importance, and those who have failed in the work are kept on, often to the detriment of the work. Paul stood on the principle that an unreliable person should not be taken for so important a task.

For all we know Paul's decision here was one of the factors that caused Mark to determine to be more faithful in God's work, and made him a very useful servant of God later in his life (Philemon 24; 2 Tim 4:11). Surely rejection by a man of God like Paul would have had a strong impact on Mark and may have stirred him up to search his own heart and ways.

**15:39** Even godly men may have sharp disagreements. This is not to say that such disagreements are good. A man like Paul once he saw the right course to take was not to be turned from it. This is the last mention of Barnabas in Acts.

**15:40** It seems from this that the church in Antioch agreed with Paul in the dispute with

Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

**16** Then he came to Derbe and Lystra, and saw a disciple *who* was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman *who* believed. But his father *was* a Greek. 2 *Timothy* was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted him to go with him, and took and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those regions, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered *to* them the regulations to keep that had been decided on by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem. 5 And so the churches were established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and had been forbidden

Barnabas. They commended Paul and Silas, but there is nothing here about commending Barnabas and Mark, and surely this omission is significant. Also we should keep in mind that God set forth Paul, not Barnabas, as an example of what a Christian worker should be – Phil 3:17; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 2 Thess 3:8,9.

**15:41** Plain and relevant teaching of the Word of God strengthens churches as nothing else can.

**16:1** See 14:6. It was not usual for Jews and Greeks to intermarry. Timothy's mother was a believer in Christ (2 Tim 1:5). Timothy became a very important person in Paul's ministry – 17:14,15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rom 16:21; 2 Cor 1:1; 4:17; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2. Paul found him in the town where he had been stoned and almost killed – 14:19.

**16:3** Timothy had not been circumcised possibly because of his Greek father's objection. But he had been taught the Old Testament (2 Tim 3:15), and was counted a Jew because of his mother. By circumcising him Paul was not following the error seen in 15:1,5. His aim was to make Timothy more acceptable to the Jews as he went about serving Christ. Compare 1 Cor 9:19-22. See Paul's desire for the conversion of Jews in Rom 9:1-4. He always made his views on circumcision very clear – Gal 6:15.

**16:4** See 15:23-29.

**16:5** The agreement in Jerusalem (chapter 15) resulted in much good to the churches.

**16:6** Asia was the name of the province of which Ephesus was the capital city. Asia was in the much larger area called Asia Minor (now called Turkey) which is a small part of the continent of Asia. Paul later had a very fruitful ministry there (19:1-22). But now God's Spirit prevented him from entering it. God has a specific time for any of His works

by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in *the province of Asia*, 7 after they had come to Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them *to do so*. 8 And they, passing by Mysia, came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: A man of Macedonia standing and asking him, "Come over to Macedonia, and help us."

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we tried to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11 Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is the principal city of that part of Macedonia, *and a Roman colony*. And we stayed in that city *for* some days.

13 And on the Sabbath we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was usually made, and we sat down and spoke to the women who assembled *there*. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira,

who was a worshipper of God, heard *us*. The Lord opened her heart so that she seized on what was spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she made a request *to us*, saying, "If you consider me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house, and stay *there*." And she persuaded us.

16 And it came about as we were going to prayer *that* we were met by a certain slave girl possessed by a spirit of fortune-telling, who brought her masters much profit by predicting the future. 17 *This girl* followed Paul and us and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, who make known to us the way of salvation." 18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very moment.

19 And when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas, and dragged *them* to the marketplace to the

and He knows where every servant of His should be at any given time. They should simply find his leading and obey it.

**16:7** Bithynia was to the northeast of the province of Asia. The fact that Paul tried to go there, but could not, can teach us some important truths. Paul was on the move, obedient to his calling to preach the gospel everywhere. He did not always know where God wanted him to go, but he did not for that reason sit at home. God guided him as he went forward in his work and made known His will as Paul practiced obedience to God's calling for him. Notice that He who is called the Holy Spirit in v 6 is here called the Spirit of Jesus. Compare John 14:16,26; 16:7; Rom 8:9.

**16:8** Troas was an important port city on the Aegean Sea facing Greece and Macedonia.

**16:9,10** "Vision" – references at 18:9,10. They had been waiting for God's guidance, and God chose this way of giving it. Their obedience was immediate – the only sort of obedience God can fully approve. For the first time (as far as we know) one of Christ's apostles was taking the gospel to Europe. Christianity began in the continent of Asia and the first churches were in western Asia. Notice the word "we" in v 10 – Luke is now including himself in the group. Evidently Luke joined Paul at Troas.

**16:11** Samothrace was an island in the Aegean. Neapolis was the port of the city of Philippi in Macedonia. Philippi was a Roman city – the Romans ruled Macedonia at that time.

**16:13** They knew there was no synagogue in the city, so they looked for a likely meeting place for Jews (and those influenced by the Jews) to worship the one true God.

**16:14** Thyatira was in the province of Asia which

God had kept Paul from entering – v 6.

"Worshipped God" – this means that she was a worshipper of the God of the Bible, the one true God. She probably learned about Him through the Jews of Thyatira. Now the Lord opened her heart to receive the message about Christ (compare Luke 24:45). The Lord does this for everyone who comes to faith in Himself. If He does not do this, it will not be done. And His opening of people's hearts is as great a miracle as opening prison doors (v 26; 5:19). But this does not relieve people of the responsibility of opening the door to Him – Rev 3:20.

**16:15** Notes on baptism at 2:38; Matt 3:6; Mark 16:16. She showed her faith by her works (Jam 2:14-19).

**16:16** The "spirit" was an evil spirit, a demon (note at Matt 4:24). Good spirits do not engage in the work this one did. See Deut 18:9-13. How accurate the predictions of this slave girl were we cannot say. She must have been right enough times to keep people believing in her.

**16:17,18** See the shouts of other demons – Matt 8:29; Mark 1:24; 3:11,12; 5:7; Luke 4:33,41; 8:28. Neither Jesus nor His disciples needed or wanted the testimony of demons on their behalf. It was not a good thing for people to think that this demon-possessed girl was on the side of the gospel of Christ. If Satan seems to cooperate with Christ's servants, his ultimate purpose is to destroy the truth. Paul was not looking for trouble, but he could endure the situation no longer. On casting out demons see Matt 4:24; 10:1; etc.

**16:19-21** Money was their god, and they (like all whose god is money) cared nothing for the health of a poor girl, or for truth and justice. Compare John 12:6. These men were appealing to anti-Jewish prejudice in a Roman city. Satan could not defeat Christ's

authorities, 20 and brought them to the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews *and* are greatly troubling our city, 21 teaching customs which are not lawful for us Romans to receive or observe."

22 And the crowd all together rose up against them, and the magistrates tore off their clothes and gave a command to beat *them*. 23 And when they had given them many lashes, they threw them into prison, and commanded the jailer to keep them safely. 24 Having received such a command, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors opened, and everyone's chains became loose. 27 And the jailer, awaking out of his sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had run away. 28 But Paul cried out with a loud voice and said, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."

servants by seeming to agree with them, so he tried a different method through these men.

**16:23** 5:40; Matt 27:26; 2 Cor 11: 23-25. **16:24** "Stocks" – wooden frames with holes for legs, or for both legs and arms, to keep prisoners immobile.

**16:25** See how true Christians can face their troubles and persecutions – prayer instead of curses, songs instead of resentment and complaining, divine comfort instead of confusion and depression, joy instead of thirst for revenge. Compare 5:41; Matt 5:10-12; Rom 5:3; 2 Cor 1:5; 1 Pet 4:13. They knew God had led them there (v 10), that they were in their Shepherd's care and that the Lord of the universe had a good purpose in it all.

**16:26** So much for Satan's attempt to crush Paul and Silas. God chose this way to vindicate His servants and to cause His gospel to spread in that place. He does not always use such methods (7:57,58; 12:1-7), but whatever methods He uses we may be sure that they are wise and good.

**16:27** See 12:19.

**16:28** Paul desired the good of the jailer who had treated him cruelly (v 24). See Matt 5:44; Rom 12:19-21.

**16:29,30** He realized that Paul and Silas were true messengers of God who taught the way of salvation. The Holy Spirit had convicted him of his spiritual need, and he asked the most important question any person can ask. If more people sincerely asked it of God's servants, more people would come into a knowledge of the truth. Not asking it, and not wanting to know the answer, keeps people in darkness and ignorance.

29 Then *the jailer* called for a light and ran in, and trembling fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 And *he* brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, *you* and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* wounds, and immediately was baptized, he and all his *family*. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his household.

35 And when it was daylight, the magistrates sent officers to say, "Let those men go." 36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul: "The magistrates have sent *orders* to let you go. So now leave, and go in peace."

37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly without trial, Roman citizens *that* we are, and have thrown *us* into prison. And now will they send us off secretly? Absolutely not! Let them come themselves and lead us out."

38 And the officers reported these words to

**16:31** Here is the answer to anyone anywhere who wants to know the way of salvation. It is the answer the Lord Jesus Himself and all His messengers gave again and again – 13:39; John 1:12; 3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47; Rom 5:1; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9; etc. Repentance is where true faith begins. Paul does not mention repentance here because it was clear that the man was already repenting. When people needed to repent, God's servants did not fail to tell them so – 2:38; 17:30; Matt 3:2; etc. To those who are repenting the word is "believe"; to those not yet repentant the word is "repent." Paul speaks of the man's family as well. God delights to save whole households when there is faith – 11:14; Gen 7:1; Josh 2:11-13; 6:22,23; Heb 11:7.

**16:32** They did more than give the man a verse or two of Scripture – they explained the gospel.

**16:33,34** He was producing fruit worthy of repentance (Matt 3:8), and showing his faith and the change in his heart by what he did (Jam 2:14-19). Observe the relationship between faith and joy, and the difference between v 34 and vs 27-29. This is what Christ can and does do in the lives of individuals – 2 Cor 5:17.

**16:35** It seems they thought the punishment given to Paul and Silas sufficient for what they considered disturbing the peace of the city.

**16:37** Paul was not seeking revenge, or standing on his rights. But the magistrates had committed a public act of injustice, and Paul insisted that they should admit it in public. It was not his good he was thinking of, but theirs and the gospel's.

**16:38** It was against the law to beat Roman



the magistrates, and when they heard that they were Roman *citizens* they were afraid. 39 And they came and pled with them, and led *them* out and asked *them* to leave the city. 40 And they went out of the prison and entered *the house of* Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and left.

**17** Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where *there* was a Jewish synagogue. 2 And Paul, as his habit was, went in to them and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating that Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead, and *saying*, "This Jesus, whom I preach to you, is the Christ." 4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, and *with them* a large number of devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

5 But the Jews who were not persuaded, moved with envy, took some wicked idlers from the marketplace, collected a crowd, and set all the city in an uproar, and rushed to the house of Jason and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some *of the* brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These *men* who have turned the world

citizens – 22:25-29. They had not known that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, but they could have inquired and found this out before they ordered the beating, if they had cared for the law.

**17:1** Thessalonica was an important town about 150 kilometers west of Philippi.

"Synagogue" – Matt 4:23.

**17:2** See 13:5,14; 14:1.

**17:3** Luke 24:25-27,45-47.

**17:4** See 10:2; 13:50.

**17:5** See 5:17; 13:45.

**17:6,7** See 16:20,21; John 19:12-16. Those who preach the truth are often regarded as troublemakers. Actually they are peacemakers – preaching peace between God and men (Matt 5:9; 10:34-36; 2 Cor 5:18-20). The world does not want what it needs most and hates those who would give it.

**17:10** Berea was nearly 100 kilometers west of Thessalonica.

**17:11,12** The Greek word translated "noble" originally meant of exalted birth, birth into an aristocratic family. Later it came to mean those of excellent qualities – generous in outlook toward others, free from base prejudices, open to truth and reason. These people in Berea showed their noble qualities in these ways: by eagerly hearing Christ's servants, by searching the Bible to see if what they said was true, and by believing the truth when it became clear. Let all of us abandon prejudice, narrowness of mind, fear

upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has shown them hospitality. And all of them are acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, *one called* Jesus." 8 And they stirred up the people and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken bail from Jason, and from the others, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away at night to Berea, who, on their arrival, went into the Jewish synagogue. 11 These *Jews* were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily *to see* if those things *Paul taught* were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed, *and* also some prominent Greek women and not a few of the men.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God was being preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the people. 14 And so immediately the brethren sent Paul away to go as far as the sea coast, but Silas and Timothy still remained there. 15 And those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens, and receiving instructions *from Paul* for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they left.

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens,

of others and fear of the truth, and follow the example of these Bereans. It will open up a great future for us.

**17:13** See 14:19; Matt 23:13. What evil deeds men do because of jealousy and prejudice.

**17:14** Paul was the leader of the group and the chief spokesman, and so was in the greatest danger. He did not leave because of fear (14:6,19,20), but because he saw it was wise.

**17:15** Athens was about 300 kilometers south of Thessalonica. It was one of the most famous cities on earth, the birthplace of democracy, the home of art, language, literature, science and philosophy. It had been the native place of Socrates and Plato and the adopted city of Aristotle, Epicurus and Zeno. In Paul's day it was ruled by Rome and its glories were in the past, but it was still a cultural and intellectual center.

**17:16** Paul saw among the human glories of Athens a sinful people, abandoned to false religion. It was the sight of idols which so greatly "agitated" him (this Greek word could also be translated "was greatly provoked" or "stirred to anger" or "distressed." It indicates strong emotion). This was because he knew God's revelation concerning idolatry and because he loved Christ and the glory of God and the people who were so bound by their idols (Ex 20:1-6; Ps 115:2-8; Isa 40:18-26; 44:6-11; 2 Cor 5:13,14).



his spirit within him was greatly agitated, when he saw that the city was full of idolatry. 17 Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout *Greeks*; and also in the marketplace daily with those who came near him.

18 Then some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him and some *of them* said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be proclaiming foreign gods." *This was* because he was preaching to them the good news of Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching *is* that you are talking about? 20 For you are bringing some strange things to our ears, *and so* we want to know what these things mean." 21 (For all the Athenians, and the foreigners who were there, spent their time in nothing else but telling or hearing some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the

In Rom 1:18-25 Paul revealed the dark truth which lies behind many shining forms of glory and beauty. In Athens he was greatly agitated at the evidence of the mixture of so much spiritual blindness with so much brains and ability – a thing we see today on every hand.

**17:17** What he saw was a compelling motive for speaking out the truth wherever he had the opportunity. Compare 4:20; Jer 20:9.

**17:18** The philosophy of Epicurus (who lived 341–270 BC) emphasized pleasure as the chief end of life. In his view the best pleasure was not bodily pleasure, but the pleasure of the mind, a serene life free from pain, disturbing desires, fears, and anxiety about death. He believed there were many gods but that they took no interest in the lives of men. In Paul's day the Epicureans had to some extent perverted the teachings of Epicurus and pursued bodily pleasure and actually glorified lust.

The Stoic philosophy was founded by Zeno (who lived 340–265 BC). He taught that men should live in harmony with nature, and that reason or design was the highest thing in nature. In theology he was a pantheist (thinking that God and the universe were joined, neither existing without the other). He thought of God as the soul of the world. He emphasized man's ability to reason and his self-sufficiency.

Some of the followers of these two philosophers looked on Paul with arrogance and cynicism, calling him a "babblers." Little did they know the difference between philosophy and what Paul preached. Philosophy is the speculation of men about the nature of reality, but Christ's gospel is God's revelation of reality and what men should do in the light of it (see notes on 1 Cor 1:17-25; Col 2:8).

**17:19** The Aeropagus was the highest court of Athens and had jurisdiction over all

Areopagus, and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I passed by and looked at the objects of your worship, I found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

"Therefore, I am going to make known to you the one whom you worship without knowing. 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since he is *the* Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, 25 nor is *he* served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, since he gives to everyone life, and breath, and everything *else*. 26 And *he* has made from one blood every nation of man to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times set for *them*, and the boundaries of the regions where they live, 27 *so* that they would seek the Lord, and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each of us; 28 for in him

religious matters. It had power either to forbid Paul to teach in the city or to give him liberty to do so.

**17:21** Most of them were not seeking the truth but only novelties.

**17:22** This was quite true, but their religion was not according to reality and truth.

"Religious" – the Greek word literally means "having fear or reverence for the gods."

**17:23** People erected such altars in other places in the Roman world. They did not want to leave out some god or God who might have power either to help or hurt them. The philosophers suggested Paul was advocating "foreign gods" (v 18). "No", Paul says, "I proclaim the God whose altar is in this city – the God unknown to you but the only true and living God."

**17:24** Paul says the true God is the Creator of the universe, and not some sort of pantheistic deity or soul of the world. He bases this assertion on God's revelation of Himself in the Bible – Gen 1:1; Ex 20:11; Ps 8:3; 19:1; Isa 40:28; 42:5; 45:12,18. And the true God does not live in temples men have made – 1 Kings 8:27; Isa 66:1,2.

**17:25** Paul emphasized the difference between the true God and idols. Idols must be taken care of by men. God has no needs (Ps 50:9-15) – He supplies to all people what they have (14:15-17; 1 Tim 6:17).

**17:26** The one man was Adam (Gen 1:26-28). God has already determined the rise and fall of nations, the times of their opportunities to find Him, and the boundaries wherein they should live.

**17:27** God had this good purpose in all His dealings with the nations of earth. "Reach out" could be translated "grope" as in darkness (Isa 60:2; John 12:46). But God gave men enough light that they could seek Him if they wanted to (John 1:9; Rom 1:19,20; Ps 19:1-4).

**17:28** Paul here quotes from two poets of

we live, and move, and have our being. As some of your own poets also have said, we are also his offspring.

29 "Since then we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that God's nature is like gold or silver or stone, *a thing* carved by man's art and design. 30 The times of such ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom he has ordained. He has given proof to all *by raising him from the dead.*"

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others said, "We want to hear you again about this *matter.*" 33 So Paul went away from them. 34 However some men joined him and believed, among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite, and *also* a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

former times whose writings should have been familiar to his hearers. Paul certainly would not have endorsed all those poets wrote, but he extracted truth from their writings and used it to appeal to his hearers. Truth is truth wherever it may be found. God is not far from any person but surrounds us all. We need go on no pilgrimages to find Him. The Creator of the universe will always be found when men lift up their thoughts to Him and seek Him sincerely with their whole hearts. Compare Jer 29:13.

**17:29** Gen 1:27; Ex 20:4; Isa 40:19,25. **17:30** Observe that he calls idolatry "ignorance." Compare Rom 1:21-23; Isa 44:9,18,20. Athens had temples magnificent in architecture, and images highly prized as works of art. To Paul and to Paul's Lord it was all evidence of the lack of wisdom in the Athenians. And all their philosophy, failing as it did to come to the knowledge of God, was nothing but brilliant ignorance (compare 1 Cor 1:19-25). Such words could not have pleased his hearers, but now Paul has reached the point he has aimed at from the beginning – their repentance. Notes on repentance at Matt 3:2,8; Luke 13:1-5.

God commands all people to repent – all philosophers, all religionists, all idolaters, all men of learning and science, all in positions of authority, all ordinary people, everyone, everywhere. He does so because all are sinners (Rom 3:23), all need to be saved from sin, and He wants to save all (John 3:16; 1 Tim 2:4,5; 2 Pet 3:9).

**17:31** On God's judgment see Matt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; Rom 2:2; 14:10; 2 Pet 2:9; Rev 14:7; 20:11-15. On Christ's resurrection see v 18; 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 13:30; Matt 28:6. Observe that Christ's resurrection is proof that God will judge the world. **17:32** Those who sneered only revealed their ignorance and lack of desire for the truth.

**17:34** The gospel did not bear as much fruit in Athens as in some other places. There

**18** After these things Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 And *there he* found a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus *and* lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all Jews to leave Rome. And *he* went to them, 3 and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked. For by occupation they were tent makers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

5 And when Silas and Timothy had come down from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. 6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook out *his* clothes and said to them, "Your blood *be* on your own heads. *I am* pure *from* guilt. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

7 And he left there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, who was a worshipper

was little mind for serious enquiry there, and too much pride of intellect (vs 18,21,32). But Paul was able to win over a member of the highest court in the city.

**18:1** Corinth was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. It was situated about 75 kilometers west of Athens. It was the capital and commercial center of Achaia (Greece), and notorious for immorality. 1 Cor 2:1-5 reveals Paul's state of mind when he arrived in Corinth. Perhaps he felt he had failed in Athens and feared that the Corinthians, too, for the most part, might reject the gospel. It seems he changed his manner of preaching from what it was in Athens. Paul was able to adjust his style of speaking to meet any situation, yet without compromising the truth.

**18:2** Aquila means "eagle." Pontus was in the northern part of Asia Minor (now called Turkey). Italy was the land to the west with Rome as its capital.

"Claudius" – 11:28.

**18:3** Though he was a great apostle Paul did not think it was humiliating or demeaning to work with his hands and earn a living. And in this he was an example to us all – see 20:34; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7,8; 1 Cor 9:1-15.

**18:4** See 13:14; 14:1; 17:2.

**18:5** Perhaps Silas and Timothy brought supplies from Macedonia so that Paul could stop his physical labor for a time. Note on "the Christ" at Matt 1:1; Acts 2:36. Here "Messiah" may be a better translation.

**18:6** See 13:45,46; 14:19; 17:5; 28:28; Matt 8:11; 21:43; Rom 1:16. Paul well knew his responsibility – 20:26,27. If he had not proclaimed the gospel to them he would have considered himself guilty of their "blood" (of not giving them a chance to receive God's salvation). Compare Ezek 33:1-9. Shaking out his clothes was similar to shaking dust off the feet (13:51; Matt 10:14).

of God. His house was right next to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord together with all his household, and many of the Corinthians, hearing *the message*, believed and were baptized.

9 Then the Lord spoke to Paul at night through a vision: "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent. 10 For I am with you, and no man will attack you to do you harm, for I have many people in this city." 11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 And when Gallio was the proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the place of judgment, 13 saying, "This *fellow* persuades men to worship God *in a manner* contrary to the Law."

14 And now when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked reckless deeds, O Jews, there would be reason for me to bear with you. 15 But if it is a question of words and names and your law, you see *to it*, for I will not be a judge of such *matters*." 16 And he ejected them from the place of judgment. 17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* in front of the place of judgment. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

18 *After this* Paul remained *there* for a good while, and then took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, along with Priscilla and Aquila,

**18:8** No opposition can keep those whom God has chosen from coming to Christ (13:48; John 6:37,44).

**18:9,10** "Vision" – 9:10; 10:3; 16:9; Gen 15:1; Num 12:6; Ps 89:19; Jer 14:14; 23:16; Dan 2:19; Luke 1:22. It was natural for Paul to dread physical suffering. The memory of what he had already endured was no doubt fresh in his mind (14:19; 16:22-24). But God knows how to comfort and encourage His servants (2 Cor 1:3-7).

**18:11** For Paul this was a comparatively long time to stay in one place.

**18:12** They attacked Paul but did not harm him. We know from history that Gallio was an educated and witty man, a brother of the philosopher Seneca. But apparently he had little interest either in Judaism or Christianity or in the true and living God.

**18:13** See 16:20,21; 17:6,7.

**18:15** Some of those who do not understand the gospel of Christ may think that in the matter of religion one word or one name is as good as another. Gallio with all his education and wit was ignorant of the truth of 4:12.

**18:18** "Vow" – 21:23,24. See Num 6:1-21. Cutting off all the hair came at the end of the vow. Evidently Paul as a Jewish Christian (23:6; 2 Cor 11:22) thought it proper to make an Old Testament vow. He

having had *his* hair cut off in Cenchrea because he had taken a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there, but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, 21 but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem. But I will return to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus. 22 And after he had landed at Caesarea and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch.

23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he left and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. 24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* powerful in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord and was fervent in spirit, so he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, *but* knew only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him and expounded to him the way of God more precisely.

27 And when he wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brethren wrote, urging the disciples to receive him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed. 28 For he forcefully refuted the Jews, *and did it* publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

may have done so with fellow Jews in mind (1 Cor 9:19-23).

**18:19-21** Ephesus was the capital city of the province of Asia and the largest city in Asia Minor. Once God had kept Paul from going there (16:6). Now he is led to go.

**18:23** See 15:36,41; 2 Cor 11:28.

**18:24** See 19:1; 1 Cor 3:4-6,22; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13. The city of Alexandria was in Egypt. It was founded by Alexander the Great and became a great center of learning. Apollos had been a member of the large Jewish community there.

**18:25** "Baptism of John" – Matt 3:1-6. Probably it was followers of John the Baptist who had instructed Apollos about Christ.

**18:26** Apollos, great as he was in learning and oratory, was humble enough to learn from two members of the congregation. And those two performed a very valuable ministry to the church and are an example for all time.

**18:27** Corinth was the capital of Achaia (v 1). "Brethren" and "disciples" were both names for the followers of Christ. Notice the phrase "who by grace had believed." Compare 13:48; John 6:37,44; Eph 2:8,9; Phil 1:29. No one apart from God's gracious working in his heart would come to experience a true and living faith in Christ.

**18:28** Verse 5; 9:22; 17:2,3.

**19** And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having traveled through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples, **2** he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

**3** And he said to them, "Then into what were you baptized?"

And they said, "Into John's baptism."

**4** Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe on him who was to come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." **5** When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** And when Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. **7** Altogether there were about twelve men.

**8** And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and speaking persuasively about the kingdom of God. **9** But when some became hardened and refused to believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the crowds, he left them, and separated the disciples, and spoke daily in the school of Tyrannus. **10** And this continued for two years, so that everyone who

lived in *the province of Asia*, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord Jesus.

**11** And God performed special miracles by the hands of Paul, **12** so that from his body handkerchiefs or aprons were taken to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

**13** Then some traveling Jews, exorcists, undertook to call out the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We command you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."

**14** And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, who did so. **15** And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" **16** And the man who had the evil spirit leaped on them and overpowered them and showed *his* strength against them, so that they ran out of that house naked and wounded.

**17** And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. **18** And many who believed came, and confessed and made known their *evil* deeds. **19** Also many of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together, and burned them before everyone. And they counted up the value of them and found *it*

**19:1** See 18:19. Priscilla and Aquila had not been able to instruct all the disciples in Ephesus as they had Apollos (18:26). These men, twelve in number (v 7), had either been baptized by John the Baptist in Judea, or by a disciple of John who had baptized them somewhere else (v 3). If they had been to Judea they must have left there before the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, before the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They had not gone on to these great truths.

**19:2** Evidently their manner of living and their conversation made Paul wonder about their spiritual condition and knowledge of the things of Christ. His question indicates his conviction that if they had really believed in Christ they would have received the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13; Gal 3:14; Rom 8:9). Their reply revealed how little they knew of events after John's death.

**19:4** Matt 3:6; John 3:27-36.

**19:5** See 2:38; Matt 28:19. This is the only case of re-baptism mentioned in the Bible.

"In the name" – could also be translated "into the name." The Greek word (*eis*) means both. It was used by Greeks in business dealings – some property or money was put "into" the account of someone. So it became his. A person receiving baptism in or into Christ's name is declaring that he now belongs to Him.

**19:6** "Laid hands" – notes at 8:15-17; 9:17; 10:47.

"Tongues" – or "languages." See notes at 2:4,11 and 10:46. There is no good

reason to think "tongues" means one thing in 2:4-11 and another thing here. The author of Acts (Luke) has given no indication whatever that this was different from that. On prophesying see notes at Gen 20:7; Num 11:25; 1 Cor 12:10.

**19:8** See 13:14; 14:1; 17:2.

**19:9** See 13:45,46; 14:19; 17:5,13; 18:5,6. In those days sometimes the way of Christ was called simply "the Way."

**19:10** In all his journeys Paul never stayed so long in any other city (20:31). And this was in a place which God had once kept him from entering (16:6; 18:19).

**19:11,12** God used this way to convince everyone that Paul was His apostle (2 Cor 12:11,12). See notes at 5:15; 8:15,17 also. Paul did not attempt to do these miracles himself and he made no gain from them.

**19:13-16** Notes on demons and driving out demons at Matt 4:24; 10:1. Here we see that merely using the name of Jesus is not sufficient to drive them out. Christ's authority, and God's Spirit are required for that.

**19:17** The failure of the sons of Sceva to drive out demons had a good result. It was in sharp contrast with the power of God displayed through Paul (vs 11,12). God can use all such things, if He wills, for the advancement of the gospel.

**19:18** Matt 3:5,6.

**19:19** They had seen the power of the true God at work and realized the evil of sorcery and how little power it had in comparison with God's power. On sorcery see Deut 18:9-11. This is the third mention of it in

was fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. 20 So mightily the Word of God grew and showed its power.

21 After these things were over, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem, when he had traveled through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must see Rome also." 22 So he sent into Macedonia two of those who assisted him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

23 And at that same time there arose no small disturbance about the Way.

24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Diana, was bringing in no small profit to the craftsmen. 25 He called them together, *along* with the workmen of similar occupations, and said, "Men, you know that we have our income from this work. 26 Moreover you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but almost throughout all *of* Asia, this Paul has persuaded and taken away many people, saying that *gods* which are made with hands are not gods *at all*. 27 So that not only is this craft of ours in danger of falling into contempt, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised, and her magnificence may be destroyed, *she* whom all Asia and the world worships."

28 And when they heard *this*, they were filled with anger and cried out, saying, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!" 29 And the whole city was filled with confusion, and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's traveling companions, they rushed into the theatre with one accord. 30 And when Paul wanted to go inside

to the people, the disciples would not let him. 31 And some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent *word* to him begging *him* not to venture into the theatre.

32 So some cried out one thing, and some another, for the assembly was confused, and the majority did not know why they had come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the crowd, the Jews having pushed him forward. And Alexander gestured *with* his hand, and wanted to make his defense before the people. 34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all cried out with one voice for about two hours: "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians."

35 And when the town clerk had quieted the people, he said, "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana and of the *image* which fell down from heaven? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly. 37 For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of your goddess. 38 Therefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen who are with him, have a matter against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. 39 But if you enquire about any other matter, it must be decided in a lawful assembly. 40 For we are in danger of being called to answer for this day's uproar, there being no reason we may give to account for this riot." 41 And when he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

Acts (8:9-11; 13:8-10). Their "books" were writings containing magical spells. Fifty thousand pieces of silver was a huge sum. One piece of silver was a day's wage for a laborer. 50,000 was enough for one's wages for 140 years! Notice they did not sell these books and use the money. They saw the evil of sorcery and wanted the books utterly destroyed. See their great zeal for God's truth once they learned it.

**19:21** One reason for the visit to Jerusalem was to take a contribution from the churches to the poor believers there (see 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8:1 - 9:15). He had long had a desire to visit Rome (Rom 1:15; 15:23-28). Here he says he "must" do so. Does this not indicate that he was conscious of God's will in this (20:22)?

**19:24** Verse 9. "Diana" - in Greek here "Artemis." Diana was the Roman name for the same goddess. The people of Ephesus and of Asia Minor in general regarded Artemis as the mother goddess. They believed her image at Ephesus had fallen from the sky. Her temple there was called one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and was four times as large as the famous Parthenon in Athens. Much of the

income of the city was related to her worship. The reason for the great disturbance (v 23) was mainly financial. So many people were turning to Christ and renouncing idolatry that a part of the economy of Ephesus was beginning to suffer (vs 25,26). Since Demetrius and his friends loved money instead of truth, there was certain to be trouble.

**19:26** See 17:29,30; 1 Cor 8:4-6.

**19:28** Love of money and fanaticism for false religion are a dangerous combination.

**19:34** They knew that the views of the Jews on idolatry were the same as that of the Christians (Ex 20:1-5; Ps 115:2-8). They shouted for two hours about the greatness of Diana but does anyone worship her today? Her huge temple at Ephesus is now buried in a swamp.

**19:35-44** "Heaven" - Jupiter (KJV) is not in Greek here.

Ephesus was ruled by Rome. "Proconsuls" (v 38) were Roman governors. The people had no right to take the law into their own hands and they could have been in trouble with the authorities if they had tried to do so. Therefore the city clerk coolly quietened the crowd and sent them away.



**20** And after the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *him*, embraced *them* and left to go to Macedonia. 2 And when he had gone over those areas and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece, 3 and stayed *there* three months. And when the Jews made a plot against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. 4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia, also the Thessalonians Aristarchus and Secundus, Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. 5 These *men*, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. 6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them in Troas, where we stayed *for* seven days.

7 And on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, *being* ready to leave the next day, preached to them and continued his talk until midnight. 8 And there were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. 9 And in a window there sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was falling into a deep sleep. And as Paul continued to speak for a long time, he collapsed with sleep and fell down from the third story and was lifted up dead. 10 And Paul went down, prostrated *himself* on him, and put his arms around *him* and said, "Don't trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11 So when he had come up again and broken bread and eaten, and had talked a long time, even until daybreak, he departed.

12 And they led the young man *away* alive, and were not a little comforted. 13 And we went

ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul *aboard*. This is what he had arranged, planning to go on foot himself. 14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him *aboard* and came to Mitylene. 15 And we sailed from there and came the next *day* opposite Chios, and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and stayed at Trogyllium, and the *day* after *that* we came to Miletus. 16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, because he did not want to spend time in Asia, for he was hurrying on to be in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost, if possible.

17 And from Miletus he sent *word* to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You know the manner *of my life* the whole time I was with you from the first day I came to Asia, 19 *how* I served the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and trials which came to me because of the plotting of the Jews, 20 *and* how I kept back nothing that was helpful *to you*, but made it known to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly declaring both to the Jews and to the Greeks *the need* of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 "And, see, now I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and sufferings await me. 24 But none of these things moves me, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

**20:1,2** The churches started by Paul's ministry described in 16:10 - 18:18 were all in Macedonia and Greece.

**20:3** See 13:45; 14:2,5,19.

**20:4** "Derbe" - 16:20,21.

**20:5** "Us" - 16:10.

**20:6** "Days of Unleavened Bread" - Ex 12:17-20; Lev 23:4-8.

**20:7** They met together on Sunday to observe the Lord's Supper, instead of on the old Jewish Sabbath (see also 1 Cor 16:2). This was fitting because it was the day the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, and brought the dawn of a new age.

**20:10** See 9:40,41; Luke 6:11-15; 8:49-55; John 11:43,44; 1 Kings 17:21; 2 Kings 4:34,35.

**20:15** Miletus was a port about 50 kilometers south of Ephesus.

**20:16** "Pentecost" - 2:1-4; Lev 23:15-21.

**20:17** "Elders" - 14:23.

**20:18-36** Paul was an example of what a servant of Christ should be, and was set forth by God Himself for our instruction (Phil 3:17; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 2 Thess 3:8,9; 1 Tim 1:16). He did not speak these words to the elders to show his own greatness,

but to try to show what they as elders should be. He well knew what he was, and that he had nothing to boast about in himself (Rom 7:18; 1 Cor 3:7; 2 Cor 2:5,6; 1 Tim 1:15). **20:19** Is it possible for a humble man to know that he is humble? Evidently. At least he may know that he has behaved in a humble way.

"With many tears" - v 31; 2 Cor 2:4; 11:28,29; Ps 126:5,6; Luke 19:41.

**20:20,21** At whatever cost to himself he was determined that every person would have a chance to hear Christ's gospel. If they did not come to public meetings he went to them. He preached always the two essentials for salvation - repentance and faith in Christ (which is really but one essential - true faith is linked inseparably with repentance). On repentance see 2:38; 17:30; Matt 3:2; 4:17; Luke 13:1-5; 24:47.

**20:22,23** See 21:1,10,11.

**20:24** Here we see one of the secrets of the great success of this man of God. He practiced Matt 10:38; Luke 9:23; 14:26,27. And he had one great goal in life - to finish what God had given him to do and to win the prize at the end - 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil



25 "And now, look, I know that all of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I call you as witnesses this day, that I *am* innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not hesitated to declare to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Therefore take care about yourselves, and about all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will arise and speak distorted things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and

day with tears.

32 "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or clothing. 34 Yes, you yourselves know that these hands provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35 I showed you in every way how that by labouring like this you ought to support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

36 And when he had said this, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept many *tears*, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the words which he

3:12-14; 2 Tim 4:7,8. His work was to proclaim and explain the grace of God to everyone he could reach (Eph 3:2,7; 2 Tim 1:9-11). Comforts, conveniences, ease, pleasures, the things that people in general hold dear, even life itself, were as nothing to him as he pursued his goal. His power for all this is seen in Col 1:29.

**20:25** He felt his work in that part of the world was completed, and he planned to go elsewhere (19:21; Rom 15:23,24). Observe that "preaching the kingdom" is the same ministry as "testifying to the gospel of God's grace" (v 24).

**20:26,27** See 18:6; Ezek 33:7-9. Paul was a great evangelist, but he was not satisfied to preach the bare facts of the gospel and move on. And he did not hold back any truth because of the fear of men or desire for their approval (v 20; Gal 1:10).

**20:28** The leaders of the church there (Greek "episkopous") were made such by the Holy Spirit. These are the only leaders in any church who deserve the name, and only such can successfully fill the office – which is to be true shepherds of Christ's sheep (John 21:16; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 5:2-4). If churches choose their own leaders without the guidance of the Holy Spirit they will have to suffer the consequences – and the consequences will not be good.

"Church" – notes at Matt 16:18. In this verse Jesus is called God – God bought the Church with "His own blood" – the blood of Jesus (1 Cor 6:19,20; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18,19). Other references to Christ's deity are at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**20:29** "Wolves" – Matt 7:15; John 10:12. Paul means false teachers who will try to tear the church to pieces (Rom 16:17,18; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Pet 2:1).

**20:30** It is not enough for church leaders to watch for false teachers coming from outside. Inside churches, too, there will be men who want followers for themselves, not for Christ. To get followers they are willing to pervert the truth of God, because their own ego is more important to them than truth.

**20:31** Verse 19. Faithful servants of Christ

love the truth, and must warn God's people about teachers who would distort it. Jesus and His apostles did this repeatedly (Matt 7:15; 24:4,5; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 1 John 2:18,19; Jude 3,4).

**20:32** The "word of grace" is what we have in the gospel of Christ.

"Build you up" – Eph 4:11-13,16,29; 2 Tim 3:16,17; 1 Pet 2:1,2; 2 Pet 2:18; Jude 20.

"Inheritance" – 26:18; Rom 8:16,17; 1 Cor 6:9; Eph 1:11,14; 5:5; Col 1:12; 3:24; Heb 1:14; 1 Pet 1:4; Rev 21:7.

"Sanctified" – John 17:17-19; Rom 8:15,16; 1 Cor 1:2,30; 6:11; Eph 5:26.

**20:33** He well knew the dangers he wrote of in 1 Tim 6:6-10. Compare Phil 4:10-13.

**20:34** See 18:3.

**20:35** These words of Jesus are not in any of the Gospels, but He always showed this principle in His life and ministry (Jesus did many things and said many things that are not written down – John 21:25). See His attitude toward the poor and helpless in Matt 9:36; 11:5; 19:21; Luke 4:18; 6:20; 11:41; 14:13; John 5:6-8 (most of His miracles were performed on the poor). He gave all that He was and all that He had with no desire to receive anything from those He helped. Compare Matt 20:28; John 10:11.

Paul followed His example – 1 Cor 9:12-17; 2 Cor 12:15. He was not like many today who think "godliness" is a means to financial gain (1 Tim 6:5), and only want what they think is the blessing of piling up money or possessions for themselves (compare John 12:6). Such people have never understood that Christianity in action is not seeing how much we can get for ourselves, but how much we can give to others. Have we learned even this most basic principle given by the Lord Jesus Himself? See notes and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

**20:37** They knew that there was no exaggeration in his words, that he had given his time, his strength, his money, his talents, and himself for them. Their tears now testify to their love.

spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

**21** And it came about after we had left them and sailed away, *that* we came on a straight course to Coos, and the following *day* to Rhodes, and from there to Patara, **2** and finding a ship sailing across to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set out. **3** Now when we saw Cyprus, we left it on the left hand and sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload her freight. **4** And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They said to Paul, through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. **5** And when we had completed those days, we departed and went on our way. And they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, until *we were* out of the city. And we knelt down on the shore and prayed. **6** And when we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned home again.

**7** And when we had finished *our* voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and greeted the brethren and stayed with them one day. **8** And the next *day* we who were accompanying Paul left and came to in Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was *one* of the seven, and stayed with him. **9** And this man had four daughters, virgins, who prophesied.

**10** And as we stayed on *there* many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. **11** And when he had come to us, he took

Paul's belt, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit: 'So the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

**12** And when we heard these things, both we and those from that place, begged him not to go up to Jerusalem. **13** Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready, not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." **14** And when he would not be persuaded, we kept quiet, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

**15** And after those days we took our baggage and went up to Jerusalem. **16** *Some* of the disciples from Caesarea also went with us, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, whose guests we would be.

**17** And when we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. **18** And the following *day* Paul went with us to James, and all the elders were present. **19** And when he had greeted them, he declared in detail what things God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

**20** And when they heard *it* they glorified the Lord, and said to Paul, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who believe. And they are all zealous for the Law. **21** And they have been told about you, that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling *them* that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, or walk according to the customs. **22** What

**21:4** God's Spirit gave them great concern for Paul and probably revealed to them the persecution he would face there. But Paul was compelled by the same Spirit to go to Jerusalem (20:22).

**21:5** See 20:36.

**21:8** "Philip," "seven" – 6:5; 8:5-40. He is called the "evangelist" to distinguish him from Philip the apostle (1:13).

**21:9** Other women in the Bible experienced the gift of prophecy – Ex 15:20; Jud 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Neh 6:14; Isa 8:3; Luke 2:36. Four in one family was surely an unusual thing, and testified to the good influence Philip (and no doubt his wife) had on them.

**21:10** See 11:27.

**21:11** He did not tell Paul that the Holy Spirit was commanding him not to go to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself (20:22). The Spirit through Agabus told Paul exactly what was going to happen, so that Paul might be prepared for it.

**21:12** Verse 4.

**21:13** See 20:24.

**21:16** "Cyprus" – 13:4-12.

**21:17** At this time they brought the gifts of money from other churches (Rom 15:25-27; 1 Cor 16:1-4).

**21:18** Jam 15:13.

**21:19** See 15:4. Jews called all other people

(except Samaritans) "Gentiles."

**21:20** These were Jews who had received Christ as the Messiah of Israel, been baptized into His name, and had become Christians. But they still loved the law of Moses revealed in the Old Testament and tried to follow it even in the observances of rituals, "clean" and "unclean" foods, feast days, etc. They had not yet understood that these things were mere shadows, types and pictures of spiritual realities in Christ – Matt 5:17; Col 2:17; Heb 10:1. (One purpose of the letter to the Hebrews was to show this and to teach that the whole old covenant was no longer in force. But this letter had not been written at this time.)

**21:21** This accusation was false. Paul did not forbid Jewish Christians to circumcise their children or to follow the law. He did tell them and everyone else that salvation cannot come by the law (13:39; Rom 3:28; Gal 2:15,16). And he did teach Gentile Christians that they did not need to follow the customs and rituals of the Jews (Gal 5:1; 5:15; Col 2:16,17). But the most important aspects of the law – its ethics, morality, and righteousness – he taught should be fulfilled in every believer whether Jew or Gentile (Rom 8:4).

**21:22-24** They suggested a way in which Paul could show that he was not in

will be *the consequences*? The crowds will certainly come together, for they will hear that you have come. 23 Therefore do what we tell you. We have four men who have taken a vow. 24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave *their* heads. And everyone will know that those things which they were told about you are nothing, but *that* you yourself walk in an orderly way and keep the Law. 25 Concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written, *and* decided, that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled *animals*, and from sexual immorality."

26 Then Paul took the men and, the next day, purified himself with them and entered the temple to make known the completion of the days of purification, when an offering would be made for each of them. 27 And when the seven days were almost over, the Jews from *the province of Asia* saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people and took hold of him, 28 crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, and the Law, and this place. And furthermore *he has* also brought Greeks into the temple and polluted this holy place." 29 For previously they had seen with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed Paul had brought into the temple.

30 And the whole city was agitated, and the people ran together. And they took Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. 31 And as they set about to kill him, news came to the commander of the *Roman* troops that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

opposition to these Jewish believers. The "vow" was probably the same that Paul himself had previously made – the Nazirite vow. See 18:18.

**21:25** See 15:20,29. They were not informing Paul of something he did not know; they were assuring him that they would not demand that Gentile believers keep the law of Moses.

**21:26** This purification would involve reporting to the priests at the temple and having holy water sprinkled on him. The offering for each of the four men is given in Num 6:14,15. Paul himself was not now making a vow. All the offerings and sacrifices of the Old Testament spoke of Christ. He was the reality of which they were the pictures (see note at Lev 1:2). Since these four men were Christians they must have known that it was by the sacrifice of Christ alone that their sins were taken away. If they did not, can we doubt that Paul told them so very clearly? In all this affair Paul was acting according to his own words in 1 Cor 9:19-23. He was

32 He immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

33 Then the commander approached and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains, and asked who he was and what he had done. 34 And some in the crowd cried out one thing, some another, and when he could not find out the truth because of the uproar, he commanded him to be carried into the barracks. 35 And when he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the people. 36 For the crowds of people kept following, crying out, "Away with him!"

37 And as Paul was about to be taken into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?"

He said, "Can you speak Greek? 38 Are you not that Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led four thousand cutthroats out into the wilderness?"

39 But Paul said, "I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. And I ask you to let me speak to the people."

40 And when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs, and gestured with *his* hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

**22** "Men, brethren and fathers, hear my defense *which I* now *make* to you."

2 And when they heard him speaking to them in the Hebrew tongue, they kept even more silent. And he said, 3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the exact

showing love and humility to those he hoped to win to higher and better truth.

**21:27** "Asia" – 18:19; 19:1,8,9; 20:19.

**21:29** Of course Paul had not brought the Gentile Trophimus into the temple. He would not thus offend the Jews he was trying to win.

**21:31** Jerusalem was then ruled by the Romans.

**21:36** See 22:22; Luke 23:18; John 15:18-21.

**21:39** "No insignificant city" – Tarsus was the capital city of the province of Cilicia in southern Asia Minor. It was a commercial center with an enthusiasm for education and philosophy which surpassed that of Athens (according to a historian in ancient times).

**21:40** "Hebrew dialect" – possibly Aramaic, a language similar to Biblical Hebrew and spoken by the Jews in Palestine in those days. Sometimes it was called "Hebrew" because the Hebrews spoke it.

**22:1** See 7:2.

**22:3** "Gamaliel" – 5:34-40. "Zealous" –

manner of the Law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as all of you are this day. 4 And I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering up to prisons both men and women; 5 as also the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify for me. From them I received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring those who were there bound to Jerusalem, to be punished.

6 "And it came about that as I travelled, and had come near to Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light around me. 7 And I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying

Phil 3:4-6.

**22:4,5** See 8:1,3; 9:1,2.

**22:6-13** 9:3-18.

**22:10** "What shall I do, Lord?" – this question is not recorded in chapter 9. It speaks of Paul's submission to the Lordship of Jesus, something that began on the day of his conversion and was seen in him throughout his life. He never tried to receive Christ as Saviour and not as Lord. Today it seems that there are many who are trying to do this, but the author of these notes believes that such a thought would have been far from Paul's mind or the minds of the original apostles and disciples.

Jesus is one magnificent person – the Christ, the son of man, the Son of God, the incarnation of Jehovah God, Saviour, and Lord. When a repenting sinner comes to Him, he (or she) may have had only a little instruction about any of these facts about Him, and one or another of them may be uppermost in his mind (to be saved it is not necessary to know much theology), but he cannot deliberately reject any of them and hope to have a true faith in Christ. To receive this wonderful person surely means to receive Him as He is, and all that He is – though we may know little enough who He is when we receive Him, and will spend the rest of our lives trying to understand all that He is and what it means to fully obey and follow Him.

In this verse we see that Paul recognized Jesus as Lord, and so he recognized also that Jesus had the right to tell him what to do, and he waited for orders. This is the only way to a true Christian life. Consider the following references:

**Matt 4:17.** One of the things that every sinner needs to repent of is his or her rebellion against the Lordship of Christ. And how can anyone enter His kingdom without submitting to the King? Likewise He is the Head and Lord of the Church which is His body. How can anyone be baptized by the Holy Spirit into this body – 1 Cor 12:12,13 – while rejecting the Lordship of Christ in his heart?

**Matt 7:21.** The will of the Father surely involves our submitting to Jesus as Lord – Phil 2:9-11.

**Matt 16:24-26.** Surely denying oneself and

to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'

8 "And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

9 "And those who were with me certainly saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of him who spoke to me. 10 And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise, and go into Damascus. There it will be told you about all the things which you are appointed to do.' 11 And when I could not see because of the glory of that light, I came into Damascus, led by the hand by those who were with me.

taking up the cross to follow Jesus involves denying one's lordship over self and submitting to Him as Lord.

**Mark 10:17-27.** To the young man who came to Him asking about eternal life Jesus indicated that he had to submit to His authority and set out to obey Him, that real faith would not let anything stand in the way of his following Christ. And Jesus was speaking about entering the kingdom of God – v 23, and being saved – v 26,27.

**Luke 6:46** and **Matt 7:24.** Can we think they are saved people who are foolish enough to ignore or reject Jesus' teachings and build on sand – Matt 7:26?

**Luke 14:26,27,33.** If we are not His disciples, can we dare to think we know Him as Saviour?

**John 1:10-12.** Verses 10,11 present Jesus as the Creator and Lord of the world, and v 12 speaks of receiving Him as such. This fact is often neglected when using v 12.

**John 8:24.** Jesus is saying He is the incarnation of Jehovah, the Lord of the universe, and that to be saved the Jews had to receive Him as such.

**John 10:4,14,27.** Jesus says that His sheep recognize Him as their shepherd – that is, their Lord and Owner – and they follow Him. If they do not they are not His sheep.

**John 14:15.** If we do not love Jesus, can we vainly imagine that we are saved people – 1 Cor 16:22? And if we do love Him we will obey Him – that is, submit to His Lordship over us.

**Acts 2:36-38.** Peter tells the Jews that they must repent of their rejection of Jesus as Lord and Christ and receive Him as such. Baptism was – and surely still is – an indication of this. It indicates death to the old life and being raised to a new life under the Lordship of Christ. People should not be baptized without understanding this.

**Acts 5:32.** Can we think we will be saved without the Holy Spirit, or that we can receive the Holy Spirit without submitting to God's Son – Rom 8:9?

**Acts 16:31.** The jailer was not told to believe in the Saviour Jesus Christ but in the Lord Jesus Christ, and can we think that real faith in Him can be born in the heart that will not submit to Him? And is not

12 "And a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the Law, having a good testimony among all the Jews who lived *there*, 13 came to me, and

believing in Him and receiving Him the same thing, so that they who believe in the Lord receive the Lord – John 1:12?

*Rom 1:5.* Observe that once again obedience and faith are linked together. Indeed we cannot have one without the other. Compare 2 Thess 1:8; Rom 6:17. The Holy Spirit gives an obedient heart to those He gives faith to. We are not saved by obedience, we are saved by faith – the kind of faith that begins to make us obedient. Any other kind of faith is dead. Compare James 2:14-26.

*Rom 6:16-23.* Paul is saying that every person is a slave to what he obeys. If we submit to sin we are sin's servants; if we submit to God we are His servants. The one way leads to death; the other way leads to righteousness and life. Does not obeying the teaching the apostles gave plainly involve the Lordship of Jesus Christ over us? How can we be slaves of God and not recognize Christ as our Lord?

*Rom 8:14.* Does not God's Spirit always lead us to submit to the Lordship of Christ? To ask the question is to answer it. And is Paul not saying that only those who are led by God's Spirit are saved people?

*Rom 10:9.* Can we think of confessing Jesus as Lord and rejecting in our hearts His Lordship over us? Can we imagine that this is the way of salvation? Is it not an act of hypocrisy instead? And observe that Paul is speaking of the basic matter of salvation.

*Rom 14:9.* To be Lord is the reason He died. Will He not begin to fulfill this purpose in everyone who comes to Him in faith?

*Eph 2:10* and *Phil 1:6.* Surely a part of the good work God has started in believers is to give them a heart to submit to the Lordship of Christ and to do the good works He has appointed to us.

*Phil 2:10,11.* Surely God causes this to happen in all those whom He calls to Himself to be His people.

*Col 2:6.* The Colossians received Jesus as Lord. This is the faith that was taught them and which they received. Surely all true believers follow their steps.

*1 Thess 1:9,10.* Here is an example showing what real conversion is. And can we think that any kind of true service to God is possible without receiving Jesus as Lord?

*Heb 5:9.* Here we are plainly told that eternal salvation comes to those who obey Christ; by which it may be judged that saving faith and obedience to Christ go together. When God grants faith to anyone He gives at the same time an obedient heart. See Heb 8:10; Ezek 36:26,27; etc.

*1 Peter 1:2.* Observe that the purpose in God's choice of people, and the purpose of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing them to Christ, is that they might obey Jesus Christ. Notice too that here obedience is

stood *there*, and said to me, Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And that same moment I saw him.

14 "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has

put before "sprinkling by His blood."

*1 Peter 4:17* – Peter points out that the "gospel of God" is something to be obeyed and that there is a fearful judgment coming on those who do not obey it.

*1 John 2:4-6.* In the light of this, can we think that true and saving knowledge of Jesus is possible without having a heart to obey Him?

*Rev 3:20.* Observe in v 14 that He does not present Himself to this church as the Saviour, but as the "Ruler of God's creation" – v 14. This fact too is often neglected when using v 20. It is as Lord and King that He stands outside the door and knocks. And it is as such that He must be received. When He comes in all that He is – Lord, Saviour, King, etc – comes in at the same time. We cannot consciously receive Him as Saviour and reject Him as Lord and King. And the more conscious we are of receiving the whole wonderful person and all that He is, the better it will be for our spiritual life.

Are any other Scriptures necessary to show that repenting and coming in faith to Jesus Christ involves receiving Him as both Saviour and Lord?

I am not saying that everyone who comes to Him is well instructed in this or is fully conscious of it. Nor am I saying that after believing we all obey Him perfectly in everything, or that we never rebel against Him. We all fail in many ways, including this way (James 3:2). But I am saying that when individuals really turn in faith to Him, God does a wonderful work in their minds and hearts (the new birth), immediately He gives the Holy Spirit – the very Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ – to live in them, and this enables them to see who Jesus is and to receive Him as Saviour and submit to Him as Lord.

The person who wants to do the one without doing the other is on very dangerous ground. It is the enemies of Jesus, not His friends, who say "We don't want this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14).

Those who are spiritually the children of Abraham (Rom 4:16) will do as Abraham did – "By faith Abraham. . . obeyed" (Hebrews 11:8. See also James 2:14,17,20-24).

The New Testament everywhere teaches that salvation is by grace through faith alone. It also teaches that God saves us to make us the sheep of His pasture and obedient to Him, and that any so-called faith which refuses to submit to Jesus as Lord is not true faith at all. It is presumption. True faith, the faith that is a gift of God, is not a passive thing that merely receives; it is a powerful force that always produces action, the action of obedience to Christ. I believe that the weakness of preaching about this matter is partly responsible for the weakness and superficiality we see in many churches.

**22:14-16** These words are not recorded in



chosen you, that you might know his will, and see that Just One, and hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For you will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

17 "And it came about that when I had come again to Jerusalem, as I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance, 18 and saw him saying to me, 'Hurry, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning me.'

19 "And I said, 'Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those who believed in you. 20 And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, consenting to his death, and watched the clothing of those who killed him.'

21 "And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.'"

22 And they listened to him until this word, and then raised their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not right that he should live."

23 And as they cried out and threw off their clothes, and flung dust into the air, 24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he must be investigated by whipping that he might know why they cried out so against him. 25 And as they bound him with leather

chapter 9. The "Righteous One" is a very fitting name for Jesus - 3:14.

**22:15** See 1:8.

**22:16** Notes on baptism at 2:38; Matt 3:2; Mark 16:16. In Ananias' words we can see that it is the visible symbol of inner cleansing from sin. This inner cleansing is by the blood of Christ - Heb 9:14.

**22:17-21** This event is not recorded in chapter 9. It probably occurred sometime during his visit there shortly after his conversion (9:26-30).

**22:20** See 7:57 - 8:1. In the Christian meaning of the word a martyr is a person who is put to death because of his (or her) witness for the truth.

**22:21** Gal 2:7,8.

**22:22** See 19:36. Here is another example of the Jewish prejudice against other peoples which was common in those times. They considered themselves superior to other peoples and did not want the "Gentiles" to be considered on an equality with themselves. Injustice, violence, threats and even murder were tools to maintain their prejudice.

**22:24** See 5:40; 16:22,23; Matt 27:26.

**22:25-28** See 16:37,38. Paul saw no reason why he should endure another unjust beating.

**22:28** At this time in Rome's history there was this strange custom of selling citizenship (with all its advantages) to those who could afford it.

straps, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to whip a man who is a Roman citizen, and not condemned?"

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman citizen."

27 Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" He said, "Yes." 28 And the commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this freedom."

And Paul said, "But I was born free."

29 Then immediately those who were going to investigate him left him, and the commander also was afraid, after he found out that he was a Roman citizen, and because he had bound him.

30 On the next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he loosed him from his bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and placed him before them.

**23** And Paul, looking intently at the council, said, "Men, brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall, for do you sit to judge me according to the Law, and command me to be struck contrary to the Law?"

**22:30** "Council" - the Sanhedrin - Matt 5:22.

**23:1** "Conscience" - this is a word Paul used altogether 23 times in his speeches and letters recorded in the New Testament. It is used only nine times in other parts of the New Testament. Some important references are Rom 2:15; 1 Tim 1:5,19; 3:9; 4:2; 2 Tim 1:3; Titus 1:15; Heb 9:9,14; 10:22; 1 Pet 3:16.

Conscience is an inner faculty which judges what is right and wrong. It is an inner voice which can speak in alarm when an individual does something contrary to its judgments, or be calm and clear when it judges behavior to be correct. Paul insisted on the importance of having a "good" conscience (1 Tim 1:19). In 24:16 and 2 Cor 1:12 he gives one of the principles he always followed. Even when he was persecuting the church he maintained a good conscience (26:9; Phil 3:6). He thought that what he was doing was right (26:9. Compare John 16:2).

This shows that conscience is not infallible and can make serious errors. It needs to be instructed by the Word of God. See also the note at Heb 9:14.

**23:2** This Ananias, an evil and greedy man, became the Jewish high priest about 48 AD. Paul's denial of any wrong doing enraged him.

**23:3** "Whitewashed wall" - compare Matt 23:27; Ezek 13:10-12. Ananias was murdered some year after this. Striking Paul



4 And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"

5 Then Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest. For it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people.'"

6 But when Paul perceived that some were Sadducees, and the others Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men, brethren! I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I am being judged concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead." 7 And when he had said this, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, *and* no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge both.

9 And there arose a loud outcry, and the scribes *who were* on the Pharisees' side got up and disputed, saying, "We find no evil in this man. And if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God." 10 And when a great dissension arose, the commander, fearing that Paul might be pulled in pieces by them, ordered the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the barracks.

11 And the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, Paul. For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must be a witness at Rome also."

12 And when daylight came, some of the Jews formed a gang and bound themselves by an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13 And those who made this conspiracy were more than forty *in number*. 14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves by a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 So now you, *together* with the council, indicate to the commander that he should bring him down to you tomorrow, as though you would

enquire more accurately concerning him. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near *here*."

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions to *him*, and said, "Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him."

18 So he took him and brought *him* to the commander, and said, "Paul, the prisoner, called me and asked me to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you."

19 Then the commander took him by the hand, withdrew *with him* privately, and asked *him*, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

20 And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they would enquire more accurately about him. 21 But do not be persuaded by them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have bound themselves by an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink until they have killed him. And they are now ready, looking for a message from you."

22 So the commander let the young man leave, and ordered him, "Do not tell anyone that you have told me these things."

23 And he called two centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers and seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea tonight at nine o'clock. 24 And provide animals to set Paul on, and take him safely to Felix the governor."

25 And he wrote a letter like this:

26 Claudius Lysias to the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings.

27 This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be killed by them. Then I came with a troop and rescued him, since I understood that he

was contrary to the law of God because the law did not permit punishment before guilt was proved.

**23:5** It would seem from this either that Paul's eyes were bad, or that Ananias was not wearing his robes of office, or that he was not presiding over the meeting in the usual place (the meeting had been hastily called - 22:30). Paul quotes Ex 22:28.

**23:6** Here Paul used the wisdom God gave him to cause a division in the ranks of his enemies. He had been raised a Pharisee (Phil 3:5. Note at Matt 3:7), and the high priest and some other members of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees.

**23:7** Sometimes religious disputes are the most violent of all.

**23:11** "The Lord stood by him" - any trouble is a blessing in disguise if it brings the Lord Jesus near.

"Take courage" - 18:9,10.

"Rome" - 19:21.

**23:12-35** From the time of his conversion the Jews had been plotting to kill Paul (9:23-25,28-30; 14:19; 17:5). They never did succeed in doing so. God knows how to protect His servants until it is time for them to go to be with Himself. No enemy can take the life of any of them as long as God has something for them to do on earth. For Paul's safety God used his nephew (v 16). This is the only reference in the New Testament to him or to Paul's sister). God used also the Roman centurion (v 17), the Roman commander (v 18), 200 ordinary soldiers, 70 horsemen, 200 other soldiers with spears (v 23), and the Roman governor of Judea (v 34). If there had been need He would have sent an army of angels from heaven.

**23:26** Felix became the Roman governor of Judea in 52 AD. He was a wicked, cruel and lustful man.

is a Roman *citizen*. 28 And when I wanted to find out the reason why they accused him, I brought him to their council. 29 I saw that he was accused concerning questions about their law, but there was no charge against him deserving of death or bonds. 30 And when I was told that the Jews were waiting in ambush for the man, immediately I sent *him* to you, and also ordered his accusers to tell in your presence what *they have* against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul at night and brought *him* to Antipatris. 32 On the next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. 33 When *the horsemen* arrived in Caesarea they delivered the letter to the governor and also placed Paul before him. 34 And when the governor read *the letter*, he asked what province he was from. And when he found out that *he was* from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will hear you when your accusers also have come." And he commanded that he be kept in Herod's government quarters.

**24** And five days later Ananias the high priest came down with the elders, and *with* a certain advocate *named* Tertullus. They informed the governor *of the charges* against Paul. 2 And when *Paul* was called in, Tertullus began the accusation, saying, "Seeing that because of you we enjoy much peace, and under your providential care very worthy deeds are done for this nation, 3 we everywhere and always receive *this* with complete gratitude, most noble Felix. 4 But so that I might not be more tedious to you, I request you in your kindness to listen to a few words from us.

5 "For we have found this man a plague, and one who stirs up rebellion among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 Also he has gone about to desecrate the temple. We seized him, and would have judged him according to our law, 7 but the commander Lysias came and very forcibly took *him* out of our hands, 8 commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you can understand all these things of which we

accuse him."

9 And the Jews also gave assent, saying that these things were so.

10 Then Paul, after the governor had gestured to him to speak, answered, "Because I know that you have been a judge to this nation for many years, I answer for myself the more cheerfully, 11 because you can find out that no more than twelve days have *passed* since I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12 And they did not find me in the temple disputing with anyone, or stirring up the people, either in the synagogues or in the city. 13 Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. 15 And *I* have the hope toward God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the righteous and unrighteous. 16 And I take pains in this: Always to have a clear conscience toward God and men.

17 "Now, after many years, I came to my nation to bring a donation for the poor, and offerings. 18 At which *time* some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, with neither a mob, nor an uproar. 19 They ought to have been here before you to object, if they had anything against me. 20 Or else let these who *are here* say if they have found any wrongdoing in me when I stood before the council, 21 unless it was for this one statement that I cried out, standing among them: 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.'"

22 And when Felix heard these things, having a very accurate knowledge of *the* Way, he postponed *things*, and said, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will determine your case more exactly." 23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul *under guard*, and to let *him* have *some* freedom, and that he should not prevent any of his friends from performing service *for him* or visiting him.

24 And after some days, Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, *and* he sent for

**24:1** See 23:2. "Advocate" – or "orator"  
**24:5** "Plague" – 16:20; 17:6. Once again a peacemaker is accused of being a source of trouble. In fact it was Paul's opponents who caused the trouble.

"Sect of the Nazarenes" – 2:22; Matt 2:23. He meant that Paul and people of like mind had rejected the truth of the Jews' religion to follow Jesus, whom they considered a blasphemer and a heretic.

**24:14** "The Way" – 9:2; 22:4. The Law and the Prophets meant the whole Old Testament (Matt 5:17; Luke 24:27). Observe that Paul says he believed *all of it*. This is a

very significant statement. If we are wise we will do likewise. "Sect" – or "heresy".

**24:15** "Resurrection" – Dan 12:2; John 5:28,29. Some of the men (vs 1,9) must have been Pharisees if they believed in the resurrection of the dead (23:8).

**24:16** Note at 23:1.

**24:17** Rom 15:25-27; 1 Cor 16:1-4.

**24:18,19** See 21:26-29.

**24:20,21** See 22:30 - 23:10.

**24:22** Verse 14; 21:31; 23:23-26.

**24:24** Drusilla was a Jewess and the third wife of Felix. Though Felix was the most powerful man in the country and was going

Paul, and listened to him *speaking* about faith in Christ. 25 And as *Paul* reasoned concerning righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come, Felix trembled and answered, "Go your way for now. When I have a convenient time, I will call for you." 26 He hoped also that Paul would give him money to release him. Therefore he sent for him the more often, and talked with him.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus came in the place of Felix, and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favour, left Paul imprisoned.

**25** Now three days after Festus came to the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 Then the high priest and the leaders of the Jews informed him against Paul, and pleaded with him, 3 asking the favour against *Paul*, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, *while they* waited in ambush along the way to kill him. 4 But Festus replied that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would go *there* soon. 5 "Therefore," he said, "let those among you who are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, if there is any wickedness in him."

6 And when he had stayed among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, *he* commanded Paul to be brought. 7 And when he had come, the Jews who came down from Jerusalem stood around, and brought many serious charges against Paul, which they could not prove.

8 And he answered for himself, "I have not in any way offended against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against Caesar."

9 But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favour,

to decide Paul's case, Paul did not hesitate to tell him about the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare 20:24; Matt 10:18.

**24:25** Felix completely lacked righteousness and self-control (23:26). Notes on righteousness at Matt 5:6,20), and he was facing God's judgment (17:31). Paul the prisoner dared to go right to the heart of this ruler's sin and need. Felix was like so many in every era – he wanted to put off the day of decision. Does a "convenient" time ever come for such people who want to remain in rebellion against God?

**24:26** Treasure in heaven was offered to him, but he, like so many in authority, was only after what he could get on earth. On bribes see Ex 23:8; 1 Sam 8:3; 12:3; Ps 15:5; 26:10; Isa 33:15. How often in this way people throw away something of eternal value for passing trifles.

**24:27** Does it not seem strange that God permitted the greatest of the apostles to be confined for two years? Compare 12:2-7. We may be sure Paul's stay in prison was not wasted. He had much time for prayer, for witnessing to fellow prisoners,

answered Paul and said, "Will you go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged about these things before me?"

10 Then said Paul, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. 11 For if I am doing wrong, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not ask to avoid death. But if there is nothing to any of these accusations they bring against me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar."

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, "Have you appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you will go."

13 And after some days king Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. 14 And after they had been there many days, Festus set Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a certain man left imprisoned by Felix, 15 about whom the chief priests and the Jewish elders informed me when I was in Jerusalem, asking *me to make a* judgment against him.

16 "I replied to them that it is not the custom of the Romans to hand anyone over to death before the one accused has *seen his* accusers face to face, and had opportunity to answer for himself concerning the crime charged against him. 17 Therefore, when they had come here, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. 18 When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him about such things as I had supposed, 19 but had some questions against him about their own religion, and about a certain Jesus, who had died, who, Paul declares, is alive. 20 And because

and for writing letters.

**25:1** We know little about Festus apart from what is here in Acts. He became governor sometime about 60 AD and died less than two years later.

**25:3** See 23:12,21.

**25:7** See 24:13.

**25:10** Caesar was the Roman emperor. Rome ruled Judea and the Roman governor was the judge in criminal cases.

**25:11** At any stage in the trial of a Roman citizen he had the right to demand that his case be heard before the emperor in Rome, and that the emperor himself should give the verdict (v 21). Paul now did this because he saw that there was little chance of a just decision. Felix wanted to please the Jews. Also Paul knew that the Lord was sending him to Rome (23:11).

**25:13** This Agrippa was the son of the Herod Agrippa of 12:1. He was king over some areas to the north of Judea. Berenice was his younger sister.

**25:19** Festus had no understanding of the gospel, was ignorant of the most important issues facing mankind.

I was in doubt about such questions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem and be judged there about these matters. 21 But when Paul appealed to be kept for the decision of Augustus, I ordered him to be kept *here* until I could send him to Caesar."

22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would also like to hear the man myself."

"Tomorrow", *Festus* said, "You will hear him."

23 And the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp and entered the place for hearing *the case, along* with the commanders and leading men of the city, Paul was brought in at the order of Festus. 24 And Festus said, "King Agrippa, and everyone here present with us, you see this man about whom all the Jewish people have entreated me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he himself had done nothing worthy of death, and that he had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him *there*. 26 *But* I have nothing certain about him to write to my lord. Therefore I have brought him before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after *this* investigation takes place I might have something to write. 27 For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner, and not indicate the charges against him."

**26** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out a hand and answered for himself: 2 "I count myself happy, King Agrippa, because I will answer for myself this day before you concerning everything I am accused of by the Jews, 3 especially *because I know* you are an expert in all the customs and questions existing among the Jews. Therefore I ask you to hear me patiently.

4 "All the Jews know my manner of life from my youth, which in the beginning was *spent* in my own nation at Jerusalem. 5 They knew me from the

beginning, if they were willing to testify, that according to the most strict sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand and am being judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7 To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly worshipping day and night, hope to come. For the sake of this hope, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews.

8 "Why should you think it an incredible thing that God would raise the dead?

9 "I indeed thought myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, 10 which I also did in Jerusalem. And I imprisoned many of the saints, having received authority from the chief priests. And when they were put to death, I gave my vote against *them*. 11 And often I punished them in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities. 12 On this *work*, while I travelled to Damascus with authority and a commission from the chief priests, 13 at midday, O king, *while* on the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who were travelling with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads.'

15 "And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"And he said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for the purpose of making you a servant and a witness both of these things which you have seen and of those things I will yet reveal to you, 17 delivering you from the people, and *from* the Gentiles to whom I *now* send you, 18 to open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who are sanctified

**25:24** See 21:36; 22:22.

**26:4-6** See 22:2,3; 23:6.

**26:7** The hope he refers to is the hope of the resurrection of the righteous - Dan 12:2; John 5:28,29.

**26:8** God who made the worlds and put man on the earth can experience no difficulty in raising the dead. Observe again how the teaching of the resurrection was always at the heart of the gospel of Christ as His apostles preached it (1:3).

**26:9** See 22:3-5; 1 Tim 1:13. When he was persecuting the church Paul actually thought he was doing the right thing and defending the true faith. Compare John 16:2.

**26:10** See 8:1-3; 9:1,2; 22:4.

**26:11** Note on blasphemy at Matt 9:3. This is the only place where Paul is said to have tried to make Christians blaspheme. He

does not say he was successful.

**26:12-15** See 9:3-5; 22:5-8.

**26:14** In the three brief accounts of Paul's conversion to Christ here (and here only) is there the mention of kicking "against the goads." In his persecution of the Christians Paul had been like a strong rebellious ox which feels the sharp point of its master's goad trying to control it. In other words, there must have been some unease in Paul's mind, some pain in his heart, at what he was doing to Christian men.

**26:16-18** See 9:6,15; 22:14,15,21. Here Paul gives more fully the words with which the Lord appointed him as His servant.

**26:18** Paul's work as an evangelist is clearly seen here. He was Christ's instrument to bring true enlightenment to people; to bring them out of bondage to Satan (compare

by faith in me."

19 "Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the area of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds appropriate to repentance. 21 For these causes the Jews seized me in the temple, and attempted to kill *me*. 22 Therefore, having obtained help from God, I continue to this day, witnessing to both small and great, saying nothing but the things that the prophets and Moses said would come, 23 that Christ would suffer, and that he would be the first who would rise from the dead, and would give light to the people, and to the Gentiles."

24 And as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind. Much learning is driving you insane!"

25 But he said, "I am not insane, most noble Festus, but speak words of truth and sanity. 26 For the king knows of these things, before whom I also speak freely. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him, because this thing was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe."

28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost you

John 8:33-35,44; Eph 2:1,2; 2 Tim 2:26. Note on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; and to bring forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28; Luke 24:47) and an inheritance among God's people (20:32; Eph 1:11; Col 1:12; 1 Pet 1:4). This is the work also of every true evangelist. Notice that sanctification comes by faith in Christ – that is, God sets believers in Christ apart from all others to be His own people.

**26:19** Paul is emphasizing (as he always did) the fact that his conversion was not due to a process of reasoning or by the persuasive teaching of men, but because of a revelation from heaven (Gal 1:11,12). His whole Christian life was in obedience to that revelation.

**26:20** See 9:20-22,28. See again the emphasis on repentance, the kind of repentance that was proved by a change in life-style. See notes at Matt 3:2,8; 4:17; Luke 13:2-5. Any preacher who neglects the subject of repentance is not preaching the true gospel of Christ, and there is no lack of such preachers. And are there not many professing Christians in the churches who have never repented and who live lives little different from the people of the world?

**26:22** "Small" or "great" made no difference to Paul. He didn't cut the demands of the gospel when speaking to any kind of person.

**26:23** Luke 24:25-27,46,47. "Light" – Luke 1:78,79; 2:32; John 8:12.

**26:24** Festus was a Roman, and the Romans in general believed in many gods

persuade me to become a Christian."

29 And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who are listening to me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these bonds."

30 And when he had said this, the king and the governor and Bernice and those who were seated with them, got up, 31 and when they had gone aside, *they* talked among themselves, saying, "This man is doing nothing worthy of death or imprisonment." 32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free, if he had not appealed to Caesar."

**27** And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they handed Paul and some other prisoners over to a *man* named Julius, a centurion of the Regiment of Augustus. 2 And entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put out to sea, intending to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

3 And the next day we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul courteously, and permitted *him* to go to his friends to refresh himself. 4 And when we had put out to sea from there, we sailed close by Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5 And when we had sailed across the sea of Cilicia

and strange superstitions. Yet Festus thought Paul was crazy for believing in the sober truth of the resurrection of Christ (compare Mark 3:20,21). But he recognized that Paul was a very learned man. Compare 4:13.

**26:25** What seems crazy to those in spiritual darkness is both true and reasonable to those whom God has brought into the light. The really crazy ones are those who go their own way in this world and do not seek for the true God, or carefully consider God's revelation of truth in Christ. See Eccl 9:3.

**26:26** Paul, seeing that Festus had no desire to believe, turned to king Agrippa in hope of winning him for Christ.

**26:28** We do not know how sincere Agrippa was. In any case, saying "almost" was not enough for him (or for anyone) to enter God's kingdom. Almost persuaded is to be still lost in sin.

**26:29** See the heart of this prisoner before the authorities and all others present – he wants them all to become believers in Christ as he was. The truth of 2 Cor 5:13-15 was powerfully at work in him.

**27:1** Italy was the country where Rome, the capital city of the Roman Empire, was located.

"We" – Luke is with Paul.

"Centurion" – a Roman military man in charge of one hundred soldiers.

**27:2** "Aristarchus" – 19:29; 20:4; Col 4:10; Philemon 24.



and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city of Lycia*. 6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing to Italy, and he put us in it. 7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and had hardly come opposite Cnidus, the wind not allowing us *to go quickly*, we sailed close by Crete, opposite Salmone, 8 and, hardly getting by it, came to a place called The Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time had been spent and sailing had become dangerous (because the Fast was already over), Paul advised *them*, 10 and said to them, "Men, I perceive that this voyage is going *to result* in disaster and great damage, not only to the cargo and ship, but also to our lives." 11 Nevertheless the centurion was persuaded more by the sailing master, and the owner of the ship, than by those things Paul said. 12 And because the harbour was not suitable to *stay* during winter, the majority advised departure from there also, if by any means they might get to Phoenix, *and spend* the winter *there*. *This is* a harbour of Crete, and faces toward the southwest and northwest.

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had achieved *their purpose*, raising *anchor*, they sailed close by Crete. 14 But not long afterwards a violent wind, called Euroclydon, arose against *the ship*. 15 And when the ship was caught and could not face into the wind, we let *it* be driven. 16 And running close to an island called Claudia, we had much work to control the lifeboat. 17 When they had taken it up, they used help and bound the ship together. And being afraid that they might fall onto the sandbanks, *they* lowered the sail, and so were driven *by the wind*. 18 And since we were violently tossed by the tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship, 19 and the third *day* we threw out with our own hands the equipment of the ship. 20 And when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay over us, all hope that we would be saved was then taken away.

21 But after a long abstinence *from food* Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you should

**27:9** The "Fast" here refers to the Day of Atonement. See notes at Leviticus chapter 16; 23:16-32. It came between the last part of September and the first part of October. Sailors in the Mediterranean Sea considered that a dangerous time of the year for sailing, because of the possibility of bad weather. After the middle of November they considered sailing practically impossible.

**27:10** Paul was a prophet and God had revealed this to him.

**27:22-24** In other moments of crisis God encouraged Paul by some revelation or other (18:9,10; 22:17,18; 23:11).

**27:25** Paul could say this not only about that particular revelation but about all that

have listened to me, and not set sail from Crete and incurred this harm and loss. 22 But now I urge you to take courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship. 23 For tonight there stood by me an angel of God, to whom I belong and whom I serve, 24 saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must be brought before Caesar. And see, God has given you all those who are sailing with you.' 25 Therefore, men, have courage, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. 26 However, we must run aground on a certain island."

27 And when the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the sailors thought that they were drawing near some land. 28 And *they* took soundings and found *the depth was* twenty fathoms. And when they had gone a little further, they again took soundings, and found *the depth* fifteen fathoms. 29 Then fearing that we might fall on rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and wished for daylight. 30 And as the sailors were about to escape from the ship, having let down the lifeboat into the sea, pretending that they were dropping anchors from the prow of the ship, 31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless they stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat and let it fall.

33 And while day was dawning, Paul urged *them* all to take food, saying, "This is the fourteenth day that you have waited and continued to fast and have taken nothing. 34 So I beg you to take *some* food for the sake of your health, for not a hair from the head of any of you will fall." 35 And when he had said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all. And when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. 36 Then all of them gained courage and they also took *some* food. 37 And altogether in the ship we were two hundred and seventy-six persons. 38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw the grain out into the sea.

God had revealed in the Bible. This is how he was able to endure triumphantly all the storms that came into his life. Compare 24:14; Rom 4:20,21; 2 Cor 4:13,14; 2 Tim 1:12; 4:18.

**27:27** "Adria" – the Adriatic Sea, which was between Italy, Malta, Crete, and Greece.

**27:28** "Fathoms" – a word used by sailors in measuring the depth of the sea. One fathom is slightly less than two meters.

**27:35** Blessed are those believers who can show the same trust and confidence in all the experiences of life and so be an example to others.

"Gave thanks" – Matt 14:19; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17;



39 And when daylight had come, they did not recognize the land, but observed a cove with a beach, into which they resolved, if possible, to drive the ship. 40 And when they had removed the anchors, letting *them* go into the sea, they loosened the fastenings of the rudder, raised the mainsail to the wind, and made for *the* beach. 41 And happening onto a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground. And the front part stuck fast and remained firm, but the stern was broken up by the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners so that none of them would swim out and escape. 43 But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and ordered that those who could swim should first throw *themselves into the sea* and get to land, 44 and the rest *should follow*, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And it came about that they all escaped safely to the land.

**28** And when they had escaped, they then learned that the island was called Melita. 2 And those non-Grecian people showed us no little kindness. For they kindled a fire, and gave a welcome to all of us, because of the rain that was *falling* and the cold. 3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper, escaping from the heat, fastened on his hand. 4 And when those people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said among themselves, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Even though he has escaped the sea, justice does not permit *him* to live."

5 And he shook the creature off into the fire, and experienced no harm. 6 And they expected that he would swell up or suddenly fall dead, but

50:14,15; 56:12.

**27:42** The soldiers were afraid they would have to endure the punishment due to any prisoners who escaped (12:19; 16:27).

**27:43** Once again God had His way of preserving the life of His servant (note at 23:12-35).

**27:44** Verses 22-25.

**28:1** "Melita" – the small island now called Malta. It lies nearly 100 kilometers south of the much larger island of Sicily.

"Non-Grecian people" – see note at Rom 1:14. The inhabitants of Melita were not barbarians.

**28:4** Compare Rom 2:14,15. God has placed the idea of justice in the hearts of people everywhere. These islanders believed in exact divine retribution.

"People" – literally, "barbarians", a name the Greeks called other people even though those people might have been civilized in every way.

**28:5** Mark 16:18. This is the only case of

after they had watched for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

7 In the same area there were fields belonging to the leading man of the island, whose name was Publius. He received us and kindly welcomed us as guests for three days. 8 And it *so* happened that the father of Publius lay sick with a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, laid his hands on him, and healed him. 9 So when this happened, others in the island also who had diseases came and were healed. 10 *And* they showed us much respect, and when we left they loaded us down with things that were needed.

11 And after three months we sailed in a ship of Alexandria which had spent the winter at the island. Its emblem was Castor and Pollux. 12 And landing at Syracuse, we stayed *there* for three days. 13 And from there we circled around and came to Rhegium, and a day later the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli. 14 There we found *some* brethren and were asked to stay with them for seven days. And so we proceeded toward Rome. 15 And when the brethren heard about us, from there they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and The Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage. 16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the commander of the guard, but Paul was allowed to live by himself with a soldier who kept him *under guard*.

17 And three days later it came about that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. And when they had assembled, he said to them, "Men and brethren, even though I have done nothing against the people, or *the* customs of our fathers, from Jerusalem I was given over as a prisoner into the

this kind recorded in the New Testament.

**28:6** To them Paul seemed to have some supernatural power and in their ignorance and superstition they thought only the "gods" could exercise such powers. Compare 14:11-18.

**28:8** Mark 16:18.

**28:12** Syracuse was the chief port of the island of Sicily.

**28:13** Rhegium was on the southernmost coast of Italy. Puteoli was the chief port of southern Italy. It was near present-day Naples.

**28:14,15** "Brethren" is one of the names used in the New Testament for believers in Christ. The welcome Paul received from them near Rome cheered his heart after a long, weary and dangerous journey.

**28:16** Paul was given considerable liberty (v 30) because there were no charges against him (25:25-27; 26:31,32) and he was a Roman citizen.

**28:17** Paul wasted no time but right away

hands of the Romans. 18 When they examined me, they would have let *me* go, because there was no reason *found* in me for the death *penalty*. 19 But when the Jews spoke against *it*, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar; not that I had any accusation to bring against my nation. 20 Therefore, for this reason I have sent for you to see *you* and to speak with *you*, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

21 And they said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brethren who have come reported or said anything bad about you. 22 But we want to hear from you what you think, for as for this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

23 And when they had fixed a day for him, many came to him in *his* lodging. He explained, and testified about, the kingdom of God, speaking convincingly to them about Jesus, both from the Law of Moses and *from* the Prophets, from morning to evening. 24 And some assented to the things that were said, and some would not believe. 25 And when they disagreed among themselves, they left, after Paul had spoken one word: "Well spoke the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 saying,

Go to this people, and say,  
Hearing you will hear, and will not understand,  
and seeing you will see, and not perceive.

27 For the heart of this people has become fat,  
and their ears are dull of hearing,  
and they have closed their eyes  
so that they might not see with *their* eyes,  
and hear with *their* ears,  
and understand with *their* heart,  
and be converted, and be healed by me.

28 "So be it known to you that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it."

29 And when he had spoken these words, the Jews left and had a great argument among themselves.

30 And Paul lived two full years in his own rented house, receiving all who came to him, 31 and preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with complete confidence, no one hindering him.

tried to reach the Jewish community in Rome with the gospel. See Rom 9:1-3.

**28:19** See 25:11.

**28:20** "Hope" - 23:6; 24:15; 26:6.

**28:22** "Sect" - they considered Christianity a rather disreputable sect of Judaism.

**28:23** "Kingdom of God" - 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; Matt 4:17.

"The Law. . . the Prophets" was their way of saying the whole Old Testament. See Paul's method of proclaiming the truth. He explained God's revelation, and he reasoned with them from the Scriptures. He knew that his message was both true and reasonable (27:35), and solidly based in God's Word.

**28:24** Compare Matt 10:34; John 7:12,13; 10:19-21.

**28:25-27** Isa 6:9,10; Matt 13:13-15; Rom 11:8. Notice the words "spoke the Holy Spirit." Paul believed in the full divine inspiration of the Old Testament (2 Tim 3:16). In this also he was a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 5:17,18; John 10:35). The Jews' rejection of the gospel was in accordance with a prophecy in their

own Scriptures.

**28:28** See 14:46-48; 18:6; 22:18,21; Rom 1:16.

**28:31** Verse 23. Again we see that with the apostles the preaching of God's kingdom and the teaching about Christ were intimately connected. Note on God's kingdom at Matt 4:17. Luke closed this brief history of the early Church with Paul in Rome. One of his aims was to show how the words of Christ in 1:8 were fulfilled. He had done what he set out to do, and his work was completed. He wrote, no doubt, before Paul stood before the Emperor to be judged.

We do not know with certainty what happened to Paul at the end of this time in Rome. We do not need to know. Tradition says that eventually he was beheaded there. However that may be, before long Paul and all the apostles passed away and went to be with Christ. But the work of Christ, not being dependent on any one man, or group of men, goes on to this day. What Christ "began" (1:1) He still continues to do and He will complete it in due time. Happy are those who have a part in it all.

# The Letter of the Apostle Paul to the ROMANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

About 58 AD.

**Theme:**

The gospel of Christ. Paul gives the theme in 1:16,17 and in the rest of the letter fully describes the gospel – what it is, what it does for those who believe it, and how it relates to the nation Israel. Some key words are sin, redemption, salvation, justified, righteousness, grace, faith.

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**1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God **2** (which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, **3** concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, **4** and declared with power *to be* the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. **5** Through him we have received grace and apostleship, *to bring about*

**1:1** "Paul" – Acts 7:38; 8:13; 9:119; 13:9.

"Servant" – the Greek word could also be translated "slave", one who belongs completely to another person. All believers in this sense are servants or slaves of Christ – He has purchased all of them from the slavery of sin to become His property, His people (6:16-18,22; Matt 20:28; 1 Cor 6:19,20). Paul accepted this relationship with Christ gladly and willingly, as all believers should. See note at 8:14.

"Apostle" – 1 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1. The word means someone who is sent on some work or some mission by another person. See Matt 10:2.

"Set apart" – God had a special work for Paul – proclaiming, explaining and defending the gospel of Christ. Observe that this gospel is "of God." The one true God conceived it, planned it, prepared the way for it, accomplished it, and now offers it to people everywhere.

**1:2** Christ's gospel was not something altogether new. In the Old Testament ("the Holy Scriptures") there were promises, prophecies, types and pictures of the gospel. See Luke 24:25,27,46,47; Matt 5:17; Heb 8:5; 10:1.

**1:3** Christ was one person with two natures – divine nature and real human nature. He was both the Son of David, and the Son of God (Matt 1:1; 3:17; Heb 2:14,17).

**1:4** "The Spirit of holiness" is the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,17,26). Notes on holiness at Lev 20:7; John 17:17,19. The final proof that Christ was the Son of God was His resurrection. See Matt 28:6. He did not appear, make great claims about Himself, then die and remain in the grave. He backed up what He said with what He did. For other evidence that He was God's Son see John 5:31-47.

**1:5** Paul well understood that his salvation and his opportunity of serving Christ were altogether God's gift (Eph 2:310; 3:7,8; 1 Tim 1:13-17; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:3-8). God appointed him to serve primarily among the Gentiles (peoples other than Jews). But of course he preached to Jews also – Acts 13:45-47; 22:31; 26:17,18; Gal 1:16; 2:7,8.

"Obedience of faith" – the KJV has "obedience to the faith", but the words "to the" were added. They are not in the Greek. The phrase "the faith" is used in the Bible to indicate the body of truth and doctrine taught by Christ and His apostles (see, for

*the* obedience of faith among all nations, for his name's sake, **6** among whom you too are called by Jesus Christ):

**7** To all who are in Rome, dearly loved by God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**8** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. **9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel

example, 1 Tim 4:1; Jude 3). But faith (without "the") is the experience of believing.

The intimate connection between faith and obedience appears in many places in the New Testament. See 6:16-23; 8:14; Matt 7:21,24; Acts 5:32; 22:10 (where many references are given); 2 Thess 1:8; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 1:2; 4:7; 1 John 2:46, and notes in those places. Salvation is altogether by grace through faith (as we shall see very clearly in the rest of Romans), but in saving us God produces a profound change in us which causes us to bow at the feet of Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as Lord (10:9,10). Believing in Christ and submitting to Him go together.

**1:6** "Called" – see also 8:28-30. In Paul's usage this means more than merely invited. All believers are God's gift to His Son and become His. See John 6:37; 17:6. God knows who they are before they believe, and He calls them through the preaching of the gospel to come to Christ, and they come and believe in Him, and receive Him as Lord and Saviour.

**1:7** All believers are "dearly loved by God" with a special love (John 13:1; 14:21,23; 1 John 3:1; Jer 31:3).

"Saints" literally means "holy ones", and all believers in Christ are such. See John 17:17-19. According to the Bible "saints" are not some exceptionally holy or dedicated or successful believers, but all believers without exception. They are to live holy lives because they are holy people and belong to Jesus Christ the Holy One.

"Grace" and "peace" are two of the great words of the gospel of Christ. Paul uses these words in the salutation of every letter of his in the New Testament. Grace saves believers and keeps them and supplies freely all they need for a life of holiness, usefulness and godliness. See note at John 1:14. We can never deserve God's grace. Grace means God's favor to those who are not worthy of it, who can never earn it. Peace here means the rest of heart, the peace of mind that Christ gives (Matt 11:28-30; John 14:27; 16:33). It is a result of being rightly related to God. Observe that the Lord Jesus is the source of grace and peace just as God the Father is. This is true because He shares God's nature. See references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**1:8,9** Paul often expressed his thankfulness to God for believers – 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3;

of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10 asking that by some means at last by the will of God I might have a good opportunity to come to you. 11 For I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift so you can be strengthened; 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by our mutual faith. 13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I planned to come to you (but was hindered until now) so that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

Col 1:3; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 1:3. And he prayed earnestly and faithfully for them wherever they might be – Eph 1:16; 3:16; Phil 1:4,9; Col 1:3,9; 2:1; 1 Thess 1:2; 3:10; 5:23; 2 Tim 1:3. He felt the burden of all the churches (2 Cor 11:28,29), and he knew the importance of prayer and its power (compare Luke 18:1; Jam 5:16).

“With my spirit” – compare John 4:24. There is such a thing as trying to serve God merely in the flesh or only with the mind. **1:10** “Come to you” – 15:23,24; Acts 19:21. **1:11** “Spiritual gift” – 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11. **1:12** He was a great apostle but he did not proudly imagine that he could not be encouraged and edified by ordinary believers.

**1:13** “Fruit” – Matt 9:37,38; John 4:35-38. For some good results of Paul’s work in other places see Acts 13:43; 14:21-23; 16:40; 17:4,12,34; 18:8; 19:17-20.

“Gentiles” – peoples other than Jews.

**1:14** He considered himself a debtor to all kinds of men – he knew he owed them the opportunity to hear the gospel. See Acts 20:26,27. Christ had placed this responsibility on him (Acts 26:16-18; 1 Cor 9:16,17), as He did on all the disciples and on the whole Church (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).

“Other peoples” – literally “barbarians.” The Greeks considered themselves the most enlightened and cultured of all nations. They used the term “barbarians” to indicate other peoples in general whose native tongue was not Greek, and not simply the most barbaric. So “other peoples” here gives the correct meaning of the Greek.

**1:15** He not only felt keenly his responsibility to all men, he was eager to fulfill it. No sufferings, no troubles, no threats of death could deter him (Acts 20:24; 21:13).

**1:16** The reason for his eagerness to preach the gospel appears here. He was not ashamed of it as if it were a weak and useless thing. He knew it was the only way of salvation, the one power of God that was effective in forgiving and changing men and bringing them at last to heaven. In this letter more than in any other he wrote Paul shows what salvation means. It includes justification (3:24), peace with God (5:1), a new holy life (chapters 6-8), and glorification (being made eventually like the Lord Jesus – 8:29,30). The only power to accomplish

14 I am debtor both to Greeks and to other peoples, both to the wise and to the unwise. 15 So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are at Rome also. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written,

“The righteous will live by faith.”

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven

all this is the gospel of Christ (see also Acts 4:12).

Paul insists here as he always did (and as the other apostles and the Lord Jesus Himself always did), that salvation is by faith – 3:22,25,28; 4:5; 5:1; 10:9,10; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9; John 1:12; 3:16,36.

“First to the Jew” – Matt 10:5,6; 15:24; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 3:26; 13:46.

**1:17** “Righteousness” is a key word in Romans, used 39 times. Here Paul means that in the gospel God reveals how people can become righteous in His sight, how He counts them righteous, makes them right with Himself. It is altogether by faith. See 3:28; 4:3-5; etc.

When Paul says salvation is through faith he is not excluding repentance. Repentance is a part of true faith in Christ (see 2:4,5; Matt 3:2; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30). True faith is impossible without repentance. And so God’s goodness leads men to repentance (2:4) and so to faith. Repentance precedes faith, but is so closely bound up with it that it might be called the first step of faith. It is part of the “obedience of faith” (1:5). Can we imagine that faith is worthy of the name if it lacks this first step?

“Revealed” – apart from God’s revelation men could not know the truth about this righteousness.

“As it is written” – Paul is showing that his teaching about righteousness and faith is in harmony with the Old Testament. The verse he refers to is Habakkuk 2:4. That verse is quoted three times in the New Testament – here, Gal 3:11 and Heb 10:38.

**1:18** “Wrath” – here is another revelation from God. See notes on God’s anger at Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; Matt 3:7; John 3:36; Eph 5:6.

“Revealed from heaven” – men did not invent this teaching. It is as much a revelation from God as His love (5:8). In fact, God’s anger comes because of His love. He loves mankind and therefore is angry with the evil which ruins people. He loves righteousness and so is angry with all that opposes righteousness.

“Suppress” – or “hold back”, “restrain”, “hinder” – this is what sinful people do, because they do not want the truth of God. They suppress any true view of God and of themselves which might lead them to God



against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known about God is evident among them, for God has showed *it* to them. 20 For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen, *that is*, his eternal power and divine nature, being understood by the things that are made, so that they are without excuse.

21 Because, when they knew God, they did not glorify *him* as God, and were not thankful, but became futile in their reasonings, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the

incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping animals.

24 Therefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts to dishonour their bodies between themselves. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. Even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural

and repentance. They prefer themselves and their false views to God and His truth, and love darkness rather than light. This is their great sin and their great danger (compare John 3:18-21; 2 Thess 2:10-12).

From this verse to 3:20 Paul emphasizes one very important subject – the universal sinfulness of people and their great need of Christ's gospel. All are sinners, all have suppressed the truth that interfered with their sinning, all deserve God's anger – 3:9,19,23. Compare Eph 2:3.

**1:19,20** People do not sin altogether in ignorance. Creation reveals that there is a wonderful Being who has made it. Compare Ps 19:1-4; Isa 40:21-26; Acts 14:15-17. But people close their eyes to this truth (and even deny it – Ps 14:1), and sin deliberately. This is why they are without excuse. Even if God had given no other revelation, even if there were no Bible, even if Christ had not come, people would still be without excuse for their sin. By creation alone the fact of God and His power are "clearly seen", and people should seek the Creator and worship and serve Him (Acts 17:26,27). But they do not do this because they will not. They love their sins and after them they will go. They love their own ways and so refuse to consider the God who points them to higher, better, holier ways.

**1:21-23** Paul here speaks of mankind's history and shows how idolatry came about. People in the beginning knew the one true God, the Creator of the universe. But they were not grateful for this greatest of privileges (v 28). And they did not fulfill the chief purpose of their creation – to bring glory and honor to God (Isa 43:7; 1 Cor 10:31; Rev 4:11). On thankfulness see Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; 1 Thess 5:18; etc.

Instead of being thankful for the knowledge of God they had, they began to speculate and to invent philosophies and religious systems. This all led to darkness of heart (Eph 4:18), arrogance and idolatry. Verses 23 and 25 show us what idolatry is. See also Ex 20:4-6; Ps 115:2-8; Isa 40:18-26; 44:12-20. (God's own nation Israel – the nation above all others which had the clearest revelation of God – was guilty of this just as every other nation in

the world – see Jer 2:11,12.)

**1:22** All man's talk of wisdom is empty and vain in God's eyes. See 1 Cor 1:18-25; 2:7,8. The so-called way of wisdom which some people think leads to salvation is altogether foolishness in the sight of the Creator of the universe.

**1:23** Compare Jer 2:11-13; Hos 4:7,8.

**1:24** Verses 26,28. One way in which God punished mankind for its sin was to give it up to further sin and to the judgment that comes upon all sin. Abandoning men to the sins which they insist on doing is one of the worst of punishments and a perfectly just one. Compare Deut 32:19-22; Jud 2:10-15.

**1:25** The knowledge of the true God was a hindrance to their sinning. Therefore they rejected it and adopted lying thoughts and false teachings as their guide. Some of the worst of these is the lie that God is like the creation He had made, or like the idols men make, and the lie that to worship God's creation (sun, moon, stars, animals, etc), or to worship idols or the "gods" is the same as worshipping God. The true God will never accept such worship – Ex 20:3-6; 1 Kings 18:21; 2 Kings 17:14-18; Ps 78:56-59; Prov 1:29-31; Jer 2:11-13; Matt 4:10; Rev 9:20,21; 21:8.

**1:26,27** Sodomy is a sin that God condemns everywhere in His Word. See Gen 19:4,5; Lev 18:22; 20:13; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10; June 7. Here in Romans Paul says it came about because God punished mankind for its sin of rejecting Him by abandoning them to the basest lusts of their fallen hearts. In these days, in some parts of the world, such sinful behavior is being accepted as a legitimate lifestyle and there men live openly with other men and women with women in a sexual relationship. But man's view of things and God's view are very different. Sodomy and lesbianism are not acceptable to God, and He will punish these sins as He does all other sin (Rev 21:8) – unless the sinner repents, turns to Him in faith, forsaking the old sinful way of living. Of course, Paul does not mean that these practices are the worst of all sins, only that they reveal how deeply mankind has fallen from its original condition. They are representative of a great many sins that are hate-

use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men committing shameful acts with other men, and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not regard it as worthwhile to keep God in *their* knowledge, God gave them up to a depraved mind to do improper things.

29 They are filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, greed, malice. *They are* full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, depravity. *They are* slanderers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, insolent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful. 32 Knowing the judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death, they not only do them, but take pleasure in those who do them.

ful to God (such as the ones listed in verses 29-32 and other places in the Bible).

**1:28** Observe carefully these terrible (but true) words. The knowledge of God is the greatest treasure God gave people, worth far more than the whole world (compare Ps 19:10; 119:72; Prov 2:1-5; Jer 9:23,24). Mankind has treated this treasure as if it were rubbish. And they have paid the penalty for it. God gave them up to the depravity which they chose and loved.

**1:29-32** Now Paul speaks of the present condition of mankind. Let no one think this description of the sinfulness of people is exaggerated. Of course, not every single person is guilty of every sin listed here, but the seeds of every sin are in us all and people in general are as these words state. See 3:9-19; Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Matt 7:11; 15:19,20; Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19. **1:30** "Haters of God" – in no way an exaggeration. See also 8:7; John 7:7; 15:18,24.

**1:32** This is the greatest evidence of the depravity of people. Even when they still have some knowledge of right and wrong, and know that God has appointed death as the just punishment for sin (5:12; Gen 2:17; Ex 21:36; Heb 2:15), this does not keep them from sinning. They not only go on in their own sins but delight in the depravity of others. Are we better by nature than others who do this? No. See 3:9; Eph 2:3. Can the gospel do anything for such people? Yes, wonderful things. See v 16.

**2:1** By judging others people show they still have some knowledge of right and wrong. And who does not do this? But if a thing is wrong in others it is wrong in ourselves, and by condemning them we condemn ourselves.

**2:2** From here to verse 16 Paul sets forth seven principles of God's judgment –

It will be based on the actual state of things, not on what people think about it all (v 2).

It will be righteous judgment – based on principles of absolute justice (v 5).

It will be according to what men have

**2** Therefore, you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself, for you who judge do the same things. 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who commit such things. 3 And do you think, O man who judges those who do such things and does the same *things*, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

5 But in accordance with your hardness and unrepentant heart you heap up for yourself wrath for the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will give to each person according to his deeds. 7 To those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory

actually done (v 6).

It will be without favoritism – it will not matter whether a man is a Jew or a Gentile, white or dark, rich or poor (v 11).

It will be as revealed in the gospel Paul proclaimed (v 16).

It will deal also with the secret acts of men (v 16).

It will be through Jesus Christ (v 16).

**2:3** In judging others people may think that they are better than those they judge, and that they are worthy to pass judgment on them. This idea is false and dangerous. All will have to stand before the just Judge of the world – Acts 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11,12.

**2:4** How do men show contempt for God's kindness? By continuing in disobedience and sin, by refusing His gospel and His Son. Compare Matt 22:1-6; Luke 14:16-24; Heb 2:3. See here the purpose of God's kindness. Note on God's character at Ex 34:6,7.

"Repentance" – Matt 3:2,8; Luke 13:1-5.

**2:5** "Wrath" – 1:18. See what people who refuse the gospel of Christ are doing. Every sin they do is adding to the amount of God's anger against them. That anger will be poured out on the day God has appointed.

**2:6** Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12; Gal 6:7,8; Rev 22:12.

**2:7** Paul is not teaching salvation by works. He never does. See 3:28; 4:5; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:5. He is not setting forth the way of salvation here but a principle of God's judgment. God will judge what all men have actually done (or have not done). See Matt 25:31-46 (note at vs 35,36). Those whom God saves by His grace He changes by His power. They become new creations of God, the children of God (2 Cor 5:17; John 3:3-8). Because this is so, they do good and seek for the glory and honor and immortality God gives.

God will bring such people into the full experience of eternal life with Himself – a life which began when they first trusted Christ

and honour and immortality *he will give* eternal life. 8 But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but yield to unrighteousness, *he will show* anger and wrath. 9 Tribulation and anguish *will come on* every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 10 but glory, honour, and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. 11 For there is no favoritism with God.

12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law. 13 (For not those who hear the Law *are* righteous in God's sight, but those who obey the Law will be declared righteous. 14 For when the Gentiles, who do not have the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, they are a law for themselves, though they do not have the Law. 15 They show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts sometimes accusing or else defending them.) 16 *Thus it will be* on the day when God judges the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

17 Look, you are called a Jew, and rely on the Law, and make your boast in God, 18 and know *his*

(John 3:36; 5:24). This is not a reward for doing good and seeking God. It is a result of the work God has done in them. Those who say they have believed in Christ but do not do what this verse says are self-deceived, and have not experienced God's salvation. See notes at Matt 5:1; 7:24-27; Jam 2:14-19,26.

**2:8** "Self-seeking" – there are two and only two classes of people: those who follow the truth and seek what the true God alone can give (Matt 6:33), and those who refuse the truth and whose seeking is all selfishness – for what self desires, for family, for name, for money, for power, for popularity, etc. This second class of people will suffer God's anger – v 18; John 3:36; Eph 5:6; 2 Thess 1:5-10.

**2:9,10** This is true "first for the Jew" because the Jews first had God's Word and Christ's gospel – 1:16.

**2:11** God will not spare a person because he is a Jew or a Christian and says he is one of God's people. In fact, such a person has had more opportunity to know the truth, and his judgment will be worse if he does not obey it.

**2:12** By the "law" he means the law God gave through Moses. See Exodus chapter 20. Why should people perish if they did not have God's revelation in the law? Because they are willful sinners, and they have God's revelation in nature, and reject the light God gave them – 1:18-20,28.

**2:13** It is not enough for a person to hear what God's law says – he must live according to it completely, if he is to be counted righteous by his works. And except the Lord

will, and approve the things that are superior because *you* are instructed out of the Law. 19 And *you* are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who have the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law. 21 You, therefore, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who make your boast in the Law, through breaking the Law do you dishonour God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

25 For circumcision indeed has its value, if you keep the Law. But if you are a breaker of the Law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. 26 Therefore if *one who is* uncircumcised follows the righteousness of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? 27 And will not *one who is* uncircumcised by nature, if he fulfils the Law, judge you who with the written Law and circumcision transgress the Law?

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly,

Jesus no person has ever done so – 3:9,19,23; Jam 2:10; Ex 19:21-25.

**2:14,15** Even those who never heard of God's law given by Moses have knowledge of right and wrong. It is something God has placed in their inner being.

"Conscience" – note at Acts 23:1.

**2:16** Acts 17:31.

**2:17** The religious and self-righteous Jew was a prime example of those who judged others – v 1; Luke 18:9-12. They thought they could be saved by keeping the law of Moses (John 5:39,45), and boasted they alone were the people of God – John 8:41.

**2:18-23** Because they had God's law the Jews thought they were the ones to teach others the truth. However, while teaching others they neglected to teach themselves and broke the very law they taught. The same can be said of many Christians today who have the teachings of the Lord Jesus and give them to others but do not obey them themselves. Observe that all sin ("breaking the law") dishonors God. Compare Ps 51:4.

**2:24** Paul proves his accusation by referring to the Old Testament which reveals the failure of the Jews – Isa 52:5; Ezek 36:22. Far better not to profess to know God (or Christ) than to call oneself one of His people and bring dishonor on His name by living an evil life.

**2:25-29** Circumcision was the seal of God's covenant with the Jews. See note at Gen 17:9-14. Many Jews thought they were God's people merely because of this physical mark, even if they disobeyed the law. Paul is saying that keeping the law, and the inward

nor *is that* circumcision which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he *is* a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision *is* of the heart, by the Spirit, and not by the written *Law*; his praise *is* not from men, but from God.

**3** What advantage, then, has the Jew? Or what value *is there* in circumcision? 2 Much every way. Chiefly, because to them were committed the oracles of God.

3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make God's faithfulness without effect? 4 Absolutely not! For let God be true, but every man a liar. As it is written,

"That you might be justified in your words, and might overcome when you are judged."

5 But if our unrighteousness proves the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unjust in bringing wrath *on men* (I speak as a man)? 6 Absolutely not! For then how would God judge the world? 7 For if through my lie the truth of God is enhanced for his glory, why am I still judged as a sinner? 8 And *why* not *rather say* (as we are

state of a person, are far more important than an outward mark on the body. Compare Matt 3:9; 23:25-28; John 8:33-41. Paul's words about circumcision can apply equally well to baptism or any other ceremony that men perform on others.

**2:29** "Circumcision is of the heart" – Jer 4:4. Also a person is a true Christian only if he is one inwardly, and baptism is only a sign of the work of God's Spirit in the heart – Matt 3:6; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Without this inner change it has no value at all. And those who are God's people inwardly will want God's approval, not man's. Compare John 5:44; 12:43.

**3:1** This question arises because Paul has said that the Jew is no better than other people, that he is not saved by his religion and ceremonies, and that God condemns him for his sin just as He does sinners who are not Jews. What use then was there in God separating the Jews from all other people and giving them special laws and ceremonies?

**3:2** See also 9:4,5. More than any other people in those times the Jews had wonderful opportunities to hear God's truth and to believe and serve the one true God. That was the greatest value in being a Jew.

**3:3** It was not God's fault if the Jews did not seize the opportunities they had and remained disobedient and unbelieving. He remained faithful (2 Tim 2:13). And He will yet fulfill all His promises to Israel as a nation (chapter 11).

**3:4** Ps 51:4.

**3:5-7** Some of them even dared to say that their unbelief and evil ways made God's faithfulness and righteousness appear more glorious. So, they seemed to say, they were

being slanderously reported *as saying*, and as some affirm that we say) "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.

9 What then? Are we better *than they*? No, not at all. For we have previously made the accusation that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. 10 As it is written,

There is none righteous, no, not one.

11 There is none who understands,  
there is none who seeks for God.

12 They have all turned out of the way.

They are together become worthless.

There is none who does good, no, not one.

13 Their throat *is* an open grave.

With their tongues they have practiced  
deceit.

The poison of vipers *is* under their lips.

14 Their mouth *is* full of cursing and  
bitterness.

15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood.

16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways,

17 and the way of peace they have not known.

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

doing God a favor and He should not condemn them!

**3:8** Some even slandered Paul by saying the above idea was a part of his teaching! But they were only trying to lessen their guilt and escape Paul's words about judgment. Paul says God is perfectly just in sending such people to hell.

**3:9** Paul means this: Are Jews with all their advantages and opportunities and God-given laws and ceremonies any better than those peoples who did not have them? The answer is obvious – no. Now we might ask, "are we Christians by nature better than others?" and the answer is the same – absolutely not. All are sinners – Jews and Gentiles, whatever religion or nation or caste they may belong to. Rich and poor, educated and uneducated, the wise and the foolish, those who practice their religion and those who do not, all, all have sinned.

There are, alas, many people who consider themselves better than others (see Isa 65:5; Luke 18:9), and in their hearts would give the answer "yes" to Paul's question. Such people have not yet received the enlightenment God gives about what they are and what they need.

**3:10-18** Now Paul proves that his teaching is in harmony with God's revelation in the Old Testament. See how he begins – "It is written". This is what should concern us more than anything else – what does God say in the Bible? – 4:3.

**3:10-12** See Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Eccl 7:20.

**3:13** Ps 5:9; 140:3.

**3:14** Ps 10:7.

**3:15-17** Isa 59:7,8.

**3:18** Ps 36:1. "Fear of God" – see notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14;

19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it says to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the Law no flesh will be justified in his sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.

86:11; 111:10; Prov 1:7; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:17; Rev 15:4; 19:5. This is one of the root causes of all the other evil behavior listed above. Without the fear of God men will not depart from evil. Paul is not saying that every person practices every sin in this list, only that mankind in general does so, and that every individual has a sinful nature and lacks the one thing needed more than anything else – righteousness.

**3:19** “Law” here means the whole Old Testament from which he has quoted the above verses, particularly the law God revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai. Those “under the law” were the Jews. Now Paul has done what he set out to do at 1:18 – he has shown that every person in the world is a sinner, guilty before God, and needs the gospel of Christ. Creation (1:18-20), man’s history (1:21-28), mankind’s present condition (1:29-32), conscience (2:15), and the truth God gave in the Old Testament (3:10-18) all declare that every person on earth is a sinner. All are utterly guilty, responsible for their sins, and deserve God’s anger. And no one should try to make any excuse before God, or think that he is better than other people.

Happy are those who know this, who lay their hands on their mouth and stand before God without defense, without trying to hide anything – such people are near salvation. God has some wonderful things to say to them. The parable Jesus told in Luke 18:9-14 is a small commentary on the truth Paul presents here. Those who think they are better than others need to understand what they are in God’s sight. Those who understand what they are can move ahead into the blessed truths of salvation. **3:20** “Law” here means the whole system of commandments and ceremonies God gave to Israel through Moses. No one can be saved by trying to keep this law because no one can fully keep it. People with a sinful nature cannot really practice holy principles. And to break one is to be guilty of breaking the whole law (Jam 2:10).

“Justified” – this means declared innocent, counted as righteous. This is a very important teaching of Romans. Indeed it is at the very heart of Christ’s gospel. In the next few verses Paul explains what it means. **3:21-26** “But” (v 21) – compare Eph 2:4; Titus 3:4. This word indicates a great turning point. Having shown the failure and sin of all people, Paul now shows the way of escape from the punishment they deserve. What men need is righteousness, and here is God’s revelation of the way to obtain it.

Righteousness in this letter means the sum total of all that men need to stand in peace before the holy and righteous God of

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from Law is revealed, being testified to by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, *which is* through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all those who believe. For there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory

the universe. It is the kind of righteousness which has no flaw whatever in it, which God Himself approves and accepts. It is the kind of righteousness which the Lord Jesus manifested on earth and which caused God to say the words of Matt 3:17. Paul here reveals the following facts about this righteousness.

It is a righteousness which no human being has by nature (v 23).

It is a righteousness which comes from God (v 21) – so, of course, it will be flawless and perfect.

It is “apart from law” (v 21) – that is, trying to keep God’s commands in His law is not the way it is obtained. This is the way that many try to obtain it (see 10:1-5), but this is not merely difficult, it is impossible.

It is a righteousness which the law and the prophets (the Old Testament) speak about (v 21) – it is not some strange, new thing (Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4).

It is a gift of God’s grace to undeserving sinners – God freely gives this righteousness to anyone who will receive it (vs 22,24).

It is obtained by faith alone (vs 22,25; 1:16,17) – therefore we should not try to earn it by our own works but instead turn to God and trust Him for it.

Actually this righteousness is Christ Himself the perfectly righteous One (1 Cor 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21; Jer 23:6). Those who have Christ have this righteousness which comes from God, and those who do not have Christ do not have it. And we can receive Christ only by faith (John 1:12; 3:16,36). Righteousness in the Bible is sometimes compared to a clean garment which God gives people. See Isa 61:10; Zech 3:3-5; Matt 22:11,12. Isa 64:6 reveals how greatly we need it. When we trust in Christ God clothes us with Christ’s own flawless righteousness.

This way of counting people righteous is based on the death of the Lord Jesus (vs 24,25). God, the righteous Judge, cannot count sinners righteous unless their sins are taken away. God’s own law condemns us and demands punishment, and God cannot act contrary to His law. How then can He forgive us, allow us to escape punishment, and count us righteous people? He can do so because the Lord Jesus has taken our place and suffered the punishment we deserve. He was a blood sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (v 25; John 1:29; Matt 26:27,28; 1 John 2:2; Isa 53:5,6,10). He turned away God’s anger from those who trust Him by taking away their sins (v 25). Having the righteousness of Christ by faith is the one and only way to get to heaven and live in God’s presence in joy and peace forever.

**3:23** God has done such marvelous and costly



of God, 24 *and* are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. 25 Him God has set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance God passed over the sins done in the past. 26 To demonstrate, *I say*, at this time his righteousness, so that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus.

27 Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the Law. 29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, 30 since

things to provide righteousness for all people because all are in great need of it. Some may be worse sinners than others, but all are sinners, all fall short of God's requirements, and so God says there is "no difference" (vs 9, 22). One person may be in a pit, another on top of a hill, but neither can reach up and touch the stars.

**3:24** "Are justified" – this means that justification is available to all who have sinned, not that all who have sinned are justified.

"Redemption" – Matt 20:28; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:18,19; Ps 78:35; etc.

**3:25,26** These are key verses in Romans and, indeed, in the whole Bible. Before Christ came and took away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, God forgave those who repented and trusted in Him. He did not condemn them to hell, because He knew what He would later do through Christ. But at the time it did not seem that He, the righteous Judge of the universe, was just and righteous in forgiving people instead of punishing them – His law condemned them, yet He let them escape. Now by sending His own Son to be a sacrifice for sin He has fully demonstrated His justice.

But was it just and righteous to cause Christ to suffer the punishment others deserved? Yes, because Christ is God (1:4; 9:5; John 1:1,14; Phil 2:6), and He suffered and died voluntarily (John 10:17,18). In Christ God Himself was taking people's sins on Himself and suffering for them. See the note at Heb 10:4.

"Propitiation" (v 25) – here this means a sacrifice that turns away God's anger, by taking away sin. Sin is what brings God's anger (1:18). When sin is taken away by the sacrifice of Christ, God's anger is propitiated, turned away, and He can justly forgive any sinner who turns to Him in faith.

**3:27** Eph 2:8-10. If people could achieve salvation by works, heaven would be filled with boasters singing their own praises (compare 2:17; Luke 18:11,12). But as it is they who are there will praise God alone (1 Cor 1:29-31; Eph 1:6,12; Rev 7:9,10). **3:28** See 1:16,17; 5:1; 10:10; Gal 2:16; 3:24; 5:4.

**3:29,30** There is only one true God, so the

*it is* one God who will justify the circumcised by faith, and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then, through faith, put an end to the Law? Absolutely not! Rather, we uphold the Law.

**4** What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found, as pertaining to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast *about*; but not in the presence of God. 3 For what does the Scripture say?

Abraham believed God, and it was put to his account as righteousness.

4 Now to him who works *his* wage is not reckoned as grace, but as something owed. 5 But to him who does not work but believes in him who

Jews should not expect that He will save them in one way and Gentiles in some other way. God has only one way of saving anyone and that way is through faith in Christ.

"Absolutely not" – the KJV has "God forbid", but here in the Greek there is no word for either "God" or "forbid", but simply a strong negative, which means literally "may it not be."

**3:31** Compare Matt 5:17,18. To say that keeping the law cannot save anyone from their sins is not to do away with the law. It is to put the law in its rightful place as that which reveals sin and condemns it.

**4:1** "We" – Paul speaks as one who was a Jew by birth, descended from Abraham as all Jews were (Genesis chapters 12 to 25). The Jews were proud of this relationship and many thought they were children of God merely because they were physically descended from Abraham (Matt 3:9; John 8:33,39). And many of them thought that salvation depended on keeping the commands and ceremonies of the law, and opposed Paul wherever he went (Acts 9:23; 13:45; 14:5,19; 15:1; 17:5; 21:11; 2 Cor 11:24; 1 Thess 2:14-16).

Why does Paul bring up the matter of Abraham here? To prove that his teaching about justification by faith was in agreement with what the Old Testament says about Abraham the father of the nation.

**4:2** See 3:27.

**4:3** Gen 15:6. See note there. By this one reference Paul proves his point. "What does the Scripture [the Bible] say?" is the important question when we want the truth.

**4:4** If God saved men because of their religious works, this would mean they earned salvation, and they would be able to boast.

**4:5** "Does not work" means does not work to earn salvation. The only way to obtain salvation and the righteousness God gives, is to take them as a gift from God's hand by faith (3:21-28; 6:23; 11:6). Of course this is the exact opposite of what men think by nature. People like to think they are righteous because of what they do and that they can earn salvation by what they call works of merit. For salvation people say we must "work." God says do "not work" for it.



justifies the ungodly, that faith is put to his account as righteousness. 6 Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 Blessed *are* those whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed *is* the man whose sin the Lord will not count against him.

9 Does this blessedness *come only* on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was put to Abraham's account as righteousness. 10 How was it put to *his* account? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith *he had while he was still*

Observe who it is that God justifies – “the wicked.” There is no one who is not wicked in God's eyes – 3:9-19; Matt 7:11. But none is so bad but what God will save and count him righteous, if he will repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of Paul himself (Acts 8:3; 9:1-5), and the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43). See also Isa 55:7; 1 Cor 6:9-11.

**4:6-8** David, Israel's greatest king, agreed with what was said about Abraham. See Ps 32:1,2. God forgives people because He is gracious, and He wants to give them that gift, not because they are good and have earned it (Ps 86:5; Micah 7:18,19; Matt 9:5-7; 12:31; Acts 13:38; Eph 1:7; etc).

See here what justification means – from then on God will not count the sins of the justified against them (8:33,34). This is because even their future sins have been taken away by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and they are united to Him forever. They have Christ's perfect righteousness imputed to them, so that theirs and His is exactly the same righteousness. There is no blot or stain on His righteousness and there never can be. So there can be no blot or stain on the righteousness they have in Him, not now, not ever. As long as the Head (Eph 1:22,23) remains righteous, so will His body, made up of all true believers.

Notice the words “will not count against him.” The Greek translated “not” could also be translated “never.” This is the wonderful position believers are in before God. For them there can be no condemnation to eternal death (the wages of sin) and hell. (Of course, as their Father He will deal with them when they do wrong and chastise and discipline them – Heb 12:5:11.) But if God does not count the believer's sins against him, will this not encourage him to sin? No. It encourages him to love God and to live for God. See notes on chapter 6 where Paul takes up this subject and shows some of the results of God's grace shown to believing sinners.

**4:9** “Circumcised” – he means the Jews, the physical descendants of Abraham.

“Uncircumcised” – the Gentiles – people

uncircumcised, *so* that he might be the father of all those who believe, even though they are not circumcised, that righteousness might be put to their account also; 12 and the father of *the* circumcised, *that is*, of those who are not only the circumcised, but who also walk in the footsteps of that faith of our father Abraham which *he had* when *he was still* uncircumcised.

13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world, *did not come* to Abraham, or to his offspring, through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law *are* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of no effect, 15 because the Law produces wrath. For where there is no Law, *there* is no transgression.

other than Jews.

**4:10-12** Here was a good Scriptural blow at Jewish pride. God counted Abraham righteous before he was circumcised – that is, while he was still a Gentile! God justified Abraham in Genesis chapter 15. But Abraham received circumcision in chapter 17, some time after he was justified. God arranged things in this way to show that the ceremony of circumcision had nothing to do with Abraham's salvation. Abraham was justified by faith alone, and all who follow Abraham, whether Jew or Gentile, must be justified in the same way.

He is the “father” of all who trust in the one true God. This means that in him God first showed how He gives righteousness to people. Circumcision was only a sign and seal of something Abraham already had. (The same may be said for baptism today. It is only a sign and is worthless to anyone who does not have the righteousness and salvation God gives through faith.)

**4:13-15** Paul shows further that God counted Abraham righteous apart from the law He gave through Moses (and which the Jews taught people had to keep to be saved). God did not give the law until hundreds of years after He justified Abraham (Gal 3:16-18).

**4:13** God promised Abraham the land of Canaan (Gen 15:7,18). This was because Abraham believed God. The promise was given long before God gave the law. He promised also that all the world would be blessed through Abraham – Gen 12:1-3. This blessing was to come through a descendant of Abraham called the Messiah (Christ. See psalm 2; 72:5-11; Matt 1:1). The Messiah (and with Him all who believe in Him) is the heir of the whole world (8:17; Heb 1:2).

**4:14** If people can become God's heirs by keeping God's law, then faith in God's promises and the promises themselves are completely unnecessary. And so this whole idea of salvation by works is absurd.

**4:15** Those who try to be righteous by keeping God's law bring more of God's anger on themselves. Because instead of

16 Therefore, *it is* by faith that it might be by grace, so that the promise would be certain to all of *Abraham's* offspring, not only to those who are of the Law but to those also who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17 (as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations), in the sight of him whom he believed, *that is*, God, who makes the dead alive, and calls things which are not as though they were.

18 *Abraham*, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, in accordance with what was said to *him*, "So shall your offspring be." 19 And *he* was not weak in faith; he did not consider his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, nor

keeping the law they break it, and this transgression of the law adds to their guilt (compare 5:20; 7:7-11; Gal 3:10). If it was necessary to keep the law of Moses to be saved, then no one would ever be saved. The Jews did not keep the law, and the Gentiles did not even have it.

**4:16** Since the promise of salvation (and the inheritance that goes with it) has nothing to do with trying to keep God's law, but only requires faith, it is for all peoples, Jews and Gentiles alike. Observe in this verse the reason why God has appointed faith as the way of salvation – He had determined to give salvation as a gift and not as a payment for work.

**4:17** Gen 17:5. Abraham is the spiritual "father" of all who believe (v 11). In the last part of this verse Paul begins to show the nature of Abraham's faith. His faith was in the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe – the God who can do anything and who can reveal in advance what He will do.

"Brings the dead to life" – see Heb 11:19,35.

**4:18-21** What was Abraham's faith like? He believed God when, humanly speaking, there was no hope of the fulfillment of God's promise (v 18; Gen 15:4,5). He believed God even though God had promised what seemed an impossible thing (v 19). Abraham's age was nearly a hundred years and Sarah's was about ninety when God said she would bear Abraham a son – Gen 17:1,15,16. He believed God and not his own ability. He believed God simply because God had made the promise, and he was sure that God could do and would do what He said. God gave Abraham no proof, no evidence that He would do what He said, just His bare word. And Abraham believed it (vs 20,21) because He really believed in God and that God was a God of truth. This was the nature of Abraham's faith and of all true faith.

**4:22** Verse 3.

**4:23,24** To obtain salvation and become an heir of the world (v 13), our faith must be like Abraham's. It is not enough to believe in just any God or god that people

yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not stagger at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and was fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was put to his account as righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was put to his account, 24 but also for us, to whose account it shall be put, if we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered up for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

**5** Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus

think exists. We must believe in the God who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead (v 24; 10:9), for He is the only God there is. And it is not enough to believe there is this one God and that He is powerful (see Jam 2:19). We must believe His promises to us, we must put our trust in Him and His Word (Heb 11:6. Consider some of the promises He has given through His Son – John 3:16; 4:14; 5:24; 6:37; 7:38; 11:25,26; Rev 3:20; Matt 11:28). When we believe Him He counts us righteous, just as He did Abraham.

**4:25** The salvation of believers rests on this one foundation – the death and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor 15:1-4). Christ was in the place of sinners, dying the death they deserved to die because of their sins. His resurrection is proof that God accepted Christ's sacrifice, that our sins are gone, forgiven, blotted out forever. We believers can see and should see that we are made right with God, counted righteous and free of sin, because Christ has risen from the dead. He is our justification before God – 1 Cor 1:30,31.

**5:1-21** Paul has shown that all are sinners and that the way of salvation is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this chapter he tells us further things about those whom God has counted righteous. His theme is the certainty of salvation for believers. They have all entered into a new state, and Paul says the following things of them.

They have peace with God (v 1)

They have continual access into God's presence (v 2)

They have hope (v 2)

They have an ability to rejoice in sufferings (v 3)

They can know that sufferings increase hope (v 4)

They have the gift of the Holy Spirit (v 5)

They have a knowledge of God's love (vs 5-8)

They have absolute security (vs 9,10)

They have joy in God (v 11)

They have eternal life in a new relationship with God (vs 12-21), having entered into the realm of unconquerable grace.

**5:1** Because God counts believers righteous

Christ, 2 by whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we rejoice in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation produces patient endurance; 4 and patient endurance, *approved* character; and *approved* character, hope; 5 and hope brings no disappointment, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us.

6 For when we were still without strength, in

they are in a state of peace with Him. Compare Col 1:20; Eph 2:14-17; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Isa 32:17; 53:5. Peace here means reconciliation between God and those who believe in the Lord Jesus.

**5:2** "Access" – believers can come into God's presence at any time (Eph 2:18; 3:12; Heb 10:19-22). Notice carefully that this access into God's presence is through the Lord Jesus (see also 1 Tim 2:5; John 14:6,13,14).

"Grace" – 1:7; 4:16; John 1:14,16; 2 Cor 8:9; Heb 4:16; Matt 7:9-11.

"Hope" – because God has counted believers righteous by faith they can rejoice in the confidence that they will eventually live in glory with Him forever (John 17:24; 1 Thess 2:12; Rev 21:2-4; 22:3-5).

"Glory" here points to the final salvation of believers (8:17-22,30). On the word "hope" see the note at 8:24,25.

**5:3,4** The question arises: Will sufferings and troubles be able to take away the peace believers have with God and destroy their hope of heaven? Paul very emphatically says, "no." Suffering actually increases the hope of believers. So they can rejoice knowing that troubles are doing them good. The gradual process of transforming suffering into hope is something believers learn by experience. It comes step by step in the life of faith.

Suffering produces patient endurance and perseverance. Believers learn that God enables them to endure troubles and tribulations, that they can face sufferings and not draw back into unbelief (Heb 10:35-39). They learn that God is with them through the worst that can happen and keeps them in the faith (8:35-37; John 10:27,28; 1 Pet 1:5-7).

Perseverance produces character. Enduring trials and troubles makes believers better, stronger people, more able to face such things in the future. And by this process the hope they had when they first believed increases and becomes even stronger.

"Patient endurance" – this is one word in Greek, with both of these meanings.

**5:5-11** These verses show that the hope of believers is based on God's love. And this is a very strong foundation indeed. The theme is the certainty of final salvation. Paul's argument is this: God revealed His great love to us when we were His enemies. Now that we have become His friends will that same love not keep us to the end?

due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely will someone die for a righteous man, though perhaps for a good man some might even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his love toward us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, now having been justified by his blood, we will be saved from *God's* wrath through him. 10 For if when we were *his* enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, having been reconciled, we will be saved

Compare 8:35-39.

**5:5** God has not given believers hope of final salvation so that He can disappoint them at last. Believers can know that God will give them what He has caused them to hope for. This confidence is rooted in the knowledge of God's love which the Holy Spirit pours into their hearts.

"Poured" suggests a great abundance. This knowledge of God's love causes believers to love Him (1 John 4:9,10,19). And the Holy Spirit imparts God's love to believers and enables them to love God and one another. And God gives the Holy Spirit to those whom He counts righteous (Gal 3:1-3,14).

**5:6-8** See the words Paul uses here to describe us before we became believers – "without strength", "ungodly", and "sinners." He adds one more in v 10 – "enemies." In other words, by nature we were bad (3:23; Gen 8:21; Jer 17:9; Matt 7:11). We did not have the one true God and did not really want Him, because we preferred our sin to Him. Because of this we were His enemies, for all sin is against Him (Ps 51:5). To be on the side of that which is opposed to God is to be His enemy (compare Jam 4:4). And we were powerless to make ourselves good, stop sinning, and become God's friends. These things were not merely difficult for us, but totally impossible.

We see from this the impossibility of the popular ways of salvation men sometimes teach – the way of jnana or karma or bhakti (knowledge and wisdom, the practice of one's religion and good deeds or worship). But what we could not do God did. Christ came and died in our place and took away our sin. Then, when we believed, He counted us righteous because of Christ's shed blood (v 9). He made us His friends (v 10). He changed our whole experience and outlook (vs 1-4). He made us new people with His own Spirit in us (v 5).

**5:9,10** These words are based on the demonstration of God's love at the cross of Christ and teach us this: Christ died for believers when they were unbelieving and His enemies, and counted them righteous when they believed and made them His friends. This is very certain, but it is even more certain that He will keep them saved and finish the work He began when He died for them.

"God's wrath" refers to the holy anger of God that will come on all who remain in their sins (2:5,8; Eph 5:5,6; Col 3:6; Rev

by his life. 11 And not only *so*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received reconciliation.

12 Therefore, as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death came on all men, because all sinned – 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not put into the account when there is no Law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a type of him who was to come.

6:16,17). The Lord Jesus will save believers from it (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9). They will be saved "by his life" (v 10. See John 11:25; 14:19). Believers are united to His life (John 17:21,23; Col 3:3,4). And He ever lives to make intercession for them (8:34; Heb 7:25). If they sin, He stands to defend them (1 John 2:1). And so they will be safe to the end.

But the question comes, "What if their faith fails? Will they not then be lost in spite of what Christ has done for them and is doing for them?" The answer is that God who gave them faith will keep them believing. See Luke 22:31,32; Phil 1:6,29; Heb 10:39. Is it reasonable or Scriptural to think that God, who does everything else to guard and keep believers, will fail in this most vital point?

**5:11** All this is a cause of rejoicing to those who understand it. This brings us back to v 2.

"Reconciliation" – see 2 Cor 5:18.

**5:12-21** Here is a contrast between Adam, the forefather and the representative of the human race, and Christ, the head and representative of those whom God has counted righteous. Through Adam sin and death came to the human race. Through Christ righteousness and life have come. Paul's purpose here is to show that life through Christ is even more certain than death through Adam, and to reveal more of the greatness of what God has done in Christ to overcome the effects of Adam's fall into sin and death.

**5:12** All human beings are sinners because the one man Adam sinned and became a sinner – Gen 2:17; 3:1-19. He produced children in his likeness (Gen 4:1) and they in their likeness, and so sinfulness like a dread disease was passed on from generation to generation (Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Jer 17:9). And this disease of sin inevitably brings death – 6:23. All men became sinners because of Adam. Not only so, we may even say that all men sinned in Adam, for the whole of mankind was in him when he sinned (compare Heb 7:9,10). What he did they all did in him. He was at the time the whole of mankind, being the only man on earth.

**5:13,14** "Law" as used here means the commandments God gave through Moses. Paul's

15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if through the offense of one *man* many have died, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, through one man, Jesus Christ, has overflowed to many. 16 And the gift *is* not like *the result* of the one who sinned. For the judgment came through one man *bringing* condemnation, but the free gift *which followed* many offenses was for justification. 17 For if through one man's offense death reigned through *that* one, much more will those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life

meaning seems to be this: people sinned before God gave the law, but they did not break any specific commands as Adam did (Gen 2:17). They died, but their death was not because of their own sin. Even babies, who committed no sin themselves, died. Why this reign of death from Adam to Moses? Because of Adam's sin. Adam is called "a type of him who was to come." This one is Christ (Christ is called "the last Adam" in 1 Cor 15:45).

How was Adam a type or pattern of Christ? Not in his sin, for Christ never sinned at all (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22). Here Adam was a type or pattern or picture in only one matter – just as his act of disobedience affected many many millions of people, so Christ's act of obedience affected many many millions; those in Adam all die because of him (v 15), but those "in" Christ all live because of Him (vs 18,19).

**5:15** "Gift" – v 17; 6:23; Eph 2:8,9.

"Many" – here means all the descendants of Adam. They all die because of Adam's sin in the garden of Eden. That is certain. But even more certainly God's grace flows to all of mankind because of what Christ has done. This does not mean that all are saved, only that God's grace is offered to all and all will be saved if they believe in Christ.

**5:16** The "judgment" was God's judgment which said "you will surely die" (Gen 2:17), and this condemnation came on all men because of the one sin of their forefather Adam. God's gift, on the other hand, provides the way of escape, not merely from the one sin of Adam, but from the vast number of sins committed throughout history. Adam's sin brought condemnation to people, but God's grace takes away condemnation and makes them righteous when they believe (3:22-24).

**5:17** "Death reigned" – vs 14,21. All men were subject to death. This cruel master took all away. Compare Heb 2:15. But God has provided through Christ a way of escape from death. And those who are in this way "reign in life." Instead of being subjects of king death they receive eternal life and become kings themselves in Christ (John 5:24; 11:25,26; Eph 2:6; Rev 3:21; 22:5). In Him the conquered become the conquerors (compare 8:37).

through one, Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, *just* as through the offense of one *man judgment came* to all men, *resulting* in condemnation, so also through the righteous act of one *the free gift which results* in justification of life *came* to all men. 19 For *just* as through one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many will be made righteous.

20 Moreover the Law came in so that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more abundantly, 21 *so*

**5:18** "Condemnation" – v 16.

"The righteous act of one" – here this seems to mean Christ's righteous consecration of Himself to be the sacrifice for sinners.

"All men" – God has made eternal life available to all people, but only those who receive Christ receive life (1 John 5:11,12; John 3:36; 7:37,38). Observe the close connection between justification and eternal life. We cannot have the one without the other.

**5:19** "Disobedience" – Gen 3:6.

"Obedience" – Phil 2:8. The contrast in vs 12-19 is very plain. Adam and Christ are the two sources or channels of what people receive. Adam is the source of sin, death, and condemnation; Christ is the source of righteousness, life, and grace which takes away condemnation and makes believers acceptable to God.

**5:20** "Law" – vs 13,14. Because there are commands to break trespasses increase. When there are no commands there can be no breaking of commands (4:15). Paul in 7:7-12 shows how God's commandments actually increase sin. God's purpose in giving the law was not that He wanted sin to flourish (sin flourished without it – Gen 6:5,11; 8:21), but that men would see their need of grace, and that His grace might appear in all its glory and power.

**5:21** "Sin reigned in death" – vs 14,17. Death reigned only because of sin. Sin is a great tyrant that always pays death to those who serve it (6:23; John 8:34). God's grace is more powerful than sin and death. It destroys sin, makes men righteous and leads them into eternal life (6:23; Titus 3:3-7).

Through the Lord Jesus Christ grace reigns (Heb 4:16)! It forgives all the sins of those who trust Him, frees them from the tyranny of sin and death and completely removes their condemnation (6:14; 8:1). Here are two masters – sin that came through Adam (v 12), and grace that came through Christ (v 17; John 1:16,17). We must all choose which master we will serve. **6:1** Paul has said that where sin increased grace increased even more (5:20). Some sinful persons, not understanding Paul's teaching, might ask the question of this verse and say, "It seems that sinning produces a very good result – it actually

that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness *resulting* in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**6** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin *so* that grace may abound? 2 Absolutely not! How shall we who died to sin, live any longer in it? 3 Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him through baptism into death *so* that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so

causes God's grace to increase. So let's sin as much as we like and expect grace to forgive it all."

In this chapter Paul shows how ignorant, how absurd such a question and suggestion are to a believer who understands Christ's gospel. He twice uses the phrase "Do you not know?" (vs 3,16), and the words know and knowing twice more (vs 6,9). Paul well knew that God counts believers righteous so that they might live holy lives. Or in his words "so we also might walk in newness of life" (v 4). He continues this theme to the end of chapter 8. Note on sanctification at John 17:17-19.

**6:2** "Absolutely not" – 3:30. For a believer this is the only possible answer to the question in v 1. Why? Because believers "died to sin." When and how did this death come about? Verses 6,8 give the answer – "crucified with Him", "died with Christ." Believers are united to Christ (v 5). In His death and resurrection Christ was the representative and head of the whole body of believers. God counts what happened to Him as though it happened to them. He was their substitute, their representative. In God's eyes, what believers were in their sinful selves is crucified and dead.

**6:3,4** What "baptism" is Paul speaking of here? "Baptism" is a word taken from Greek. If we translate the Greek word here instead of using the words "baptized" and "baptism" these verses could read – "all of us who were immersed [or submerged or brought] into Christ Jesus were immersed [or submerged or brought] into His death. We were therefore buried with Him through this immersion into death." "Immersion" would thus mean immersion into Christ, not in water. It would indicate union with Christ, entering into a special relationship with Him, being made members of His body by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:12,13; John 17:21,23).

The Greek words for baptized and baptism are used in a figurative sense in other places in the New Testament. See Luke 12:50; 1 Cor 10:2. Water baptism can be only a symbol of the spiritual realities Paul speaks of here. Going into the water speaks of death and burial with Christ. Coming out of the water speaks of resurrection with Christ. See notes on water baptism at Matt 3:6; 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; on Spirit baptism see notes at



we also might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united in the likeness of his death, we will be *united also in the likeness of his resurrection*. 6 We know that our old human nature was crucified *with him*, so that the body of sin might be deprived of force, that from now on we should not serve sin. 7 For he who has died *with Christ* has been freed from sin.

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, 9 knowing that Christ being raised from the dead will not die again. Death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For *the death* he died, he died to sin once for all, but *the life* he lives, he lives for God.

Acts 1:5; etc. The purpose of all God did for us in Christ is that we "might walk in newness of life", resurrection life, a life freed from the bondage of sin and death. See 2 Cor 5:17; Titus 2:11-14.

**6:5** "United" is the key word here. Believers are "in" Christ (8:1; John 15:4; Eph 1:3,4; Phil 1:1; Col 1:2), and "one" with Christ (12:5; 1 Cor 6:15,17; 12:13). Notes at John 17:21-23). Just as His death is their death, so His resurrection is theirs (Eph 2:6; Col 2:12; 3:1).

**6:6** "Our old human nature" – literally "our old man." The expression means all that we were before we became believers and new people in Christ. "Crucified" is not something we do to ourselves. When Christ was crucified about 30 AD we believers were crucified "with Him" (v 2; Gal 2:20).

"Body of sin" is the sinful nature in the bodies of believers (7:18). It was not literally destroyed when Christ died in our place, just as our literal bodies were not destroyed. But Christ's death makes it possible for God to deliver us from the power of it (vs 14,22; 5:21). By God's grace we need not live in bondage to it (8:4; Gal 5:16-25; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:5-10).

**6:7** In God's reckoning we believers sinned in Adam and died in Christ (2 Cor 5:14; Col 3:3). Condemnation came on us from the source of Adam's sin (5:16,18). Freedom from it came through the death of Christ. Dying with Him we are "freed" (or acquitted) from sin, the relationship with sin is broken, and God no longer counts our sins against us (4:7,8). Our sins are all paid for by Christ's sufferings and death. All of the above things are facts which are true of every believer, not of a few superior ones only.

**6:8** Verse 4. Believers live now with Christ the new spiritual life God has given them (John 5:24; 14:23), and they will live forever with Him (1 Thess 4:17).

**6:9,10** Death is the result of sin (5:12; 6:23). Christ died in the place of believers to pay the penalty for their sins (3:25; John 1:29; 1 Cor 15:3). This He did once for all time (Heb 10:10,14; John 19:30). Now He lives forever (Rev 1:18). He lives for God, to please God the Father and to do His will

11 Likewise you also *must* count yourselves as dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its cravings. 13 And do not present your *body's* members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? Absolutely not! 16 Do you not know that to whom you present

(John 8:29), not for self and not for sin.

**6:11** In the above matter believers are to be like Christ and live for God as He does. Like Him "death no longer has any power" over them (John 11:25,26). They are to count things as God does – that they died when Christ died and have risen to new life in Him.

**6:12** Paul does not say that sin is no longer in the "mortal body" of believers (he knew that it is – 7:18,25; Gal 5:17; Eph 4:22; 1 John 1:8). He says that they must not let sin "reign" there (5:21). Sin is no longer to be the master of believers (v 14; John 8:31-36).

**6:13** God has brought believers "from death to life" (John 5:24). Now they must not turn again to their old master, sin, and offer their hands and feet and eyes and ears and mouth to it. They have a new Master, the one true and living God, and they are to give to Him themselves and all they are and have (12:1). Neither sin nor themselves are to be their master, but God only. If believers fail here they will find sin ready to pounce on them and master them again.

**6:14** Here is the sweetest truth possible to believers troubled and harassed by sin. Let us not think we will overcome sin by any efforts to keep God's law or to be "good." Only God's grace can enable us to throw off the tyranny of sin – grace that brings to us forgiveness and eternal life, the Holy Spirit, and power and strength to conquer in the fight against sin.

"Not under the law" – compare 7:1-4.

"Under grace" – 5:21 – a sweet and powerful master indeed!

**6:15** Verse 1. This question arises because men in general think that sin can be restrained only by making and enforcing laws. Such people, if they do not understand Paul's teaching about grace, may say that he is giving believers a license to sin. This is a total misconception. Actually Paul is showing the way to keep from sinning. The gospel is the power of God for salvation (1:16). It makes people true servants of God.

**6:16** People may think they are "free" to sin. Actually their continuing in sin reveals they have no freedom and are slaves to sin



yourselves as slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether *slaves* of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, you have obeyed from the heart that form of teaching to which you were delivered. 18 So having been freed from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness.

19 I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For *just* as you have presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and to evil *leading* to further evil, even so now present your members as slaves to righteousness *leading* to holiness. 20 For when you were the slaves of sin, you were not controlled by righteousness. 21 What

(John 8:34; 2 Pet 2:19). When they yield to sin, sin gets power over them, grips and holds them and compels them to sin again and again. And this way ends in death. There is only one other way possible to us. This is the way of obedience to God, which means renouncing sin and counting oneself dead to it. This way leads to righteousness. There is no middle ground between these two ways. Compare Matt 7:13,14.

"Slaves" – the KJV has "servants." This is a valid translation of the Greek word which means either servants or slaves, but slaves seems a better translation here and closer to the original meaning of the Greek.

**6:17,18** See how freedom comes to believers. On their part it means obedience to the gospel and teachings of Christ. Notice the word "obeyed from the heart." They were not forced to leave their sins and become God's servants. With all their hearts they wanted to do so.

"Slaves to righteousness" – this is not forced bondage but willing, glad surrender to a gracious Master to do His will.

**6:19** Verse 13. "Slaves" – believers are bound to this new master (v 18). But they must willingly live in accordance with this truth. In their thoughts, motives and actions they must not try to escape from righteousness. This "slavery" brings them into the happiest condition possible on earth, the freedom to serve God, and to enjoy great blessings from the God they serve (compare Matt 5:6,10; 6:33). Such people do not need the law to force them to be good. With their whole heart they want to be good. This is what a true belief in Christ produces. This is not to say that believers are never tempted to sin or never fall (notice the word "weakness" in this verse. Compare 7:18; etc). It means that the whole tendency of their lives is to be controlled by righteousness.

"Present" – or "offer" – v 13; 12:1,2. The result of this is holiness of life.

**6:20** A person cannot have two masters, both sin and righteousness (compare Matt 6:24). Paul is not saying that slaves of sin never do what men call righteous acts, or that they cannot be religious (they may be

fruit did you have then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things *is* death. 22 But now, having been freed from sin and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end *is* everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**7** Do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the Law), that the Law has authority over a man as long as he lives? 2 For the woman who has a husband is bound to *her* husband, by the Law, as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is freed from the law *regarding* the husband. 3 So then, if she marries

very religious indeed). He is speaking of what is master in the life as a whole. In the eyes of God, even the "righteous" acts of sinners are stained with sin (Isa 64:6), and they are actually done in the service of sin.

**6:21** The believers at Rome had truly repented and submitted to God, so they were ashamed of their former way of life. If a person says he is a believer in Christ and yet is not ashamed of his former sins there is something very much wrong, and he may rush back into those same sins (2 Pet 2:22). And the end of a life of sin for anyone, regardless of what he says he is, is death.

**6:22** The only way to holiness and eternal life is to become "slaves" to God, to be God's own redeemed property, willing to obey God's voice. This is the way also to spiritual freedom (Gal 5:1,13; John 8:36), a freedom to serve God willingly and joyously.

**6:23** The contrast, as in vs 16-22, is still between slavery to sin and slavery to God. Sin pays "wages" to its slaves – death. This death is eternal separation from God (Rev 21:8; 2 Thess 1:8,9; Matt 25:41). Slaves of sin get exactly what they deserve and earn by their behavior. But what God gives His "slaves" is not wages but a gift – eternal life. This is not what they deserve, and they could never earn it (see 4:4,5; 5:17; Luke 17:10; Eph 2:8,9; John 3:16; 4:14). How does one become a "slave" to God? Only by repenting of sin and trusting in Christ. All believers are God's purchased possession and have a heart to serve Him. They do not serve Him in order to obtain eternal life, but because they have eternal life.

**7:1** The law God gave through Moses has no authority over those who have died. And Paul has said that believers have died in Christ (6:6-8). For this reason they are no longer under the law (6:14), and the law cannot condemn them, and they are safe.

**7:2** Gen 2:24; Matt 19:3-9. The law of Moses gave no permission to a wife to divorce her husband.

**7:3,4** The death of a woman's first husband gives her freedom to marry another. In Paul's spiritual application who is the first husband? Some commentators say he is

another man while *her* husband is still living, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband is dead, she is freed from that law, so that even though she gets married to another man, she is not an adulteress.

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have died to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be married to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the Law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6 But now we have been delivered from the Law, having died to what held us, *so* that we might serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the old way of the written *code*.

7 What shall we say then? *Is* the Law sin?

Christ under the law before His death (Gal 4:4). A greater number, however, say the husband is the law that God gave through Moses and that this law died in relation to believers when Christ died.

But whether the first husband is the law, or Christ under the law, the chief point Paul makes is the same – believers died when Christ died (6:6-8). And being dead they are free from the authority of the law, free to have a spiritual “husband”, free to have a new relationship with God. By receiving Christ as their Lord and Savior they become His “bride.” See Matt 22:2; John 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-33; Rev 19:7. See the purpose of this union of Christ and believers – spiritual “fruit to God.” See John 15:1-8.

**7:5** The law “aroused” sinful desires. See vs 7-9; 3:20; 4:15; 5:20. Being commanded not to do something makes the sinful nature want to do it. Forbidden fruits seem sweet. But the result of all that is death (6:16,21,23).

“Flesh” – the way Paul uses this Greek word here (sarki, from sarx) it means what people are by nature – fallen and sinful and under the control of their desires. It includes all that fallen man is in mind, soul, and body. Compare 1:18-32; 3:9-19; Gen 8:21; Jer 17:9; Matt 7:11; 15:19; Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19; Titus 3:3.

**7:6** That which “held us” was the law of Moses. In this verse Paul contrasts serving under the authority of the law and under the grace and freedom of God’s Spirit (see also 2 Cor 3:6,17). In chapter 8 Paul makes much of service in the new way of God’s Spirit. He calls it a new way because after the resurrection of Christ God gave His Spirit in a new way (John 7:38; 14:16,17; Acts 1:4; 2:4).

**7:7** This question arises because Paul said that the law aroused sinful desires (v 5). If it does so, is it not sinful itself? No. The law is holy, righteous, and good (v 12), but people by nature are unholy, unrighteous and bad (3:9-19). And the law reveals this. It is not the fault of the law that people want to break it. It is altogether the fault of

Absolutely not! Indeed, I would not have known sin except through the Law, for I would not have known *what it means* to covet unless the Law had said, “You shall not covet.” 8 But sin, taking *the* opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of craving. For apart from the Law sin was dead. 9 For once I was alive apart from the Law. But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which *was to lead* to life, I found *to lead* to death. 11 For sin, taking *the* opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*. 12 Therefore, the Law *is* holy, and the commandment *is* holy, and just, and good.

13 Then, did that which is good become death to me? Absolutely not! But sin, *so* that it might

people. In this and the following verses Paul shows how this worked out in his own experience.

The commandment which destroyed his good views of himself was the one against desiring. See Ex 20:17. Paul could keep from outwardly breaking the law of God, but he found his inward desires were beyond his control. In fact, the very command not to desire seemed to arouse his desires and make them stronger. The heart of human beings is filled with sinful desires and God’s law says “absolutely no” to them all. But this only causes these desires to become even more determined. Rebelliousness against God’s law is an inherent part of the “flesh” (8:7).

**7:8** Until he more clearly and fully understood that the law was commanding him not to desire, Paul did not recognize sin in himself. It was as though sin was completely inactive. He thought his heart was good, but soon found that it was a nest of poisonous snakes.

**7:9** Paul was a Jew born under the old covenant, and there was never a time when he was not under the law until he trusted in Christ. He means here that there was a time when he thought he was spiritually alive because he had not yet understood the spiritual meaning of the law and how it condemned his inner desires. When he truly understood the command not to desire he realized his sin, and that he was dead in sin and not spiritually alive as he had thought. “I died” speaks of an inner experience that was like death.

**7:10** One reason God gave the law was to promote a good, just, and moral life among His people. To Paul it brought death. That is, he realized his sin by the law, and he knew that the result of sin is death.

**7:11** See the deceiving nature of sin. Compare Heb 3:13. It promised Paul life through the law, but brought death instead. **7:12** Verse 7.

**7:13** There is no fault in the law. The whole problem with man is the sinful nature in him. God uses the law to show what sin is. Fallen human nature will not obey the law, cannot

appear as sin, was producing death in me through that which is good, so that sin, through the commandment, might become exceedingly sinful.

14 For we know that the Law is spiritual. But

obey it, and God's broken holy commandments reveal the utter sinfulness of sin.

**7:14** In describing his past experiences in vs 7-13 Paul used the past tense. In vs 14-25 he changed to the present tense. Surely this change is significant. It seems clear to the author of these notes that in these verses Paul is describing what he was in himself even after his new birth in Christ. He uses the words "I", "me", "my", "myself" nearly forty times in these twelve verses and refers to Christ only once at the end, and makes no mention of God's Spirit at all. And having used the present tense all through, in v 25 he gives thanks to God through Jesus Christ, and then sums up how things are with him. This is surely an indication that in the preceding verses he is describing what he was experiencing as a believer.

Here in v 14 when he says he is "fleshly", and "sold under sin", he is indicating what he is like by nature, not what Christ has made him. The spiritual law of God has shown him what he is in his personal sinfulness. Who but an enlightened man could say what Paul says of himself in this verse? Those who do not know Christ may feel regret over foolish actions or the fact that they were caught in some misdeed, but unless we are awakened by the Spirit of God we will not have this deep consciousness of sinfulness and will not grieve about sin as Paul does here in vs 14-25. The man in these verses reveals that he is poor in spirit and mourns about sin, and so the kingdom of heaven is his. See Matt 5:3,4. This could not have been true before Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus.

The great battle in these verses against the sinful nature is not seen in unsaved people. It is true that even unbelievers may struggle against one or another quality in themselves they are not pleased with. And they may want to gain control over all of their desires and not be in bondage to any. But this is merely one aspect of their sinful nature fighting against another aspect of it. And their motive is not to live a spiritual life in Christ or glorify God, but to glorify themselves, or to satisfy themselves in some way, or to gain something else that self wants very badly. Their struggle is not the spiritual struggle Paul reveals here.

**7:15-24** Believers who like Paul have been awakened to the power of their sinful natures, will have the same complaint he had (certainly the writer of these notes has it) – they want to be good and do only good, but find something bad in them. They have holy desires, but find unholiness in their nature which hinders their efforts to act according to these holy desires.

Paul found that sin lurked in him like a

I am fleshly, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand what I do; for I do not do what I intend to do, but do what I hate. 16 If, then, I do what I do not intend to do, I agree with the Law, that *it is* good. 17 So then *it is* no longer I who do it, but

cruel tyrant determined to keep him in bondage to itself. He could not be all that he wanted to be, or do all that he wanted to do, and some things he did he did not want to do at all. He found that the word of Jesus to His disciples is really true: "you are evil" (see Matt 7:11), and he did not try to explain it away by using other terms for it.

**7:15** "Do what I hate" – we should not imagine that Paul was indulging in vile sins such as the ones he lists in 1 Cor 6:9,10 and other places. Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God, as he himself plainly stated. In this verse Paul does not tell us exactly what it was he struggled against, but the thing he emphasized earlier in this chapter was desire – desire which the law stirred up and which revealed the depravity of his old nature – vs 7,8. Persistent desires for wrong things rising up out of his nature was in itself enough to show Paul what that nature was like, and to cause him to utter the groan of v 24.

God's standards (and so God's apostle Paul's standards) were perfect in holiness and righteousness for both the outer behavior and the inner thoughts and motives and desires (2 Cor 7:1; Matt 6:48). Anything less than this perfection was hateful to Paul and so, when he came short in any way, he had to say that "what I hate I do."

We should understand that whatever inner struggles Paul experienced he always lived in such a way that his conscience would be clear before God and man – see Acts 24:16; 2 Cor 1:12. That is, he did not willingly, consciously practice any sin.

**7:17** Paul is facing the terrible reality that an enemy lives in him, and that this enemy, sin, is stronger than he is.

"No longer I. . .but sin that lives in me" (also v 20). Observe how he distinguishes between himself and his sinful nature. Before he obtained a new nature in Christ he was his old nature, and nothing more than that (this is true of all of us). But the words "no longer" suggest a radical change, the change he speaks of in v 4. When Christ died for him, in God's eyes it was the same as Paul dying, and so the death of all that Paul had been (6:3-7; Gal 5:24; Col 3:3), and he learned to regard it as God did. He (and this is true of all believers) no longer had any connection with his sinful nature, for it was "dead" through the death of Christ, and he, the new man, was alive in Christ (compare Col 2:11,12). And so he refused any longer to regard his sinful nature, or any part of it, as himself – "no longer I."

Sin lived on in him (as we see in these verses, in 1 John 1:8, and other places in the Bible), but now only as an alien which

sin that lives in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) no good thing lives. For *the ability* to choose is present with me, but I do not see *how* to perform what is good. 19 For I do not do the good that I choose *to do*, but the evil that I do not choose, that I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not choose, it is no longer I who does it, but sin that lives in me.

Paul detested and opposed. This unwellcome evil power (not some demon or demonic power, but simply his old nature), which was no longer himself, produced bad desires, bad motives, and even bad acts. But Paul, the new man in Christ, the man dead to the law and crucified with Christ, the man born again by the Spirit of God, did not purpose to do those things and did not do them. It was the old man of sin who did them, the old man who refused to accept his proper place of death and raged on, always trying to subdue Paul and bend him to his will.

Since it was not "I" who did the evil, "I" (the new man in Christ) could not be charged with doing it (see and understand 4:8). That is why there is "no condemnation" to death and hell for those in Christ (8:1), and no losing of salvation because of what the old fallen man within does. That "old man" is already condemned, crucified, and, in God's eyes, counted as dead forever.

Paul was a holy man of God and was not trying to make an excuse for bad behavior – he is writing by the inspiration of God's Spirit for our instruction, and stating things as God sees them, and as he himself came to understand them. He did not side with his sinful nature, but rejected it with abhorrence, and longed to be completely free from its influences and its presence. And he was not at all denying his responsibility for his actions. He knew very well the truth he wrote in another place – "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10). **7:18** Here is the truth God taught Paul about man's "flesh" ("sarx" – v 5). This is the nature everyone has received from Adam. Compare 1:29-32; 3:9-19; 8:5-8; 13:14; Gen 5:3; 8:21; Jer 17:9; Matt 7:11; 15:19; Gal 5:16,17; Eph 2:1-3; 1 Tim 1:15. See notes at those places.

Here Paul says there is no spiritually good thing in this nature received from Adam (though there are some things in it which people call good qualities – but people dominated by their sinful nature are not reliable judges of what is spiritual or good in God's eyes. Compare Luke 16:15). Here Paul exposes what "self" really is.

What he writes is in agreement with the words of Jesus. Jesus said that "self" must be completely renounced – it is worthy only of death (Matt 10:38; Luke 9:23 – in this verse notice the word "daily". Death to self must be an attitude believers renew daily,

21 I find, then, a law: When I choose to do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the Law of God in the person *I am* inwardly. 23 But I see another law in my *bodily* members, making war against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this *body of*

or the self, the flesh, will assert itself and try to rule us).

Observe in Paul's case the contrast between his good desire and the poor results. Isn't there reason enough for all believers to confess this? It is clear that in the fight against his sinful nature Paul could find absolutely nothing in himself that would give him the victory. To subdue and conquer his sinful nature he had to look for resources not found in himself.

**7:19,20** By restating, in slightly different words, what he declared in vs 15,17, he emphasizes the truth of it.

**7:21** "Law" – the fact he has stated is as powerful as a law of nature. Paul found that it was not something that happened only occasionally, and was gradually weakening and fading away out of his life. Always he wanted to do good and only good (this is what the believer's new nature in Christ is like), but always in trying to do the good he wanted to do, he found the evil alien within opposing him and trying to turn him in its direction.

**7:22** Is it even remotely possible that any unsaved person, any unbeliever, could ever truly say this? The Bible reveals what the heart (the inner being) of unsaved people is like, and it certainly does not delight in God's law – Gen 8:21; Jer 17:9; Matt 15:19; etc. People dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-3) do not inwardly delight in anything really holy as the law of God is. Here Paul surely means that in his new inner nature received in the new birth, in what he really was in Christ, he delighted in all the truth of God, including God's law which was holy, righteous and good. He could say with the psalmist "Your law is my delight" and "Oh, how I love your law!" (Ps 119:77,97).

**7:23** "Another law" – he means another law than the law of God which he refers to in v 22. This "another law" is the law seen in v 21. Observe what strong language he uses. This law is "making war" against him and actually takes him prisoner. In other words, Paul, fighting with all that he has in himself, with all his strength of mind and will, cannot win the victory over his old nature, his flesh. He loses again and again, and so has to utter the cry of the next verse.

**7:24** This knowledge of evil within, and this unsuccessful struggle with himself to be good, brought a deep groan from Paul's heart. This is the cry of a man face to face with the basic, total, incorrigible depravity of his fallen nature, which he himself can do nothing at all to change.

"Body of death" – see 6:12 where he uses

death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh *serve* the law of sin.

the similar expression "mortal body." Compare 6:6 – "body of sin." It is a body of death because sin lives in it (v 17; 8:10). Paul has been writing about this body of death, this body so bound up with the sinful nature, all through the preceding verses. (In other words, *sarx*, the sinful nature, lives in the soma, the Greek word for body).

Observe carefully that Paul views this deliverance from the body of death as something still future to the time of his writing these words. Compare 8:23; 1 Cor 15:53,54; Phil 3:21. He never said it was to be gained in this lifetime. But he is not at all denying that believers can gain the victory over the body and the sin living in the body. In the following chapter he shows clearly that we can do so. The same person who wrote v 18-21 also wrote 8:37 and 2 Cor 2:14. Which of these things is true? Both of them are true and at the same time. **7:25** At the same time Paul thanks God through the Lord Jesus for the coming deliverance from his body of death (which he could only do as a believer in Christ), he admits he has a sinful nature that brings bondage. If we ignore his statement here we will not be able to interpret the preceding verses correctly (and several other passages in the New Testament). See also 13:14; Gal 5:16,17; 1 John 1:8.

But the question comes, is there no deliverance now from the power of the sinful nature in believers? Can they not serve God with freedom and joy? Is there no victory over the enemy within? In chapter 6 Paul has already said that there is, and pointed the way. In chapter 8 he makes this even clearer. But here in chapter 7 he reveals that there is no hope of victory by trying to keep God's law, or by struggling against sin with one's own strength. Sin is far stronger than the strongest, most determined person on earth. Like Pharaoh of old it says "I do not know the Lord and I will not let His people go" (Ex 5:2).

But Paul does not teach this truth so that believers should despair and give in to the power of sin in them, but that they might know themselves and seek and find victory in God's way.

**8:1** The word "therefore" ties this verse with the preceding verses and seems another sure indication that in 7:14-25 Paul is describing himself as a person "in Christ Jesus." His connection with sin was completely broken (7:17), his inner being was changed so that he delighted in the law of God (7:22), and he could thank God through Jesus Christ the Lord for deliverance from the body of death (7:25). By these statements he shows that he was in Christ and therefore there was no condemnation for him. And there is none for anyone in a similar position.

Because of their struggles with sin

**8** *There is*, therefore, now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, *who* do not behave according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ

believers may often think to condemn themselves, but God does not condemn them. Compare 4:7,8 – how can believers be condemned for sins which God does not count against them?

"In Christ" means united to Him, members of His spiritual body – 6:3; 1 Cor 12:12,13. "No condemnation" is the same as being counted righteous or justified (3:24; 4:78; 5:1). See also John 5:24. Just as there is no condemnation for Christ, so is there none for those united to Him. Christ has already died for them and taken away their condemnation and sin forever. He and they with Him have risen to a new life beyond condemnation.

Another reason why there is no condemnation for them is that this way of faith in Christ leads to freedom from the law of sin and death (v 2). Christ both saves His people from their sins and gives victory over their sinfulness. Whom He justifies He also sanctifies. Being counted righteous through faith is the way (and the only way) that leads to victory over the flesh, the world and the devil.

"Who do not behave according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" – many scholars believe that this phrase has been copied by mistake from v 4, and that it was not in the original Greek here in v 1. Others do not agree with this view. The author of these notes believes that the phrase is a brief definition of those who are "in Christ Jesus," and that Paul shows the truth of this in the rest of the chapter. This becomes clearer if we take it like this: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. *They* do not behave according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus", etc. (The original Greek did not have our modern punctuation marks.)

**8:2** This whole chapter is in great contrast with 7:14-25. The reason is this: those verses describe what a believer is in himself faced with the awful reality of his sinfulness, but this chapter describes what we are "in Christ." Here we have a higher and better law than the law of sin and death seen in chapter 7. This is a law that gives believers power against that law. This law has to do with the "Spirit of life" – the Holy Spirit of God living in believers and enabling them to do what they could never do by their own efforts. In chapter 8 Paul refers to Christ and God's Spirit nearly thirty times (see note on 7:14). Here Paul emphasizes the wonderful truth that God has given His Spirit to live in the bodies of believers.

The Holy Spirit alone is their power for victory (vs 4,13)

He gives life and peace (v 6)

He leads them (v 14)

He causes them to know they are God's



Jesus has set me free from the Law of sin and death. 3 For what the Law could not do because it was weak through the flesh, God *did by* sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as a sacrifice* for sin, and *so* condemned sin in the flesh, 4 *so* that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not behave according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those

children (vs 15,16)

And He is in them praying for them (vs 26,27)

See notes on the Holy Spirit at John 14:16,17; etc

**8:3** "Law" – Paul means the law God gave through Moses. It was powerless to save people or to help them overcome their sin and sinfulness (3:19,20; 4:15; 7:5,7,14).

"Flesh" (also vs 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13) – see note at 7:5. To give a way of escape for sinful people God had to send His own Son (John 3:14-16). Jesus the Son did not come as a sinful man with a sinful nature (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22). He came in the "likeness" of sinful man. That is, when He was on earth His outward appearance was like all other men. He came "as a sacrifice for sin" (the words "as a sacrifice" are not in the Greek but are implied there). He came to deal with the whole human problem of sin. He condemned it and died for it (3:24,25).

**8:4** God's grand purpose in all this was to free people from the guilt, condemnation and power of sin, and make them a holy people for Himself, a people able to be spiritual and fulfill the righteousness in the law which is holy and spiritual (7:12,14). See also Heb 8:10. Believers are not under the law (6:14; 7:4). They need not observe its days, ceremonies, instructions about foods, etc. But God wants the moral and ethical requirement of the law to be fulfilled in them. This requirement is summed up in two commandments – see 13:8-10; Matt 22:37-40. To fulfill these, one thing is of the utmost importance – behaving "according to the Spirit." Here, and throughout this chapter, the Spirit means God's Spirit. See also Gal 5:16-18.

Living "according to the Spirit" means this: To recognize that He lives in us (vs 9, 15)

To offer ourselves to Him (6:13)

To obey Him (v 14; Gal 5:25)

To trust Him for His strength and power and use them (v 13)

**8:5-8** "Flesh" (7:5; Gal 5:17). Paul here describes two kinds of people, the only two kinds on earth. One type thinks along certain lines, the other in a radically different way. The sinful nature brings its desires to the minds of unbelievers, and, in general, they will go after those things. God's Spirit brings His desires to the minds of believers. And if their minds are filled with the things

who *live* according to the Spirit *set their minds on* the things of the Spirit. 6 The mind occupied with the flesh *is* death, but the mind occupied with the Spirit *is* life and peace. 7 Because the mind occupied with the flesh *is* hostile to God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can *it* be. 8 So then those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. Now if anyone

He desires for them they will go after those things. The way a person thinks has a very great influence on how he lives (so the importance of 2 Cor 10:5; Phil 4:8; Col 3:16; Ps 1:2).

The things of the sinful nature are not always things which appear sinful to people. They may be religious, or intellectual things too. But they are things which are not of God (Matt 16:23). They are not heavenly things (Col 3:2), but earthly things (Phil 3:19), things which seem natural to people without God's Spirit.

"Death" in v 6 means spiritual death, separation from God (Isa 59:2; Eph 2:1; 4:18). The natural mind of every person out of Christ is set on what pleases himself, and these things have nothing to do with the one true God and are opposed to Him (v 7). Such a person may think he is on God's side and may even say he loves Him. But this is a delusion. And the mind of a sinful person will never change itself and obey God. It is impossible to it.

If a person is to start obeying God a radical change must take place in him. God's Spirit must enter him, give him new life and change his thinking. Without this no one can please God. He may be very religious, moral, educated, may try to keep God's law, but without God's Spirit it is all sin and death and can never be acceptable to God. Compare John 3:3-8. Because a person's sinful nature is clothed with religion and morality does not make it any more pleasing to God. He sees beneath the outer things of religion to the heart (Heb 4:12,13). He knows that the religious ideas and feelings of fallen man are stained by sin, just as everything else about him is stained by sin. Compare Isa 1:11-17; Prov 14:12.

**8:9** "In" – the two kinds of persons Paul describes in vs 5-8 live in two different realms or spheres. Those without God's Spirit belong to their sinful nature, and they live in it and according to it. Those who have God's Spirit have renounced sin and their sinful nature. They belong to God's Spirit and He lives and works in them, and they live in Him.

In this verse the Spirit of God is called the Spirit of Christ. What is this but to say that Christ is God? See other references at Phil 2:6 and Luke 2:11. Without Christ's Spirit no one belongs to Christ or to God the Father, no one is saved or counted righteous. Such people may be called



does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. 10 And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies by his Spirit who lives in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not

to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if through the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive again the spirit of bondage to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we call out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself

Christians and may think they are Christians, but they are not Christ's people. How does one receive Christ's Spirit? Only by faith in Christ. God gives Him as a gift to individuals when they believe (5:5).

**8:10** In v 9 Paul says the Spirit of God lives in believers. Here he says Christ Himself lives in them (see also John 17:23; 2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:27; Rev 3:20). He is in them by His Spirit. These verses show the unity of God and Christ and the Spirit (this does not mean that Christ and the Holy Spirit and the Father are the same person. Notes at Matt 3:16; John 17:1; 2 John 3; etc).

Notice that the "body" of a believer is "dead." Compare 6:12; 7:24. The process of death is at work in Christ's own people as in everyone else, and if Christ does not return in our lifetime we will all die. This is because of sin. But the Spirit of life (v 2) lives in believers, and their spirits are alive because of Him.

"The Spirit gives" – or, possibly, "The spirit has" (there is no verb in the Greek here).

**8:11** Two truths are here – the resurrection of Christ from the dead (1:4; Matt 28:6), and the future resurrection of believers (v 23; John 6:39; 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16). In the gospel of Christ the body is not merely a temporary house for the believer's spirit which will be discarded forever at death. Our bodies are important as the instruments through which our spirits express themselves, and they will be raised and glorified like Christ's body (Phil 3:21).

**8:12,13** What should be the response of believers to all this glorious truth God has revealed? What is their responsibility in the light of God's marvelous grace? Paul wrote something of this in 6:11-13,19. They must deny self, renounce their own sinful natures, and use the power and strength of God's Spirit to "put to death the deeds of the body" (see Col 3:5-10. Compare Matt 5:29,30; Gal 5:24). This is something that needs to be done continuously. This means to renounce every evil action and work with God's Spirit to put it to death – the power to kill sin in our lives is His power, not ours. But we must cooperate with Him, and use the power He gives us (compare Phil 2:12,13). Believers should no more allow sinful acts and practices and desires to remain in their lives than allow poisonous snakes to be in their houses.

The true believer has repented of his sins and he fights against sins in his life and learns to use the Spirit's power against them. He makes the decision to do this

when he comes to Christ, and the decision is immediate and sudden, but the work of actually doing it may be slow and painful. Perhaps few are always and completely successful in this. But the tendency of the lives of all believers is to do so. If anyone called a "brother" does not put to death the deeds of the body, he shows he does not have the Spirit of life at work in him (compare 1 John 3:6,9). Constantly living "in accordance with the flesh" is proof that the Spirit is absent, and such living is death and leads to death (v 6; 6:16,23).

**8:14** This is a word showing what it means to be a child of God. The sons of God are those born of His Spirit (John 1:12,13). More than that – they follow His Spirit's leading (compare John 10:27). And God's Spirit leads them to "put to death the deeds of the body." God's Spirit will always lead away from self and sin. A person lacking this experience lacks genuine repentance and faith, and is not saved (see 1 John 2:4-6; 3:3,7-10; John 14:23,24).

Paul calls believers "sons" of God. In 6:16-22 he calls them "slaves." There is no contradiction. In speaking of "slavery" he does not mean enforced bondage, but willing and glad service to God. Believers prove themselves God's "sons" by willingly becoming His "slaves." If they are not willing to be God's slaves they show themselves unworthy to be His sons, and, in fact, are not His sons.

**8:15** Believers are voluntary slaves to God, not unwilling slaves to fear (compare Heb 2:14,15). And by God's Spirit living in them they spontaneously think of God as their Father and they call Him that and cry out to Him as their Father.

"Adoption" – see v 23.

"Abba" is the word for father in the Aramaic language (compare Mark 14:36; Gal 4:6).

**8:16** Notice carefully the distinction between God's Spirit and the spirits of believers. They are not one and the same spirit as Advaita Vedanta teaches in parenthesis. See also John 14:16,17.

In the hearts of believers, as they follow the leading of God's Spirit and put to death the misdeeds of the body (vs 13,14), there is a happy agreement between their spirits and God's Spirit. God's Spirit leads them to an assurance that they are God's children (compare 1 John 3:24; 4:13). Paul does not define how God's Spirit gives this witness within their hearts. But it is clear that it is an inward personal experience. And we

testifies with our spirit, that we are the children of God; 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *him*, so that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected *it*, in hope, 21 because the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious

liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers birth pangs together until now. 23 And not only *creation*, but we ourselves who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan in ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *that is*, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved *in this* hope. But hope that is seen is not hope, for why does a man still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, *then* we wait patiently for it.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps *in* our weaknesses; for we do not know what we should pray

and can be sure that the inner witness of the Spirit and the outer witness of the Bible will perfectly agree. God's Spirit will never tell us something is true which God's Word indicates is not true. The Spirit will make God's Word personal and real and living in the hearts of believers.

On the knowledge and assurance believers can have see 5:5; 1 John 5:10,20; 1 Cor 2:9-12; John 16:13-15. If the believer sins he is in danger of "quenching" the Spirit and the Spirit's assuring voice (Eph 4:30).

**8:17** "Heirs" – Christ is the heir of all things (Heb 1:2). So to be heirs with Him means to inherit all things. See 4:13; 1 Cor 3:21-23; Eph 1:14; Col 1:12; Rev 21:7; Matt 5:5.

"Suffer with him" – sufferings then glory was the way God led His Son Jesus (Luke 24:26); and it is the way He leads His children now (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Pet 4:1,12). Sharing Christ's sufferings is not enduring the difficulties, sorrows and pains which come to all people whether they are Christ's believers or not. It means to suffer for the very reason that we belong to Him and because we live in a world that rejects and hates Him (John 15:18-21), because we are tempted and tried as believers, because we fight against sin in ourselves and elsewhere and stand for truth and justice. All such will face persecution (2 Tim 3:12).

If we are not willing to suffer with Him now, we have no right to think we shall share His glory and inheritance hereafter. When we suffer with Him we should not ask why we are suffering. Rather, if we never suffer with Him we should ask why we do not.

"Glorified" – 5:2; 9:23; John 17:22,24; Col 1:27; 3:4; 1 Thess 2:12; Heb 2:10; 1 Pet 4:13,14; 5:10.

**8:18** Paul suffered much (2 Cor 11:23-29). But he regarded his sufferings as trivial in the light of eternal glory – 2 Cor 4:17. It was his assurance that he would share in that glory which enabled him to endure his sufferings with patience and even joy (5:3).

**8:19** "The revealing of the sons of God" – v 23; Col 3:4; 1 Pet 1:5; 1 John 3:1,2.

**8:20-23** The whole earth suffered from the fall of the first man into sin – Gen 3:14-19. All that God made in the beginning was good (Gen 1:31), but because of sin destruction

and death came to this good creation. This same creation now groaning in bondage will be released and share in the coming glory. Compare Isa 11:6-9; 25:6-8; 35:1-10; 49:8-13. Now creation is not what it was originally, and it is not what it shall be after Christ returns. Just as it shared in the results of man's fall into sin, so it will eventually share in the results of Christ's redeeming men from sin.

**8:23** See 7:24; 2 Cor 5:4. Believers earnestly desire and groan for the final step in their salvation – their resurrection and glorification (v 30). Here this is called the "redemption" of their bodies. See 1 Cor 15:51-54; Phil 3:21. See also John 5:28,29. "Adoption" here means that believers, redeemed fully and eternally and transformed into Christ's likeness in body, soul and spirit, will take their place as God's children in a redeemed and transformed creation.

**8:24,25** "Hope" – 5:2. The Greek word for hope as Paul and other writers of the New Testament used it, has a much stronger meaning than the English word hope commonly has. It means a confident expectation that what God has revealed as coming in the future, will come, that his promises will be fulfilled. It is the other side of faith. See also Titus 1:2; 1 Pet 1:21; etc.

**8:26** This chapter is full of wonderful revelations of the spiritual life of believers and of their final salvation. But in the heart of the chapter there are three groans – here, v 22 and v 23. Creation, believers, and God's Spirit are all groaning at the same time. Why does God's Spirit groan in us who are believers? He is greatly concerned for our spiritual welfare. He longs for our growth in holiness and wisdom, our conformity to the Lord Jesus. With unutterable desires He works to keep us from the pit of sin and the influence of Satan. He strives to make us strong and fruitful children of God. Compare the Spirit-inspired prayer of Paul in Col 1:9-12.

"What" – the Spirit's help and intercession are greatly needed, for believers in themselves are utter weakness (7:14-25), and know neither how to pray or what to pray for as they ought. We can say that God's Spirit works in us to turn our weak-

for as we ought. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans which cannot be expressed in words. 27 And he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because he intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are

ness into strength (2 Cor 12:9,10). Because of Him when we are weak, we are strong.

**8:27** Believers have two all-wise intercessors praying for them (v 34). And they have One who is all-powerful who listens to the prayers of these two intercessors. They always pray in the will of God, so the Father always answers the prayers of the Son and the Spirit (compare 1 John 5:14,15). The whole Trinity is at work to help believers in their weakness and to enable them to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

**8:28** Here is one of those great verses of the Bible which many people quote to others, and few seem able to apply to their own circumstances. To those who do believe these words, and apply them, they are like the cool shadow of a great rock in a hot and weary land. This verse is true even when it seems impossible that it could be true (see in vs 35-39 some of the experiences that can come to believers). Happy are those who can apply this truth to all the events which overtake them in their life on earth.

See what Paul says – “we know” – not “we have some faint hope” or “we guess it might be true.” We can know it is true because God has revealed it and has given evidence of its truthfulness in many parts of the Bible (see, for example, Gen 50:20).

“Those who love Him” and “those who are called” are just two phrases which here mean all true believers. All of them love God, and He has called all of them for His purpose (v 30; 1:5,6; 1 Cor 16:22; 1 John 4:8,16). God brings good out of every circumstance that He brings believers into. Through all such things He means for them to grow spiritually and become more like Christ. Believers may not always be able to see what possible good has come to them from some things which have happened, but we are not required to understand, only to believe.

Some versions have the following translation of the first part of this verse: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.” This does not change the meaning. If all things work together for good, it is God who causes them to do so.

**8:29** God’s purpose spoken of in v 28 is this: to make believers like Christ (see also Heb 2:10,11; 1 John 3:1,2). There can be no higher purpose, no greater goal than this. Paul here points to five steps in the fulfillment of this purpose of God. Two of them are in the past before the world began, two in the beginning of the believer’s life in Christ, one still to come. Each of these

the called according to *his* purpose. 29 For whom he foreknew, he also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover, whom he predestined, those he also called; and whom he called, those he also justified; and whom he justified, those he also glorified.

steps is tied to all the others and all are as certain as God Himself can make them.

“Foreknew” – God’s predestining believers to be like Christ was based on His foreknowledge of them. See also 1 Pet 1:2. Paul does not explain what this foreknowledge is, or what relationship it has to predestination. See note on this subject at the end of this letter.

“Predestined” – this word is found only six times in the Greek New Testament (here, v 30; Acts 4:28; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5,11). It has nothing to do either with blind fate or with karma. It means God, who knows beforehand what should be done, ordains that it should be done. And we can be sure that what God, the all-wise and all-powerful One, predestines to be done will certainly be done. Apart from Acts 4:28, which speaks of an event, the New Testament speaks of God’s predestination only in regard to believers. It never says God predestined anyone to eternal punishment.

The New Testament teaching of predestination should give great comfort, great hope to believers. It should lead no one to despair, wondering whether God has predestined him to salvation. See notes at John 6:37,44. Anyone who will may come to Christ (Rev 22:17) and the very act of coming and believing in Him is proof that God has chosen the person coming.

**8:30** “Called” – v 28; 1:6. This means called to Christ so that they come and believe in Him. For an understanding of what God’s call means study the following references – 11:29; Gal 1:6; 2 Thess 2:14; 1 Cor 1:9,24; Gal 5:13; Col 3:15; 1 Tim 6:12; 1 Pet 2:9,20,21; 3:9; Jude 1; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 3:1. All believers should make sure God has called them – 2 Pet 1:10,11. Believers can know that God has chosen them, called them, and justified them, and they should know these things.

“Justified” – those God calls, in the sense Paul uses the word, all come to God and believe in the Lord Jesus. Immediately God forgives them every sin and counts them perfectly righteous. See 1:16,17; 3:21-28; 4:5,6-8; 5:1; 10:10.

“Glorified” – vs 17,18,23. This last step in the salvation of God’s own people is put in the past tense as the other steps are. In other words, it is as certain in God’s eyes as His original foreknowledge and predestination, as certain as if it were already done (compare 4:17). The same “those” who are predestined, called and justified will be glorified.

One hesitates to say here “will be

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's chosen? *It is* God who justifies. 34 Who *is* he who condemns? Christ *is the one* who died, and beyond that, who was raised again and who is at the right hand of God, who also is

glorified", though the final act of the glorification of believers awaits Christ's second coming. For Christ has already been glorified and they are united to Him, are "in" Him, and so in a very real sense they have already been glorified – see John 17:22; Eph 2:6; Col 3:3,4. This all speaks of the certainty of the final salvation of all those whom God has called to believe in His Son. Jesus Himself expressed the same truth in John 6:37-40; 10:27-29.

**8:31** What shall we say? Let all of our words regarding what God plans and accomplishes toward His own people be words of faith and praise and much assurance. Let none of our words express doubt that any of it can be true. God is for us who believe Him. He is with us, in us. No enemy either within or without can defeat God's purpose for us (v 37; Heb 13:6; John 10:29; Rom 5:20).

**8:32** God loves to give because He is love (1 John 4:8; 2 Pet 1:3; 2 Cor 9:15; Acts 14:17; Matt 5:45; 7:10; Ps 145:9). He is the "God of all grace" (1 Pet 5:10). His throne is a "throne of grace" (Heb 4:16). In a special sense grace reigns over His people (Rom 5:21), and grace will triumph over all their weakness and sinfulness. God gave His Son, the greatest of all gifts. Can He possibly withhold anything needed for the final salvation of believers?

**8:33** Because God counts believers righteous He will not accept any accusations against them. Believers are united to Christ, are in Christ, and share Christ's perfect righteousness. Just as God will not accept any accusations against His Son, so He will not accept any accusations against those united to Him. See 4:6-8 and notes there. Sin is the only thing that could possibly rob them of their salvation, and God will not count their sins against them. Does this give them a license to sin? Absolutely not – 6:1,15; 8:4,12-14.

**8:34** Who can condemn a single believer so that God will accept the condemnation? No one. Not Satan, not other men, not the believer himself. Christ has died as a sacrifice to take away all of their sins forever (Heb 10:10,14). Not only so, He is at God's right hand for His people. There He answers every accusation or attempt at condemnation. His life and intercessions keep them safe now and forever (5:9,10; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

**8:35-39** The "love of Christ" here means His love for believers, not their love for Him.

interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are considered as sheep for the slaughter."

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels,

But if Christ's love for believers should fail because of their sin, what then? His love never will fail. It is everlasting (Jer 31:3). It began before they came into existence on the earth and will go on as long as they live in it and forever after. He knew in advance all their sinfulness and all their sin, and set His love on them anyway. Christ's love "surpasses knowledge" (Eph 3:19). It will overcome all obstacles and bring all His people safely into His loving presence at last (compare Song of Songs 8:6,7).

Why does Paul here speak of troubles and dangers? Because they are the common lot of God's people (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; etc); because Satan tries to use them to get the victory over believers; because they may sometimes cause believers to wonder if Christ still loves them; and because they may even become an occasion for them to sin and fall temporarily into unbelief. If this happens will Christ forsake them? Will He withdraw His love? Never. He will bring them all safely through all possible experiences of life.

**8:36** Ps 44:22.

**8:37** Judging from the context of this chapter we can say that Christ makes all believers "more than conquerors", not merely the exceptional ones like Paul – notice the "we", a word that included all believers at Rome (and, by extension, all believers now). Who can be "more" than a conqueror? One who not merely wins but one whom it is impossible to finally defeat by any means whatever.

And Paul says "we are", not "we may be" or "we can be." Sin and Satan, the world, the flesh and the devil, may wound believers and temporarily cause them to fall, may hard press them, perplex them, persecute them, and strike them down (2 Cor 4:8,9). But they cannot get the final victory over them. It is not possible to conquer those who are more than conquerors. God who gave them faith will keep them believing to the end. He who brought them to Christ will keep them in Christ and give them final, eternal triumph.

Believers are more than conquerors for one reason only – they are united to Christ who is the supreme conqueror of sin, of the world, of Satan, of death, and of everything that raises its head against God, and they all share in His victory.

**8:38,39** How could Paul say more emphatically that believers are safe in the loving care of the Lord Jesus Christ? Life with its

nor rulers, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**9** I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also *is* bearing witness for me in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; 3 for I could wish that *I* myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites. To them *belongs* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants,

temptations and trials cannot separate them from Him. Neither can the future with all its possibilities. Nor can death at the end of life, no matter what death they die. No evil power can do so, no good power would do so if it could.

But, someone may say, sin is not mentioned here. However, it is implied in the words "life" and "future" with all the possibilities these words signify. And as for a believer's sins we have seen what God says about them in vs 33,34 and in 4:8. Grace reigns (5:21)! Since Paul was "convinced" of the above truth, so should we be, and always rejoice in it.

Paul has presented what the gospel of Christ is, and shown how it is the power of God for salvation. He has taken us step by step from man's terrible sinful condition, under the wrath of God, to the marvelous state of believers in Christ, forgiven, justified, sanctified, glorified, loved and safe forever. We can see why he was "not ashamed" of the gospel (1:16). The gospel of Christ is glorious beyond compare, and powerful beyond man's poor ability to describe. It is exactly suited to man's need and to God's glory. Let us believe the gospel, and learn it thoroughly, and rejoice in it, and live it, and speak of it, and present it to others all the days of our lives.

**9:1-3** Paul has concluded his presentation of the salvation God has provided for mankind. Now in chapters 9, 10, 11 he takes up the question of why God's nation Israel rejected Christ and His gospel, and what the future of that nation will be.

"Conscience" – Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Cor 4:4; 8:7; 2 Cor 1:12; 1 Tim 5:19; 3:9. Paul speaks so strongly, so emphatically in these verses because many Jews thought he was their enemy (Acts 21:21,28; 24:5). The truth is he loved them and longed for their salvation so much that he was willing to be lost himself (if that were possible) if they could be saved. Compare Ex 32:32 and Gal 3:13. So powerfully was the Messiah of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ at work in his heart.

**9:4,5** Here Paul more fully answers the question in 3:1. As a nation, he says, Israel still has certain advantages. These advantages have not been lost because

and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises. 5 Theirs *are* the fathers, and from them, as concerning the body, *came* Christ, who is over all, God, forever blessed. Amen.

6 *It is* not as though the Word of God had failed. For they *are* not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel. 7 Nor *are they* all the children of Abraham because they are the offspring of Abraham; but, "through Isaac your offspring will be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh *are not* the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. 9 For this is the word of promise: "At

Israel rejected Christ. In these verses Paul indicates that the things he mentions still belong to that nation.

"Adoption" – here means that God chose the nation of Israel to be His people (Deut 7:6; 14:1,2). They alone of all peoples of earth had the visible glory of God in their place of worship and the promise of that glory for the future (Ex 40:34,35; 1 Kings 8:11; Ezek 43:2-5; 44:4). Theirs are the covenants God made with them (Gen 15:18; Ex 24:8; 2 Sam 7:16; 23:5; Jer 31:31-33; 32:40). God gave His law only to them (Ex 20:1,2; Deut 4:8). They alone of all people in history had a way of worship given by God Himself (Exodus chapters 25-40; 1 Kings chapter 6). Theirs too are many promises scattered here and there throughout the Old Testament – promises of great blessing in the future. Theirs are the "fathers" – those whom God Himself chose to be the founders and leaders of the people – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (11:28; Gen 12:1-3; Ex 3:6). And Jesus was born an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham and David.

"Christ, who is over all, God, forever blessed" – here is a plain declaration that Jesus Christ is God. Some versions have different translations of the Greek words here, but the translation above is in agreement with the Greek, and with other places in the Bible which show that Christ is God. See references at Phil 2:6 and Luke 2:11.

**9:6** Israel as a people with all its advantages failed to receive Christ and His gospel. And God's kingdom was taken from them and given to others (John 1:11; Matt 21:42,43). Does this mean that God's Word had failed and His promises were broken? Paul says no. He then draws a distinction between two different kinds of Jews – those who were natural descendants of Israel and those individuals from among them God chose and called to Himself. The latter are the true Israel. See also 2:28,29; Matt 3:9; John 8:39-41.

**9:7-9** See Gen 21:12. Abraham had other children (Gen 16:15; 25:1,2). But God chose only Isaac to be Abraham's heir and spiritual descendant. He was the child of "promise" – 4:18-21; Gen 15:4; 17:15,16; 18:10; 21:1-3. In other words, the covenant and promises God made with



this time I will come, and Sarah will have a son."

10 And not only *this*, but also when Rebecca had conceived by one man, by our father Isaac 11 (*the children* being not yet born, never having done any good or evil, so that the purpose of God according to *his* choice might stand, not by works, but by him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

14 What, then, shall we say? *Is there* injustice with God? Absolutely not! 15 For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,

Abraham did not include all his natural descendants, but only the ones God chose. **9:10-13** The same truth applied to Isaac's descendants. God chose only one of them, Jacob, to be the heir of Isaac and the leader of His people, the one in Abraham's line to inherit God's promises. The reason God chose Jacob and rejected Esau had nothing to do with the works they might do later. In His wisdom and grace God chose one and not the other, and God's Word was fulfilled in the one He chose.

Observe that God did not say "the older will go to hell, the younger to heaven", but "the older will serve the younger". The subject of chapters 9-11 is not individual salvation, but God's dealings with peoples and nations.

**9:12** Gen 25:23.

**9:13** Mal 1:2,3. On God's hatred see notes at Ps 5:5; Mal 1:3; Luke 14:26. God had a special love for Jacob which He showed in history. The history of Esau's descendants shows God did not have that same love for them. Paul quotes Malachi to prove the fulfillment of v 12 in history.

**9:14-24** The rejection of the bulk of the nation of Israel in this age is perfectly just. The question of God's justice was bound to come up (v 14). The answer is that God is absolutely sovereign and may do as He pleases with men. All are sinners (3:9,23), and God could justly reject all. Instead of that He has chosen some to be His people. And this is perfectly just. No one has any right to reply against God and accuse Him of injustice (vs 20,21). God is God. He is the great King over the universe (Ps 47:1-3; Isa 40:22,23; Dan 4:34,35; Mal 1:14), and can do and does do according to His will.

God's choosing some and not all people has nothing to do with the doctrine of karma, with the idea of reincarnation, of previous births. (These have no reality. See notes at Job 11:12; John 9:3.)

It also has nothing to do with the arbitrary will of a tyrant or dictator. God is sovereign and can do as He wills in all matters. But we should understand that He is also love (1 John 4:9). And He always acts in accordance with His nature. He delights to show mercy when it is right to do so (10:12; 11:32; Ex 34:6,7; Micah 7:18).

and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

16 So then *mercy* is not of him who wills *it*, or of him who runs *for it*, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very same purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be declared through all the earth." 18 Therefore he has mercy on whom he chooses *to have mercy*, and *hardens* whom he chooses *to harden*.

19 You will, then, say to me, "Why does he still

And when it is not right to do so, because of the unrepentant determination of men to go on in their sins, and because His justice demands that such people be punished, His loving heart is grieved (see notes on Jer 48:30-39; Luke 19:41).

We should understand that these verses in Romans do not stand alone, and we must interpret them in the light of the whole Bible. Whatever may be the mysteries of God's sovereignty, foreknowledge and predestination, of one thing we may be sure – they will never cause Him to act contrary to the revelation He has given of Himself in His Word. God can do no wrong. All He does is based on absolute justice and absolute love. On that mighty rock our hearts can rest.

**9:14** Gen 18:25; etc.

**9:15** Ex 33:19.

**9:16** God alone knows to whom He should show mercy and whom He should punish. And His mercy is free – He is not obligated to show it to anyone. Men cannot earn it by their efforts or force God to show it because they desire it. We should not get the idea from this that God is hardhearted and reluctant to show mercy. It is certain that if anyone will forsake his sins and turn to God He will have mercy on him (11:32; Isa 55:7). God does not have a severe will which is contrary to His merciful, compassionate, loving will. He shows mercy when He can, punishes when He must (see such notes and references at 10:20,21; Gen 6:7; Jer 48:30-39; Ezek 18:30-32; Luke 19:41-44). We can be sure that God's sovereignty will never work against His love, or cause Him to do a single unjust act toward anyone.

**9:17** Ex 9:16; 7:17. God can act toward evil men in a way which will promote His own glory and increase the knowledge of Himself in the earth. And this is a great benefit, and a great mercy to the world.

**9:18** See note on the hardening of Pharaoh at Ex 4:21. Pharaoh wanted God to be merciful and remove the plagues He sent on the country, but he did not want to repent and serve God. God punished his sin by abandoning him to further sin and hardness of heart. Compare 1:21-26,28. We can be sure that God will harden no one who does not fully deserve such punishment. And God is free to act as He thinks best in all cases.

**9:19-21** Paul knew that men will try to blame



find fault? For who has resisted his will?" 20 But who are you, O man, that *you* reply against God? Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this"? 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel for honour, and another for dishonour?

22 *What* if God, willing to show his wrath and to make *his* power known, endured with much patience the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And *did so* that he might make known the riches of his glory to the vessels of mercy, whom he had already prepared for glory, 24 even us, whom he has called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles? 25 As he says also in Hosea,

"I will call them my people,  
who were not my people;  
and *call* her 'loved one' who was not loved".

26 And it will happen *that* in the place where

God for their sinful condition and hardness of heart, though actually they are the ones who are responsible for them. Compare Gen 3:12,13. Paul also knew that man the creature has no right to say anything against God the Creator. Even among men a potter can make the kind of pots he wants, and the pots have no say in the matter, and should have no say. Compare Isa 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jer 18:4-6.

We know from the account of creation in Genesis that God as a divine Potter made no bad vessels (Gen 1:31). A good, wise, and loving potter will not make ugly, depraved pots, and God is a good, wise, and loving Potter. If any pots are bad we can trace the source of their badness to man and to Satan, not to God.

Man's place is in the dust before God, confessing his own guilt and inability, and realizing that God is God and that He alone can make us what we ought to be. Instead of speaking against God or trying to blame Him for our condition, we should put ourselves willingly and believingly in His hands. He will then make us vessels for noble and glorious purposes.

"Same lump" (v 21) – all human beings have the same fallen, sinful nature (3:9,23; Eph 2:3). They have made themselves like bad clay, and do not deserve to be made into anything good. There is not among men some who are like good and noble clay and some like base and depraved clay. We are all of the "same lump" of humanity, all descended from the one man Adam and are all sinful (3:19; 5:12; 7:18).

**9:22-24** God has a good purpose in all His dealings with mankind. It was beneficial to the whole world that people understand that God has great anger against sin and that He is a God who can do anything. He chose to display His wrath and power against Pharaoh and the Egyptians (v 17), and others in the history of mankind.

it was said to them,  
"You *are* not my people";  
there they will be called the children of the living God.

27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:

Though the number of the children of  
Israel be like the sand by the sea,  
*only* a remnant will be saved;

28 For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short  
in righteousness;  
because the Lord will make a short work  
on the earth.

29 And as Isaiah said before, Unless the LORD  
of hosts had left us offspring,  
we would have been like Sodom, and  
become like Gomorrah.

30 What, then, shall we say? That the Gentiles,  
who did not follow after righteousness, have laid

Here Paul distinguishes two groups "the vessels of wrath. . . prepared for destruction", and "the vessels of mercy whom he prepared for glory." In other words, believers and unbelievers, those whom God has chosen for salvation and those He has not chosen. Concerning believers Paul says God has prepared them for glory (compare 8:17,18). Concerning unbelievers he says only that they are prepared for destruction, but he does not say who prepared them. Since he does not say God did so, it is possible to assume that someone else prepared them, or else that they prepared themselves for that punishment.

On the basis of verses like 1:18-32; 2:4-11; Prov 1:24-33; Ezek 18:30-32; Matt 23:37; 1 Tim 2:3,4 we can believe that people prepare themselves for destruction. See also Matt 13:38,39; etc. See notes on God's wrath at 1:18; Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36. **9:24** "Gentiles" – 1:5,16. Paul means from the above that God has a perfect right to choose only a few from the nation Israel and reject the rest, and to be merciful to the Gentiles. In vs 25-29 he shows that all this is in accordance with the Old Testament. The word of God had not failed (v 6).

**9:25** Hos 2:23. "Not my people" here means those people who were not of God's people Israel.

**9:26** Hos 1:10.

**9:27,28** Isa 10:22,23.

**9:29** Isa 1:9. The nation had become so corrupt that if God had not chosen a few from among them the whole nation would have been utterly destroyed (Gen 19:23-25).

"LORD of hosts" – the meaning of "LORD of Sabaoth" (KJV). Note at 1 Sam 1:3.

**9:30-32** The Jews worked at their religion. They had God's law and set about to become acceptable to God by trying to keep that law. But their attempts to be

hold of righteousness, the very righteousness which is by faith. 31 But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, has not reached the law of righteousness. 32 Why? Because *they did* not seek *it* by faith, but as if it were by the works of the Law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. 33 As it is written,

Look, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone  
and rock of offense,  
and whoever believes in him will not be  
put to shame.

**10** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. 2 For I testify concerning them that they have a zeal for God. But *it is* not according to knowledge. 3 For they are ignorant of God's righteousness,

righteous by their works ended in utter failure (3:9,19,20). The Gentiles did not have God's law and were not much concerned with righteousness. But when they heard the gospel of Christ they believed and "obtained" righteousness. God counted them righteous by faith (3:22,26,28; 5:1). The Jews, on the other hand, rejected the "stone" God put in Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:11; Matt 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:6-8). Notice that Paul does not say the Jews failed because God predestined them to failure, but because of their own ways.

**9:33** Isa 8:14; 28:16. "Zion" is Jerusalem. **10:1** See 9:1-3.

**10:2,3** On the whole, the Jews were not atheists, or careless sinners (2:17-20). Paul saw their zeal and was moved with compassion for them. He could well remember his own religious zeal which had not been based on spiritual knowledge and understanding, and which had led him astray (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1,2; 22:3,4; 26:9-11; Phil 3:6). They were zealous in religion but lost. Zeal for God does not mean that those who have it know the God they are zealous about, or that they are pleasing to Him.

The Jews, like people in general, did not understand that God gives righteousness as a gift to those who believe Him (3:24; 4:4,5,13), and supposed they had to earn it by their religious works. They had not learned the truth God had revealed to them in their own Scriptures. And so they would not submit to God's way of righteousness – faith in Christ. They did what all men do by nature, if they have any religion at all – they tried to establish their own righteousness, to justify themselves, to earn salvation by their own efforts.

**10:4** "Law" – 3:20,31; 4:15; 5:20; 6:14; 7:4,7,12,14; 8:3,4; Gal 3:19,23-25. Christ has severed the connection between the believer and the law of Moses.

**10:5** Lev 18:5.

**10:6-8** Deut 30:12-14. Was it right for Paul to apply the words of Moses (about 1400

and go about to establish their own righteousness, *and so* have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

5 For Moses describes the righteousness which is by the Law *like* this: "The man who does those things will live by them." 6 But the righteousness which is by faith speaks in this manner: Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*). 7 Or, Who will descend into the Abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith which we preach: 9 That if you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart man believes

B.C.) to the gospel of Christ? Of course it was right. God's Spirit enabled Paul to see the true spiritual meaning of the words of Moses.

**10:7** "Abyss" – Rev 9:1,2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3. The word here means the realm of the dead.

**10:9,10** This is the "word of faith" Paul preached (v 8). Christ has already come down from heaven and God has already brought Christ up from the dead (1:3,4; 4:24,25; 8:32,34). Now if people want to receive the gift of God's righteousness, all that remains for them to do is to turn from sin and self-effort and believe in Christ. Observe that a belief in the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus is essential to salvation. See 4:24,25; 1 Cor 15:1-8. It is a basic fact of the gospel. See the emphasis on this in the book of Acts – 1:3; 2:24; etc. If we do not believe this fact we show we do not believe the record God has caused to be written concerning His Son. To believe in Christ is to believe in Him risen from the dead.

Also the belief that Jesus is Lord is necessary. See John 8:24; Acts 2:36; 1 Cor 8:6; 12:3; Eph 4:5. Jesus is not *a* Lord, only one among many. He is the only divine Lord there is. Paul means that Jesus is the one who has absolute authority, the master and owner of all, the incarnation of the Lord (Jehovah) of the Old Testament (v 13; Luke 2:11; John 8:24,58. Notes at Ex 3:14,15).

Confession that Jesus is Lord is not a work of merit that causes God to have mercy on us and save us. It is not something else added to faith which men must do to be saved. It is evidence that faith is real. Faith working in the heart will cause the mouth to speak and confess Christ. See also Matt 10:32,33. We must always be doubtful about the faith of those who are ashamed or afraid to confess Christ. Faith without confession is defective, confession without faith is useless.

For a believer heartily to say "Jesus is

for obtaining righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made for salvation. 11 For the Scripture says: "Whoever believes on him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich toward all who call out to him. 13 For whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

14 How, then, will they call out to him in whom they have not believed? And how will they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? 15 And how will they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

16 But not all of them have obeyed the gospel.

Lord" surely indicates that believer's willingness to receive Jesus as the Lord of his life and obey Him (see 14:9; Matt 7:21; John 3:36; Acts 5:32; Heb 5:9; 1 John 2:3,4). See the note at Acts 22:10. How could a believer even dream of saying or thinking "Jesus is Lord, but not my Lord. He may tell others what to do, but not me"? One of the things people need to repent of when they come to Christ is the sin of trying to be the master of their own life and refusing the Lordship of Christ.

Verse 10 brings to a close much of Paul's teaching in Romans on righteousness. By the inspiration of God's Spirit he has shown the following things:

God is absolutely, perfectly righteous

People have no righteousness of their own (1:18 - 3:19)

They are ignorant of God's way of giving righteousness (v 2)

Because they are ignorant of God's way they try to establish their own righteousness (v 3)

This is utterly impossible (3:20,28; 8:3)

The only way to be righteous before God is to have Christ's righteousness (3:22-26)

Christ's righteousness is obtained only by faith in Him (1:16,17; 4:5; 5:1)

Those whom God counts righteous will begin to live righteous lives (6:17,18; 8:4,13,14).

**10:11** Isa 28:16. Compare Rom 1:16; 5:5.

**10:12** "No difference" - 3:22,23,29,30. There is only one Lord - the Lord Jesus - and see here what His character is like. He delights in blessing people who come to Him. He wants them all to be rich in spiritual things. Compare 5:21; 2 Cor 8:9; 1 Tim 1:13,14.

**10:13** Here Paul is quoting Joel 2:32 where the word translated LORD is Jehovah in Hebrew. Paul is here speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ (v 9). To call on the name of the Lord is to call on Jehovah. This is one more indication that Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See other references to this at Luke 2:11. In this context calling on His name is the same as believing in Him (v 14). See in this verse how God's offer of

For Isaiah says:

"Lord, who has believed our report?"

17 So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes indeed:

Their voice went into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

19 But I say, Did Israel not know? First, Moses says,

I will make you jealous by *those who are* not a nation,  
and I will make you angry by a foolish nation.

20 But Isaiah is very bold and says,

I was found by those who did not

mercy and salvation is open to all. Note on salvation at 1:16.

**10:14** Paul has concluded his presentation of the gospel which saves people and makes them righteous. It is good news indeed, but what good is good news if people do not hear it and believe it? So he emphasizes the necessity of preaching the good news, and of God's sending His servants to do so. See also Acts 1:8; John 20:21; Luke 24:46,47; Mark 16:15; Matt 28:18-20.

**10:15** Isa 52:7. Those feet may be rough, cracked, bruised, and ugly from the many weary miles they have gone preaching the good news. But in God's eyes they are the most beautiful feet on earth because they are going on the most wonderful and important work.

**10:16-21** Here Paul shows clearly that Israel's rejection of Christ and God's rejection of them was their own fault. They could not blame their rejection on some secret decrees of God.

**10:16** This was their great sin and the cause of their rejection. When Christ came they would not receive Him (John 1:11). This was in accordance with their own Scripture - Isa 53:1.

**10:17** Verse 14. See how faith comes to people.

**10:18** Can God excuse the sin of the Jews because they did not hear the gospel? Not at all. They did hear it. Ps 19:4 speaks of the witness of creation. Paul's meaning seems to be that in the years between the death and resurrection of Christ and the time he was writing this letter the gospel had gone forth to the Jews everywhere, as the witness of creation did. See Acts 1:8; 2:36; 13:14-16; 17:1,2,10; 18:5; 19:8.

**10:19-21** Can God ignore the sin of the Jews in rejecting the gospel because they did not understand it? Not at all. Paul quotes three verses from the Old Testament to show that they understood far more than the Gentiles who received the gospel.

**10:19** Deut 32:21. The contrast is between a "foolish" nation (Gentiles) with the Jews who at least had some understanding.

**10:20,21** Isa 65:1,2. The Gentiles did not

seek me;

I was revealed to those who did not  
ask for me.

- 21 But to Israel he says,  
All day long I have stretched out my hands  
to a disobedient and contradicting people.

**11** I say then, Has God cast away his people?  
Absolutely not! For I myself am an  
Israelite, of the descendants of Abraham, of the  
tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away his  
people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what  
the Scripture says about Elijah? *This is* how he  
pleads with God against Israel *and* says,

- 3 Lord, they have killed your prophets  
and torn down your altars,  
and I alone am left,  
and they seek my life.

- 4 But what does the answer of God say  
to him?

I have reserved for myself seven  
thousand men who have not bowed  
the knee to Baal.

- 5 So also at this present time there is a

even have enough understanding to seek  
the true God. Israel did have, yet did not  
find God. And the cause of this was Israel's  
stubborn disobedience. The picture here is  
of God standing before the people holding  
out loving hands, offering them great things,  
patient, compassionate, longing for their  
salvation. Compare Matt 23:37; Jud 2:10-  
19; Hos 11:8. Can we think that such a  
God will predestinate people to hell before  
they are born, because He is sovereign and  
can do so if He wants to?

**11:1-10** Chapters 9, 10, and 11 form a unit.  
The subject is the fall of the nation Israel.  
Paul shows in chapter 10 that their fall was  
their own fault, not God's. In chapter 11 he  
shows that in spite of their unbelief and  
hardness of heart, God still has a gracious  
purpose toward them and will eventually  
bring the nation back to Himself.

This whole chapter is an answer to the  
question asked in this first verse – "has God  
cast away his people?" Paul says "no." He,  
a Jew, was evidence that God had not. He  
might have said also that all the original  
apostles and those who made up the first  
church in Jerusalem were Jews. And many  
other churches throughout the Roman  
Empire had believing Jews as members,  
even though the nation as a whole was  
hardened and disobedient. There were  
some who believed and obeyed God. The  
situation was similar to that in Elijah's day  
(more than 850 years before Christ). See  
1 Kings 19:14-18.

**11:5** On the basis of grace alone God chose  
those who believed from the whole nation.  
His choice had nothing to do with their merit  
and worthiness or the lack of them – 3:24.

remnant according to the choice of grace. 6 And if  
by grace, then *it is* no longer by works. Otherwise  
grace would no longer be grace. But if *it is* by  
works, then it is no longer *by* grace. Otherwise  
work would no longer be work.

7 What then? Israel did not obtain what it  
sought, but the chosen *ones* obtained it. And the  
rest were blinded. 8 As it is written,

God has given them a spirit of apathy,  
eyes so that they would not see,  
and ears so that that would not,  
to this day.

- 9 And David says,  
Let their table become a snare and a  
trap and a stumbling block  
and a retribution to them.

- 10 Let their eyes be darkened so they cannot  
see,  
and permanently bend down their backs.

11 I say then, Have they stumbled *so* that  
they should *utterly* fall? Absolutely not! *Rather*,  
through their failure salvation *has come* to the  
Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. 12 Now if  
their failure *means* riches for the world, and their

**11:6** See 4:5.

**11:7** See 9:30-32. Many in Israel were  
"blinded." First, they refused the light God gave.  
Then God punished them by making it so that  
they would not see the light. See Isa 6:9,10.

**11:8** Deut 29:4; Isa 29:10. Compare Isa  
6:9,10 and Matt 13:13-15.

**11:9,10** Ps 69:22,23.

**11:11** From here to v 32 Paul speaks of the  
large part of the nation Israel which was  
hardened and stumbled and fell (9:32,33).  
Has the nation fallen forever with no hope  
of recovery? Will it rise no more? Is God  
finished with Israel as a people now that He  
is working in and with the Church of the New  
Testament? Paul answers clearly – God is  
not finished with the nation Israel. He still  
has purposes regarding it and will bring it  
back to Himself (compare Acts 1:6,7). He  
begins by saying that God had a good  
purpose even in their fall. They were dis-  
obedient and hardened and so they rejected  
and crucified God's Son. But this all resulted  
in good for the world as a whole (Acts 2:22-  
24). God worked through their evil actions  
to provide the gospel to everyone. And when  
they later rejected the gospel God turned to  
other nations, here called "Gentiles"  
(compare 1:16; Acts 13:46; Matt 21:42,43).

**11:12** Paul's logic is plain. Through their  
sin the riches of the Gospel have come to  
the whole world, so their "fullness" will surely  
mean greater riches. Paul does not say "if"  
they receive fullness it will mean greater  
riches. He simply states the fact of their  
future fullness. Their "fullness" means that  
they as a nation will fully turn to God and  
God will fully fulfill His promises to them  
(Isa 2:1-5; 11:1-9; Jer 23:5-8;

loss *means* riches for the Gentiles, how much greater *riches* their fulness *will bring*!

13 For I am speaking to you Gentiles. Since I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I honour my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are of my flesh and blood*, and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection *means* reconciliation for the world, what *will their* reception *mean* but life from the dead? 16 For if *what is offered as* firstfruits is holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches.

17 And if some of the branches have been broken off, and you, being *from* a wild olive tree, have been grafted in among *the branches*, and share with them in the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you boast *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you. 19 You will say then, The branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. 20 Well *yes, but* because of

Ezek 37:21-28; Zech 14:9,16,21).

On "riches" see 2:4; 10:12; 2 Cor 8,9; Eph 1:7,18; 2:7; 3:8,16; Phil 4:19; Col 1:27. **11:13** Gal 2:7.

**11:14** Verse 11; 10:1,19. "People" – literally "flesh", as we would say "flesh and blood."

**11:15** Verse 12. Paul speaks of the time when God will accept the nation as a whole. That will be "life from the dead". Some scholars think this refers to the literal resurrection of the dead (John 5:28,29). Others think it means that the conversion of Israel will result in a time of wonderful spiritual life and blessing to the whole world (see 8:20-23; Acts 3:21; Matt 19:28). Perhaps it means both.

**11:16** "Firstfruit" – Num 15:17-21. Here "firstfruit" means either God's chosen few among the Jews who had accepted Christ (v 5), or the very first of the nation – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or even Christ Himself (though this is not so likely). The point Paul makes is the same in either case – namely, the whole nation of Israel even in their fallen, unbelieving condition is still "holy." Holy here means set apart for God's good purpose. See note at Lev 20:7,8.

The "root" seems more definitely to refer to Abraham, Israel and Jacob, or perhaps to Abraham alone (4:1). The nation sprung from them was God's special people and holy nation (Deut 7:6; 14:2). Paul says it has not ceased to be so (v 29).

**11:17-24** The "olive tree" before the Jews rejected Christ was the nation Israel, grown out of the "root" Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "Some" branches of the nation (in fact, most of the nation) were broken off because of unbelief (vs 17,20). In their place Gentile Christians have been "grafted in" (v 17,19; Matt 21:43). Gentiles were like a "wild" olive tree (v 24). By nature they had no connection with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or with the "olive tree" that sprung from

unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but have fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he may not spare you either.

22 See, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; severity on those who failed, but goodness toward you, if you continue in *his* goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And they, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in also. For God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut from an olive tree which is wild by nature, and, contrary to nature, were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more *easily* will these, the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brethren, so that you may not be wise in your own opinion: Partial blindness has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles comes in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved. As it is written,

them. Now through Christ they have been brought into a relationship with Abraham (grafted into the "cultivated" tree – v 24).

Paul gives a warning to the Gentile Christians (v 13). They must not boast against fallen Israel (v 18), must fear rather than be arrogant (v 20). If God broke off Israelite branches and grafted in Gentile ones, He can also break off Gentile ones and graft in Israelite ones.

Does this "breaking off" suggest that saved individuals may loose their salvation? No. That is not Paul's subject at all. The "olive tree" is not the spiritual body of Christ. In the Old Testament and in Christ's days on earth the olive tree was the whole nation of Israel including both believers and unbelievers. Only unbelievers were broken off, and the bulk of the nation remains to this day in that condition. God has laid them aside for this age, grafted Gentiles into His tree and works through them to fulfill His purposes in the earth. But Gentile churches may fall into arrogance and unbelief just as the Jews did. Paul says they should be "afraid", for if they follow the way of fallen Israel God will treat them as He did fallen Israel (vs 21,22). And if Israel turns in faith to Christ they will be grafted back into their own olive tree (v 24. See note at Acts 1:6).

**11:25** Paul did not want Gentile Christians to be ignorant or conceited. He knew they could become so if they persuaded themselves that God is finished with Israel and that all His promises made to Israel now belong to the Church of the New Testament. Paul tries to prevent this by making some very clear statements about Israel. He calls this teaching a "mystery" – something men cannot know unless God reveals it to them. Israel is "blinded" only "until the fullness (of full number) of Gentiles has come in." Paul implies that then this blindness of heart and mind will be taken away.

**11:26,27** "All Israel" – it seems clear that



The Deliverer will come out of Zion,  
and will turn ungodliness away from Jacob.

27 For this *is* my covenant with them,  
when I take away their sins.

28 Concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes, but concerning the choice of God, *they are* loved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and calling of God *are not* to be withdrawn. 30 For *just* as you in time past were not obedient to God, yet now have obtained mercy because of their disobedience, 31 even so now *these* also have been disobedient, so that through the mercy *shown* to you they may also obtain mercy. 32 For

Paul means the nation as a whole in existence when the full number of the Gentiles has come in. (This time has still not come.) For proof of this statement Paul points to Isa 59:20,21; 27:9. "Zion" means Jerusalem. "Jacob" means the people of Israel. "Covenant" means the new covenant God promised He would make with Israel - Jer 31:31-34.

**11:28** "Enemies" - unbelieving Jews did all they could to fight the preaching of the gospel and prevent Gentiles coming to Christ (1 Thess 2:14-16).

"They are loved" - in spite of its unbelief and evil behavior God still loves the nation Israel. This is because of the "fathers" (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob).

**11:29** Compare Mal 3:6. Though God has laid aside Israel during this age, He has not changed His mind about that people. He still counts them His nation. Some of His gifts to them are seen in 9:4,5.

**11:30,31** The Gentile believers were once unbelieving and lost, just as unbelieving Jews are now. But as God had mercy on the Gentiles so will He have mercy on His own fallen nation.

**11:32** Compare Gal 3:23,24. God in just judgment gave the Gentiles up to the wickedness of their own hearts (1:24-32). And God punished the Jews by hardening them, and they in their disobedient condition crucified His Son (11:7,8). All were locked up in sin and disobedience. In this way He revealed that His mercy was the only hope for anyone, Jew or Gentile. And we see in this verse that all of God's mysterious dealings with the nation was with a loving, gracious purpose in mind - to show mercy to all. He is not the kind of God who delights to harden and punish men. Mercy is His delight (Micah 7:18,19; Lam 3:31-33; etc).

But we should not misunderstand this verse. The Bible does not teach that all individuals will finally be saved. Those who reject Christ and die in their sins will be lost forever (2:5,6; 6:23; John 3:36; Rev 21:8). "Mercy on all" here may mean all nations whether Jew or Gentile. In showing mercy God does not distinguish between them, and the salvation of both Gentiles and Jews is intimately connected in the plan of God.

**11:33-36** Paul has concluded his

God has confined them all in disobedience, so that he might have mercy on all.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor? 35 Or who has first given to him, that it should be repaid to *the giver*? 36 For of him and through him and to him *are* all things; to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

**12** Therefore, brethren, because of the mercies of God, I plead with you to present

presentation of the meaning of the gospel and God's dealings with the Jews and the Gentiles. He well knows he has not explained everything. There are mysteries beyond his understanding, and depths in God's wisdom no human mind can fathom. So now he lets God be God, and praises Him.

**11:33** The more we learn God's Word and understand the revelation of Himself He has given, the more we will see that He is infinitely above us in wisdom as in everything else. He knows all that He is doing in the world. We can know only the little He has revealed. Instead of criticizing His ways and complaining about His dealings with us and others (as many do), we must learn to trust and praise Him and to submit our puny minds to His eternal wisdom. Compare Job 40:3-5; 42:1-6.

**11:34** Isa 40:13. See the context of this quotation (Isa 40:12-26). It gives us a beautiful picture of the greatness of God. In creation and in the administration of the world God has not needed the advice of any man.

**11:35** Job 41:11. God is not a debtor to men. He does not owe salvation or anything else to anyone. His dealings with men are all on the basis of grace and mercy. Because all are disobedient to Him He could justly withhold all the necessities of life from all men and send them into hell.

**11:36** "Of Him" - God is the Creator.

"Through Him" - God sustains and rules the world.

"To Him" - all things in the world serve God's purposes. They exist for Him, not for themselves. Let us all learn with Paul to ascribe all glory to Him, for He alone is worthy of any.

**12:1** Paul has concluded the doctrinal part of this letter. He has shown that all are sinners and deserve nothing but God's anger, and he has revealed something of the greatness of God's mercy. From here on to the end of this letter he writes of the practical daily life that believers should live because God has been merciful to them. What good is all the wonderful truth revealed in chapters 1-11 to those who read it but remain unchanged and disobedient to it?

The first thing we must all do, of course, is to give ourselves completely to God. In Old Testament days priests in Israel offered animal sacrifices which were slain. Now believers - the priests of the New



your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which* is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. 3 For by the grace given to me, I say to everyone who is among you, *one* should not think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but should think soberly, according to the measure of faith God has distributed to each one.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same function, 5 so we, *though* many, are one body in Christ, and each one a member belonging to every other. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace

that is given to us, if *the gift is* prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; 7 or if it is serving, *let him be active* in serving; or he who teaches, *let him be active* in teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, *let him exhort*; he who gives, *let him do it* generously; he who leads, *let him do it* with diligence; he who shows mercy, *let him do it* cheerfully.

9 *Let* love be without hypocrisy. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 *Be* devoted to one another in brotherly love, in *the matter of* honour put others above *yourself*. 11 *Do not be* backward in zeal, *but be* fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, persevering in prayer, 13 distributing to the needs

Testament (Rev 1:6; 1 Pet 2:5,9; Heb 13:15,16) – must offer a living sacrifice, their own bodies for God to use for His glory (6:13,19; 1 Cor 6:13,19,20). This is the sort of worship God wants, not mere words. This kind of sacrifice is “holy” and “acceptable” to Him.

**12:2** “World” – the New Testament has much to say about the world of men.

The world does not know God (John 1:10)  
It loves spiritual darkness (John 3:19)

It hates Christ and His followers (John 7:7; 15:19)

Its “ruler” and “god” is Satan (John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4)

It cannot receive God’s Spirit (John 14:17)  
Its wisdom is like foolishness (1 Cor 1:20; 3:19)

It is only temporary (1 Cor 7:31; 2 Cor 4:18)  
It is without God and without hope (Eph 2:12)

Its friendship is enmity with God (James 4:4)

It is corrupt (1 Pet 1:4)  
It is filled with pride and lust (1 John 2:15-17)

It is in wickedness (1 John 5:19)

No wonder Paul tells believers not to be “conformed” to it. There are powerful forces in the world that mold its people and cause them to behave in evil ways.

Believers are to be “transformed” into the likeness of Christ. Transformation is an inner work of God’s Spirit. Believers are to do more than outwardly avoid the ways of the world – their inner life also is to be altogether different. This takes place by the “renewing” of their minds (Eph 4:22,23). Thoughts are extremely important. To a very large extent they will govern how believers behave.

The only way to live a transformed life is to keep our thoughts under control and have our minds filled with God’s truth (8:5,6; 2 Cor 10:5; Col 3:16; Ps 1:1-3; Phil 2:5; 4:8; Heb 8:10). We are to love God with all our mind (Matt 22:37). This is the “renewal” we need. Those who will not give themselves to God, and who do not cooperate with God’s Spirit in the work of inner transformation, will not be able to find out what God’s will is for them. If

we wish to know and follow that perfect will, we must do what He tells us here.

**12:3** 2 Cor 10:12; Gal 6:3. Paul begins here to speak of the transformed lives believers should live. Notice that he begins with their minds, specifically with their thoughts about themselves. Observe, too, that God may give more faith to some than to others (1 Cor 12:9).

**12:4-8** Believers are united by God’s Spirit to form one spiritual “body.” See John 17:21-23; 1 Cor 12:12,13; Eph 4:15,16; 5:23. In this spiritual body each believer belongs to all the others (v 5), and God has given each person one or more talents (“gifts”) or abilities so that he or she can be of use to others in the body. Each person should find out what his ability is and use it for God’s glory and for the good of others. See 1 Cor 12:7-11,27-31; Eph 4:11-13.

**12:6** “Prophecy” – notes at Num 11:25; 1 Cor 12:10,28.

**12:9-21** Here is a beautiful picture of the transformed life believers should live. It means showing love toward fellow believers (vs 9,10,13,15,16), toward Christ (vs 11,12), and toward enemies (vs 14,19-21).

**12:9** “Hypocrisy” – it is all too possible to pretend to love others because of some supposed benefit. Believers must not act so.

“Hate” – if we love God as we should, we will learn to hate all that is opposed to God – Ps 97:10. We should love people as Christ did, but hate the evil in them (and in ourselves).

**12:10** John 13:34; 15:12,17.

**12:11** 1 Cor 15:58; Titus 2:14. If we love God as we ought we will be zealous in His service. In fact, our love for Him will be revealed by what we do for His sake, not by what we say. Compare John 2:17.

**12:12** See 5:2-5; Luke 18:1; Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17.

**12:13** Love must be practical, and sometimes it will be costly – 1 John 3:16-18; Matt 25:34-40.

“Distributing” – sharing with others what one has, not merely distributing what others may give. See note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

“Hospitality” – how few show such

of the saints, eager to show hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 *Be* harmonious in your thoughts toward one another. Do not think highly *of yourself*, but associate with men in low positions. Do not think you are a wise one.

17 Do not pay back to anyone evil for evil. Take thought for what is excellent in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with everyone. 19 Dear *friends*, do not take revenge, but leave room for *God's* wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." 20 Therefore, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him *something* to drink. For in doing this you will heap coals of fire on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**13** Every person should be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no

eagerness!

**12:14** Matt 5:43-48; 1 Pet 2:21-23.

**12:15** 1 Cor 12:25-27; Gal 6:2. Believers are not to be hard, cold and selfish but must share in the joys and sorrows of others.

**12:16** Acts 4:32; Eph 4:2,3. Pride, conceit, and exalting oneself over others disturb the harmony and unity of believers. In Christ those in low positions and in high places are all one and should act like it – Acts 6:1; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28. Pride and disunity because of caste, or resulting from pride of positions in society or in the church are abominable to God.

**12:17,18** Verse 21; Matt 5:38-41. Believers represent Christ on earth. Good behavior will bring honor to Him, bad behavior will cause Him to be dishonored. Compare 2:24; 1 Pet 2:9; Heb 12:14.

**12:19** Deut 32:35. The desire for revenge is a source of great trouble for individuals, families and nations. It must have no place in the hearts of Christ's people. Notes at Matt 5:38-44; 2 Thess 1:6-9; Ps 94:1; Num 31:1-3; Nahum 1:2,7.

**12:20** Prov 25:21,22; Luke 6:27,28; 1 Pet 2:21-23. To hurt those who hurt us is to try to overcome evil with evil. It is allowing the evil acts of others to cause us to disobey God's plain orders and act in an evil way.

**13:1-7** Believers in Christ have been brought into God's kingdom. They owe their primary loyalty to the King of kings Jesus Christ. But they are still in the world and in one or another of man's kingdoms. These verses show how they are to behave toward government authorities.

**13:1** This does not mean that all rulers and government officials are good men who obey God. (When Paul wrote these words one of the worst emperors the Romans – or any nation – ever had, Nero, was in power.) But

authority except from God; the authorities that exist have been determined by God. 2 Therefore, whoever resists the authority is resisting what God has arranged, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Do you want to be without fear of the authority? Do what is good, and you will receive praise from him. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who does evil. 5 Therefore *you* need to be subject *to the authorities*, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience.

6 For this reason you also pay taxes; for they are God's ministers, attending continually to this very thing. 7 Therefore, give to all their due; tax to whom tax *is due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

8 Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another. For he who loves others has fulfilled

in spite of their errors, sins, failures, and corruption, governments are appointed by God (Ps 75:2-7; Dan 4:34-35). Sometimes God will permit evil rulers to gain power as a punishment to a people for their sins. But even a bad government is better than no government at all. Anarchy – a complete breakdown of government – is the worst state a country can come to, for then there is no governing power to restrain any evil.

It is the duty of Christians to obey their government because God has appointed it (vs 2,5,7). There is one exception to this rule – if the laws of a country or the commands of certain officials are contrary to the Word of God, believers should disobey men and obey God. See Acts 4:18-20; 5:28,29. **13:4** "God's minister" – this does not mean that rulers are consciously or willingly doing service to God (though some of course may do so). They are simply instruments in God's hands in His rule over the earth.

**13:6,7** Matt 22:21; 1 Pet 2:17. If a believer is dishonest in the matter of paying taxes, etc, he is sinning against God.

**13:8** Debt is something to be avoided. It is a trap that catches the careless. It can bring much bondage and misery. The custom of going into debt for special occasions like marriages, etc, or to buy unnecessary things, is surely wrong for believers. The rule of life for believers should be contentment with what they have (Phil 4:12; 1 Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5), and faith that God will supply all they need (Matt 6:33; Phil 4:19). People who will not pay their debts, when they are able to pay, are no better than thieves – they take and use what does not belong to them. But there is one debt all believers have and which they must make continued efforts to pay – the duty of loving one another (12:9,10; John 13:34).

the Law. 9 For the *commandments*, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet, and any other commandment *there may be*, are summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

10 Love does no harm to a neighbour, so love *is* the fulfilling of the Law.

11 And *do* that, knowing the *present* time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk decently, as in the daylight, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and unbridled lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfil its* cravings.

**14** Receive the one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to dispute about doubtful matters.

**13:9** Exodus chapter 20; Lev 19:18.

**13:11-14** Spiritually speaking, the world is a dark place (John 3:19,20), but believers are children of the light (Matt 5:14; John 12:36; Eph 5:8). Here is how God wants them to behave.

**13:11,12** Neither Paul, nor any other apostle, knew the day of Christ's second coming. He was eagerly looking forward to it and he wanted all believers to have the same expectant attitude he had. The Holy Spirit inspired him to use language suitable for every generation of believers. Compare Matt 24:36,42,44.

"Salvation" (v 11) here means the completion of the salvation believers already have. Compare 8:23; 1 Pet 1:9.

"Armour of light" – this means that truth when applied to the lives of believers acts as a protection against sin and Satan. Compare Eph 6:11-17. To put it on is to understand it and make use of it as Christ Himself did in Matt 4:1-11.

**13:13** 1 Cor 6:9-11; Eph 5:3-6; Col 3:5-8.

**13:14** The Lord Jesus is in believers (8:9; 2 Cor 13:5).

"Put on" here speaks of the outward life. It means that the behavior of believers should be in accordance with the ways of Christ who is in them. Compare Eph 4:22-24. We must apply His truth to our behavior. Observe that Paul recognizes that the sinful nature with its desires is still in believers. Compare 7:18; 8:13; Gal 5:16,17. See the importance of the thoughts in getting victory over the sinful nature. See 8:5; 12:2.

**14:1** Here is the general principle Paul teaches. In vs 2-6 he gives two examples of matters which believers may disagree about. His purpose is to show that Christians are to be helpers of each other, not judges (Matt 7:1-5). Each believer should

2 For one believes that he may eat everything; another, who is weak *in the faith*, eats *only* vegetables. 3 The one who eats *everything* should not look down on him who does not eat, and the one who does not eat should not judge the one who eats, for God has received him. 4 Who are you who judges another person's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will surely be caused to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

5 One man thinks one day is above another, someone else thinks every day *is the same*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He who regards a day *as special*, regards it *so* to the Lord, and he who does not regard a day *as special*, does not regard *it so* to the Lord. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, does not eat to the Lord, and gives God thanks. 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

accept all other believers who are trying to live for Christ (but see also 1 Cor 5:9-13; 2 Thess 3:6).

Believers must judge evil behavior, but not condemn fellow believers who disagree with them about comparatively unimportant matters. Separation from other believers over such matters is utterly wrong (12:16; Eph 4:3). Of course there are fundamental truths of the faith which must be preached and defended even at the cost of separation from other Christians who reject them. But Paul is not speaking of these matters here in this chapter.

**14:2** Believers in this age of grace may eat anything. They are not under any kind of dietary laws (v 14; Mark 7:18,19; Acts 10:9-16; 1 Tim 4:3-5). But some believers have not yet understood this, and think they must not eat certain foods. They may base this opinion on the dietary laws of the Old Testament (Leviticus chapter 11) which are no longer in force.

**14:3,4** Here is an important principle. Believers must accept and love one another. Those who have more understanding must not think they are superior to others, and those whose personal rules are being broken should not condemn those who break them. All are servants of the Lord Jesus, and only He has the right to judge them. Believers must not reject any of those whom God has accepted.

**14:5,6** Some Jewish believers thought they should continue to keep the Sabbaths and other special days God appointed in the Old Testament for the nation of Israel. Other believers realized that such rules were not binding on Christians. The principle of vs 3,4 applies to this also.

"Thanks" – see Matt 14:19.

**14:7-12** Each believer is a servant of God and is answerable to God alone. He belongs

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living. 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you put your brother down? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written,

As I live, says the Lord,  
every knee will bow to me,  
and every tongue will confess to God.

12 So then every one of us will give an account of himself to God.

13 Therefore, let us no longer judge one another, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an obstacle in *his* brother's way.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that no *food* is unclean in itself. But to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15 But if your brother is grieved by the food *you eat*, then you are not behaving in a loving way. With your food do not ruin one for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be spoken of *as* evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God, and

to the Lord (vs 7,8; 1 Cor 6:19,20). Each one must walk in the light he has here on earth and each must stand before the judge in heaven (vs 10,12; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12). No one else has any right to control the lives of believers or condemn them.

**14:9** See 10:9; Acts 2:32-36; Phil 2:8-11. Notes on "Lord" at 10:9,10,13; Matt 22:41-45; Luke 2:11.

**14:11** Isa 49:18; 45:23.

**14:13-21** These verses give another very important principle. Each believer must learn to live for the good of others and not to please himself. See 15:1-3; 1 Cor 10:24,33; 9:19-23; 8:9-12. Eating this thing or that, or refusing to eat it, is a small matter in itself. But if it grieves or offends someone else it is no longer a small matter. We must not insist on doing what we want regardless of the effect it has on other believers. Christ died for those believers. Don't we care enough about them to change any habit which strikes a blow at their faith?

The important thing in God's kingdom is not being able to eat or drink what one wants, or having personal freedom in all matters of dispute (v 1). It is to act in a way that promotes the basic elements of God's kingdom – righteousness, peace and joy (v 17). Doing as we please will promote none of these. See Paul's attitude in 1 Cor 8:13. A good rule to follow is 1 Cor 10:31.

In Romans this is the only time Paul uses the words "kingdom of God." Note on this kingdom at Matt 4:17.

**14:15** Note at 1 Cor 8:11.

**14:22,23** Keeping the conscience clear and

approved by men.

19 Therefore, let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things with which we can build one another up. 20 For food do not demolish the work of God. All *food is* indeed clean, but *it is* evil for that man who eats *giving* offense. 21 It is good not to eat flesh, or to drink wine, or *to do anything* that causes your brother to stumble or be offended or be made weak.

22 Do you have a belief *about something*? Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 And he who *eats with* doubt is condemned if he eats, because he *does* not *eat* from faith. For whatever *is* not of faith is sin.

**15** We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to build *him* up. 3 For even Christ did not please himself, but, as it is written, The insults of those who insulted you fell on me.

4 For whatever things were written previously were written for our instruction, so that we, through patient endurance and *the* encouragement of the Scriptures, might have hope.

free from accusations of guilt is very important. If we permit ourselves to do something against the warnings of conscience, we sin and make ourselves unclean. If we cannot do something with the assurance that it is all right we must not do it. Compare 1 Tim 1:19. Note on conscience at Acts 23:1.

To sum up this chapter: we must live for the Lord and receive His judgments on our actions (vs 8,10,12). Therefore our great aim should be to please Him. We must live on earth with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Therefore our chief purpose toward them all must be to build them up in the faith and to do nothing that might unnecessarily offend any of them (vs 15,19,21). And we must live with ourselves. Therefore let us keep ourselves from being condemned by our own hearts and consciences. **15:1,2** See 14:1,19-21; 1 Cor 12:25; Gal 6:1,2. Compare Luke 9:23. Christ did not call us to please and pamper self, but to put self to death.

**15:3** Ps 69:9; John 8:29. Because Christ represented God the Father on earth He had to endure all the world's rejection, insults, and scorn. If He had tried to please Himself He could have avoided all that. But His one aim in life was to please God no matter what happened. He is our example.

**15:4** There are many fine examples in the Old Testament ("the Scriptures") of people who did not please themselves but lived for God and others. We must learn from them. Observe that "everything" in the OT is for our instruction. If we neglect any part of it we are keeping ourselves in ignorance of

5 Now the God of patience and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind toward one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6 that you may, with one mind *and* one mouth, glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ received us, to the glory of God. 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ became a servant to the circumcised for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, 9 and *to cause* the Gentiles to glorify God for *his* mercy. As it is written,

For this cause I will confess you among  
the Gentiles,  
and sing to your name.

10 And again he says,  
Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again,  
Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;  
and laud him, all you people.

12 And again, Isaiah says,  
There will be a root of Jesse,

important truth. And we will miss things which will encourage us and help us to endure all we as believers have to face in this world. See also 2 Tim 3:16,17.

"Encouragement" – the Greek word here also means "comfort."

**15:5,6** "Of the same mind" – 12:16; 14:19; Eph 4:3.

"Glorify" – this should be the one great aim of every believer in everything they do (1 Cor 10:31).

**15:7** See 14:1,3.

**15:8** "Servant" – see Matt 15:24; 20:28; Luke 22:27; Phil 2:7; Isa 42:1. Christ as a servant for the Jews did not abolish the promises God made to them in the Old Testament. He confirmed them. See 9:4,5; 11:26,27. To confirm them means to make their fulfillment sure. By His death and resurrection Christ laid the foundation for the fulfillment of all God's promises.

**15:9** But all along Christ had the Gentiles also in mind. Paul shows this by referring to verses in the Old Testament. This first one is Ps 18:49. The picture is Christ praising God among Gentile peoples.

**15:10** Deut 32:43. Gentiles join in happy fellowship with Jews ("His people").

**15:11** Ps 117:1.

**15:12** Isa 11:10.

**15:13** The "God of hope" means the God who inspires hope in His people and fulfills it. The hope is of final salvation (5:2-5; 8:23-25). It is produced by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. Peace and joy are also produced by God's Spirit (Gal 5:22). They are natural elements of God's kingdom (14:17). They were both promised by Christ to His obedient disciples (John 14:27; 15:11). God wants believers to be filled with them. Only then will they behave towards others as they

and he who will rise to reign over  
the Gentiles.

In him the Gentiles will trust.

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may overflow with hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

14 And I myself am persuaded about you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, *and* able to instruct one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written very boldly to you on some points, as a reminder to you, because of the grace that is given to me by God, 16 that I should be a servant of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore I have reason to glory in Jesus Christ in the things of God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not done through me to make the Gentiles obedient. *But* by word and deed, 19 through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, I

ought, and praise God and live for His glory as they ought. Believers should learn to reject anything which robs them of their peace and joy or dims their hope.

**15:14** Goodness is another fruit of God's Spirit (Gal 5:22). Ability to instruct each other is what all believers should have (Heb 5:11-14; 1 Thess 5:14).

**15:15** See 1:8. Compare 2 Pet 1:12; 3:1; Jude 5; 2 Tim 2:14. It is very easy for spiritual truth to slip away and be forgotten. We all need constant reminders.

**15:16** Acts 22:21; Gal 2:7; Eph 3:8. Paul's great task was proclaiming the gospel (1:1).

"Offering up" – this was a duty of priests. Paul was not suggesting that he was a priest in contrast to ordinary believers (all believers are priests – see 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; Heb 10:19-22). Paul did not offer any sacrifices or offerings for the Gentiles. The Gentiles themselves were the "offering." Those who believed the gospel became an acceptable offering to God because they were sanctified by the Holy Spirit (compare 12:1). This means they were set apart by Him to be among the people of God. Notes on sanctification at John 17:17-19.

**15:17,18** Paul did not glory (boast) in himself. His service was in Christ and his rejoicing was in Christ. He did not think it was by his ability or power that his work was accomplished. He used different language when speaking about himself – 7:18; Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:15.

**15:19** Acts 14:8,9; 16:18,25,26; 19:11,12; 2 Cor 12:11,12. From Jerusalem to Illyricum (an area northwest of Greece and Macedonia) was a very large region, including Syria, central and western Turkey, Greece and Macedonia.



have fully preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem *all the way* around to Illyricum. 20 And I have made it my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not named, so that I would not be building upon another man's foundation, 21 but as it is written,

To whom he was not spoken of,  
they will see,  
and those who have not heard will  
understand.

22 For this reason also I have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now, having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24 when I take my journey to Spain, I will come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be sent on my way there by you, if first I can enjoy your *company* for a while.

25 But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. 26 For it has pleased those of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints who are at

Jerusalem. 27 It has pleased them indeed, and they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. 28 Therefore when I have accomplished this, and have made certain that they *get* this fruit, I will go to Spain by *way of* you. 29 And I am sure that when I come to you, I will come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now I plead with you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me, 31 *so* that I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be accepted by the saints, 32 that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

**16** I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea,

**15:20,21** Here was the principle which guided Paul in his service. The quotation is from Isa 52:15. Paul was usually traveling, wanting to reach the unreached, desiring to give all men in his generation an opportunity to hear Christ's gospel. In this he is an example to all of us. Compare Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47; Acts 1:8. **15:22,23** See 1:10-13. He wanted to finish his work in that large region before moving on to new areas.

**15:24** Spain is a country across the sea to the west of Italy. Here and v 28 are the only places the Bible refers to it by name. Paul must now have been nearing 60 years of age, but he was looking for new fields of service. The assistance Paul mentions in this verse was not financial. Asking for money for himself and his work was not his way. He was referring to the custom of sending one or more brothers at least part way on a journey with someone traveling. See Acts 15:3; 20:38; 21:5; 1 Cor 16:6,11; 2 Cor 1:16.

**15:25-27** 2 Cor 8:1-5. This principle applies now as well. It is always the duty of those who have received spiritual benefits to share their material things with those who were the channels of those spiritual benefits. See 1 Cor 9:7-14.

**15:28** "Fruit" - here means financial assistance. Neither the Bible nor history tells us whether Paul ever got to Spain.

**15:29** Paul did get to Rome - as a prisoner of the Roman government (Acts 28:16). But his faith here was fulfilled. The full measure of the blessing of Christ to him did not mean ease, luxury, abundance of possessions, or a full purse. It meant peace and joy in the heart and God's power to serve and proclaim the gospel. Outward circumstances meant little to that man of God.

See Phil 4:11-13; 2 Cor 12:9,10. He is an example to us all.

**15:30** Paul well knew the value of the prayers of believers for him - 2 Cor 1:11; Eph 6:19,20; Phil 1:19; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1; Philemon 22. "Love of the Spirit" probably means the love the Holy Spirit has for believers. This is an indication of His personality (note at John 14:16,17).

"Strive" - 1 Cor 9:25,26; Eph 6:12; Col 1:29. Everyone who would serve Christ and live a holy life will know something of this struggle.

**15:31,32** From Acts 21:27 to the end of Acts we have the story of how Paul was delivered from unbelievers in Judea and how he arrived in Rome with joy. Did not the prayers of these believers in Rome have something to do with it? Compare Jam 5:16.

**15:33** "God of peace" - 16:20; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20. Compare Rom 15:13. God is the author of peace, the giver of peace.

**16:1-16** All parts of the Bible were given by inspiration of God, and there are good lessons to be learned in every part of it. In these verses we see Paul's love and concern (and so the Lord's love and concern) for the believers in Rome. We see things he (and the Lord) approved in them, and so have good examples for our own life and service. Seeing this record we can also remember the greater and more complete record written down in heaven about us all (Heb 12:23; Mal 3:16; Rev 20:12; Dan 7:10; Luke 10:20; Phil 4:3).

**16:1,2** "Sister" here refers to spiritual relationship, not blood relationship.

"Servant" - this Greek word could be translated "deaconsess." Phoebe held some position of responsibility in the church. Cenchrea was a seaport about seven miles



2 that you receive her in the Lord, as is worthy of saints, and that you assist her in whatever business she has need of you. For she has been a helper of many, and of myself also.

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus, 4 who have risked their necks for my life. Not only I give thanks to them, but also all the Gentile churches.

5 Likewise greet the church that meets in their house. Greet my dear Epänetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.

6 Greet Mary, who laboured much for us.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who were also in Christ before me.

8 Greet Amplias, *who is* dear to me in the Lord.

9 Greet Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys *who is* dear to me.

10 Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

11 Greet Herodion, my relative. Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Greet dear Persis, who has laboured much in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his from Corinth. It is probable that she took Paul's letter with her to Rome.

**16:3** Acts 18:2,18,26; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19.

**16:4** See 5:7; 1 John 3:16. They did not merely teach God's Word, they practiced it.

**16:5** In those early days meetings for fellowship and teaching were often held in homes.

**16:6** Mary was a very common name then as now. We know nothing about this Mary.

**16:7** Paul was several times in prison (2 Cor 11:23). We do not know which time he refers to here.

"Apostles" – the word means those sent on a mission. These two servants of God were not among the twelve chief apostles of Christ, but were evidently important leaders of the church.

**16:10** "Approved in Christ" – here is a great commendation for any believer, any servant of God. Compare 1 Cor 9:27; 2 Tim 2:15.

**16:12** Some believers laboured for the Lord; others "laboured much" (v 6). Paul stated things as they were. And this will be true in the day we stand before God. He will not say anything about us that is not true or reward us for what we have not done – 2:6; 1 Cor 3:12-15. See also Luke 19:12-26.

**16:13** "Mother" – Mark 10:29,30.

**16:16** In those days a kiss on the cheek was a common way of greeting, of showing respect (Luke 7:45). A "holy" kiss means there was to be no suggestion of impurity about it, only a recognition and honoring of fellow believers in Christ.

**16:17** Paul warned believers about false

mother and mine.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them.

15 Greet Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

17 Now I plead with you, brethren, look out for those who cause divisions and hindrances contrary to the teaching you have learned, and avoid them.

18 For such people do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own stomach, and by flattery and fine speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19 For your obedience has become known to everyone. So I am happy about you, but I want you to be wise concerning what is good, and simple concerning evil.

20 And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

21 Timotheus, my fellow worker, and Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives, greet you.

22 I Tertius, who wrote *down this* epistle, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, my host, and *the host* of the whole

teachers in many of his letters (2 Cor 11:13-15; Gal 1:6-8; Col 2:8,18; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:1-8; 4:2-4). See also Matt 7:15,16; 24:4,5,24; Acts 20:29-31; 2 Pet 2:1,2; 1 John 2:18,19; Jude 4. Truth is God's instrument to save people and to establish and build up believers. Falsehood is Satan's way of trying to destroy people (John 8:44). Satan uses false teachers to introduce false doctrines into churches. We can recognize false teachers by the results of their teaching (Matt 7:20). One result will be "divisions." Another will be that obstacles in the way of following the truth will be created, and these obstacles will be contrary to God's revealed truth.

When anyone tries to bring false teaching into the church believers must do one thing only – "avoid them." They must not accept them, have fellowship with them, or permit them to teach.

**16:18** If they are teaching contrary to God's Word, it is plain they cannot be true servants of Christ. So they are serving their own desires (and Satan who stands behind them – 2 Cor 11:14,15). See Phil 3:18,19; Jude 13,14. Inwardly they are like demons, but outwardly are full of smooth talk and flattery.

**16:19** See 1:8; 6:17; 15:14.

**16:20** "God of peace" – 15:33. Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44; etc. The mention of Satan here indicates that he was behind the false teachers of vs 17,18.

**16:22** Tertius wrote down the words Paul dictated to him.

**16:23** "Gaius" – 1 Cor 1:14.

church, greets you. Erastus, the city manager, greets you, and Quartus, a brother, *does too*.

24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

25 Now to him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the revelation

of the mystery that was hidden since the world began, 26 but is now revealed, and through the writings of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, 27 to God, *who alone is wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.*

**16:25** "My" gospel does not mean Paul invented it. It means the gospel Paul preached and taught and which is the great theme of this letter (1:16). "Mystery" means spiritual truth of God which He must reveal if men are to know it. They can never find it out in any other way. The mystery of the gospel in all its aspects was not fully revealed in Old Testament days (Eph 3:5).

**16:26** By "writings of the prophets" Paul may be referring to the writings of the apostles. They were prophets like the Old Testament prophets, but with a fuller revelation of God's truth. Compare 1 Cor 2:6-13. Or Paul may mean that the writings of the OT (which had prophecies and pictures of the gospel) have now been made clear by the apostles. Compare 3:21; Luke 24:25-27,45-47; 1 Pet 1:10-12. In either case God's purpose is the same. He wants all nations to believe and obey Him - 1:5; 11:32; 15:9-12.

**16:27** The one true God alone is absolutely wise. He alone knows what can be known and what to reveal to men and when to reveal it. And only He is worthy of glory (11:33-36; Rev 4:1; Isa 48:11). And all glory should go to Him "through Jesus Christ" - 1 Pet 4:11; Jude 25.

### Note on Foreknowledge

There is not full agreement on the meaning of God's foreknowledge as it is revealed in the Bible. Some scholars think it means the following: Before God created the world He knew which individuals He would choose for salvation and determined that they should eventually become like His Son. He did not choose them because He foresaw that they would believe in Christ, or submit their will to His. His choice was based on His grace and wisdom alone. At the same time He rejected everyone else. He could have chosen and saved all men but did not. He did not choose anyone because of any goodness or merit He foresaw in them, for they had none. And He did not reject anyone because He foresaw they would be worse than those He chose. It was all a matter of His grace and sovereignty.

An objection to this interpretation may be worded like this: God declares that He wants all men to be saved (11:32; 1 Tim 2:3-6; 4:10; 2 Pet 3:9; Ezek 18:30-32; 33:11). His very essence is love (1 John 4:8,16), and He says He loves the whole world (John 3:16) and that He has compassion on all (Ps 145:8,9). In the Bible He repeatedly shows what His heart is like (Jer

48:31-39; Matt 23:37; Luke 19:41; Rev 22:17). Now if He loves all men and wants all to be saved, and could save them if He had decided to choose them, the question naturally arises, why did He not choose them? Arbitrarily to choose some and reject others may be a fine display of His sovereignty, but what happens to His love and desire to save all?

Because of weighty questions like these do arise in connection with this interpretation, other scholars reject it. They believe foreknowledge means the following:

Before He created the first man God knew those individuals in the human race who would yield to the work of His Holy Spirit and choose to believe Him. God ordained that these people should be saved and eventually become like Christ. It is not that God foreknew that some people were better than others and chose them, or that some would acquire merit and become worthy of salvation. Absolutely not. See 3:9-20,24; Eph 2:1-10; Titus 3:3-7. Men cannot even believe in Christ unless the Holy Spirit enables them to do so (John 6:29,44; Acts 13:48; Phil 1:29). But when the Spirit of God works in the hearts of people He enables them to decide whether to believe or not. Their wills are confronted with God's will, and they have enough freedom to say "yes" or "no" to God, to choose Him or reject Him. Being enabled to say "yes", some persons do, and others will not. God in His sovereignty decided to create human beings with this power of choice, and the choice has eternal consequences.

Since no one unaided by God's Spirit could even choose to believe, saying "yes" to God is not a work of merit which God rewards with salvation. How can accepting a gift of God be a work of merit, especially since He even gives the ability to accept the gift? A gift does not become any less a gift because someone takes it. God knew beforehand who would choose Him and accept His gift, and He predestined them to become like Christ.

In this view, God's sovereignty is not regarded as something less than in the first view. In fact, to say that God cannot give this power to man's will is to limit Him. It is saying that the sovereign God cannot do this thing if He wishes to do it.

The author of these notes does not think that the second view on foreknowledge presented above has been completely proved from the Bible (any more than the first view has been proved), but believes it is in harmony with the character of the God of love

as revealed there. It is hard to think that those who are finally lost are lost just because God did not choose to save them even though He might have done so, that He passed them over and chose for salvation others who were sinners just like them, without any other consideration than His own sovereign choice. The question will always be troublesome — would the God of sovereign love and compassion do that?

But the working of the will of both God and men is a very difficult and mysterious matter, and perhaps it is not wise to be very dogmatic about this subject. In this matter

(as in some other difficult matters of theology) follow the apostle Paul. By the inspiration of the Spirit of God, after writing some very deep truths, in chapter 11 he cried out,

“Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

# The First Letter of the Apostle Paul to the CORINTHIANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

About 56 AD.

**Themes:**

God had used Paul to found the church at Corinth (Acts 18:1-18), but after his departure teachings and practices contrary to the gospel of Christ had found a place among the Christians there. Individuals were guilty of various errors and sins and the church as a whole was being damaged by factions. Paul wrote this letter to correct the faults there. He pointed out to them the holy, humble way believers should live, worship, and serve God. Above everything else he emphasized the way of love (chapter 13).

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**1** Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother, **2** To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

**3** Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

**4** I always thank my God for you, for the grace of God which is given to you by Jesus Christ, **5** *so* that in everything you are enriched by him, in all *kinds of* speaking and complete knowledge, **6** since the testimony of Christ was established among you, **7** *so* that you are not inferior in any gift, as you wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **8** He will establish you to the end, *so that* you *may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9** God *is* faithful, by whom you were called

into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

**10** Now I plead with you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak in agreement, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in the same mind and in the same purpose. **11** For it has been told me about you, my brethren, by those *who are of the household* of Chloe, that there are quarrels among you. **12** Now I say that all of you are speaking *like this*: "I am of Paul", and another "I am of Apollos", and another "I *am* of Cephas", and another "I *am* of Christ".

**13** Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? **14** I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, **15** *so* that no one should say that I had baptized in my own name. **16** And also I baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides *these*, I do not know whether I baptized anyone

**1:1** Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1. "Will of God" – whatever any believer is he should be that by the will of God and know it is God's will for him to be that. It seems that Sosthenes wrote down this letter as Paul dictated it to him. Compare Rom 16:22.

**1:2** Paul speaks of what all believers in Christ are. They form a called out assembly (note on Church at Matt 16:18). They belong to God (16:19,20; John 17:9,10). They are set apart ("sanctified" – John 17:17-19). They are "in" Christ (Eph 1:1,4). God has called them to be holy (to be a special people belonging to a holy God. Note at Lev 20:7). They have one Lord (8:5,6; Rom 10:9).

**1:3** Rom 1:7.

**1:4** Rom 1:8; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Tim 1:3.

**1:5-7** "Enriched" – Rom 10:12; 2 Cor 8:9; Matt 7:11. God had given them every spiritual ability to serve Him – 12:4-11,28-31; Rom 12:6-8. Paul is not speaking merely about the leaders, preachers and teachers in the Church, but about all believers there. The spiritual life in the Corinthian believers was good evidence that the gospel he preached to them was true (v 6). And it caused them to look forward eagerly for the second coming of Christ (v 7; Matt 24:30; 2 Thess 1:7; 1 Pet 1:7,13; 4:13).

"Gift" – talent, ability given by God.

"Coming" (v 7) – here Paul uses the Greek word meaning "revelation" (apokalupsis). He says nothing about a hidden coming of Christ, a secret rapture. He says that the Corinthian believers were looking for Christ to be openly revealed. Compare Titus 2:13.

**1:8** "To the end" – Phil 1:6; Rom 5:9,10; 8:29,30; John 10:28,29; Heb 7:25; 1 Pet 1:5.

"Blameless" – Eph 1:4. The blameless are those against whom no accusation can be brought. Compare Rom 4:8; 8:33,34. The "day" of Christ is the time of His second

coming (v 7).

**1:9** "Faithful" – God will fulfill all His promises to believers and keep them to the end (v 8; 1 Thess 5:24; Titus 1:2; 2 Tim 2:13).

"Fellowship" – 1 John 1:3; John 14:23.

**1:10** See 12:25; Rom 12:16; Eph 4:3. Is it possible for all believers to be "perfectly united in . . . mind and . . . purpose"? Evidently. See also 2:16; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 4:13; Phil 1:27; 2:2; Acts 4:32. Of course Paul is speaking of the teachings of Christ and his apostles. It is possible for all believers to agree on these teachings, but very difficult. It requires a thorough knowledge of God's word, a firm belief in it, and a determination to apply it in every situation.

**1:11,12** This was a mark of their immaturity and lack of spirituality – 3:1-4. They knew much and spoke well (v 5), but practiced little of the truth they knew – a common fault everywhere and always. They made far too much of men – another common fault in all times (3:5-8).

"Apollos" – Acts 18:24-28. "Cephas" is another name for Peter. Both names mean "rock."

"Of Christ" – those who said they followed Christ alone where no more mature and spiritual than the others, if they made this a reason for division in the church and looked down on others. Observe that Paul was not pleased with the fact that there was a group there saying that they were "of Paul." He did not want such things. He always pointed people to Christ, not to himself.

**1:13** Neither Christ nor His Body can be divided (12:12,13). Believers are to recognize this fact, accept one another, and live in the unity they have in Christ (Eph 4:2). Paul is saying in this verse, "who is any person compared to Christ? Do not exalt any man to too high a place."

**1:14-17** Notes on baptism at Matt 3:6; 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Paul knew that as far as salvation is concerned repentance and faith were the vital things



else. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ be made of no effect.

18 For the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and will bring to nothing the  
understanding of the intelligent.

(Acts 17:30; 20:21; Rom 10:9,10). If baptism had been essential for salvation (as some today confidently assert) could Paul possibly have taken this attitude toward it? It is evident that the duty of all believers to live in harmony with each other was more important to Paul than questions about baptism.

**1:17-25** In v 17 Paul is not denying that Christ told His disciples to baptize (Matt 28:19), or that all believers should be baptized. He is speaking about the essence of his ministry, the one overwhelmingly important thing – preaching the gospel.

Observe here what Paul avoided in his preaching – human wisdom. He knew that such wisdom was really foolishness (v 20), and that by it no one can come to a true knowledge of God (v 21). And he knew that God had appointed the clear preaching of the gospel as the way to bring men to salvation (vs 21,23; 15:1,2; Rom 1:16). Preaching with human wisdom is the same as trying to empty the cross of Christ of its power. And we may be sure that anything which does that is not of God, and is of no use in the salvation of men.

Verse 18 speaks of two classes of people – the “perishing” and those “being saved.” The attitude of people toward Christ’s cross reveals which group they are in. In these verses the “perishing” (see John 3:16; Luke 19:10) are of two kinds (v 22) – the religious law-keeping Jews and the idolatrous Greeks with their love of philosophy. The cross is foolishness to both kinds of people. Why? They do not understand it (2 Cor 4:4), and they do not believe it is necessary (the gospel is not man’s way of thinking, but God’s – Rom 8:5-7). Moreover, they do not want it (they are self-confident and proud and the cross would humble them in the dust).

There are many such people today. They do not think it is foolishness to lie, cheat, steal, live for temporary pleasures, or bow down to images made by men. To them only the cross (which is the wisdom of God – v 24) is foolishness!

But some people are “being saved” (salvation begins with the new birth – John 1:12,13; 3:3-8, and goes on to the resurrection and glorification of believers – Rom 8:23,30). To them the cross is the power of God (vs 18,24; Rom 1:16). They

20 Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the debater of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world by *its* wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the “foolishness” of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 For the Jews require a *miraculous* sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ

have experienced its power. It has completely changed their lives (2 Cor 5:17). To them it is also the wisdom of God (v 24). They see far more of God’s wisdom in any aspect of the cross than in all the works of all the world’s wise men and philosophers who do not believe and know Christ.

**1:19** Isa 29:14.

**1:20** True wisdom begins with the fear of the one true God, and this the wise men, scholars and philosophers who belong to this world (and not to Christ) do not have (see Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7). So they do not have even the barest beginning of wisdom. But the point here is that God made all their so-called wisdom as foolishness by the cross. The cross is God’s one way of saving men, and it is a way none of the wisest of men ever once thought about. The way of wisdom cannot bring salvation to anyone. It is not God’s way. See also Col 2:8.

**1:21** There are three important truths here.

First, men with all their philosophy, intellectual activity or mystic knowledge did not come to the knowledge of God. Actually quite the opposite happened – they lost the knowledge of God that mankind once had (see Rom 1:21-23).

Second, God saves people through what seems foolishness to so-called wise men – the preaching of the cross (v 18). “The ‘foolishness’ of what was preached” – this seems a more accurate translation of the Greek than “the foolishness of preaching.” Compare verses 23 and 25. The Gospel message is certainly the very opposite of foolishness, but it seems like foolishness to those who are wise in their own eyes. And that is Paul’s meaning here.

Third, salvation comes only to those who believe this preaching (Rom 1:16,17).

**1:22** Mark 8:11; John 6:30; Matt 12:39,40.

“Sign,” “Wisdom” – they sought for what they thought was a rational basis for everything. They were not content to believe something simply because God said it was true.

**1:23** “Stumbling block” – a crucified Messiah was not according to their expectations or desires.

“Foolishness” – they reasoned that only criminals were crucified, and how could a crucified criminal have anything to do with anyone’s salvation or display any of the wisdom they sought.

**1:24** “Called” – Rom 1:6; 8:30. The “called”

the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty, 28 and lowly things of the world, and things which are despised, God has chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 so that no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But by him you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God,

of v 24 are those "being saved" of v 18.

**1:25** See how different God's wisdom is from man's, and how far above it. Compare Isa 55:8,9; Rom 11:33-36.

**1:26** This was true then and true now. In India from among the intellectuals, or the high castes God has called some but not many. It has pleased Him to call many from among the poor and uneducated, the lower castes or no castes. Compare Christ's words in Matt 11:25,26. Caste pride is not something He looks on with favour.

**1:27-29** Here is God's good purpose in choosing the lowly and despised to be His people. He loathes men's pride, and cannot stand those who boast in their strength and influence. See Jer 9:23; Prov 6:16,17; 16:5; Isa 1:31; 2:12-18; 13:11; Jer 17:5; Matt 18:3,4; Jam 4:6. He has arranged matters so that all that men take pride in will come to nothing and that no human being will be able to boast in His presence - Rom 3:27; Eph 2:9.

**1:30** Believers are in Christ (Eph 1:1,4). They are there because God the Father has chosen them. And Christ is to them all they need for salvation, for time and for eternity. Christ is a far higher wisdom than anything the world knows or can know (Col 2:2,3,8,9). And even the most uneducated and lowliest believer in Christ has more true wisdom than any wise man or philosopher without Christ.

"Righteousness" - notes at Matt 5:6; Rom 1:17; 3:21-26; 10:9,10; Phil 3:9.

"Sanctification" or "holiness" - notes at John 17:17-19; Rom 1:7.

"Redemption" - notes at Matt 20:28; Ps 78:35. Believers in themselves have none of these things, but only in Christ (Eph 1:1,4).

**1:31** Jer 9:24. Compare Ps 34:2; 44:8.

"LORD" in the Hebrew of Jer 9:24 is Jehovah; here in 1 Corinthians it refers to Christ. Christ is the incarnation of Jehovah. See other references that teach this at Luke 2:11.

**2:1** "Wisdom" that is, what men regard as wisdom.

**2:2** Paul came to Corinth directly from Athens which prided itself on being the

and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, according to what is written, he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

**2** And I, brethren, when I came to you declaring to you the testimony of God, I did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, 2 for I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who

world's center of philosophy and wisdom (Acts 17:15; 18:1). He realized afresh how important it was to keep to the heart of the gospel. And the heart of the gospel is Christ, Christ crucified for the sins of men. If any preacher gets away from this he is moving away from the very center of God's revelation, and he is in danger of having a weak and ineffective ministry (though it may be successful in the eyes of men).

**2:3** He was not afraid of what men might do to him. Rather he feared that the people in Corinth might be as indifferent to the gospel as the "wise" men of Athens, and that his preaching might fail because of a lack in him. Weakness and trembling in any preacher are better by far than self-confidence, dependence on intellect, or a careless attitude. Compare 2 Cor 12:9,10.

**2:4** See 1:17. Paul was capable of using wise and persuasive words if he thought the occasion required them (Acts 17:22-31). But he knew the two most important elements in preaching were to have the right message and the power of God's Spirit to deliver it. It is quite possible for preachers even with the right message to try to talk people into God's kingdom and fail to achieve this because of a lack of God's power. So see Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Eph 5:18. People are not saved and established in the faith by being impressed with the wisdom or eloquence of the preacher, but by trusting Christ.

**2:5** True faith must be created in people's hearts by the power of God's Spirit. If they base their faith on the wisdom or eloquence of a preacher or merely on his convincing arguments, it will be superficial and fall short of the faith which brings salvation. The Christian faith is reasonable, but arguments for it directed to the reason alone will not bring new life to the heart of anyone. Christ's servants must proclaim Christ and His cross with the power of God sent down from heaven.

**2:6,7** Paul does not want his readers to think he is praising ignorance, or that when it comes to wisdom believers in Christ are nowhere.

are mature, but not the wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, that comes to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained for our glory before the world *began*, 8 which none of the rulers of this world knew. For if they had known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written,

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,  
nor have entered the heart of man,  
the things which God has prepared  
for those who love him.

10 But God has revealed *them* to us by his Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in

him? Even so the things of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is of God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. 13 These things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know *them*, because they are spiritually evaluated. 15 But he who is spiritual *properly* evaluates all *these* things, yet he himself is not *properly* evaluated by any man.

16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

They have available to them God's secret wisdom, unknown to the wise and powerful of this world (1:30; Col 2:2,3). On "wisdom" see also Ps 51:6; 90:12; 111:10; Prov 1:7,20; 2:1-6; 3:13; 8:1-36; 9:10; Eph 1:17; Jam 1:5. Before the creation of the universe God foreknew and chose His people (Rom 8:29,30), and He ordained that they should have the highest of all wisdom – the knowledge of God and of Christ.

**2:8** "Lord of glory" – Paul gives to Jesus a title that can refer only to God. Compare Ps 24:10 where Jehovah God is the "King of glory." See also Acts 7:2; Jam 2:1. Other references that show Jesus is Jehovah are at Luke 2:11. The fact that men crucified a divine person reveals they did not know God or have God's wisdom.

**2:9** Isa 64:4 has similar but not these exact words.

**2:10** The wisdom Paul speaks of cannot be found out by man's intellect or philosophical reasoning, or by searching into religion or mysticism or the occult. God reveals it by His Spirit. There is no other way to receive it. Compare John 16:13-15. And the only way to receive God's Spirit is by believing in Jesus Christ.

**2:11** No one can know what God is thinking unless He reveals it, but the Holy Spirit can know it because He is God. This verse teaches that God's Spirit is not some impersonal influence or power. He is a person who has knowledge and can reveal it (v 10).

**2:12** The world (mankind in general in its fallen sinful condition) does not have God's Spirit and cannot receive Him (John 14:16,17). Believers in Christ have received God's Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13), and can know what others cannot possibly know (v 14).

**2:13** Observe Paul's emphasis on "words." God's Spirit had given the apostles the very words that expressed God's truth, and not merely general ideas in the mind. Compare Matt 4:4; 5:18; 2 Tim 3:16.

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual" – this expression in Greek can be translated in

different ways, though the above translation seems as good as any to the author of these notes. Literally it is "comparing (or explaining or combining – the Greek word means all three) spiritual with spiritual." The word "things" is implied and is needed to make a proper English sentence.

**2:14** See 1:18,23; Rom 8:5-8. If we would accept and understand God's truth it is absolutely essential that God's Spirit teach us. So Eph 1:15-19. "Natural" = unsaved.

**2:15** 1 John 2:20,27; John 3:8. Only believers in Christ made spiritual by God's Spirit can see the true state of things and people. But those without the Spirit will not understand Christ's people and so will be unable to rightly evaluate them. Proper judgment must be based on spiritual understanding, and this no one has by nature.

"Evaluates", "evaluated" – in Greek the same word used in v 14. Here it means to determine the worth or truth of a person or thing.

**2:16** Isa 40:13. This is given as evidence of the above truths. Natural men (those without God's Spirit) cannot know God's mind and so they cannot understand the mind of believers. This is because believers no longer think like people of the world. They share in God's mind through Christ. This does not mean that believers know all that Christ knows. It does mean that because Christ is in them, and they have His Spirit, they are at the source of God's truth, and He can enable them to understand it.

Is this true only of apostles and great and wise Christian leaders? No, it is true of all spiritual believers (1:26-28). Education, great intellectual ability, and human wisdom have nothing to do with it. God's Spirit giving understanding to man's spirit – this is the great essential. Observe that all through this passage of Scripture God's Spirit is seen to be different from man's spirit. This is the teaching of God's Word everywhere. See notes at John 14:17; Rom 8:9,16; Gal 3:2; Eph 4:18; Jude 19.

**3** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people*, but as to carnal, as to infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, and not with *solid* food, for until now you were not able to *receive it*, and you still are not able. 3 For you are still carnal. For while *there* are envy, and strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal, and behaving like *unbelieving* men? 4 For while one says, "I am of Paul", and another, "I *am* of Apollos", are you not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each man? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then

**3:1,2** "Spiritual people" – compared to those who do not have God's Spirit all believers are spiritual (2:14-16; Rom 8:5-9). But among believers themselves some are much more spiritual than others. And some, unfortunately, behave all too much like people of the world who follow their sinful nature. On the whole the Corinthian believers were like this. Spiritually speaking, they were still babies, and Paul could not teach them the deep things of God (compare 2:6; Heb 5:11-14).

"Carnal" – or "fleshly" – all too often falling prey to the old fallen nature. In 2:14 and 3:1 Paul speaks of three kinds of people.

"Natural" are those who do not have God's Spirit.

"Spiritual" are those who have God's Spirit and who walk in accordance with the Spirit. And "carnal" are those who have God's Spirit but in some ways behave as if they do not.

**3:3** Here was the evidence that they were "carnal." For jealousy and quarreling among believers do not come from God's Spirit, but from the fallen nature in people (Gal 5:19,20; Jam 3:14-18). Believers in Christ have no right to behave like unbelieving men. They are God's holy people, having God's Spirit, and are called to a higher way of living.

**3:4** See 1:11,12. Still today many believers show their worldliness and carnality by their factions, by their pride in their sect or church or denomination, and by their giving glory to men.

**3:5-9** Believers should see that the Lord alone is the important one and that all who preach and teach His Word are mere servants, and in themselves nothing (v 7). The Lord is the one who assigns different tasks to different servants (v 5), and it is God who prospers the work, not men (v 7). God alone is the source of truth and spiritual life and blessing. The true servants of God, such as Paul and Apollos, have one purpose (v 8), and believers should recognize this and with one heart and mind accept them all (1:10), but should not make too much of any of them.

**3:7** "Anything" – here is the proper view any servant of God should have toward himself. Compare 15:9; 2 Cor 3:5; Eph 3:8; 1 Tim

neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one. And each man will receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are workers together with God. *You are* God's field, you are God's building.

10 In accordance with the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master builder, I laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let everyone take care how he builds on it. 11 For no one can lay any other foundation than *the one* that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, 13 every

1:15. See also Ex 3:11; Jud 6:15; Jer 1:6. This is surely one reason for Paul's great fruitfulness. He was not concerned with man's praise or blame, honor or contempt. His whole purpose was to serve God in humility of spirit.

**3:8** Verse 14.

**3:9** "Workers together with God" – God's servants are joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, have God's Holy Spirit living in them, and are doing the Father's work. Can any work be as noble, as splendid, as rewarding as this?

"God's field" – Matt 13:24.

"God's building" – v 16; Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:5.

**3:10** In v 7 Paul says he is not anything. Here he says that all he has done as a servant of Christ was by the grace of God. God freely gave him all his abilities and opportunities. See also 2 Cor 3:5,6.

"I laid the foundation" – Paul began the work in Corinth (Acts 18:1). Others were building on the foundation he laid.

**3:11** Isa 28:16; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6. Paul laid the foundation in Corinth by preaching and teaching the truth about Christ, and by the power of God's Spirit working in him bringing people to put their faith in Christ for salvation. Paul then left Corinth, and other builders were at work.

**3:12** If builders are spiritual and practice and teach the treasures of God's Word, it is as though they were using precious metals and gems. But if builders are worldly and behave like unbelieving men (v 3) and build with their own ideas of how to build, it is like using wood, hay, or straw. All that comes out of self in believers, from the "flesh", will come to nothing on the day of judgment, even if it is work related to the church, and said to be done in Christ's name. (And is there not a great deal of such effort in the churches?) But all work that comes from God's Spirit in them will stand the test on that day.

**3:13-15** "Day" – Paul speaks of the day when God will judge the work of all His servants. Verse 13 says it will be a revealing judgment, a fiery judgment, and a testing judgment. The amount of a person's work will not be the important thing in that day, but the quality of it. The chief thing will not

man's work will be made clear, for the day will make it known, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test everyone's work as to what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built *on the foundation* remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss. He himself will be saved, but as if through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy. And you are that *temple*.

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become foolish so that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. For it is written,

be that which seems to be good work before God's fire tests it, but what remains afterwards. With what care and reverent fear and trembling (2:3) should God's servants go about their work.

**3:14** Matt 16:27; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12. **3:15** "Will suffer loss" – means the loss of the rewards he might have had. Compare 2 John 8.

"Fire" – compare 1 Pet 4:17,18.

**3:16** Both individually and as a whole Christ's believers are God's temple. A temple is where worship goes on and offerings are given to God (Rom 12:1,2; Heb 13:15,16; 1 Pet 2:5). It is where God's presence is (Ps 11:4; John 17:23; Acts 2:4; Rom 8:9). Christ's believers are now the only temple God has on earth. Those who reject Him or them may go to man-made temples, but God is not there (Acts 17:24).

**3:17** "Destroy, destroy" – the same Greek word is used twice. It has other meanings – corrupt, injure, ruin, or mar. Paul may be referring to the false teachers who troubled the Corinthian church and so many other churches – Rom 16:17,18. Believers do not destroy God's temple – they are God's temple and others are trying to ruin them. At Corinth it seems clear that false teachers were preaching worldly wisdom, ignoring Christ's cross, and perverting the gospel. See 2 Cor 11:4,13-15,18. Such teaching as theirs is what injures God's temple. And we may be sure that God will deal very harshly with people who try to ruin His holy work. **3:18** "Let no one deceive himself" – 6:9; 15:33.

"Wise" – men become truly wise in God's eyes, not by going after worldly wisdom, but by rejecting it and believing Christ's gospel. Such people are fools in the eyes of the world (1:18).

**3:19** See 1:20; Job 5:13.

**3:20** Ps 94:11. Since our own wisdom is futile and foolish we should reject it.

**3:21** Verse 4; 1:12,29,31. Men are instruments in God's hands. All praise should go to God who made the instruments

He catches the wise in their own craftiness.

20 And again,

The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are useless.

21 Therefore let no one boast about men. For all things are yours, 22 whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours. 23 And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

**4** So men should regard us as the servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you, or by *any* human judgment. Indeed, I do not judge myself. 4 For I

and uses them, and not to the instruments themselves.

**3:22** God has appointed His servants for the benefit of believers (v 5; Eph 4:11-13). The whole earth is the field where believers are planted, watered and caused to grow. All the events of this present life work for their good (Rom 8:28). Death too is theirs – it is a gift which frees them from the mortal body and from the presence of all sin and all troubles. For the believer in Christ death is a door which opens into a higher, better life with God. All things in the future are also theirs – they are God's heirs, joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17; Matt 5:5; Eph 1:14; Rev 21:7). Then why this boasting in men, this exalting one over another?

**3:23** Believers do not belong to men, but to Christ (John 6:37,39; 17:6). They must boast in Him alone (1:31).

"Christ belongs to God" – 11:3; 15:28; Matt 3:17; John 3:16; 14:28.

**4:1** See 2:7; 3:5,10; Rom 16:25; Gal 1:11,12; Eph 3:2,3. Paul and the other apostles of Christ did not invent their teaching. God had revealed them and placed them in their care. Paul wanted everyone to understand the importance of this fact.

**4:2** Faithfulness is the one absolute essential for all servants of Christ. See Matt 24:45; 25:21,23; Luke 16:10; 19:17.

**4:3,4** Paul was not much concerned about the judgment of the Corinthians on his faithfulness. He was Christ's servant, not theirs. Christ had sent him and told him what to teach, not they. He was responsible to Christ, not to them. Compare Rom 14:10-12. He did not judge himself because that was not his work, and he knew that no one is capable of judging himself properly, let alone others. Only God can do that, for only He knows for certain what He has given an individual to do and what may be that individual's motives, struggles, temptations, difficulties, inner failures and successes.

Paul's conscience was clear – see Acts 23:1; 24:16. This lack of worry about the judgment of others gives freedom to serve



know nothing against myself, yet I am not counted righteous by that. The one who judges me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes. He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make known the purposes of the heart. And then everyone will have praise from God.

6 And these things, brethren, I have applied as an example to myself and Apollos for your benefit, that you might learn in *our case* not to think beyond what is written, so that none of you becomes puffed up for one against another. 7 For who makes you to differ *from others*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you received it, why do you boast, as if you had not received *it*?

8 Already you are full! Already you are rich! You have reigned as kings without us! How I wish you really were reigning, that we also might reign with you. 9 For it seems to me that God has displayed us, the apostles, *last in the procession*,

God as He directs.

**4:5** He means judge nothing about the faithfulness of others or their motives. Later on he told them to judge the outward behavior of people (5:12; 6:1-6). Christ can and will judge the hidden things of the heart. This no man should try to do.

"Praise from God" – Matt 25:21,23; Rom 2:29; 2 Cor 10:18; Gal 1:10.

**4:6** The problem with the believers in Corinth was that they were not viewing God's servants in a Biblical way ("what is written"). Paul used the illustration of himself and Apollos to show them this. They were judging men, exalting or condemning as they pleased, and they needed to learn not to do this.

**4:7** Some were boasting in their abilities or position or the fact that they were followers of one teacher rather than another. They had fallen into the absurd sin of considering themselves superior to other believers there (this is the exact opposite of what their views should have been. See Phil 2:3. Compare Luke 18:9). Paul reminds them that whatever they had that was worth having was a gift from God, so that if they boasted they should boast in the Giver and not in themselves (15:10).

**4:8-13** In these verses Paul uses irony or sarcasm to strike a blow at their boasting. He does so for the benefit of their spiritual life.

**4:8** Paul seems to be saying, "Evidently, you think you have risen very high in the Christian life; that you have reached the goal of perfection; that you have begun to reign with Christ in glory!"

**4:9** Paul is referring to the persecutions and hardships the apostles endured (Acts 5:17,18,40; 12:1-4; 14:19; 16:22-24; 2 Cor 11:23-27). In those days the authorities sometimes made criminals parade before the people before executing them. Paul says his position in the world

like *those* condemned to death. For we have been made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men. 10 We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ. We *are* weak, but you *are* strong. You *are* honoured, but we *are* despised. 11 Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are poorly clothed, and are beaten, and homeless. 12 And *we* labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we bear it; 13 being slandered, we plead. To this day, we have become *like* the filth of the world, *and like* the scum of all things.

14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my dear children I warn *you*. 15 For though you may have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers. For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Therefore I beg you, imitate me. 17 For this reason I have sent Timothy to you. He is my dear son, and faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my ways

seemed like that. But he does not believe this is because of blind chance or fate. He knows that God has done this for a good and wise purpose.

**4:10** "Fools for Christ's sake" – this means that they were willing to reject the wisdom of the world and preach what the world called foolishness (1:18,23). The Corinthian Christians were not actually very wise – they only thought they were.

"Weak" – 2:3; 2 Cor 12:9,10.

**4:11** 2 Cor 11:27. Such is the way the world treats the best and most spiritual of all people. Compare Heb 11:36-38; John 15:18-21; 16:33.

**4:12,13** "Working with our own hands" – Acts 18:3; 20:34,35.

"Bless" – Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27,28; Rom 12:14; 1 Peter 2:21-23.

"Scum" – that is, the world treated the apostles of Christ as if they were the lowest, basest and worst of all people.

**4:14** Paul's purpose in writing these things was not to move them to pity him or to make them ashamed. He saw their poor spiritual condition and in love for them ("my dear children") was trying to warn them about it.

**4:15** They had experienced spiritual birth into God's kingdom (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8), and this was through the ministry of Paul. Compare Gal 4:19.

**4:16** Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6. Paul was not at all trying to draw men after himself (3:1-7). But he knew that God had made him an example of how men should live and had revealed to him the gospel he preached. He was an imitator of Christ, so it was safe for believers to imitate him – 11:1. He was not like many who preach one thing and practice something else (Matt 23:3; Rom 2:21-24). It was not safe to follow the false teachers who had come to trouble them.

**4:17** Paul was not Timothy's natural father but his spiritual father (Acts 16:1; 1 Tim



in Christ, which I teach everywhere in every church.

18 Now some *of you* are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. 19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and will know, not the talk, but the power of those who are puffed up. 20 For the kingdom of God *is* not in talk, but in power. 21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

**5** It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles, that a man has his father's wife. 2 And you are

1:2). He could tell the Corinthians that Paul's way of living agreed with his teaching.

**4:18** These people were of one of the factions there opposed to Paul. With their worldly wisdom and sinful pride they thought themselves quite superior to him. And they thought he would not return to Corinth.

**4:19** "If the Lord wills" – this was always a governing thought in Paul's life. Compare Jam 4:13-16.

**4:20** Paul's opponents in Corinth could make good speeches but could they live good lives? Christ's true gospel is the power of God to salvation (Rom 1:16). It makes men new (2 Cor 5:17). If a person is not changed, if he has no power to live a humble, obedient, holy life, his talk and teaching are in vain. Compare Rom 14:17.

**4:21** "Rod" – he was Christ's apostle and their spiritual father (v 15). He had the right to discipline, rebuke and chastise then if their condition required it. See 2 Cor 13:10. Of course he preferred to have loving fellowship with them without the need of harsh discipline. The choice was theirs. See 2 Cor 1:23,24.

**5:1** The way Paul put this – "father's wife" instead of "mother" – indicates that he meant stepmother. The man was guilty of a sin that unbelievers condemned (it was also condemned in the law of Moses – Lev 18:8; 22:30; 27:20).

**5:2** "Puffed up" – or "proud." Were they proud of their worldly wisdom in this matter? Or of their tolerant attitude? Did they think that the gospel of Christ gave Christians a license to do anything they pleased? Paul now reveals how any local church should behave toward a sinning member. There should be grief – grief that dishonor has come to Christ, that a fellow Christian has fallen so low, that the church is in danger of God's judgment. And it is their responsibility to put out of their fellowship the Christian, even if he is a leader – or especially if he is a leader – who will not repent of his sin. A church not willing to exercise such discipline is headed for God's judgment – 11:30-32.

**5:3** Is it the business of Christian leaders or the church as a whole to judge individual Christians? Yes. It is their duty to keep the church pure, to rebuke sin and judge behavior contrary to the holy way of life Christ taught. See vs 12,13; Matt 18:15-17;

puffed up. *You* did not mourn greatly, so that the one who did this deed might be put away from among you. 3 For indeed I, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already reached a decision (as though I were present) *about* the one who has done this deed. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 *I have decided* to hand this one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your boasting *is* not good. Do you not know

Acts 5:1-11. This is not the same thing as one individual judging another (this we should not do – 4:3,5; Matt 7:1-5; Rom 14:4,13). This is a church matter, a matter of who is worthy to be in its fellowship, of what standards a church should have.

**5:4,5** Discipline must be taken in the name of the Lord Jesus, in His presence, by His power. He is the great purifier of the Church and its Head and Lord. Local churches should act on His authority. Handing the sinning Christian over to Satan means to put him out of the church and to have nothing more to do with him until he repents – vs 11,13. And, it seems, it means to give Satan a chance to afflict him. Outside the Church is the world which is Satan's realm (John 14:30; Eph 2:2; Col 1:13; 1 John 5:19). Satan has the ability to afflict men's bodies (Job 2:4-7), and he has the power of death (Heb 2:14). Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; etc).

Handing over to Satan is a terrible and painful discipline indeed. But here Paul reveals a good purpose for it. He wanted the man's flesh to be destroyed and his spirit saved.

"For the destruction of the flesh" – here the Greek word (*sarx*) is used, a word that has several meanings. It may mean literal flesh, or the body, or the sinful nature in man, among other things. It appears that Paul is speaking of the death of the man, or at least the wasting away of his literal flesh. Certainly it does not mean the destruction of his sinful nature. The sinful nature in a believer is not destroyed in this life (see notes on Romans chapter 7, etc), and in any case, Satan is not in the business of destroying men's sinful nature except by destroying their bodies where their sinful nature resides – that is, by killing them.

"That the spirit may be saved" – God always has a good purpose in disciplining His people (11:32; Heb 12:7-11). Is it possible that the only way to save some people is to take them away by death before they go further into sin? These verses create this impression. See also 11:30. If this is necessary, we can believe that God will do it rather than have one of His people lost forever (John 6:49,50).

**5:6** Verse 2. He means that sin may have small beginnings in a church but spread all

that a little yeast permeates the whole lump? 7 Therefore, purge out the old yeast, that you may be a new lump, since you really are without yeast. For truly Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old yeast, nor with the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the yeastless *bread* of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, 10 but not at all *meaning* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the greedy, or extortioners, or with idolaters. For in that case you would have to leave the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who is called a brother if he is sexually immoral or greedy or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, *and* not to eat with such a person.

12 For what business do I have judging outsiders also? Do you not judge those who are

inside? 13 But God judges those who are outside. Therefore put away that wicked person from among yourselves.

**6** When anyone of you has something against someone else, dare *he* go for judgment to the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And since the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life! 4 If then you have matters requiring judgment about things pertaining to this life, appoint as judges *even* those who are least esteemed in the church. 5 I speak to your shame. *Can* it be that there is not a wise man among you? Not even one who would be able to judge *a dispute* between his brethren? 6 But *instead*, brother goes to law against brother, and that in front of unbelievers!

through it. This is one reason why it is so important to deal with it immediately and firmly. If the church does not do so, people in it may get the idea that sin is unimportant, and that they can get away with anything they wish to do.

**5:7** "Old yeast" means old corrupt habits. The church is like a "new lump" of dough and the things of the old life are to have no place in it. Compare Eph 5:25-27; Col 3:5-12. The Passover Feast was eaten with bread made without yeast, yeast being a type or picture of evil – see Ex 12:14,15; Lev 23:5,6. Christ's death on the cross was the spiritual fulfillment of the Passover (Matt 26:26-28; John 1:29; 6:53-58).

**5:8** Of course, keeping the "Feast" does not mean literally observing the old Jewish feast of the Passover. Christians were never taught to do this. The Festival of believers is a continuous "feasting" on the truths concerning Christ their Passover. It is fellowship with Him in a new life. Pride, factions and quarreling, immorality, dishonesty, etc, are to have no place in this "Feast."

**5:9-11** Believers must not treat fellow Christians who sin as they treat people of the world. Believers live in the world and cannot avoid its sinful people. But someone sinning "who is called a brother" is a different matter altogether. Here is a plain command that we are not to associate or eat with such a person. See also 1 Thess 3:6.

**5:12,13** Verse 3; 6:1-5; 11:31. Though individuals do not have the right to judge and condemn other individuals, the church has the right to judge who can be in its fellowship. And they must exercise this right. When wicked men are expelled, the church can grow in purity and power. When they are not expelled, disaster waits at the door. If adulterers and adulteresses, thieves and dishonest persons, etc are permitted

to remain in fellowship, then God, in large measure, will withdraw His blessing. There may be many spiritual gifts in such a church and seeming success in the ministry, but the rottenness there will rob it of true spiritual life.

**6:1-8** Some Christians still seem to think it is all right to bring lawsuits against one another in secular courts. Even whole churches and denominations sometimes engage in this. Here the words of the apostle (which are inspired by God) utterly condemn any such thing. It is "shameful" (v 5), it shows an utter lack of wisdom in the church (v 5), and it means that the church is defeated in its Christian life and walk (v 7).

**6:1** "Unrighteous" here means those outside the Church, people of the world. Eph 2:12. "Saints" are believers, not some exceptionally holy believers (note at Rom 1:7). Notice the word "dare." To Paul Christians contending with each other in court was absolutely wrong and shocking. See Matt 5:23-26. The church should decide all disputes between Christians.

**6:2** This refers to the judgment that will take place when Christ comes again. Christ's people will reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21; 20:4). That is, they will administer God's kingdom with Him, and this will include judging. Compare Matt 19:28; Luke 22:30; Rev 2:26,27.

**6:3** Ruling and judging with Christ will mean ruling and judging over all creation and created beings, even the highest. Cannot believers, then, judge the lowly matters of earth?

**6:4** He may be speaking with irony or sarcasm. Or he could mean – "it is better to appoint the least qualified believer than to go to worldly judges.

**6:5** "Wise" – some of them thought they were very wise indeed. Paul is saying their behavior casts doubt on whether there was

7 Now, therefore, there is utter failure for you, because you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated? 8 Instead, you do wrong, and cheat, and *do* this to *your* brethren!

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor men who practice sodomy, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are

even one wise man there.

**6:7** Christians engaging in lawsuits with fellow Christians is not merely failure, it is "utter" failure. They are overcome by the spirit of this world, by greed, or malice, or desire for revenge, or determination to get what they think are their rights, regardless of what happens to their Christian testimony and the reputation of Christ. Their love, their humility, their obedience to God have fallen by the wayside (if indeed they ever had these qualities). It is better to suffer wrong and be cheated than to fight with other Christians for one's so-called rights in a secular court. Compare Matt 5:38-41; Luke 9:23; 14:33.

**6:8** It is sad that such words then and now apply to any who profess to belong to Christ.

**6:9** "Do you not know" – vs 2,3,19; 3:16. Evidently Paul wondered whether some of these Christians had even the most basic understanding of what it means to be a believer. Did they think that because they called themselves believers they could live as they pleased? Paul now corrects any such mistaken view. Compare 3:18; 15:33; Gal 6:7; Eph 5:6; 1 John 3:7. In a world like this, being deceived is all too easy (Jer 17:9; Heb 3:13; Rev 12:9). And people like to think that no matter how they live they can have a place in God's kingdom and God's heaven. They are mistaken. God's kingdom is not for the wicked, but for those who repent, for the poor in spirit, for those who love righteousness enough to accept persecution for it (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 5:3,10), for those who prove their faith by their good works (Matt 25:34-36; Jam 2:14-26). Let every person who names the name of Christ take this to heart and depart from evil (2 Tim 2:19).

**6:10** Eph 5:5; Col 3:5,6; Rev 21:8.

**6:11** "And such were some" – true believers were once sinners like everyone else (Eph 2:3; Titus 3:3). But they no longer live as they once did.

"Washed" – John 13:10; 15:3; Titus 3:5.

"Sanctified" – John 17:17-19.

not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of anything. 13 Foods for the belly, and the belly for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God has both raised up the Lord, and will raise us up by his own power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of a prostitute? Absolutely not! 16 What? Do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For two, he says, "will be one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who is sexually immoral sins against his own body.

"Justified" – Rom 3:24. They were new creations in Christ (2 Cor 5:17), and this was a result of the work of God's Spirit.

**6:12-20** Now Paul speaks of the freedom that believers have in Christ. Writing to other churches Paul had said that believers are not under the law (Rom 6:14), that Christ had given them liberty (Gal 5:1), that in the matter of food and the observance of days there is no restriction whatever (Rom 14:1-6,14). It seems some Christians in Corinth were twisting Paul's teaching and saying that any believer was free to practice whatever he pleased, including sexual sins. Paul here fights this false teaching. He shows that believers have not been set free from the law so that they might sin, but that they might not sin. Verse 12 gives two restrictions on the liberty believers have (10:23,24,31 adds two more). They must do only those things which are beneficial and must not become enslaved to any desire or habit (compare Rom 6:16-18; John 8:34).

Verse 13 was aimed at those who thought they were free to commit sexual sins just as they were free to eat anything they wanted. But the two things are entirely different. No kind of food is contrary to God's purpose for man's stomach, but sexual sins are against God's purposes for the human body. God will raise the bodies of believers from the dead to live an eternal life in glory and holiness (v 14). Believers now must recognize this and use their bodies for God's high purpose.

**6:15** See 12:27; Rom 12:4,5; Eph 1:22,23. A believer should never even consider doing what Christ Himself would not do.

**6:16** Gen 2:24.

**6:17** John 17:21-23.

**6:18** "Flee" – Gen 39:11,12; 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:22. And where should we run? See Prov 18:10. Believers must not even permit themselves the thought of sexual immorality (Matt 5:28; Eph 5:3). We should not try to see how close we can get without sinning, but stay as far away from it as possible.

19 What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have *received* from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

**7** Now concerning the things you wrote to me about: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, *to avoid* sexual immorality, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband give to the wife the affection due *to her*, and likewise also the wife to the husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body; the husband *does*. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. 5 Do not deprive one another, unless *it is* with *mutual* consent for a time in order to give yourselves to fasting and prayer. Then come

**6:19,20** See 3:16. The temple does not belong to itself but to God. It is set apart for His worship and praise. A believer has no right to use his body as if it were his own. Here is the clearest restriction on the freedom believers have in Christ. They must do only those things which please and honor God's Spirit who lives in them.

"Not your own" – John 6:37; 17:6.

"Price" – Matt 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18,19.

**7:1-40** Certain facts may help us to understand Paul's teaching on marriage in this chapter. Paul believed in the full inspiration of the Bible (2 Tim 3:16), and would never have dreamed of contradicting anything that God had revealed in it. God Himself ordained marriage for the good of mankind (Gen 2:20-24; Matt 19:4-6). Paul himself elsewhere described the marriage relationship in beautiful and meaningful language (Eph 5:25-33). He did not forbid marriage to believers and knew that anyone who did so was deceived (1 Tim 4:1-3). He emphasized the freedom believers had either to marry or not to marry. He did not teach that being single was a holier state than marriage.

He was writing to Christians at Corinth who had written him a letter of enquiry. He was writing them in view of a "present crisis" (v 26), and the "time was short" (v 29). At such a time in his opinion it was better for those who were single to remain so, if they could (vs 8,9). Certain things Paul said here are general truths good for all time, others had to do with the particular circumstances in Corinth at that time.

**7:1** Paul taught elsewhere that it is also good for people to marry (1 Tim 5:14). He certainly would have agreed with Heb 13:4.

**7:2** The single life at Corinth at that time was good, but only if single believers could abstain from sexual immorality (6:13-18).

**7:3-5** Any marriage is headed for trouble

together again, so that Satan does not tempt you because of a lack of self-control. 6 But I say this as a concession *and* not as a command. 7 For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

8 Therefore, I say to the unmarried and widows: It is good for them if they remain just as I *am*. 9 But if they cannot control *themselves*, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*.

10 And to the married I give this command, *yet* not I, but the Lord: The wife must not separate from *her* husband; 11 but if she separates, she must remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband. And the husband must not divorce *his* wife.

12 But to the rest I say *this* (I; the Lord *did* not): If any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 And the woman who has

when either husband or wife will not follow this principle.

**7:5** If they stay apart for a long time they may be giving Satan an opportunity to tempt them to sin with others.

**7:6** He is probably referring here to v 2. He neither commanded believers not to marry nor to marry.

**7:7** "As I myself" – single (vs 8).

"Gift" – God gives the gift of marriage to some, the gift of the single life to others. And we may be sure that all of God's gifts are good. By His grace some have the desire for marriage and the opportunity to marry other believers. Others by God's grace have the desire and ability to live without marriage and without immorality. See Matt 19:11,12. This was true then, and is true now.

**7:9** Being aflame with desire, being always distracted with struggles against sexual temptations, is harmful to the spiritual life. And God wants His people to be spiritual and victorious whether they are married or unmarried.

**7:10,11** What he has said before was not a command (v 6). Believers are free either to marry or not to marry. But having married they are not free to divorce each other. So he gives a command based on the teaching of Christ Himself – Matt 5:32; 19:3-9; Luke 16:18. Marriage between believers is a binding relationship as long as husband and wife live.

"But if" – there may be cases when one of the partners finds the marriage intolerable and leaves. Such a person must not marry again as long as the other partner is still alive.

**7:12-16** "The Lord did not" – Paul does not mean that the Lord Jesus had not taught him about the following circumstances. He means that when Jesus was on earth He did not say anything about them. Paul taught that believers should marry only believers

a husband who is an unbeliever, if he is willing to live with her, she must not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. In such *cases* a brother or a sister is not bound. But God has called us to peace. 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O man, whether you will save *your* wife?

17 But as God has allotted to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him live. And so I appoint in all churches. 18 Is any man called being circumcised? He should not become uncircumcised. Is anyone called being uncircumcised? He should not become circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing. But keeping the commandments of God *is the important thing*. 20 Everyone should remain in the same *situation* in which he was called. 21 Were you called while you

were a slave? Do not be concerned about it. But if you can become free, then use *the opportunity*. 22 For the one who is called by the Lord *while* a slave, is the Lord's free man. Likewise the one who is called *while* free, is Christ's slave. 23 You are bought at a price. Do not become the slaves of men. 24 Brethren, everyone should remain with God in the *situation* in which he was called.

25 Now concerning virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give judgment as one who has obtained mercy from the Lord to be faithful. 26 Therefore I think this is good in the present distress: that *it is* good for a man *to remain* as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you not bound to a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But even if you marry, you have not sinned *by doing so*, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless, such people will have trouble in the flesh, and I would spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short. So that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 and those who weep,

(v 39; 2 Cor 6:14,15; etc). But either a husband or wife may become a believer after marriage and the other not. Paul here gives clear directions about such a case.

**7:14** Observe the way Paul uses the words "sanctified" and "holy" here. He uses it in the sense of being set apart. He is not saying that an unbeliever is cleansed from sin and becomes morally pure because of marriage to a believer. He means that such an unbeliever is set apart from unbelievers who are not married to believers – presumably God will deal with that unbeliever and with the children of such a marriage in a special way. Paul does not explain what he means by this, but we may reasonably think that the difference in treatment will be real and meaningful. On "holy" and "sanctification" see notes at Lev 20:7; John 17:17-19.

**7:15** "Peace" – a believer must live in peace with an unbelieving husband or wife if that is possible, and must be at peace if the unbeliever decides to leave. There should be no bondage, no attempt at compulsion in such a case.

**7:16** "Save" – a believing husband or wife, by a holy life, by a good testimony to Christ, by prayer and patience may bring the unbelieving spouse to Christ and salvation in Him.

**7:17-24** In these verses Paul is speaking of marriage as well as the other conditions of life he uses as illustrations. God has "called" each one to a certain condition, and He has "assigned" each a certain place. The important thing for every believer is to know what God's will for him or her is and remain obedient to it. There should be no grumbling and complaining about one's lot in life, but a recognition that God's will is best and a humble acceptance of it.

**7:17** We should not think Paul is speaking

only about the situation in Corinth.

**7:18** Jews who became believers in Christ should not try to destroy the marks of their Jewishness, and Gentile believers should not think they must be circumcised (as some false teachers taught – Acts 15:1).

**7:19** In this Church era a mark in the body, or the absence of it, has no importance in God's sight. Doing God's will is the important thing. See Gal 6:15; Rom 2:25-29.

**7:21,22** Slavery was very common in those days in the Roman empire, and many slaves believed in Christ. What should they do about their enslaved condition? Accept it with peace, gain freedom if possible (but not, of course, with violence), and recognize that Christ has made them free – free from bondage to sin, death and the law of Moses. Compare John 8:36; Gal 5:1. On the other hand those who are not physically slaves to men should recognize they are Christ's "slaves" (Rom 6:16-22). In other words, believers in every condition of life should recognize that their relationship to Christ is the important thing and serve and glorify Him.

**7:23** See 6:20.

**7:24** The fact that this is the third time he has said this indicates its importance (vs 17,20).

"With God" – whatever situation we as believers are in we should live as in God's presence, recognizing His nearness to us.

**7:25** Verses 10,12.

**7:26** "Distress" – the same Greek word is used in Luke 21:23; 2 Cor 6:4; 1 Thess 3:7. His point is that in certain times and conditions it is better for believers not to marry. It is also true that in all times it is better for some (possibly few) believers not to marry (compare Jer 16:1,2).

**7:29-35** "The time is short" (v 29). It is not clear what Paul meant by this. It is likely he



as though they did not weep, and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice, and those who buy, as though they possessed nothing, 31 and those who use this world, as not misusing *it*. For this world's *present* form is passing away.

32 But I want you to be without anxiety. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord, 33 but he who is married cares for the things of the world, how he may please *his* wife. 34 There is a difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband. 35 And this I say for your own benefit, not that I may put you under restraint, but *to point out* an excellent way so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distractions.

36 But if any man thinks he is not behaving properly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and if it need be so, let him do what he wants, let them marry. He does not sin *in this*. 37 Nevertheless, he who stands firm in his heart, not being under compulsion, but having power over his own will, and having so determined in his heart

foresaw that even greater trouble would soon come on the Church. Some think he was expressing his conviction that the Lord Jesus might come very shortly (compare Rom 13:11,12. Neither he nor any other apostle knew the time of Christ's coming). However that might be, he expected tremendous changes would soon take place (v 31), and he wanted believers to be occupied with only the most important thing on earth – their love and service for the Lord (v 35).

**7:36-38** Paul wants it to be clear that he is not forbidding marriage to anyone. Even in those changing and difficult times he says believers had freedom to do what seemed good to them as they walked with God.

**7:39** Verse 10; Rom 7:2. Paul insists that believers should marry only believers. This is what he meant by "in the Lord."

**7:40** "Happier" – can those who do not marry be as happy as those who do? Yes, even happier, if the single state is God's gift to them (v 7).

"Spirit of God" – Paul knew he had the Spirit of God. He means here that he thought God's Spirit was inspiring him to write as he just did.

**8:1-13** This was another matter of disagreement among Christians in those days – some said it was all right to eat food that had been offered to idols, others said it was wrong. All of them knew certain facts that had a bearing on this question. But Paul raised the discussion to a higher level. Christian love, he says, is more important than knowledge; and knowledge without that

that he will keep his virgin *unmarried*, does well. 38 So then he who gives *her* in marriage does well, but he who does not give *her* in marriage does better.

39 The wife is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband has died, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, *but only* in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she remains as *she is*, in my judgment. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

**8** Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 And if anyone thinks he knows something, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know *it*. 3 But if anyone loves God, that one is known by *God*.

4 So concerning the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice to idols: We know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* but one God, *and* no other. 5 For though there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many *called* gods and lords), 6 yet for us *there is but* one God, the Father, from whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom *we live*.

love can be a harmful thing. He gives the highest possible principles of action for believers – love fellow believers, try to build them up, and abstain from anything that might harm them.

**8:1** Knowledge can produce pride and arrogance in oneself. Acting in love causes others to grow in their Christian lives.

**8:2** No one ever knows all there is to know about any subject. To be proud of one's little knowledge is a foolish thing. It is wisdom to humbly acknowledge how little we know.

**8:3** Love for God is better than all knowledge. In itself it is the highest kind of knowledge (13:2; 1 John 4:7,8). God knows those who love Him – He recognizes them as belonging to Him, He approves of them (compare 2 Tim 2:19; Gal 4:9).

**8:4** Deut 6:4; Ps 115:2-8; Isa 44:6-9.

**8:5** He means that idolaters think there are many gods and lords both in heaven and on earth, but believers in Christ know there is only one true God, one true Lord. See in 10:20 what he says about the many gods and lords some people worship. See also Acts 14:15.

**8:6** Verse 4. To say there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, is not to say the Father is not Lord. Jesus Himself called Him Lord – Matt 11:25. In the same way, to say that there is one God, the Father, is not to say that Jesus Christ is not God. God the Father inspired the writers of the Bible to call Him God (Isa 9:6; John 1:1; Acts 20:28; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:3,8;



7 However everyone *does* not *have* this understanding. For some, being conscious of the idol, to this hour eat *such food* as something offered to an idol, and because their conscience is weak *it* is defiled. 8 But food does not commend us to God. For if we eat, we are not the better, or if we do not eat we are not the worse.

9 But watch out that somehow this liberty of yours does not become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have understanding sit at food in the temple of an idol, will not his weak conscience encourage him to eat those things which are offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother, for whom Christ died, be ruined? 12 But when you sin against the brethren like this, and

wound their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ. 13 Therefore, if *such* food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, lest I cause my brother to stumble.

**9** Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 *Even* if I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 This is my defense to those who judge me: 4 Have we not the right to eat and to drink? 5 Have we not the right to take along a wife, a sister *in the Lord* just as the other apostles, and as the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or have only I and Barnabas not the right to refrain from

1 John 5:20).

Paul says that through Him all things came into existence – these same words are used of God in Rom 11:36. Actually, to say that Jesus is Lord is to say He is God. See notes at Luke 2:11; Phil 6,10,11. Are there, then, two Gods? Absolutely not. There is one God, three persons in the one Godhead. Notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc. Observe that Paul defines the one true God as the Creator of all things (Gen 1:1; Isa 40:25-28). He is the One we should seek, the one we should worship, and no other.

**8:7** He means not everyone knows that an idol is nothing, and that food offered to an idol is still just food and does not become unclean. They thought it was wrong to eat such food even in their own homes, and if they ate it their consciences accused them. A “weak” conscience is one which thinks something is sinful though it actually is not, or one which is not able to decide whether it is sinful or not.

**8:8** This is what some at Corinth would have said. Paul agreed with it, but says in the following verses that there is a higher principle than this.

**8:9-13** Compare 10:23-33; Rom 14:14-23. Believers have freedom to eat or not to eat this or that food. But there are other matters which should concern them more than this freedom. Fellow believers should mean more to them than pleasing themselves.

**8:10** “Temple of an idol” – Paul later said that no believer should eat in such a place (10:19-21), and he certainly is not suggesting here that it is all right to do so.

**8:11** Christ loved those weak brothers enough to die for them. Should not strong believers love them enough to abstain from behaving in a way that might harm them?

“Ruined” – or “destroyed” – Rom 14:15. This means injured in their spiritual life. It does not speak of final destruction from the presence of the Lord as in 2 Thess 1:9 (see John 6:37-40; 10:27-29; Rom 5:9,10; 8:28-39).

**8:12** Anyone who is the cause of a believer sinning is sinning himself both against that believer and against Christ (compare Acts 9:4; Ps 51:4).

**8:13** This is a principle Paul always followed, not just in the matter of food. And so must we (10:24,32,33). It is the principle of love. Those who love as they ought are always willing to deny self for the good of others.

**9:1-27** The principle Paul taught in chapter 8 was self-denial for the good of other believers. In this chapter he sets before believers his own example. He did not preach one thing and practice its opposite. Several times in this chapter he refers to his freedom and his rights – vs 1,4,5,12,19. But he did not use his freedom and rights to please himself, but thought only of how he could help others come to Christ and be built up in faith. He concludes by saying that self-denial is the only way any servant of Christ can win the rewards God promises His faithful servants.

**9:1** “Free” – he speaks of spiritual liberty, freedom from any law regarding foods, etc.

“Apostle” – he means that an apostle should have as much freedom and as many rights as other believers.

“Seen. . . our Lord” – 15:8; Acts 9:3-5.

**9:2** Some were denying that Paul was an apostle. But the believers at Corinth should not be so foolish. It was through him that they believed in Christ – 4:15.

**9:3** His defense against those who denied he was an apostle is in vs 1,2.

**9:4-14** In this portion he speaks of the “rights” of the apostles (or, for that matter, any others Christ sends into His work). These “rights” were to eat and drink whatever they wanted (v 4), to marry and take along their wives on their journeys (v 5), and to receive their full support from those they ministered to (vs 6-14).

**9:4** Rom 14:14.

**9:5** “Brothers of the Lord” – Acts 1:14.

“Cephas” – Peter (John 1:42). He was married (Matt 8:14), and apparently his wife went with him on his travels.

**9:6** Acts 18:3; 20:34.

working *for a living* ?

7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock, and does not drink of the milk from the flock? 8 Do I say these things *on my own* as a man? Does not the Law also say the same *thing*? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses,

You shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn.

Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Or does he say *this* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, so that the one who plows might plow in hope, and the one who threshes in hope might share in his hope. 11 If we have sown spiritual *seed* in you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? 12 If others are taking part in *this* privilege among you, *should* we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this privilege, but endure all things, so we would not hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do you not know that those who work among the holy things *of the temple* eat *of the offerings* of the temple? And those who serve at the altar share in *what is offered* on the altar? 14 Even so

**9:7** He uses these illustrations to show how natural it is that churches should support those who work for Christ in them.

**9:8,9** Deut 25:4; 1 Tim 5:17,18.

**9:11** Here is the application of the illustrations.

"Spiritual seed" – apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers sow the Word of God (Luke 8:11).

"Reap material things" – that which was needed for their support.

**9:12** See the principle which worked in Paul's heart. For the sake of Christ's gospel he was willing to renounce any rights, abstain from any action that might offend others, put up with anything. See 2 Tim 2:10. He is an example to us all (4:16; 11:1).

**9:13** See Lev 7:6,8-10,14,28-36.

**9:14** Verse 11; Matt 10:9,10; Luke 10:7,8. It is the solemn duty of all assemblies or groups of Christians to support to the best of their ability the servants of Christ who labor among them. Any group which will not do so is being disobedient to the Lord Himself.

**9:15-18** Paul was entrusted with the secret truths of God (4:1,2), and Christ had sent him to proclaim them (Acts 20:24; Gal 2:7; Eph 3:8). Whether he wanted to do so or not, he still had to do it. If he did not, it meant "woe" (v 16. This indicates some sort of loss or punishment). So preaching the gospel was no reason for boasting. But he had a ground for boasting. It was this: he preached without pay. In this way he proved that his motives were good, that he was preaching "willingly", that he was not like a hired man. He was like a soldier who

the Lord has ordained that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these things. Nor have I written these things that it should be done to me *like this*. For I *consider it* better to die than have anyone make this boast of mine void. 16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast about, for necessity presses on me. Yes, woe is me, if I do not preach the gospel! 17 Now if I do this willingly, I have a reward, but if against my will, *still* a stewardship *of the gospel* has been entrusted to me. 18 What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may set forth the gospel of Christ without charge, that I do not misuse my privilege in the gospel.

19 For though I am free from *bondage* to all, yet I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more *of them*. 20 And to the Jews I became like a Jew, that I might win the Jews; to those who are under the Law, like *one* under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those without the Law, like *one* without the Law (not being without law toward God, but under Christ's law) that I might win those who are without the Law. 22 To the weak I became like *one*

served at his own expense (v 7), happy to serve so good a master as the Lord Jesus. In v 18 he speaks of his pay. His pay was to serve without pay and so prove his integrity and love.

**9:19** Chapters 8 and 9 are about the proper use of Christian liberty, of spiritual freedom. Here Paul says he is willing to give it up altogether if it enabled him to bring others to Christ. In other words, he loved people more than his own freedom. His personal likes and dislikes were as nothing to him compared with his desire to do good to others. He wanted to win them more than he wanted to do what pleased him. In the next verses he shows what he meant by saying he made himself a "servant" (or "slave" – the Greek word means either) to all. He speaks of three kinds of people – the Jews, the Gentiles, and those weak in conscience and faith.

**9:20** He did things that would make his teaching more acceptable to the Jews – if those things were not contrary to the Christian faith and way of life. Examples of this are recorded at Acts 16:3; 18:18; 21:20-26.

**9:21** "Without the law" – Rom 2:12. Working among people who were not Jews he ignored Jewish laws and ceremonies. This does not mean he ignored the moral requirements of the law (see Rom 8:4). He knew he still must obey God and follow the spiritual laws Christ taught.

**9:22** "Weak" – 8:7; Rom 14:1. He was careful not to offend or grieve them. He gave up his freedom and his rights so that he might win them to more spiritual views. Not the pleasing of self, but the good of

weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. 23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might share in it with *you*.

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may get *the prize*. 25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* uses self-control in all things. Now they *do it* to get a perishable crown, but we an imperishable *one*. 26 Therefore I run accordingly, not uncertainly; I

others was his aim among all kinds of people. See Rom 15:1-3.

**9:23** The gospel was the important thing to Paul, not his preferences, his appetites, or his "rights." "Share" means partake with others in the blessings of the gospel and not simply to have them himself.

**9:24-27** Do we wish to win the rewards God gives for faithful service? There is only one way, the way Paul took. It is the way of self-denial and discipline for the sake of the gospel. See Matt 10:38; 16:24; Luke 9:23.

**9:24** Is service for Christ then, like running a race? In some respects, yes. See Acts 20:24; 2 Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1. And not everyone who runs gets a prize. The prize Paul speaks of is not salvation (this is a gift and all believers have it, not just one among many - Eph 2:8,9). The prize is some reward for service to Christ.

**9:25** "Crown" - note at 2 Tim 4:8. The New Testament speaks of several crowns which Christ's servants may win - 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; Jam 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4. Athletes take great pains and undergo rigid training and discipline to win the temporary rewards they get on earth. Should not Christ's servants be at least as wise and as dedicated as they? The rewards we can win are eternal. **9:26** Paul ran with a goal in mind - Phil 3:13,14. He did not make a pretense of fighting. He actually fought, and he fought to win - 2 Tim 4:7.

**9:27** "Roughly discipline" - this is from a Greek word meaning literally "to strike under the eye" and is used figuratively as in the above translation. It has also been translated "buffet" or "bruise", but we should not think that he physically afflicted his body. He is speaking of self-control. He did not pamper his body, but forced it to obey him. It seems, then, he regarded his body as a possible danger, as something that could get the upper hand over him, as a strong fighter which had to be subdued (compare Rom 7:24). And he refused to be a slave to his body, but by discipline and self-denial he aimed to make his body his slave. He wanted that future eternal prize of God's approval. For that he was willing to renounce the present ease and pleasures of the body.

Evidently, Paul knew no easy way to live a holy, spiritual, fruitful Christian life. For him the way involved real struggle and determination to subdue the flesh by God's Spirit.

fight accordingly, *and* not like someone who beats the air, 27 but I roughly discipline my body, and treat *it* like a slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be approved *for the prize*.

**10** And, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all

"Not be approved" - this is a more accurate translation than "be a castaway" (which is actually misleading). Several versions of the Bible have "be disqualified." He is not saying here that he feared he might lose his salvation, but his rewards (compare 3:12-15; 2 Tim 2:5). The body is the home of the sinful nature in men. It wants nothing but the satisfaction of its desires and cravings. A body not kept under control will bring a person under its control. This can lead to gluttony, drunkenness, immorality, and other sins of the flesh.

**10:1-11** "And" - in the closing verses of chapter 9 Paul speaks of the necessity of self-denial and discipline, and gives himself as an example of one who practiced them. Now he gives examples (vs 6,11) from the history of Israel of those who did not practice them, and he shows the terrible consequences of giving in to evil desires.

**10:1** "Cloud" - Ex 13:21,22. "Sea" - Ex 14:21,22,29. Paul is saying they all - the whole nation of Israel - came out of Egypt and started the journey for Canaan.

**10:2** "Baptized" - their passage through the sea was like a baptism. It was a picture of a complete break with the old life they had lived in Egypt. There were baptized "into Moses." The Greek word translated "into" (eis) also means "into", "for", "in", "on", "to-ward", "concerning." The meaning is they were brought under the leadership of Moses. He was to be the head of a united people on their journey to Canaan. Christian baptism has a similar meaning. It signifies a new life lived under the Lordship of Christ, united to Him as the Head of the Church.

**10:3** This food was manna. See Ex 16:14,15.

**10:4** See Ex 17:5,6. The manna and water are called "spiritual" because they were given miraculously by God's Spirit. The rock from which the water came was a type or picture of Christ who gives the "living water" (John 4:10,14; 7:38,39; 19:34). The Old Testament nowhere says that the literal rock went rolling through the desert with the Israelites as they journeyed (though it should not be thought impossible that water from the rock made a channel and followed them - Ps 105:41). But Christ Himself went with them and provided all they needed. Paul says the rock which accompanied them and provided for them was Christ.

In the Old Testament "Rock" is a symbol of the one true God, Jehovah (note at Deut

drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not pleased; their bodies were scattered in the desert.

6 Now these things *happened as* examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things, as they craved *them*. 7 And do not become idolaters, as some of them *were*. As it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 And let us not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell *dead*.

9 And let us not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. 10 And do not complain, as some of them

32:4). In this way Paul is saying that Christ is Jehovah. (See also v 9; Gen 16:7; Ex 3:2; 32:34; John 8:24,58; 12:41; other references at Luke 2:11.)

**10:5** In spite of all they experienced of God's grace, in spite of all their great privileges as the people of God, the vast majority of them never reached Canaan. They were "not approved for the prize" (9:27). God's punishment came upon them and they wandered aimlessly in the desert until they died.

**10:6-10** Here are the reasons why they failed and fell in the desert. Paul speaks of five sins they were guilty of – setting their hearts on evil things, idolatry, immorality, testing God, and grumbling. These are all examples of common sins which all Christians must avoid. If we do not avoid them, have we any right to expect that our end will be better than theirs?

**10:6** Setting the heart on evil things instead of on the Lord alone is a root cause of all other sin. Paul elsewhere tells believers to put all evil desires to death (Col 3:5). If we permit them to remain in our hearts we will find that eventually they will bite like poisonous snakes.

**10:7** Ex 32:6. Afterwards Israel fell into idolatry again and again. In His Word God everywhere condemns idolatry (v 14; Ex 20:3,4; etc).

**10:8** Num 25:1-9. Numbers tells us that 24,000 died in the plague God sent. Paul says 23,000 died "in one day." Evidently the other 1,000 died later. God detests adultery and forbids it in the clearest terms (Ex 20:14; etc).

**10:9** Num 21:4-9. This is another very serious sin which is all too common among Christians.

**10:10** Num 14:1-4,37; 16:41-49. The destroying angel brought the plague which killed them. Grumbling about one's lot may be the most common of all sins among Christians. God views it very seriously.

**10:11** "Examples" – God wants us to see that what He hated among His people then He hates now, and that punishment will follow sin as surely as day follows night.

complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened to them as examples. And they are written as a warning to us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands watch out that he does not fall.

13 No temptation has taken hold of you but such as is common to man. But God *is* faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able *to bear*; but with the temptation will also make a way to escape, so that you may be able to bear *it*.

14 Therefore, my dearly loved ones, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men. Judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing for which we give thanks, is it not the communion of

"Ends of the ages" – Heb 9:26. The first coming of Christ brought to an end all previous ages and began a new one. We should learn the lessons God taught in previous ages.

**10:12** In other words, self-confidence can be disastrous. No matter how great our privileges and how favorable our circumstances, no matter how much we know and have experienced, we may still fall into terrible sin. We must always recognize our weakness and find our strength in the Lord. And we must follow Paul's example in 9:27.

**10:13** Temptations will "take hold of" believers as they do everyone else. But believers have a promise that others do not have, and a very great promise it is. God will never let any temptation be so powerful, so attractive that a believer cannot resist it. He will always provide a way out of it. He is absolutely faithful. Of course, we must want that way and look for it. Otherwise we may not see it. If we want to be overcome because the sin we are tempted to do is pleasing to us, then we are in grave danger of falling. If we fall into sin we should never try to accuse God of allowing a temptation we could not resist. See also Matt 6:13.

**10:14-22** Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper and also a feast before idols. Those who take part in the first must keep themselves far from the second. To attend a feast before an idol or in an idol temple is an act of idolatry; it is to get involved with demons.

**10:14** Verse 7; 1 John 5:21. From some things believers should simply run and keep as far away as possible. Compare 6:18.

**10:16** We must interpret this verse in the light of Matt 26:26-28. Compare also John 6:53-58,63. "Communion" does not mean a literal eating of the body and blood of Christ. It means spiritual participation, a partaking together. We take the literal bread and wine but partake in the Spirit with Christ. The bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are symbols of the relationship believers have with the Lord (compare v 18). They are reminders of His death for them which they participate in by faith. The Lord's

the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For *though we are many we are one bread, one body, for we all partake of that one bread.*

18 Look at Israel according to the flesh. Do not those who eat of the sacrifices partake of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? 20 *No*, but *I say* that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink *both* the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons. You cannot take part in the Lord's table, and in the table of demons. 22 Are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful for me, but not all things build up. 24 No one should seek his own

*benefit*, but each one *the benefit* of others.

25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions, for conscience sake. 26 "For the earth and its fullness belongs to the Lord."

27 If any of those who are unbelievers ask you *to a feast*, and you have a mind to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question, for conscience' sake. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered in sacrifice to idols", do not eat *it*, for the sake of the one who pointed this out, and for conscience' sake; for the earth and its fullness belongs to the Lord. 29 "Conscience", I say, not *meaning* your own, but *that* of the other *person*. For why should my liberty be judged by another *man's* conscience? 30 For if I partake with thanksgiving, why am I slanderously accused for something I give thanks for?

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.

Supper is a ceremony of fellowship with Christ who died for us, a thanksgiving service to Him because He has redeemed us. **10:17** One loaf of bread was used in the usual observance of the Lord's Supper. When believers partake of the bread they show they are united as one body (12:12,13).

**10:18** Lev 7:15; 8:31; Deut 12:18. To eat of the sacrifices is to "partake of the altar." These words give light on what is meant to partake in the blood and body of Christ (v 16). Partaking of the altar obviously did not mean a literal eating of the altar. It signified a close relationship with the altar and its sacrifices. It signified a fellowship with all others who partook of it and in all the altar stood for.

**10:19-21** This is the point Paul was aiming at when he gave the two illustrations in vs 16-18. Participating in Christ signifies fellowship with all others who do so, and acceptance of all that the sacrifice of Christ means. In the same way, participating in a feast before an idol or in an idol temple is to become a part of that whole system of false worship. It is to take part with demons. **10:19** See 8:4.

**10:20** Idols themselves are nothing. But behind the idols are demons (they are the "gods" and "lords" of 8:5). They who worship them may (or may not) think they are giving offerings to God, but they are not actually doing so. This is a very important statement concerning the worship of many people in the world. See also Deut 32:17. To share food offered to idols is like participating with the demons behind them. It is to show a measure of agreement with the worship offered them.

**10:21** "The Lord's table" signifies the feast of the Lord's Supper. There He is the host, and believers who partake of it are guests. "The table of demons" means an idol feast. There demons are the hosts and those who partake are their guests. By using this

language Paul shows how impossible it is for believers to join these two things, or to think that taking part in an idol feast means nothing.

**10:22** See Ex 20:5; Deut 32:21; Ps 78:58. Dare we think we are strong to do what He forbids or stand when His anger is aroused?

**10:23** See 6:12.

**10:24** He returns to this important principle - 6:9,13; 8:1; Rom 14:19; 15:1-3. See John 13:34.

**10:25** Much of the meat sold in the market had previously been offered to idols. But being in the market it may be bought and eaten at home.

**10:26** Ps 24:1. Meat in the market even though offered to an idol, by creation actually belongs to God, and His people may eat it.

**10:27** This refers to a meal in a house, not a feast in a temple. Paul has already said Christ's believers must not partake of a feast in a temple (vs 20,21).

**10:28** In such a case as this the believer who eats may give the impression that idolatry is unimportant, and this he should never do. And he is troubling the conscience of any other believer present who thinks that it is wrong to eat any meat anywhere that has been offered to an idol (8:7).

**10:29,30** The believer who thinks it is wrong in any circumstance or in any place to eat meat offered to an idol may condemn the believer who is sure he has the freedom to eat it. Paul says it is better not to use this freedom if this is going to be the result.

**10:31** Now Paul gives a great principle that should govern every act of a believer. Here is the highest motive possible to anyone. If all believers live according to this there will be no divisions and factions in the church and no immorality, no condemning of other believers, no actions which thoughtlessly offend others. If every action in our daily lives must pass under the scrutiny of this verse many things thought harmless or



32 Give offense to no one, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God, 33 just as I please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the *benefit* of many, that they may be saved.

**11** Be imitators of me, just as I also *am* of Christ. 2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and obey the instructions just as I gave *them* to you.

3 But I want you to know that the head of

indifferent will have to go.

**10:32** See 8:9,13; Rom 14:13,20,21. If we live according to v 31 we will fulfill this also. "Church" – note at Matt 16:18.

**10:33** See 9:19-23; 2 Tim 2:10. He did not set before them a way of life that he himself was not willing to follow. Selfish and self-centered people think such a way totally undesirable. But it is the highest kind of life and leads to peace of heart and joy in God and eternal reward.

**11:1** See 4:16; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6. Paul gives here the reason why it is good to follow his example – God had enabled him to live as Christ had lived. In fact, it was Christ in him doing the living (Gal 2:20). And that is the only way they or anyone would have the power to follow Paul's example.

**11:2** "Instructions" – or "traditions." These were the teachings concerning the Christian faith which all the apostles had taught. Now Paul turns to the subject of public worship and shows how believers ought to behave at such times. He continues with this subject to the end of chapter 14.

**11:3** "Head" here means the one in authority. A man is to be in subjection to Christ. The woman is to be subject to her husband (Eph 5:24; 1 Tim 2:11,12; 1 Pet 3:1,5,6). Any attempt by a wife to rule her husband by any means whatever is an attempt to overthrow God's order, and it will certainly have unhappy consequences. Paul does not state here how a husband should use his authority, but he does in Eph 5:25,28,33. When Paul says the authority over Christ is God, he is not saying Christ does not share God's nature (a woman subject to her husband still shares human nature with him. So Christ, though subject to the Father, shares God's nature). Paul is only saying what Christ Himself taught. See John 14:28; 5:19-23.

**11:4-10** Paul is speaking of public worship. At such times all things should be done "properly and in order." Paul makes a distinction between what is proper for men and what is proper for women. He based this distinction not on the customs of the times, but on the basic relationship between men and women which God Himself has revealed (vs 3,7-9).

**11:4** Some think the second use of "head" in this verse refers to Christ (v 3). This would mean that Paul used the word in two different senses in this verse. This seems

every man is Christ, and the head of the woman *is* the man, and the head of Christ *is* God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying with *his* head covered dishonours his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with uncovered head dishonours her head, for that is just like having *her head* shaved. 6 For if the woman's *head* is not covered, let her hair be cut off. But if it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaved, let her *head* be covered. 7 For a man indeed should not cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God. But

unlikely. To dishonor his head probably means to dishonor himself.

**11:5,6** Is it fitting for women to pray or prophesy in public meetings when both men and women are present? Paul does not take up that question here. In 14:34 he says "women should remain silent in the churches." The subject there is prophesying, not praying. He never says specifically that a woman should not pray aloud in public meetings for worship. In the New Testament we see that some women also had the gift of prophesying – Acts 2:18; 21:9. It seems that Paul taught they should not use this gift in public meetings of both men and women, but that they might do so at other times (14:34,35; 1 Tim 2:11,12).

Here in v 5 Paul seems to be saying that if a woman prays (in public, when men are present) or prophesies (at any other time) she should cover her head. A shaven head for a woman was a mark of dishonor. So is praying or prophesying without covering her head, Paul says. He does not say that covering the head is necessary even when not praying aloud or prophesying.

Some people may say that coverings for the head (or long or short hair – vs 14,15) are only symbols and not important. It is true that they are symbols, but symbols God has appointed have their importance, and those who are ready to get rid of the symbols may be showing also their readiness to get rid of that which the symbols signify. But, someone may say, isn't all this a comparatively small matter? What if it is? Believers are not to please themselves even in those things they think are small matters (10:29,33; 11:1). But don't Christians have freedom? They have freedom, but they should use their freedom to do what is fitting, and not to act contrary to what is fitting.

**11:7-10** He does not base his views of what is honorable or dishonorable on local customs, but on God's purpose in creating men and women. He is speaking of the creation of the first man and woman (Genesis chapters 1 and 2).

**11:7** Here is the reason a man should not cover his head in public worship. An uncovered head is a sign of authority and God gave to man authority over all other created things on earth, including woman. In this way a man reflects the glory of God who is the supreme Ruler over all. Women should



the woman is the glory of the man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man. 9 Nor was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 For this reason a woman should have a *symbol of man's* authority on *her* head, because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless, in the Lord, man is not independent of woman, and woman is not independent of man. 12 For as woman *is* from man, even so man *is* through woman; but all things are from God. 13 Judge for yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God *with her head* uncovered? 14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him? 15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her. For *her* hair is given to her as a covering. 16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither *do* the churches of God.

17 In what I have to tell *you* now I do not praise *you*: your meeting together *does* not

cover their heads, Paul says, because it is a sign of submission to the God-given authority men have over them. By submitting to man's authority a woman is reflecting man's glory.

**11:8,9** See Gen 2:20-23. He is saying that God put man first in creation to show woman's subordination (woman was "for man", not the reverse of this).

**11:10** Here is another reason why women should cover their heads when praying or prophesying, and this reason too had nothing to do with customs at Corinth. Angels are watching the gatherings of believers and they know what is fitting and what is not fitting. Christian women should not behave in a way which is offensive to these messengers whom God has sent forth to serve believers (Heb 1:14).

**11:11,12** Paul did not want his readers to think he is exalting men and putting women far below them in everything. In the matter of authority man is the head, but in everything else there is a mutual dependence. God has appointed it that a man and his wife form a unit.

**11:13** Paul thinks the matter is so plain that believers should be able to see the truth without any instruction from him.

**11:14,15** Paul says long hair is a disgrace to a man but a glory to a woman, and that they should know this without him saying it. What would he say in these days when many women (especially in western countries) cut off their "glory", and many men seem proud of their "disgrace"? Paul does not define "long", but plainly means that women should have longer hair than men. "Covering" in v 15 is not the same covering he speaks of in vs 5,6.

**11:16** Paul was aware that some will want to dispute what he says. He will not argue. It is enough that he has presented the truth – truth followed by all the churches in his day.

**11:17** Verses 22,34.

*produce* the better, but the worse. 18 First of all, I hear that when you meet together as a church, that there are divisions among you; and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be dissensions among you, so that those who are approved *by God* may be revealed among you.

20 Therefore, when you meet together in one place, *it* is not to eat the Lord's supper, 21 for in eating, everyone begins his own supper ahead of *others*, and someone is hungry, and another is drunk. 22 What? Do you not have houses to eat and to drink in? Or do you despise the church of God, and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? I will not praise *you*.

23 For I have received from the Lord that which I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, the *same* night in which he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke *it* and

**11:18** See 1:10-12; 3:3,4. It seems they did not keep their divisions and quarrels private but brought them to church with them.

**11:19** "Dissensions" – even the disputes and factions there were serving a purpose, strange as it may seem.

"Approved" – the Greek word suggests being approved after a test or trial of some kind or other. Evidently God permits divisions, sects, heresies, differences between Christians to occur for a good reason. Such things are a test. They help to reveal which ones are worthy of God's approval. They show who is spiritual, faithful to God's ways, and willing to put into practice the principles Paul has already given in this letter. Without a test there is no passing of a test and no clear revealing who would pass it if there were one.

**11:20-22** They said they were observing the Lord's Supper. But they abused the occasion so badly that Paul says it should not even be considered the Lord's Supper. Some churches in those times had a common meal in connection with the Lord's Supper. Because the object of it was to show their love for one another it was called a "love-feast" (Jude 12). But at Corinth it could not rightly be called that, for the Christians there were not thinking of one another but only of themselves or their factions. Their behavior in the church was as if they despised the church (v 22). They forgot that the Lord's Supper spoke of union with Christ and with one another (10:16,17).

**11:23** He now begins to reveal again what the Lord's Supper means and how it should be observed. He had once passed this truth on to them but they had gotten away from it. What he had passed on he had received from the Lord Jesus. It agrees with the accounts given in the Gospels. See Matt 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-22.

**11:24** "My body" – the bread (v 28) in the Lord's Supper is a symbol of the body of

said, "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same manner also *he took* the cup after he had eaten, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death, until he comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats this bread and drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But a man should examine himself, and then eat

of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, not discerning the Lord's body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many have fallen asleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we will not be condemned with the world.

33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 And if anyone is hungry let him eat at home, so that your

Christ. On the use of symbols in the New Testament see notes on John 6:53-58,63.

"For you" – this means Christ gave His body to death on the cross as a sacrifice for believers.

"Do this" – this is a solemn command of the Lord Jesus Himself. So any believer who wishes to be obedient must partake of the Lord's Supper.

"In remembrance" – at the time of the Lord's Supper we are to look up and look back (and look within – v 28). Our thoughts should be on Christ above and what He did for us in His death on earth long ago.

**11:25** The cup contained wine which, according to Matt 26:28, was a symbol of Christ's blood. It was shed to establish the new covenant (see notes there). Notice the wording here: "this cup is the new covenant." It is obvious that the cup was not literally the new covenant. The cup was simply a cup, but it was a symbol of the new covenant in Christ's blood. We should understand in the same way v 24 which speaks of the bread being Christ's body. It is not His literal body, but a symbol of it. Observe that Paul is teaching them to drink from the cup as well as eat the bread. A proper observance of the Lord's Supper requires both.

**11:26** "Proclaim" – in the New Testament this word is usually used of preaching the gospel. Believers' keeping the Lord's Supper is like a gospel sermon, not in words but in action. The subject of this sermon is the death of Christ for sinners. God's purpose is that this proclamation should go on in this way until the second coming of Christ.

"As often" – Paul nowhere says how often believers should observe the Lord's Supper.

**11:27** To whom is Paul giving this very serious warning? What is meant by "an unworthy manner"? It is not to think oneself unworthy of participating. It is not partaking with a sense of sinfulness or even a knowledge that one has sinned (if that sin has been confessed and forsaken before partaking of the Supper). Verses 18-22 reveal one unworthy manner. Taking part in the Lord's Supper carelessly, without reverence, without remembering its meaning and applying it to oneself, is to partake in an unworthy manner.

Participating while living in sin, of course, is also in an unworthy manner. And

participating in an unworthy manner is to sin (be guilty) concerning the body and blood of Christ. That is, it shows disrespect for the symbols of His body and blood, and this is all the same as showing disrespect for His body and blood. And this is no small sin.

**11:28** Taking part in a worthy manner requires preparation of heart and mind. So believers should look at their outward lives and their inner condition before partaking. All sin, all irreverence, all thoughtlessness should be renounced and forsaken. And each one should make sure he or she understands the meaning of the Lord's Supper and the reason for taking part in it.

**11:29** "Judgment" here does not mean God's eternal condemnation. It means God's displeasure and His chastening hand, as v 30 makes clear.

"Not discerning the Lord's body" – has two possible meanings. It may mean not recognizing the meaning of the Lord's Supper, failing to realize it is not a meal like any other (the Corinthians were failing in this). Or it may mean not recognizing that all real believers form the body of Christ (10:17; 12:12,13). The Corinthians with their factions and quarrels were failing in this also).

**11:30** This is the judgment they were bringing on themselves. This is some of the harm their meetings were causing (v 17). God requires that His people behave in a fitting and orderly way (14:40). If they do not, what God intended to be a blessing to them will result in judgment and punishment.

"Fallen asleep" – see also 5:5 and note. Here "fallen asleep" means departed from this life (note at John 11:11-14).

**11:31** Verse 28. We must examine ourselves, judge what is wrong in us or in our behavior and turn from it. Then God will bless us instead of punishing us.

**11:32** Heb 12:5-13. We should welcome anything God does to keep us from being condemned with the fallen, sinful world. Notes on world at John 15:18,19; Rom 12:2; Jam 4:4; 1 John 2:16.

**11:33,34** These verses help us to understand what Paul meant in v 29. There must be a proper recognition of the purpose of the Lord's Supper and the unity of the Church.

meetings together *do not lead* to judgment. And when I come I will set the remaining matters in order.

**12** Now concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant. 2 You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to dumb idols, being led somehow. 3 Therefore I give you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and that no one can say

**12:1** Here begins three chapters on the same subject – “spiritual gifts.” These gifts are abilities to do things believers could not do otherwise. We should understand that possessing spiritual gifts does not in itself make believers spiritual. Believers at Corinth had spiritual gifts but they were behaving like unspiritual people and acting like people of the world (3:1-4). What an empty thing it is to boast of having some spiritual gift or gifts while living in a carnal, worldly way! In chapters 12-14 Paul teaches the following eleven things about these gifts.

God’s Spirit gives them (12:4,7,11).

They are given and should be used under the Lordship of Christ (12:3,5).

Each believer has some gift or other (12:7,11).

No particular gift is possessed by all believers (12:29,30).

All the gifts are for the good of all, not for personal benefit (12:7; 14:3-12,19; 10:33 - 11:1).

God gives the gifts to promote unity, not to divide believers (12:25).

God’s love working in believers is greater than any gift or all of them together (13:1-13).

Believers should desire spiritual gifts (12:31; 14:1).

Prophecy is the greatest of the gifts (14:1).

No one should think himself superior to others because he has some gift or other (4:7; 13:4; 12:21,25).

In using the gifts believers must behave in a fitting and orderly way (14:40).

If every believer had always taken all these truths to heart, there would not have been all the quarreling and divisions over spiritual gifts that have afflicted the churches.

**12:2** Before they became Christians they went after idols in a blind, unreasoning way. They themselves hardly knew what they were doing, or why. There were influences and powers at work they did not know or resist.

“Dumb idols” – Ps 115:4-7; Hab 2:18,19.

**12:3** “Accursed” – some Jews did this. They said Jesus was a blasphemer whose crucifixion was a proper punishment. Paul says such people cannot have God’s Spirit. Saying Jesus is “Lord” is saying He is the incarnation of Jehovah God. See Luke 2:11; Phil 2:10,11. No one can say this with faith

that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

4 Now there are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are various kinds of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are various kinds of working, but it is the same God who works all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the benefit *of all*. 8 For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge through the same

except by the working of God’s Spirit in him. Others will be able to say the words without meaning them.

**12:4-6** Paul emphasizes the one source of all that believers have and can do in God’s work (compare Eph 4:3-7). The three persons of the Trinity are here (notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc).

**12:7-11** Observe that any spiritual gift (and not just one, such as miraculous powers or tongues) is proof that God’s Spirit is working in a person.

**12:7** The common good of all believers is a constant theme of Paul (10:24,33; 14:5,26; Rom 14:19; 2 Cor 8:13,14). “Manifestation” means that the Holy Spirit who is in the bodies of believers (6:19) reveals His presence through spiritual gifts.

**12:8-10** Not all spiritual gifts are in this list. Paul mentions some others in v 28 and Rom 12:6-8.

**12:8** “Word of wisdom” – this means the ability to speak to others in a wise and helpful way. We should understand the words “wisdom” and “knowledge” by Paul’s use of them in other places, especially other places in this Corinthian letter. Wisdom is not human wisdom, but Christ and His cross (1:17-24). It is God’s revelation of the gospel and the deep truths connected to it (2:6). God’s Spirit gives some people (the apostles had it in full measure) a special ability to understand this wisdom and communicate it to others.

“Knowledge” is similar, but not exactly the same. Here it may include the ability to understand people and circumstances and speak fitting words to lead others to a fuller knowledge of Christ and His truth. Doubtless there is such a gift, but whether it is this that is here called “the message of knowledge” is not certain. Certainly we should not think this is an ability (that some people these days claim to have) to get a revelation from God regarding what other people should do in their personal lives. In the matter of decisions that need to be taken in life, each believer should try to understand the principles given in the Word of God, depend on the Lord alone for guidance, and go directly to the Lord for that guidance (after listening to the advice of wise friends, if he wants).

On “knowledge” see 1:5; 13:2,8; 14:6; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 4:13; Phil 1:9; 3:8; Col 1:9,10; 2:3; 3:10; 2 Pet 3:18.

Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *various* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all of these, distributing to each one individually as he wills.

12 For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body,

**12:9** The faith that any believer has is a gift of God (Eph 2:8,9; Phil 1:29). But the Holy Spirit gives special faith, or a larger measure of faith to some believers (compare Rom 12:3). This enables them to serve in ways not possible to those without it.

"Gifts of healing" are abilities to heal people by God's power. Notice the plural – "gifts." It would seem that not all diseases can be healed by using the same "gift."

**12:10** "Working of miracles" must mean an ability to do miracles other than healing the sick, for these powers are given to "another." Paul does not explain what miracles they may be. But we may be sure they were for the common good of all believers (v 7), not for the fame of the individual who had this gift.

"Prophecy" is the ability to receive a message from God and deliver it by the Holy Spirit. The message may or may not have to do with the future. The gift of discerning spirits is the ability to know whether someone speaking or prophesying is doing so by God's help or not. Not everyone who seems inspired by God really is. He or she may be inspired by an evil spirit or by his or her own aroused spirit. See 14:29; 1 John 4:1; 1 Thess 5:20,21; Jer 14:14.

"Tongues" – or "languages" the Greek word (*glossai*) appears 50 times in the Greek NT (21 times here in chapters 12-14). Eighteen times it refers to the physical tongue. The other times it means some language or other. In Acts chapter 2 when the apostles spoke in tongues they spoke ordinary human languages which they did not know themselves but which their hearers did know (Acts 2:4,6,8,11). See also the note at Acts 10:46). Is Paul using the word "tongues" here in chapters 12-14 with a different meaning? Some think so and some think not. The matter has not been proved either way to the satisfaction of all believers (there are obscure expressions in Paul's language in chapter 14 which have tended to keep the matter in doubt). But would it not be strange for the word "tongues" to be used in one way everywhere else in the Bible and in a different sense only here in these chapters of 1 Corinthians?

But whatever Paul means by the gift of tongues, here he clearly teaches that not all believers have it any more than they all have gifts of healing or miraculous powers or any of the other gifts. The words "to another" indicates this. See also v 28. This gift is not the sign that a believer has been baptized

being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. 13 For with one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slave or free, and have all been given to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not the hand, I do not belong to the body", does it therefore not belong to the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not the eye, I do not belong to

or filled with God's Spirit, and it is not more a manifestation of the Spirit in a person than any other spiritual gift. The "interpretation of tongues" is the ability given by God to understand the meaning of what is said in "tongues" and put it in words understood by the hearers.

**12:11** Verse 7. God's Spirit fully knows each person and what spiritual gift or gifts each should have. He gives these gifts (or withholds them) according to His own wise and loving will. We cannot force Him to give any particular gift to us. We may try to do so, and even persuade ourselves that He has given it. But this does not mean we actually have it. We should earnestly desire the best gifts (v 31), but accept without complaint what He decides to give us.

**12:12,13** John 17:21-23; Eph 1:22,23; 4:4; 5:28-30. Here Paul speaks of the true church made up of all believers wherever or whatever they may be, and whatever spiritual gift they may or may not have. "We" in v 13 means believers in Christ, born of God's Spirit (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8).

"With one Spirit we were all baptized" – the Greek word translated "with" here (*en*) is the same word used in Matt 3:11 and Acts 1:5. It is important to recognize this. The word means "in", "with", or "by." Without this Spirit baptism, which, Paul says, every believer has, people may have water baptism and call themselves Christians and be members of local churches, but they are not in Christ's one true Church, His Body. Paul is not speaking of an organization, but about a living body in which God's Spirit lives and works. And the only way to get into it is by God's Spirit.

Everyone who by faith has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour can say and should say "I have been baptized with (in, by) the Holy Spirit." And the aim of each one should be to have the fullness of the Spirit continually (Eph 5:18). See also Luke 11:13.

"Spirit to drink" – see John 7:37-39; 4:10,13,14. Not only does God's Spirit bring believers into Christ's body, He comes into them and lives in them (6:19). He is in them as "living water" springing up to eternal life.

**12:14-26** Paul uses this illustration of a literal human body to teach two principal lessons to those at Corinth. We today need very much to learn these same lessons.

First, just as there is much variety and diversity in the human body so there is also in Christ's body the Church (vs 14-20). Not

the body", does it therefore not belong to the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would* the hearing *be*? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would* the smelling *be*? 18 But now God has set each member in the body as it pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *would* the body *be*? 20 But now *they are* many members, yet but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; again, the head *cannot* say to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 Not *at all*. Those members of the body which seem to be weaker are much more necessary, 23 And those *members* of the body which we think are less honourable, to them we give more honour, and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty. 24 For our presentable parts have no need *of it*. But God has joined the body together, giving the greater honour to that *part* which lacked *it*, 25 so

all parts are the same and God never intended they should be. Remember Paul is speaking about spiritual gifts (v 1). He has said that not everyone has the same gift or gifts (vs 7-11). He emphasizes this truth by this illustration of the body. If some in Christ's body cannot prophesy are they then not a part of the body? If they cannot do miracles or speak in tongues are they not a part of the body? Paul is saying that no one should think they are not. Neither the tongue, nor any other body part, is the whole body.

Second, just as the human body is one body in spite of the variety in its many parts, so is Christ's body one body. There is a dependence of each part on the others (vs 21-26).

**12:18** Here is a truth applicable both to the human body and to Christ's body the Church. Let each believer be content in the place God put him or her and in being the "part" God wanted him or her to be. If he is an "eye" let him function as an eye; if a "tongue" as a tongue; if a "foot" as a foot.

**12:21** He is speaking of believers with different spiritual gifts. No one should try to exclude another believer from fellowship in the body. No one should exalt himself over others. No one should be arrogant and conceited enough to think others are not needed in Christ's body.

**12:25** "No division. . . same care" – words that should be written on the hearts of all believers (1:10,13; John 13:34; Acts 4:32; Rom 12:10; 14:19; 15:1-3; Eph 4:2,3). The results of failure here are sad indeed, and appear everywhere today.

**12:27-30** Paul now applies the illustration of vs 14-26 to the matter of spiritual gifts.

**12:28** "God has placed" – v 18. It is not the business of anyone in the Church to quarrel with God's appointments, or to try for the place of another, or to insist that God give him or anyone else a particular spiritual gift. The use in this verse of the words "first", "second", "third", and "then" suggests Paul was making a list in the order of importance.

that there should be no division in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another, 26 and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, or *if* one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, individual members *of it*. 28 And God has placed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, different kinds of tongues. 29 *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

**13** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I have become sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

It cannot mean the order in which they were given in time. The apostles were given the ability to heal and work miracles at the same time they were called to be apostles (Matt 10:1,2).

Apostles were the infallible teachers and guardians of the gospel of Christ, those who laid the foundation of the Church.

Prophets were inspired communicators (v 10).

"Helps" – every believer should try to help others but some have a special spiritual ability to do so – 16:15.

**12:29,30** It is perfectly clear that the answer to each of these questions is "no." All he has said in this chapter demands this answer. God will give spiritual gifts to His people, or not give them, as He pleases, and when He pleases, and it is wrong for anyone to insist that every believer have any one of these particular gifts or any other particular gift or manifestation of God's Spirit. If anyone insists that everyone who has received Spirit baptism must receive any one particular gift he is going contrary to the teaching of the Word of God and is being divisive.

**12:31** See 14:1. Why should a believer want spiritual gifts? Not for his personal satisfaction, not so others will accept him, not to make a name for himself, but to fulfill the words of 14:12. Each believer should be thinking of the good of others, not his own (10:24). What are the greater gifts? Those that enable us to do the most good to others (14:3,5,12).

"Earnestly desire the best gifts" – 14:1. It seems clear that some Christians are desiring gifts which Paul placed low in his list in v 28, rather than the greater ones.

"Excellent way" – now Paul turns to something far more important than any spiritual gift we may have – love, love like God's love, the greatest gift of all. Without this all our other gifts are as nothing.

**13:1** "Love" is the translation of a Greek



2 And though I have *the gift* of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the*

*poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 Love is patient *and* is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not promote itself, is not puffed up, 5 does not behave rudely, is not

word (agape) not in common use before the writing of the New Testament. It indicates a higher kind of love than any other Greek word, and a higher kind than most Greek speakers (or almost anyone else in the world) ever considered. The noun "agape" is used 116 times in the Greek NT. The verb related to it is used about 137 times. The words are used of God's love and of the love believers should have for one another and for God. It is unselfish love, love that always seeks the good of others. It has nothing to do with lust, selfish desire or love between the sexes. These references give something of the meaning of the word as found in the NT – Matt 5:44; 22:37; John 3:16; 13:1,34; 14:15; 17:24,26; Rom 5:5-8; Eph 5:25; 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:8,9. Agape is divine love.

In this great chapter Paul speaks of the necessity of love (vs 1-3), love's nature (vs 4-7), and love's permanence (vs 8-13). He begins by saying that love is superior to any language on earth or in heaven. Without love the gift of tongues, or any speaking a person might do is nothing but noise. The tongues of angels are the languages angels speak. So the tongues of men are the languages men speak.

In this verse Paul is not stating that he spoke in any language of angels any more than he is stating that he does not have love. The obvious meaning is this: Even supposing that he did speak in a language of angels, it would do no good to anyone, if he did not have love. There is no example in the whole Bible of anyone speaking in any language of angels. When angels came to earth they spoke in the languages of men. They wanted to be understood.

**13:2** Paul now speaks of greater gifts than that of tongues, the greater gifts he told believers to desire (12:31). But without love all of them together do not make a person anything of real worth. Love (and not some spiritual gift or other) is the greatest evidence that we are God's people, and that we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Love is the one manifestation of the Spirit that should appear in every believer's life.

**13:3** Is it possible without love to give away all one possesses or sacrifice oneself? Yes. One may do it thinking to gain merit with God, or from fear of hell, or from dedication to one's religion or ideals. Many are deceived about all this. They think that by what they call good works or works of merit they can earn salvation. But it is all quite useless. In God's eyes so-called good works done without divine love, without this unselfish love for God and man, are not good works at all, and may even be called, in one sense, bad works, because of bad motives.

**13:4-7** What Paul gives us in words about the nature of love we can see perfectly lived out in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is love (1 John 4:8), and Christ is God incarnate and therefore love incarnate. In His life of love He is the great example for all believers.

**13:4** "Patient" – the Greek word here means longsuffering. It indicates the ability, the mind, to endure injuries, wrongs, and harsh words and actions from others without resentment or striking back. This was seen throughout Christ's life and most clearly at the time of His trial and execution – Isa 53:7; Matt 27:14; Luke 23:34; 1 Pet 2:21-23. This is a quality His followers should have – compare Matt 18:22; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:2; Col 1:11; 3:12.

"Kind" – this means active helpfulness to others, even to those who do not deserve it. This quality compels us to a life of usefulness and service. It is a virtue very prominent in Christ's life – Matt 4:23,24; 20:28; Acts 10:38. And it is a virtue Christ demands in His followers – Matt 25:31-40; Luke 6:35; Eph 4:32; Col 3:12.

"Envy" – on this deadly sin see Prov 14:30; 27:4; Matt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5. Envy is to experience pain or resentment at the success or popularity or possessions of others. This feeling is completely foreign to love and Christ was never guilty of it. Christ's followers must endeavor to keep themselves from it – Rom 13:13; Jam 3:14-16.

"Not promote itself" – or "boast." Love much prefers to promote others or to boast about others.

"Puffed up" – or "proud" – love never seeks for applause from others. It is not conceited, but humble and modest. This humble love is seen to perfection in Christ's life. His believers must follow Him in this also (Matt 11:29). Love practices self-denial, not self-assertion (Matt 10:38,39; Luke 9:23).

**13:5** "Does not behave rudely" – or "improperly" or "disgracefully." Love will never act in a way that brings disgrace or dishonor to anyone; will never behave in a way it could ever be ashamed of.

"Self-seeking" – love is not after anything the world values highly, not money, or possessions, or fame, or power, or applause. It is not greedy. It seeks only the good of others. We see this in Christ; we should see it also in His followers (10:24; Rom 15:1,2).

"Not easily provoked" means not swift to take offense, is not quick-tempered. This does not mean that love is inconsistent with deep and terrible anger against sin (God, who is love, is continually angry with the wickedness of men – Rom 1:18; John 3:36; Ps 7:11). See also Mark 3:5. But that is a different matter and a different word is used



self-seeking, is not easily provoked, does not impute evil, 6 does not rejoice in wickedness, but rejoices in the truth, 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. But if *there are* prophecies, they will fail; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect has come, then

in Greek.

"Not impute evil" – love covers wrongs, forgives them, and does not plot revenge (see Matt 5:38-48; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:59,60; 1 Pet 4:8). It does not naturally think others are acting from bad motives; it prefers not to impute sin to them. Christians who love as they ought, prefer to think others are better than themselves (Phil 2:3), and will not wish to judge and condemn anyone (Rom 14:4,10,13).

**13:6** Love, divine love, is not weak, wishy-washy, or sentimental about wrongdoing. It does not compromise with evil. It cannot smile when wickedness appears. "Does not rejoice" suggests the opposite – love grieves at all wrongdoing. It's greatest joy comes when truth triumphs. Love and truth are great companions. Here truth is put as the opposite of evil. Evil has to do with darkness, lies, deceit, and suppression of God's truth (John 3:19,20; Rom 1:18; 2 Thess 10,12). The truth Paul here speaks of has to do with light, with reality, with God. It is the truth of which Christ is the embodiment (John 14:6). If we do not rejoice in this truth we should not vainly imagine that we have the sort of love Paul describes. And without it what are we?

**13:7** "Bears" – the Greek word also means to "protect" or to "preserve by covering." Love bears anything that might come; it is a shield to cover and protect.

"Believes" – love does not believe every lie and tall story men tell. It does not believe the heresies of false teachers. It does not believe what the devil says. This is not the meaning. Love rejoices in the truth (v 6), so can recognize truth. It is not senseless, naive, or blind. But by nature it is not suspicious and cynical but trusting. It is ready to give the benefit of the doubt to people.

"Hopes" – love is not easily discouraged. Failure does not crush it. It can hope when there seems no ground for hope. It believes the grace of God can reach any person, transform any situation.

"Endures" – or "perseveres" – the Greek word comes from a military use. It means to endure every attack of the enemy (compare Eph 6:10-17; 2 Tim 2:10). "Agape", the unselfish love for God and man, goes on in the face of all difficulties, persecutions, sufferings and attacks of Satan and men. It makes believers more than conquerors.

**13:8-12** The meaning is that love, "agape",

that which is in part will be ended. 11 When I was a child I spoke like a child, I understood like a child, I thought like a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know even as also I am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

will go on forever. God is love and only those who love will be with Him in eternity. Some other things which were good and useful as Paul wrote will pass away. By tongues, prophecies and knowledge he seems to be referring to the spiritual gifts seen in 12:8-10, but his meaning may possibly be wider.

Some scholars think he means those gifts will pass away at the completion of the New Testament ("that which is perfect") – until then the gifts (the imperfect) were needed because the Church did not have God's full revelation of truth. Afterwards the gifts were not needed and so passed away. They think the gifts were useful only during the childhood of the Church (v 11), but not now during the times of its maturity.

This interpretation seems unlikely to the author of these notes. Verse 12 seems to put the time of "what is perfect" at the end of this age, or when believers are face to face with Christ in heaven, and not at the completion of the New Testament. The time of "perfection" is a time when they shall "know" even as Christ now knows them. This did not take place at the completion of the New Testament.

**13:8** "Knowledge. . . shall vanish away" – judging from the context, Paul's meaning may be that the ability to give a word of knowledge (12:8) will pass away. Or knowledge may mean imperfect knowledge, or even knowledge in general which is acquired by the process of reasoning and investigation. All that will be unnecessary, for perfect knowledge will come (v 12).

**13:11** Perhaps he means the whole life of believers on earth is like a childhood. Only after Christ's return will they be fully mature. But there seems to be at least a hint that even now we should not act childishly in the matter of love and spiritual gifts – see 14:20.

**13:12** "Darkly" – most mirrors in those days were of poor quality and the reflection seen in them would have been distorted. This is the way things are at present in the matter of our knowledge.

**13:13** These three are pre-eminent in the life of the Church and the individual believer – far more important than any spiritual gift. Is it surprising that Paul says love is greater than faith or hope? Faith is necessary for our very salvation (John 3:36). Hope is the expectation that God will fulfill His promises and it is a vital part of the Christian life (Rom 8:24,25).

How is love greater than these? Faith

**14** Follow after love, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. 2 For he who speaks in an *unknown* tongue does not speak to men, but to God, for no man understands him. However in the spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But he who prophesies speaks to men *for their* edification, and encouragement, and comfort. 4 He who speaks in an *unknown* tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. 5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but would prefer that you prophesied. For he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church

may be edified.

6 Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking in tongues, what benefit will I be to you, unless I speak to you either by *way of* revelation, or knowledge, or prophesying, or doctrine? 7 Even lifeless things making a sound, whether a flute or a harp, unless they give out a distinction in the notes how will it be known what is being played on either flute or harp? 8 And if a trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for the battle? 9 Just so with you. Unless you speak easily understandable words with *your* tongue, how shall it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking

takes, love gives, and it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Faith is like a hand that receives, love is the great thing it receives. Hope is similar to faith and expects good for oneself, love seeks the good of others. Faith and hope are means to an end, love is the end. That which does most for the common good is the greatest and best, and love does this (8:1). Love and love alone causes believers to do what Paul said they should do in 10:24 and 10:31.

After studying this chapter one important question remains – how do we get this “agape”, this unselfish love for God and people? See the answer in Gal 5:22; 1 John 4:7,19; Rom 5:5. Though this love comes from God, believers must yield to it, obey it, and put it into practice (14:1).

**14:1** “Follow after love” – Paul wrote the great words of chapter 13 that we might follow the way of love, not that we might marvel at the nature of love, or admire his skill in writing.

“Desire” – 12:31.

“Prophecy” – 12:10. It seems from this that Paul regarded this gift the greatest of the spiritual gifts that the Corinthian believers could receive. Much of this chapter shows how prophecy is greater than the gift of tongues (except when someone is bringing a message from God in a language unknown to those present and there is interpretation along with it; except, that is, when he is actually exercising the gift of prophecy in a different way – v 5).

**14:2** This seems to some people to be fully convincing evidence that speaking in tongues as practiced in Corinth was not exactly the same as the spiritual ability seen in Acts 2:4-11. At Pentecost the apostles spoke in languages they had not learned and did not know, and the people present understood them without translation. At Corinth people did not understand those who spoke in a tongue unless there was interpretation (vs 5, 13). But what reason is there for thinking that “tongue” does not mean some language spoken on earth?

“Unknown tongue” – the word “unknown” is not in the Greek here. Adding it seems justified because of the words “no one understands him” and because of the necessity for translation if the church is to

be edified (v 5, etc). But “unknown” does not necessarily mean a language that no one on earth knows and uses, only a language that is not known to people where it is being spoken.

“But to God” – this means that no one there in the meeting understood the language but God and (probably) the person who was speaking it (vs 4, 28).

“Mysteries” – 4:1; Matt 13:11; Rom 16:25.

**14:3,4** This is why “prophecy” was greater than “tongues” – it was for the benefit of others. See 10:24,33.

“Edifies himself” – to edify means to build up. Here it means spiritual strengthening. See also 8:1; 10:23; 1 Thess 5:11. Can speaking in a language which the speaker himself does not understand edify him? It seems unlikely. Does Paul mean the speaker is edified because he understands what he is saying even if others do not? Very probably. Usually we think that being edified is a result of hearing and understanding the truth – see the next verse.

**14:5** Paul is not at all belittling the gift of tongues. He himself taught that it was a manifestation of God’s Spirit for the good of the Church (12:7,10). But Paul is speaking against the misuse of this gift. He says they should not use the gift unless there was translation (vs 13,27,28).

“Unless he interprets” – this suggests that “tongues” were meaningful languages which the speakers might be able to translate into other languages, and that what was said in an unknown language, if explained, would edify the church. Paul emphasizes that edification comes by knowing what is said.

**14:6** See 12:8-10. “Benefit” – again we see that Paul always thought of the good he could do others and wanted all believers to have the same purpose (vs 12,19,26).

“Revelation” – v 26. Here this means a message that God reveals to someone to deliver to others in the assembly. This is very like the gift of prophecy, and a revelation might come suddenly to one sitting in a meeting (vs 29-31).

**14:7-11** His whole point here is that speaking an unknown language without translation is useless for those who hear it.

into the air. 10 If there are many kinds of languages to be met with in the world, not even one of them *is* without meaning. 11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the one speaking, and the one speaking *will be* a foreigner to me. 12 Just so *with* you. Since you are zealous for spiritual *gifts*, seek to excel *in gifts that will* edify the church.

13 Therefore the one who speaks in an *unknown* tongue should pray that he may interpret *what he says*. 14 For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What is *the way* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 16 Otherwise when you praise with the spirit, how will he who has his place among the uninstructed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you are saying? 17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other *person* is not edified.

18 I thank my God, I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19 Yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, so that I might teach others, than ten thousand words in an

*unknown* tongue.

20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding. *In regard* to evil be children, but in understanding be mature. 21 In the Law it is written,

With *men of* other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet for all that they will not listen to me, says the Lord.

22 Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers. But prophesying *is* not for unbelievers, but for believers. 23 Therefore if the whole church has met together in one place, and all speak in *unknown* tongues, and *some who are* uninstructed or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are insane? 24 But if everyone prophesies, and an unbeliever or uninstructed *person* comes in, he is *going to be* convicted by everything, he *is going to be* judged by everything, 25 and so the secrets of his heart are *going to be* laid bare. And so, *prostrating himself*, he will worship God, and declare that God is really in you.

26 How is it then, brethren? When you meet together, each one of you has a psalm, *or* has a teaching, *or* has a tongue, *or* has a revelation, *or*

Verses 10,11 seem to indicate that the tongues Paul refers to were nothing else than ordinary foreign languages.

**14:12** Verses 3,4,6,19,26,31; 10:24.

**14:13** Only with translation would it edify others.

**14:14,15** Observe the importance Paul gives here to the mind and understanding. What does Paul mean by the difficult phrase "my mind is unfruitful"? Possibly it means that if someone prays in a language he does not himself understand, his inner being may be praying but his mind is not a part of it. He himself does not understand what he is saying and so there is not even the fullest edification to himself that there would be if he understood. Or it may possibly mean that though he himself understands what he is saying, this understanding, this mental activity, bears no fruit in others because he is not communicating to them. In any case, it is clear from v 15 that Paul wanted his worship to be understood. He wanted his mind as well as his spirit to be engaged in it.

**14:17** "Edified" – notice again this constant theme of Paul (vs 3, 4, 19, 26).

**14:18** "Tongues" – or "languages". Paul was not writing as he did because he did not have this gift. He had it and thanked God for it.

**14:19** "Teach others" – Paul (our example) was always thinking of others and how to edify them, instruct them, encourage, strengthen and comfort them.

**14:20** See 13:11.

**14:21,22** Isa 28:11,12. The people of Israel had fallen into unbelief and would

not listen to their prophets who spoke in a language they could understand. So in judgment God would send them people speaking a language they could not understand. Paul draws a lesson from this for Christians. He says tongues are a "sign" – they pointed to the presence of God's Spirit (12:7). He says this "sign" is not to convince believers, or the person speaking in a tongue that God's Spirit is in him (there is far greater and more necessary evidence than that). Tongues are a sign to unbelievers (compare Acts 2:4-13). Prophecy, however, was given for the edification of believers (vs 3,4).

We should notice that in v 21 "tongues" surely refer to languages spoken in foreign countries. Can it be otherwise in v 22?

**14:23** In v 22 Paul speaks of the gift of tongues properly used. Here he speaks of it being improperly used – everyone speaking in tongues and no translation.

**14:24,25** "Uninstructed person" (v 24) – here means someone who does not yet understand the message of the gospel and teachings of Christ. He will be able to understand the words of the prophecies being spoken. And they may well convince him of his sin and make him a believer in Christ.

"Convicted" – compare John 16:8-11.

**14:26-40** Paul here speaks of the proper use of spiritual gifts in the meetings of believers. His emphasis is on orderliness (vs 26,31,33,40).

**14:26** "Revelation" – v 6. "Edify" – vs 3,4, 12,31. The Greek word translated "edify" literally means "to build a house." Figuratively, it means to build up, to promote spiritual growth.

has an interpretation. All things should be done to edify. 27 If anyone speaks in an *unknown* tongue, *it should be done* by two, or, at the most, *by* three, and *that* by turn, and someone should interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter, *the speaker* should keep quiet in the church, and speak to himself and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak, two or three *of them*, and let the others judge *what is said*. 30 If *anything* is revealed to someone else sitting there, the first *speaker* should be silent. 31 For you may all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn, and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

**14:27** "By turn" – it seems that several were trying to speak at the same time and creating confusion.

**14:27** "Interpret" – vs 5,13.

**14:28** "To himself" – v 2. This may mean that those who had the gift of tongues could understand the tongue they spoke and could exercise the gift without speaking aloud.

**14:29** "Judge" – 1 Thess 5:20,21. They must weigh what was said because of the possibility of false prophets and false prophecies. What should they weigh those spoken "prophecies" against? God's truth as revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures and through Christ and His apostles. Anything not in agreement with this truth was false and dangerous.

**14:30** Verses 6, 26.

**14:31** See how often in this chapter Paul says everything must be done for the good of everybody.

**14:32,33** Using spiritual gifts did not mean losing control of oneself. There was no sweeping away of the will and mind of the individual in whom they were at work. Those who had the gift of prophecy and tongues (and doubtless any other spiritual gift) could keep silent if they chose (vs 28,30). Otherwise there would have been disorder, and disorder and confusion are contrary to God's very nature.

**14:34** The subject of this chapter is using certain spiritual gifts in public meetings of the church – gifts which involve speaking. Paul says women must not do this. They may have these gifts but they must be used at other times. Note at 11:5,6; 1 Tim 2:11-14. Some think that Paul is forbidding women even to pray in public meetings, but this is very doubtful indeed. The context is prophesying and speaking in tongues and translating tongues (vs 26-31). The Greek word translated "speak" in these verses is the same as in vs 5,6,9,19, etc.

"Submission" – 11:3,8,9; Eph 5:24; 1 Tim 2:11,12; 1 Pet 3:1,5,6.

**14:35** "Ask their husbands" – this means, of course, that they can ask them if their husbands are believers in Christ. If not,

34 Your women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but *are* to be in submission, as the law also says. 35 And if they wish to learn something, they should ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for women to speak in the church.

36 What? Did the word of God come from you? Or did it reach only you? 37 If any man thinks he is a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Therefore, brethren, have an earnest desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

(though Paul does not think it necessary to say so) they could ask the pastors and teachers in the church, or other women with more knowledge than themselves.

"Shameful" – 11:6. The Greek word means "base", "shameful", "contrary to modesty or purity", "opposed to what is fitting". It seems that Christians in Corinth thought they could do as they pleased regardless of what other churches did or what the apostles taught.

**14:37** Some Christians there thought they were spiritually very able people. If this was really the case they should have been able to discern a command of the Lord Jesus Himself given through Paul.

**14:38** This seems to mean that if any such person ignores the Lord's command he is not worthy of being heard himself.

**14:39** "Tongues" – or unknown languages.

**14:40** Verse 33. In chapters 12-14 Paul has written of a number of spiritual gifts believers had during the early days of the Church. Have these gifts passed away? Certainly we should not think there are now any apostles of Christ like the original apostles – those who saw the Lord Jesus and heard Him, those whose inspired teachings are infallible. It is a huge mistake to say that any man now has the same authority and infallibility that Christ's apostles had. The Bible was completed in the first century and it contains all the inspired, infallible writings and teachings God wanted men to have. The Bible alone must be the final authority for all of us, and it is the only infallible teaching we need or have or should want to have.

But some of the other gifts spoken of in these chapters (for example, helps and teaching) have certainly not passed away. Have any of the others passed away? The author of these notes does not believe the Bible anywhere indicates that they would either pass away or not pass away in this present age of the Church.

We should understand that God has freedom to do what He wants to do. And if it is His good pleasure to give those gifts to

**15** Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and in which you stand. 2 By it also you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you; unless you believed in vain.

3 For I passed on to you first of all that which I also received: That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that, he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom the majority remains to this present *day*, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After

anyone today, or to withhold them from anyone, He will do so (12:11).

Another thought that comes to many believers is this: if these gifts passed away in the first century it seems strange that the Holy Spirit would include Paul's instructions about them in this portion of the Word of God which is surely for all churches throughout this whole age.

**15:1** "The gospel" – 1:17; 4:15; 9:16,17; Rom 1:1,9,15,16; 16:25; 2 Cor 4:3,4; Gal 1:6-9; Eph 6:19; Phil 1:17,27; 1 Tim 1:11; 2 Tim 1:10.

**15:2** "By which you are saved" – this is why God gave the gospel of Christ (Mark 1:10,16; Rom 1:16). Receiving it in faith means salvation, disobedience to it means eternal punishment (2 Thess 1:8,9). Knowing its vast importance Paul wanted those at Corinth (and everyone else) to understand and believe it.

"If" – Col 1:23; Heb 3:6; 6:6; 10:38. Perseverance in the faith of the gospel is the proof that faith is genuine. See Col 1:23; Heb 3:5,6; 10:39. Some at Corinth were denying that God raises the dead (v 12). But the resurrection of Christ is a vital part of the gospel. Those who denied it were revealing a very defective faith (vs 14,17).

"Believed in vain" may mean believed without knowing what they believed or without understanding the proper basis of belief. Or it could mean that anything that seems to be faith but which does not go on to the end is a vain, worthless thing which cannot save.

**15:3-8** Four important things are associated with the gospel – Christ's death, His burial, His rising from the dead, and His appearances to His disciples. Christ's death was "for our sins" – Matt 26:28; John 1:29; Rom 3:24,25; 4:25; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 1:4; Heb 1:3; 9:28; 10:12; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; Rev 1:5. Anyone who denies that Christ really died is denying the one sacrifice for sins God has provided for mankind, and rejects the one way God has appointed for men to be saved from their sins. Christ's burial was also of great importance. It was the final and needed proof that He was dead (Matt 27:57-66; Mark 15:42-46; John 19:38-40). Christ's

that, he was seen by James; then by all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which *was granted* to me was not in vain, for I laboured far more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Therefore, whether I or they, so we preach, and so you believed.

12 Now if Christ is preached that he rose from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no

resurrection (His spirit entering again His dead body and making it alive again and enabling it to leave the tomb) is also of the utmost importance (vs 13,14,17,18; Rom 4:25; Matt 28:6).

Both the death and resurrection of Christ were "according to the Scriptures" (the Old Testament). See Matt 5:17; Luke 24:25-27,45,46. Christ's appearances to His disciples were also of "first importance." They were the proof that He had risen from the dead. Paul does not list all of His appearances. On Christ's appearances after His resurrection see note at Matt 28:6.

**15:3** "Received" – Gal 1:11,12.

**15:6** "Five hundred" – the law says that facts can be established by two or three witnesses (Deut 17:6; Matt 18:16). Those who saw Christ after His resurrection were in excess of 500, and among them some of the best people the world ever had. There is far more evidence for the death, burial and resurrection of Christ than for any event in the secular histories of the world that deal with olden times.

"Fallen asleep" – departed this life (John 11:11-14).

**15:7** "James" here probably means the Lord's brother (Acts 1:13,14), not either of the apostles of that name.

**15:8** "Seen by me" – Acts 9:3-7.

"One born out of due time" – Paul means he was not one of the original apostles or disciples, that he was still in sin when Christ rose from the dead, and that he became an apostle later on, in an extraordinary way.

**15:9** Acts 8:3; 9:1,2; Eph 3:9; 1 Tim 1:12-15. Paul was happy to do what he told others to do in Phil 2:3.

**15:10** Paul understood that for him to be a servant of God, an apostle, was sheer mercy, indescribable grace (Eph 3:7,8; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:3,4). When he says he worked harder than all, he is exalting the grace of God working in him, not himself.

**15:11** The gospel Paul preached was the same gospel the other apostles preached. There is only one way to salvation. They all knew and preached this one way.

**15:12-19** Some in the church at Corinth (just like the Sadducees – Acts 23:8) were saying that there was no such thing as dead



resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not risen. 14 And if Christ has not risen, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is also in vain. 15 Yes, and we are found *to be* false witnesses about God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ up, whom he did not raise up, if so be that the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ has not been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith *is in* vain, you are still in your sins. 18 Then, also, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20 But now Christ has risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of those who slept.

21 For since by man *came* death, by man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the

bodies coming to life again. Paul points out that if there is no such thing then there are some very sad results – Christ could not have risen (vs 13,16); the preaching of the apostles would be both “useless” and false (vs 15); the faith of Christians would also be useless (vs 14,17); and they would still be in their sins and lost forever (vs 17,18); and all of them would be in a state to be pitied (v 19). In this way Paul shows the absolute necessity of the bodily resurrection of Christ for the salvation of men. It is at the very heart of the gospel. To deny it is to pervert the gospel. It is an attempt to rob the gospel of its truthfulness and power.

**15:14** “Preaching” here means the message they preached, not the act of preaching. Without the resurrection of Christ Christians would have no message and their faith would be worthless and without a valid foundation.

**15:17,18** If Christ did not rise from the dead it would mean that He sank condemned under our sins, that His sacrifice was not acceptable to God, and that no one is justified or forgiven (Rom 4:24,25). And if no one is counted righteous or forgiven, everyone is lost forever.

**15:19** The Christian’s hope must reach far beyond this present life. See Rom 5:2-5; 8:23-25. If there is no resurrection any such hope would be in vain. In such case Christians would be deluded and should be objects of pity. And all their hardships, trials, and persecutions (John 15:18-20; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 3:12) would be for nothing.

**15:20** But Christ’s believers are not to be pitied. Why? Because Christ’s resurrection is a fact. There was not the slightest doubt about it.

“Firstfruits” – He was the first of a great many in the future.

**15:21,22** Compare Rom 5:12-21. On the resurrection of the dead see John 5:28,29; etc.

**15:23** “Those who belong to Christ” – see John 6:37-40; 17:6,10. Paul here says

firstfruits, afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. 24 After that *comes* the end, when he will have handed over the kingdom to God the Father, when he will have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death. 27 For he has put all things under his feet. But when he says that all things are put under *him*, *it is* evident that he who put all things under him is not included. 28 And when all things have been made subject to him, then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him, so that God may be all in all.

29 Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all?

Why, then, are they baptized for the dead?

30 And why do we stand in danger every hour?

31 I declare by the boasting I have about you in

nothing about the resurrection of unbelievers at the return of Christ. In fact, he never teaches there will be a general resurrection of all men at the same time. See Rev 20:5.

**15:24** “Then” – the Greek word thus translated does not necessarily mean “immediately.” It can mean and here (in the view of the author of these notes) surely does mean “at some time after”, the amount of time not being specified.

“The end” – judging from v 25 this means the end of Christ’s reign. Some teach that this means Christ’s reign in heaven at this present time. The author of these notes believes it means Christ’s reign on earth for a thousand years (see Rev 20:1-6). Certainly Christ has not yet “destroyed all dominion, authority and power.” In fact, He will not do so until His second coming. See Rev 19:11-16. Now, and until the end of this age, human kingdoms and authorities and powers will continue. Christ will destroy them at His coming and during the millennium and then hand over to God the Father the kingdom He has ruled.

**15:25** “All enemies” means all human enemies, Satan and all evil spirits, and death itself. It means all that can hurt His people, resist God’s rule, or be opposed to His kingdom.

**15:26** “The last enemy. . . death” – 2 Tim 1:10; Rev 20:14; Luke 20:36.

**15:27** Ps 8:6; Heb 2:8,9.

**15:28** Note on “Son” at Matt 3:17; John 3:16; 5:18-23.

“Subject” – compare John 14:28. See also notes at John 5:19-23.

“All in all” – Rom 11:36.

**15:29** “Baptized for the dead” – no one now knows what this meant then or why people did it. There is no mention of it in any other place in the Bible. Paul does not say that he did it himself, or that the Corinthians did it, and he does not say he approved of it.

**15:30-32** Verse 19. If there is no hope of a better future after death, it may seem to



Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 32 If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what does it benefit me, if the dead do not rise? *In that case* let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

33 Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good character. 34 Awake to righteousness, and do not sin. For some do not have the knowledge of God. I say *this* to your shame.

35 But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? 36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive, unless it dies. 37 And what you sow is only seed; you do not sow the body that will be, but perhaps *seeds* of wheat or of some other *grain*. 38 But God gives it a body as it pleases him, and to every seed its own body. 39 All flesh *is* not the same flesh, but *there is one kind* of flesh for men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 40 *There are* also heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies. But the glory of the heavenly *is* one, and the *glory* of the earthly *is* another. 41 *There is* one glory of the sun, and

another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a life-giving spirit." 46 However, that which is spiritual *did not come* first, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man *was* of the earth, earthly; the second man *is* the Lord from heaven. 48 *As was* the earthly man, so also *are* those who are earthly; and as the heavenly *man is*, so also *are* those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the likeness of the earthly, so we will also bear the likeness of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does

make some kind of sense to enjoy this life as much as one can. It was because Paul was sure of the resurrection that he was willing to face danger and death every day for the sake of the gospel. 2 Cor 11:23-27 gives a list of some of those dangers. "I die daily" probably means here that every day he was facing persecutions or dangers which could result in his death.

**15:32** "With beasts" – Paul could have meant this either literally or figuratively. There is no record of this literally happening to him but he faced other dangers at Ephesus. See 2 Cor 1:8. He probably means wicked persecutors who seemed like wild beasts (compare Ps 22:12,13; Luke 13:32; Acts 20:29).

**15:33** There is great danger in believers having the wrong kind of people for friends. Here "bad company" means the company of those who deny the resurrection. But is it necessary to say that other kinds of friends also can be bad company?

**15:34** False teaching leads to a false way of living and to sin. The denial of the resurrection produced this result among the Christians in Corinth.

**15:35-49** Paul here answers questions some Christians were asking. It seems they were asking in unbelief and possibly even ridiculing the idea of resurrection, for he says to those who would ask such questions, "Foolish one" (v 36). He says the human body (he is speaking here only of the bodies of believers) is like a seed. After it dies it will be changed into something quite different from what it appears to be now. There are different kinds of bodies and different kinds of glory, and God can take the physical elements and make of them what He pleases. So can He do with the

bodies of believers. And so He will do.

**15:42-44** Believers after the resurrection will have bodies of glory and power which can never die. They will be perfectly fitted for a spiritual existence. In short, they will be like Christ's resurrected body (v 49; Phil 3:21; Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2. See Luke 24:31,36,51; John 20:19,26).

**15:45** Gen 2:7. "The last Adam" means Christ the Head, the Representative and the Progenitor of a new kind of people. Adam had life. Christ gives life (John 5:21-29; 11:25,26; 14:6). "Life-giving spirit" does not mean Christ did not have a real body (see Heb 2:14). But He was spirit before He became a man (John 4:24).

**15:46** He means only that the first Adam came first in time.

**15:47** Gen 2:7; 3:19; Luke 2:11; John 1:14; 3:13; 6:38,51; Phil 2:6,7.

**15:48** What men receive from Adam are bodies which die and return to dust. What those who are "heavenly" will receive from Christ is something far superior. Observe that believers in Christ are "heavenly" or "of heaven" –

their life is there (Eph 2:6; Col 3:1-3),  
their hope is there (Heb 6:19,20),  
their Head is there (Eph 1:22),  
their inheritance is there (1 Pet 1:4),  
their home is there (John 14:2),  
their citizenship is there (Phil 3:20).

**15:49** In vs 47-49 thrice Christ is called the man from heaven. This does not mean He was a man in heaven before He came to earth, but that He was in heaven before He became a man on earth.

"Likeness" – vs 42-44.

**15:50** Believers now are in the kingdom of God (Col 1:13). But Paul here speaks of "inheriting" it. See Rom 8:17-23; Eph

corruption inherit *the* incorruptible. 51 See, I show you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on *the* incorruptible, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on *the* incorruptible, and this mortal has put on immortality, then will take place the word that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 O death, where *is* your sting?  
O grave, where *is* your victory?

56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. 57 But thanks *be* to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my dear brethren, be firm, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labour is not in vain in

1:14; 1 Pet 1:4. We cannot inherit it with these bodies of death.

**15:51,52** 1 Thess 4:13-18; John 14:3. Not all believers will "sleep" (die). Some will be alive when Christ returns and will be instantly changed.

"Mystery" – means a revelation from God which men could not know in any other way.

"Last trumpet" – see Matt 24:30,31 (the only trumpet Jesus mentioned) and Rev 11:15 (the last trumpet in the book of Revelation) – it is hard to see how the resurrection of believers could take place before the events of these verses in Matthew and Revelation, and still be at the "last" trumpet. We should take seriously Paul's placing of the rapture of the saints (1 Thess 4:16,17) at this time – it is the only place he plainly tells us when it will occur. (The Greek words signifying trumpet – noun and verb – are used 23 times in the NT – 1 Cor 14:8; twice here in 15:52; Matt 6:2; 24:31; 1 Thess 4:16; Heb 12:19; Rev 1:10; 4:1; 8:2; twice in 8:6; 8:7,8,10,12; twice in 8:13; 9:1,13,14; 10:7; 11:15.)

**15:53** Verses 42-44,49.

**15:54** Isa 25:8.

**15:55** Hos 13:14.

**15:56** Death has no sting itself. Its sting is sin (Rom 5:12; 6:23), and to die in sin is to be lost forever. Christ has removed this sting for believers by removing their sins, and so death to them is only a door to life with Christ (Phil 1:21-23).

"The law" – this means God's law revealed through Moses. The law condemns us all (Rom 3:19,20), makes transgression possible (Rom 4:15), and causes our sinful nature to rebel against it and so sin even more (Rom 7:5-11).

**15:57** "Victory" – the victory He gives is over sin and death and everything else that could bring eternal harm to us (Rom 8:37; 2 Cor 2:14; 1 John 5:4). Death and sin will not

the Lord.

**16** Now concerning the collection for the saints, just as I gave instructions to the churches of Galatia, so you should do also. 2 On the first *day* of the week each one of you should put *some money* aside, as *God* has prospered him, so that there will be no collections when I come. 3 And when I come, I will send whomever you approve by *your* letters, to take your gift to Jerusalem. 4 And if it is suitable that I go also, they will go with me.

5 Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia; for I will pass through Macedonia. 6 And it may be that I will stay, yes, and *spend* the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not want to see you now on the way, but I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will remain at Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great door and an

have the victory over believers. This is because Christ gained the victory over death and sin and because He shares that victory with them. It is Christ's resurrection which is the proof of all this.

**15:58** "Therefore" – Paul taught great doctrines and revelations of truth from God. And he always wanted people to apply those truths to their lives, and to be better people because of them. Compare Rom 12:1; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 5:1; Eph 4:1; Col 3:5. "Be firm, unmovable" – v 1; 16:13; Rom 5:2; 2 Cor 1:24; Gal 5:1; Eph 6:11,13,14; Ps 15:5; 16:8.

"Abounding in the work" – v 10; Matt 21:28; 24:45,46; Luke 19:11,24; John 4:34-36; 2 Cor 9:8; Col 1:10; Heb 6:10; 13:21; Rev 22:12; Eccl 9:10. Because the dead will rise, our labor is not in vain. Then every person shall receive the proper reward for his or her labors. But observe what sort of work is not in vain – work "of the Lord" and "in the Lord." We must do the Lord's work in the strength of the Lord, under the Lord's direction.

**16:1-4** Rom 15:26; 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9; Acts 24:17. Evidently believers living in Jerusalem were poor and in need. So Paul arranged for other churches to help them financially.

**16:2** "First day" – Sunday. See also Acts 20:7; Rev 1:10. It seems that very soon after Christ's resurrection believers began to meet on Sunday for worship rather than on Saturday the Jewish Sabbath.

**16:3** Observe the great care Paul was taking about this money. He wanted there to be no possibility of any kind of wrong use of it, or any suspicion of wrong use – 2 Cor 8:20,21.

**16:5** "Macedonia" – Acts 19:21; 20:1,2.

**16:6** "Send me on my journey" – compare Rom 15:24.

**16:9** "Door" – Acts 14:27; 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3; Rev 3:7,8. When the Lord opens a

effective *one* has opened to me, and *there are* many opponents.

10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he can be with you without fear, for he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*. 11 Therefore no one should look down on him. But send him on his journey in peace, so he can come to me. For I am expecting him with the brethren.

12 Concerning *our* brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was not at all willing to come at this time. But he will come when he has a convenient time. 13 Watch, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. 14 All you do should be done with love.

15 I urge you, brethren (you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints), 16 to submit

yourselves to such *persons*, and to everyone who works and labours with *us*. 17 I am glad about the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, for they have supplied what was lacking on your part. 18 For they have refreshed my spirit, and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.

19 The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, together with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 *I*, Paul, *write* this greeting with my own hand.

22 If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. Come, O Lord.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you.

24 My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

door of service for us He means for us to enter it. But the enemies of the gospel will try to see that we do not.

**16:10,11** "Timothy" – Acts 16:1; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 2:2.

"Without fear" – 1 Tim 4:12. Timothy was young, and probably timid, and the Corinthians were not always as helpful as they might have been (4:1,8-13).

**16:12** "Apollos" – 1:12; 3:4-9; Acts 18:24-28.

**16:13** "Watch" – Acts 20:28; Rom 16:17; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6; 2 Tim 4:5.

"Firm" – 15:58. "Strong" – Eph 6:10; 2 Tim 2:3; Isa 40:31.

**16:14** "Love" – 10:24; 13:1-13; John 13:34.

**16:15** Achaia was the region in which Corinth lay.

"Devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints" – here was a spiritual gift they continually and wholeheartedly used (12:28) – helping fellow believers. Such people are an example to all others who may not have any of the more public or well-known gifts.

**16:16** This means to accept their leadership in their work of serving believers and assist them.

**16:17** "Lacking on your part" – he is not reminding them that they had not helped him financially (see 9:12-18). He means that he misses them and their fellowship and news about them.

**16:18** It is good to be the kind of people whose presence refreshes others.

**16:19** Paul was writing from Ephesus the chief city in the Province of Asia.

"Aquila and Priscilla" – Acts 18:1-3,26; Rom 16:3,4.

"In their house" – Rom 16:5.

**16:20** "Kiss" – Rom 16:16.

**16:21** Paul sometimes dictated his letters and they were written down by someone else (Rom 16:22). But he always added a greeting in his own hand (2 Thess 3:17).

**16:22** Love for the Lord Jesus Christ is the evidence of spiritual life (1 John 3:14; 4:7,8,16). Absence of love for Him is proof of spiritual death. If we cannot, or do not, love Christ, we show ourselves depraved, still in our sins, and worthy of a curse from God. Nothing is more important than the state of our hearts in regard to the Lord Jesus.

"Come, O Lord" – Rev 22:20. In the Aramaic language the expression is "Marana tha".

**16:23** See 1:3; Rom 1:7; 16:20.

**16:24** Paul had opponents at Corinth, and others there were carnal, proud, divisive, abused spiritual gifts, and complained against him. He had to say some rather harsh things in this letter to correct them. But he sent love to them *all*. Compare what he wrote in 13:4-7 – Paul was happy to practice what he taught to others.

# The Second Letter of the Apostle Paul to the CORINTHIANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

About 57 AD.

**Themes:**

Another serious problem had arisen among the Corinthian Christians besides the ones Paul dealt with in his first letter to them. Some false teachers had come there saying that Paul was not a true apostle of Christ and that his teachings were not to be trusted. And they had convinced some Christians that this slander was true, and had brought the whole church into danger. For if they rejected Paul's apostleship they would begin to question the truth of the gospel of Christ which he preached, the only true gospel there is. So for the sake of believers there, and for the sake of the truth of Christ, it became necessary for Paul to set forth his authority as an apostle whom Christ had appointed, and to show that his words and deeds were in accordance with his apostleship. Therefore, more than in any other of his New Testament letters, he writes of his personal life and his service for Christ. He speaks in moving terms of his experiences, his motives, his labors, and his sufferings. In doing so he shows once and for all what true service for Christ is and involves, and what those who call themselves the servants of Christ should be and how they should behave.

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**1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia: 2 Grace *be* to you and peace from God our Father and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all encouragement, 4 who encourages us in all our trouble, that we may be able to encourage those who are in any trouble, with the encouragement we ourselves have from God. 5 For *just* as the sufferings of Christ are in us in abundance, so our encouragement is also in abundance through Christ. 6 And if we are afflicted, *it is* for your encouragement and salvation, which is effective in

**1:1** "Apostle" – Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; Matt 10:2.

"By the will of God" – he emphasizes the truth of his apostleship here and throughout this letter, because some of the people at Corinth were attacking him at this very point.

"Timothy" – v 19; Acts 16:1-3; 1 Tim 1:2.

"Achaia" – the region (Greece) where Corinth was located.

**1:2** Rom 1:7.

**1:3-11** Here are two important themes of this letter – "encouragement" (or "comfort") and "trouble." The Greek word translated "encourage" or "encouragement" (noun and verb) occurs 17 times. The Greek words behind the translations "afflicted", "sufferings", etc occur about the same number of times. Paul is not complaining about his troubles – just the opposite (6:10; 7:4; 12:10; Rom 5:3). He found that his troubles and sufferings were working good for him. Let us consider well what he has to say about them.

Through sufferings and troubles he came into a deeper knowledge of God as the encourager and comforter of His people (vs 3,4).

He experienced such sweet comfort in Christ that it made his sufferings seem worthwhile (v 5).

Because of them he was better able to comfort others (vs 4,6).

He learned to rely more on God (v 9).

He came to understand better that troubles in believers' lives were actually producing greater glory in eternity (4:17).

And he learned that God's strength in him became the greater as his troubles (and resulting weakness) increased (12:9,10). See also note at Job 3:20.

**1:3** Here is truth about God's nature that Paul learned more deeply because of trouble and suffering.

"Compassion" – Ex 34:6; Ps 86:15; 103:13; 111:4; 145:8; Lam 3:22; Micah 7:19; Matt 9:36.

"Encouragement" – or "comfort" (the Greek word means either of these) – God continually encourages and comforts His

patiently enduring the same sufferings that we also suffer. Or if we are encouraged, *it is* for your encouragement and salvation. 7 And our hope for you *is* firm, knowing that just as you are sharers in the sufferings, so *you will* also *share* in the encouragement.

8 For, brethren, we do not want you to be ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia. We experienced pressure beyond measure, above strength, so that we even despaired of life. 9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead. 10 He delivered us from so great a death, and continues to deliver, and we trust that he will deliver *us*, 11 you also helping together

people through His Word and through His presence – Ps 23:4; 119:50; Isa 40:1; 61:2; 66:13; Rom 15:4,5; 2 Thess 2:16,17; Heb 6:18. One name for God's Spirit, "The Comforter" comes from the same Greek root. See note at John 14:16.

**1:4** "All our trouble" – the God of "all" encouragement (v 3) has encouragement for every kind of trouble. But believers can fail to obtain it, if they refuse to be comforted (see Matt 2:18). Observe that God encouraged Paul, not merely for his own sake, but that he might give encouragement to others in trouble (v 6).

**1:5** "Sufferings of Christ" – Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29; 3:10; Col 1:24. Christ suffered for the sake of others and is still suffering for their sake in His people (Acts 9:4,5). Those who willingly suffer with Him for others will know His comfort and encouragement (John 16:33).

**1:6** Paul was all for others, and both his troubles and his encouragements were for their sake (1 Cor 9:19-23; 10:24,33; 2 Tim 2:10). Only those who follow his example have any right to expect the same great encouragement he received from God. The result of suffering is "patient endurance" – Rom 5:3-5; Jam 1:2-4; 5:11.

**1:7** Believers in Corinth also shared Christ's sufferings. They, too, were objects of persecution, though not to the extent Paul was. But to be willing to share with Christ and His people in suffering is to be able to share in Christ's comfort and joy.

**1:8** "Asia" – Acts 16:6; 18:19. Ephesus was the chief city of the province of Asia.

"Pressure" – compare v 10; 4:8,9; 6:9; 11:23-29. The dangers and difficulties which faced him were beyond his ability to escape or overcome by himself.

**1:9** "Death" – it seemed to him that his time to die had come. But this too was for his good (Rom 8:28). His reliance on God became greater than before. He realized that if God could raise the dead He could keep him safe in the most deadly peril.

**1:10** This must have been some miraculous and unexpected deliverance. It gave Paul much assurance for the future. Compare 2 Tim 4:18. See also 1 Sam 17:34-37.

**1:11** Paul had to rebuke believers in Corinth



by prayer for us, so that many people will give thanks on our behalf for the gift of *grace granted* to us through *the prayers* of many.

12 For this is what we boast about: the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our behaviour in the world, and more abundantly toward you. 13 For we are writing nothing to you except what you read or understand. And I trust you will understand, even to the end, 14 as also you have understood us in part, that we are *going to be your reason* for boasting, just as you *are going to be our reason for boasting*, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

15 And in this confidence I intended to come to you first, that you might benefit a second *time*,

about the poor quality of their Christian lives – 1 Cor 3:1-4; 5:1,2; 6:1; etc. But he still valued their prayers and was sure they would be a help (compare Phil 1:19; Philemon 22). From this let us learn that the prayers of even weak and frequently failing believers are not without power with God. Observe also that Paul wanted thanksgiving to God to abound (4:15; 9:11-13). **1:12-14** Some at Corinth were questioning Paul's truthfulness and sincerity (13:3). So he writes these words. It was important for them to trust him, not for his sake, but for theirs. His "boasting" was really a defense, not of himself, but of the gospel he preached and of his apostleship. All through this letter the false teachers of 11:13 are in view. They brought a false gospel, and in order to defend it they had to attack Paul. In order to defend the true gospel Paul had to defend himself against their attacks. As far as the Corinthians were concerned the gospel stood or fell with Paul. What he wrote them about himself was for their benefit (12:19). At that time they had no New Testament to appeal to, and possibly not even a single written Gospel.

**1:12** "Boast" – this is another important theme in this letter. He uses the word in its various noun and verb forms 31 times. For example, see 10:8,13; 11:16. The same Greek word is translated "rejoice" in Rom 5:2,3 and Phil 3:3. The kind of "boasting" Paul does in this letter is like a holy joy in God. It is not at all the sort of boasting sinful unbelieving men do. They boast about their own strength, brains, ability, etc. Paul boasted in God and how God worked in him. He knew that any good thing in him was "from God" and "according to God's grace". Compare Rom 7:18; 1 Cor 1:29,31.

**1:14** "Day" – the day when Christ returns. He was sure they could be a source of rejoicing to him then. Compare Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19,20.

**1:15-24** These verses give the reason why some of the Corinthians were doubting Paul's truthfulness and sincerity. And here Paul gives his answer to their doubts. Paul

16 and to come to you *on the way* to Macedonia, and to come again from Macedonia to you, and to be sent by you on my way to Judea. 17 So when I planned this, did I do so lightly? or in making plans do I plan according to the flesh, so that with me there will be "yes, yes" and "no, no"?

18 But *as surely as* God *is* faithful, our word to you was not "yes" and "no." 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not "yes" and "no", but in him was "yes." 20 For all the promises of God in him *are* "yes", and in him "Amen", for the glory of God through us. 21 Now he who establishes us together with you in Christ, and has anointed us, *is* God, 22 who has also sealed us, and given the Spirit as a pledge in our hearts.

had made plans to revisit Corinth, had told them so, then for good reasons changed his plans. His opponents said Paul could not be relied on, that this was evidence that even the gospel he preached should be doubted, and that Paul might change his mind about the gospel also. Paul was far more concerned with the reputation of the gospel than his own reputation, but they were bound up together. And so he wanted his reputation to be clear for the sake of Christ's gospel.

In this he is an example to all servants of Christ. We must all realize how Christ's reputation and ours are tied together.

**1:15-17** This was his original plan which he had to change (compare 1 Cor 16:5-7). It seemed to them that he kept changing his mind for no good reason, and that he planned in a worldly way, as unsaved men do. They were tempted to think that he was fickle, and didn't give proper thought to what he said.

**1:18-20** For the sake of the gospel Paul is alarmed that they should believe any such thing about him as is in v 17. And so he solemnly assures them it is not so. His message and his preaching had always been sure and certain and affirmative. There had been no wavering, no change of mind about those vital matters. And he can assure them that there is never any wavering or change in the Christ whom he preached. Every promise God has made He will fulfill in Christ. Silvanus in v 19 is the same person as Silas. **1:21** Paul well knew that in the matter of God's gospel and God's truth, all believers should be unwavering and steadfast (1 Cor 15:58; 16:13). Only God can make them so (Rom 16:25; 1 Peter 5:10).

"Anointed" – Paul did not say anointed "me" but "us." God anoints all believers – 1 John 2:20,27. He anoints them with His Spirit and sets them apart from the rest of mankind to be a kingdom of priests (Rev 1:6. Note on anointing at Matt 1:1. Compare Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38).

**1:22** "Sealed" – compare Eph 1:13; 4:30; 2 Thess 2:19. The seal is God's Spirit, and His presence in believers marks them as

23 Moreover I call God as a witness for my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth. 24 Not that we have power over your faith, but *we* are working with you for your joy, for by faith you stand.

**2** But I determined this with myself, that I would not come to you again in sorrow. 2 For if I make you sorrowful, who is he then who makes me glad, but the same one who is made sorrowful by me? 3 And I wrote this same thing to you, so that, when I came, I would not have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy; having confidence in all of you, that my joy is *the joy* of all of you. 4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which

I have so abundantly for you.

5 But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but to some extent, not to be too severe, all of you. 6 Sufficient for such a man *is* the punishment which *was inflicted by many of you*. 7 So that, on the contrary, you *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and encourage *him*, or perhaps such a one would be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I plead with you to reaffirm *your* love toward him. 9 For to this end also I wrote, that I might see if you would stand the test and be obedient in all things. 10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*. For if I forgave anyone anything, it was for your sakes that I forgave *it* in the presence of Christ, 11 so that Satan might not take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

God's special possession (1 Cor 6:19,20; Rom 8:9; John 17:6,10).

"Pledge" – see 5:5; Eph 1:14 and notes there. God's giving His Spirit to believers is a guarantee to them that He will give also the inheritance He has promised (Rom 8:17,23; Eph 1:13,14; 1 Pet 1:4). It is a God-given pledge of their final salvation. As certain as God's Spirit is in us, so certain it is that we shall never be lost. See also John 6:37-40; 10:27-29; 17:11,12; Rom 5:9,10; 8:28-39.

**1:23** See how solemnly he speaks. The reputation of Christ's gospel was his chief concern. Now he gives the reason why he changed his mind. It was not that he did not care about his word, it was that he cared so much about them. See also 2:1-4. He means that the condition of the church in Corinth was so poor that his coming would mean pain and grief to both them and himself. And this he did not want for them. See 1 Cor 4:21.

**1:24** He did not want them to misunderstand. He was not a tyrant who could dictate to them. It was their own faith which caused them to stand, not any authority over them he could exercise (13:10). Compare 1 Pet 5:3.

**2:1-4** See 1:23. Some scholars think the letter Paul refers to in vs 3,4 is 1 Corinthians. It is much more likely that it was another letter, now lost, which God's Spirit did not choose to make a part of the New Testament.

**2:5-10** If 1 Corinthians is the letter Paul refers to in vs 3,4, the man he refers to in these verses would be the one in 1 Cor 5:1-5. But it is probable that Paul is referring to someone else altogether – someone who had in some way sinned against Paul personally. The language here indicates this. But in either case the lessons are the same. When a person who has sinned accepts church discipline and repents he should be forgiven and restored to fellowship.

**2:6** By "punishment" he means church discipline – excommunication or stopping fellowship with the man, or something

similar (compare 1 Cor 5:13; 2 Thess 3:17).

**2:7,8** The purpose of church discipline is not simply to punish but to bring the sinning Christian to repentance. These verses indicate that the man had repented and was grieving because of his sin. Believers, Paul says, should see this and know when to stop disciplining and start forgiving and comforting. He does not say they should forgive and comfort before discipline and repentance. When Christians sin, church leaders should be neither too soft and easy with them, nor too harsh and hard. There should be discipline and there should be love as well.

**2:9** "Be obedient" – he does not mean obedient to himself (1:24), but obedient to the Lord's instructions through him. There is a big difference between these two things. Some Christian leaders emphasize obedience to themselves, Paul was concerned about obedience to the Lord Jesus.

**2:10** Paul had already forgiven the man the wrong he had done to him personally. Now the man had repented and Paul was willing to consider his sin as a small matter. This would be impossible if he was referring to the sin of the man in 1 Cor 5:1-5 – that was no small matter, and Paul would never have counted it as such. But Paul was glad to forgive any wrong done against him personally. On this kind of forgiveness see Matt 6:12,14,15; 18:21-35; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13. Paul knew the eyes of Christ were upon him, and that Christ had forgiven him far more than he had forgiven others.

**2:11** Satan's purpose is to ruin the lives of believers, wreck churches and bring dishonor to Christ. He has schemes (plural) to accomplish this. He will try to make Christians sin, then try to arrange matters so that they will live in despair of forgiveness. Or he may try to get the church to accept them even without their repentance. He will try to destroy peace and harmony in the church through one or more of its members. He will try to make church leaders either too easy with sin or too harsh

12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother. But taking leave of them, I went on from there to Macedonia.

14 Now thanks *be* to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and spreads everywhere the aroma of his knowledge through us. 15 For we are to God a fragrance of Christ among those who are saved, and among those who perish. 16 To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life.

with those who fall. See notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1; John 8:44.

**2:12** "Door" – Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 16:9; Col 4:3; Rev 3:8.

**2:13** "Titus" – Paul had sent Titus to Corinth (7:6,7), and evidently arranged to meet him in Troas. When Titus did not come there Paul remained uneasy in mind about the situation in Corinth. His love for them was very great (v 4), and he longed for them to respond in the right way to his letters.

"Macedonia" – 1:16.

**2:14** In spite of problems in the churches and persecution in the world, God leads His servants on from victory to victory. Compare Rom 8:37. Notice the words "always" and "in Christ" – our efforts apart from Him will not be victorious, not ever. Though they may meet with what some people consider success, that will be only a worldly kind of success, which God can not reward.

"Aroma" – the knowledge of Christ to the heart is like precious perfume to the sense of smell. Paul and his co-workers spread this knowledge "everywhere" they went. Do we?

**2:15** "Fragrance" – Christ's servants spread the knowledge about Christ to saved and unsaved, believers and unbelievers alike. In this way they became a "sweet smell" to God. A person with perfume on his (or her) body or clothing will give off that fragrance wherever he goes. A person who has Christ living in him, who speaks of Christ, and presents Christ's gospel will give out the fragrance of Christ. Believers should not, and need not, ever smell of sin or of the world.

**2:16** The gospel when preached by Christ's servants brings life to those who believe it, death to those who reject it. Compare John 3:36. So to those who refuse to believe in Christ the gospel is like a deadly, killing odor, but to those who believe it is the fragrance of eternal life.

"Who is sufficient" – no man in himself is competent for the work of spreading the knowledge of Christ. But see 3:5,6. There is One who can make us competent.

**2:17** "Adulterating" – Paul knew that there were men who said they were Christ's servants who watered down the message of Christ for personal gain. The Greek word translated "adulterating" may also mean "peddling" or include both ideas. Dishonest

And who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not like many, adulterating the word of God. But as sincere *men*, but as men belonging to God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

**3** Do we begin to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some *people*, letters of recommendation to you, or recommendation from you? 2 You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by all men. 3 *For you are* clearly seen to be a letter of Christ, a result of our ministry, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living

merchants or traders often adulterate their product to make more profit. Some so-called Christian workers are like this, only what they "adulterate" is the message concerning Christ, and their "service" is only for what they can get out of it – compare 1 Tim 6:5; John 12:4-6; 2 Pet 2:15.

"Sincere" – 1:12,18,19.

"In the sight of God" – Paul knew that the eyes of God were always on him, and sought to live and serve accordingly. This knowledge will make a tremendous difference in anyone's life.

**3:1** The answers to both these questions is "no." Paul is not saying letters of recommendation have no place. He himself sometimes recommended others (8:16-24; Rom 16:1,2; 1 Cor 16:3,10,11). But here he is saying he needs no such thing for himself.

**3:2,3** The believers at Corinth were themselves like a letter of recommendation for Paul. Comparing them to a letter the following things are said about them. They were written on the hearts of Paul and his co-workers (that is, Paul and others were conscious of the work of God done in them and they loved them dearly – 7:3). They were no secret letter hidden in Paul's heart, but a letter anyone could read (anyone could see the change in them produced by Paul's ministry). The letter was "of" Christ (it was His plan, His message that produced the change in them).

They were also the letter of Paul and his associates (Christ had used them in this work). They were produced by God's Spirit (compare John 3:5-8). The "writing" was done in their hearts (the change in them was not merely outward but inward – 5:17). Paul puts all this in contrast to God's writing the law on tablets of stone. See Ex 31:18; 32:15,16. Compare Jer 31:33,34; Heb 8:10-12.

Now too God's servants are working with God to produce "letters" – people profoundly and eternally changed by Christ's gospel. Is there any higher privilege on earth than this work?

**3:3-11** In these verses Paul contrasts the new covenant with the old.

The old was a ministry which brought death (vs 6,7), but the new brought life (v 6).

The old was written on stone (Ex 31:18),

God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh, of the heart.

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to think anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, 6 who indeed has made us able ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses, because of the glory on his countenance, which was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be even more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation *is* glorious, much more glorious is the ministry of righteousness. 10 For even what was made glorious has no glory in this respect: the fact of the glory that excels it. 11 For

but the new is written on people's hearts (v 3).

The old was a ministry which condemned men, but the new removes condemnation and makes men righteous (v 9; Rom 3:19-24).

The old was "fading away" (v 11; Heb 8:24), but the new is permanent (v 11).

In short, the old covenant was in laws and commandments which could never change people's hearts (note at Ex 19:5,6), but the new brings the ministry of God's Spirit which makes men new (vs 3,6,8).

So though the old had some glory, the new has far more glory (vs 8-11).

It seems likely that some people had been troubling the Christians in Corinth by telling them they needed to keep the law of Moses. Compare Acts 15:1,2. So Paul shows them how much greater was the gospel he preached than the law they preached.

**3:4** He was quite sure that God was using him in the work described above. Christ Himself gave him this assurance.

**3:5** See 2:16. The above work is impossibly difficult for anyone who is not called and equipped by God. Paul's confidence in the work was not self-confidence in his own abilities. He knew that God alone made him able to do what he did (1 Cor 15:10; Col 1:29. See John 15:5).

**3:6** Everyone whom God sends on His work can and should have this confidence that God will make him able to do that work. On the new covenant see notes at Matt 26:28; Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:6-13. The Greek word translated "letter" here is not the same as in vs 2,3, and its meaning is completely different. By "letter" here Paul is referring to the old covenant with its laws, rules, and regulations. It brought death because no one ever fully kept it, and so it justly condemned people to death (Rom 7:9-11; Gal 3:10. See also Rom 3:19,20; 4:15; 5:20; 8:3; etc.). But the new covenant brings life by God's Spirit (Rom 7:6; 8:2-4,11; John 3:5-8).

if what was passing away *was* glorious, what lasts *is* much more glorious.

12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we use great boldness of speech, 13 unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face, so that the children of Israel could not steadily look on to the finish of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were blinded, for to this day the same veil remains in place when the old covenant is read, *for* this *veil* is taken away *only* in Christ. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is on their heart. 16 However when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled faces, seeing, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same likeness from glory to glory, *altogether* by the Spirit of the Lord.

**3:7** "Face of Moses" – see Ex 34:29-35.

**3:12** "Hope" – Rom 5:2-5; 8:23-25. This hope, this expectation of glorious things in the future made Paul very bold in the present.

**3:13** Ex 34:29-35. The sight of glory made the Israelites afraid. The new covenant does not bring fear but hope and boldness and joy.

**3:14-16** He now draws spiritual lessons from the veil Moses put on his face. In v 14 he is speaking of those who were still under the old covenant – Jews and converts to the Jewish religion. Their minds are dull, a veil is on their hearts (v 15). That is, they do not have a proper understanding of what they read in the Old Testament. See 4:3,4. Compare Jesus' words to the Jews in John 5:39,40,46,47; etc. Only Christ can take away the "veil" of darkness and misunderstanding and cause men to know the truth and to know God (v 14,16; Matt 11:27; John 8:12,31,32; 14:6).

**3:17** The Lord Jesus and God's Spirit are one in the same sense that the Father and the Son are one (John 10:30; 14:9). God's Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ in Rom 8:9. Notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc.

"Liberty" – God's Spirit gives many kinds of freedom: from the law (Rom 7:4,6; Gal 5:18), from fear (Rom 8:15), from sin (Rom 6:14,18). Compare John 8:36.

**3:18** "Seeing" – all believers now see something of God's glory in Christ (4:6). That is, they have some spiritual understanding of it, an enlightenment of the mind regarding it. But it is all like seeing in a poor mirror. Compare 1 Cor 13:12. Only a reflection appears, not the whole reality which we believers will see when face to face with Christ. But now all believers are being changed. The Greek word translated "transformed" appears only four times in the New Testament – here, Matt 17:2, Mark 9:2, and Rom 12:2. It suggests an inward

**4** Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, since we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. **2** But *we* have renounced hidden, shameful ways, not behaving with craftiness, or handling the word of God deceitfully, but by making the truth clear *we* commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. **3** But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are lost. **4** In *their case*, the god of this *present* world has blinded the minds of

unbelievers, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, would not shine into them. **5** For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

**7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,

change that appears outwardly. In the case of Christ it meant a change in outward appearance that was in accordance with what He was inwardly. In the case of believers this is both an inner and an outward change, first inner, then outer.

And it is a gradual process – “from glory to glory.” Compare Ps 84:7; Prov 4:18. Here and now God is making them more and more like Christ. Finally, at His coming, they shall become completely like Him (Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:1,2). The process may be so slow now that the believer himself may have difficulty in believing it is taking place at all. But it is, in every true child of God.

**4:1** God's servants under the new covenant have received a ministry full of glory, greater than the ministry of Moses (3:9). They are not ministers of the law which condemns, but of God's grace which saves. They have received this ministry through God's mercy, not through personal merit (1 Cor 15:10; 1 Tim 1:13,14). So, Paul says, he refuses to be discouraged and give up in spite of all the problems, dangers, and difficulties he faced (v 16. Compare 1 Cor 15:58; Luke 18:1).

**4:2** See 1:12; 2:17. Paul kept insisting on his integrity because some at Corinth denied it, and he knew great harm could come to the church if they lost faith in his apostleship.

**4:3** See 3:14-16. Here Paul speaks not only of unbelieving Jews but of unbelievers of every nation.

**4:4** “The god of this world” means Satan. Compare John 12:31; 16:11. He is called “god” because he wants worship and receives it, and because he rules in the realm of this world's darkness (Eph 6:12). Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44.

“Blinded the minds” means Satan makes people unable to understand God's truth and he keeps them from having spiritual sight. Of course, this is with their willing cooperation (John 3:19,20; 2 Thess 2:10,11).

“The glorious gospel of Christ” – the gospel reveals the glory of God and of His anointed one the Lord Jesus (John 12:23).

“The image of God” – Heb 1:3; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15; 2:9; John 1:14,18; 12:45; 14:9. He is in visible form what the unseen God is.

“Would not shine on them” – or it could be translated “would not be seen by them.”

**4:5** In this letter Paul had to defend his apostleship against attacks and he speaks

much about himself. But all that was for their sake not his (notes on 1:12-24). He did not preach himself as a way of salvation. He had not invented the gospel. He did not think he was some great one, only a servant of others for Christ's sake (1 Cor 3:5-7; 9:19-23). He had someone far greater than himself to preach about – Christ. And he declared Him to be the one Lord of heaven and earth. Compare Luke 2:11; Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 8:6; 12:3; Acts 2:36; Phil 2:10,11.

**4:6** Paul compares the creation of physical light in the beginning (see Gen 1:1-3) with the spiritual light God makes to shine into the hearts of believers in Christ. God opens the eyes of their understanding so they can receive the knowledge of the truth. Before this their minds, like the minds of everyone else, were in darkness and chaos. Compare Eph 1:18; Acts 26:18; John 8:12; Matt 6:22,23; 11:27; 16:17; 1 Cor 2:11-16.

See what this enlightenment is which God gives. It has nothing to do with the wrong teaching that men can “know” they are God. That teaching is a terrible delusion created by Satan. Men are not God, cannot become God, and have fallen into a very grave error if they think they are God. In true enlightenment God enables individuals to understand that the glory of God is in Christ (Heb 1:3), not in them. Paul had his enlightening experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-9). Most of us do not have experiences so dramatic and so sudden. But every believer has received spiritual sight and light and is a child of the light (John 12:36; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5).

“In the face” – compare 3:13. The glory of the old covenant, symbolized by the light in Moses' face, was fading away. The glory on the face of Christ, the founder of the new covenant, will never fade away.

**4:7** “Treasure” – this knowledge of God's glory in Christ is the greatest of treasures. Compare Ps 19:10; 119:72,127; Prov 2:1-5. By “treasure” Paul may also mean the ministry of the gospel entrusted to him. In his eyes this too was a glorious matter (Eph 3:8).

“Earthen vessels” – he means frail human nature, the body, soul, heart, and mind of individuals. All this is like a jar made of clay. The treasure is extremely great, but the containers it is in are very weak and unattractive by comparison. This shows that the power to give out this treasure to others, to be able ministers of



so that the exceedingly great power may be of God, and not of us. 8 *We are* hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 *We are* always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also might be revealed in our body. 11 For we who live are always being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also might be revealed in our mortal body. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

13 Since we have the same spirit of faith as what is written, "I believed, and therefore I have spoken", we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus, and set *us* with you in

the new covenant (3:6), is altogether God's power. Compare Acts 1:4,5,8.

**4:8-12** In these verses Paul shows the weakness of the "earthen vessels" – "hard pressed", "perplexed", "persecuted", "struck down", "death." But he shows also God's power at work in them – "not crushed", "not in despair", etc. If God's power was not at work in these "earthen vessels", these clay jars, they would not be able to accomplish anything and would surely be quickly destroyed.

**4:10-12** "Death" – see 1:8,9. The Lord Jesus faced the same hardships and persecutions Paul faced. What Paul faced was for "Jesus' sake" (v 11) – indeed, it was the "dying of the Lord Jesus" in him. This meant for Paul constant dangers and troubles (11:23-27), death to self (compare Matt 10:38,39; Luke 9:23), and living for Christ alone (Gal 2:20). Personal plans and ambitions, his own likes and dislikes, comforts, pleasures – these had no place in his heart, just as they had no place in his Master's heart.

Paul found that this was the way of life, spiritual life, the life of Jesus working in him (v 11). It also meant that spiritual life could come to others like the believers at Corinth (v 12). Here is a true principle – those who would be a channel of spiritual life to others must be willing to experience their own dying. See John 12:24-26. Those who are not willing for this may have what they call success, but it will not be success in God's eyes.

**4:13,14** Ps 116:10. What enabled Paul to go on in Christ's service in the face of all hardships and dangers? He believed God and so could not remain silent. And he was sure of a blessed future. The future resurrection of believers was the great hope that kept him going (Rom 8:23-25; 1 Cor 15:49-58).

**4:15** All Paul's sufferings and experiences were for the good of others. And this is just what he desired – Col 1:24; 1 Cor 10:33; 2 Tim 2:10. What a help this attitude is to any servant of God who has it! And what a blessing to others! See again Paul's concern that thanksgiving abound to God (not to himself) – 1:11; 9:11-13.

**4:16** A summing up of some of the themes

of his presence. 15 For everything *is* for your sake, so that the grace that is spreading *to many* might overflow to the glory of God through the thanksgiving of many.

16 For this reason we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is wasting away, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is producing for us an eternal weight of glory that far exceeds *it*, 18 while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporal, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

**5** For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from

of this chapter.

"Do not lose heart" – v 1.

"Wasting away" – vs 7-12.

"Renewed" – vs 10,11. He faced death daily (1 Cor 15:31), but God also gave him life daily.

**4:17** "Affliction" – look at his troubles and difficulties – vs 8-10; 1:8; 11:23-27. Paul calls them "light"! He means they are insignificant compared with his future reward. What shall we say then of our little troubles? Shall we pity ourselves and complain? Not if we have the same understanding of this matter that Paul had.

"For a moment" – Paul's troubles began shortly after his conversion and went on until his death, a great many years. But in Paul's view all of that was only like a moment compared to eternity. This is the view we too should have.

"Producing for us" – troubles for Christ's sake actually are working for the eternal good of those who suffer them. They help produce the glory which believers will receive. Compare Rom 8:17,18,28.

**4:18** This was the reason why Paul could endure all that came to him, why all hardships were light and momentary in his eyes. But how can we fix our eyes on what is unseen? It is by the spiritual understanding God gives (v 6), and it is by faith that the unseen, eternal things of God are real (Heb 11:1). In 5:7 he expresses the same thing in different words. With our physical eyes we see the world and our troubles and difficulties. With the eyes of our faith and our spiritual understanding we can look into the face of Christ (4:6) and into eternity. And living our lives with our eyes fixed on unseen things, on eternal things, will have a profound effect on how we live.

**5:1-10** Paul now speaks of some of those eternal unseen things he mentions in 4:18 – an eternal house (vs 1-4), being home with the Lord (v 8), and final judgment and rewards (v 10). On these he "fixed his eyes."

**5:1** "We know" – what Paul speaks of is not speculation. It is knowledge based on God's revelation of truth. By "earthly house" he means our physical bodies (v 4). They will



God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this *one* we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our dwelling which is from heaven, 3 since, *then* being clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened; not that we want to be unclothed, but clothed, so that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now he who has made us for this very thing is God, who has also given us the Spirit as a pledge.

6 Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, *I say*, and prefer to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

die – if death comes before the return of Christ (1 Cor 15:51,52).

But what does he mean by a “building from God”, “an eternal house”? There is disagreement about his meaning. He may be referring to “the Father’s house” of John 14:2. See also Heb 11:10; 13:14; Rev 21:10-27; Luke 16:9. Or Paul may mean the resurrection bodies which believers will receive at Christ’s coming (1 Cor 15:35-53). If “tent” is our present body, “house” would seem to mean a future body, and one not temporary as a tent is.

**5:2** “Groan” – see Rom 8:23. There the groaning is for the “redemption of our bodies.” So it may be his meaning here. “Clothed” also suggests something to be put on over the individual person or spirit of the person, and not a city which is like an eternal dwelling place in heaven.

**5:3** Here “naked” seems to indicate a spirit without a body.

**5:4** This seems to mean that believers do not groan to be rid of the present body, but to have a new body. The words “clothed” and “mortality may be swallowed up by life” are very similar to Paul’s language when speaking of the resurrection of our bodies in 1 Cor 15:54.

**5:5** Believers are God’s workmanship, a new creation (v 17; Eph 2:10). And He made us for the very purpose of clothing us with a heavenly “dwelling” (v 2) – a dwelling place suited to heaven. See John 6:39,40.

“Pledge” – or “deposit” or “guarantee.” Originally it meant earnest-money – money given as a down payment, the rest of the money for the purchase to be given later. See also 1:22 and Eph 1:14. This is a pledge God gives to every believer signifying that He will fulfill all His promises to them and bring them into their future inheritance. We have no reason to think God ever changes His mind and takes back this pledge. Having given His own Spirit to us He will not withhold the future blessings He has promised.

**5:6-8** Paul’s confidence and knowledge resulted from God’s revelation, and all believers may have them. Compare 1 Cor 2:9-16. In these verses he does not mean

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be pleasing to him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that everyone may receive *according to* the things he has done in the body, whether good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. But we are clearly known to God, and, I trust, are also clearly known to your consciences. 12 For we are not commending ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so that you may have some *answer* for those who take pride in appearances, and not in *things of the heart*. 13 For if we are out of our mind, *it is* for God. If we are of sound mind, *it is* for you. 14 For the love of Christ constrains us,

that the Lord is not with us now while we are in the body on earth. We know He is with all believers – 13:5; Matt 28:20; John 17:20-23. But believers are not yet with the Lord – in His immediate presence in heaven. Paul says that when they die they go into His presence. See also Phil 1:23,24. Compare Luke 23:43; John 17:24.

**5:7** See 4:18.

**5:9** Since believers are going to enter the presence of Christ, and be with Christ forever, it should have a profound effect on the way they live. Paul says it did have this effect on his own way of life. Whether alive or dead he wanted above everything else to please Christ. Those who please Christ will not have the goal of pleasing themselves, but will live for Christ’s glory and the good of others. Compare v 15; 1 Cor 9:19-23; 10:31. Those who do not wish to please Christ are not true servants of God.

**5:10** Rom 14:10-12; 2:6; 1 Cor 3:13-15. Believers will receive rewards for deeds worthy of rewards, and denied rewards because of deeds unworthy of Christ.

**5:11** “Fear of the Lord” – Paul means reverence and awe. See Rom 3:18; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7. Thoughts of the coming judgment brought it to his mind. It was one powerful motive for his ministry.

**5:12** 1:12-14; 3:1-3. In this verse he refers again to his opponents at Corinth (11:13-15). He wanted believers there to take pride in him – that is, to be assured that he was a true apostle and teacher of God’s truth. Then they could answer the false teachers who took pride in mere outward things.

**5:13** Did his opponents say he was mad? Did believers there think he acted sometimes in an abnormal manner? (Compare Mark 3:21; Acts 26:24; 1 Cor 4:10.) He wants them to know that whatever he was, however his behavior seemed to them, it was for God and for them, not for himself. Compare John 2:17.

**5:14** Here is a motive for his ministry greater than the one in v 11. How is it he could do everything for God’s sake and for the good of others? The knowledge of Christ’s love, the experience of it in his heart (Rom 5:5)

because we judge that if one died for all, then all died, 15 and he died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them, and rose again.

16 Therefore, from now on we regard no one according to the flesh. Indeed, though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer so regard *him*. 17 Therefore, if anyone

was a compelling force which drove him on in God's work. (Compare Luke 12:50 where, in Greek, the same word is used.) Christ was in him, as in all believers, and so Christ's love was in him. Because he was fully yielded to Christ he was fully yielded to Christ's love. Christ's love here does not mean his own love for Christ, but Christ's love for all men. Compare 1 John 4:10,19. See Gal 2:20.

"Constrains" – the Greek word means "hold together", "sustain", "close together", "press hard", "seize", "urge on", "impel." No doubt the love of Christ can do all of that but probably the meaning here is "press hard" or "urge on" and "impel."

"One died for all" – Christ died for all men. They all deserved to die because of their sin. He died in their place (v 19; John 1:29; 3:16; 1 Tim 2:6; Heb 2:9; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:2). So in God's reckoning "all died" – died when Christ died. What happened to mankind's substitute and representative is as though it happened to mankind. This does not mean that all people are saved. People are not saved simply because Christ died for them – they must be reconciled to God (v 20). They must repent and believe in Christ (Luke 13:3; John 3:36; 8:24; Acts 17:30). They must be "baptized" into His death (Rom 6:3). Otherwise there is no salvation for anyone.

The death of Christ makes it possible for God to forgive all men, but only those who turn to Him for forgiveness through Christ receive salvation. Another possible interpretation of the words "died for all" is that Christ died for all whom God has given to Him, the elect (John 6:37; 17:6). This interpretation is favored by many scholars (but not by the author of these notes). Whichever interpretation we take one thing is very clear – the eternal benefits of Christ's death come only to those who believe in Him, not to all men.

**5:15** Here was one great purpose of Christ's death – to break people loose from their self-centered and selfish way of living and make them Christ-centered. See also Rom 14:9. We see this was the result in Paul's case (v 9). Has it had the same effect in us? If not, do we know Him? Is our faith genuine? Being baptized into His death means to be baptized into His resurrection also. It means an altogether new way of life (v 17; Rom 6:4-7). Living for self is the ultimate disaster. Living for Christ is the ultimate blessing. See Matt 10:37-39; Luke 9:23; 14:26.

**5:16** Before he became one of Christ's

*is* in Christ, *that person is* a new creation. Old things have passed away. See, all things have become new! 18 And all *these* things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 namely, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. And *he* has committed

believers Paul, being without spiritual understanding, regarded others, including Christ, by outward things. Compare John 8:15. But knowing the meaning of Christ's death changed his superficial way of judging. It caused him to view everyone in their relationship to Christ.

**5:17** The word "therefore" links this with the previous verses. A person in Christ is a new creation. So naturally his view of Christ and of others and of himself will not be the same as it was before.

"In Christ" – see John 17:20,21; Rom 6:3,5; 8:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 12:12,13; Eph 1:1,4. "A new creation" speaks of spiritual birth (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:23). Those who have experienced this can never be the same again. The old way of living for self and judging others and Christ from a worldly point of view goes. Old ideas and motives and principles go. New truth, new power to live according to it, and new desires and new motives enter the heart. Let us note carefully that this is true not merely of men like Paul but of "anyone" in Christ.

**5:18** "Of God" – see John 1:13; Eph 2:10; 4:24; Jam 1:18. People may turn over a new leaf but they cannot create new life in themselves. This is not merely difficult, it is impossible. They are no more able to do it than to make the first creation (Gen 1:1).

"Reconciliation" means to make friends out of enemies, and to remove the cause of separation and enmity. Sin had made people God's enemies (Rom 5:10; Col 1:21). God's anger was on them because of their sins (Rom 1:18. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; etc.). In order to reconcile people to Himself God had to deal with that which made Him angry and separated them from Him. This He did by sending His Son to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world (references at v 14). God has reconciled people "through Christ" – Eph 2:16; Col 1:20,22. Having done so He sends His servants everywhere to proclaim this good news. This is the meaning of "given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

**5:19** Here is the message of reconciliation God gives His servants to declare. In v 18 Paul says God reconciled "us." Now he speaks of God's reconciling "the world." This is in the past tense. Through the death of Christ God laid the foundation of eternal friendship between Himself and any human being on earth who wants it. He did not count men's sins against them. He took

to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us. We beg *people* on Christ's behalf *to* be reconciled to God. 21 For he made him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**6** We then, as workers together *with him*, plead *with you* also not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says,

I have heard you in an acceptable time,  
and in the day of salvation  
I have helped you.

their sins and laid them on Christ (v 21; John 1:29; Isa 53:5,6). This does not mean that everyone is saved. It means that the way is open for everyone to be saved. To receive salvation people must receive what God has done for them and put their trust in Christ. If they will not they will perish (John 3:16,36).

**5:20** God's part in the work of reconciliation is twofold – He sent His Son to die for our sins, and He sends His servants everywhere to preach this truth. But people also have their part – “be reconciled to God.” This means to receive the reconciliation God has already made in Christ. It means the same as repenting and believing the gospel of Christ. Paul (and anyone else whom God sends to preach the gospel) was Christ's “ambassador.”

An ambassador is one who goes to a place to represent another or others. He does not speak or act on his own authority. He speaks what he is told to say by the one who sent him. Christ is in heaven, but His ambassadors are on earth speaking in His name and giving His message. Through them Christ is appealing to people, begging them (the word for “you” is not in the Greek of this verse. Believers in Corinth to whom Paul was writing had already been reconciled). See how God begs people to be saved. Compare Ezek 18:30-32.

**5:21** Here are four great truths.

One, Christ was sinless (John 8:46; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 John 3:5).

Two, God made Him to be sin – that is, God laid the sin of the world on Him and Christ bore the guilt and penalty of it. God counted Him as if He were sin. Every sin of man, all that is brutal and perverted and vile and corrupt and every other kind of sin was put to the account of the Holy Son of God (think of it!).

Third, this was “for us” (v 14; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 4:10). God put our sins to Christ's account so that He might not have to leave them in our account.

Fourth, God's purpose in this was that believers might become the righteousness of God in Christ. This speaks of justification (note at Rom 3:21-26), and of union with Christ (John 17:20-23; Rom 6:3-8; Eph

Look, now *is* the acceptable time, now *is* the day of salvation.

3 We *are* giving no offense in anything, so that *our* ministry will not be not blamed, 4 but in everything we show ourselves to be servants of God: in much patient endurance, in troubles, in hardships, in distresses, 5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard work, in sleeplessness, in fastings, 6 by pureness, by understanding, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 by honour and dishonour, by evil report

1:1,4). Christ Himself is the righteousness of God (1 Cor 1:30; Rom 3:21-24; Acts 3:14). Believers are united to Him and so become righteous in Him, and, in God's reckoning, what Christ is before God believers also are.

**6:1,2** “Workers together” – 5:20; 1 Cor 3:9. The grace of God means the grace described in 5:21. Receiving it “in vain” would be to hear and know of it and do nothing about it. It means to receive it only in such a way that it has no effect on the life and does not result in salvation. To emphasize this point he refers to Isa 49:8. The day of salvation is now – this whole era of God's grace revealed in Christ.

**6:3-10** Paul continues to defend his ministry. See 1:12-14. His emphasis on this shows his fear that some, or even many, in the church at Corinth might reject him as Christ's ambassador, and accept the false teachers with their perverted gospel. So he sets before them his character and experiences. They reveal that he was a true servant of God.

**6:3** Some people there were determined to discredit Paul's ministry. He was determined that he himself should not discredit it.

**6:4,5** Compare 1:8; 4:8,9; 11:23-29; 1 Cor 4:9-13. It was in patiently enduring such things that they showed themselves to be true servants of Christ. What a contrast this must have been with the lives of the false teachers being accepted in Corinth, and this is something the Christians there should have seen with their own eyes.

**6:6,7** Now he speaks of the qualities and power he revealed in his service for God. These are things every servant of Christ should have and cultivate. He is saying that such spiritual fruit in his life was proof that he was God's servant and not a false prophet. Compare Matt 7:16-20.

**6:7** “Armour” – or it could be translated “weapons” – 10:4; Eph 6:11-17. His weapons were not cunning and deceit, not harshness and brutality, but weapons of righteousness. They were given by the God of righteousness and Paul used them in a righteous way (1:12).

**6:8-10** He went on serving God regardless of what people said about him, regardless

and good report, *regarded* as deceivers, and *yet* true, 9 *regarded* as unknown, and yet well-known; as dying, and, see, we live; as punished, and *yet* not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

11 O *you* Corinthians, our mouth is open to you, our heart has been made wide. 12 You are not restricted by us, you are restricted in your own inner being. 13 Now in return for this (I speak as to *my* children) you open wide *to us*.

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness

with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has the one who believes with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said,

I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*,  
and I will be their God,  
and they will be my people.

17 Therefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and do not touch *what* is unclean, and I will receive you, 18 and will be a

of his sufferings, regardless of his feelings, regardless of his poverty. In all circumstances he was proving that 5:14 was true of him.

**6:10** "Sorrowful" – 2:4; 5:4; Rom 9:2,3; 7:24. There is surely enough reason for sadness in the world, in the church, and in themselves to make all of Christ's servants sorrowful. But though sad, Paul experienced a spring of joy always rising up in his heart – 2:3; 7:4; Rom 5:11; 14:17; Gal 5:22.

"Poor" – compare Acts 3:6; Luke 6:20; 1 Tim 6:6-9. Paul had great spiritual gifts and abilities, and could have made much money had he chosen to do so. He preferred to follow the Lord Jesus who had no place to lay His head (Matt 8:20). So he was able to make many "rich" – rich not in money and possessions but in eternal blessings. Compare 8:9.

"Nothing", "all things" – compare Phil 3:8; Matt 19:27; 1 Cor 3:21,22.

**6:11-13** Opening wide the heart means making room in them. It indicates love and concern – 7:2,3. Often the hearts of Christians are cramped and narrow. They have room only for the things which concern themselves. Compare Phil 2:4,21.

**6:14-18** Paul now sets forth this very important truth – believers in Christ are the special people of God and they should behave accordingly. Compare Deut 7:3-6; 1 Pet 2:9-12; John 17:6-10,17-19. Verse 14 gives a principle which applies to all believers in all times and in all places. They must not form any close alliances with unbelievers.

"Yoked" indicates being joined very closely together in a common aim and work. See Deut 22:10. Believers are yoked with Christ (Matt 11:28,29), so they must not yoke themselves with those who reject Christ. This certainly forbids marriage between believers and unbelievers (see also 1 Cor 7:39; Ezra 9:1,2; Neh 13:23-27; Mal 2:12). It also forbids fellowship with false teachers who preach a perverted gospel or who deny some of the basic truths of the Bible.

Of course, Paul is not forbidding believers to work in a place where unbelievers work, or to hire unbelievers to work for them. And it does not mean that they should cut themselves off from all contact with

unbelievers (1 Cor 5:9,10). Paul himself associated with unbelievers in order to win them to Christ (1 Cor 9:19-23. Compare Matt 11:19). But here he forbids close fellowship and common goals with unbelievers, any relationship which would lead to a compromise of Bible principles, or endanger the fellowship of believers with Christ. Any believer who acts against this principle is inviting trouble.

In vs 14-16 Paul asks five questions to show how foolish and wrong it is for believers to join themselves to unbelievers. Things and persons which have nothing in common should not be treated as if they did have. Separation from all evil and all evil persons is God's command for His people (v 17).

**6:14** "Light" – believers are in the light, love the light, and are children of the light (Matt 5:14; John 3:21; 8:12; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5). The situation of unbelievers is just the opposite of all this (John 3:19; Eph 6:12; 1 John 2:9,11). Then should they willingly engage in joint ventures?

**6:15** "Belial" – this name comes from a Hebrew word meaning worthless and wicked. Paul uses it here as a name for Satan. Believers are joined to Christ, unbelievers are joined to Satan (Eph 2:2; John 8:44). How then can believers even dream of joining themselves to unbelievers?

**6:16** Believers are the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 2:21,22). Unbelievers are either worshipers of literal idols or idols in the mind (Eph 5:5), or make themselves like idols. So what agreement can there be between these two vastly different sorts of people? Paul refers to some Old Testament verses to show something of the meaning of being the temple of God – Lev 26:11,12; Jer 32:38; Ezek 37:27.

**6:17,18** Paul refers to OT Scriptures to give a fitting conclusion to this section. He does not give an exact quotation of any one verse, but probably had in mind such verses as Isa 52:11,12; 2 Sam 7:14; Jer 31:9; Isa 43:6. See the great thing he sets before those who are willing to be a distinct separate holy people. They lose the fellowship and pleasures of the world, but they gain the fellowship of Almighty God. Many people would like to have both, but this is not possible (Jam 4:4).

Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

**7** Therefore, since we have these promises, dearly loved ones, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Welcome us *in your hearts*. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. 3 I do not speak *this* to condemn you; for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together. 4 Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* the pride I take in you. I am filled with encouragement, I am exceedingly joyful in all our trouble.

5 For when we had come to Macedonia, our body had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears. 6 But God, who encourages those who are cast down, encouraged us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not by his coming only, but by the encouragement which he received with you. When he told us of your earnest longing, your mourning,

**7:1** Hearing God's great promises should not leave us as we were before we heard them. God gives us His Word and shows us His grace so that we might obey Him and become the holy, separated, happy people He wants us to be. Compare Rom 12:1,2; 1 Cor 15:58; Eph 4:1; Col 3:1; Titus 2:11-14. Here Christ's ambassador tells us we are to aim at perfection in holiness (see also 13:9,11. On "perfection" see note at Matt 5:48). Certainly he would not tell us to be half or three-quarters or nine-tenths holy – that would be the same as encouraging us to be one half, or one quarter or one tenth unholy. Our goal should be to live as holy a life as Christ lived on earth.

Of course, aiming at perfection is not the same as achieving it. The world, spiritually speaking, is a filthy place and believers can easily be defiled by living in it. See John 13:10. Also believers have a sinful nature which can easily be a snare to them. See Rom 7:18; Gal 5:16,17; 1 John 1:8; etc.

The word "perfecting" indicates a continuing process. The work of perfection going on now will not be done in a moment. See in this verse that this work of perfecting holiness is something believers do themselves – it is not some experience that they passively receive. Compare 1 Cor 9:27; Col 3:5; 1 John 3:3. Of course, such work cannot be done in our own strength – Rom 8:13; Gal 5:16. See notes on sanctification at John 17:17-19; on "holy" at Lev 20:7.

"Fear of God" – see 5:11; 1 Pet 1:17. The fear of God is essential in the work of perfecting holiness in ourselves (Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14).

**7:2,3** See 6:11-13.

**7:4** "Joyful" – his joy in this case was the knowledge that the Christians in Corinth were

and your zeal regarding me, I rejoiced even more.

8 For though I made you sad with my letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it, seeing that the same letter made you sad, but only for a little while. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sad, but because your sorrow resulted in repentance. For you were made sad in a godly way, that you might not be injured by us in anything. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation about *which there* will be no regrets. But the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing: You grieved in a godly way. What earnestness it produced in you, *what* clearing of yourselves, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what demands* for justice! In everything you have shown yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12 Therefore, though I wrote to you, *I did* not do *it* on account of the one who had done the wrong, or on account of the one who suffered the wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you. 13 Therefore, we were encouraged by your encouragement. And we

standing fast in the faith and trying to obey the Word of God.

**7:5** Paul, great apostle that he was, was not immune from fears, restlessness and struggles (2:13).

**7:6** See 1:3,4. Titus had visited Corinth and came to Paul somewhere in Macedonia.

**7:8** See 2:3,4. Because he saw that they were in spiritual danger he wrote them a very strong letter, a letter that hurt them. This was because he loved them and wanted to see them firmly grounded in God's truth. Love is not weak and sentimental. Love does not let others ruin themselves without a word.

**7:9** Their hurt and sorrow caused by Paul's letter produced a very good result – repentance. They renounced certain evils, drew back from false paths and turned to God more wholeheartedly than ever.

**7:10** "Godly" sorrow is sorrow that God produces, a sorrow that one has brought sorrow to God's Spirit (Eph 4:30). Such sorrow causes those who have it to turn to God from all that grieves and offends Him.

"Worldly" sorrow is not related to God, but to one's self. It is due to loss or disappointment, or failure to get one's own way, or pain, or being caught in some sin that one wants to continue doing, etc. It sometimes brings remorse, but never true repentance (compare Matt 27:3-5). People with worldly sorrow go right ahead sinning. It leads to death as everything else "worldly" leads to death – spiritual death.

**7:11** See how godly sorrow and repentance work together. "This very thing" refers to 2:5-7.

**7:12** See 2:9. "Devoted to us" meant devoted also to the truth of God. And this was the really important thing to Paul.

**7:13-16** These verses are an illustration of



rejoiced far more because of the joy of Titus, for his spirit was refreshed by all of you. 14 For if in anything I boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But just as everything we spoke to you was truth, even so the boast I *made* to Titus is found *to be* true. 15 And his deep affection for you is more abundant when he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. 16 Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

**8** Now, brethren, we inform you of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, 2 so that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the riches of their generosity. 3 For I bear them witness that according to *their* ability, indeed, even beyond *their* ability, on their own *they were willing to give*, 4 pleading with us earnestly that we would accept *their* gift and participation in the ministry to

how believers can refresh one another, find encouragement and joy from one another. They show too the delight in the heart of a soul winner when converts walk in the truth – 3 John 3:4.

**8:1** This chapter and the next are concerning a collection for believers in Jerusalem who were poor and in great need. See 1 Cor 16:1-4. But in writing of that local matter Paul gives us all some beautiful principles concerning giving in general.

"We inform you of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia" – the KJV has "we do you to wit", an expression which was clear to readers 400 years ago, but not to people now who are not familiar with the English of that day. There are a number of verses in 2 Corinthians in the KJV very hard for the general reader to understand. We hope the revised text we have produced will help to some extent to make the meaning clear.

**8:1-5** The churches in Macedonia (which included those in Philippi and Thessalonica) wonderfully displayed the grace of giving – this is the "grace" that God had given those churches (v 1). Believers there were very poor and faced severe persecution. But in spite of all that, they gave a contribution. They gave because of "the abundance of their joy," Paul had not urged them to give. They earnestly pleaded with him to be allowed to give. They knew that giving to Christ and to Christ's people was a "privilege" and not a painful duty.

When all the churches and believers in this country and in the world come to understand this truth and act according to it what a blessing there will be in the churches and in the land and in the world.

**8:5** They had far exceeded Paul's expectations. They not only gave money but, more importantly, gave themselves completely to the Lord and for any work that the Lord's servants might ask them to do.

the saints. 5 And *this they did*, not as we expected, but first gave themselves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God. 6 So we urged Titus, that since he had already made a beginning, so he should also bring to completion this same *act of grace* among you. 7 Therefore, just as you have an abundance in everything, in faith, and speaking, and knowledge, and *in* complete diligence, and *in* your love for us, *see* that you have an abundance of this grace also. 8 I am speaking, not by *way of* commandment, but because of the earnestness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich.

10 And in this *regard* I give *my* advice. This is best for you: You were the first to prepare to do *this service* and also to have the desire, *and this was* a year ago; 11 now, therefore, carry out the

They were glad to give to God all they were and all they had. Compare Rom 12:1,2.

**8:6** Titus had been to Corinth (7:6). Now Paul plans to send him again (vs 16-18).

"Bring to completion" – it seems that the Corinthians had not yet given the full amount they had promised, or the amount which they could easily give (9:5).

**8:7** 1 Cor 1:5-7.

**8:8** "Not by way of commandment" – he knew that the desire to give must come spontaneously from the heart. God does not want forced and unwilling giving (9:7). Love is the basis of the giving that pleases Him. Giving is a test of the sincerity of one's love for Christ. This is always true. The person who will not give to Christ does not love Christ, regardless of what he thinks or says. Paul, instead of giving commands about giving, set before them the example of the Macedonians. In v 9 he speaks of a far greater example.

**8:9** The Lord Jesus had the grace of giving in full measure. In love He gave all He had. And He is an example to all believers.

"He was rich" – John 1:1-3; 17:5; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2.

"He became poor" – Luke 2:7; Matt 8:20; 17:27; 27:46; Phil 2:6-8; Isa 53:2-6.

This was "for your sakes", for the sake of all believers. Christ loved us and gave Himself for us – John 10:11-18; Gal 2:20. He wanted us to "become rich" – not money in the bank now, but the riches seen in Matt 19:28,29; John 14:2,3; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21-23; Eph 1:3,7,8; 1 Pet 1:4; Rev 21:7. This was possible only "through His poverty" – that is, if Christ had not given up everything to die in the place of sinners no one would ever have received the riches of salvation. In the matter of love and the grace of giving, the apostles followed the Lord's example – 6:10; Acts 3:6; Matt 19:27. Do we?

**8:11,12** Giving should be in proportion to



doing *of it*, so that as *there was* a readiness to desire, so *there may be* a completion also, out of what you have. 12 For if there is first a willing mind, *the gift* is acceptable according to what a man has, *and* not according to what he does not have.

13 For *I do* not *mean* that others should be relieved and you burdened, 14 but *that there might be* an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may* supply what they need, so that *some day* their abundance may also *supply* what you need, that there may be equality. 15 As it is written, He who *gathered* much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.

16 But thanks *be* to God, who put the same earnest care for you in the heart of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted *our* exhortation, but being very earnest, he is going to you of his own accord. 18 And we are sending with him the brother who *is* praised throughout all the churches *for his service* in the gospel. 19 And not only *this*, but he was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gracious gift, which we administer for the glory of the Lord himself, and *to show* your eagerness *to help*. 20 *We are* arranging things so that no one will blame us for *the way* this large gift is administered by us, 21 preparing matters with

integrity, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22 And we are sending with them our brother, whose diligence we have often proved in many things, but now much more diligent because of the great confidence *I have* in you. 23 If *anyone enquires* about Titus: *He is* my partner and fellow worker for you. Or if *anyone asks about* our brethren: *They are* the messengers of the churches, *and* an honour to Christ. 24 Therefore show them, in the presence of the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting about you.

**9** For concerning *this* service to the saints, it is unnecessary for me to write to you. 2 For I know your readiness of mind, about which I speak with pride concerning you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago. And your zeal has inspired most *of them*. 3 Yet I have sent the brethren, so that our speaking proudly about you would not be in vain in this regard, *but* that, as I said, you may be ready, 4 *thinking* that if the Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to say, you) would be ashamed about this confident boasting. 5 Therefore I thought it necessary to urge the brethren to go in advance to you, and prepare

what one has (1 Cor 16:2). The poor cannot give much, the rich should not give little.

"Acceptable" (v 12) – see Mark 12:41-44.  
**8:13-15** The key word here is "equality." There should be mutual love between believers, an eagerness to share when some are in need. Compare Acts 2:44,45; 4:32-35. See also 1 John 3:16-18. Again the Lord Jesus is the greatest example of this. He shares all He has with believers. Why should not believers share all they have with Him and with one another? Since they are all one in Christ why should some of them be exceedingly rich and others be exceedingly poor? Why should some of them almost throw their money away on needless luxuries while others of them are destitute?

When the people of Israel were in the desert God arranged things so there would be equality (v 15; Ex 16:18). God now gives good things to believers so that all might have enough – not that some might enjoy all the good (and all the expensive) things of life while others starve. But there is no command in these matters. It is a matter of love. Giving should not be forced. A man's property is his own, and he can give it or keep as much as he likes. But if he keeps most and gives little, there will be great loss to himself and suffering to others whom he might have helped if he were more generous.

**8:18** "Brother" – we don't know who this brother and the brother in v 22 were.

**8:19** 1 Cor 16:3,4.

**8:20,21** See 12:16-18; 1 Cor 16:3. Here

is a very wise example of how funds given for God's work should be handled. Christians now should take the same pains as Paul to do what is right and to let others see that it is so. They should remember too that whether or not men see what they do, the Lord sees – Heb 4:13.

**8:23** "An honour to Christ" – compare John 17:10. When the majority of human beings continually dishonor Christ can we say anything greater about any person than that he is an honor to Him?

**8:24** "The proof of your love" – v 8. Compare 1 John 3:17. If we are not giving to Christ and His work, what proof is there that we know Him and love Him? If we truly love Him we will love His work and His people also and try to help them.

"Our pride in you" – 7:14. See what love and concern Paul had for those whom he sent to the churches, as well as for the churches themselves (11:28).

**9:1,2** See 8:6,7,10,11.

**9:3,4** See 8:13,22-24. The Christians at Corinth earlier had shown eagerness to give a generous offering, but it seems that later on they had become careless in actually getting the collection ready (8:10,11). Unfortunately, many Christians are like this. In the beginning they show enthusiasm for a work, but with the passage of time their enthusiasm cools and they do not bring the work to completion. This is a mark of immaturity and instability.

**9:5** Verse 7. When it comes to giving, believers should not want to keep as much

your generous gift, which *you* previously promised, that it might be ready, as *a matter of* generosity and not as a grudging duty.

6 But this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows abundantly will also reap abundantly. 7 Everyone *should give* as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or from compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God *is* able to make all grace flow to you in abundance, so that you, always having all sufficiency in everything, may have an abundance for every good work. 9 As it is written,

He has dispersed abroad;  
he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness remains for ever.

as they possibly can for themselves, should not give merely because it is expected of them and they see no way to escape from giving.

**9:6** Compare Prov 11:24,25; 19:17; 22:8,9; Luke 6:38; Gal 6:7. Mark this principle down as sure. Some people are poor and will remain poor both in material and spiritual matters because they have no heart to give to God and others.

**9:7** Verse 5; 8:8. If our giving is to please God it must come willingly from the heart, must be an act of love for God and for His people, must be a happy thing, not something done with a sad face. If we have love, giving is as natural as breathing to us.

**9:8** Those who give generously and cheerfully to others will not be the losers. Just the opposite is often true – Prov 11:24,25. God loves to give to those who love to give. God is the ruler of the universe. Men's plans and projects, lands, weather conditions, the state of an economy, and all the many factors which can make or break a person financially, are all in His hands. He can make all circumstances to work for the good of those He delights in. He can even work miracles for them if He pleases – 1 Kings 17:10-16; 2 Kings 4:1-7.

But usually He blesses them in more ordinary ways, using men and circumstances to increase their prosperity, and protecting them from disasters which could bring poverty. He knows how to pour out His grace in such a way that they will always prosper both spiritually and materially (if material prosperity is in His plan for them).

Observe that the reason He does so is that those whom He blesses "may have an abundance for every good work." If they do not behave like this when God blesses them, they should remember that He can just as easily withdraw His blessing as give it.

**9:9-14** Paul gives some results to believers of generous and cheerful giving. The results are both in this life and in the life to come (v 9). The results are as follows.

10 Now may he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, multiply the seed you have sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are richly furnished in everything for complete generosity, which produces thanksgiving to God through us.

12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also overflows in much thanksgiving to God, 13 while, because of what this service proves, they glorify God for your obedience *which accompanies* your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for *your* generous sharing with them, and with everyone. 14 And in their prayers for you, *they will* feel strong affection for you because of the overflowing grace of God in you.

15 Thanks *be* to God for his indescribable gift.

God will never forget what they have done (v 9. Compare Heb 6:10).

God will bless them materially (vs 10,11). The needs of God's people will be met through them (v 12).

They will be giving proof of their obedience to Christ's gospel (v 13).

Others will remember them warmly and lovingly in their prayers (v 14).

And because of them thanksgiving and praise will be given to God (vs 11,12,13).

This last result, thrice repeated, was of the highest importance to Paul. See also 1:11; 4:15. The glory of God was his chief concern in everything (1 Cor 10:31), and God is glorified when His people behave as they should and when they thank and praise Him as they should.

**9:10,11** Verse 8 says God can do such things. Now Paul tells them that God will bless them if they are cheerful and generous givers. Of course, this is not a sweeping promise that God will make everyone rich who gives generously. There are many poor people who are cheerful givers who remain poor (but probably not as poor as they would have been otherwise).

In any case, we should never seek to be rich, or to have material prosperity for our own sake (see 1 Tim 6:6-8). If we want prosperity it should be only because it will enable us to do more for God and His work and His people. To give only because of the hope of getting back more than we gave is not the kind of giving God delights in. In fact, it is only selfishness in disguise. It is a big mistake to think of it as merit which will make us worthy of God's grace. And we should always remember that Jesus pronounced a blessing on believers who were poor, and He warned against riches (Luke 6:20,24).

**9:13** Their generous giving proved their love and obedience. Lack of giving will, of course, prove the opposite of this.

**9:15** God's gifts to men are many and great (Ps 68:35; 127:2,3; 146:7; Ps 2:6;

**10** Now I myself, Paul, plead with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in person *am* lowly among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you. 2 But I plead *with you* that when I *am* present I may not *have* to be bold with that confidence with which I intend to be bold against some *people*, who regard us as if we live

according to the flesh. 3 For though we live in the body, we do not fight according to the body. 4 For the weapons of our warfare *are* not of the body, but mighty through God to the destruction of strongholds, 5 demolishing reasonings and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and leading away captive every thought to

Matt 7:11; John 14:27; Acts 5:31; 14:17; 15:8; 17:25; Rom 5:17; 6:23; 1 Cor 7:7; 12:7-11; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 3:16; Jam 1:5,17). But no doubt Paul has in mind here the greatest and most indescribable gift of all – John 3:16; Rom 8:32; Isa 9:6. And he refers to this gift so that believers might better understand what giving is all about and learn to give as God gives. Here is a brief summary concerning the truth about the giving of believers.

Being able to give is a gift of God, God's grace working in their hearts and lives (8:1; Rom 12:6-8).

Giving is a privilege believers should seek (8:4).

Giving is a test of the sincerity of our love and obedience – no giving indicates no love, little giving, little love, much giving, much love (8:8).

Giving is the nature of God (8:9).

Even very small gifts are acceptable to God, if the heart is right (8:12; Mark 12:41-44).

Giving helps to bridge the gap between those who have plenty and those who are in need (8:13).

Giving is service to God's people (9:1).

Giving should be with freedom and cheerfulness (9:5,7).

Giving will bring its reward (9:6,8-11,14).

Giving is a source of thanksgiving and praise to God (9:11-13).

Here are some other references on giving to God and to others – Ex 35:5-9; Lev 7:12,13; 27:30; Num 18:21,24; Deut 14:28,29; 15:10; 2 Sam 24:24; 1 Chron 29:3,5,9,14; Ps 37:26; Prov 11:24,25; 19:17; 22:9; Eccl 11:1,2; Mal 1:7,8,14; 3:8-10; Matt 6:1,2,19,20; 19:21; Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 6:18,19; Heb 6:10; Jam 2:15,16; 1 John 3:17.

**10:1** See 11:10. In chapters 10-13 Paul turns his attention to the false teachers in Corinth and to those who were listening to them. These false teachers taught a perverted gospel (11:4). They were servants of Satan whom Satan had sent to Corinth to lead believers astray (11:13,14). They boasted that they were true apostles (11:5,12), and attacked Paul and the gospel he preached. So Paul defends the truth that he was an apostle. This was not for his sake but for the sake of the church in Corinth (12:19). He was worried about their spiritual condition (11:3; 12:20,21), and he realized that it would become far worse if they rejected him and refused to believe that God spoke through him as a chosen apostle.

**10:1** "Gentleness of Christ" – Matt 11:29;

12:20; Isa 40:11. Paul would behave as the Lord Jesus did, not exercising his authority as an apostle (13:10), but appealing to them in love.

"Bold" – some in Corinth were accusing Paul of being cowardly when he was there and able to use bold language only when he wrote to them.

**10:2** Paul was able to be bold and use severe methods in Corinth, but hoped they would not force him to do so.

"According to the flesh" – this is another false accusation some people brought against Paul.

**10:3-5** Paul now refers to the war between truth and error, that is, between the truth God has revealed and the errors of men. The world's purpose is to destroy the truth of Christ. The purpose of God's true servants is to destroy error and bring men's thoughts into obedience to Christ.

The weapons of Christ's servants are different from the weapons of the world. Believers are in the world, but they are not to use the world's weapons in their fight for truth. The world's weapons are violence, force, trickery, charm, propaganda, human reasoning and any method that comes out of man's fallen nature. Believers also have weapons (6:7; Eph 6:17), but they are spiritual weapons. Paul relied on the power of God working with truth and righteousness. The fullness of God's Spirit, honesty, sincerity, speaking the truth in love were the weapons of that great soldier of God.

And such weapons have divine power. By them he was able to demolish "strongholds" – forts of Satan, of evil, of unbelief, forts of false religion and philosophy, of arguments against God's truth, of pretended wisdom and power. That soldier for God took "captives" also.

The great battle going on in the world is between truth and error. Paul took hold of every philosophy of man, every religious idea, everything which passes for wisdom, every thought, and brought it to the feet of Christ for His judgment on it. Paul wanted not only his own mind and thinking to be subject to the Son of God and in accordance with the truth He taught, but the minds and the thinking of all men.

We may be sure that only minds willing to obey Christ, and only thoughts which He can approve, are what they should be. By nature, the minds of men, like their desires and actions, are fallen and sinful (Rom 8:6,7; Eph 4:18). People need new minds which think as God originally intended them to think – Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23; Phil 2:5.

be obedient to Christ; 6 and *we* are ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

7 Do you look on things according to their outward appearance? If anyone has persuaded himself that he belongs to Christ, let him again take into account that, just as he belongs to Christ, even so we belong to Christ. 8 For even if I were to boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord has given us for building you up, rather than pulling you down, I should not be ashamed of it. 9 I do not want to seem as if I would frighten you by letters. 10 "For *his* letters", they say, "*are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech *is* of no account." 11 Let such a person realize that just as we are in word by letters when we are absent, so *we will be* in deed also when we are present.

12 For we dare not count ourselves among those who commend themselves, or compare ourselves with them. But they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not wise. 13 But we will not boast beyond measure, but according to the boundaries of the sphere which God has appointed to us, a

sphere which reaches even to you. 14 For we are not extending ourselves beyond *our boundaries*, as though *they* did not reach to you. For in *preaching* the gospel of Christ we came as far as you also. 15 *We will* not boast of things beyond *our boundaries*, *that is*, of other men's labours, but have hope, as your faith increases, that *the boundaries* of our sphere will be enlarged by you, 16 *so we can* preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's *area* of accomplishment. 17 But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. 18 *For it is not the* one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

**11** Would to God you would bear with me a little in *my* folly. And indeed you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have betrothed you *to* one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that by some means, as the serpent deceived Eve through his cunning, so your minds might be corrupted from the integrity that is in Christ. 4 For if the one coming *to you* preaches another Jesus, whom we have not

See also Paul's comparison of man's wisdom with God's wisdom in 1 Cor 1:17-2:16; 3:18-20; Col 2:8.

**10:6** Paul wanted to give them every opportunity to respond to the truth and be obedient. Eventually they would find that he had authority to punish disobedience. Compare 13:10; 1 Cor 4:21; 5:3-5.

**10:7** Verse 12; 5:12.

**10:8** "Boast" – note at 1:12.

**10:10** Verse 1. Evidently some thought Paul, in his preaching, lacked eloquence and human wisdom (11:6) and was too gentle and meek in presenting the truth. At least they spoke the truth when they said his letters were "weighty and powerful."

**10:12** If men compare themselves only with some of their fellow men (such comparisons will no doubt be prejudiced in their own favor), they might find something to praise themselves for. But Paul refused to play this game. He knew there was a much higher standard for comparison than other men. Christ is the great example, and no one in his senses can think highly of himself if he compare himself with Him.

**10:13,14** "Boast" – 1:12.

"Sphere" – Paul means his work as an apostle, evangelist and teacher. His sphere of service reached to Corinth. It was he who first went there with the gospel and founded the church (1 Cor 4:14,15; 9:2).

**10:15** The false apostles (v 13) who came to Corinth were trying to take over the church and claim the work as their own. This is the usual way with false teachers. Paul was not doing that in "boasting" about his work in Corinth.

**10:16** Paul hoped the church there would become more firmly established in the truth so that he could use his time and strength to go to other places. Compare Rom 15:20-22.

**10:17** Jer 9:24; 1 Cor 1:31.

**10:18** Verse 12. The false teachers commended themselves and sought the commendation of men (3:1). Compare John 5:44. Paul wanted the approval that comes from God only (1 Cor 4:3-5; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4).

**11:2** "Jealous" – he is speaking about spiritual matters. Some in Corinth were listening to false teachers and he feared they would forsake the truth he had taught them. The word "jealous" indicates his love for them. But observe that he was not trying to keep those Christians for himself or for his own praise and glory. It was their relationship to Christ which concerned him.

"Husband" – Matt 22:1,2; John 3:29; Rom 7:1-4; Eph 5:24-33; Rev 19:6-9. Compare Ps 45:9-15; Isa 54:5; Jer 3:14,20; Hos 2:16,19.

**11:3** Gen 3:1-7. It is fitting for Paul to speak of Eve rather than Adam because Eve was the bride of the first Adam and the Church is the bride of the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45), and because Eve was deceived, not Adam (1 Tim 2:14). And what believers were facing in Corinth was Satanic deception (vs 13-15).

**11:4,5** Paul gives the reason why he was afraid for some Christians there – they seemed to be lacking in love for the truth and an ability to recognize error. At least they were unwilling to take a stand against false teachers. They were so tolerant that

preached, or *if* you receive another spirit, which you have not received, or another gospel, which you have not accepted, you put up with *that* well enough! 5 But I do not think that I am at all inferior to those “super” apostles. 6 Even though I *am* untrained in speech, *I am* not *untrained* in knowledge. *What we are* has been made completely evident to you in all matters.

7 Did I commit a sin in lowering myself that you might be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God freely? 8 I robbed other churches *by* receiving support *from them* to do you service. 9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one. For what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I have kept myself from being a burden to you, and I will *continue to keep myself*

Paul was alarmed. He well knew that tolerance of false teaching reveals a lack of love for the truth. Observe that not every religious teacher who has some spirit or other, or some power or other, has God's Spirit and His power. And not everyone who seems to be preaching the gospel is preaching the true gospel of Christ (see Gal 1:6-9; 1 John 4:1). He calls those so-called apostles “super” apostles in sarcasm, because of the great claims they made for themselves.

**11:6** “In speech” – 10:10; 1 Cor 2:1-5.

“In knowledge” – 1 Cor 2:6-16; Gal 1:11,12.

**11:7-12** See 1 Cor 9:4-15. Perhaps his enemies said that Paul did not take any support from the church there because he knew he was not a real apostle and was not worthy of it, and that his working with his own hands to earn his living (Acts 18:3) was beneath the dignity of a true apostle. But, Paul says, his motive was his love for them (v 11), his desire to “elevate” them, to have them rise spiritually (v 7).

**11:8** “I robbed” – of course Paul is speaking figuratively. He did not ask other churches for financial help but he accepted it when they offered it, and sometimes those who gave were poor themselves. He felt it almost like robbery to accept help from them while serving the more wealthy Corinthians (8:14).

**11:9** Paul sometimes did accept material help from believers. But it seems he did not do so from a church during the time he was present and ministering to it.

**11:10** 1 Cor 9:15-18.

**11:12** Doubtless the false apostles at Corinth took money from the Christians there for their preaching (2:17). They liked to think they were Paul's equal, but Paul shows they were not his equal in preaching the gospel free of charge. And he determined to continue showing this.

**11:13-15** Now Paul by the inspiration of God's Spirit fully exposes the character of the false religious teachers at Corinth, and of all such teachers who come in the name of Christ, in all generations and in all places.

*so.* 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no one in the regions of Achaia will stop me from this boasting.

11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows *I do.* 12 But I will continue to do what I am doing, so that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire opportunity to be regarded as we are in the things they boast about.

13 For such *men are* false apostles, deceitful workers, *outwardly* changing themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for even Satan *outwardly* changes himself into an angel of light. 15 So it is no big thing if his servants also *outwardly* change themselves into servants of righteousness. Their end will be according to their works.

16 I say again, Let no one think me a fool; if otherwise, then receive me as *you would* a fool, so

He says six things about them.

They are “false” – they say God has sent them but He has not (compare Rev 2:2; Jer 23:21).

They are “deceitful workers” – both their methods and their message are deceitful and their purpose is to deceive others (Matt 24:11,24; Rom 16:18; 2 Thess 2:9,10).

They outwardly change themselves, masquerade, put on a disguise so that others will think that Christ has sent them, but their evil hearts have not been changed.

They are Satan's servants (v 15; John 8:44; 2 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 4:1,2).

They pretend to be servants of righteousness – they speak of righteousness but they are really servants of sin (2 Pet 2:18,19). The whole of 2 Peter chapter 2 and the letter of Jude reveal what many false religious teachers are like).

God will judge them according to their works (2 Thess 2:8; 2 Pet 2:3,9; Jude 13; Matt 7:22,23).

Some of the Corinthian Christians were listening to such men, were giving them money, were being tolerant of their teaching. Can we not understand Paul's alarm? Can people welcome Satan's servants and not be harmed in their lives? Won't there be reason for doubting the spiritual condition of those who do so?

**11:14** Satan does not come revealing himself as Satan, and he does not make sin and evil seem sinful and evil. He can make himself shining, brilliant, attractive. He comes as a god. He can make denial of God's Word seem sweetly reasonable. He can make sin seem like righteousness. He tries to turn the whole world upside down, and make truth seem like error and error seem like truth, and darkness seem like light and light seem like darkness. And among men he has many willing helpers. God pronounces judgment on such in Isa 5:20. Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1; John 8:44; etc.

**11:16-21** Paul nowhere praises himself. He well knew what he was apart from God's



that I may boast of myself a little. 17 What I am saying in this confident boasting, I am not saying according to the Lord, but as if in foolishness. 18 Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. 19 For you gladly bear with fools, since you *yourselves* are wise! 20 For you bear it, if someone brings you into bondage, if a man devours *you*, if a man takes *from you*, if a man exalts himself, if a man hits you in the face. 21 To *my* shame, I say we were too weak for that! But in whatever matter anyone else dares *to boast* (I speak foolishly), I too dare.

22 Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the offspring of

Abraham? So *am* I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more, in more abundant labours, in beatings above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty *lashes with a whip*, minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have been in the sea, 26 *in* frequent travels, *in* perils from waters, *in* perils from robbers, *in* perils from *my own* countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren, 27 in weariness and hardship, in frequent

grace and power – 12:11; 7:18; Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:15. He even hated to appear to be praising himself. It made him feel somewhat foolish. But for the sake of the Christians in Corinth he felt compelled to defend his apostleship (12:19). And the only way he could do that was by speaking of these things God had enabled him to do and to suffer for Christ.

**11:19-21** In order to shame them he speaks sarcastically. They had put up with the boasting of false teachers so they should be able to endure a few boasts from Christ's true apostle. Verse 20 describes what the false teachers there had been doing.

"Into bondage" – this probably means they were trying to bring the Christians there under the law of Moses (compare Acts 15:1; Gal 2:4), but being under any kind of false teaching is a kind of slavery.

**11:21** "Boast" – note at 1:12.

**11:22** This, too, is evidence that the false teachers there were Jews who professed to follow Christ yet who insisted that keeping the law of Moses was necessary for salvation. They boasted about their descent from Abraham, and the fact that they were of the conservative community, able to read the Scriptures in the original Hebrew (see note at Acts 6:1). But Paul points that he, too, was all of these things (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5).

**11:23-29** They said they were servants of Christ (v 23). Paul has already denied they were (vs 13-15) and so does not repeat what he had said before. Instead he shows there was far more evidence that he was a servant of Christ than those teachers could bring forth. The evidence was of three kinds – his great labor for Christ (vs 23,26,27), his great sufferings for Christ (vs 23-27), and his great care for Christ's people (vs 28,29).

**11:23** "In more abundant labours" – Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 4:12; Col 1:29. Paul puts this first in his list. He knew the real test of anyone saying he as a servant of Christ is not in talk but in action, and that one way to measure a person's love for Christ is to see how hard he is willing to work for Him.

"Prisons" – there is a tradition that comes from the first century that Paul was in prison

seven times.

"Death" – 1:8,9; 2:11,12.

**11:24** Forty lashes with a whip was the maximum number of strokes the law permitted – Deut 25:1-3. Usually the Jews gave only 39 – they were afraid that if they gave 40 they might miscount and actually give 41 and thus be guilty of breaking the law. These beatings were very severe and sometimes people died under them. A person's love for Christ is measured also by what he is willing to suffer for Him.

**11:25** "Pelted with stones" – Acts 14:19,20.

"Shipwrecked" – only one shipwreck is recorded (Acts 27:27-44). Many sufferings and dangers Paul endured are not recorded in the New Testament, and we know of them only because he mentions them here.

**11:26** "In perils" – a person's love for Christ may also be measured by what he is willing to face for Christ. The false teachers could sit in Corinth and boast they were great ones. But what had they suffered? What dangers were they willing to face for Christ?

**11:27** "Sleepless" – often he had no proper place to sleep. And often the burdens and pressures of the work would have kept him awake. Let those who never in their lives missed a comfortable night's sleep for Christ's sake, criticize him if they will (he implies).

"Hunger", "thirst", "nakedness" – Paul was not writing high-sounding theory in Rom 8:28,35-37. He had proved it in experience. And he had proved his apostleship by the things he had done and suffered. Could he not have made his life more comfortable, more easy, more financially secure? Of course he could have, if he had been willing to ask individuals or churches for help, if he had taken money along for the best available accommodations, inns and food, if he had gone only where it was easy to go and where things were well arranged for his coming.

But he was not interested in all that (Acts 20:24). He wanted to reach people in places where those things were not even possible, and He considered suffering for Christ a privilege and a glory, not something to be avoided at all costs – 4:17; Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29; 3:10; Col 1:24.



sleepless vigils, in hunger and thirst, in frequent fastings, in cold and nakedness. 28 Beside those outward things, *there is* that which presses on me daily: concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I do not burn *with indignation*?

30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things which relate to my weaknesses. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the governor under king Aretas kept the city of the Damascenes under a military guard, wanting to capture me. 33 But I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped *from* his hands.

**12** Without doubt, boasting is useless to me. I will come to visions and revelations of the

Far different was this man of God from those teachers and preachers who sat boasting in Corinth – and from so many today who seem to think it is unjust treatment or hardship if they have to face a simple insult for Christ's sake or miss a single meal.

**11:28** "All the churches" – not the one in Corinth only, not merely those others he had founded in various places, but even churches he had never seen (Col 2:1). All the churches were linked with Christ and Christ's reputation on earth, and so in Paul's mind they were all linked with himself. The concerns of one church is sometimes enough to crush a pastor. Paul's heart went out to all the churches.

**11:29** It was not merely churches in general that weighed on him, it was individuals in the churches.

"Weak" – Rom 14:1; 15:1; 1 Cor 9:22.

"Burn" – he was filled with indignation when others caused individual Christians to stumble in their faith. He fulfilled his own words in Rom 12:15 and Gal 6:2. He felt what they felt, took on himself their cares, problems and troubles. Of course it was Christ who taught him and enabled him to do so.

**11:30** "Weaknesses" – 12:5,9,10.

**11:31** The list of Paul's troubles, hardships and sufferings might have seemed unbelievable to some people in Corinth. So he solemnly assures them in God's name that he was telling the truth.

**11:32,33** Acts 9:22-25. This humiliating experience is but one example of the "weaknesses" he boasted about. He wanted them to understand that all along he has been boasting not in his strength to endure sufferings and dangers, but in God who enabled him to endure in spite of his weaknesses (3:5; 4:7).

**12:1** Paul saw no value to himself in going on boasting about his "weaknesses," but he had no choice – vs 11, 19. And he thinks the same about speaking of his visions and revelations. But if the false teachers in

Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ *who*, more than fourteen years ago, was caught up to the third heaven, whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knows. 3 And I know that this man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knows) 4 was caught up to paradise, and heard inexpressible matters which are not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such a one I will boast, but of myself I will not boast, except in my weaknesses. 6 For *even* if I might choose to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so that no one will think of me above what he sees me *to be*, or *what* he hears of me.

7 And so that I would not be highly lifted up *with pride* because of the greatness of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to beat me, so that I would

Corinth had been boasting of visions and revelations (which seems very likely), for the sake of the Christians there he felt he should show he did not fall short of them in this matter either. Note on visions at Gen 15:1; Num 12:6.

**12:2-5** Was Paul speaking of himself here? Yes; see v 7. Why, then, does he speak of a "man," as if it were someone other than himself? Possibly because this had nothing to do with his "weaknesses" and he wished to boast only in that; possibly because it was something that happened to him in such a strange way he hardly understood what was going on and was almost like a spectator, or possibly for some other reason that has not occurred to the author of these notes.

**12:4** "Paradise" – evidently this is the same as the "third heaven" (v 2). Some Jews taught there were seven heavens, but this idea has no place in God's revelation of truth in the Bible. By "the third heaven" Paul evidently meant the highest heaven, the spiritual heaven, the dwelling place of God, Paradise. The word "Paradise" appears only three times in the New Testament – here, Luke 23:43 and Rev 2:7. Paul heard there things he was "not permitted to tell." Compare Deut 29:29; Rev 10:3,4.

**12:6** He wanted people to form their opinions about him and his apostleship from what they were able to see and hear, not from his spiritual experiences which they could not verify.

**12:7** This proves he has been speaking about himself in vs 2-5. People have become proud and conceited because they saw, or thought they saw, visions and revelations far less great than Paul saw. God knew there was danger that Paul would become proud because of what God had shown him. And God has His ways of keeping an apostle, or any of His people, from falling into the pride which He hates. What was Paul's "thorn in the flesh"? All we know about it is what he here tells us. And the language is obscure and difficult.

not become highly lifted up *with pride*. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast more gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest on me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in

persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then I am strong.

11 I have become a fool in boasting. You have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you, because in nothing am I inferior to those "super" apostles, though I am nothing. 12 Truly the *miraculous* signs of an apostle were performed *by me* among you with all patient

"Flesh" could mean his physical body. In this case the "thorn" could have been some physical disorder or disease.

"Flesh" could also mean his fallen nature which he speaks of in Rom 7:14-25; etc. The Greek word used here (*sarki*, from *sarx*) also means that (see Rom 7:5,18). In this case the "thorn" had something to do with his fallen, sinful nature (what he was in himself apart from Christ) – possibly a strong temptation, and evil suggestion Satan kept putting into his mind, or some such thing, which was a constant reminder to Paul of his sinfulness and weakness, a deeper understanding of what he was by nature (as seen in Rom 7:14-25). It seems to the writer of these notes that this would be more likely to keep him from being puffed up with pride than some physical ailment or other. For example, it is not easy to see how some disease of the eyes (some scholars have thought this was his "thorn") could keep him from being proud and conceited concerning his heavenly visions.

However, we do not know for certain what the "thorn" was, and we do not need to know. But we do know some things about it. It was "given" to him. He means God arranged matters so that he would experience it. But it was a "messenger of Satan." The Greek word here translated "messenger" is the same as that translated "angel" in many places of the New Testament. This could possibly mean that the thing which so troubled Paul, whether physical or spiritual in nature, was merely produced by Satan. Or (and does this not seem more likely?) it could mean that a literal messenger of Satan – a demon – was the source of his trouble, an evil spirit which hounded his footsteps and oppressed and opposed him at every turn, or which prodded at some weak point in his old fallen nature, or tried to lure him into some evil which he hated.

In any case, the "thorn" resulted in a great deal of pain to Paul. Whether physical or mental or spiritual pain, or some combination of these, he does not say. Perhaps he does not say so that all believers who experience various kinds of "thorns" might have the same great promise that was given to Paul in v 9. Compare Paul's experiences with Job 1:6 - 3:26.

**12:8** So great was his pain that he begged God to take the "thorn" away.

"Three times" – compare Matt 26:44; John 13:38; 21:17; Acts 10:16. Observe that not even the prayers of this great apostle were always answered in the way he

had hoped.

**12:9** The Lord did not give Paul what he asked for. He gave him something far better – an explanation and a great promise. The explanation was this: if Paul wanted to be spiritually strong through Christ he needed to be weak in himself and to know his weakness. The promise was that Christ would enable him to endure his "thorn" and obtain spiritual benefit from it. We can be sure that God will not call on us to face any pain, or difficulty or danger, or to do any work or bear any burden, without giving us strength to do so. His grace will always be sufficient for all His people in all situations in all generations.

"Therefore" – Paul learned this important lesson about Christ's spiritual power perfected in human weakness. And since one great desire he had was that Christ's power rest on him (Phil 3:10), he was happy to endure anything that taught him his weakness.

**12:10** Observe the words "for Christ's sake" – his whole life and ministry were for Christ's sake, and he wanted Christ's power to rest on him for Christ's sake, not for his own sake. He gladly faced suffering for the same reason.

"Take pleasure in" – or it could be translated "delight in" – many Christians seem to think it is enough to grimly endure weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties, if they can manage to do even that. But when a person knows the great spiritual benefit which can come from such things, he can delight in them. In the light of this knowledge of God's ways, pain can produce pleasure (compare Matt 5:11,12; Acts 5:40,41; 16:22-25; 1 Pet 5:12-14).

Paul here is speaking of spiritual power, the power to make him an able servant of Christ. Why was Paul strong when he was weak? Because recognizing his weaknesses he did not try to rely on himself, his strength, his intellect, his ability, but on God alone. See 1:8,9; 1 Cor 2:1-5. And the way to obtain God's power is to renounce one's own and trust Him. Compare Isa 40:28-31. Of course, this is the exact opposite of the way men in general think.

**12:11** "Fool" – 11:1,16,21.

"Commended by you" – 3:1-3.

"I am nothing" – 3:5; 1 Cor 3:7; Eph 3:8.

**12:12** God gave "signs" through Christ and His apostles to teach spiritual truth (note at John 2:11). "Wonders" means deeds which cause amazement (Matt 12:22,23; 15:31;

endurance, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. 13 For in what were you inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

14 See, I am ready to come to you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you. For I do not seek what is yours but you, because children should not save up for parents, but parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. 16 But be that *as it may*, I did not burden you. However, being crafty, I caught you with guile! 17 Did I exploit you through any of the men I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus *to go there*, and I sent a brother with *him*. Did Titus exploit you? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit? Did *we* not *walk* in the same steps?

19 Once again, do you think that we are defending ourselves to you? We are speaking in God's presence, in Christ, and *we do* everything,

Acts 2:12; 3:10).

"Mighty deeds" or "miracles" – means deeds done with supernatural power. These were "the signs of an apostle." They showed that the apostles were chosen and sent by God and that they taught the truth of God (Acts 5:12; 14:3; Heb 2:4). The days of the apostles are over, the truth has been established once for all and written down for us in the New Testament. Now there is not the need for signs, miracles, and wonders that there was then – though God may give them in certain places at certain times if He wills. See note at Acts 8:15-17.

But now we can recognize whether a person is chosen and sent by God, not by any miracles he may do or claim to do, but by whether his preaching, belief, and manner of living are in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament. And if they are not, we must view with great suspicion any miracles or seeming miracles he or she does. Let such people live and suffer and give themselves, and renounce greed for money and property, and teach as Paul reveals he did in this letter, and we will be more inclined to listen to them.

**12:13** See 11:7-12; 1 Cor 9:12-18. In asking for forgiveness it seems Paul is speaking ironically. He knows he has done no wrong by not taking support from them (7:2).

**12:14,15** Their love and fellowship meant far more to him than any money they could ever give – 6:11-13. He was like a father to the church (1 Cor 4:15). He recognized the duty of fathers toward their children, and was willing to spend for them all he had including his time and strength and abilities (7:3). This is what God would like to see in all His servants. They should be concerned with what they can give to God's people, not what they can get from them.

**12:16-18** It seems some were saying something like this: It is true Paul did not

dearly loved *brethren*, for your building up. 20 For I fear that when I come I will not find you as I would like, and you will find me as you would not like, and that there will be debates, jealousies, angry passions, selfish ambitions, backbitings, *slandorous* whisperings, arrogant attitudes, disturbances. 21 *And I fear that* when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I will *have to* mourn over many who have already sinned, and have not repented of the uncleanness and sexual immorality and lewdness which they have committed.

**13** This *will be* my third *visit* to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word will be established. 2 I told you before, and am telling you in advance, as if I were present the second time, but being absent I now write to those who have previously sinned, and to everyone else, that if I come again I will not spare *them*, 3 since you seek proof that Christ is speaking through me.

accept money from the church, but his real purpose in having them take up a collection for Christians in Jerusalem was to get his hands on the money and use it for himself, and Titus and the other brother were his agents in this. Paul appeals to them – was there any evidence that this slander was true? It was because of such suspicions that Paul acted so carefully and wisely in the matter of the collection (8:16-21; 1 Cor 16:1-4).

**12:19** Here is the reason why he has "boasted" in this letter and defended his apostleship. They should not misunderstand him. He is not presenting a defense before them as though they were a panel of judges (1 Cor 4:1-5). All he had to say to them, including his "boasting" (1:12), was for their good, not his own. By accepting him for what he was – Christ's apostle – and by following the truth he taught, they would be strengthened in their spiritual life.

**12:20,21** Paul well knew that the church there was weak in some respects, and had been guilty of factions and sexual sins (1 Cor 1:11,12; 3:3; 4:18; 5:2,11; 6:15,16; 8:1; 11:18,22). He was afraid that if they rejected him and the truth he taught, the situation would get much worse and his visit there would be a time of much grief to them both.

**13:1** Deut 19:15. Paul probably means that the truth of what they were, and what he was, was well established. There was no need for further evidence or delay.

**13:2** "I will not spare" – see 1 Cor 4:18-21; 5:3-5. He means he would exercise his authority as Christ's apostle to see that offenders were punished.

**13:3,4** "Since you seek proof" – this accounts for the defense of his apostleship in this letter. If they wanted a display of authority or power (instead of meekness and gentleness – 10:1) he would give it to them. They

He is not weak toward you, but is mighty in you. 4 For though he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God *which is active* toward you.

5 Examine yourselves *and see* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless you fail the test. 6 But I trust that you will know that we have not failed the test. 7 Now I pray to God that you will do no evil, not that it might appear that we have stood the test, but that you would do what is honourable, even though it might seem we have failed the test. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but *only* for the

truth. 9 For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And we want this also: your perfection. 10 Therefore I write these things when *I am* absent, for fear that, being present, I would use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord has given me for building up, and not for demolishing.

11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

13 All the saints greet you.

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.

were offended at his seeming weakness (10:10; 1 Cor 2:3). They would find out the power of Christ. Christ, too, seemed to be weak ("crucified in weakness"), but He lived among them in resurrection power. Paul would display this same power in dealing with them – if they did not repent.

**13:5,6** "Examine yourselves" – they had been trying to examine Paul and looked for proof that Christ was speaking through him (v 3). Paul says they would do well to examine themselves. If they passed the test and were sure that Christ was in them, they should realize that he (their spiritual father – 1 Cor 4:15) also passed the test.

What is this test? And why should Christians examine themselves and how do they do it? The purpose of self-examination is to see whether we are "in the faith" – that is, whether we have accepted God's truth, believed it, and follow it, whether we are true Christians or Christians in name only.

How do we test ourselves? Not by trying to look in our own hearts to see what is there (if we do that we may see only something like Rom 7:18,21), and not by examining our feelings (our feelings fluctuate and can be very poor evidence of our spiritual condition). We must test ourselves by what we are actually doing, and by the Word of God, and by our obedience or disobedience to it.

We know what a tree is like by its fruit (Matt 7:16-20; Heb 6:9,10). If we have had no experience with Christ and are not obedient to Him, if our way of living and thinking and acting are contrary to God's Word, what evidence do we have that we belong to Christ? But if we know that we have had some experience with Christ and that we are earnestly trying to obey His Word (weak and failing though our attempts sometimes may be), and that we have done what the Bible says we must do to receive His salvation, we can know that Christ is in us. Compare 1 John 5:9-13; 2:4; 3:10,14,24. We should do all we can to make sure we are in the faith – Heb 6:11; 2 Pet 1:10. And if we do not pass the test, we should not despair. Rather, we should repent of our sins and turn to Christ with

all our hearts and souls.

"Jesus Christ is in you" – John 17:23; Rom 8:9,10; Col 1:27; Rev 3:10.

**13:7-9** Again he puts them first in his thinking – his desire is that they be right with God, even if they think he is not. He was willing to be trampled on if they would be true to God. In any case he could act only for the sake of the truth (1 Cor 9:23; 2 Tim 2:10).

**13:9** See 4:12; 1 Cor 4:9-13.

"Perfection" – 7:1; Matt 5:48. Do we ever ask God to make believers perfect?

**13:10** Verse 2; 1 Cor 4:21.

**13:11** "Be perfect" – v 9; 7:1; note at Matt 5:48. Our aim for others and for ourselves should be nothing less than full spiritual maturity.

"God of love and peace" – Heb 13:20; 1 John 4:8.

**13:12** "Kiss" – Rom 16:16.

**13:14** Here is a verse full of rich truth. Jesus is in this verse. He is both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36. Notes on "Lord" at Luke 2:11; Phil 2:10,11; on "Christ" at Matt 1:1). It is His grace that saves sinners and blesses believers (8:9; John 1:14-17; Gal 1:6). To say that Christ is the source of grace to men is to say He is God. See references at Phil 2:6.

God the Father is also in this verse. He sent the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16; Rom 5:8; 1 John 4:10). Verse 11 speaks of the God of love. Here it is the love of God – His love in action. The grace of Christ and the love of God work together. Because of God's love Christ came and manifested His grace, and because of His grace God's love can be with believers.

The Holy Spirit also is here. See notes at John 14:16,17; etc. His personality is indicated. We can have fellowship only with persons, not with unconscious powers or influences. It is through the Holy Spirit that God lives in us believers, and it is through Him that we have fellowship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus (1 John 1:3).

So the Trinity is in this verse. Each of them has His part in the salvation, sanctification, and blessing of believers. See notes on "Trinity" at Matt 3:16,17.

# The Letter of the Apostle Paul to the GALATIANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime between 49 and 58 AD.

**Themes:**

At least some of the churches in the province of Galatia (an area in what is now the country of Turkey) were a direct result of Paul's labors (4:13-15. See Acts chapter 14. Iconium, Lystra and Derbe were towns in what was known as Lacaonia, but sometimes called "Southern Galatia"). Later on some Jewish Christians who professed to be servants of Christ came there and tried to pervert the gospel of Christ. They taught that for salvation faith in Christ and the grace of God were not sufficient, but that all Christians, whether Jews or not, must keep the law of Moses. Paul had taught the Galatian Christians what he taught everywhere: Salvation comes only by the grace of God through faith (compare Eph 2:8,9). In this letter, using the illustration of Abraham the father of the Jewish nation, and setting forth other evidence, Paul proves this truth once and for all. He also emphasized that spiritual completeness and a holy life can be realized only by the same means – by grace through faith. Some key words in this letter are "faith", "justified", "grace", "freedom", "flesh", "Spirit", "cross." Some key verses are 2:16-21.

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**1** Paul, an apostle (not *sent* from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead), 2 and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace *be* to you and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

6 I am amazed that you are turning away so

**1:1** "Apostle" – Matt 10:2; Rom 1:1.

"From the dead" – Matt 28:6. Observe the distinction Paul makes between Jesus Christ and God the Father. Both are in the one Godhead, but are distinct persons. See notes at Matt 3:16,17; John 17:1; etc.

**1:2** Galatia was a large area in the land now called Turkey. Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 14:1-20) were in that province.

**1:3** Rom 1:7. "Grace" is a key word of this letter – 1:3,6,15; 2:9,21; 3:18; 5:4; 6:18. Paul clearly sets forth what the gospel of grace means.

**1:4** "For our sins" – Isa 53:6,8,10; Matt 26:28; John 1:29; Rom 3:24,25; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18.

"Deliver us" – here is one very important reason why Christ died. It was God's appointed way to rescue people from the power of evil in the world, from the chains which bind men. A title given to Christ in Rom 11:26 is "the Deliverer." Compare Matt 1:21; Luke 4:18; Col 1:13; Titus 2:14; Heb 2:15. He liberates people from everything that could keep them from God – 5:1; John 8:36; Rom 6:17,18.

"Evil world" – or "evil age." The desires, aims, ideals, and works of this age (as all former ages) are bad. See John 3:19; 7:17; Rom 3:19,23; 12:2; 1 John 2:16; 5:19. Our rescue is accomplished like this: Christ died to take away our sins and to deliver us from condemnation (Rom 8:1). When we repent and trust in Him He forgives us and God's Spirit comes to live in us. We then have power and strength to renounce the world and live for God, and Christ begins the process of purifying us from all that would bind us to the evil in the world. Eventually He will return and separate us altogether from evil. The foundation for all of this is His death in the place of sinners. Without that there could be no rescue, no deliverance.

**1:5** "To whom be glory" – Rom 11:36; 16:27; Eph 1:6,12,14; 2:8,9; 3:21.

**1:6** "Are turning away" – they had begun to move away from the truth of God (the one who called them) because they were being deceived by evil men, but they had not fully turned away yet.

"Called you" – notes at Rom 1:6; 8:30.

"Different gospel" – this was the teaching that salvation comes by keeping the law of Moses (3:1-5; 4:9-11,21; 5:2-4. See

soon from him who called you by the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another. But there are some who are troubling you, and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than the one we have preached to you, let him be under a curse. 9 As we already said, so now I say again: If anyone preaches any other gospel to you than the one you received, let him be under a curse.

10 For do I now try to gain men's favor, or

Acts 15:1,5). Paul had taught them the true gospel of Christ – that salvation is a free gift of God and received by faith (2:16; 3:6-9,26; 5:5,6. Compare Rom 4:5; 6:23; Eph 2:8,9). False teachers preaching a false gospel came and told them that faith in Christ was not sufficient, that they also needed to obey the law of Moses, that self-effort had an important part in salvation. And these Galatian Christians were turning toward that false teaching.

**1:7** "Not another" – the word gospel means "good news", and the teaching that Christians were under the law and had to obey it was certainly not good news (3:10; Acts 15:10). Today also there are many so-called gospels in the world, but any teaching that salvation can come by some way other than by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is no gospel at all. And any teaching that tries to add something (some religious ceremony, some good work, some self-effort) to faith for salvation is a perversion of Christ's true gospel.

"Some who are troubling you" – 4:17; 5:10,12; 6:12,13.

"Pervert" – comparatively few people on earth are willing to accept Christ's gospel as it is and not try to change it to suit themselves.

**1:8** "Under a curse" – he uses this strong language to show the great importance of the gospel he preached and the terrible sin of people who try to pervert it. He knew that Christ Himself had revealed the gospel to him (vs 11,12), and that it alone was the power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16). Anyone trying to change it was, knowingly or unknowingly, trying to take away from men the only way of salvation. See Matt 23:13; Luke 11:52. This is a great crime against mankind and against God, and no language is too strong to condemn it. And those guilty of it will pay for their great crime, unless they repent of their folly and wickedness.

**1:9** He repeats this for emphasis. He wants no one to be in doubt about the wickedness of tampering with God's revealed truth. Compare Rev 22:18,19. Other references to false teachers: Matt 7:15; 24:11; Acts 20:29,30; Rom 16:17,18; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 1 Tim 4:1,2; 2 Tim 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1; Jude 4.

**1:10** Did Paul's enemies accuse him of preaching only what he thought men wanted to hear? Verses 6-9 should show them that

God's? Or am I seeking to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ.

11 But I tell you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not of man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *learned it* by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For you have heard of my former conduct in the Jews' religion, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure, and *tried to* destroy it.

14 And I advanced in the Jews' religion more than many of my contemporaries in my own nation, far surpassing them in zeal for the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called *me* by his grace, 16 to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles

before me, but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

18 Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 Now about these things I am writing to you, look, in the presence of God, I am not lying. 21 Afterwards I came to the regions of Syria and Cilicia, 22 but my face was not known to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23 They had only heard that "He who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once *tried to* destroy." 24 And they glorified God in me.

**2** Then fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took along Titus also. 2 And I went up *in accordance with* a revelation, and set before them the gospel that I

the opposite was true. Paul always preached the truth God had revealed and held none of it back for fear he might offend someone (Acts 20:20,26,27). As far as his message was concerned he did not try to please anyone but Christ. He knew that no one can be a true servant of Christ if he is not willing to preach the whole message of Christ whether men like it or not. But in other matters he was willing to please men in order to win them to Christ or help them grow in Christ. See Rom 15:1-3; 1 Cor 9:19-23; 10:33. We should follow him in both these ways.

**1:11** See 2 Pet 1:16; Heb 2:3,4; Acts 1:1-3,8; 2:32; John 7:16,17; 12:49,50; Luke 24:45-48.

**1:12** Eph 3:2-5; Rom 16:25-27; 1 Cor 15:3; Acts 22:14,15; 26:15,16. This is of the utmost importance. Paul insisted on this because the false teachers who had gone to Galatia denied it. He knew he was not guessing about the truth. He was not passing on something he heard from men and which he might have misunderstood. Christ Himself had revealed the truth to him, and so he could speak with complete authority. He did not have to compare the gospel he preached with any other so-called gospel to see if it was true. (But we need to compare the gospel we preach with Paul's. If ours is not the same as his, it is not the true gospel.) See also 2 Cor 1:12-14.

**1:13,14** Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1,2; Phil 3:4-6; 1 Tim 1:13.

**1:15** "From my mother's womb" - compare Jer 1:5; John 15:16.

"Called . . . by his grace" - v 6. God gave this call many years after Paul's birth and began to fulfill the purpose for which He had set him apart at birth.

**1:16** Christ was revealed to Paul (Acts 9:3,4; 1 Cor 9:1). But here he speaks of God's purpose to reveal Christ *in* him. Paul understood that Christ was living and working in him and that he was to show forth Christ to others (2:20; 2 Cor 4:10,11; Col 1:29).

This is God's purpose for all believers.

"Gentiles" - 2:7; Acts 22:21; 26:17,18; Eph 3:8. In the New Testament the word "Gentiles" means people who are not Jews.

**1:17** This is the only place the New Testament speaks of this trip into Arabia. It took place sometime during the events described in Acts 9:19-22. Paul does not tell us why he went there, but seems to imply that it was for the purpose of prayer, fellowship with Christ, and thought and meditation. He did not consult any man (v 16); he wanted to consult God.

**1:18,19** Acts 9:26-30. The other apostles were probably not in Jerusalem at that time. If Peter and James welcomed him it is reasonable to think the others would have done so had they been there.

**1:20** He solemnly states this matter because their acceptance of the true gospel was at stake. If they did not believe him they might continue to do what they began to do (v 6).

**1:21** Acts 9:30; 11:25,26. Tarsus was in Cilicia (a part of what is now called Turkey). Antioch was in Syria.

**1:22** Paul's work was in other areas and he spent only a very brief time in Jerusalem. So most of the Christians in Judea had no personal acquaintance with him.

**1:23,24** They knew of the change in Paul but they didn't praise Paul for it. They praised God who changed Paul. And this was just what Paul desired above all (1 Cor 3:4-7; Eph 1:6,12,14; Phil 1:11).

**2:1-10** Paul continues the subject he introduced in chapter 1. There he says God called him to be an apostle and revealed the gospel to him. Here he says the other apostles accepted him as an apostle and recognized that the gospel he preached was the same as the gospel they preached.

**2:1** "Barnabas" - Acts 4:36; 9:27; 11:25,30; 12:25; 13:2; 15:2.

"Titus" - 2 Cor 2:13; 7:6; 2 Tim 4:10; Titus 1:4.

**2:2** "A revelation" - a revelation from God.

"Privately" - Paul did not want to get

preach among the Gentiles, but *I did this* privately to those of reputation, lest by any means I was running, or had run *my race*, in vain. 3 Yet not even Titus, *who* was with me and who was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 And this *came up* because of false brethren brought in secretly. They came sneaking in to spy on our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into bondage. 5 We did not yield submission to them, no, not for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

6 But from those who seemed to be something (it makes no difference to me what they were – God shows favoritism to no man), for those who seemed *to be something* in conference added nothing to me. 7 On the contrary, when they saw that

involved in any possible argument in public with the leaders of the church in Jerusalem about the gospel. He hoped that privately they would fully agree with him about what the gospel was, and then this agreement could be made public. And this is what happened.

“Lest. . . in vain” – Paul was not afraid that he did not have the true gospel. He knew very well he had (1:12). But he was afraid if the other apostles opposed him and denounced the gospel he preached that it would destroy his work among the Gentiles. **2:3** Circumcision was one of the important issues of the day – v 12; 5:2,3,6,11; 6:12-15; Acts 15:1-5; Rom 4:9-16. The question was, did Gentile Christians have to become converts to the Jewish religion, accept circumcision and keep the law of Moses? The answer Paul and all the apostles gave was “no.” Titus was a test case. He was a Gentile believer, and the apostles in Jerusalem accepted him as a true follower of Christ even though he was not circumcised.

**2:4** These “false brethren” were Jews whom the believers in Jerusalem regarded as fellow believers. The aim of these Jews was to bring all Christians, Jew or Gentile, under the bondage of the law of Moses. Paul knew that one reason Christ came was to set people free from this law. The real question was, how do people obtain salvation – by obeying the law, or by the grace of God? The answer is very plain – 5:1-4; Acts 13:38,39; 15:10,11; Rom 3:24-28; 6:14; 7:4.

**2:5** Paul knew that yielding to false teachers even for a moment could result in great loss for the churches of Galatia. And in all he did he kept in mind the effect it might have on other people.

**2:6-9** Paul was not one to exalt men, either himself or others – 1 Cor 3:5,22,23. In this case, the important thing to him was not what people seemed to be, or the great privileges they had, or the high position they occupied, or their reputation with others. His one concern was whether they accepted as true the gospel Christ had revealed to him. And he could inform the Galatian churches

the gospel for the uncircumcised had been entrusted to me, *just as the gospel* for the circumcised *had been* to Peter 8 (for he who was working effectively in Peter in the position of apostle for the circumcised, the same one was working effectively in me for the Gentiles), 9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, *agreeing* that we *should go* to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10 But *they wanted* us to remember the poor. I too was eager to do the same thing.

11 But when Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before certain men came from James, he

that Peter, James and John, the leaders of the Jerusalem church, were in agreement with him about the meaning of the gospel (v 9).

In verses 7,8, and 9 the words “uncircumcised” and “circumcised” signify Gentiles and Jews. In those days people often spoke of these two groups of people in this way.

**2:10** When Paul took the gospel to the Gentiles, the other apostles did not want him to forget the physical needs of the Jewish Christians in Judea. Paul himself was eager to help meet the needs of the poor there – Acts 24:17; Rom 15:25-28; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians chapters 8,9. In the middle of a profound theological discussion this word about helping the poor shows the importance they all attached to such service. See also Ex 23:11; Deut 15:7,8; Ps 41:1; Prov 14:31; 19:17; 21:13; 29:7; 31:9; Matt 19:21; 2 Cor 9:9.

**2:11-21** In this section Paul continues to defend his authority as an apostle. He was absolutely sure that Christ had revealed the gospel to him (1:12). So he was willing to stand publicly against anyone who spoke or did anything to bring the truth into doubt. Peter was a leader among the original apostles of Christ. He was a good man and one whom God had greatly used (Acts chapters 2-11). But he was not perfect, and there came this time when Paul, for the sake of the gospel, had to rebuke him to his face.

**2:11** We do not know when Peter came to Antioch or the specific purpose of his visit. At that time Antioch was the largest city in that part of Asia and the center of Gentile Christianity (Acts 11:19-26; 13:1-3).

**2:12** “From James” does not mean necessarily that James sent these men; it may mean simply that they went out from the church in Jerusalem where James was a leader. Compare Acts 15:13,20,24. James along with Peter and John had already given the right hand of fellowship to Paul, showing that they agreed with the gospel he preached (v 9).

Paul here calls the men who came to Antioch “of the circumcision.” They were Jewish Christians who taught that Jews who

ate with the Gentiles, but when they arrived, he drew back and separated himself for fear of those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

14 But when I saw that they were not behaving in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of *them* all, "If you, being a Jew, live the way the Gentiles do, and not like the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to live like the Jews?"

15 "We *who are* Jews by nature, and not Gentile sinners, 16 know that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by faith in Jesus

Christ, and we too have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law. For by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

17 "But while we seek to be justified by Christ, if we ourselves also are found to be sinners, is Christ therefore a servant of sin? Absolutely not! 18 For if I rebuild the things I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live for God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live – yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

believed in Christ should continue to keep the rules and ceremonies of the law of Moses. They did not think it was right for Jewish Christians to eat with Gentile Christians unless the Gentiles were willing to follow Jewish rules and ceremonies. Peter had learned that this attitude was wrong (Acts 10:27-29; 11:2-17). So he ate with the Gentile believers in Antioch. But when the "circumcision" group came there he stopped doing this.

Peter was very bold when he was filled with God's Spirit (Acts 2:4,14,36; 4:18-20,31; 5:29-33,41,42), but when he was not, he could easily give in to fear (compare Matt 26:69-75). And how true are the words of Prov 29:25!

**2:13** "Played the hypocrite" is Paul's name for Peter's behavior. This is because Peter believed one thing (that it was all right to eat with Gentile believers), but acted as if he believed another thing (that it was wrong to eat with them). In this way fear of others or a desire for their approval can make even great men of God fall into hypocrisy. The Jewish Christians native to Antioch and even Barnabas, good man that he was (Acts 11:24), fell into the same sin – and sin it certainly was.

**2:14** Paul saw that the situation was very serious. Peter knew the truth very well, but he was not acting according to the truth he knew. His actions were casting doubt on the real meaning of the gospel, just as the words of others had done (Acts 15:1,5).

"Live the way Gentiles do" – Paul meant that Peter himself was no longer following Jewish ceremonies and rules.

"Compel" – Peter was not forcing the Gentiles by words, but bringing pressure on them by his actions. So Paul had to rebuke him for the sake of the truth. He then set forth in vs 15-21 the meaning of the gospel. All the rest of this letter is based on the foundation of the truth in these verses.

**2:15** Paul also was a Jew by birth and speaks from that point of view now.

**2:16** He says that the Jewish Christian leaders had learned a very basic and important truth – salvation cannot come by trying to keep the law God gave through Moses. Sinners, whether Jewish or Gentile, can be

justified only by faith in Christ (compare Acts 13:38,39; Rom 3:24-26,28,30; 5:1). Any pressure brought on Christians to make them think they had to follow the rules and regulations of the law struck at the heart of the gospel. It still does. Any teaching that keeping any religious law whatever leads to salvation or contributes an iota to salvation is false. Any teaching that self-effort, and good works, and human merit can lead to salvation is equally false.

**2:17** For the sake of some who might not have had a full understanding of the truth, Paul begins to answer a possible objection against the gospel. The language here is quite obscure, but it is very probable that this objection is the same he speaks of in Rom 6:1,15. He admits that all who are justified, including himself, are sinners. But does this mean that believing in Christ actually encourages sinning? The answer is, "absolutely not" (see note on this expression at Rom 3:30). See Romans chapter 6 and notes.

**2:18** The meaning seems to be: "After denying that the law God gave through Moses is a way of salvation, if I (or anyone) turn back to it as if it is a way of salvation, I become guilty of sin, and the law itself will condemn me." Compare Heb 2:1-4; 6:4-6; 10:26-29; 12:25.

**2:19** "Am dead" – see Rom 7:1-4. Rejecting the law as a way of salvation does not promote sin. It enables believers in Christ to "live for God". And the law, instead of giving life, was an instrument of death (Rom 7:9-11; 2 Cor 3:6).

**2:20** "Crucified with Christ" – this is true of all believers, not just of Paul. See Rom 6:3-8. Christ died in their place and God counts His death their death. This is the way to a new kind of life. Believers are not the source of this spiritual life. Christ is. And the power to live this new life does not come from the physical or mental life of believers but from Christ living in them. Compare Rom 8:1-10. The new life can be lived only by faith in Christ the Son of God. The true Christian life begins by trusting in Him and continues in the same way (2 Cor 5:7; Col 2:6,7). Paul here is doing what he instructed others to do in Rom 6:11.

21 I do not set aside the grace of God. For if righteousness *comes* by the Law, then Christ died in vain."

**3** O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth? Before your eyes Jesus Christ has been clearly portrayed among you as crucified. **2** This one *thing* I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? **3** Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now going to be made perfect by the flesh? **4** Have you suffered so many things in vain? If indeed *it is* in vain. **5** *The One* who grants the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does he do it by your* works according to the

Law, or by *your* hearing with faith?

**6** Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. **7** Understand, therefore, that those who believe, they are *the ones who are* the children of Abraham. **8** And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith, announced the gospel in advance to Abraham, *saying*, "In you all nations will be blessed." **9** So those who have faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

**10** For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse. For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the Law." **11** But *it is* clear that no one is justified by the Law in the sight of God, for, "The righteous will live by faith." **12** And

"Gave himself for me"—1:4; Rom 5:6-8.

**2:21** The teaching that men can be saved by keeping God's law makes the death of Christ meaningless and useless. So Paul has no hesitation in rejecting it. Why would Christ come and die for people to make them right with God if they could make themselves right with God by what they do? The choice is plain — salvation by grace or no salvation at all.

**3:1** It is foolish to believe that Christ died for no reason. But false teachers were trying to lead these Christians into just such a foolish position. They would never have said that Christ died for nothing. But by teaching the necessity of law-keeping along with Christ's death they were indirectly teaching that His death was unnecessary. And such teaching was completely contrary to the truth Paul had "clearly portrayed" among them when he preached to them the gospel.

**3:2** He appeals to their own experience as evidence that he taught the truth. When they believed the gospel he preached, they received God's Spirit (compare 4:6; Eph 1:13; Acts 10:44; Rom 8:15). God gave His Spirit to live in them not because of their efforts to keep God's law, but when they trusted in Christ. No one yet ever received God's Spirit by observing religious rites, rules and regulations. Observe that people do not have God's Spirit by nature. That Spirit must be received by faith in Christ. See John 14:17.

**3:3** When they believed in Christ they experienced what God did by grace. Was it not foolish to think now that self-effort or rules and ceremonies of the law could carry them forward? Would it not be equally foolish for us to think so?

**3:4** He is doubtful about them. Will the false teachers succeed in their efforts? Will the Christians there accept a perverted gospel? Will they lose the rewards their sufferings might have brought them? Their behavior makes him wonder and doubt (4:11,20).

**3:5** He repeats the question of v 2 in a different form. To resist the false teaching they had heard he wants them to think and use the knowledge of the truth they had.

**3:6** "Abraham" — Paul's purpose is to give

Scriptural proof that God justifies men by faith apart from the works of the law.

"Righteousness" — Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3.

**3:7** Rom 4:11,12,16,17. "Children" here means, of course, spiritual descendants.

**3:8** Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18.

"Scripture" — Rom 3:10; 4:3.

"In you. . .blessed" — see Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18.

**3:9** People everywhere think that God's blessing can be earned by keeping the rules and ceremonies of religion, by attempts to obey the laws they think God has given. The Jews were confident they could gain God's blessing by observing the law God gave through Moses. Paul shows that God's blessing comes by faith, not by self-effort. Notes on "blessing" at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:23-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12; Acts 3:26; Eph 1:3.

**3:10** See Deut 27:26. By trying to keep God's law people do not gain the blessing they hoped for. Instead God's condemnation comes on them. How can this be? Because the law demands full, perfect, constant obedience to everything in it, and no person is capable of this obedience. See notes at Ex 19:5,6,8,21-25. Paul said in Phil 3:6 that his "legalistic righteousness" was faultless. But even he came under the curse the law pronounces on lawbreakers because he could not keep the tenth commandment (Rom 7:7-14). And if a person ever breaks one command of the law of God he is guilty of breaking the whole law (Jam 2:10,11). So condemnation has come on every person who has tried to be right with God by trying to keep God's law.

**3:11** This is one of three places Hab 2:4 is quoted in the New Testament (Rom 1:17; Heb 10:38). It is by faith in God, not by efforts to keep His law, that a person can be right with God.

**3:12** Lev 18:5. Law and faith are totally different principles. Faith trusts God and receives salvation and eternal life as a gift. The law promises life only to the person who "does them" (the commands of the law), not to the person who merely tries to do



the Law is not of faith; but, "The man who does them will live through them." 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 so that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

15 Brethren, I speak of man's ways: no one annuls or adds to a human covenant once *it has been confirmed*. 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings", meaning many; but, "And to your offspring", meaning one *person*, who is Christ. 17 And this I say, *that* the Law, which came four

them or says he does them. And since no one perfectly, constantly does them, the law brings death and condemnation (v 10; Rom 3:19,20).

**3:13** See what the Lord Jesus was willing to do for sinful men! He took our place and let the curse of the broken law fall on Him. He paid the penalty for our crimes against it. Compare Rom 5:6-8; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 3:18. See notes on redemption at Ps 78:35; Matt 20:28.

"Tree" – Deut 21:22,23. In ancient times the authorities in Israel hung condemned and executed criminals on trees. This was a public display of their condemnation and disgrace. So Jesus died for crimes which we have done, and bearing our condemnation and disgrace hung on the cross (called "tree" in Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; 1 Pet 2:24). We are the ones who deserve to be there.

**3:14** In His suffering He thought of our blessing. His desire for our good was greater than His desire to avoid the condemnation and death of the cross. Now all believers in Christ are redeemed from the curse of the law (Rom 8:1). And they are heirs of the blessing God promised through Abraham (see vs 8,9).

"The promise of the Spirit" – Luke 24:49; John 14:16,17; Acts 1:4,5; 2:39. Notice carefully the teaching here. The blessings of God come only to those who have received God's Spirit. We receive God's Spirit "by faith" (vs 2,5; Luke 11:13; Eph 1:13). And all this is through "Christ Jesus", not through anyone or anything else. And it is clear from this verse that before believing in Christ we do not have God's Spirit.

**3:15-17** This is generally true of human contracts and agreements – events which take place after they have been made do not affect them. Paul's point is that this is certainly true of God's covenant with Abraham. The law of Moses, coming centuries after it, could have no effect on it.

**3:16** See Gen 12:7; 13:15; 24:7. Paul means that Christ is the heir of the promises God gave to Abraham. He is the "offspring" of Abraham (Matt 1:1). Believers in Christ are Abraham's heirs only because they are linked with Christ and are joint heirs

hundred and thirty years later, cannot set aside the covenant previously confirmed by God in Christ, and so make the promise void. 18 For if the inheritance *comes* by the Law, *it is* no longer by promise. But God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19 What purpose then does the Law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring, to whom the promise was made, had come. *And it was* ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a *mediator* of one *party only*; but God is one.

21 *Is* the Law then against the promises of God? Certainly not. For if a law had been granted that could have given life, then surely righteousness would have been by the Law. 22 But the

with Christ (vs 14,29; Rom 4:13; 8:17). **3:18** Just as the law and faith are different principles (v 12), so the law and God's promise to Abraham are totally different. God's promise to bless people through Abraham had nothing whatever to do with the law. When God gives a promise men should simply believe it and rejoice, not try to get God to fulfill it by keeping rules and ceremonies.

"Inheritance" – Rom 4:13,14; 1 Cor 3:22; Matt 5:5; Heb 11:8-10; 1 Pet 1:4. Believers in Christ will inherit the earth and heaven too. All that Christ will have they will share, and Christ will have everything (Heb 1:2).

"Gave" (1:6) – Paul speaks of grace as he does of "faith" and "promise," as the opposite of "law." A gift of God cannot be earned by self-effort (Rom 4:4,5; Eph 2:8,9). It should simply be accepted with gratitude.

**3:19** The law brought a curse to those under it. Then why did God, who wants to bless men, give the law? See Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:7. God used the law to bring sin out into the open, to reveal its nature and power. By this method He was teaching people their need of Christ. And to learn of one's need of Christ and to receive Him is the greatest of all possible blessings.

"Until" – God had set a time for the reign of Old Testament law. It was only until the "Offspring" (Christ) should come and provide salvation for people.

"Angels" – see Heb 2:2; Acts 7:38,53. The mediator through whom the law came was Moses.

**3:20,21** Paul deals with a possible objection – since God is "one" (there are many so-called "gods", but not many Gods) why did He give His promises to Abraham and then give the law which was opposed to His promises? Paul says this is a misunderstanding. The law is not opposed to God's promises of blessing. But God's promises cannot be fulfilled as long as people depend on the law for salvation, because the law is unable to give spiritual life or make men righteous (see Rom 7:14; 8:3).

**3:22,23** Compare Rom 3:19-24. The law

Scripture has included everyone under sin, so that the promise *which comes* through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the Law, confined for the faith that would later be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law was a tutor in charge of us *to bring us* to Christ that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under *this* tutor.

26 For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female – in Christ Jesus you are all one. 29 And if you *belong* to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, and heirs according to the promise.

can only condemn and lock men up in the prison they have chosen for themselves – the prison of sin. Before Christ came and provided salvation and taught the way of faith, the law was like a jailer. Even the best of men apart from Christ were in this jail. In God's eyes those who break His law are condemned criminals who are held for punishment. They have no spiritual freedom and no hope of release apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

No one can escape from this prison by self-effort, good works, law-keeping, religious rules and ceremonies, or anything else they can do. Salvation, liberation, spiritual freedom, and God's eternal blessings come only by the means He has appointed – faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (vs 9,14,26; 2:16; Rom 1:16,17; 3:22,28; John 3:16,36; 5:24; Eph 2:8,9). **3:24** The law could not save people, but God used it to discipline them until the way of salvation in Christ was revealed. See in Rom 7:7-14 how the Law was a "tutor" to Paul.

"Justified by faith" – 2:16.

**3:25** Since Christ revealed the way of faith in Himself, and after people put their trust in Him for salvation, the law of Moses has no more authority over them (Rom 6:14).

**3:26** Men are not sons of God by nature. Though God is the creator of all men He is not the spiritual father of all men (compare John 8:44). Only by faith in Christ do people become children of God – John 1:12,13.

**3:27** "Baptized into Christ" – see notes at Rom 6:3. It is faith that makes us children of God (v 26), not water baptism, which is only an outward sign of an inner spiritual change. Baptism into Christ is only by God's Spirit – 1 Cor 12:13.

"Put on Christ" – clothed themselves with Christ – this means that believers stand before God in Christ, covered by His righteousness, as acceptable to God as Christ Himself is.

**3:28** "You are all one" – 1 Cor 12:13; John 17:20-23; Col 3:11. God makes no distinction between human beings in Christ.

**4** Now I am saying *that* an heir, as long as he is a child, though he owns it all, does not differ at all from a slave, 2 but is under guardians and managers until the time appointed by the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the rudimentary things of the world. 4 But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might be adopted as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, calling out, "Abba, Father." 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

8 But at the time when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those who by nature are not gods. 9 But now after you have known God, or

With Him background, origins, social position, caste, race, etc, mean absolutely nothing. What men would count the poorest and lowliest believer in Christ is as acceptable to Him as any other.

**3:29** Verses 7,14,18.

**4:1-7** Paul refers to customs of those days, and uses them as illustrations of spiritual truth. Male children were heirs and would eventually possess all their fathers had. But if they could afford to do so, fathers kept guardians to look after their children until they reached a certain age. When that age was reached the children were regarded as mature "sons" and no longer as children.

Paul is saying that people under the law were in a state similar to childhood, a condition of immaturity, not all that God wanted them to be. But with the coming of Christ, God's time had come to give to believers the rights of sons. Before Christ came they were under the "rudimentary things of the world" (v 3), or under the law (v 5). Now they are freed from all such "guardians and trustees." They have full freedom and all the privileges of the sons of God.

**4:4** The "time" was about 2000 years ago; God's Son was Jesus. He was born "of a woman" (Matt 1:18-21; Luke 1:26-38). He had true human nature (John 1:14; Heb 2:14). And He was born a Jew under the law of Moses (as all Jews were).

**4:5** "Redeem" – 3:13,14. As long as men were under the law they could not have the full rights that God's sons now have.

**4:6** See 3:2,14; Rom 8:15. "Abba" is the word for father in the Aramaic language (a language closely related to Hebrew).

**4:7** Believers in Christ are not like slaves who have to labor under a whip. They are God's children who have been freely given everything God has (1 Cor 3:21-23).

**4:8,9** These Gentile believers were formerly in bondage to false religion and false gods, but they had gained freedom by a knowledge of the true God. Now they were considering putting themselves under the law of Moses. This was to exchange freedom

rather are known of God, how is it that you turn again to those weak and beggarly rudimentary things to which you desire again to be in bondage? 10 You are observing days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid for you, that perhaps I have labored for you in vain.

12 Brethren, I appeal to you, become like me, for I *became* like you. You have not harmed me at all. 13 You know that because of bodily infirmity I preached the gospel to you at first. 14 And you did not despise or scorn my trial which was in my flesh, but received me as if I was an angel of God, *even as if I were* Christ Jesus. 15 Where, then, is that blessedness you spoke about? For I testify about you that, if *it had been* possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.

for a new bondage after escaping from old bondage into freedom.

**4:10** Paul is speaking of the law of Moses. By "days" he means Sabbath days; "months" – celebration of the new moon festival; "times" – Jewish feasts; "years" – Sabbath and Jubilee years (Ex 20:8; 23:10,11,14-17; Leviticus chapter 23; 25:8-12). To keep these religiously was to turn to what he calls "weak and miserable principles" (v 9). Those days, etc, were only pictures, types, or shadows of spiritual truth, and believers in Christ have no obligation whatever to observe any of them. Compare Heb 8:5; 10:1. Paul well knew (and we should know) that keeping or not keeping certain days can not make us either better or worse. But the teaching that believers *must keep them brings them into bondage and injures their spiritual life*.

**4:11** "I am afraid for you" – their observance of Jewish holy days, etc, alarmed Paul. To him it was an indication that they were turning to the perverted gospel of false teachers (1:6,7). It must have made him wonder if they had really understood the true gospel.

**4:12-20** Paul has been speaking of very important doctrinal matters. Now he speaks of the personal relationship that existed between him and the Galatians. Here his pastor's heart is revealed. They are his "little children". He loves them and is deeply concerned about them.

**4:12** "Become like me" – Paul was freed from any bondage to the law and rejoiced in the grace of God alone. He wanted them to follow him in this.

"I became like you" – they were Gentiles and so when he went there to preach the gospel he became like a Gentile, like one who had never been a Jew. Compare 1 Cor 9:20-23. He says he has not been speaking to them as he has because they have wronged him personally. On the contrary, he shows in the following verses that there was much love between them.

**4:13** "Infirmity" – or "illness." We do not know what he is referring to. Was it an eye disease (v 15)? Was it the "thorn" of 2 Cor

16 Have I now become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

17 They zealously pursue you, *but* not for a good *purpose*. Yes, they want to separate you *from us* so that you might zealously go after them. 18 But *it is* good to be zealous in a good *thing*, always, and not just when I am present with you. 19 My little children, for whom I feel again the pains of birth until Christ is formed in you, 20 I desire to be in your presence now, and to change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the Law, do you not understand the Law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a slave woman, the other by a free woman. 23 But the one from the slave woman was born according to

12:7? Was it a result of the mistreatment he suffered (Acts 14:19)? We cannot be sure.

**4:14** "My trial" – they may have been tempted to think his infirmity was a punishment from God, and so to reject him as a messenger of God. But they did not give in to such a temptation, but welcomed him with great respect.

**4:15** The teaching of false teachers that was bringing them into bondage to the law of Moses was killing their joy and their love for Paul. The doctrine of self-effort for salvation will always be a joy-killer.

**4:16** Telling people God's truth is the greatest thing we can do for them, but all too often people reject and hate us because we do it.

**4:17,18** "They" – he means the false teachers who preached a perverted gospel (1:6,7). Such people always want to be leaders of sects and factions and to have people zealously on their side. Compare Rom 16:17,18. Paul (and he is an example to us all) wanted people to be zealous for God. Compare 1 Cor 3:4-9,21.

**4:19** The believers in Galatia were Paul's spiritual children (compare 1 Cor 4:15). They were born again (John 3:3-8) because of his efforts among them, efforts as painful to him as childbirth to a woman. Now he is in pain for them again. What they needed was not to have another spiritual rebirth (there is nothing in the New Testament that even suggests the possibility of such a thing. Indeed, how could an individual be born by God's Spirit again and again?)

What they needed was for Christ to be formed in them. That is, for Christ who was already in them (3:2,26-29) to live His life in them as He did in Paul (2:20). They needed to be transformed in their thinking and acting (Rom 12:2; 13:14; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:13-15).

**4:20** "Perplexed" – v 11; 1:6; 3:1. He hardly knew how he should speak to them by letter.

**4:21** "Desire to be under the law" – this was the great error of some of them, and Paul knew it was because of their ignorance of what the law meant.

**4:22,23** See Gen 16:1-4; 17:15,16;

the flesh, but the one from the free woman *was born as a result* of promise.

24 These things are symbolic, for these are the two covenants. The one *is* from mount Sinai, which produces bondage. This is Hagar. 25 For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem that is in bondage with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written,

“Rejoice, barren *one*,  
*you* who do not bear *children*.  
Break forth and cry out, you who have  
no labor pains;  
for the desolate *one* has far more

21:1-5; Rom 4:18-21.

**4:24-31** Paul draws spiritual lessons from the Old Testament stories of Abraham, Abraham’s wife Sarah, and the slave girl Hagar. He knew they were real people in history. But he saw them also as types or pictures of spiritual things. Some scholars have objected to his method here, but Paul was inspired by God’s Spirit and was not making a mistake. The tabernacle and the whole law were shadows of spiritual things (Heb 8:5; 10:1).

We may even say the whole Old Testament is a type, figure, picture, or shadow of the spiritual realities of the new covenant established by Christ. Of course, we should be very careful in our interpretations of the events and details of the Old Testament. God gave Paul special inspiration by His Spirit, and made him infallible in his teaching. This is not true of us. And in our days sometimes some very wild interpretations and spiritualizing of literal OT passages are heard in the churches.

**4:24,25** Hagar represents the old covenant God made through Moses at Mount Sinai (Exodus chapter 19). Sarah represents the new covenant of Christ announced in Matt 26:28. Hagar was a slave girl and her offspring was not to be regarded as the free-born son of Abraham (see Rom 9:7,8). Hagar is a symbol of the law of Moses, of Mount Sinai where that covenant was given, and of the city of Jerusalem which was the center of the practice of the old covenant. And the old covenant, Paul says, means spiritual bondage or slavery (vs 1,9; 3:10,23).

**4:26** Sarah is a symbol of the new covenant and of the heavenly Jerusalem which is the center of the spiritual realities of the new covenant (Heb 12:22). There is no bondage, no slavery there. And believers now are related to the new Jerusalem, not to the old.

**4:27** See Isa 54:1. Isaiah spoke of the glorious future of Israel when it would come under the blessings of the Messiah and the new age He would establish. Fruitless before, it would become fruitful by God’s grace and power.

**4:28** Abraham believed God’s promise, and God gave him Isaac. Isaac came into

children than she who has a husband.”

28 Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But then just as he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, just so *it is* now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? Send away the slave woman and her son; for the son of the slave woman will not be an heir with the son of the free woman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free.

**5** Therefore stand firm in the liberty for which Christ has set us free, and do not allow yourselves to be tied again to the yoke of

existence because of the life-giving, miracle-working Word of God. This is the same way believers now receive new life and become the spiritual descendants of Abraham (Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23). “Promise” here is put in contrast to the law of Moses.

**4:29** See Gen 21:8,9. Ishmael was born “according to the flesh,” in the usual way that people are born. There was nothing supernatural about his birth. Isaac was born “according to the Spirit.” That is, God’s Spirit enabled Abraham and Sarah to have him when, humanly speaking, it was impossible (Heb 11:11,12; Rom 4:18-21). As Ishmael persecuted Isaac so did those under the old covenant (Jews) persecute those under the new covenant (followers of Christ). See Acts 5:40; 7:54-58; 13:49,50; 14:19; etc. And so will unspiritual people in every era persecute spiritual people.

**4:30** “Scripture” – Gen 21:10. The spiritual meaning is that those who are trying to be saved by their efforts to keep the law are in bondage and have no place with those who receive salvation and freedom by God’s grace. These two totally different ways do not mix. The old covenant and the new covenant cannot somehow be joined and made into a third thing. Any such attempt produces only a perverted gospel (1:7).

**4:31** This means that believers in Christ have no connection with the law of Moses, with the old covenant, with Judaism. They are children of the new covenant alone. They are born again by the power of God through the promises of the gospel of Christ. For two other comparisons of the old and new covenants see 2 Cor 3:6-18; Heb 8:6 – 10:18; 12:18-24.

**5:1** All teaching that promotes self-effort and observance of laws and rules and rites and ceremonies as a way of salvation is like a yoke of slavery (4:3-9). Especially, Paul has in mind the law of Moses (compare Acts 15:10,11). Christ has set believers free from any such yoke. This means He has set us free from all forms of religious bondage whether it goes under the name of Judaism or of any other religion or of a perverted kind of Christianity. Free means free. Believers in Christ should recognize

bondage.

2 Look, I, Paul, tell you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you at all. 3 For once again I solemnly declare to every man who receives circumcision, that he is duty bound to keep the whole Law. 4 Christ has been put at a distance from you, you who are *trying to be* justified by the Law. You have fallen away from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness *which is* by faith. 6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor

their freedom and value it and not give it up. They are yoked to Christ (Matt 11:28-30). This is the only yoke they need. And this yoke brings freedom.

**5:2-12** Here Paul in plain language sets forth the impossibility of mixing the two ways of law and grace. Men must choose one or the other. They cannot have both. Men cannot be saved both by God's grace and by their own efforts, both through faith and through ceremonies and rules and law keeping.

**5:2** "I, Paul" – he speaks with absolute authority as an apostle of Christ (1:1), as one who had the revelation of the gospel from Christ Himself (1:12).

"Circumcision" – note at Gen 17:11-14; Lev 12:3. The physical act of circumcision is nothing in itself. But Paul is speaking about the situation they were in. If the Galatians agreed with those false teachers and accepted the religious ceremony of circumcision at their hands, and so took themselves under the law of Moses, they could not have the benefits of the new covenant. They had to choose either Christ as the way of salvation or the law of Moses which could never save.

**5:3** He means that circumcision in that situation would make them like Jewish converts and as such they would be obligated to keep the whole law of Moses. And, as he had pointed out already, this would not result in blessing but in a curse (3:10-12).

**5:4** "Christ has been put at a distance from you" – this means that such people remove themselves from the effectual working of Christ in their lives. They are turning their backs on the realm of grace where He is active.

"Fallen away from grace" – Paul is not saying believers will do this. In fact, he was confident that even the Galatian Christians, weak and vulnerable as they were, would not (v 10). But he is emphasizing this principle: law and grace do not mix. The way of faith and the way of self-effort have nothing in common. To go to the law, to depend on rules and ceremonies is to forsake the way of grace. Paul is not teaching here (or anywhere) that believers will lose their salvation by falling into sin (compare Rom 5:9,10; 8:29-39; 1 John 1:9; 2:1).

By "fallen away from grace" he does not mean fallen into the usual temptations that beset us all. He means fallen away from the teaching that it is by God's grace alone

uncircumcision can accomplish anything, but only faith that works through love.

7 You ran well. Who hindered you that you should not obey the truth? 8 This persuasion *does* not *come* from the One who calls you. 9 A little yeast permeates the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you in the Lord, that you will have no other mind. But the one who is troubling you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. 11 And *as for* me, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? For then the offense of

that men are saved. It may be possible for those who are not well grounded in the truth of the Gospel to be temporarily deceived by false teachers, but to permanently abandon the Gospel of grace altogether – this is something else. Those who do it show that they do not really belong to Christ (1 John 2:19). Christ will keep His sheep and they will not permanently fall away and be lost (John 10:27,28; 17:11,12).

**5:5** "We" – we true believers in Christ, we who reject the way of law and self-effort. The law brings bondage and death. Faith inspires eager hope for the final fulfilment of God's promises (3:18,29). Compare Rom 8:23-25.

"Righteousness" here does not mean the righteousness God has already counted to the believer (2:16; Rom 3:21-24; 5:1), but being actually made perfectly righteous in every way (Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2). And this awaits the future and is a glorious hope inspired by God's Spirit.

**5:6** See 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19; Rom 2:28,29; 4:9-12. The same is true of any outward ceremony. There is none which can make a person acceptable to God. God counts men righteous and saves them through faith alone, and after He saves them they are to walk by faith and obey Christ's command to love one another (John 13:34; 15:12). What possible good could it do us to observe any number of rules or ceremonies if we do not trust and love Christ? A faith that results in love is not one important thing among many. It is the only thing that counts.

**5:7** "You ran well" – 1 Cor 9:24; Heb 12:1.

"Who hindered you" – 1:7.

**5:8** The one who called them was God (1:6). He certainly was not the one who kept them from obeying the truth.

**5:9** See 1 Cor 5:6-8. Even a little false teaching can eventually affect a whole church, a whole denomination.

**5:10** After warning them about falling away from the way of grace (v 4), he expresses his confidence that they will not. The Lord Himself had made him sure that they would agree with the truth he has written to them. Compare Heb 6:9 after 6:4-8 and Heb 10:39 after 10:26-31. As for the false teacher (or teachers) who was leading them astray he was sure that God's judgment would come on him in due course. Compare 2 Pet 2:1-3.

**5:11** Had anyone there said that Paul taught circumcision was necessary for salvation? If



the cross has ceased. 12 I wish those who trouble you would amputate themselves!

13 For, brethren, you have been called to liberty. But *do* not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh. Instead, with love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch

so, it was a slander.

"Persecution" – the Jews persecuted Paul because he taught that the law of Moses was not a way of salvation and that circumcision in itself had no spiritual importance to Christians.

"Offense of the cross" – compare 1 Cor 1:23. What is this offense? How does the offense cease by turning back to the law of Moses? The offense is that the cross of Christ proclaims man's complete ruin in sin. It declares that people are so bad and so weak that they can never be saved by self-effort, religion, rules and ceremonies; that their only hope is in the death of the Son of God in their place.

This strikes at people's pride and self-esteem and brings them into the dust at Christ's feet, and so is offensive to them. There is no offense of the cross in the teaching that keeping religious rules and ceremonies is sufficient for salvation. This is what many religious people like to hear. They like to think they can pile up merit with God and save themselves by what they do. Such teaching is very agreeable indeed to their proud blind hearts.

**5:12** "Those who trouble you" – the false teachers were stirring the Galatians to rebellion against God's truth. Paul suggests they were no better than some fanatical priests in idol temples who castrated themselves.

**5:13** Paul now turns to the practical application of the truth he has written up to this point. This is his usual method – he lays a foundation of truth and then pleads with believers to live in accordance with it. Compare Rom 12:1,2; Eph 4:1.

"Liberty" – v 1. Christ does not make us free so that we can live a life of sin (sinning is not freedom, but the worst kind of bondage – John 8:34; Rom 6:16). Christ frees us so we can become the willing servants of God and of one another. See Rom 6:15-23.

"For the flesh" – in Greek "sarx", the word Paul used to indicate what we all are by nature. See Rom 7:5,18; 8:3,5,8. Christians do not become free from the law so that they can indulge their sinful natures – quite the opposite (see Romans chapter 6).

**5:14** Did they want to be under the law (4:21)? Paul says forget the rules and ceremonies of the law and fulfill the whole essence of the law – love (Lev 19:18; Matt 22:39; Rom 13:8-10; Jam 2:8). Actually the essence of the law can be fulfilled only in those who believe in Christ and have His Spirit (Rom 8:4).

**5:15** The false teachers there had brought

out that you are not consumed by each other.

16 So I say, walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfil the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires *what is* against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. These are opposed to one another, so that you cannot do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

strife and divisions. This is always one result of their activities (Rom 16:17). God wants His people united in love and truth – not in love without truth nor in truth without love. Error and strife destroy churches. Truth and love keep them spiritually alive and growing.

**5:16** "Walk" – or "behave" or "live" or "go forward." This is Paul's theme from here up to 6:10. By "Spirit" he means God's Spirit. He is the one who gives believers the power to live a spiritual life in Christ. Compare Rom 8:4-14. Paul does not deny that the sinful nature (the "flesh" – v 13) and its desires are in believers. He very plainly indicates that they are. This is even clearer in the next verse. See also Rom 7:14-25; 13:14; 1 John 1:8. The flesh and its desires are in us all, but we can subdue and conquer them by God's Spirit.

**5:17** God's Spirit and the flesh (man's fallen, sinful nature) have absolutely nothing in common. They have different desires, different thoughts, different aims (Rom 8:5-8). They will be at war with one another until the end of our earthly lives. The flesh – what we are by the nature we received from our parents – will never give up, will never stop desiring the wrong things, will never become good and holy. In fact, with the passing of time it gets worse (Eph 4:22). And God's Spirit will resist the flesh every step of the way, and will never give in to a single one of its demands.

What does Paul mean by "you cannot do what you want"? It may mean that believers do not do all the good they want to do because their sinful natures hinder them (see Rom 7:15,18,20). Or it may possibly mean they do not fulfill the desires of their sinful nature because the Holy Spirit in them opposes those desires. To some extent both of these things are true, and both show that the sinful nature is still in believers.

And observe carefully that Paul is not teaching the Galatians that the way of victory is to have their sinful nature eradicated here on earth. He does not hold out this hope in any of his letters (and it is not found anywhere else in the Bible). In fact, he teaches something else altogether. The way to victory, Paul says, is living by God's Spirit (v 16).

**5:18** "Led by the Spirit" – see Rom 8:14. God's Spirit has led believers out of religious bondage, away from the principle of self-effort for salvation. He does not lead them back into such things.

"Not under the law" – Rom 6:14. People



19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are *these*: adultery, fornication, impurity, lewdness, 20 idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousies, rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. Concerning these I tell you in advance, just as I have told you

generally think that the only way to subdue the desires and works of the flesh is by laws and regulations. Paul knew that such things can actually promote sinful desires and sin (see Rom 7:5,7-13). He knew that living by God's Spirit is the only possible way for us to conquer the flesh.

**5:19-21** Observe that he puts idolatry alongside immorality, and selfishness and strife alongside drunkenness and debauchery. To spiritual people it is "evident" that these things come out of the sinful nature, out of the fallen heart of man. Compare Matt 15:19; Mark 7:21-23; Rom 1:29-32; 3:9-18. Paul does not list here all the acts of the sinful nature. These are only examples. Some of these acts are directly against God, some against other men, some against the person who does them. They are all destructive and worthy of God's anger and judgment.

"Idolatry" – Ex 20:3-6; etc.

"Witchcraft" – Deut 18:9-12; etc.

"Dissensions", "heresies" – 1:6,7; 1 Cor 3:3,4.

"Envy" – Prov 14:30; 27:4; Matt 27:18; Acts 17:5; Jam 3:14,16.

**5:21** "Do" – practice.

"Will not inherit the kingdom of God" – see 6:7,8; 1 Cor 6:9,10; Eph 5:5,6; Rev 21:8. In spite of such words there are always some so-called Christians who persuade themselves they can sin as they please and get away with it. Avoid such people. They have deceived themselves and will try to deceive us. Note on "kingdom of God" at Matt 4:17.

**5:22,23** These things are not fruit of the believer's spirit but produced by the Spirit of God in the believer. They are not the result of self-effort. But this does not mean that the believer should be passive and do nothing. He must live in the Spirit and follow the Spirit's leading. Otherwise his fruit will not appear in his life. The word "fruit" suggests a process of growth. Compare Matt 13:23.

For fruit to appear in the realm of nature there must be first the seed, then the growth of the plant or tree, then the bud and the flower, and then the fruit. So it is with spiritual fruit. When we first believe in Christ there is often a rush of love, joy and peace to the heart. But these need to be developed and perfected, and other spiritual virtues added. Things like patience, faithfulness and self-control develop over a period of time. Compare 2 Pet 1:5-8.

God wants everyone of His children to have all the qualities in this list, and by the working of His Spirit we can have them. Paul

in time past, that those who go on doing such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, goodness, faith, 23 meekness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

puts love first. He knew it was the greatest of all qualities (vs 6,14; 1 Cor 13:13).

"Joy" – John 15:11; 16:20-22; 17:13; Rom 5:11; 14:17; 15:13. The happiness that people in the world may sometimes feel is based on outward circumstances. The joy of believers is based on eternal realities.

"Peace" – Luke 2:14; John 14:27; 16:33; Rom 1:7; 14:17; 15:13.

"Patient endurance" – one word in Greek, having both meanings. Rom 5:3; Col 1:11; Heb 6:12; 10:36; 12:1; Jam 1:3,4.

"Kindness" – (a better translation of the Greek word than "gentleness") 2 Cor 6:6; Eph 2:7; Titus 3:4.

"Goodness" – Rom 15:14; Eph 5:9.

"Faith" or "faithfulness" – Matt 24:45; 25:21; 1 Cor 4:2; 7:25; Rev 2:10; 17:14.

"Meekness" or "gentleness" – Matt 11:29; 2 Cor 10:1; 1 Thess 2:7.

"Self-control" – 2 Tim 1:7; 1 Cor 9:25,27; 2 Pet 1:6.

All these qualities are given by God's Spirit so that we should exercise them and live them out in our daily lives. We can either hinder or encourage their growth in us.

**5:24** This is true of all real believers, all who belong to Christ, and not of just a few exceptional saints. In 2:20 Paul speaks of the believer's crucifixion with Christ. Here he speaks of what the believer himself has done. He does not say believers should do this, but that they have done it. Believers did this when they first repented and trusted in Christ.

Repentance signifies a complete break with the old way of living which was under the power of the sinful nature. Faith in Christ accepts His death in the believer's place. In other words, by their action in repenting and believing in Christ they are saying (though in the very beginning they may not have a good understanding of this), "I am the one who should have been crucified, not Christ." They are confessing that the proper place for their sinful nature is on a cross. They agree with God's verdict about it.

And they deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Christ (Matt 10:38,39; 16:24-26. See notes there). If people are not willing to do this there is no good reason to think they are true Christians. Paul is here defining what true believers are. If they have not "crucified" their sinful nature they do not belong to Christ.

However, this whole passage from v 16 does not lead us to think that believers will have no more trouble with their sinful nature. Paul shows very plainly that the opposite will be true. Believers, in the

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not desire empty glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

**6** Brethren, if anyone is taken in a sin, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, so that you also are not tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let everyone *test and* prove his own work, and then he will have reason to rejoice in himself alone, and not in someone else. 5 For everyone should bear his own burden.

6 Let the one who is being taught the Word

attitude they take toward God and sin, have crucified the sinful nature, and they are united with Christ who was crucified in their place (Rom 6:4-7). But the sinful nature is not dead and buried in believers. And it continually tries to get its own way again in their lives (v 17). So Christ tells us we must take up our cross "daily" – Luke 9:23.

"Crucified the flesh" speaks of the attitude of believers toward their sinful nature and toward the cross of Christ.

**5:25** God's Spirit has given spiritual life to all believers (John 3:3-8). Since this is true they should follow where the Spirit leads and go step by step with Him. This is the only way of victory over the sinful nature, the only way to keep it where it belongs – on a cross.

**5:26** Paul begins to speak of keeping in step with God's Spirit in some very practical matters. he Spirit hates conceit, strife, and envy, and so should we who want to walk with Him. They are works of the flesh.

**6:1** "Spirit of meekness" – 5:23; 2 Tim 2:24,25. Harsh, unloving condemnation of someone fallen into sin is not the way to bring him to repentance. Compare Luke 22:60-62; Mark 16:7; John 21:15.

"Tempted" – even those who are spiritual should not think they are beyond temptation and sin (1 Cor 10:12).

**6:2** Believers are not under the law of Moses (3:25; 5:1), but they are under the law of Christ. This is the law of love (John 13:34). If we love fellow believers we will want to help them in everything that makes life difficult and burdensome for them.

**6:3** One of the great obstacles to fulfilling v 2 is conceit (5:26). We must have a right attitude toward ourselves if we are to be really helpful to others. This right attitude is seen in Luke 17:10; Rom 12:16; 1 Cor 3:5-7; Phil 2:3.

**6:4** See 2 Cor 10:12-18. If we think we are better than other believers, or that our ministry is superior to theirs, this will promote pride and will be an obstacle to the fulfilment of verse 2.

**6:5** Every individual has his own duties and he is responsible to God only for them, not for someone else's (John 21:21,22; Rom 14:12).

share all good things with the one who is doing the teaching.

7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that is what he will reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but he who sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap, if we do not give up. 10 Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

11 You see with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand.

12 As many as desire to make a good showing in

**6:6** Compare 1 Cor 9:9-14; Rom 15:26,27; 1 Tim 5:17,18.

**6:7** This is a truth that appears throughout the Bible – Lev 26:3-17; Deut 30:15-18; Hos 8:7; 10:12; Prov 22:8; Ps 18:25-27; Job 4:8; 2 Cor 9:6.

**6:8** There are only two possible ways to live: pleasing self ("flesh"), or pleasing God's Spirit. The one way ends in destruction as it should. The other way ends in eternal life (5:19-21; Rom 2:5-11; 8:5,6,12-14). Paul has already said that believers have crucified the flesh (5:24). So anyone whose life is taken up in pleasing his sinful nature is no true believer in Christ (though it is possible for every true believer to fall sometimes into that error).

But is eternal life something to be reaped? Paul knew it is a gift (Rom 6:23), but he is showing here that it is an inheritance that is entered after a certain kind of life (compare Rom 2:7-10). He is not teaching salvation by works, but transformation of life by God's Spirit. Believers are not like anyone else in the world. They alone of all people actually sow to the Spirit.

**6:9** "Doing good" is one way believers sow to please the Spirit of God. And it is an evidence that God's Spirit is in them (5:22). Believers will receive a reward for the good they have done – Matt 5:12; 10:42; 25:21; 1 Cor 3:14; 15:58; Rev 22:12. Those who want to do good in a world like this will find many opportunities, but will meet with many discouragements also and will sometimes be tempted to give up. Paul encourages us all with thoughts of the future reward.

**6:10** "All" means all – even our enemies (Matt 5:43-48; Luke 6:35; Rom 12:20,21).

**6:11** "Large letters" – did Paul write large letters because his eyes were bad? Or because he wanted to make this concluding portion stand out? Or because he was emphasizing what follows? We do not know.

**6:12** The false teachers there tried to please men. They wanted to impress the Jews with their ability and zeal. And they did not want to bear the "offense of the cross" (5:11). Some so-called servants of Christ will do

the flesh, *are trying to* compel you to be circumcised, only so that they can avoid suffering persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the Law. But *they* want to have you circumcised so they can boast about your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the

anything to avoid persecution and be popular. Compare 1:10.

**6:13** "Keep" – Rom 2:17-24. Not one of the false teachers fully kept the law of Moses.

"Boast" – the boasting would be that they had made converts to their views.

**6:14** "The cross" – this is the believer's true ground for glory and pride. It is not in himself or in what he has done, but in the death of Christ for sinners. Compare Rom 3:27; 1 Cor 29-31; Eph 2:9. We should learn to be careful of those who do not follow Paul in this but boast in themselves and what they have done. What a man boasts about is a good indication of his character.

"Crucified" – 2:20; 5:24. By the "world" Paul means "this present evil world" (1:4). He means the sinful world – all that men want and seek and boast in. See John 7:7; 17:14; Rom 12:2; 1 John 2:15-17. Paul wanted nothing from the sinful world. It was a dead thing as far as he was concerned. And he was crucified to the world. The world regarded him as a fool, and wanted nothing from him. Between the world and him there was a great gulf caused by Christ's death. The world crucified Christ – what part would Paul want with Christ's murderer?

See in Galatians how Paul uses the word "crucified" in relationship to the believer – crucified with Christ (2:20), crucified the flesh (5:24), crucified to the world (6:14).

**6:15** "A new creation" – 2 Cor 5:17. The important thing is transformation of the inner person, new spiritual life, not rites, ceremonies and religious laws like the Jews

world. 15 For in Christ Jesus *what* avails *is* neither circumcision nor lack of circumcision, but a new creation. 16 Peace and mercy *be* on all those who live according to this rule, and on the Israel of God.

17 From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

practiced. If we have not been born again, those outward things cannot have the slightest real value. If we have been born again we should see that they do not.

**6:16** "This rule" – the principle he has laid down in vs 14,15.

"And on the Israel of God" – the NIV (1978 edition) has this translation: "even to the Israel of God." This is unnecessary and could be misleading. The Greek word is "kai", usually translated "and" in the New Testament. (In the KJV the word is translated "and" 8,182 times, "also" 515 times, and "even" only 108 times.) By "Israel" Paul means only those Jews who had rejected the way of self-effort and believed in Christ. They were the true Israelites. Compare Rom 2:28,29; 9:6; 11:1-7. In the New Testament the Church made up of believing Jews and Gentiles is never called "the Israel of God." (The NIV does not even have a note stating that the Greek word usually means something other than "even.")

**6:17** Paul appeals to the Christians there to accept his teaching, reject false teachers, and no longer be a source of trouble to him.

"Marks of the Lord Jesus" – he is probably referring to the scars received in the service of Jesus – 2 Cor 1:5; 11:23-25; Col 1:24.

**6:18** Paul ends the letter as he began it with "grace" (1:6). This was a reminder to them that every blessing they had, especially every spiritual blessing, was by the grace of Christ.

# The Letter of the Apostle Paul to the EPHESIANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime about 60 AD.

**Themes:**

There are several very important themes in this letter: God's eternal purpose of bringing glory to His grace in the salvation of believers, the high position believers in Christ have by God's grace, the great truth of the Body of Christ, the life worthy of this high position and this truth, and the spiritual warfare of believers and how they can win it.

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**1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4 even

**1:1** "Apostle" – Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1.

"Saints" – Rom 1:7.

"Ephesus" – Acts 18:19; 19:1-41.

"Faithful" – here means those who were continuing to live by faith in Christ.

"In Christ" or "in Him" is a key phrase in this letter – vs 3,4,7,12,13; 2:6,7,10,13; 3:6,11,21; 4:32; 6:10. It signifies our spiritual union with Christ. See John 17:20-23; Rom 6:3-8. Every spiritual blessing believers have is theirs because they are "in Christ". Apart from Him they have nothing and are nothing.

**1:2** Rom 1:7.

**1:3** "God and Father" – having become a man on earth Jesus called God the Father His God – Matt 27:46; John 20:17. In doing so He was not suggesting He was not God Himself. Compare John 8:24,58; 20:28,29; Matt 11:27. See other references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

"Blessed us" – the verb is in the past tense. God has already given to believers every possible spiritual blessing. These blessings are in Christ and believers are in Christ where the blessings are. Notes on blessed or blessing at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:9,14. "Us" means all believers in Christ, not just a few exceptional ones.

"Heavenly places" is another key expression in Ephesians – 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12. In Greek it is one plural word – "heavenlies." It plainly includes God's dwelling place in heaven – (1:20), but it includes more than that (6:12). It seems to mean the unseen world of spirits where God reigns but where Satan opposes God's reign. God is there in the highest heaven. Satan and demons are there in the lowest regions of the spiritual world warring against believers. In God's eyes, believers on earth are at the same time in the highest place of the heavenly realm (2:6), because their Head and Representative is there (1:22) and they are "in Him." In the body of course they are still on earth fighting evil beings in the unseen realm of spirits.

"All spiritual blessings" – these are blessings of the spiritual world, blessings of God's grace which saves us, makes us spiritual, enables us to live for Christ, and raises us to heaven at last to live with Him forever. Paul is not suggesting that God does not bless believers in other ways – physically, mentally, financially, etc. But his emphasis here is not on these things. In the course of this letter he refers to some of the spiritual blessings God has given believers –

as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us to the adoption as children to himself, by Jesus Christ, in accordance with the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he has made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the

vs 5,7,13,14,17-19; 2:5,6,10,13-19,22; 3:16,17,20; 4:7,13,24; 5:8,18,25-27; 6:10,13.

**1:4-6** "Chosen" – Mark 13:20; John 15:16,19; Rom 8:33; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 2:9. Compare John 6:37; 17:6. Before believers were born, before the world was made, God looked forward into time and saw each one, chose each one in Christ and predestined each one to a high place. See Rom 8:29,30 and notes there and at the end of Romans. Here, in vs 4-6, Paul speaks of three reasons for God's choosing and predestining believers.

First, God wanted us to be "holy and blameless before him" – v 4; 5:22-27; John 17:17-19; Phil 2:15; Titus 2:14. The words "in love" may be joined either with the phrase before it or the phrase after it. The Greek has no punctuation.

Second, God wanted us to be His children (v 5). Compare John 1:12,13; Rom 8:15; 2 Cor 6:17,18; 1 John 3:1,2. On "adoption" see Rom 8:23 and notes. Believers are God's children by spiritual birth (John 3:3-8). They will be adopted as His children at their resurrection from the dead. That is, He will in that way openly declare them to be His children.

Third, God wanted praise to come to His grace – 2:8,9; 1 Cor 1:29-31; Gal 6:14. If men could save themselves by what they do, then praise for their salvation would be due to them. In the way God chose to save people He eliminated any such possibility of boasting. The glorious grace of God alone saves believers, and so all praise goes to that, and not to believers. Grace is something freely given, not something that can be earned by our efforts or so-called works of merit (Rom 4:4,5; 6:23; 11:5,6). Other notes on grace at John 1:14,16; Rom 1:7. Observe the word "love" at the end of v 4. This was behind God's choosing and predestining believers – 2:4; Jer 31:3; Rom 5:8; 8:39; John 3:1,16; 4:8.

"Predestinated" – see note at Rom 8:29, and the note on foreknowledge at the end of the notes on Romans.

"Made us accepted" – no doubt this is a truth, and a wonderful one. But many scholars and translators think the Greek word here means "freely given" (NIV) or "freely bestowed" (NASB) and not "made accepted."

"The Beloved" (v 6) is Christ – Matt 3:17; John 17:24. Believers are "in Christ" and so are objects of God's love and grace in the fullest possible measure.

**1:7** "Redemption" – Luke 2:38; Rom 3:24; 1 Cor 1:30; Gal 3:13; Col 1:14; Heb

forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace 8 which he has lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 *He* has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and on earth, in him.

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of

9:12,15. Notes at Ps 78:35; Matt 20:28. Redemption includes the forgiveness of sins because it was sin which held us in bondage. Christ gave His blood, poured out His life to free us.

"Forgiveness" – 4:32; Matt 6:12; 9:6; 12:31; Mark 2:7; Luke 24:47; Acts 13:38; 26:18; Rom 4:7; Col 2:13; 1 John 1:9. Forgiveness of sins cannot be earned by good behavior. It is a free gift of God to believers in Christ. Observe the phrase "riches of his grace" – compare 2:4,7; Rom 2:4; 10:12. These are the true riches in the universe and they make believers rich – v 3; 2 Cor 8:9; 1 Cor 3:21-23.

**1:8** See the word "lavished." God is not reluctant or miserly in giving blessings to men. We need not try to force Him to give us of these riches. We need no saints in heaven to intercede on our behalf in order to obtain them. God sent His own Son to die for us so that He could pour His grace on us. Compare Rom 8:32. God can no more stop giving than He can stop being God. He will continue throughout eternity to lavish on believers the riches of His grace – 2:7.

Redemption, forgiveness, and all other such blessings God gives with "all wisdom and understanding." This could possibly mean that in all His gracious dealings with us God acted in perfected wisdom. This is certainly true. But Paul probably means that in Christ God has made available to believers complete spiritual wisdom and discernment. Compare Col 1:9; 2:2,3; 1 Cor 2:7-10.

**1:9,10** "Mystery" – 3:3,4,9; 5:32; 6:19. Notes at Matt 13:11; Rom 16:25,26. The secret truth God revealed and which Paul speaks of here is this: sometime in the future when the time is ripe God will establish a new order and will make the Lord Jesus Christ the supreme authority over it. Compare Rom 8:21; Matt 19:28; 1 Cor 15:25; Phil 2:9-11; Rev 20:4-6.

**1:11,12** "Obtained an inheritance" – this also is in the past tense. We have obtained it, but we have not yet fully entered into it – v 14; 1 Peter 1:4.

"Predestinated" – v 5.

"Purpose" – events in the world often appear to take place in a haphazard or chaotic manner. There seems to be no rhyme or reason in much that happens. But this is because of our limited view of things. God has a perfect plan and He is working it out perfectly. Compare Rom 8:28;

him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, 12 so that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 You also *trusted* in him, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and upon believing you received a seal in him, the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the pledge guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory.

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith

11:33-36; Isa 46:10. God's plan has to do particularly with believers and the destiny He has marked out for them. They are for "the praise of His glory" – v 14; 3:21; Rom 16:27; Gal 1:5; Phil 1:11; Heb 13:21; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 4:11; 1 Cor 10:31.

**1:13** "You also" – he means believers other than Jews. In v 12 Paul spoke of those who were first to hope in Christ. That means Jewish believers. In the Old Testament the Jews enjoyed blessings in which other nations had no part. Now believers of other nations are included in Christ just as Jewish believers. This is one theme of this letter – 2:11-22; 3:6. The gospel of Christ is called "the word of truth." See also Col 1:5; 2 Tim 2:15; Jam 1:18. It was revealed by the God of truth and is true from beginning to end – John 17:17; 12:49,50; 8:40; 7:16,17. It is the gospel of "salvation" (note at Rom 1:16). The Ephesian Christians did not merely hear the word of truth, they believed it. Hearing alone produces no good result. Compare Matt 13:14,15. Believing it brings the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

"Seal" – the Spirit Himself is this seal – 4:30. A seal indicates ownership – v 14; 2 Tim 2:19; Rom 8:9. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who belong to Him. The possession of His Spirit marks them out as His as nothing else could possibly do. God's Spirit comes to live in all believers when they first put their trust in Christ – Gal 3:2,5,14. Notes on the Holy Spirit at 5:18; Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; John 14:16,17; Acts 1:4.

"Of promise" – Luke 24:48; Acts 1:4,5.

**1:14** God the Father gives His Spirit to believers as a "pledge" or "deposit" or "guarantee of purchase" (as some other translations have it). Compare 2 Cor 5:5. This means He guarantees that He will complete the work He has begun in us (Phil 1:6), that He will give us the inheritance He has promised (Rom 8:17; Col 1:12; Heb 6:12; 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4), and that He will keep us as His possession until He redeems our bodies (Rom 8:23), and forever (John 14:16). Believers are God's possession (1 Cor 6:19,20). So it follows that He will guard them with great care and lose none of them. Compare John 6:39,40; 10:27,28; 17:11,12. The knowledge that we have received His Spirit should give us the assurance that all this is true.

"Praise of His glory" – vs 6,12.

**1:15,16** "Faith," "love" – Col 1:4; Gal 5:6;

in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, mentioning you in my prayers. 17 *I ask* that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 and what *is* the

exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, in accordance with the working of his mighty power 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21 far above all sovereignty, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, 22 and put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *as* the head

1 Thess 1:3. These two qualities are always found together in true believers. Anything called faith that does not result in love for fellow believers is not true faith – 1 John 3:14; 1 Cor 13:2.

"Thanks" – Paul made a practice of this (Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Thess 1:3). Whether he knew believers personally or not, whether they came to Christ through his ministry or someone else's ministry, he was glad and thankful for them. Believers are a glory to God and to His grace (vs 6,12,14), and what Paul desired above all was to see God glorified in the salvation and holy lives of men and women.

"Prayers" – Rom 1:9; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Tim 1:3.

**1:17** "Asking" – the prayer of Paul which follows was inspired by God's Spirit. It reveals some things God wants all believers everywhere to have. It shows what we may safely pray for.

"God" and "Father" – v 3.

"Spirit" – it is not likely that here Paul meant the Holy Spirit. He had just said that they had already received the Holy Spirit (v 13). So why should he pray that they might receive Him? He is praying that the Holy Spirit who was in them might give them a spirit of wisdom – that is, might make their spirits wise and give them a mind that could understand the deep truths of God's Word. He prayed this because he wanted them to know God better.

The personal knowledge of God is one of the great treasures of believers. Their spiritual life begins with it and progresses with it – John 17:3; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 4:13; Phil 3:8,10; Col 1:10; 2 Pet 3:18. Paul was aware that knowing God personally and getting to know Him better is a matter of "revelation." God must reveal Himself to us or we can never know Him. See Matt 11:27; 1 Cor 2:10,11.

**1:18,19** God wants us not only to know Him but to know the things He has prepared for us as believers.

"Eyes" – there are two kind of eyes – physical, which can see material objects, and spiritual, which can "see" unseen spiritual things (2 Cor 4:18; Heb 11:13; John 4:35). The eyes of the inner being of unbelievers are closed and blind – Matt 13:15; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 John 2:11; Rev 3:18. God has opened the spiritual eyes of believers – Acts 26:18; John 9:39; 2 Cor 4:6. When this happens they begin to

understand spiritual truth which they could not understand in any other way. They "see" something of what they are like and of what God is like and what salvation is. But believers do not understand everything in a moment. God who enlightened them at first continues to enlighten them.

So Paul prayed this prayer – a prayer we should all pray for ourselves and for others. Without spiritual enlightenment people may read and reread the Bible and be little wiser for their efforts. Compare 2 Cor 3:15. Paul prayed they might understand three things: their hope, God's inheritance, and God's power.

"Hope" – Rom 5:2; 8:23-25. The hope of believers is to be made like Christ and to be with Him in eternity – Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 John 3:2,3; John 17:24.

"Inheritance" – believers have an inheritance in Christ (v 14) and God has an inheritance in them. They are His prized possession, His treasure, His riches. He wanted them so much He paid for them with the death of His Son (v 7). At the time of the resurrection from the dead He will fully claim His inheritance – 1 Thess 4:16-18.

"Power" – God's power working in us and for us makes the fulfillment of our hope a certainty. It makes it sure that He will claim His inheritance. His power is so great that it cannot be compared to any other power. So He is well able to keep His people safe – John 10:29. In the next verses Paul gives an illustration of what God's power has done so that we might know what it can do for us.

**1:20,21** In the resurrection and ascension of Christ we see the greatest display of God's power in the history of mankind – Matt 28:6; Mark 16:6,19; Luke 24:6,7,51; Acts 1:3,9; 2:32,33; Rom 1:4; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 1:3. Christ sits on the throne of His Father, exalted far above all the created universe with its powers and authorities – Col 2:10; Rev 1:5. There is no man, no angel who ever lived, or who lives now, who can come anywhere near to Jesus in power, authority, glory and honor.

And the same power of God which raised Him there is at work for us and in us – v 19. This is how we can be more than conquerors – Rom 8:37. This is how we can truly serve Christ in a hostile world, overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and finish our earthly life with joy. If we do not, it will be because we fail to use the power available to us.

**1:22,23** "Under His feet" – Acts 2:34-36; Heb 1:13; 2:8,9; 10:13.

"Head" – 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19.

over everything to the church, 23 which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all.

**2** And you *he has made alive, you* who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience. 3 Among them we also, all *of us*, had our life in time past in the cravings of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,

Christ is the only Head the true Church has, or can have. Head means director. It suggests the mind or brain which plans and thinks and gives orders to the body. Christ is not merely the one authority over the Church, He is one with it by God's Spirit. The same life and the same Spirit in Him are in it. "Church" here means His spiritual body made up only of true believers in Him – John 17:20-23; 1 Cor 12:12,13; note at Matt 16:18.

"Fullness" – Christ fills the universe – 4:10; Col 1:17. The true Church is His fullness, His completion. A head cannot be said to be full and complete without a body. This is one interpretation of v 23. Another is that Christ is the fullness of God. Compare Col 2:9,10.

**2:1-10** In these verses Paul continues the theme he introduced in 1:19 – "the exceeding greatness of his power toward us." He showed in 1:20-23 how this power was at work in Christ. Now he shows how it has been at work in and for believers. God raised Christ from death and exalted Him to heaven (1:20). He has raised believers from spiritual death and has exalted them also (vs 5,6). God's great power made Christ the Head of the Church (1:22). That same power made believers a new creation united with Christ (v 10).

**2:1** "Dead" – no one separated from Christ has true spiritual life. Because everyone has sinned (Rom 3:23) every person is spiritually dead until Christ gives him new life. This death means separation from God's life and fellowship – 4:18; Isa 59:1,2. See Gen 2:17; John 5:24; Rom 7:5; 8:6; Col 2:13; 1 Tim 5:6; Jam 1:15; 1 John 3:14. This is the reason the new birth is essential for salvation. See John 1:12,13; 3:3-8.

**2:2** The "course of this world" – 1 John 2:16; John 1:10; 7:7; 14:17; 16:8; Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 1:21; Jam 4:4; 2 Pet 1:4. The world's way comes out of spiritual death and leads to eternal death. The "ruler of the power of the air" is Satan. He is a spirit being who moves about in the region of the lowest part of the heavenly places (6:12), and it seems that he exercises his authority from the earth's atmosphere. He is called the "god" and "ruler" of this world – John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4. He is at work in all those who are disobedient to the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare John 8:44; Acts 5:3; 2 Tim

and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in sins, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised *us* up together, and seated *us* together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come he might show the exceedingly great riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of

2:26.

**2:3** "All of us" – Rom 3:9,19; Titus 3:3.

"By nature" – means the nature we received from our parents at birth. See Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Rom 3:9-19.

"Wrath" – God's anger against sin appears everywhere in the Bible. See notes at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18. To be "children" of wrath means to be objects of God's anger, under his anger, deserving of his anger.

**2:4** "Rich in mercy" – Ps 5:7; 51:1; Micah 7:18; Rom 2:4; 10:12; Titus 3:5; Jam 5:11; 1 Pet 1:3. As sinners we all deserve God's anger and punishment. Only mercy can spare us, forgive us, save us. There is no hope whatever in anything else.

"Great love" – John 3:16; Rom 5:8; 1 John 3:16; 4:8,9.

**2:5** God has made believers spiritually alive and brought them into union and fellowship with Christ – John 1:12,13; 5:21,24; Rom 5:17; 6:4,8; Col 2:13; 1 Pet 1:3,23; 1 John 3:9; 5:1,18. This was a gift of God – v 9; Rom 6:23.

**2:6** "Raised us up together" – see Rom 6:3-5. Christ is the representative of all believers. Because they are "in Him" (1:3) and united to Him, God counts what happened to Him as if it happened to them also. In His eyes believers on earth are already raised from the dead and exalted to heaven. Compare Col 3:1-4.

**2:7** Here is God's grand purpose toward us. Who can even imagine what it will mean? God will satisfy His love toward us by pouring out on us the greatest blessings and gifts that even He can imagine. And He will continue to do so for all eternity.

"Riches" – 1:7.

**2:8,9** Salvation from beginning to end is a gift of God to unworthy people. Human merit has nothing whatever to do with it – Acts 15:11; Rom 3:24; 4:4; 5:15; 6:23; 11:6; Titus 3:4-7.

"Through faith" – John 1:12,13; 3:14-16,36; 5:24; 6:47; Acts 13:38; 16:31; Rom 1:16; 3:25,28; 4:16; 5:1; 10:9-13; Gal 2:16,21; 3:26.

"Gift of God" – this refers to both salvation and the faith through which it comes. Even our faith is a gift of God, and we can no more boast of that than of anything else about us (Acts 18:11; Phil 1:29; 2 Peter 1:1). No one could or would

yourselves; *it is* the gift of God; 9 not of works, so that no one should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good deeds, which God ordained beforehand that we should be active in them.

11 Therefore remember, that in time past you *were* Gentiles according to the flesh, called "Uncircumcision" by those who are called "the Circumcision" in the flesh made by hands; 12 that at that time you were without Christ, were shut out from the commonwealth of Israel, and were strangers to the covenants of promise, having no

hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who at one time were far off are brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who has made *the* two one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the cause of enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *with its* regulations, so that *from* the two he might make one new man in himself, *and so* make peace; 16 and that he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, by which he destroyed the enmity. 17 And *he* came and

believe in Christ apart from God's work in the mind and heart. In God's way of salvation boasting in man is altogether shut out - Rom 3:27; 1 Cor 1:29-31.

If anyone boasts that he is saved because of something he is, or something he has done, or because of some good thing in him, or because of his connection with some religion, or any such thing, we can be sure that he (or she) has not understood God's way of salvation. It is impossible that any way of works can lead to salvation. Every work of a sinner (and all are sinners - Rom 3:23) is stained with sin and is not really good or meritorious in God's eyes (Isa 64:6). And no matter how many works he has, no matter how long a time he works, he can never earn salvation.

**2:10** The new spiritual birth of believers is not something they achieve, any more than their physical birth into the world was something they achieved. It is something God does in them. It is a work of creation - 2 Cor 5:17; Jam 1:18; John 1:13. Observe here one reason why God creates new life in us. We are not saved by good works, but we are saved so we will do good works - Titus 2:14; Matt 5:16. God has prepared us for good works and good works for us. He places the opportunities to do good works before us all. Good works are a fruit of salvation. If we do not do good works we show that we are not God's workmanship (Matt 7:16-20; etc). The new life in us will bear good fruit as surely as a good tree will bear good fruit.

Since believers are God's workmanship we should think that He will finish this work and not abandon it somewhere along the line - Phil 1:6.

"Be active" - the Greek word may also be translated "walk", "go forward", "live", "behave", "conduct oneself", "be occupied with", etc, depending on the context. In the letters of Paul (and of John) it is never used of literal walking.

**2:11-22** In the Old Testament the nation Israel was God's special people. God gave them His word, His law, His covenants, etc - Rom 9:4,5. The other nations of the world (Gentiles) had no part in all that - v 12. They were far away - v 13. And there was an actual barrier of enmity between Israel and all other nations - v 14. Now,

Paul says, God has changed all that. In Christ there is no longer any separation between people of Gentile and Jewish background - vs 14-22. All believers are one in Christ. Compare 1 Cor 12:12,13; Gal 3:28.

**2:11** "Gentiles" - peoples other than Jews. The Jews (the "circumcision") called them the "uncircumcised." This was a term of contempt - Jud 14:3; 15:18; 1 Sam 14:6; 17:26; 2 Sam 1:20. Notes on circumcision at Gen 17:9-14; Gal 5:6.

**2:12** This is still the sad condition of all people on earth who are apart from Christ - they do not have the true God, and so they do not have a true and proper expectation of salvation (1 John 2:23; 5:11,12; Gal 4:8).

**2:13** "You" means "you Gentiles." They had been far away from God because of their sin and unbelief. But being "in Christ" they are brought near to God. The way for all believers into the presence of God has been opened - Heb 10:19-22.

**2:14** "Our peace" - the Lord Jesus is peace between believing Jews and believing Gentiles. In Him all national barriers are destroyed and there is unity and oneness.

**2:15** "In His flesh" - on the cross Christ destroyed the state of hostility between the Jews and the Gentiles - v 16. This was by abolishing what created the hostility and division - the law given through Moses (Rom 7:4; 10:4). This hostility is destroyed only in Christ. It often prevails among those out of Christ.

"One new man" - means the whole number of Jewish and Gentile believers together in one body with Christ as the Head. It is "new" because there was nothing like it before and it is a new creation with new spiritual life.

**2:16** "Reconcile" - notes at Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18,19.

**2:17** "He came" - the Lord Jesus came. He is the Prince of peace who came to bring peace to men and between men and God and between men and men who receive Him - Isa 9:6; Luke 1:79; John 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; 2 Cor 5:20. He preached peace Himself and through His apostles and is still preaching it through His servants everywhere.

"Far off" - Gentiles - v 13. "Near" - Jews.



preached peace to you who were far off, and to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

19 Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but are fellow citizens with the saints, and belong to the household of God, 20 and are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is fitted together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit.

**2:18** See 3:12; Rom 5:2; Heb 10:19-22. Now everyone whether Jew or Gentile can come directly to God through Christ. Observe the Trinity here – we approach God the Father through God's Son by the Holy Spirit.

**2:19** The exact opposite of v 12. "Fellow citizens" suggests a connection with a city or country. Compare Gal 4:26; Phil 3:20; Heb 11:16; 12:22.

"Household of God" – God has a family. It is not made up of all mankind but of those who have been born into His family by His Spirit – v 5. Spiritually speaking all believers in Christ are brothers and sisters with God as their Father – 2 Cor 6:17,18.

**2:20-22** Believers in Christ are also God's house, God's temple. Compare 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 1 Pet 2:4,5. See the many expressions Paul uses in this letter to reveal what believers are to God. They are

God's sons (1:5),  
God's inheritance (1:18),  
The Son of God's "Body" (1:23),  
God's workmanship (2:10),  
God's people, citizens of God's heaven,  
and God's household (2:19),  
And God's temple (v 21).

A temple is a place where worship goes on and where offerings are made. So it is with God's living temple composed of His people – Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15,16.

**2:20** "Apostles" – 1:1; Matt 10:2.

"Prophets" – this word could refer to Old Testament prophets, to New Testament prophets (3:5; 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28), or to both.

"Cornerstone" – 1 Pet 2:6; Isa 28:16. Builders cut out the cornerstone first. It was the most important stone in a building. It gave a true line to the walls with which it is connected and so gave stability and beauty to the whole building.

**2:21** "Grows" – God's building is not completed. It continues to grow as He adds new believers to it day by day. The building holds together in Christ and grows in Christ. Believers are like living "stones" fitted into the structure of God's spiritual temple – 1 Peter 2:5. There is no reason to think that God ever tears any of these living stones out of His temple if they sin, or fits them back in again and again as they repent again

**3** For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles – 2 since you have heard of the administration of the grace of God which is given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery (as I wrote before in few words, 4 so, by reading *that* you can understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, 6 *namely*, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs *with Israel*, and of the same body, and share in the same promise in Christ, through the gospel; 7 of

and again. God is a better planner, architect and builder than that, and His placement of the stones more permanent than that. Before the foundation of the world He knew what stones He wanted in his temple and chose them in advance – 1:4,5 – so there is no question of taking any of them out once He has placed them in.

**2:22** "You also" – you Gentile believers.

"Dwelling" – see notes at Ex 25:8; Rev 21:3. Believers in Jesus Christ form the only temple God now has on earth. He does not live in any temple made by men – Acts 17:24,25.

**3:1** "For this reason" – 2:20-22.

"Prisoner" – Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter. He was there because of his devotion to Christ and because of the work of Christ he had done among the Gentiles (compare Acts chapters 21, 22). So he calls himself Christ's prisoner. Also he well knew that men could not imprison him apart from Christ's will for him.

"Gentiles" – Paul does not finish this sentence. He means to say that he is praying for them and he does say this in v 14 where he picks up the thought of this verse. Verses 2-13 contain another line of thought that came to his mind.

**3:2** "Given me for you" – Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles – Gal 2:7-9; Acts 9:15; 22:21.

**3:3,4** "Revelation" – Gal 1:11,12.

"Mystery" – notes at Matt 13:11; Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 15:51. What mystery is Paul speaking of here? He tells us in v 6.

"Few words" – he is probably referring to some of the things he said in the first two chapters of this letter, such as 1:9; 2:19.

**3:5** Rom 16:25,26; Col 1:26,27. The teaching of these apostles and prophets recorded in the New Testament is not of men but a revelation from God.

**3:6** Paul here sums up what he said in 2:11-22. He lists three benefits to the Gentiles who believe the gospel of Christ. Together with Jewish believers they are heirs, members of the one true Church, the Body of Christ, and they share in the promise of God. "Promise" here may refer in general to salvation or more specifically to the Holy Spirit (1:13).

**3:7,8** See how Paul regarded his service in the



which I became a servant, according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effectual working of his power. 8 To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make everyone see what the fellowship of the mystery *is*, which, from the beginning of the world, has been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. 10 *His* intent was that now through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly *places*, 11 according to

gospel ministry. To him it was a wonderful gift of God. What a difference it would make in the churches if all Christians viewed the matter like this!

"Power" – 2 Cor 3:5,6; Col 1:29; Acts 1:8. Only God's power can make anyone a good servant of the gospel.

"Less than the least" – see Paul's view of himself. Compare 1 Cor 3:5-7; 15:9. He thought he was the least of all believers, the worst of all sinners (1 Tim 1:15). It is sad that some people have the opposite view of themselves and think they are the best of believers and the least of sinners.

"Unsearchable riches" – v 16; 1:7,18; 2:7. Some people hold the gospel in contempt, considering it a simple, foolish, useless thing (compare 1 Cor 1:18,23). Little do they know that the gospel speaks of spiritual riches in Christ which no one can trace out. There is no greater work on the face of the earth than telling others of these unsearchable riches of Christ.

**3:9** In ages past God revealed other truth to men, but this truth He kept back until the time was ripe for it. Then He chose Paul to reveal it.

"Created all things" – Paul wanted people to know he was not speaking about some "god" but about the Creator of the universe (Gen 1:1).

**3:10** God teaches through the Church (1:22,23) not only men but heavenly beings as well (and they want to learn – 1 Pet 1:12). God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles, His making believers from both groups one "body" in Christ, Christ's death to accomplish this – these matters are a revelation of God's great wisdom.

"Rulers and authorities" – in the unseen spiritual world there are both evil ones (6:12), and good ones (Col 1:16; 1 Pet 3:22; Dan 10:12,13). Here Paul probably means good ones. They must be filled with wonder and admiration at God's ways with the Church.

**3:11** "Eternal purpose" – what has been happening on earth in the formation and growth of the Church has all been in accordance with an ancient master plan – 1:11. **3:12** See 2:18. "In Him" – John 14:6.

"Assurance and confident access" – Heb 4:16; 10:19-22.

"Through faith" – Rom 5:2

the eternal purpose which he ordained in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him we have assurance and confident access *to God*, through faith in him. 13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

14 For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory, he would grant you to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner person, 17 so that Christ may dwell in

**3:13** "Not to lose heart" – they might have been tempted to think that if Paul was a true servant of God he would not have to suffer. Or that if he had to face persecution they too would have to face it. In any case Paul did not want them to lose heart. As for himself he rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ – Col 1:24; 2 Cor 12:10; Rom 5:3.

"Sufferings" – v 1. Compare 2 Cor 11:23-29. His sufferings were for their sake 2 Cor 1:6; 2 Tim 2:9,10.

"Your glory" – Paul's sufferings were proof of God's love (and his love) for them. Suffering for Christ brings glory to Christ and Christ's "Body."

**3:14,15** Paul now continues the thought he broke off at v 1.

"Father" – note at Matt 5:16. God's family of believers (2:19) are a family only because He is a father with a true father's nature and heart.

**3:16** "Riches" – v 8; 1:7,18; 2:7; Phil 4:19. In his prayer in 1:17-19 Paul asked that they might have wisdom and know God's great power. Here he prays that they might be strengthened with that power and know Christ's great love.

"Spirit" – the Father has given the Holy Spirit to live in believers (1:13). He is the inner spiritual source of power for them.

**3:17** "Dwell" – Paul was writing to believers, and all believers have Christ in them (Rom 8:9,10; 2 Cor 13:5; Col 2:27. See note on v 19). Here Paul is praying for something more for them. He wanted Christ to fully live His life in and through them (Gal 2:20), to make their hearts His home (John 14:23). It is sadly possible to have Christ in us and for us to try to keep Him as a sort of guest in one small room in our hearts. Christ wants to occupy with us the whole house – every part of our inner being. He wants us to recognize that the whole house is His, not ours. He wants our loving submission, obedience, and fellowship. He wants to be Lord in our hearts and govern all we think, plan, and do (Rom 14:9).

We should not try to be masters in our houses (our hearts), but servants to Him who lives there. He is the King of kings and wants our hearts as His palace and the place of His throne. This can happen only if God's Spirit strengthens us with power (v 16). If He does not, we will behave in such a way that Christ

your hearts by faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all saints what *is its* breadth and length and depth and height, 19 *and* to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to him *be* glory in the church through Christ Jesus

will be put into a corner of our hearts.

"By faith" – the true Christian life from beginning to end is a life of faith (2:8; Rom 1:17; Col 2:6), and Christ will occupy all of our hearts and feel at home there only as we continue to trust Him. If we have trusted Him to save us we should trust Him to fill us and completely occupy our inner being. And since He has revealed that He wants to do so why should we not trust Him to do it?

"Love" – the most important thing in this relationship between the Lord Jesus and a believer (John 14:23,24; 1 Cor 13:13). Love is like good ground where believers are to be "rooted" and grow. It is like a solid foundation to build their lives on.

**3:18** The knowledge of Christ's love inspires love in believers (1 John 3:16; 4:9-12,19). So we need to grasp the greatness of His love so that we will be rooted and established in love and love Him as He ought to be loved. Christ's love is wider than the world, so long that we can never come to the end of it, so high it reaches beyond the skies to the eternal dwelling place of God, as deep as the fathomless wisdom and purpose of God (Rom 11:33).

**3:19** How can we know that which surpasses knowledge? How can we grasp the infinite? God's Spirit can give us an inner knowledge and experience of it. We will not understand the ocean merely by reading about it, but by sailing on it and by plunging into its depths. God Himself is infinite and eternal and beyond the full understanding of man. But believers know Him – Matt 11:27; Heb 8:11; 1 John 5:20. So it is with the love of Christ.

"Filled" – 5:18. To be filled with Christ is to be filled with God and with the Spirit of God. The fact that Christ is in the hearts of all believers in all places at the same time is proof that He is God. Only God is able to be in so many places at one time. See references on Christ's deity at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

What greater prayer can there be than this one for the divine fullness? But can our little hearts hold all the fullness of God? Can a teacup hold all the fullness of the ocean? It can hold all the ocean it is possible for it to hold. It can be full to the brim with ocean. So with the believer's heart and God. Believers should aim at nothing less than this. **3:20** But are the wonderful things of vs 16-19 really possible for us? Certainly. God would not present them to us and cause

throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

**4** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, appeal to you to walk worthy of the calling which you received, 2 with complete humility and meekness, with patience bearing with one another in love, 3 striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, just as you are called in one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

us to hope for them if they were not possible. God is able to do these things in us and to do them beyond our ability to imagine. Then why is not this the usual experience of all believers? Because God requires that we really want it, yield ourselves completely to Him, humbly obey Him in everything, and trust Him and go on trusting Him for it (v 17; John 14:21; Rom 12:1,2. Compare Jer 29:13; Isa 57:15).

**3:21** "To him be glory" – 1:6,12,14. Since it is God who does everything in and for believers it is only right that He should have the glory for doing it.

**4:1** In the previous chapters Paul revealed what God has called us to be in Christ – God's children, God's inheritance, Christ's body, God's temple, Christ's home. Now Paul exhorts us to live worthy of this calling. We must constantly behave as God's own special children should behave. We should always keep in view the glorious truth of what we are in Christ and live in the light of it.

"Walk worthy of" – live and behave in a manner worthy of – Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12. Note on "walk" at 2:10. A worthy manner is a life lived in love for God and men. A loveless life, no matter how correct and moral and self-sacrificing and faithful, can never be a life worthy of our calling.

**4:2** "Humility and meekness" – Matt 5:3,5; 11:29; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 5:5,6.

"Patience" – Paul defines one aspect of Christian patience. It is bearing with one another in love. It is love which makes it possible to bear things patiently in our relationships with one another which we could not (or at least would not) bear otherwise (1 Cor 13:4).

**4:3** "The unity of the Spirit" – this is the unity God's Spirit has created in making all believers one "body" in Christ (1 Cor 12:12,13). It is not an organizational unity, and believers cannot create it (see John 17:20-23). But in this unity believers can live in peace with one another, and this is what Paul here tells us to do (Rom 12:16,18; 2 Cor 13:11; 1 Pet 3:11). To do this requires much effort – "striving." It will not happen by itself. In the next verses Paul shows the ground for unity and the reasons why believers should live in peace with each other.

**4:4** "Body" – 1:22,23; 3:6. "Spirit" – 1:13; 2:22. "Hope" – 1:18.

**4:5** "Lord" – 1:2; 1 Cor 8:6 (note at Luke 2:11).

6 one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 But to each one of us grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.  
8 Therefore he says,

"When he ascended up on high,  
he led captivity captive,  
and gave gifts to men."

9 (Now that "he ascended", what is it but that first he also descended into the lower parts of the

"Faith" – 1:13,15; 2:8.

"Baptism" – this is the only mention of baptism in Ephesians. Paul does not say whether he means baptism by water or by the Holy Spirit. He does not say "one mode of baptism", though it seems likely that he means water baptism here. By "one baptism" he probably means baptism as symbolizing the forgiveness of sins and union with Christ. Notes on water baptism at Matt 3:2; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 1:14-17; on Spirit baptism at Acts 1:5; 1 Cor 12:13. Also see notes at Rom 6:3,4.  
**4:6** "God and Father" – 1:2,3,17; 3:14.

"In you all" – in all believers (2:22). God is not in all human beings (2:12; 4:18). The word "one" appears seven times in vs 4-6. Since all believers are one in all these seven matters, they should keep this oneness in the "bond of peace" (v 3). Observe the Trinity in these verses – one Spirit, one Lord, one Father, three persons, one God. Notes at Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6.

**4:7-11** There are some matters in which all believers are the same (he has just listed seven), but in other matters they differ. This is true concerning their spiritual abilities and work. Paul mentions only the most important ones here.

**4:7** Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11.

**4:8** Ps 68:18.

**4:9** "Lower parts of the earth" – he probably means the unseen world of the dead (Rom 10:7).

**4:10** "Ascended" – 1:20,21; Acts 2:31-35.

"Fill all things" – see Jer 23:24 which speaks of Jehovah God as doing this. This is another indication in the Bible that Christ is the incarnation of Jehovah. See note and references at Luke 2:11.

**4:11** Compare 1 Cor 12:28.

"Apostles" – Matt 10:2.

"Prophets" – 2:20; 3:5. Note at Gen 20:7; 1 Cor 12:10,28.

"Evangelists" – those who have a special gift of preaching Christ's gospel.

"Pastors and teachers" – these two words signify the same group of men. All pastors ought to have the gift of teaching and all teachers of God's Word should have the pastor's heart. If God has called them to this ministry they should confidently look to God for the abilities necessary to do it well.

Observe that "priests" are not here – for all believers are priests. See 1 Peter 2:5.

earth? 10 He that descended is the same also who ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some *to be* apostles, and some *to be* prophets, and some *to be* evangelists, and some *to be* pastors and teachers, 12 for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a complete person, to the measure of the mature state of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we will not be children,

**4:12** Here is the grand purpose Christ has in giving spiritual gifts to individuals and giving those individuals to the Church. Compare 1 Cor 12:7.

"For the perfecting of the saints" – the Greek word translated "perfecting" here is not the same word found in Matt 5:48 or Heb 6:1, but has in it the idea of preparing or making fit, of a process that leads to completion.

"For the work of the ministry" – or "the work of service" – in this verse it is the saints who are to do service for others to build them up in Christ (see Gal 5:13), and it is the work of the pastors and teachers and evangelists to prepare them to do it. Not every believer is in what is called "full-time ministry", but every believer should be ready at all times to serve fellow believers.

"For building up" – Rom 14:19; 1 Cor 14:12,26; 1 Thess 5:11. This should be the aim of every believer. He should always be seeking ways to edify others. Imagine the changes there would be in some churches if this principle were put into practice by everyone.

**4:13-15** Growth into spiritual maturity is what God desires for us. Compare 1 Cor 3:1-3; Heb 5:11 - 6:1; 1 Pet 2:1-3; 2 Pet 3:18. In v 13 this maturity is in unity of faith in Christ and in knowledge of Him. In v 15 it is in all spiritual things. We should grow deeper and deeper into Christ and up to Him until we all together attain His fullness. This is what God plans for His Church as a whole, and He will accomplish it. Individually we are to work with Him by "speaking the truth in love" (v 15).

This is exceedingly important in spiritual growth. If we wish to grow we must learn to speak to one another God's truth revealed in the Bible, and to tell the truth in all our dealings with one another (v 2,25; 6:14; Ps 15:2; 25:5; 31:5; 51:6; Prov 6:16,17; 12:22; 1 Cor 5:8; Col 3:9; 1 John 2:21). Truth is the ground in which the Church is planted. It is the food it must eat, the air it must breathe. When truth is lost all is lost. We must love the truth and learn to speak the truth out of a heart of love for one another. Of course, this is the exact opposite of the way of many who creep into churches and practice the things God condemns in v 14.

**4:14** Rom 16:17,18; 2 Cor 11:13-15; Col 2:8; 1 Tim 4:2.

tossed this way and that and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery *and* cunning craftiness of men in their deceitful plotting, 15 but speaking the truth in love, in everything may grow up in him who is the head, *that is*, Christ. 16 From him the whole body joined and knit together by what every ligament supplies, with the effectual working of every part in due measure, causes the body to grow and edify itself in love.

17 This I say, therefore, and solemnly declare in the Lord: henceforth you must not live as other Gentiles live, with their futile thinking. 18 Their understanding is darkened, and *they* are shut out from the life of God because of the ignorance that

is in them, resulting from the blindness of their heart. 19 Being past feeling they have given themselves to unrestrained lust to commit eagerly every impure act.

20 But you did not learn Christ like that. 21 If indeed you have heard him and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 *you learned* this with regard to your former conduct: put off the old man, which is corrupt according to its deceitful desires, 23 be made new in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new man, which is created by God in righteousness and true holiness.

25 Therefore putting away lying, every man must speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are

"Tossed. . .carried about" – this can happen to those who do not understand and apply God's Word and so fail to grow in Christ. Compare Gal 1:6,7; 3:1.

**4:16** "Joined and knit together" – a physical body is held together by physical ligaments, muscles, bones, etc. Christ's body the Church is held together by spiritual bonds created by God's Spirit (1 Cor 12:12-27). And every member has a responsibility to the whole body to see that it will "edify itself in love." **4:17** "Live" – 4:1. If we live like people in the world we are not living a life worthy of Christ (2:2,3). Because others behave in a certain way is no reason why we should behave in that way.

"Futile thinking" – Rom 1:21; Acts 14:15; 1 Pet 1:18. Many in the world pride themselves on their ability to think and reason. In God's eyes their thinking, especially their religious and philosophical thinking, is empty and useless.

**4:18** In four phrases Paul states the condition of people in the world without Christ.

"Understanding is darkened" – 6:12; Ps 82:5; John 1:5; 3:19; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 2:11.

"Shut out" or "separated" from the life of God – 2:12; John 14:17; Rom 8:9,16; Jude 19.

"Ignorance that is in them" – no doubt they know many things, but they do not know the one true God (John 15:21; 16:3; Rom 1:22; 1 Cor 1:21; 1 John 2:4).

"Blindness of their heart" – this is the condition of all men without Christ. Compare 2 Cor 4:4. Sad it is for anyone to be physically blind. Sadder still when people have blind minds, blind hearts which cannot see the truth of Christ. The Greek word translated "blindness" in this verse may also be translated "hardness" or "insensibility" or "dullness."

**4:19** See 2:3. This is the result of blinded, hardened hearts – men lose moral and ethical feeling. Sin no longer seems like sin, and they begin to deny it is sin. The next step is abandoning themselves to sexual immorality, or other evils. Rom 1:24-32 is a true and terrible description of what happens then.

"Unrestrained lust" – lust is never really

satisfied. The more men try to satisfy it the more it craves, the more it rages and demands.

**4:20,21** Even some so-called Christians live as those described in v 19. But their style of life contradicts everything they learned about Christ.

"As the truth is in Jesus" – John 1:17; 14:6. Humbly, obediently learning from Him will result in being delivered from all that is seen in vs 17-19.

**4:22** "Old man" – compare Rom 6:6. The old man is what we were before Christ called us and saved us. It means the whole of our former way of life (2:1-3). This old self was crucified with Christ, and believers have already put it off (Col 3:9). Why, then, does Paul tell them to put it off? Because some of the old ways of thinking and behaving and desiring stick to us and we need to deal with them.

**4:23** Rom 12:2. This will make all the difference in the way we behave.

**4:24** "The new man" is the new way of living in Christ. He Himself, when He was on earth, showed us how to live. And He created in us a new spiritual nature that will enable us to live a holy, righteous life (2:5,10; Rom 8:4).

"Put on" – Col 3:10; Rom 13:14; 1 John 2:6. "Putting on" speaks of outward behavior. A believer's actions should be in accordance with what he is in Christ. He is a new creation (1 Cor 5:17), and must behave like one. Hypocrites put on something outwardly that is not real inwardly. Believers have something spiritual, real, and wonderful inwardly and are to let this be seen in the way they live.

"Created by God" – 2 Cor 5:17. The new nature believers have is as holy and righteous as the old nature is unholy and unrighteous, or even more so, and they are to live accordingly.

**4:25-32** Paul makes clear what he means by the words "put off" and "put on." Believers must "put off" (quit, reject) everything contrary to truth and holiness and goodness, and "put on" (start practicing) everything in harmony with them.

**4:25** Verse 15. Truth builds up. Falsehood destroys. When Christians fail here they

members one of another. 26 Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you *are* angry. 27 And do not give place to the devil. 28 He who formerly stole must steal no longer. Instead, he must labour, working with *his* hands at some good *task*, so that he may have *something* to give to those in need.

29 Let no corrupt talk come out of your mouth, but what is good and useful for edification, that it may minister grace to those who hear it. 30 And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed until the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and rage and anger and uproar and evil speaking be put away from you, together with all malice, 32 and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God,

for Christ's sake, forgave you.

**5** Therefore be followers of God as dear children, 2 and walk in love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

3 But *as for* sexual immorality, and all uncleanness or greed, let there be not even a mention of these among you, as is proper for saints; 4 *nor let there be* filthiness, or foolish talk, or *coarse* jesting, which are improper, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this you know: no sexually immoral person, no impure person, no covetous person (he is an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no man deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath

will be in continual trouble with each other and with the God of truth (Ps 31:5). All lying and deceiving by believers is a sin both against God and against the body of Christ the Church.

**4:26** Ps 4:4; Matt 5:22. Anger can lead to the sins he mentions in v 31. Believers should deal with it the very day that it rises in their hearts.

**4:27** Falsehood and anger are two ways Christians give opportunity to Satan to create trouble among them. And Satan is always looking for such opportunities (2 Cor 2:11; 1 Pet 5:8).

**4:28** "Steal no longer" – stealing would include taking a fund entrusted to our care, or "borrowing" from it and not returning it, or falsifying accounts for personal benefit, etc, as well as taking things which belong to others. Compare John 12:6. This is a terrible temptation to a certain kind of person. The many failures in this matter among Christians make spiritual people weep – indeed they make Christ weep. If anyone is guilty of this let him or her have the good sense to return what has been taken and get right with God. Should not God's smile, God's fellowship be more important to us than any amount of unjust gain?

"Working . . . to give" – Acts 20:34,35; 2 Thess 3:6-10. Money earned honestly and shared with others glorifies God. Dishonesty and selfishness dishonor Him.

**4:29** "Corrupt talk" – 5:4; Col 3:8; Matt 12:36. If Christ is in our hearts how can we dare to use filthy language?

"Useful for edification" – this should always be the purpose of what we say and do (vs 12,15,16).

**4:30** "Grieve" – the Holy Spirit is not an unfeeling, unconscious influence, but a person (see John 14:16,17). How do believers grieve Him? By the sins Paul has been speaking of – lying, anger, stealing, selfishness, bad talk, etc. Anything unholly will grieve Him who is pure holiness. And anything we do that unnecessarily grieves any of God's people grieves Him.

"Sealed" – 1:13,14. Even if believers

grieve the Holy Spirit He does not leave them. But there will be misery in their hearts. **4:31** Other sins which grieve God's Spirit. We must put them off – reject them as having no right to exist in our lives.

**4:32** Verse 2; Rom 12:10,17,19; Col 3:12,13. God has forgiven believers freely and completely. So believers must forgive those who offend them. If they do not they will be in trouble with God Himself. He will act toward them as they act toward others. See Matt 6:12,14,15; 18:21-35. If we refuse to forgive those who offend us we injure ourselves, grieve Christ, and cause trouble to the Church.

**5:1** Matt 5:48. God's children must behave like their Father.

"Dear children" – 1 John 3:1.

**5:2** "Walk in love" – or "Live a life of love" – 3:19; 4:15; John 13:34; Rom 12:10; Gal 5:6,13; 1 John 3:11,16-18; 4:7,8. Note on "walk" at 2:10.

"Christ loved us" – v 25; John 13:1; 15:9,12; Rom 8:37; Gal 2:20.

"Offering. . . fragrant aroma" – Matt 20:28; 26:28; John 1:29; Rom 3:25; 5:8; 2 Cor 5:14; Heb 9:14; 10:10,14; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18. The word "fragrant" brings to mind the offerings of the Old Testament which are symbols of Christ (Lev 1:9,13,17, etc).

**5:3** 4:1; 1 Cor 6:13-18; 1 Pet 1:14,15; 1 John 2:6.

"Greed" – v 5; Luke 12:15-21; 1 Tim 6:6-10; Heb 13:5; 2 Pet 1:4.

**5:4** 4:29; Col 3:8. "Giving of thanks" – v 20; Col 3:17; Phil 4:6; 1 Thess 5:18; Heb 13:15; Ps 50:14; 113:1; Lev 7:12,13. **5:5** 1 Cor 6:9-11; Gal 5:21; Heb 10:26,27; 1 John 3:9,10.

"An idolater" – a covetous person is called an idolater because such a person is worshiping the thing or things he has greedily set his desires on. His idol is in his heart – see Ezek 14:3,4.

"Kingdom" – see Matt 4:17; Rom 14:17; Col 1:13.

**5:6** "Let no man deceive you" – 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 6:7; 1 John 3:7,8. Some people



of God comes upon the children of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be sharers with them.

8 For at one time you were darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Behave as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things exposed are made evident

(including some Christians) persuade themselves that they can go on sinning as they please and still have a place in God's kingdom, and they try to persuade others also. But such people are indulging in base deceit and empty words.

"The wrath of God" – see notes at Num 23:5; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; etc.

**5:7** 2 Cor 6:14-18; etc.

**5:8** Sinners and unbelievers are not only in spiritual darkness, they *are* darkness. Similarly believers are not only in the light, in Christ they *are* the light (Matt 5:14-16). They have the privilege and duty of living according to what they are. God is light (1 John 1:5). Therefore His children are children of light, children of the One who is absolutely pure and holy. So they must endeavor to live in an absolutely pure and holy way.

**5:9** "Fruit" – Matt 7:17-20; John 15:1-8; Rom 7:4.

"Goodness" – Gal 5:22.

"Righteousness" – 4:24; Matt 5:6; Rom 6:18; 8:4; 14:17,18; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 1:11; 1 Tim 6:11; 1 Pet 2:24; Ps 15:1,2.

"Truth" – 4:15,21,25.

**5:10** Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 5:9. The whole aim of the believer should be to find out what pleases the Lord Jesus and do those things.

**5:14** This is not a quotation from the Old Testament but may be based on some verses there – Isa 60:1; Mal 4:2. The words may be part of an ancient Christian hymn.

"Rise from the dead" – those who live in darkness and sin are spiritually asleep and "dead" (2:1). The light of Christ is shining in the world through His people. And those who are asleep and dead must rise and come to Christ.

**5:15** "Behave" – or "walk" – note at 2:10. Believers are to live in such a way that God's light shines through them into the darkness where men sleep in sin and are dead.

"Wise" – Col 4:5; Matt 10:16. Believers need wisdom to know how to live in a fallen world like this. We can have this wisdom (Jam 1:5,6).

**5:16** He means we should make the most of our opportunities to let our light shine in the world.

"The days are evil" – Gal 1:4; Phil 2:15; 2 Tim 3:1.

**5:17** "Understand" – 1:18; 4:18; Col

by the light. For whatever makes evident is light. 14 Therefore he says, "You who are sleeping, awake and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

15 See then that you behave carefully, not as fools, but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, in which is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking among yourselves in psalms and

1:9; 2:2; Rom 12:1,2.

**5:18** "Drunk" – Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:10; Gal 5:21; Isa 5:11,22; Gen 9:21. The "Spirit", of course, means God's Spirit (1:13,14; 2:18,22; 3:16).

"Filled with the Spirit" – this is God's will for every believer. God does not tell us to do something or to have something which is not His will for us. This fullness of God's Spirit is the same thing seen in Paul's prayer for believers in 3:19. Since this is God's will we know that we can have this fullness (1 John 5:14,15; Luke 11:13). We can have it by going directly to the heavenly Father and receiving this by faith, without the involvement of any human being. Also see notes at Acts 1:5; 2:4,39.

"Be filled" means to be constantly filled, to receive the fullness and remain in that condition. God wants this to be the normal state of all believers. This is the Christian life as we should live it. How else can we deny ourselves as we should and live as we should and serve Christ as we should? To be constantly filled means, on our part, constant obedience, submission and trust.

What does "filled" mean? A person drunk on wine is under the influence and control of wine. A person filled with God's Spirit is controlled by God's Spirit. But this does not mean he loses control of himself (1 Cor 14:32,33. A fruit of the Spirit is self-control – Gal 5:23). It is a conscious, loving obedience to the Spirit and a joyful fellowship with Him.

**5:19-21** What is the evidence for the fullness of God's Spirit? Paul says nothing here about signs and miracles, or gifts or manifestations of the Spirit. No single one of those is given to all believers. Some have one and some another (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:7-11,28-30). It is possible to have some gift or many gifts of the Spirit and not be in a Spirit-filled condition (1 Cor 1:7; 3:1,3). And it is possible to be filled with the Spirit and not have the gift that some Christians emphasize so much (notes at Acts 2:4,11; 1 Cor 12:10,28-30).

Paul here speaks of other things, things which show the fullness of God's Spirit – joyful fellowship with other believers, thanksgiving to God, and submission to one another. The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) grows best in those constantly filled with the Spirit.

**5:19** Music and singing of a spiritual kind



hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

21 Submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God.

22 Wives, be submissive to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church and the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is *to be* in submission to Christ, so the wives *should be* to their own husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, 26 that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing

naturally spring from a Spirit-filled heart.

**5:20** Notice the words "always" and "for all things." See 2 Cor 4:15; Col 2:7; 4:2; 1 Thess 5:18; 1 Tim 2:1; Heb 13:15; Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; etc. Believers can do this because of Rom 8:28 – if they are filled with God's Spirit.

**5:21** "Submit" – vs 22,24; 6:1,5; 1 Cor 16:16; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:5. Submission means obedience. It is the opposite of self-will, self-assertion and arrogant independence.

"Fear" – see notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**5:22-24** "As to the Lord" – this does not mean that wives are to regard their husbands as they regard Christ, but that they are to be in submission to both their husbands and Christ. Submission to their husbands is a duty that they owe to Christ, in these modern days just as in the days when Paul wrote these words. Compare Col 3:18. See also 1 Tim 2:11-13; 1 Pet 3:1,2,5,6. Wives who refuse to do this are fighting against God's order and will bring sorrow on themselves. "Head of the wife" – this does not mean that women are inferior to men. It means that God in His great wisdom has established an order in the home and in society and He wants believers to follow that order. See 1 Cor 11:3-16 and notes.

"Saviour" – Christ is the Deliverer, Protector and Defender of the Church.

"Body" – v 30; 1:22,23.

**5:24** "In everything" – Paul is speaking of a situation where both husband and wife are believers and both are submitting themselves to the Lord. If a husband wants a wife to do something contrary to God's Word or against her conscience she must not obey him. God does not want a wife to obey if it means her sinning. See the principles laid down in God's Word – Acts 4:19; 5:29; Rom 14:23; etc.

**5:25** "Love" – wives have their duty – submission. Husbands have theirs – loving (this is not to say that wives should not love their husbands, or that husbands should never give in to the wishes of their wives). Paul is speaking of love in action, lived out in the way husbands treat their wives, not

of water by the Word, 27 that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So men ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two of them will be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery. But I am speaking about Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you also love his wife even as himself; and let the wife *see* that she shows reverence to *her* husband.

as some mere romantic feeling. Husbands who fail in this are responsible for many difficulties and much sadness in the marriage relationship.

"Just as Christ" – compare John 13:34.

"Gave himself" – v 2; Gal 2:20; Rom 5:8; John 10:11,15.

**5:26,27** See why Christ died for the Church. Compare 1:4; Titus 2:14; 1 Cor 6:11. He is perfectly holy and will not be satisfied until His Church is perfectly holy. Verse 27 will be accomplished when the Church rises to meet Christ in the air at His second coming (1 Cor 15:50-57).

"Washing of water by the Word" – some scholars seem sure that Paul here means water baptism. This seems very unlikely. Let us all know and remember that the important thing is an inner cleansing by God's Word and God's Spirit and not an outward symbol of cleansing (baptism). On cleansing and washing see Ps 51:2,7; Ezek 36:25,26; John 13:5-10; 15:3; Titus 3:5 (John 3:3-8); Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7,9.

**5:28,29** He means that husband and wife are "one flesh" (v 31). Since she is like his own flesh he should love her as he does his own body.

"Cherishes" – this means love in the way he behaves toward her (v 25). Love that is not expressed in action is not Christian love, not Christ's love – 1 John 3:18. Christ did not remain in heaven sending messages of love. He came down and gave Himself for us (v 25). He now "nourishes and cherishes" the Church.

**5:30** See 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4,12,16; Rom 12:4,5; 1 Cor 12:12,13,27.

**5:31** Gen 2:24.

**5:32** For this reason a person will leave his (or her) parents, and sisters and brothers, and all he has and himself also to be united to Christ, and the two will become "one spirit" (1 Cor 6:17; Matt 4:18-22; 10:37-39; Luke 14:26,27,33). Paul speaks of a husband as being a symbol or type or picture of Christ, and his wife as being a symbol of the Church. Compare 2 Cor 11:2; John 3:28,29; Rev 19:7.

**5:33** Need it be said that a husband should

**6** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honour your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: 3 "That it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."

4 And you fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ, 6 not

live in such a way that he deserves the respect of his wife? or that a wife should live in such a way that she is worthy of her husband's love? The Greek word translated "reverence" in this verse and the word translated "fear" in v 21 are from the same root.

**6:1** Paul is still speaking to believers in Christ ("in the Lord"). Children are not bound to obey parents if those parents give instructions and commands contrary to God's Word. But in all other matters they should obey. Disobedience to parents is a mark of the sinful and rebellious nature in children and a child who disobeys his parents will not find it difficult to disobey God (Rom 1:30).

**6:2,3** Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16. Believers are not under the law (Rom 6:14,15; 7:4; Gal 3:25). But the righteousness of the law is to be fulfilled in them (Rom 8:4). And obedience to parents is "right" (v 1). If Christian children do not obey their parents they have no good reason to expect that things will go well with them or that they will enjoy a long life on earth.

**6:4** Treating children unjustly or too severely, or without sensitivity or sympathy will provoke them. Discipline is absolutely necessary (see Prov 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; Heb 12:7,8), but it should be discipline with love and the children should be made to see this. God has placed children in the hands of their parents. They belong to God (Ezek 18:4). God has given their parents the duty and privilege of bringing them up for Him. By acts and words parents must help make children what God wants them to be. Compare Deut 6:6,7; Ps 34:11; 78:4-8. If parents neglect this supreme duty should they be surprised if their children turn out badly and bring much sorrow to them?

**6:5** "Slaves" – or "servants" – the Greek word means either, but Paul is speaking to those who were under the authority and control of others, and not to those who were paid servants. Slavery was a common thing in the ancient world. In the Roman Empire (where Ephesus was) people were bought and sold like cattle. Many of these slaves were prisoners of war or descendants of prisoners. In some cities there were more slaves than free men. Many of these slave became Christians. What should they do?

with service *because he is* watching or as pleasers of men, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 serving with good will, as to the Lord and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive *a reward* for it from the Lord, whether *he is* slave or free.

9 And you masters, act in the same way toward them, leaving off threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord

Revolt and try to escape from their masters? The New Testament does not say so (1 Cor 7:20-24. See also Col 3:22; 4:1; 1 Tim 6:1,2; Titus 2:9,10; 1 Pet 2:18-25).

The NT does not teach that slavery is a good thing. It only shows that in the situation as it then existed both slaves and masters had duties to one another, and it lays down certain principles of behavior. But Christians came to see that slavery was an evil because it violated the law of love (Rom 12:10; 13:8-10; etc), and they got slavery abolished in those countries where they were able to do so. Slavery cannot long exist where the gospel of Christ has free course. See the note on slavery at Ex 21:3.

**6:6-8** Paul is saying that there are more important matters than personal freedom. Obeying Christ, doing the will of God, being freed from the slavery of sin, having the right attitude about the condition we find ourselves in – these are the supreme things whether one is a slave or a free man.

"Slaves of Christ" – Rom 6:16-18,22; 1 Cor 9:19.

"Reward" – Matt 5:12; 10:41,42; 16:27; 1 Cor 3:8,14; Heb 10:35; Rev 11:18; 22:12.

**6:9** Believing slaves were just as much members of Christ's body the Church as believing masters, and together they had one Head, one Lord, one Master. So masters had better recognize this and behave accordingly. This is just as true today in regard to hired servants and those who hire them.

"No favoritism" – Rom 2:11; Col 3:25; 1 Pet 1:17. Christ will judge us by what we have actually done and by our words and motives, not by our situation in society.

**6:10** "Strong in the Lord" – 1:19-21; 3:16; 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 12:10; Phil 4:13; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 2:1; Heb 11:34; Josh 1:6,7,9,18; Ps 18:32-36; Isa 40:30,31; Rom 8:37. Believers are on a spiritual battlefield. They are God's soldiers (1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 2:3,4; 4:7). As such they must be equipped to fight and to win. Their own strength and will power are not enough for this. They need God's strength, and they should look to Him for it and trust Him for it (1 John 5:14,15). And we must not neglect His Word. The whole Bible is available that we might be

and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against powers, against the princes of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wicked-

strong for the fight.

**6:11** "Whole armor" – Paul has spoken of great blessings (1:3), great salvation (1:13,14), great understanding, great power, great love (1:18,19; 3:17-19). But we should not get the impression that the Christian life will be an easy thing. We should not be surprised if Satan attacks us; we should be surprised if he does not (1 Pet 5:8). Paul here used a figure of speech based on the way Roman soldiers of that day fought in battle. Partial armor would not have meant partial success. It would have meant no success at all. It would have left them vulnerable and in mortal danger. God has prepared spiritual armor for believers in Christ.

We must understand what this armor is and put all of it on. We must not try to choose the helmet of salvation and refuse the breastplate of righteousness, etc. If we do not have the whole armor on, instead of standing against Satan's schemes we may fall. And if we fall we may be sure that Satan will try to keep his foot on us and give us many a wound. Notes on the devil at Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44.

"Wiles" – 2 Cor 2:11. Believers have a very clever enemy who is determined to defeat them and who is always plotting their downfall.

**6:12** The devil is not alone in his fight against believers. Many in the unseen realm of spirits (the "heavenly places" – note at 1:3) are on his side. Satan is the "ruler" and "god" of this world (John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4), but there are other unseen rulers working with him (see Dan 10:13,20; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 16:14). These are evil spirits, demons, angels who rebelled against God. These are the "gods" worshiped by many people (1 Cor 8:5; 10:20; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37). Of course these "gods" will try to convince people they are good or God Himself or supreme lords and destroyers of demons).

**6:13** "Therefore" – without God's armor how can we stand against such evil powers, their deceitful tricks, and their desire to ruin us?

"Put on" – this indicates that the armor is within our reach. Where is it? In Christ. Or we should say it is Christ Himself. Compare Rom 13:14 – this verse should help us understand what Paul means by putting on God's armor. Putting on the armor means to understand and apply the truth Christ has revealed, that He is. It means to study, to understand, to believe, to apply God's Word to ourselves. This putting on is first in the mind, in the heart, in the spirit, and then in the outward behavior.

"The evil day" – this whole age is evil (Gal 1:4), and the days in which Paul wrote

edness in the heavenly *places*. 13 So take for yourselves the whole armour of God that you may be able to resist *them* in the evil day and, having done everything, to stand. 14 Stand, therefore, having your waist girded with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness,

were evil (5:16). But for each individual believer there will come special times of temptation and trials when unseen evil authorities will make special efforts to defeat him or her. We can never know when those evil days may come, and so must have God's armor on every day. Without any warning, very suddenly Satan may strike at us. Compare Job 1:6-19; 2 Sam 11:2; Gen 3:1. We need to be always alert (1 Pet 5:8).

**6:14** "Stand" – this is the fourth time in four verses Paul uses this word. We are not to lie down and let Satan walk over us. We are not to turn our backs and run away. We are not to sit lazily by while others do the fighting. We are not even to refuse to fight by turning the whole battle over to Christ. Christ will be in us and by our side, but we too must fight. We cannot be passive spectators on this spiritual battleground and hope to participate in the victory. We must stand and fight against all evil powers, unshaken in faith and loyalty to Christ, with unfailing courage and determination to fight and win. If we do not, the battle for us is almost lost before it begins. See note at Josh 1:17.

Paul names six pieces of armor. Observe that there is none for the back – there can be no protection for cowards who turn their backs to the enemy.

"Waist girded with truth" – truth is the foundation for everything else in the believer's life and warfare. Paul here can hardly be speaking of the believer's truthfulness and sincerity. Of course, all believers should be truthful and sincere (4:15,25, etc.). But do we dare go against Satan merely with our own truthfulness and sincerity? To fight him successfully we need the truth God has revealed in the Bible. Compare John 8:31,32; 17:17,18. And we need to "put on" Christ who is the truth (John 14:6). Truth makes us free from Satan's power and fits us to live and fight.

Here the truth is to be used for defensive purposes. In v 17 it is to be used for offensive purposes. We must believe and understand and behave according to the truth. Otherwise we will have neither defense nor offense in this fight against Satan. In particular we must know and believe the gospel of Christ (4:21; 2 Thess 2:13,14; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 5:8,9; John 14:6). To buckle on the belt of truth means to fill our minds with Bible truth and with Christ and be ready to apply it when facing Satan's attacks.

"Breastplate of righteousness" – compare 1 Thess 5:8. Here Paul is not speaking primarily of the believer's attempts to live a righteous life. Of course, we should all live righteous lives (4:1,22-24). But will

15 and your feet fitted with the preparation of the gospel of peace. 16 Above all, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And

take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying always in the Spirit with all *kinds of* prayers and requests, and being alert for this with all

this alone enable us to defeat the devil? This armor signifies Christ and what He is to believers. He is our righteousness (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21). We stand against Satan in Christ and in His righteousness, or we do not stand at all. God counts believers righteous in Christ and then sets out to make them actually righteous in their behavior in Him. To stand against Satan we need both aspects of righteousness – the righteousness God gives to us by faith (Rom 3:22-26; 5:1; 8:1), and the righteousness God works in us by His Spirit (Rom 8:4).

To put on and keep on the breastplate of righteousness means to keep constantly in mind that we are righteous by faith and that God has called us to live a righteous life and given us power to do so. It means to put on the "new man" (4:24). It means to be right with God and to know we are standing on the basis of the truth God has revealed. It includes confessing and putting away all sin and knowing we have been cleansed from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). We must have this knowledge and this confidence, or Satan will wound us. Need it be said that if we rely on our own righteousness he will be able to knock us off our feet without difficulty?

**6:15** "The preparation of the gospel of peace" – Paul is not speaking about our readiness to tell others the gospel. Of course we should all be ready to do that. And an element in the victory of believers over the devil is "the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:11). But here he is speaking about standing our ground against Satan and he knew that only the gospel of Christ can make us ready for that. Our spiritual "feet" must be fitted with the gospel. In other words, we must understand the gospel, believe it, love it, know we have peace with God because of it, and apply its principles to our lives and "walk." This, too, is like being "clothed" with Christ. He Himself is the gospel and He is our peace (2:14; 3:8).

**6:16** "Shield of faith" – Satan will hurl at us fiery temptations to sin, to leave the fight and seek comfort and pleasure, to forsake God and live for self. How can we stop these arrows from sticking in our minds and hearts and destroying our will to fight? By taking the gift of faith God gives us and using it. In Hebrews chapter 11 see what faith is and does. See also 1 Pet 5:9. If we want to defeat the devil we must trust the word of Christ. We must put our confidence in Him, not in ourselves. We must believe that He is with us, that He will give us strength for the fight, and victory over everything Satan can throw at us. This was Paul's assurance and it can be ours (Rom 8:31,37; 2 Cor 2:14; 2 Tim 4:18). It is by faith that we

"clothe" ourselves with Christ and successfully resist the enemy.

**6:17** "Helmet of salvation" – 1 Thess 5:8; Isa 59:17. A helmet is for the head. As God's spiritual soldiers we must fill our minds with thoughts of salvation. We must understand what salvation is. We must know that we are saved at present from sin (1:7; 2:5) and have the living hope of the completion of our salvation in the future (Rom 8:23-25). The Lord Jesus Himself is the salvation of His people and we must "clothe" ourselves with Him (Ps 18:2,3,17; 27:1; Jer 3:23; Luke 2:30; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Tim 2:10).

"Sword of the Spirit" – a sword can be used for both defense and attack. See in Matt 4:1-11 how the Lord Jesus used this sword of the Spirit against Satan. Believers in Christ can do the same thing today. But they must know God's Word and understand it and be able to apply it to the temptations and trials that come to them. So we must believe the Bible and love it and study it and let it fill our minds and hearts and use it – 4:13,14; Col 3:16; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:16,17.

Why is God's Word called the sword of the Spirit? Because God's Spirit inspired the Bible and He alone can enable us to understand and use it properly (1:17,18; John 16:13; 1 Cor 2:10-14). What do we need to do to defeat Satan? Use God's Word against the suggestions, doubts, and temptations he brings to our minds.

**6:18** Paul is still speaking of God's soldiers. He is still showing the way of victory over spiritual enemies. He knew that to be prayerless is to be defeated already, but that Satan trembles when he sees believers praying, because by praying they are calling God into the struggle. He is telling us that without prayer the armor will fail to protect us, that we should put it on with prayer and stand in it with prayer.

On prayer see references and notes at Gen 18:32; Ps 66:18; Jer 33:3; Dan 10:13; Matt 6:5-13; 7:7-11; 26:41; Mark 11:24,25; Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-14; John 14:13; 15:7; 17:1-26; Acts 1:14; Rom 8:26; 12:12; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17; Heb 4:16; 10:19-22; Jam 5:13,16; 1 Pet 4:7.

Holding right views about the gospel and Christian doctrine, important as this is, is not enough to give us the victory over the devil. Without prayer we will be without spiritual strength in the battle against Satan.

Our praying should be "in the Spirit" – 2:18; Rom 8:26; Jude 20. This means God's Spirit. We should be yielded to Him and directed by Him in our praying. We are

perseverance and requests for all saints.

19 And *pray* for me that it may be given to me to speak, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that in *doing so* I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

21 Tychicus, a dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that

you may know my situation *and* what I am doing. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you might know our state, and *that* he might encourage your hearts.

23 Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

to pray on "all" occasions with "all" kinds of prayer – requests for all sorts of things according to God's will, intercession for others, thanksgiving and praise (compare 1 Tim 2:1), secret prayer and public prayer, oral prayer and prayer in the heart.

"For all saints" – all believers are in this fight against spiritual enemies and should help each other in it by prayer. Can our prayers actually help others? Certainly. God has appointed this way and God does not tell us to do things that are useless.

**6:19,20** "And pray for me" – Rom 15:30; 2 Cor 1:11; Phil 1:19; Col 4:3; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1. Paul was a great apostle, filled with God's Spirit and a very successful soldier of Christ. Could the prayers of ordinary believers help him to speak as he should? Very evidently, yes.

"Mystery of the gospel" – means that the

gospel is a revelation from God. Men could not have known it apart from this revelation.

"Boldly" – Acts 4:13,29,31; 28:31.

"Ambassador in chains" – 3:1; 2 Cor 5:20.

**6:21,22** "Tychicus" – Acts 20:4; Col 4:7; 2 Tim 4:12; Titus 3:12.

**6:23** "Love with faith" – love accompanies true faith (Gal 5:6). And the source of both love and faith is the Lord Jesus along with God the Father.

**6:24** All true believers love Christ and love Him sincerely (1 Cor 16:22; 1 John 4:8). The Greek word translated "sincerity" here means "incorruptness" and is the same word used in 1 Cor 15:42,50,53,54 of the resurrection body believers will have. The love God plants in the hearts of His own people is divine and eternal love (1 Cor 13:1), and so it is sincere, incorruptible, undying.



# The Letter of the Apostle Paul to the PHILIPPIANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime about 60 AD.

**Themes:**

Paul had founded this Church during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:12-40). Now he is in prison, being persecuted for preaching the gospel of Christ. However the key words of this letter are "joy" and "rejoice." Though encountering many troubles and dangers Paul did not give in to discouragement, did not complain about anything. He was rejoicing and he encouraged others to rejoice. Another theme of this letter is the proclamation and spread of the gospel (1:4,7,12,18,27; 2:15,22). For the sake of Christ's gospel Paul renounced his own aims and desires and patiently endured all things that he might make it known. He found his joy, his ability to endure and persevere, his righteousness, his strength and power in Christ alone, and revealed to the believers at Philippi (and to us) the way of life that is satisfying and fruitful, the kind of life that brings glory to Christ. Another important theme is renunciation – 2:5-8; 3:8-10.

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**1** Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God at every remembrance of you. 4 in every prayer of mine for all of you I pray with joy, 5 because of your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will go on completing *it*, until the day of Jesus Christ.

7 So it is right for me to think this of all of you,

**1:1** "Timothy" – Acts 16:1. We need not think that Timothy helped Paul in the contents of this letter but possibly wrote it down as Paul dictated it. Compare Rom 16:22. "Servants" – Rom 1:1.

"Saints" – Rom 1:7.

"Philippi" – Acts 16:12-40.

"Overseers" – Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:3; 1 Pet 5:2.

**1:2,3** Rom 1:7,8.

**1:4** "In every prayer" – Rom 1:10.

"Joy" – so me churches were at times a source of grief to Paul. In 1 Corinthians or Galatians there is no mention of his joy in them. The church at Philippi was quite different from those churches. Joy is a keynote of Philippians – it appears more in this short letter than in any other letter Paul wrote – 1:18,25,26; 2:2,17,18,28; 3:1; 4:1,4,10.

**1:5** Here is the reason for Paul's thanksgiving and joy – there had been no break in the fellowship and mutual helpfulness they experienced – 4:14-16. The gospel of Christ had united them in mind, heart, and action.

"Gospel" – Paul defines the gospel in 1 Cor 15:1-8. The whole letter to the Romans is a fuller description of it.

**1:6** "Confident" – 2 Cor 1:14,15; Gal 5:10; 1 Thess 1:4,5; Heb 6:9,10.

"He who has begun" – God. Let us learn from this verse the following:

True Christians are a work of God – Eph 2:10; 2 Cor 5:17. He is the one who begins the work of salvation in them (Jam 1:18; John 3:5-8; 6:37,44), and He is the one who carries the work on – 2:13; 1 Cor 12:6; Col 1:29; Heb 13:21.

This is a "good" work.

This is an inner work ("in you"), a work in the heart, the mind, the inner being – 2:13; Gal 2:20; Eph 3:16,20.

It is a work God finishes – Rom 8:29,30. Men may begin a work and leave it unfinished for one reason or another. Not God. When He begins the work of salvation in anyone He intends to complete it and will do so. Paul was confident of this and so should we be. In 2:12,13 we see that we should cooperate with God in this work. See notes there.

because I have you in my heart. For both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all share with me in *God's* grace. 8 For God is my witness how greatly I long for you with the tender affection of Jesus Christ.

9 And I pray that your love may overflow still more and more, in knowledge and *in* complete discernment, 10 that you may approve things that are excellent, and that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, for the glory and praise of God.

"The day of Jesus Christ" – Christ's second coming.

**1:7** "In my heart" – 2 Cor 3:2; 6:11; 7:3.

"Chains" – v 13; Eph 4:1; 6:20.

"In the defense" – God's servants should know how to defend the gospel against attacks, objections, slanders, misunderstandings, etc, as well as to preach it.

"Grace" – note at John 1:14; Rom 1:7. It was God's grace which made them believers in Christ and brought them into the true Church the body of Christ.

**1:8** Christ was in Paul and Paul's loving was Christ loving through him – Gal 2:20. We will not learn to love as he did unless we learn Christ as he did – Eph 3:17-19. Love is a fruit of God's Spirit in believers who live in obedience to Christ – Gal 5:22.

"I long for you" – here he reveals the heart every Christian worker should have. See also 4:1; Rom 1:11; 2 Cor 2:4; Gal 4:19,20; 1 Thess 2:17; 2 Tim 1:4.

**1:9-11** Compare Paul's prayers for the Ephesians – 1:17-19; 3:16-19, and Colossians – 1:9-12. In Paul's prayers, inspired as they were by God's Spirit and recorded for our instruction, we can learn what God wants to do for us and in us. We can also learn how to pray for others.

**1:9** "Your love" – he means their love for God and for fellow believers and for all mankind. He wants their love to increase in the right ways. They should know more and more what real love is and how to show this love to others in action. This love should not be blind but full of the knowledge of Christ and His love – Eph 3:17-19.

**1:10** "Approve things that are excellent" – he is speaking of their lives together in one church as believers. He mentions some of these excellent things in 2:1-5,14,15; 4:8,9.

**1:11** "Fruits" – Matt 7:17; Rom 6:22; 7:4; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9.

"Of righteousness" – Heb 12:11; Jam 3:1;8 – fruit that comes from a right relationship with God.

"By Jesus Christ" – only through Him can there be any fruit acceptable to God (John 15:4,5).

"For the glory and praise of God" – Eph 1:6,12,14.

12 I want you to understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have really turned out for the advancement of the gospel, 13 so that it has become clear among all the palace guard, and ever other *place*, that my chains *are* for Christ, 14 and many of the brethren in the Lord, becoming confident because of my chains, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Christ out of envy and strife, but some with good will. 16 The former preach Christ out of selfish motives, not sincerely, thinking to add trouble to my chains, 17 but the latter out of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel. 18 What, then, *is the result*? Only that *in every way*, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is being preached. And

**1:12** What happened to him was his arrest and imprisonment. This did not discourage him or cause him to murmur or complain. Compare Gen 50:20. He believed what he wrote in Rom 8:28.

"Advancement" – what some may consider an obstacle to the advance of the gospel might actually serve to advance it, and seeming disasters may turn into blessings. In God's hands all events in a believer's life serve a good purpose.

**1:13** Paul was a witness for Christ to the soldiers who guarded him, soldiers who served the Roman emperor or governor or king as the case may be (we are not sure where Paul was in prison when he wrote this). So the gospel advanced in places it had not gone before. Compare 2 Tim 2:9.

"My chains are for Christ" – everyone came to understand that Paul was no criminal, no law-breaker, but was in prison because he preached Christ's gospel.

**1:14** They knew it was a bold thing for Paul to preach to the authorities and guards who held him captive. His example of boldness made them more bold. And this too caused the gospel to advance.

**1:15-17** Not everyone then who preached the gospel did so with good motives. Some were envious of Paul's greatness and success and considered themselves his rivals. Selfishness governed their outlook and ministry. The same is true today also. Some preachers want to be popular, want to succeed for their own sakes, want to put down other preachers and even cause them trouble if they can. But some now as then preach Christ sincerely, out of love for Him and for the souls of men.

**1:18** Paul did not consider himself in competition with anyone. He wanted Christ and His gospel to be known everywhere. He could rejoice even if those who disliked him and caused him trouble preached Christ, and even if their motives were bad. It was not himself he wanted to see exalted but Christ. There is a great lesson here for all preachers. Of course Paul was referring to those who preached the truth about Christ and His gospel, not to those he warned

in that I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 20 *This is* in accordance with my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that I will not be ashamed in anything, but *that* with complete boldness, now also, as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live *is* Christ and to die *is* gain. 22 But if I live on in the body, this *will mean* fruit from my labour. But I do not know what to choose. 23 For I am held between *these* two: I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, 24 but to remain in the body *is* more necessary for you. 25 And being convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all

against in other letters (2 Cor 11:13-15; Gal 1:7,8; etc).

**1:19** Probably Paul is speaking of deliverance from the accusations against him and so deliverance from death at that time – vs 25,26.

"Through your prayer" – Philemon 22; Rom 15:30-32.

"Spirit of Jesus Christ" – see Rom 8:9 and note.

**1:20** He was full of hope that he would not lose his boldness to speak for Christ at any time in any situation. Compare Eph 6:19,20.

"Christ. . .exalted" – this had always been the result of Paul's life and ministry from the time he speaks of in Gal 1:16, and this was still his aim and expectation. There can be no greater purpose than this in either life or death.

"In my body" – Christ was exalted by Paul's actions, by his day to day behavior, by the words of his mouth, not merely in his thoughts and desires.

**1:21** "To live is Christ" – Gal 2:20. Paul lived by Christ's life in him, not his own. He served by Christ's power, not his own. His aim was Christ's glory, not his own.

"To die is gain" – Paul had no fear of death (see Heb 2:15). He knew the truth of Ps 116:15. He was sure that Christ would be exalted in him whether he lived or died – v 20. But, as v 23 shows, at least part of the gain he was thinking of was the joy of going to be with Christ. Is it true of everyone that to die is gain? No – only of those who live for Christ. No one whose life is self will find death a gain. Death is an enemy of all who do not know Christ.

**1:22-24** "Fruit from my labor" – Rom 1:13; 7:4. Observe his confidence that his labor for Christ would be successful. This was born of the knowledge that it was Christ in Him doing the work – Col 1:29.

"What to choose" – both living and dying were very acceptable to him. He could hardly decide which he wanted most.

"Be with Christ" – 2 Cor 5:8; Luke 23:43. A believer at death goes into the presence of the Lord Jesus.

**1:25** "I will remain" – personally he would

of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or be absent, I may hear about you that you are standing firmly in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, 28 and not at all afraid of your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of *their* destruction, but to you of *your* salvation, and that of God. 29 For it has been given to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, 30 finding yourselves in the same conflict which

you saw in my case, and now hear *to be* in me.

**2** If *there is*, therefore, any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender affections and mercies, 2 then make my joy full by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing *be done* through selfish motives or self-esteem, but in humbleness of mind let everyone consider others better than themselves. 4 No one should look *only* to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did

prefer to die and go to Christ. To him this was far better than remaining on earth. But as usual what he wanted was not the important thing to him. The need of others – this is what determined his actions and prayers. Compare 1 Cor 9:19-23; 10:24,33. But how could Paul know he was not going to die at that time? God had given him assurance that prayer for his deliverance was going to be answered – v 19; 2:24.

"Progress. . . in the faith" – Eph 4:12,13. Joy will accompany progress in the faith. Every believer should be more concerned with progress in the Christian faith than with progress in anything of this world.

**1:27** "Worthy" – Eph 4:1; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12.

"Standing firmly" – Eph 6:11,14.

"One spirit", "one mind" – 2:2; Eph 4:2; 1 Cor 1:10; Rom 12:16.

"Striving" – v 7; Jude 3. Believers must never weakly submit when the gospel is under attack, must never compromise with error and false teaching. The truths of the gospel are worth struggling for, and we must do so with all the wisdom and spiritual strength and ability (and love) God gives us.

**1:28** "Not at all afraid" – vs 14,20; Matt 10:28; Heb 13:6.

"Your opponents" – v 30.

"Sign" – their boldness in Christ would be evidence that God was with them. See Acts 4:13; 2 Thess 1:4-7. Their opponents would be able to recognize that if God was with Christ's believers, He was not with themselves who opposed them.

**1:29** "Given. . . to believe" – faith is a gift of God – Eph 2:8. "To suffer" for Christ is also a gift of God. It is one of the great privileges we can have on earth. Happy are those who know this. See 3:10; Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3; 2 Cor 1:5; 1 Pet 5:13,14,16. Is it not an honor to suffer for the Lord Jesus who suffered and died for us? Love answers "yes", and will not try by every possible means to escape discomfort, hardship, persecution, trouble or suffering for His sake.

**1:30** "In my case" – for some of Paul's difficulties in Philippi see Acts 16:19-40. There were still many opponents of the gospel in that place and believers there were

still suffering at their hands.

**2:1,2** Paul was concerned about the lack of harmony in the church there – 1:27; 4:2. He appeals to them on the basis of what they have as believers in Christ.

"If" – he is not doubting that they have the things he now lists. The meaning is "since you have these."

"In Christ" – John 17:20-23; Rom 6:5; Eph 4:15,16.

"Comfort" – 2 Cor 1:3,5,7.

"Fellowship" – 2 Cor 13:14.

"Tender affections and mercies" – qualities every believer should have toward other believers.

**2:3** "Ambition" – 1:17; Jer 45:5; 1 Cor 13:5; Gal 5:20.

"Consider others better" – Rom 12:10,16; Gal 5:26; 1 Pet 5:5,6. See an example of this in Paul himself – Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:15.

**2:4** Rom 14:19; 15:21; 1 Cor 10:24.

**2:5-11** Paul puts before them the greatest possible example of the humility and love for others he has been speaking of. Is it possible for believers to have the same attitude as Christ, to think as He does? Certainly it is possible or Paul would not have written v 5. See 1 Cor 2:16; Rom 8:5. Christ is in believers, and when He is the master in their hearts (Eph 3:17) He can fill their minds with the thoughts and attitudes they should have. When this happens strife and selfishness and conceit and arrogance among them will end.

In these verses Paul gives a brief summary of truth which the New Testament teaches in other places. Remember that Paul's aim here is practical. He is teaching truth he wants believers to apply to their lives. Jesus left the full glory and riches of heaven behind for His time on earth and lived a life of humble service. All believers must learn to renounce the false and contemptible glory and riches of this world and spend their lives here humbly serving God and others.

**2:6** "Being in the form of God" – the Greek here can mean only one possible thing: Christ has the very nature of God. Jesus is called God in other places in the Bible. See Isa 9:6; John 1:1; 20:28,29; Acts 20:28;

not think it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made himself of no reputation and took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death,

Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8; 1 John 5:20. Besides these there are other places which indicate that Christ is God. See Matt 1:23; 2:11; 3:17; 10:37; 11:27; 12:8; 14:33; 18:20; 22:41-45; 28:17,19,20; John 5:17-26; 8:19; 9:38; 10:30-33; 11:25; 14:7,10,23; 17:1-5; Acts 3:14,15; Rom 1:7; 8:9,10; 1 Cor 8:6; 2 Cor 4:4; 13:14; Eph 3:17-19; Col 1:15-17; 2:9; 1 Thess 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 3:16; Heb 1:3,10,12; 1 Pet 3:15; 1 John 1:3; 2:22; Rev 1:4,5,8 (with 22:12,13); 1:17; 5:8,13,14; 19:16; 21:6. Other verses reveal that He is the incarnation of Jehovah (God's name in the Old Testament). See vs 10,11 and other references at Luke 2:11.

"Did not think it robbery to be equal with God" – the Greek here has been translated in various ways. For example, "did not consider equality with God something to be grasped", "did not cling to his equality with God." No doubt it is difficult to bring out the exact meaning of the Greek phrase. The word translated "robbery" is related to a Greek verb meaning "to seize" or "to carry away by force." It may mean either the act of seizing, or the thing seized. However that may be, from the wording here, the context, and from the teaching of the Bible as a whole, we can say the following:

In nature and attributes God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are equal, and this is not something that one of them can either grasp or give up. So in this sense, for Christ to consider Himself equal with God the Father is certainly not robbery. But the three members of the Trinity are not equal in position in the Godhead. The Father has the highest place. See John 5:19-23; 14:28; 1 Cor 15:27,28. Christ the Son of God did not try to seize an equal place with God the Father. Quite the opposite. He was happy for the Father to be the Father and Himself to be the Son in obedience to the Father – v 8; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 9:4; 14:31; 15:10; 17:4. Observe the clear distinction in this verse between the Father and the Son before the Son came to earth.

**2:7** "Made himself of no reputation" – the Greek here too has been variously translated. For example, "emptied himself", or "made himself nothing." The Greek verb has the meaning of "to empty", but we should be careful not to misunderstand how it is used here. The meaning is clear from the words which follow. Jesus did not empty Himself of deity – this is an impossible thing. He did not stop being God when He came to earth. But He emptied Himself of the glory that He had with the Father (John 17:5), of the rights and privileges He had as God's own Son. He deprived Himself of His

even the death of the cross.

9 Therefore God has also highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee would bow, of *those* in heaven, and *those* in earth, and

heavenly dwelling and all that this meant (2 Cor 8:9). He put Himself in a position where men could count Him nothing, as a person of no reputation. He who made mankind was willing to become despised and rejected by men – John 1:10,11; Isa 53:3; Matt 8:20; 12:24; Mark 6:3; John 18:30.

"Made himself of no reputation" is a fitting way to describe the huge step down from the heights of power and glory in the universe to a lowly position among men on earth.

"Servant" – Rom 15:8; John 13:3-5; Luke 22:27; Matt 20:28.

"Likeness" – John 1:14; Rom 8:3; Heb 2:14. Jesus is both God and a person with real human nature.

**2:8** "Appearance" – outwardly Jesus seemed to be a man like other men and nothing but a man. His divine nature and the glory He had before He came to earth were concealed from the eyes of men.

"Humbled himself" – this was true all through His life (Matt 11:29), but His humility appeared most vividly at the time of His death – Isa 53:7,8; 1 Pet 2:23,24. He did not insist on His rights as the Son of God, did not proudly resist those who falsely accused Him, mistreated and killed Him.

"Obedient" – this means obedient to God the Father – Matt 26:39; John 18:11; Rom 5:19; Heb 10:7; John 10:17,18.

"Cross" – Paul says "even the death of the cross" because the cross was the most humiliating way for a person to die. Public execution on a cross was the way Romans dealt with criminals.

**2:9** "Therefore" – God rewarded Him for His renunciation, humility and obedience. This is in accordance with Christ's own teaching – Matt 23:12.

"Highly exalted him" – Acts 2:33; Eph 1:20,21; Heb 1:3; Rev 3:21. No one ever humbled himself as low as Jesus, none was ever exalted so high. He has the highest place because He alone is worthy of it.

"Name" – what is this name above all – "Jesus" (v 10), or "Lord" (v 11)? Paul probably means "Lord" because the name Jesus was given before the Father exalted His Son from the place of humiliation and death, and Paul seems to be referring to a name God gave Jesus at the time of His exaltation. Compare Acts 2:36. "Name" can signify authority. See John 14:13,14. It can also be used in the sense of "title" – Isa 9:6.

**2:10,11** "Lord" – the Greek word here translated "Lord" in the New Testament ("kurios") is the word used to indicate Jehovah, the Old Testament name of God (see Luke 2:11; Ex 3:14,15). Knees should bow only to Him – Isa 45:22-24; Matt 4:10. God the Father has given this name, this title to Jesus. That



*those* under the earth, 11 and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, my dearly loved ones, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who is working in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

14 Do everything without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and sincere, the sons of God, without fault, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding forth the word of life. Thus I will be able to rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, or laboured in vain. 17 Yes, and even if I am being poured out

is, He has declared to the universe that Jesus who became man and suffered death is the Lord of the universe, the incarnation of Jehovah the great God of all (Acts 2:36; 1 Cor 8:6; Matt 28:18), and that Jesus is worthy of worship. See other references which show that Jesus is Jehovah at Luke 2:11.

"Confess" – believers now gladly confess that Jesus is the mighty Lord with all authority in heaven and earth. The time will come when everyone will have to confess this, willingly or not.

"Glory of God the Father" – when Jesus is exalted and confessed as Lord the Father is glorified. Compare John 5:23; 1 John 2:23.

**2:12** "Therefore" – in the light of the truth given above.

"Obeyed" – he means they obeyed God's revealed truth (Rom 6:17; 1 Pet 1:22). This is of the utmost importance – Jam 1:22-25. Christ was obedient to God – v 8. So must they be, whether Paul was there or not. So must we be wherever we are.

"Work out" – Paul does not say "work for salvation." He well knew that salvation cannot be earned by good works and human effort – Eph 2:8,9; Rom 3:28; 4:4,5; 6:23; 11:6. He is saying believers should work out in their lives the salvation they already have. They should have the same attitude Christ had and apply the truth to every part of their lives.

"Fear and trembling" – Isa 66:2; Jer 5:22. The work is extremely important and has eternal consequences; it means dealing with the God of the universe. So it demands reverence and fear and carefulness and trembling. See notes on the fear of God at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**2:13** "God... is working in you" – see 1:6; Eph 2:10. Because God works in believers we are not to think we have nothing to do. Instead we are to work with Him in the living out of the inner spiritual life He has given us. We are not puppets or robots. God is active in us. He is directing us with a good will toward a good goal – He wants us to be

*as a drink offering* on the sacrifice and service *that come* from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 For the same reason you also must be glad, and rejoice with me.

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be encouraged, when I know your state. 20 For I have no one *else* of the same mind, who will sincerely care about you. 21 For everyone seeks his own *interests*, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father, he has served with me in the gospel. 23 Therefore I hope to send him presently, as soon as I see how things will go with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself will come shortly.

25 But I have considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in

more and more like Christ (Rom 8:29). We should cooperate with Him in this most sublime work.

**2:14-16** Here are two very serious sins – complaining against God and the leaders He has appointed (Ex 16:2-8; Num 11:1; etc), and disputing with each other (Rom 14:1-4; 1 Cor 3:3,4). Instead of behaving like that, believers must become like Christ. Only then can we be "blameless" (1 Thess 2:10; 5:23; Matt 10:16; 2 Cor 11:2), and "without fault" (Matt 5:48).

"Perverse generation" – Matt 17:17; Acts 2:40; Gal 1:4; Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19. Every generation is a perverse, depraved generation, but some more so than others.

"Lights" – Matt 5:14-16.

"Word of life" – God uses His word to give spiritual life to those who believe (Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23).

"Not... in vain" – if they live as they should, he (the founder and teacher of the church there) would have reason to be proud of them when Christ returns. Compare Gal 4:11; 1 Thess 2:19,20.

**2:17,18** "Drink offering" – see Ex 29:40. Paul is speaking of the possibility of death and probably death by violence (2 Tim 4:6).

"Faith" – their faith in Christ had produced loving service toward Paul (and others – 4:14-16; 2 Cor 8:1-4). This was like a sacrifice (see 4:18; Heb 13:16). If he should die for the service of Christ and be like an offering poured out to God he will rejoice. And if things turn out like that they should rejoice too.

**2:19** "Timothy" – 1:1; 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10; 1 Thess 3:2.

**2:20** "Of the same mind" – he means no one in the place where he was at that time. Timothy was with Paul at the very beginning of the work in Philippi – Acts chapter 16.

**2:21** This is the state of things in the world and all too often among Christians as well.

**2:22** "Son" – Paul considered Timothy a son in spiritual matters – 1 Tim 1:2. Compare 1 Cor 4:14,15; Gal 4:19; 1 Thess 2:11.

**2:23,24** See 1:25,26.

**2:25** "Brother" – he means brother in spiri-

the work, and fellow soldier, who is your messenger, and the one who ministered to my needs. 26 For he has longed for all of you, and has had a heavy heart, because you heard that he had been sick. 27 And indeed he was sick almost to death. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I have sent him the more eagerly, so that when you see him again, you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. 29 So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold such *men* in esteem. 30 Because *it was* for the work of Christ that he was near death, not regarding his life, to make up any deficiency in your service toward me.

tual matters, a fellow believer.

"Companion in labour" – in God's work (1 Cor 3:9).

"Fellow soldier" – 2 Tim 2:3,4; Eph 6:11.

"My needs" – 4:18. Probably Epaphroditus, after bringing the gift of money to Paul, helped him in prison in various ways.

**2:26** "Has longed" – 1:7,8.

"Sick" – he did not want the believers in Philippi to be grieved because he was sick. **2:27** "To death" – evidently Paul who had healed many people (Acts 19:11,12; 28:8,9) was not able to heal him immediately. See also Gal 4:13; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20. But eventually God healed him ("had mercy on him").

"Sorrow" – joy is a major theme of this letter (1:4). But on earth the joy of believers is often mixed with sadness – 2 Cor 6:10; 1 Pet 1:6.

**2:28-30** The church had sent Epaphroditus to be a help to Paul while he was in prison. But Epaphroditus fell ill because of the work of Christ and longed to return to the church in Philippi. Would the church there think he had failed in his mission and was deserting Paul in his time of need? Paul is careful to assure them that this was not the case.

"Esteem" (v 29) – such men are more worthy of honor than anyone else on earth, and God Himself will honor them – John 12:26.

"Not regarding his life" (v 30) – Acts 20:24; Rom 16:4; 1 John 3:16.

**3:1** "Rejoice" – 1:4; 4:4. The believer's rejoicing is not to be in his circumstances, in his successes, in his possessions, in his worldly hopes, but "in the Lord". See Hab 3:17,18.

"Same things" – perhaps Paul is referring to his repeated exhortation to rejoice; or perhaps to the warning against evil men in the verses which follow – previously he may have given them similar warnings.

**3:2** Paul here speaks of the same sort of people he wrote about to other churches – 2 Cor 11:13-15; Gal 1:7; 2:4; 5:12. See also Acts 15:1,2,5.

"Dogs" – the Jews regarded dogs as unclean animals and called Gentiles "dogs." Paul says the Jews who rejected Christ and

**3** Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you *again* is no trouble for me, and for you *it is* safe.

2 Beware of dogs! Beware of evil workers! Beware of the mutilators!

3 For we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. 4 Though I too might have confidence in the flesh. If any one else thinks he has reasons for trusting in the flesh, I *have* more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; as for

tried to harm Christians were the real unclean animals.

"Evil workers" – trying to pervert Christ's gospel and to turn Christians from the truth is the greatest of evils. It has to do with eternity.

"Mutilators" – he refers to circumcision – Gen 17:10-14. Some Jews were trying to compel Gentile Christians to submit to this ceremony. He uses sarcasm here because the unbelieving Jews who opposed the gospel of Christ did not live up to the meaning of circumcision (Rom 2:25-29), and so with them the rite of circumcision became an empty and meaningless cutting of the flesh.

**3:3** "We" – he means believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles. Though they may not be circumcised they are "the circumcision" – that is, they have the inner reality which the old ceremony of circumcision pointed to. See Rom 2:29; Col 2:11. Paul now defines true believers.

"Worship God in the Spirit" – John 4:23,24.

"Rejoice in Christ" – or "glory in Christ" or "boast in Christ" – 1 Cor 1:30,31.

"No confidence in the flesh" – the false teachers taught that ceremonies performed on the body, human merit, good works, etc, could make people acceptable to God and earn salvation. Paul completely rejects this idea. He knew what human nature is like – Rom 7:18; 8:5-8. True Christians put their confidence in Christ, not in themselves or what they can do, or in what others can do to them or for them – Gal 2:16; 5:24; Eph 2:8,9.

**3:4-7** The Jewish false teachers put their confidence in themselves and in the observance of their religion. See Rom 2:17-20. Paul looks back at his past and says that he was in no way inferior to any of them. But, unlike them, he had learned to reject all that confidence in self and in religion. He lists seven ways in which he had been (in the eyes of the Jews) an ideal Jew.

"Eighth day" – Lev 12:3.

"Israel" – God's chosen nation (Rom 9:4,5).

"Benjamin" – a tribe which the Jews regarded with much esteem. Jerusalem was located in territory belonging to Benjamin.

the righteousness that is in the Law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yes, indeed, and I count all things *as* loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them *as* rubbish, that I may gain Christ, 9 and be

"Hebrew of the Hebrews" – this means he had learned the Hebrew language and had followed the old customs of the people.

"Pharisee" – he was of the most orthodox and conservative sect of the Jews (note at Matt 3:7).

"Zeal" – he was zealous for what he thought was the truth and hated any teaching that seemed contrary to his religion (Acts 8:3; 9:1,2). Because of this the Jewish leaders regarded him highly.

"Blameless" – he means outwardly he did not break God's law given through Moses (he did not worship other gods, or make idols, or steal, or commit adultery, etc). He observed its external requirements. He could find no fault in his own behavior (later on he learned that inwardly he was guilty of breaking one of the ten commandments – Rom 7:7-11). It is safe to say that no one ever tried harder than Paul as a Jew to be saved by his own efforts, to be righteous, to be acceptable to God.

**3:7** This new view of things began with his experience on the Damascus road – Acts 9:3-6. He was enlightened as to the true value of things. What he had considered spiritually profitable he now saw was loss. Self-confidence and pride had kept him from Christ. Now he renounced it all – pride of birth, pride of race, pride of religion, pride in attainments. With the opening of his spiritual eyes, what had been pleasing to him became useless and vile. Self had been the center of Paul's life. Now Christ became the center. So it will be with all those who are truly enlightened and come to know Christ.

**3:8** "All things" – not just the things he names in vs 4-6. In his eyes everything connected with himself, everything that religion can offer, everything in the world became as loss, useless and empty of value. Compare Matt 10:39; 16:24-26. Knowing Christ was the great prize that made everything else seem like rubbish. Compare John 17:3; 2 Cor 4:6. Paul means far more than merely knowing about Christ. He is speaking of a personal acquaintance and fellowship with Christ. For this he let everything else go into the garbage heap. It is sad that the majority of people on earth live for what Paul knew to be rubbish.

"The loss of all things" – Luke 14:33. If a person loses all things and gains Christ he is gaining far more than he loses, and should not dream of feeling sorry for himself. For in Christ is wisdom, righteousness, holiness, redemption, and every spiritual blessing – 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:3. What does it cost to be a real Christian? Everything a person has. What does a

person gain by becoming a real Christian? Everything God has – 1 Cor 3:21; Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 6:10; 8:9.

**3:9** "My own righteousness" – v 6; Rom 10:3. This is the only righteousness many people try for. It is all they know. But it will not be sufficient when they stand before God to be judged. Compare Luke 18:9-14; Isa 64:6.

"Righteousness. . . though faith" – Rom 3:21-26,28; 5:1; 10:10; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 2:16.

**3:10** "That I may know him" – v 8. Paul wanted to know Christ better and better. He is speaking about a knowledge resulting from personal experience, not mere head knowledge gained from reading about Him. Compare 2 Pet 3:18.

"Power of his resurrection" – Paul knew something of this power, more than most men ever know (Col 1:29). But he wanted to experience more of it. Compare Eph 1:19,20; 3:20; Rom 6:4.

"Fellowship of his sufferings" – 1:29; Col 2:24; Rom 8:17. Paul had suffered much for Christ, more than most men ever do – 2 Cor 11:23-29. He wanted to know even more of this. He knew that to share Christ's life in His Body the Church, to enter more fully into his fellowship, meant to share His sufferings as well. And he did not think this was something to be avoided at all cost (as some seem to think). See Col 1:24. At one time in his life Paul made Christ suffer – Acts 9:4,5. Now he wanted to share the sufferings of Christ which continue as long as His people are on earth. Sharing in the power of Christ's resurrection means to share in His sufferings also. Sharing in His sufferings means to share in His comfort and peace now (2 Cor 1:5-7; John 16:33), and in His inheritance hereafter (Rom 8:17).

"Conformed to his death" – 2:8. Christ's death meant complete humility, obedience, and abandonment of Himself to God's will. Paul wanted to experience this more and more in himself. Compare 2 Cor 4:10-12; Gal 2:20. God's life in us comes out of our death to ourselves. See John 12:24,25.

**3:11** "Resurrection from among the dead" – this implies that when some are raised others will not be. In other words, Paul is here speaking of the resurrection of believers (1 Cor 15:50-54; 1 Thess 4:14-17; Rev 20:5). But is this resurrection something to be "attained"? Was Paul in doubt whether he would "attain" it? There is no reason to think he was in doubt – 3:21; 1:6; Rom 5:8,9; 8:38,39; 2 Cor 5:1,2; 2 Tim 4:18. But he knew that the resurrection of believers came at the end of a life of faith, and that it was necessary to choose Christ and

from among the dead.

12 Not that I have already attained, or have already been made perfect. But I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not consider myself as having laid hold of it. But one thing *I do*: forgetting those things which are behind, and stretching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Therefore, let us, as many as are fully

continue to choose Him, to believe and go on believing to the end – Col 1:23; Heb 3:6,14. Growing in the knowledge and fellowship of Christ, becoming more and more like Him, insured that this would be the course of his life. This perseverance in faith is one of the great themes of the letter to the Hebrews (indeed of the whole Bible).

**3:12** "Not. . . obtained" – v 10. He knew something of Christ's power and fellowship but not all it was possible to experience.

"Perfect" – perfection was his aim, but not yet his experience. See notes on perfect at Matt 5:48. There may have been some in Philippi who claimed a kind of perfection and looked down on other believers (Paul wrote what he did in each of his letters to fit the spiritual condition of those he wrote to). If there were any there, Paul wanted them to know that he did not claim perfection for himself. If Paul the great apostle had not become perfect, we may be quite sure that we have not.

"I press on" – Heb 6:1,11,12.

"Lay hold" – he wanted to become all that Christ wanted him to become when He saved him and called him. He wanted to become as holy, as humble, as obedient, as loving, as fruitful as it was possible for a believer on earth to become. He was not content with his present spiritual condition. Past accomplishments did not satisfy him. He still wanted more of Christ in his life.

**3:13** "One thing I do" – he had no divided heart, no double-mind about the spiritual life (compare Jam 1:8).

"Forgetting" – this does not mean blotting altogether from the memory. Such a thing is hardly possible to us. Paul meant that he deliberately and continuously refused to dwell on the past. To him the future was the important thing and he was willing to leave the failures and successes of the past behind him and press on. He did not want his failures to discourage him or his successes to make him self-satisfied and complacent.

"Stretching" – or "straining" – this word indicates great effort, like the effort of a runner using all his strength to win a race.

**3:14** "The goal" – see 1 Cor 9:24-27; Acts 20:24.

"Prize" – he does not say what this will be. He knows it will be something tremendous – as great as the God of the universe can make it. On rewards see Matt

mature, have this same mind. If you think differently in anything, God will reveal this also to you. 16 In any case, in *the measure* we have already attained, let us conduct ourselves by the same rule, let us have the same mind.

17 Brethren, you have us as an example, so join others in following me, and take note of those who walk so. 18 (For many walk *as* enemies of the cross of Christ. I have often told you of them, and now tell you even weeping. 19 Their end *is* destruction, their God *is* their belly, and their glory

5:12; 10:41,42; 16:27; 1 Cor 3:8,14; Heb 10:25; Rev 11:18; 22:12.

"Upward calling" – v 20; Heb 3:1.

**3:15** "Mature" – or "perfect" – 1 Cor 2:6; Eph 1:13-15; Col 1:28; 4:12; Heb 5:14; 6:1. Paul did not claim perfection in the sense of being sinless or without flaw – v 12. But he knew that he was a mature believer, grown up spiritually in Christ. All such believers should take the view on perfection he has been setting forth – Paul knew that his teaching on perfection in the above verses was a revelation from God and he was praying that God would open their eyes to understand it (1:9,10), and he was confident that God would hear his prayers.

**3:16** Believers should live up to the light they have. If they do so, God will surely give them more understanding of the truth.

**3:17** "Example" – note and references at Acts 20:18. Paul not only taught believers how they should live, he showed them.

"Take note" – v 2; Rom 16:17.

**3:18** "Weeping" – Acts 20:31. Paul wept because many who professed to believe in Christ proved by their behavior that they were Christ's enemies. It seems that everywhere a local church began such enemies of the cross soon appeared – Acts 20:29,30; Rom 16:17; 2 Cor 11:13-15; Gal 1:7; 6:12; Col 2:8,16; 2 Tim 3:1-7; 4:1-5. They had a form of godliness but denied its power – 1 Tim 3:5.

**3:19** "Destruction" – Matt 7:13; John 17:12; Rom 9:22; 2 Thess 1:9.

"Belly" – the word as used here probably stands for the "flesh", the whole life of the body in contrast to spiritual life (Rom 7:5). Some people worship and obey this "god." They are willing to lie, cheat, and steal for it. They say they are followers of Christ, but follow their own desires and lusts – Rom 16:18; 1 Tim 6:5; 2 Pet 2:3. A full stomach is what they want – not the fullness of God's Spirit.

"Shame" – in their terrible spiritual ignorance they boast about things which should make them ashamed. Compare 1 Cor 5:1,2,6; 2 Pet 2:18; Jude 16; Ps 10:3; 52:1. The only glory they have is what Paul knew to be rubbish and filth.

"Earthly things" – Rom 8:5-8. Their desires are not for spiritual things (no matter how much they may speak or preach about them), but for the passing things of this world (1 John 2:16). Money,

*is* in their shame, *and* their mind *is on* earthly things.) 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from there we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body, that it may become like his glorious body, according to the power that enables him to subdue all things under himself.

**4** Therefore, my brethren dearly loved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord, *my* dearly loved *ones*.

2 I plead with Euodias and plead with Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 And I beg you also, true colleague, to

possessions, prestige, popularity, satisfaction of the desires of the body – these they love and pursue. This is the broad way which leads to destruction.

**3:20** Believers are in the world, but they do not belong to the world – John 17:6,11, 14,15. Their city, their country is above – Heb 11:10,16; 13:14; Gal 4:26. They belong to heaven. Their hopes, their desires are fixed on it. God is their King. They look forward to the return of their Saviour – Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:14-18; Heb 9:28.

**3:21** “Transform” – 1 Cor 15:50-53.

“His glorious body” – 1 Cor 15:42-44,49; 1 John 3:2; Rom 8:23-25.

“Subdue” – 1 Cor 15:24,25; Heb 2:8; Eph 1:19.

**4:1** “Longed for” – 1:7,8.

“Joy and crown” – 2:16; 1 Thess 2:19 – a joy to him then, both a joy and a crown afterwards.

“Stand firm” – Eph 6:11,13,14; etc.

**4:2** We do not know who these two Christian women were, but their quarrel alarmed Paul. He begged them to settle their dispute. Compare 2:1,2. He well knew what factions and divisions can do to a group of believers – 1 Cor 1:10-13; 3:3,4.

**4:3** “True colleague” – we do not know who this was. Paul evidently considered him able to help bring peace between the two women.

“Book of life” – compare Ex 32:32; Ps 69:28; 139:16; Luke 10:20; Rev 3:5; 20:12-15. How did Paul know their names were in the book of life? By observing their deeds and words. Compare 1 Thess 1:4-10.

**4:4** See 3:1; Neh 8:10.

**4:5** “Gentleness” – 2 Cor 10:1; 1 Tim 3:3; Jam 3:17.

“The Lord is at hand” – this may mean He is near to believers now (Ps 145:18; Matt 28:20; Heb 13:5), or perhaps that His second coming is near (Jam 5:8; Rev 1:3).

**4:6** Here is God’s way for us to have continual peace of mind and heart in all circumstances of life (except when sinning – that will always rob believers of their peace).

“Anxious” – anxiety reveals that trust in God or understanding of His truth is weak. Worry and faith are like oil and water; they do not mix. See Matt 6:25-34.

“Nothing” – we should refuse to worry

help those women who laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* my other fellow workers, whose names *are* in the book of life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always, *and* again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord *is* at hand. 6 Be anxious about nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your requests known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* honest, whatever things *are*

even in the most difficult or alarming situations. If we are believers, God is in us, near us, around us, with us. He is our Father who loves us beyond our ability to grasp, and has power without limit to use in our behalf. Our part is to cast all our care on Him by faith and to rest in Him and in His promises – 1 Pet 5:8.

There are different kinds of prayer and Paul here uses four different words to indicate some of them.

“With thanksgiving” – see notes at Gen 18:32; Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17,18; Heb 13:15. Without giving thanks to God can we imagine that the other forms of prayer mentioned here will be effective? Will not a lack of thanksgiving contribute to anxiety of heart?

“Requests. . . to God” – not to people. See also Matt 7:11.

**4:7** The peace of God means here the peace He gives. It is like His own peace. God does not worry about anything. Peace in us is the result of submission to God and trust in Him – Isa 26:3. See also John 14:1,27; 16:33; Col 3:15. This peace is like the “rest” Jesus promised in Matt 11:28-30. Believers can have peace in situations where others could never have it, and they will not be able to understand how they have it and will wonder at it. This peace of God will act as a guard at the door of their minds and hearts, and will keep out the anxieties, worries, and disturbing thoughts that so greatly trouble those without this peace.

**4:8** “Think on these things” – our mind, our thoughts are exceedingly important in the spiritual life. To a large extent they will determine our actions. Believers should have minds made new – Rom 12:2. They should set their thoughts on heavenly things – Col 3:2. They should keep their thoughts on the things of God’s Word. See Ps 1:1,2. Sinful things, worldly things, evil things are attractive to the sinful nature in us – Gal 5:16,17. If we let our thoughts dwell on such things we may be overcome with the desire for them. If our thoughts are always on true, pure, and excellent things we will be better able to reject and subdue sinful desires. So we should be very careful what



just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue, and if *there is* anything praiseworthy, think on these things. 9 Those things that you have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

10 But I greatly rejoice in the Lord, that now at last your care for me has flourished again. Previously you certainly cared, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I am speaking about *my* needs, for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. 12 I know both what it is to have little, and I know how to have plenty. Everywhere and in everything I am instructed both *how* to be full and to be hungry, both to have plenty and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

14 However, you have done well, in that you shared in my trouble. 15 Now you Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel *there*,

when I was leaving Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you. 16 For even to Thessalonica you sent again and again for my need. 17 Not that I am seeking a gift. I seek to have fruit going abundantly into your account. 18 But I have everything in abundance. I am full, having received by Epaphroditus the things from you. *They are* a sweet-smelling aroma, a sacrifice acceptable *and* well-pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

20 Now to our God and Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, chiefly those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all.

Amen.

we read, what things we watch, what kind of music we listen to, where we allow our imaginations to take us. If we fill our minds with things unworthy for believers in Christ we may soon be living lives unworthy of Christ.

**4:9** God set Paul forth as an example to believers. We can learn from him what we should think, believe and practice – 3:17.

"God of peace" – Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20. Only if the God of peace is with us can we have the peace of God in us – v 17.

**4:10** "Rejoice" – 1:4,5. He was not happy for his sake, because he had received something. He was happy because it meant a reward for them from God – v 17. This is a wonderful attitude to take toward those who give to us.

**4:11,12** See 1 Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5; Luke 3:14. Who is the truly rich person on earth? He who is content with what he has. Contentment is something Paul "learned", not something he had by nature. Contentment goes along with the peace of God which guards the hearts of those who trust Him. For some of the situations in which Paul learned to be contented see 2 Cor 4:8,9; 6:4-10; 11:23-27. He was not writing this letter from a mansion, in the midst of plenty, but from prison – 1:12,13. The desire of some Christians to pile up money, possessions, luxuries, etc, is contrary to God's Word and exceedingly harmful to the spiritual life.

**4:13** "All things" – he felt he was able to face any circumstance of life, any task, any difficulty and come through victoriously.

"Through Christ" – Rom 8:37; 2 Cor 2:14; 3:4-6; Eph 1:19; 3:20. Paul's confidence was not in his own strength, or in self-control or self-discipline (though he practiced these – 1 Cor 9:25-27).

"Strengthens" – Ps 73:26; Isa 40:31; 2 Cor 12:8,10. Each of us should learn what

Paul learned here, and no one should ever feel that he or she can do nothing.

**4:14-16** See 1:5. In the matter of giving they were an ideal church. See also 2 Cor 8:1-5.

"Thessalonica" – Acts 17:1.

**4:17** Verse 10.

**4:18** "Sweet-smelling aroma" – compare John 12:3; Matt 26:10; Lev 1:9; 2:2; etc.

"Sacrifice" – 2:17; Heb 13:16.

**4:19** They had met Paul's needs – v 18. This was out of their great poverty – 2 Cor 8:2. God would meet their needs according to His great riches. There is a principle at work in this matter which we should all learn and put into practice. See Luke 6:38; 2 Cor 9:6-8.

"All your need" – not all we may want, but all that He sees we really need. Matt 6:33; 7:9-11; Ps 23:1; 37:25. God supplies all our spiritual needs also – v 23; Eph 1:3; 3:16-20.

"Riches" – Rom 2:4; 9:23; Eph 1:7,18; 2:7; 3:8,16. Do believers need to be anxious as though God did not have enough to supply their needs? Absolutely not – v 6; Matt 9:29. If it is necessary to beg people for anything, God can do this on the believer's behalf. That is, He can move the hearts of His people to help those in need much more successfully than they can. We should learn to leave these matters in His hands where they belong and to trust Him only. We should never imagine that God cannot do anything or will not do anything. See also Num 11:23.

**4:20** Rom 16:27; etc.

**4:21** "Saint" – Rom 1:7.

**4:22** "Caesar's household" – 1:13. He probably means those in the service of the emperor or government officials.

**4:22** "Grace" – Rom 1:7; 16:20. This is how all our needs are met.

# The Letter of the Apostle Paul to the COLOSSIANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime about 60 AD.

**Themes:**

Paul is in prison, being persecuted for preaching the gospel of Christ. However he is not occupied with his own difficulties but, as usual, has his mind and his heart fixed on Christ and Christ's people. He had never visited Colosse but he knew the condition of the church there, and so he writes this letter to encourage them and to show them more fully who Christ is and what He has done for believers. His principal theme is the preeminence and greatness of Christ and the believer's completeness and fullness in Him. Some false teachers had gone to Colosse, acted as though they were very wise, taught some philosophical nonsense and doctrine contrary to the truth of Christ, and tried to pervert His gospel. They insisted that the "wisdom" they taught was necessary for salvation, that Christ is not God or the Saviour of the world, that there were many angels and spiritual beings who were mediators between God and men and that Christ was only one of these, that worshipping angels and practicing severe austerities on the body were good things. Opposing their false teaching, Paul writes of the complete redemption and salvation Christ has purchased for men (1:13,14,20), of Christ's full deity (1:15-19), and of the perfect wisdom believers can find in Christ (2:3). Some key verses are 2:8-10.

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**1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother, 2 to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colosse: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love *you have* for all the saints, 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven. You heard of this *hope* previously in the message of the truth of the gospel 6 which has come to you, as *it has* to all the world and brings forth fruit, as *it does* in you also since the day you heard it and truly knew the grace of God; 7 *since* indeed you learned from

Epaphras, our dear fellow worker who is a faithful servant of Christ for you. 8 Also he has told us of your love in the Spirit.

9 For this reason we too, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in complete wisdom and spiritual understanding, 10 so that you might behave in a manner worthy of the Lord and please Him in everything, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, so that *you may have* complete endurance and patience together with joy, 12 *and go on* giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit to

**1:1** "Apostle" – Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1.

"Timothy" – Phil 1:1.

**1:2** Rom 1:7. Colosse was a small unimportant town about 160 kilometers east of Ephesus in the land now known as Turkey. It was near Laodicea.

**1:3,4** Compare Rom 1:8; Eph 1:15,16.

**1:5** "Hope" – here hope means that which believers expect some day to have, not the present experience of hope in their hearts. Compare v 27; Titus 1:2; 2:13.

"Laid up for you" – 1 Pet 1:4.

"Gospel" – Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 15:1-8.

**1:6** "Fruit" – Matt 13:8; Mark 4:26-29. The gospel is the power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16). When it is clearly, boldly and faithfully preached it will bear fruit.

"Knew" – observe the connection between knowledge and fruit-bearing. Compare Matt 13:23.

"Grace" – notes at John 1:14,16; Rom 1:7; Eph 2:8,9.

**1:7** "Epaphras" – 4:12; Philemon 23. These references give all we know about this servant of Christ.

"Servant" – Rom 1:1; 6:18,22. What greater thing can be said of anyone than this: "A faithful servant of Christ"?

**1:8** "Love in the Spirit" – Rom 5:5. We can only have God's love (Greek "agape" – see note at 1 Cor 13:1) in our hearts through God's Spirit. In all the earth it is to be found only in true believers in Christ.

**1:9** "Pray for you" – here is another example of Paul's prayers for believers – Eph 1:17-19; 3:16-19; Phil 1:9. In none of them does he ask God for material things. Wisdom, understanding, strength, love – these are the things above all else that he wanted them to have. Let us learn from this the lesson God wants us to learn.

"Knowledge of His will" – Rom 12:2. He prays this for them because the other things he wants to see in their lives (v 10) are based on this. We cannot set out to do God's will unless we understand what it is.

"Complete wisdom and spiritual understanding" – this is one of the themes of this letter – v 28; 2:2,3; 3:16. God alone can give them – Eph 1:17. Neither education nor philosophy can produce them. They

mean far more than knowing about God or the Bible. They come from heaven, and to get them we must seek the God who is in heaven. Compare Job 28:12-28; Prov 2:1-6; 1 Cor 1:20,25,30; 2:10-14.

**1:10** "Worthy of the Lord" – Eph 4:1; 1 Thess 2:12. Wisdom and understanding are not an end in themselves. They are to enable us to live as we ought. If what we call wisdom does not do this, it does not deserve the name of wisdom.

"Please Him in everything" – 2 Cor 5:9; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4. If we live to please ourselves we will not please the Lord in any way. We must have the same attitude He had – Phil 2:5; John 8:29. Our actions should not be based on what we want or do not want, what pleases us or does not please us – Matt 10:38,39. If we live as this verse directs, we can become people according to God's heart (as David was – see note at 1 Sam 13:14).

"Fruitful" – John 15:1-8.

"Increasing in the knowledge of God" – not just in the knowledge of God's will, but of God Himself. Compare Phil 3:10; 2 Pet 3:18.

**1:11** "Strengthened" – Eph 3:16; Phil 4:13. "All might" is God's power which alone can give true spiritual strength. Why did Paul want these believers to have this strength and power? That they might do miracles? That they might become great preachers? No – that they might endure their trials, have patience and joy, that they might do the good they could in their little town and live a life that would bring glory to God.

"Endurance and patience" – see Rom 8:25; 1 Cor 13:4; 2 Cor 1:6; Gal 5:22; Eph 4:2; 1 Thess 5:14; Heb 6:12; 10:36; 12:1; Jam 5:10.

"Joy" – Phil 1:4; 3:1; 4:4.

**1:12** "Thanks" – this is a recurring theme in this letter (2:7; 3:15,17; 4:2) and throughout the Bible (Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; 100:4; Dan 6:10; Matt 14:19; 26:27; Eph 5:4,20; Phil 4:6; 1 Thess 5:18).

"Made us fit" – they did not make themselves fit for God's inheritance. That is totally impossible for any person

share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and brought *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son, 14 in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, 16 for by him all things were created, *things* that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers—all things were created by him, and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things hold

(Rom 3:19,20; Eph 2:1-3; Jer 13:23). Only if we are God's children by a new, spiritual birth are we qualified for an inheritance with Him – John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; Rom 8:16,17; Eph 4-10.

"Inheritance" – Eph 1:14; 1 Pet 1:4.

"In light" – the light of God and of Christ, the light of glory – Rev 21:23,24.

**1:13** Here are two very different kingdoms. Every person is in one or the other.

"Darkness" – Acts 26:18; Luke 22:53; Eph 6:12; John 3:19,20. Satan is the ruler of the kingdom of darkness. Christ rules His kingdom of light (note on kingdom of God at Matt 4:17). He rescues people and brings them from Satan's kingdom to His own. He does this by giving them light and by His almighty power making them children of the light (2 Cor 4:4-6; Eph 5:8). This is the great work of God now going on throughout the world.

"His dear Son" – Matt 3:17.

**1:14** "Redemption through his blood" – Eph 1:7.

**1:15** "He" means the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Image of the invisible God" – God is spirit and cannot be seen by physical eyes (John 1:18; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; Heb 11:27). But Christ revealed what God is like. He is the exact likeness of God in human form – 2:9; John 1:1,14; 14:9; 2 Cor 4:4; Heb 1:3.

"Firstborn" – Rom 8:29; Heb 1:6; 12:23; Ps 89:27. The Son of God shares the nature of God, is God. This means He is eternal. As God He never had a beginning, was never "born." The Greek word translated "firstborn" (*prototokos*) here signifies pre-eminence and sovereignty. The Jews could even say of Jehovah God, the uncreated Creator of the universe revealed in the Old Testament, that He was the firstborn of the world. Here Paul is saying that Christ is the Lord over all creation. That this is his meaning is clear from the next verse. See also notes and references at Luke 2:11; Phil 2:6.

**1:16** "For" – Christ is called the "firstborn" because all creation came into existence through Him (John 1:3; 1 Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2; Gen 1:1), not because He was born first (or because He was born at all). Since He is the Creator of all things it is clear that He Himself was not created.

"For Him" – only of the one true God could

together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church, *and* he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that in everything he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased *the Father* that all fulness should dwell in him, 20 and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, *I say*, whether things on earth, or things in heaven.

21 You also were once alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked deeds, but now he has reconciled you 22 in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above

it be said that all creation was for Him. The same Greek words are translated "to Him" in Rom 11:36. There they refer to God alone. Christ is not some kind of lesser god created by a greater God. He Himself is God.

"Thrones" – compare Rev 4:4.

"Dominions... powers" – Eph 1:21; 3:10.

**1:17** "Before all things" – Christ, the Son of God, was not a part of creation. He existed before creation and brought creation into existence.

"Hold together" – compare Heb 1:3. Christ keeps the vast universe from becoming a chaos. His is the power that makes it an ordered system. He holds all its parts together. Could this be said of anyone except God?

**1:18** "Head" – see Eph 1:22,23.

"Body" – Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12,13.

"Church" – Matt 16:18.

"Beginning" – the Greek word means either "source" or "one who has the first place." Christ is the one from whom His Church came into existence, and He occupies the supreme place in it.

"Firstborn from the dead" – Rev 1:5. This means more than that Christ was the first to conquer death. It means that He has first place, He is the sovereign of all those who shall, like Him, rise from among the dead. Compare Rom 14:9.

"Preeminence" – Eph 1:22; Phil 2:9-11. Christ must have the supremacy and He will have it.

**1:19** All the fullness of God was in the man Christ Jesus – 2:9; John 1:1,14.

**1:20** "Reconcile" – the whole world had fallen away from God into sin (Rom 3:19,20), and God's anger burned against the sins of mankind (Rom 1:18). There was no peace between heaven and earth. God sent Christ to make peace. Christ did so by becoming a blood sacrifice to take away the sins of the world – John 1:29; Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:19; Eph 2:16.

**1:21** "Alienated" – Eph 2:12; 4:18.

"Enemies" – Rom 5:10; Jam 4:4.

"In your mind" – they did not think they were God's enemies, but because the thoughts and desires of their minds and hearts were contrary to God, they were His enemies. Compare Rom 8:5-8.

"By wicked deeds" – sinning is what makes men God's enemies.

**1:22** Verse 20; Eph 2:16-18.



reproach in his sight, 23 if you continue in the faith established and firm and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you have heard, which has been preached to every creature which is under heaven, of which I Paul have been made a servant.

24 I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25 I have been made a servant of this church, in accordance with the position of overseer that God has given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God, 26 the mystery kept hidden for ages and generations, but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God desired to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles,

"Holy" – Eph 1:4; 5:25-27.

"Above reproach" – 1 Cor 1:8; Rom 8:33.

**1:23** "If" – Paul is not suggesting that some believers may not continue in their faith. He is defining what true believers are and do. Their continuing in the faith would be the proof that they had been reconciled. Compare 1 Cor 15:2; Heb 3:6,14; 10:38,39; John 10:27; Luke 22:32; 1 John 2:19.

"Established and firm" – true faith rests on a firm foundation (1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20), and makes believers firm.

"Under heaven" does not have the same meaning as "the ends of the earth" or the whole world – Mark 16:15; Acts 13:47. But Paul is informing them of how widespread the preaching of the gospel was in that part of the earth.

**1:24** "My sufferings for you" – 4:10,18; 2 Cor 1:5,6; Eph 3:1,13. Paul's sufferings were a result of preaching the truth, winning people to Christ and working to establish Christ's Church on earth. He rejoiced not because suffering was pleasant to him, but because he suffered for Christ and for others. This he regarded as a privilege – Phil 1:29; 3:10. Compare 1 Pet 4:13-16.

"Lacking" – was there something lacking in Christ's sufferings on the cross? No, absolutely not. Was His sacrifice for the sin of the world incomplete? No, and Paul is not speaking of that here. Certainly Christ's sufferings for our sins were once and for all, and perfect, and finished forever – John 19:30; Heb 10:10,14; 1 Pet 3:18. But now Christ is building His Church (Matt 16:18; Eph 2:19-22), and He is giving His servants the privilege of working with Him. In this sinful world this means troubles and tribulation and suffering and affliction. These are not yet finished, so are still "lacking." Christ has given His servants the honor and privilege of suffering with Him for the sake of the Church.

**1:26** Eph 3:2-9; Rom 16:25-27.

"Saints" – Rom 1:7.

**1:27** "Riches" – Eph 3:8. Compared to these riches every system of thought devised by men is poverty-stricken.

which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 We preach him, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 Indeed for this purpose I labour, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily.

**2** For I want you to know what a great struggle I have for you, and for those at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts might be encouraged, being knit together in love, and so enter into all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, into the complete knowledge of the mystery of God, of the Father and of Christ. 3 In Christ are hidden all

"Christ in you" – John 17:23; Rom 8:9,10; 2 Cor 13:5; Rev 3:20.

"Hope of glory" – Rom 5:2; 8:18. If Christ is not in us we have no good reason to hope we shall be saved and see God's glory.

**1:28** Compare Acts 20:20-24.

"Complete wisdom" – the wisdom God gave him – 1 Cor 1:30; 2:7,10,12,16. He was not boasting in his own wisdom. He prayed that they might have complete wisdom – v 9. He knew this was possible to have because he had it. So can believers now – Jam 1:5.

"Perfect" – compare 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 4:12-15. See references and notes at Matt 5:48; Phil 3:12,15; Heb 6:1; 10:14.

**1:29** To Paul Eph 3:20 was not mere theory. Observe that though God's power was working in Paul this did not mean easy activity for him. Quite the opposite – it meant great labor and struggle (the same Greek word is used in 4:12; Luke 13:24; 1 Cor 9:25).

**2:1** "Struggle" – 1:29. Paul struggled in prayer for believers whether he had met them or not. He well knew that every believer is precious to Christ and bore Christ's name before the world.

"Laodicea" – Rev 3:14.

**2:2** Another example of the content of Paul's prayers – 1:9.

"Encouraged" – Acts 4:36; 9:31; 16:40; Rom 1:12; 15:4; Eph 6:22; Phil 2:1; 1 Thess 2:11,12. Paul considered this an important ministry.

"Knit together in love" – Rom 12:10; Eph 4:2,3; Phil 2:2.

"Understanding" – see what Paul considered "riches." Compare Prov 3:13,14; 8:10,19; 16:16.

"Mystery" – a revelation from God. See note at Matt 13:11.

"Of God, of the Father and of Christ" – no one can know Christ unless God reveals Him – 2 Cor 4:4-6. In the same way no one can know God unless Christ reveals Him – Matt 11:27. The knowledge of Christ and God the Father is greater riches than everything else put together. Compare Phil 3:7-11; John 17:3.

**2:3** If we know Christ we are at the source

the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 And I say this so that no one may deceive you with persuasive words. 5 For though I am absent in the body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and seeing your order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

of all spiritual wisdom. Observe the word "all." All wisdom, without limit, is in Christ. If we do not know Him we are completely lacking in spiritual wisdom even though we know all philosophy and have all of the world's knowledge. See 1 Cor 1:20,21. What some people call the way of wisdom for salvation is the way to pride and arrogance, not the way to salvation.

"Hidden" – the wisdom and knowledge of Christ are not clear to everyone, they do not lie on the surface. They must be sought as people would seek for hidden treasures. Compare Prov 2:1-6. Psalm 119 gives the example of one seeking for spiritual understanding with his whole heart. Happy are those who imitate him.

**2:4** There are always those who deceive others (and themselves) with "persuasive words." They can make man-invented ways and the wisdom of philosophy or religion sound very reasonable and good. Only by faith in Christ and an understanding of the truth, and of the reality He gives, can we keep ourselves from false ways.

**2:5** "In spirit" – 1 Cor 5:3,4. Paul is not suggesting that his spirit could leave his body and travel to other places. He means his mind, his heart, his thoughts were on them and their affairs. What Paul "saw" (understood from the information he had received about them) made him hopeful that they would not be deceived by fine-sounding arguments.

"Order" – 1 Cor 14:40.

"Firmness of your faith in Christ" – this is what enables us to stand against deceptive teaching and every device of Satan (2 Cor 1:24; Eph 6:16; 1 Pet 5:9; 1 John 5:4).

**2:6** Notes on "Christ" and "Jesus" at Matt 1:1. Notes on "Lord" at Luke 2:11. They had received the truth about the Jesus of history. They had not received some mystical idea, some Christ of speculation and imagination. They believed in a flesh and blood Jesus who was the God-anointed one and the Lord from heaven. Observe carefully that by faith they had received "the Lord." This is the truth they had been taught and they had believed it and submitted themselves to Him. Now by that same faith they must continue to live (2 Cor 5:7).

"Go forward" – or "walk" – note at Eph 2:10.

**2:7** "Rooted and being built up" – compare Eph 3:17. Believers can be compared in some ways with plants or trees – Matt 12:33; 13:1-30; Ps 1:3. Christ is like the good ground where their roots are. They are already rooted, but gradually developing. They are like a building and Christ is the foundation where they are being built up –

6 Therefore *just* as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* continue to go forward in him, 7 rooted and being built up in him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, overflowing in it with thanksgiving.

8 Beware lest any man despoil you through

Eph 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:4,5; 1 Cor 3:11.

"In the faith" – they should be more and more established in the truth of Christ, believe it more and more firmly.

"Thanksgiving" – Eph 5:4,20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**2:8** "Beware" or "be very careful" – a subtle danger was there – the danger of being captured by a false system of thought. In vs 16-23 Paul speaks of the system which the Colossians faced. Those we face today may be similar or different, but we too need to be on our guard. One thing is certain in every generation – any philosophy, or system of religious thought that leaves out the Lord Jesus Christ is hollow and deceptive.

Philosophy is the pursuit of what men regard as wisdom, an attempt to find out truth and the nature of reality by logic and reasoning. Christ is the truth, and all spiritual wisdom is hidden in Him. The methods of philosophy will never lead men to Him. The Bible is a revelation of the nature of reality, and all the truth about spiritual matters which God wants men to know is contained in it. Philosophy is speculation. It never leads to the true God (1 Cor 1:20,21). The Bible leads us to Christ who is true God. Philosophers in general contradict one another, and make statements which cannot be proved. They are dealing with things they do not know, things too high for them.

Christ, the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24), stands before us. In him alone are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It is interesting that the word "philosophy" is used just this once in the whole Bible. The word "philosophers" also is used just once in the Hebrew and Greek Bible (Acts 17:18), but they appear under different words once more – 1 Cor 1:20. In this way God, the Author of the Bible, reveals the uselessness of philosophy in the field of spiritual wisdom. If God ignores something, or fails to speak approval of it, then we may be sure it has no contribution to make to those things God wants most to teach us.

"Despoil you" – or the Greek could be translated "make a prey of you" or "take you captive."

"Traditions of men" – the philosophy troubling the Christians at Colosse was based on human traditions (either spoken or written down), and on certain basic lessons men thought they had learned from the world. Those philosophers were dealing with only the ABCs of things (but probably prided themselves on their deep thought). Their philosophy was not based on Christ and therefore was "empty deceit." Since it was not based on Christ all true wis-

philosophy and empty deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the rudimentary things of the world, and not according to Christ.

9 For in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. 10 And you are complete in him, who is the head of all sovereignty and power. 11 In him also you have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh in the circumcision *done by* Christ, 12 *and have been* buried with him in baptism, in which you have also been raised with *him* through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

13 And *when* you were dead in your sins and the lack of circumcision in your flesh, he made you

dom was left out. So it promised something it could not give. This is as true today as it was then. There are many systems of philosophy and of religious thought based on certain traditions, or ancient religious writings, or on pure human speculation. Since they leave out Christ, who is the wisdom of God, these systems also are hollow and deceptive.

**2:9** See 1:19. This means that Christ is the incarnation of the one true God, the Creator of the universe. All the fullness of the divine nature dwells in His body. See references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**2:10** Believers are "in Christ", united to Him by God's Spirit - John 17:20-23; Rom 6:5; 1 Cor 12:12,13; Eph 1:4,7,11,13. Therefore in Him they have all they need for a holy, wise, and spiritual life. The "completeness" God has given them is not, of course, the fullness of deity. Human beings can never become God and receive God's attributes (see Gen 1:26; Ps 9:20; Isa 40:6-8,12-26). But God has given to believers fullness of grace and power and wisdom in Christ. They are to understand this and appropriate these things to themselves and use them. Compare John 1:16-18; Eph 3:19; 5:18.

"Head" - Eph 1:20-23; Phil 2:9-11.

**2:11** "Circumcised" - Paul is speaking of the true spiritual meaning which the religious ceremony of circumcision pointed to. See Rom 2:28,29; Phil 3:3. The flesh (in Greek "sarx" - see note at Rom 7:5) cannot be improved in any way. It deserves to die, and Christ by dying in our place has put it to death. He has cut believers off from any connection with it - 3:3; Rom 6:6; 7:17; 8:9. They have a new heart, a new nature; they are separated from the old life - 3:9,10; 2 Cor 5:17. This does not mean that the actual sinful nature within them is inactive - Rom 7:17,18; Gal 5:17.

**2:12** "Buried with him in baptism" - see Rom 6:3,4.

"Raised with Him" - Eph 2:6.

"Through faith in the working of God" - compare Rom 4:20,21,24. When we believe the God who revealed His power in raising Christ from physical death, He raises us

alive together with him, forgiving you all trespasses, 14 *and* blotting out the handwriting of decrees that was against us, which was opposed to us, and took it away, nailing it to his cross. 15 *And* having plundered principalities and powers, he made an open spectacle of them, triumphing over them by *the cross*.

16 Therefore let no one judge you in *the matter of* food or drink, or regarding a festival, or new moon *observance*, or sabbath days. 17 These are a shadow of things *that were* to come, but the substance *is* of Christ. 18 Do not let anyone keep you from receiving your reward, by a self-willed humility and worshipping of angels, entering into things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by

from spiritual death. Compare John 5:24; Rom 10:9,10.

**2:13** "Dead. . . alive" - Eph 2:1,5.

"Forgiving" - 1:14; Eph 1:7.

**2:14** Eph 2:15. "Against us" - the law of God was opposed to people because all are sinners and have broken it, and the law demanded punishment and death - Gal 3:10; Rom 3:19; 4:15; 7:12-14.

"Nailing it to His cross" - Christ took our place and endured all the punishment and curse of the law against sin - Gal 3:13. He died under the curse of the law and all believers died with Him (in God's reckoning). Because they are dead to the law, it is as though the law was crucified and dead to them - Rom 7:1-6.

**2:15** "Principalities and powers" - here Paul means Satan and other evil spirits (Eph 6:12). They tried to destroy Christ by the cross - Luke 22:53. Instead, Christ by His cross and resurrection gained the victory over them, and freed His people from their power - John 12:31; Heb 2:14,15.

**2:16-23** Paul now speaks of some ways false teachers tried to deceive the Colossians by "persuasive words" (v 4).

**2:16** "Let no one" - here he is referring to the Jews who still held to the "written code with its regulations" (the whole law of Moses) - v 14.

"Food or drink" - see note at Lev 11:1; Mark 7:18,19; Acts 10:9-16; Rom 14:1-4.

"Festival" - he means Jewish observance of special days and times. Believers now are not under such Old Testament rules and regulations. See notes on "Sabbath" at Rom 14:5-8; Gal 4:10,11. These regulations are part of the written code Christ nailed to the cross - v 14.

**2:17** "Shadow" - Heb 8:5; 10:1.

"Substance" - the rules and regulations of the Old Testament were shadowy pictures of spiritual truth found in Christ.

**2:18** Paul now speaks of another danger. Some people in Colosse were in a false religious path. They were proud of what they considered their humility, and they worshiped angels. This worship and their so-called humility went hand in hand. They may have argued something like this: human beings

his carnal mind, 19 and not holding to the Head, from whom the whole body is supplied and knit together by muscles and ligaments, *and* grows with the increase God *gives*.

20 Therefore if you died with Christ to the rudimentary things of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you submit to rules 21 (do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, 22 all of which are to perish with the using), according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These

cannot go to God directly – He is too high above them, too holy, too unapproachable; so men should worship Him only through mediators and these mediators are angels. Some religious people today use a similar argument. But instead of worshipping angels or through angels they venerate those they call the “saints” who have died. They regard them as mediators, and ask them to intercede with God in their behalf. Besides these there are a great many people who worship various “gods”, not God the Creator. All of this is contrary to God’s Word and will revealed in the Bible – Ex 20:1-6; John 14:6; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 10:19-22.

“Reward” – see 1 Cor 9:24; 2 Tim 2:5. Believers should not let anyone cause them to stumble in the spiritual race they are running. If they do they may lose the prize they could otherwise have received.

“Self-willed humility” – not the kind of humility produced in a believer by the Holy Spirit.

“Puffed up” – this is the result of self-willed humility. Such “humility” is only pride in disguise.

“Carnal mind” – the mind of the flesh, the fallen nature – see Rom 8:5-7. The people described here were controlled by their sinful nature and their worship, religion, and philosophy came out of that, but they may have considered themselves very spiritual.

**2:19** “Not holding to the Head” – the NIV here has “lost connection with the Head.” This is an unnecessary and misleading translation. It implies that these false teachers once were connected with the Head (Christ), but somehow lost that connection. This strikes the author of these notes as something very unlikely. The phrase may possibly be translated “not taking hold of the Head” or “not united to the Head” (The Jerusalem Bible). The false religious teachers at Colosse were not controlled by Christ. His teachings did not rule their lives. That is why they went astray. Probably they professed to be His followers, but proved by their teachings that they were not.

“Grow” – Eph 4:16.

**2:20** “Died in Christ” – Rom 6:6,8; Gal 2:20.

“Rudimentary things” (v 8; Gal 4:3) – things that are related to the old creation, not the new spiritual creation in Christ.

**2:21,22** Some people thought then (and think now) that laws and rules and regula-

things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in their self-chosen worship, and humility, and bodily austerities, *but have* no value against fleshly indulgence.

**3** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in

tions about food, drink, etc are at the heart of spiritual life. Believers in Christ have, in Christ, died to all that.

**2:23** “Appearance of wisdom” – this is quite enough to satisfy most people on earth. The true wisdom that comes from God they do not have and do not try to obtain.

“Self-chosen worship” – many people try to worship in their own way and ignore God’s appointed way. Compare Matt 15:7-9; John 4:23,24; Ex 20:1-6; Ps 29:2; Prov 14:12.

“Bodily austerities” – some think that they can become spiritual by ill-treating the body, and forcing it to obey them by ascetic practices. Self-control and subjection of the body are certainly good (1 Cor 9:27). But not all methods men practice to accomplish this are good. But neither that alone, nor the other things Paul mentions here, can make anyone spiritual or enable him to overcome his sinful nature. There is only one way to do this, and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul takes this matter up in the next chapter.

**3:1,2** What men need is new, spiritual life, not the things false teachers tried to impose on Christians at Colosse (2:4,8,16-23).

“Raised with Christ” – 2:13; Rom 6:4,5; Eph 2:4-6. Believers died in Christ who is their representative and substitute, and they were raised in Him. This became a living experience when they received Him by faith and were born again – John 1:12,13. Christ is at the right hand of God – Eph 1:20; Phil 2:9; Heb 1:3. That is where every believer’s thoughts and desires should be. This is the only way to live a holy life worthy of Him. Compare Phil 4:8; Rom 8:5; etc.

“Affection” – or “mind”, or both.

“Things. . . above” – these are the things of Christ and God, spiritual things, the truth God has revealed, the true wisdom, the blessings He has given us in Christ (Eph 1:3). We should seek those things with all our thoughts, desires and strength. This is the way to continued peace and joy and assurance and power and holiness and power and growth in the Christian life.

“Things of the earth” – Phil 3:19; 1 John 2:16,17.

**3:3** “Died” – Rom 6:2-4,8; Gal 2:20.

“Life” – the new, spiritual life that God has given to believers.

“Hidden” – no one on earth can see it, no enemy can come at it to destroy it (John 10:28,29). Though this treasure in Christ

God. 4 When Christ, *who is* our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Therefore put to death your members which are upon the earth: sexual immorality, uncleanness, bad passion, evil cravings, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. 7 Once you also spent your life in these things, when you lived in them. 8 But now you must also put off all these: anger, rage, malice, blasphemy, filthy language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have put off the old man with his deeds 10 and have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator, 11 where there is neither Greek nor may seem far away, it is very near, and very safe.

**3:4** Christ is the life of all believers – that is, they have this new, spiritual life because He is in them (1:27; John 11:25; Rom 8:9,10; 1 John 5:11,12,20). They are united to Him (John 17:20-23), and His life flows through the whole body of believers.

"Appears" – 1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 5:4; 1 John 2:28; 3:2.

"In glory" – John 17:24; Rom 5:2; 8:17,18; 1 John 3:1-3.

**3:5** "Put to death" – Paul bases this command on the great truths he has set before us in vs 1-4. Compare Rom 12:1; Eph 4:1; 5:1. Since God has given believers new life in Christ, since they have a glorious future, they should behave accordingly. They must set out to remove sinning from their lives. And this is possible (though it is not possible for us to eradicate the sinful nature within us). If it is not possible, Paul by the inspiration of God's Spirit would not have told believers to do it. They will not accomplish it by any methods of the false teachers (2:23). But they can do so through Christ, by His Spirit, using the strength He gives. See Rom 8:4,13,14; Gal 5:22-25; Eph 3:16-20.

"Members" – "parts of the body." The sins Paul now lists are as closely connected to our nature by birth as eyes, hands or feet are to the body. They must be dealt with harshly, drastically. See Matt 5:29,30.

"Covetousness" – or "greed" "desiring more" – a sin very common even among Christians.

"Idolatry" – Eph 5:5. Idols in the heart are detestable and destructive just as exterior idols are. See Ezek 14:3,4.

**3:6** "Wrath" – Eph 5:6; Rom 1:18; Ps 90:7-11; Num 25:3.

"Children of disobedience" – this expression means those who are disobedient, those whose nature and practice is disobedience.

**3:7** Eph 2:1-3; Rom 3:9-19.

**3:8** "Put off" – Eph 4:22-32.

**3:9,10** "Do not lie" – Eph 4:25; Ps 15:2; Prov 12:22.

Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian *nor* Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all, and in all.

12 Therefore, as the chosen of God, holy and dearly loved, clothe *yourselves* with tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and patience. 13 Bear with one another, and forgive one another, if anyone has a quarrel against another. Just as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. 14 And above all these things *clothe yourselves* with love, which is the perfect bond.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, for you were called to this in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one

"Have put on" – when people repent (Matt 3:2) and believe in Christ they are putting off the old way of life and putting on a new. They obtain a new nature, they become new people – 2 Cor 5:17. This new nature is in the "image" of God – that is, it is spiritual, holy and righteous (Eph 4:22-24). It exists in believers side by side with their sinful nature – Gal 5:16,17; Rom 7:14-25; etc. So each believer has to deal with the faults, sins, bad habits, evil desires, etc., of the old nature. And the way to deal with them is to put them to death, to put them off.

**3:11** Gal 3:28. All who believe in Christ have the new nature and all are united with Christ. Christians should not make distinctions where God has made none.

**3:12** "The chosen of God" – 2 Cor 6:16-18; 1 Pet 2:9,10.

"Holy" – notes at John 17:17-19; etc.

"Dearly loved" – Eph 1:5; 3:18,19; 5:25,26; 1 John 3:1.

"Put on" – or "clothe yourselves" – Rom 13:14.

"Tender mercies. . . patience" – Phil 2:1; Gal 5:22,23.

**3:13** Eph 4:32; Matt 6:12,14.

**3:14** "Above all. . . love" – John 13:34; Rom 12:10; 1 Corinthians chapter 13; Eph 4:2; Phil 2:2; 1 John 3:18; 4:7,8. Only love can make perfect unity among believers. Without it there will be selfish ambition, quarrels, factions, etc.

**3:15** "The peace of God" – John 14:27; Phil 4:6,7. Peace should sit on the throne of our hearts and direct our actions. We should avoid doing anything that strikes against inner peace, that is a traitor to peace, that makes us uneasy and fearful. Peace in the heart is a tender flower and sin will cause it to wither.

"One body" – 1 Cor 12:12,13. So we should behave toward one another in the light of this – 1 Cor 1:10; Phil 2:2.

"Thankful" – 1:12; 2:7.

**3:16** Compare Eph 5:18-20. There is a close connection between being filled with God's Spirit and letting the word (teachings) of Christ dwell richly in the mind and heart.

"Dwell" – compare Eph 3:17; Ps 119:11. See the importance of the word of Christ to



another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love *your* wives, and do not be bitter toward them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this pleases the Lord well.

21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, so that they will not be discouraged.

22 Slaves, in everything obey *those who are your* masters according to the body, not serving *because he is* watching, *not* as pleasers of men, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do *it* heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. For you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for the wrong he did, and there is no favoritism *with God*.

**4** Masters, give *your* slaves what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in

believers. Compare Ps 1:2; Deut 6:6,7; Josh 1:8.

"Teaching and admonishing" – all believers are to be teachers of one another. But this can happen only as Christ's word richly lives in them.

**3:17** Compare 1 Cor 10:31.

"In the name of the Lord Jesus" – on His authority, according to His nature and teachings, as those who represent Him on earth. Here is a rule that should govern our every action and word. If we cannot do or say something by the authority of the Lord Jesus we should not do it or say it. Believers are His people on earth, members of His body. They are to present Him to the world, not to speak and act as they please.

**3:18-25** See Eph 5:22-6:8 and notes. "Slaves" – or "servants" or "bondservants".

**4:1** Eph 6:9.

**4:2** Eph 6:18; Luke 18:1.

"Thankful" – 1:12; 2:7; 3:15,17; 1 Thess 5:18.

**4:3** Eph 6:19,20.

"Mystery of Christ" – 1:25-27. Paul, an example to us all, was always looking for opportunities to tell others of Christ. He prayed for opportunities and asked others to pray for him.

**4:4** "Speaking as I should" – in the variety of situations we face, and with the variety of people that we meet, it is not always easy to speak as we ought. To be ready to speak in every situation, to every kind of person, requires much prayer and thought and study. **4:5,6** Believers must always consider what effect their words and actions have on

heaven.

2 Persevere in prayer, and be alert in it with thanksgiving, 3 and be praying for us also, that God would open to us a door for the Word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, 4 that I may make it clear, speaking as I should. 5 Behave with wisdom toward outsiders, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you should answer everyone.

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. *He is* a dear brother, and a faithful servant and fellow worker in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for the same purpose, that he might learn how you are and encourage your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, a faithful and dear brother, who is *one* of you. They will tell you everything that *is happening* here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as *does* Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (you received instructions about him. If he comes to you, receive him), 11 and Jesus, who is called Justus. These *are* the only *ones* of the circumcision who work with me for the kingdom of God, *and* they have been a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, greets you. *He is* always striving earnestly for you in prayer, that

unbelievers. Outsiders may know nothing more of Christianity than what they see in us or hear from us. If we are not wise we may offend them unnecessarily. If we do not take the opportunities God gives us to speak to them of Christ, their blood may be on our hands – Acts 20:25-27. When we do speak to them our way of speaking should be gracious, courteous, pleasant. And, of course, our message to them should always put emphasis on God's grace. Compare Ps 45:2; Luke 4:22.

The word "salt" may suggest two things. Salt makes things tasty. Our way of speaking should make people want to hear more. Salt preserves from corruption. We do not need to adopt the corrupt way of speaking common among men. Compare Eph 4:29.

**4:7** "Tychicus" – Eph 6:21.

**4:8** "Encourage" – 2:2.

**4:9** "Onesimus" – Philemon 10-12,16.

**4:10** "Aristarchus" – Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Philemon 24.

"Prisoner" – v 18; Eph 3:1; Phil 1:13.

"Mark" – Acts 12:12,25; 13:5,13; 15:37,39; 2 Tim 4:11; Philemon 24; 1 Pet 5:13.

**4:11** "Jesus" is the Greek form of Joshua and was not an uncommon name among Jews in those days.

"Of the circumcision" – or of the Jews. The rest of his fellow workers were people of other nations or races.

"Kingdom of God" – notes at Matt 4:17; Rom 14:17.

**4:12,13** "Epaphras" – 1:7.

"Striving. . . in prayer" – 2:1. This was not

you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and for those in Laodicea and *for* those in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. 15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that *meets* in his house.

16 When this letter is read among you, see that

it is read in the church of the Laodiceans also, and likewise that you read the *letter* from Laodicea.

17 And say to Archippus, "See that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."

18 This greeting I, Paul, *am writing* with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

for himself but for others. He wanted to win spiritual victories for them. Spiritual wrestling is often necessary because of the weakness of the flesh, and the opposition of enemies in the spiritual world – Matt 26:40,41; Eph 6:12. Compare also Gen 32:24-32. Epaphras wanted very important things for those believers – things believers still need today. He wanted them to have the ability to know God's will and stand firm in it (1:9,10), and to enjoy spiritual maturity (Eph 4:13-15). Notice the word "always."

"Laodicea" – vs 15,16; 2:1.  
**4:14** "Luke" – Philemon 24; 2 Tim 4:11. Luke was a Gentile (compare v 11) and the

author of Acts and the Gospel of Luke. This is the only place he is called a physician.

"Demas" – Philemon 24; 2 Tim 4:10.  
**4:15,16** This was one way Paul's letters (and other portions of the Bible) became known to the churches. Remember that in those days there were no printing presses and no copying machines of any kind.

**4:17** "Archippus" – Philemon 2. One of the major concerns of every believer should be to finish the work the Lord Jesus has given him or her to do. See Acts 20:24; 2 Tim 4:7.

**4:18** "Own hand" – 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; 2 Thess 3:17. "Chains" – v 10.

# The First Letter of the Apostle Paul to the THESSALONIANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime between 50 and 54 AD.

**Themes:**

During his second missionary journey Paul visited Thessalonica and preached the gospel of Christ. Some people there believed in Christ, left their idols, and became disciples (Acts 17:1-9). Now Paul writes to strengthen their faith, to let them know of his joy concerning them, and to give them some further teaching. A principal theme is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul refers to this event in each chapter of this letter (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-17; 5:1-4). Christ will come again and gather His believers to Himself to be with Him forever, therefore believers should now rejoice in this great truth and live lives worthy of it.

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**1** Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians *which is* in God the Father and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers, 3 remembering constantly your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of our God and Father, 4 knowing, dear brethren, God's choice of you. 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance. You know

**1:1** "Paul" – Acts 8:1-3; 13:9.

"Silvanus" was the same person as Silas – Acts 15:22,40.

"Timothy" – Acts 16:1-4. Silas (and possibly Timothy) was with Paul when the church in Thessalonica was started – Acts 17:1-4,10-14.

"In God. . . and Christ" – Paul in this way shows the oneness of two distinct persons in the one Godhead (notes at Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; John 10:30; 17:1-5; Phil 2:6). Believers are "in" God. He is their refuge, their home, the location of their spiritual life. Compare Ps 90:1; Col 3:3.

**1:2** "Thanks" – Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:8; Col 1:3.

"In our prayers" – Rom 1:9,10; Eph 1:16; 3:16; Phil 1:4,9; Col 1:3,9; 2:1. **1:3** Here are three great Christian qualities and something of what they produce. True faith will always produce good works. See Jam 2:14-17,26. The Greek word translated "love" here is "agape." See 1 Cor 13:1-13 for its description. Love can be known only by what it produces and seen only in how it behaves. Real love is always willing to labor for Christ and others.

"Hope" – see Rom 5:2-5; 8:24,25. Believers are willing to endure all things because their hope is fixed on God who has promised them eternal life with Himself – Titus 1:2.

**1:4** "Knowing" – the evidence that they were true believers was very strong indeed and made Paul sure that God had chosen them for eternal life.

"Dearly loved" – Rom 5:8; Eph 3:18,19; Col 3:12; 1 John 3:1.

"Choice of you" – Mark 13:20; John 13:18; 15:19; Rom 8:33; Eph 1:4,5,11; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:9.

**1:5-10** These verses, together with v 3, give the evidence that made Paul certain of their salvation. When he first preached to them he experienced the power of the Holy Spirit, he saw the profound change that occurred in them, a change which stood the test of persecution, and he knew that their witness for Christ was true and fervent.

1:5 "Our gospel" – the gospel revealed by Christ which they preached (2:8; 3:2; Gal 1:11,12; Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 15:1-8).

"In power" – Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 2:4,5; Col 1:29. Too much preaching is simply with words and lacks the power of God.

"In the Holy Spirit" – notes at Matt

what kind of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And you became followers of us and of the Lord. You received the word in much suffering, but with the Holy Spirit's joy. 7 So you became examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord sounded out from you. Not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith in God is becoming known, so that we do not need to say anything *about it*. 9 For they themselves declare concerning us what kind of entry we had among you and how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from

3:16,17; John 14:16,17; Acts 1:4; Eph 5:18. Paul moved about and preached and served others in the heavenly atmosphere of God's Spirit. This was the source of his power.

"In much assurance" – both he and they were convinced that God was at work among them.

"What kind" – 2:5-12. Compare Acts 20:18-20,33-35.

**1:6** "Followers of us" or "imitators of us" – Christian leaders must be examples which all may safely follow. See 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 2 Thess 3:7,9; 1 Tim 1:16; 4:12; Titus 2:7; Heb 6:12; 13:7; 1 Pet 5:3.

"In much suffering" – 2:14; Acts 17:5-10. This did not turn them from the gospel. It never will turn away those whom God has chosen.

"Joy" – compare Acts 8:8; 13:52; 16:34; Rom 14:17. God's Spirit alone can produce this joy in the hearts of those who believe the gospel.

**1:7** "Examples" – Paul became a model to believers by following the greatest of all examples (1 Cor 11:1). They imitated Paul and became models to others.

"Macedonia and Achaia" – what we call Greece today consisted then of these two main regions. Thessalonica was in Macedonia.

**1:8** "Word. . . sounded forth" – they were clear and open witnesses for Christ as all believers should be.

"Everywhere" – compare Rom 1:8.

**1:9** "Idols" – many of the believers there were Gentiles – people other than Jews – and idolatry then was as common as it is now in some parts of the world. A clear mark of their conversion was that they abandoned their idols and turned to the one true God. So it must be with us.

"The living and true God" – Paul uses this expression to distinguish Him from the "gods" which are false and lifeless, the idols the Thessalonians had worshipped and that others still worshipped. See 1 Cor 8:5,6; Ps 115:3-8; Isa 44:20; Jer 10:14; Rom 1:22,23,25. If we want the true and living God to be our God we must do as these Thessalonians did. We cannot have both the true God and idols.

**1:10** "Wait" – 1 Cor 1:7; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28. The second coming of Christ is an important theme of both letters to the Thessalonians – indeed an important theme

heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who has delivered us from the wrath to come.

**2** For, brethren, you yourselves know that our coming to you was not in vain. **2** But even after we had suffered previously and been spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak the gospel of God to you, in *the midst* of much conflict. **3** For our exhortation *did not arise* from error, or from impurity, or from deceitfulness, **4** but since we were approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not to please men, but God, who tests our hearts. **5** For we did not at any time use flattering words, as you know, or a cloak *to cover* greed. God *is our* witness. **6** And we did not seek glory from men, either from you, or from others.

As the apostles of Christ, we could rightly have been a burden to you, **7** but we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* lovingly takes care

of the whole New Testament – 2:19; 3:13; 4:13-18; 2 Thess 1:7; 2:1; Matt 24:30; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Rev 1:7.

"Raised from the dead" – Matt 28:6; Acts 1:3; 2:24-32; 1 Cor 15:3-8.

"The wrath to come" – Rom 1:18; 2:5; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6; Rev 6:16. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18. God's wrath will come when God rises to judge the world. Wrath is the opposite of salvation – 5:9. It means eternal punishment – 2 Thess 1:7-10; Matt 25:46. Jesus is the only one who rescues believers from this wrath. See Rom 5:9. Some commentators on this passage of Scripture have expressed their belief that the wrath Paul speaks of here is the same as the great tribulation at the end of this age (Matt 24:21). However, the great tribulation is nowhere called the wrath of God. Actually it is the wrath of Satan and of evil men against God's people. See notes at Matt 24:29; Rev 6:12-17; 13:7,15-17. Paul does not say here (or anywhere else) that believers will be rescued from this. Also we should understand that whether or not the church will be in the great tribulation period, true believers of some kind will certainly be – see Rev 12:17; 13:7. If the tribulation is the wrath of God this would mean that the wrath of God will come on those saints who resist antichrist to the point of death. Can we think that this is possible? Surely "the wrath to come" refers to something far different and far worse than the great tribulation period.

**2:1** "Not in vain" – 1:5-10 makes this very clear.

**2:2** "Philippi" – Acts 16:19-24.

"Conflict" – Acts 17:5-10.

**2:3** It is probable that someone at Thessalonica had been speaking against Paul. Compare 2 Cor 1:12; 2:17; 4:2.

**2:4** "Entrusted with the gospel" – 1 Cor 4:1; Gal 2:7; Eph 3:7,8; 1 Tim 1:11,12.

of her children. **8** We yearned over you with such affection that we were willing to give to you, not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you were dear to us. **9** For you remember, brethren, our labour and toil. For labouring night and day because we would not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

**10** You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holy, righteous and blameless our behaviour was among you who believe. **11** Also you know how we encouraged and comforted and instructed every one of you, as a father does his children, **12** that you should behave *in a way* worthy of God, who has called you to his kingdom and glory.

**13** For this reason also we constantly thank God: because when you heard the Word of God from us and received it, you embraced *it*, not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God. Also it is *effectively* working in you who believe. **14** For, brethren, you became imitators of

"Not to please men" – Gal 1:10.

"Tests our hearts" – 1 Sam 16:7; Ps 66:10; 139:1,23,24; Prov 21:2; Jer 17:10; Rev 2:23.

**2:5** Acts 20:33-35; 2 Cor 7:2. Some preachers are after money, and put on a mask of piety to trick people into giving it – 1 Tim 6:5. Paul was not like them. He well knew that the anger of God rests on the greedy and deceitful – Eph 5:5,6; Col 3:5,6; 1 Tim 6:9-11.

"God is our witness" – v 10. A very solemn and emphatic way of speaking.

**2:6** "From men" – compare John 5:44; Rom 2:29.

"Burden" – see 1 Cor 9:7-15; 2 Cor 11:9. **2:7** Verse 11; Gal 4:19.

**2:8** 2 Cor 7:3; 12:15; 1 John 3:16.

**2:9** Acts 18:3; 2 Cor 11:9; 2 Thess 3:8.

**2:10** He is not speaking like this for his own sake, but for their sake and for the sake of the gospel he preached. Compare 2 Cor 1:12; 11:16-21; 12:19. He wanted them to have no doubts about the truth of the gospel.

**2:11,12** He was like both a mother and a father to them – v 7. Compare 1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19. He is an example of how evangelists and pastors should behave toward converts.

"Behave" – or "walk" – note at Eph 2:10.

"Worthy of God" – see Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10.

"Called you" – note at Rom 1:6; 8:30. Observe what God calls us to.

"Kingdom" and "glory" – see Matt 4:17; 25:34; John 17:22,24; Rom 5:2; 8:17; 14:17; Col 1:12,13; Heb 12:28; 2 Pet 1:11.

**2:13** "The Word of God" – here means the gospel of Christ. See Gal 1:11,12. Compare 2 Tim 3:16.

"Working in you" – compare Phil 1:6; 2:13. The Word of God in the hearts and minds of people is an active force for great good – Ps 119:11; Heb 4:12. So we have the instruction in Col 3:16.

**2:14** "Imitators" – 1:6.

the churches of God in Judea which are in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen that they *have* from the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us. And they are not pleasing to God, and are opposed to all men, 16 forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, and *so* always filling up *the measure of* their sins. And wrath has come on them to the utmost.

17 But we, brethren, for a short time, being removed from you in person (but not in heart), with great longing, made every effort to see your face. 18 Therefore we would have come to you, certainly I, Paul, more than once, but Satan hindered us. 19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

**3** So when we could no longer endure *it*, we thought it good to be left alone at Athens,

"Your own countrymen" – Greeks. Unbelieving Greeks persecuted believing Greeks just as unbelieving Jews persecuted believing Jews. And as all other peoples of earth tend to persecute believers in Christ. **2:15** "Killed" – Roman soldiers did the actual killing, but the Jews handed Jesus over to the Romans and demanded His death, and so were responsible for it (Matt 27:1,2,22-25; Acts 2:23; 3:13-15).

"The prophets" – Matt 23:37; Acts 7:52.

"Persecuted us" – Acts 13:50; 14:2,5, 19; 17:5; etc.

**2:16** "Gentiles" – Acts 13:45,50; 20:3; 21:27; 22:21,22.

"To the utmost" – compare Matt 23:35,36.

**2:17,18** "Being removed" – Acts 17:10. He was in Thessalonica only a brief time and had to leave new believers before he had much opportunity to teach them. He loved them dearly (vs 7,11) and longed to visit them.

"Satan hindered us" – compare Rom 1:13. We do not know what circumstances Paul refers to here. But we do know that Satan is constantly opposing God's servants, and, it would seem from this verse, he can cause delays and disruption of plans. On Satan see 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44.

**2:19,20** See Phil 4:1. How proud he was of these who believed in Christ! What joy they brought to his heart!

"Crown" – he speaks of the reward of the soul winner. It is to see people in Christ's presence won through his (or her) efforts. Compare Ps 126:5,6; John 4:36.

**3:1** "Athens" – from Thessalonica Paul and his companions went to Berea and then on to Athens (Acts 17:10,15).

**3:2** "Timothy" – 1:1; Acts 16:1.

"Encourage" – he was always concerned

2 and sent Timothy, our brother and servant of God, and our fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, 3 that no one would be upset by these troubles. For you know that we are appointed to this. 4 For in fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we would experience tribulation – even as it came about, as you know. 5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure *it*, I sent to find out *about* your faith, *fearing* that perhaps by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labour might be in vain.

6 But now Timothy has come from you to us, and brought us good news about your faith and love, and *reported* that you always have good memories of us, and greatly desire to see us, even as we *desire to see* you. 7 So, brethren, we were encouraged about you in all our trouble and distress, because of your faith. 8 For now we live, since you stand firm in the Lord. 9 For what thanks can we offer to God again for you, for all the joy we experience for your sakes in the presence of

that believers, especially new believers, be strong in the faith and encouraged to live for Christ. See v 13; 2:12; 2 Thess 2:17; Acts 14:22; 2 Cor 12:19; Eph 3:16; Col 1:11; 2:7.

**3:3** "These troubles" – 2:14.

"We are appointed to this" – observe this truth very carefully and compare John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Pet 4:1,12.

**3:4** Paul knew from the Word of God and from his personal experience what would happen, and he plainly told them so. When speaking of the blessings of the gospel he did not fail to speak also of the troubles that would come to believers. Compare Acts 20:20,27.

**3:5** "Fearing" – compare 1 Cor 15:2; Gal 4:11. True faith in Christ enables believers to overcome trials, persecutions and temptations – John 10:39; 1 John 5:4,5; etc. Paul knew the Thessalonians were facing such difficulties. Was their faith real enough to stand the test? He was anxious to find out.

"The tempter" – Satan (Matt 4:1-10).

"In vain" – Gal 2:2; Phil 2:16.

**3:6** "Faith and love" – 1:3.

**3:7** "Encouraged." . . .because of your faith" – he understood that their faith had passed the tests that came to it and so proved itself genuine (compare 1 Pet 1:6,7).

**3:8** "Now we live" – Paul felt his life was bound up with theirs, that if they lived faithfully in Christ it made him feel alive. Compare 1 Cor 12:24-26.

"Stand firm" – 1 Cor 15:58; Gal 5:1; Eph 6:14; Col 2:5; Jam 5:8; 1 Pet 5:9,10.

**3:9** "Thanks" – 1:2. These Thessalonians had come to Christ through his ministry, but his thanks were to God because he knew it was God alone who produced this result.

"Joy" – 2:19,20. This was the joy that



our God, 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and fill up that which is lacking in your faith?

11 Now *may* our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. 12 And *may* the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love toward each other, and toward all *men*, just as we *do* toward you, 13 to the end that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness in the presence of our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

**4** Finally then we urge you, brethren, and encourage *you* in the Lord Jesus, that as you have learned from us how you ought to behave and please God, *so* you would excel *in this* more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

came because they had proved themselves to be genuine believers and strong in Christ. It was a joy like the joy of a father who sees his children turning out well – but it was doubtless greater than that kind of joy because it was a spiritual joy in God's fellowship.

**3:10** "Praying" – 1:2,3.

"Lacking in your faith" – they had believed in Christ and stood firm in faith in the face of persecution. But Paul does not pretend that their faith was fully mature and perfect. They needed to grow in faith – compare Luke 17:5; 2 Cor 10:15; 2 Thess 1:3. For this they needed more teaching of God's Word – Rom 10:17; Eph 4:12-15. Paul longed to visit them and give them this teaching.

**3:11** "Direct our way to you" – compare 2:18.

**3:12** "Abound in love" – 4:9,10; 2 Thess 1:3; John 13:34; Rom 12:9,10; 1 Cor 13:1,13; 1 John 2:5,10; 3:11,14,16-18.

**3:13** "Establish your hearts" – inner spiritual strength is the great need of believers, and Paul prayed in the will of God that they might have it. See Eph 3:16.

"Unblamable in holiness" – 5:23; 1 Cor 1:8; Eph 5:26,27; Phil 2:15; Titus 2:14; 2 Pet 3:14.

"Holy ones" – may mean angels or believers who have died, or both (4:14; Matt 25:31; Jude 14; Rev 19:14).

**4:1** "Please God" – Rom 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Col 1:10. No believer should ever try to live in any other way. Pleasing God is our whole responsibility, and we should ask about everything we do "does this really please God?" Then we can become people according to God's heart, as David was – see the note at 1 Sam 13:14.

**4:2** "By the Lord Jesus" – he knew he was an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor 5:20). Christ gave him the gospel he preached and the teachings he passed on to the churches – 2:13; Gal 1:11,12. So he could speak with all the authority of heaven behind him.

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you should abstain from sexual immorality, 4 that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in holiness and honour, 5 not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God, 6 that no *man* transgress and take advantage of his brother in *this* matter; because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also warned you before and solemnly affirmed. 7 For God has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness. 8 So he who rejects *this teaching* is rejecting not man but God, who has given to us his Holy Spirit.

9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need of my writing to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. 10 And indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all of Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel *in this* more and more, 11 and to aim to live a quiet

**4:3** "Your sanctification" – 3:13; 5:23; John 17:17-19; Rom 6:19; 2 Cor 7:1; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15,16.

"Immorality" – 1 Cor 6:18-20; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5.

**4:4,5** "His vessel" – the body is the vessel of the spirit of a person and he must learn to control this vessel and not let it control him.

"In honour" – immorality brings dishonor and shame.

"Lust like the Gentiles who do not know God" – see Eph 4:17-20.

**4:6** Adultery is a wrong done not only to those who engage in it but to their spouses.

"The Lord is the avenger" – Rom 12:19. He will bring punishment in due time – Eph 5:5,6; Col 3:6; Heb 13:4; and believers will not need to seek revenge, and, indeed, they must not.

**4:7** "Called. . . to holiness" – Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; Titus 2:14; Heb 3:1; 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15.

**4:8** "Rejecting not man but God" – Paul's teaching was "by the Lord Jesus" (v 2), so to reject his teaching was the same as rejecting God who sent him.

"Holy Spirit" – 1 Cor 6:19; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13; John 14:16,17.

**4:9** "Brotherly love" is the love believers have for one another. They are all spiritual brothers (and sisters) belonging to one heavenly Father, and should behave in accordance with this truth – John 13:34; etc.

"Taught by God" – compare Isa 54:13; John 6:45; 1 John 2:27. See Ps 25:4,5.

**4:10** "Macedonia" – Acts 16:9. Thessalonica was located in that province.

"More and more" – 3:12; 4:1. The Christian life should be a constant growth until Eph 4:12-15 becomes a reality.

**4:11** "Aim" – people have many ambitions, sometimes very selfish ones (Gal 5:20; Phil 1:17; Jam 3:14). Paul shows us a good one to have. God has placed each of us where He wants us to be and has given each a work to do. Let us get on with this work, and not meddle in other people's business.

*life*, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we instructed you, 12 so that you may behave honorably toward outsiders, and *that* you will lack nothing.

13 But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you do not grieve like others who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, just so God will bring with him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we tell you by the word of the Lord: that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who

have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive *and* remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be forever with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**5** But about the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write to you. 2 For *you* yourselves know perfectly *well*

"Work. . . hands" – some people then (as now) thought that manual labor was demeaning and beneath them. The great apostle did not think so (2:9; Acts 18:3; 20:34,35), and he did not want any believer to think so.

**4:12** "Lack nothing" – laziness and meddling in other people's business will not produce so good a result – Prov 24:29-34.

**4:13-18** Other prophecies of Christ's second coming are at Matt 24:27-31,36; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor 15:23 (51-54); 2 Thess 1:7; 2:1,8; Heb 9:28; 1 John 2:28; Rev 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:12.

**4:13** "Fallen asleep" – an expression sometimes used in the Bible to indicate death. See John 11:11,14; Acts 7:60. "Sleep" suggests that a time will come to wake from sleep – the resurrection. In this "sleep" it is only the body which sleeps, not the soul or spirit. See Rev 6:9-11.

"Do not grieve" – believers can know that death is not the end, that there will be resurrection and reunion with those who have gone on before them.

"No hope" – people without Christ have no valid hope for the future (Eph 2:12).

**4:14** "Died and rose again" – Matt 27:50; 28:6; Acts 1:3; Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:3-8.

"Just so" – if we really believe one thing God has revealed, we should also be able to believe the other things He has revealed.

"Asleep in him" – when He comes the Lord Jesus will bring with Him the spirits of believers who have died.

**4:15** "The word of the Lord" – it is probable that the Lord Jesus revealed the following truth – the truth that the dead in Christ would rise first – directly to Paul as He did other truths (Gal 1:11,12). But it is possible that Jesus revealed it to His apostles while He was still on earth – though it is not recorded in any of the Gospels.

"We who are alive" – some will be living when Christ returns. By using the word "we" Paul did not necessarily mean that he believed he would be one of them. He is speaking more generally – at the time of the second coming some believers would be dead, some alive. Paul did not know the time of Christ's return any more than we do – 5:1,2; Matt 24:36 – and so could not assume that he would be alive. Later

on he came to know that he would not be (2 Tim 4:6,7). Here he gives no hint whether the coming of Jesus for His people will be before the great tribulation (Matt 24:21) or after it.

"Not precede" – those who are still alive will not be changed and caught up into the air before those who have died.

**4:16** "From heaven" – Acts 1:11; 3:21; Rev 19:11.

"Shout" – the Greek word means "a call" or "a summons" or "a shout of command." Jesus will call His believers from their graves, or from wherever they may be – see John 5:28. Compare John 11:43,44.

"Archangel" – Michael (Jude 9; Dan 10:13). Not Michael alone but many angels will come with Christ – Matt 16:27; 25:31.

"Trumpet" – see 1 Cor 15:52; Matt 24:31.

"Dead in Christ" – Paul says nothing about unbelievers rising at this time. Compare Rev 20:4-6; Phil 3:11.

**4:17** "Caught up together" – in 1 Cor 15:52,53 Paul tells us what will happen at that moment. See also Phil 3:20,21; 1 John 3:2. This event is often called the Rapture (this word is from a Latin word meaning "to transport" or "carry away").

"The clouds" – Dan 7:13; Matt 24:30; 26:64; Rev 1:7.

"Meet the Lord in the air" – compare Matt 24:31. Here Paul does not say what will happen after this – whether He immediately returns to earth with His people or not.

"Forever with the Lord" – this is the glorious goal to which every believer moves (5:10; John 14:3; Col 3:4; Rev 21:3; etc.).

**4:18** "Comfort" – or "encourage" – the Greek word means both. The truth expressed in these verses is an encouragement and comfort to God's people in every grief that can come to them on earth, in every kind of disappointment, trial, difficulty, persecution, and suffering.

**5:1** "Times and seasons" – Matt 24:36; Acts 1:6,7.

**5:2** "The Day of the Lord" – Acts 2:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10. The phrase is taken from the Old Testament. See Isa 13:6,9 (2:12-18); Joel 1:15; 2:31. It is distinguished in the Bible from the great tribulation which comes before it. See notes on Matt 24:29 and Rev 6:12-17, and

that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety," then sudden destruction will come on them, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you like a thief. 5 You are all children of light and children of the day. We are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night; and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But let us who belong to the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to

obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep, we should live together with him.

11 Therefore encourage each other, and edify one another, just as you are doing. 12 And we urge you, brethren, to pay attention to those who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to regard them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, *to* warn those who are unruly, *to* comfort the fainthearted, help the weak, *and* be patient with everyone. 15 See that no one pays back to anyone wrong for wrong, but always follow what is good, both for yourselves, and for everyone.

compare these two Scriptures. In 4:13-18 Paul wrote of the resurrection and catching up of believers (the Rapture). Here he indicates that while writing to them of that event he was speaking of the "Day of the Lord." It seems then he was teaching that the return of Christ for believers occurs at the beginning of the period of time called the Day of the Lord.

"Thief in the night" – Matt 24:43,44; Luke 12:39,40; Rev 3:3; 16:15.

**5:3** "Peace" – compare Jer 6:14; Ezek 13:10.

"Sudden" – compare Prov 6:15; 29:1; Isa 29:5,6.

"Destruction" – Phil 3:19; 2 Pet 3:7. 2 Thess 1:8,9 reveals what this destruction will mean – eternal banishment from the Lord's presence. "Labour pains" strike suddenly. So will the destruction that comes on the Day of the Lord.

**5:4** In this verse Paul seems to be teaching that Christian believers will be on earth up to the very time that the "day of the Lord" begins. If he did not believe that some of them would be here why would he speak of their not being surprised by its coming? And if he believed that none of them would be here at that time here was a good opportunity to say so, instead of urging them to "watch" (v 6).

"Not in darkness" – Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:6; Col 1:13.

"Overtake you" – those who are on the lookout for a thief will not be surprised when he comes. Believers are in the light and are waiting for the revelation of God's Son from heaven – Titus 2:13. If so, they cannot be surprised when it occurs. They should not attempt to set dates, but the Bible gives some signs of the coming end of this age so that believers can see its approach (Heb 10:25; 2 Thess 2:3,4; Acts 2:20; Matt 24:29,33).

**5:5** "Children of light" – Eph 5:8; John 12:36; Matt 5:14.

**5:6** "Let us not sleep" – sleeping people do not know what is going on or what is going to happen.

"Watch" – Matt 24:42,43; 25:13.

"Be sober" – the Greek word may also mean "self-controlled" – compare Acts 24:25; Gal 5:23; 1 Pet 4:7; 5:8; 2 Pet 1:6.

**5:7** Rom 13:13,14; 2 Pet 2:13.

**5:8** "Who belong to the day" – v 5. Believers belong to the new day that will dawn when Christ comes – 2 Pet 1:19; Rev 22:16. They already walk in the light of that day.

"Breastplate" – compare Eph 6:14 where the "breastplate" is righteousness. All Christian qualities are intimately connected. All are "put on" by putting on "Christ." See Rom 13:14. Notes at Eph 4:24; 6:13.

"Helmet" – see Eph 6:17.

**5:9** "Wrath" – note at 1:10. "Wrath" is put in contrast with "salvation" (not with some supposed escape from the great tribulation). The one means God's anger on sin and sinners, the other means deliverance from sin and therefore deliverance from God's wrath that comes on sin.

**5:10** "Died for us" – John 10:15; Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 3:18. Here "awake or asleep" means alive or dead (3:13).

"Live together with Him" – living believers share Christ's life and fellowship even now (Rom 6:5-8; 1 John 1:3). Believers who have gone to heaven do so face to face with Him – 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23.

**5:11** "Encourage" – 4:18. This is a duty and privilege of every believer.

"Edify one another" – Rom 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor 14:3-5,12,17,26; Eph 4:29.

**5:12,13** "Over you" – 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:1-3.

"In the Lord" – the authority of church elders comes from the Lord, and must be used in the Lord.

"Be at peace" – Mark 9:50; Rom 12:16; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 4:3; Phil 2:2; Heb 12:14.

**5:14** "Fainthearted," "weak" – local churches will have all sorts of believers. None should be belittled or neglected.

"Weak" – Rom 14:1.

**5:15** "Wrong for wrong" – Rom 12:17-21.

16 Rejoice always. 17 Pray without ceasing. 18 In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies. 21 Test everything, hold firmly what is good. 22 Keep away from every form of evil.

23 And may the very God of peace sanctify you completely. And *I pray God that* your whole spirit

and soul and body be kept blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you *is* faithful, and he will also do *it*.

25 Brethren, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. 27 I charge you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the holy brethren.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

**5:16** "Rejoice" – Phil 3:1; 4:4; Rom 12:12; Hab 3:17,18.

**5:17** Paul did more than instruct others to do this. He did it himself – 1:3; 2:13; Rom 1:9,10; Eph 6:18; Col 1:3; 2 Tim 1:3. He knew the power and privilege of prayer, and always kept his heart in tune with the Lord regardless of what work he may have been doing. When one is occupied with other activities it will not always be possible to formulate a prayer or speak one audibly. But prayer is lifting the heart to God even if no words are spoken with the lips. Notes and references to prayer at Gen 18:32; Matt 6:5-13; 7:7-12; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8; Rom 8:26,27; Eph 1:17; 6:18; Phil 4:6,7; Col 1:9; Heb 11:6; Jam 1:5-8; 5:16-18; 1 John 5:14,15; Ps 66:18.

**5:18** Heb 13:15; Col 3:17; Phil 4:6; Eph 5:20; Ps 50:14; 113:1; Lev 7:12,13. "In everything" means all things without exception, whether the circumstances are pleasant or unpleasant, safe or dangerous, smooth or rough. There are always things to thank God for in every circumstance of life and we should all learn the practice of thanksgiving.

"This is the will of God" – we may not know God's will about some things, but we know it in this matter of thanksgiving.

**5:19** "Do not quench the Spirit" – God's Spirit gives warmth, light and burning zeal to the hearts of believers. But it is possible to quench His fire in us by sin, neglect, prayerlessness and ingratitude. Compare Eph 4:30.

**5:20** "Prophecies" – he means prophecies

uttered by those in the church who then had this spiritual ability. See Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:10,28; 14:3.

**5:21** "Test" – 1 Cor 14:29; 1 John 4:1. Not every prophet or prophecy is from the Lord – Matt 7:15; 2 Pet 2:2; Jer 14:14. Every word men speak must be tested in the light of the Word of God.

**5:22** Some people are good at avoiding evil things they do not want to do, but fall into those evils which are pleasing to them. Believers have no business doing any kind of evil.

**5:23** "God of peace" – Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor 14:33; Phil 4:9; 2 Thess 3:16; Heb 13:20.

"Sanctify" – note at John 17:17-19.

"Completely" – of course Paul would not pray for their partial sanctification, nor should we desire such a thing for ourselves or for any believer. To be only partly holy is to be partly unholy. Compare Matt 5:48; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 7:1.

"Blameless" – references at 3:13.

**5:24** "Faithful" – Deut 7:9; 32:4; 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Thess 3:3; 2 Tim 2:13; Titus 1:2; 1 John 1:9.

"He will also do it" – see 1 Cor 1:8,9; Phil 1:6. This word, this promise, is spoken to all the believers in Thessalonica (and to all now), not just to the exceptionally holy and mature.

**5:25** Rom 15:30; Eph 6:19.

**5:26** "Kiss" – Rom 16:16.

**5:27** All the family of God still need the truth revealed in this letter, and the instructions of the apostle.

**5:28** Rom 1:7; 16:20.

# The Second Letter of the Apostle Paul to the THESSALONIANS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime between 50 and 54 AD.

**Themes:**

The principal theme in this letter, as in the first letter Paul wrote to them, is the second coming of Christ. Some religious teachers had visited Thessalonica at a time when believers there were undergoing persecution, and troubled them by insisting that the Day of the Lord had already come (2:1-2). The Day of the Lord is the future time connected with the second coming of the Lord Jesus, and, among other things, involves God's anger and punishment on the disobedient and unbelieving. Opposing the false views of those religious teachers, Paul informed them that the Day of the Lord would not come until the wicked person he calls the "man of sin" (or "lawless one") appeared. This is the antichrist who will come at the end of this age (1 John 2:18; Revelation chapter 13; Matt 24:15-24). Paul encouraged the believers in Thessalonica to be free from fear and to hold fast to the truth about Christ which he had taught them. He concludes the letter with a long warning about idleness and laziness.

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**1** Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you for each other abounds, 4 so that we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God, for your patient endurance and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you bear.

**1:1** 1 Thess 1:1. "Silvanus" – the same person as Silas.

**1:2** Rom 1:7.

**1:3** Rom 1:8; etc. "Your faith grows", "love . . . abounds" – see 1 Thess 3:10,12; 4:10. Paul's hopes for them were being fulfilled, his prayers answered.

**1:4** "Boast" – 2 Cor 7:14. This was not flattery – 1 Thess 2:5. He was happy with the condition of the church there and was also happy to tell them and others so.

"Persecutions and tribulations" – 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:3.

**1:5** "Evidence" – faithfully enduring trials and persecutions that come to us because we believe in Christ is evidence that our faith is genuine and living. It is evidence also of "the righteous judgment of God." The meaning of this here is not very clear but it probably means that God's decision to choose them and work among them was vindicated by their perseverance in the faith. Compare Phil 1:27,28.

"Counted worthy" – compare Luke 20:35; Rev 3:4. No one is worthy of salvation, of being taken into God's kingdom – Rom 3:9,19,23; Col 1:13,14. But believers can prove by their conduct and by continuing on in the faith that God has changed them and enabled them to live in a way that is worthy of His kingdom.

"Kingdom of God" – note at Matt 4:17.

"Suffer" – Rom 8:17; Matt 5:10. This was evidence of their worthiness. Those who refuse to suffer for the sake of God's kingdom are not worthy of that kingdom.

**1:6** "A righteous thing. . . to repay" – a truth seen everywhere in the Bible (Deut 32:4; Ps 9:16; 11:7; 89:14; 111:7; Prov 29:26; Isa 30:18; Dan 4:37; Rom 3:26; Rev 15:3; 16:5-7). God shows His justice both by punishing the wicked if they refuse to repent, and by giving eternal relief to those who suffer for His kingdom (v 7). Compare Rom 2:6-11.

"Repay" – Num 31:1-3; Deut 32:35,41; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30.

**1:7** "When the Lord Jesus will be revealed" – God may sometimes take vengeance on people and rescue believers here and now, but for the most part these matters await the end of this age when Christ comes. Then all things will be made right, and absolute justice will prevail and all men will see that it is prevailing.

5 *This is* clear evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer, 6 seeing *it is* a righteous thing for God to repay tribulation to those who trouble you, 7 and *give* rest to you who are being troubled, *along* with us, when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory

"Revealed" – observe that Paul says relief will come to God's people in His Church at the revelation of Christ when He comes to punish the wicked, not at some time before that. Compare Matt 24:29,30; 1 Cor 1:7; Titus 2:13.

"Angels" – Matt 24:31; Jude 14.

**1:8** "Fire" – Heb 10:27; 12:29; 2 Pet 3:7; Rev 19:11-16; Isa 66:15; 30:27; 24:6.

"Taking vengeance" – God does not take delight in punishing anyone. See Ezek 18:23,30-32; Joel 2:13; 2 Pet 3:9. But when people refuse to repent and continue to sin, God in justice must and will punish them. Compare Ex 34:6,7; Nahum 1:3. If God left the guilty unpunished He would not be just, and the universe would be a chaos without moral order.

"Those who do not know God" – people in general do not know the one true God because they do not want to know Him, and they refuse any offer to know Him. They prefer their sin to God's fellowship. Compare John 3:19,20; Rom 1:18-25; Eph 4:17-19.

"Do not obey the gospel" – evidently this refers to those who have heard the gospel and refused it. They want what they mistakenly regard as their freedom rather than obedience to Christ. Observe here that the gospel of Christ is something to obey, and not merely something to believe. Compare Matt 7:21,24; Acts 5:32; Rom 6:17; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 1:22; 4:17. In fact, truly believing the gospel results in obedience to it. Believing and obedience are joined together and cannot be separated. Compare Jam 2:14-26. Faith is not a passive thing. See notes at Acts 22:10; Heb 11:4.

**1:9** "Everlasting destruction" – 2:3; Matt 7:13; Rom 9:22; Gal 6:8; Phil 3:19; 1 Thess 5:3; 1 Tim 6:9; 2 Pet 3:7,12,16; Rev 17:8,11. Destruction means utter ruin, the second death (Rev 21:8). The Bible does not say that such people cease to exist. Compare Matt 25:46; Luke 16:26.

"From the presence of the Lord" – compare Matt 7:23; 25:41; Rev 22:15,16. This is what their destruction will mean. They will be cut off forever from God who is the only source of blessing, joy and peace. This is what they chose during their lives (v 8), and this is what they will get. And it is perfect justice that they should receive this punishment.

"Glory of His power" – Isa 2:10,11,19,21.



of his power, 10 when he comes to be glorified in his saints and admired among all believers (because our testimony among you was believed), in that day.

11 Therefore we always pray also for you that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power, 12 that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you

**1:10** "Glorified" – John 17:10; Eph 1:12,14.

"Saints" – all true believers in Christ (Rom 1:7; 1 Pet 2:9).

"Admired" – what admiration will seize us when we finally see Him as He is!

"Among all believers" – Christ is glorified in those who believe in Him, and only they will share His glory. All others continually dishonor Him by their unbelief and behavior.

"Our testimony among you was believed" – 1 Thess 1:7-10.

"In that day" – compare 1 Thess 5:2; Isa 2:12.

**1:11** "We always pray" – Rom 1:8,9; Eph 1:16; 3:16; Phil 1:4,9; Col 1:3,9,21; 1 Thess 1:2; 3:10.

"Worthy" – v 5; Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12.

"This calling" – see Eph 4:1; Rom 1:6; 8:30.

"And fulfil. . .with power" – compare Ps 90:17; Isa 26:12. It is because of His working in us that we are able to accomplish any work of faith – Phil 2:13; Eph 2:10.

**1:12** "Name" – Christians bear Christ's name before the world (1 Peter 5:16).

"Glorified in you" – this will happen when Jesus comes (v 10); it should happen now also – 1 Cor 6:20; 10:31; Col 3:17; 1 Pet 4:11.

"You in Him" – those in whom the Lord Jesus is glorified He will glorify in Himself. Compare John 17:10,22; Rom 8:30.

"Grace" – everything connected with the salvation of believers and their blessing is all of grace (Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8,9). The last phrase of this verse may also be translated "our God and Lord, Jesus Christ." There is no word for "the" in the Greek here.

**2:1** "The coming of our Lord" – 1:7; Acts 1:11.

"Our gathering together to him" – compare 1 Thess 4:17; John 14:3; Matt 24:31. This event is sometimes called "the Rapture" (from a Latin word meaning to transport or carry away).

**2:2** "By a letter seemingly from us" – we do not know who was trying to alarm these believers, but he probably means false teachers who (he thought) would not have hesitated to forge a letter and tell them Paul wrote it, or use some other trick to upset them. We know the character of such teachers from Paul's description of them in other letters – Rom 16:17,18; 2 Cor 11:13-15; etc. We have no reason to expect that the enemies of the truth will be ethical

in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**2** Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, we plead with you, brethren, 2 not to be hastily shaken in mind, or alarmed, either by a spirit or by a message or by a letter seemingly from us, that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no one deceive you

when they fight it.

"Day of Christ" – Phil 1:10; 2:16. This means the day of Christ's coming. In 1 Cor 1:8 it is called "the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ." That day will take place sometime toward the beginning of "the Day of the Lord" (1 Thess 5:2). Some commentators say that some years before that the Rapture (1 Thess 4:16,17) will take place, but Paul himself never says so. Paul did not want the believers in Thessalonica to think that the Day of Christ had already come – that he was mistaken in his teaching about the coming of Christ. If they thought he was wrong about this, they might think he was mistaken about the gospel and all other teaching he gave them. And this would have produced disastrous results.

**2:3** "Let no one deceive you" – there will always be deceivers who want to turn believers away from one Biblical truth or another. Compare Matt 24:4; Rom 16:18; Eph 5:6; Col 2:4. We need to know the Word of God and be always alert.

"Until" – Paul now speaks of an event that must take place before the Day of Christ (or the Day of the Lord) comes. Observe that he does not say that that event is the Rapture of the Church. If he had believed that the Rapture would occur before the beginning of the Day of the Lord this would have been an ideal time for him to say so, but he does not. Instead, he speaks of "the apostasy." The Greek here means "the rebellion" or "the forsaking" or "the apostasy." In general apostasy means departing from one's religion or forsaking the principles of one's religion.

Apostasy from the Biblical point of view is rebelling against God and departing from the truth of Christ. Since the fall of the first man into sin (Genesis chapter 3) mankind in general has always been in rebellion against God, always willing to depart from Him. In this matter God's own people Israel are representative of all peoples. See Deut 9:7,24; Ps 106:43; Isa 1:2; Jer 6:28. All sin is evidence of rebellion (see 1 John 3:4). But Paul wrote to the Thessalonians about a final great rebellion or departure or apostasy that will occur at the end of this age. It will be something extraordinary, something that will have its effect on all of earth's religions and peoples (including apostate Christianity) – v 4; Matt 24:10-25; 2 Tim 3:1-5; Rev 13:4,8,13-15.

"The man of sin" – this revolt will be headed up by a person so sinful that he will

by any means. For *that day will not come*, unless apostasy comes first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. 4 He opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he as *if he were* God sits in the temple of God, setting himself forth to be God.

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And now you

be the embodiment of rebellion and evil. This is the coming antichrist – 1 John 2:18.

"Son of perdition" – compare John 17:12. The expression means one tied closely to destruction, one doomed to destruction.

**2:4** The "man of sin" will be an exceptional political and military leader, but He will claim to be God and demand worship from everyone on earth – Rev 13:1-8,15. He will have no regard for either the laws of God or the laws of men. In nature and character he will be the exact opposite of the Lord Jesus (Heb 10:7; Ps 40:8). The world does not want Christ, so they will get the antichrist instead. They do not want God's royal law, so they will get the lawless one.

"Exalts himself" – compare Dan 7:8,11,20,25; Rev 13:5,6.

"The temple of God" – a building dedicated to the worship of the true God. Compare Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14.

"Declaring himself to be God" – this is the ultimate sin. According to the Bible for any man to say he is God is the worst possible blasphemy against God. See notes at John 5:18; 10:31-33; Matt 26:64,65. For the embodiment of rebellion and evil to say it – this is wickedness developed to the utmost. God is the almighty Creator; all men are creatures made by God. God is absolutely holy; all men are sinful. See Gen 8:21; Lev 20:7; Isa 6:3; Rom 3:9-23; 1 Pet 1:15,16.

**2:5** "When I was still with you" – Paul was with them for only a comparatively short time (Acts 17:1-10), but he evidently thought this teaching about the coming antichrist important enough to include in the basic instructions he gave them.

**2:6,7** Some power or some person will prevent the appearance of antichrist until the time God has chosen for him to appear. Paul told the Thessalonians what this power or person will be, but he did not repeat his words in this letter, so we do not know what he meant. Therefore we should not speak dogmatically about it. There has been much speculation on this matter.

Some believers say Paul meant that the Holy Spirit is the one who holds back the appearance of the antichrist. In their view "taken out of the way" means the Rapture of the Church, and that then the Holy Spirit who is in all believers will depart from earth with them. However this too is speculation. There is no mention here of either the Holy Spirit or the Church or the Rapture. Even if Paul did mean the Holy Spirit, "taken out of the way" would not necessarily refer to the Rapture of the Church.

One difficulty with the view that Paul here

know what is restraining that he might be revealed at his *proper* time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but he who is now restraining *will continue to restrain* until he is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless *one* will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth and will destroy with the brightness of his coming. 9 *This one's* coming will be according to

is referring to the departure of the Holy Spirit before the great tribulation or during the tribulation is this: there will be believers of some kind, "saints" on earth throughout the tribulation period (Rev 7:9-17; 13:6; etc). How is it possible that they will be left here without the Holy Spirit as believers now have Him, just when they will need Him most?

Also there is the uncertainty of the meaning of the phrase "taken out of the way." This is not a literal translation of the Greek. Literally it is "until he becomes out of the midst." It could mean until he moves aside. Certainly, being taken *upwards* is not indicated by anything in this phrase. And there is no suggestion that anything or anyone is included with him in this going out of the midst. Nor are we informed what "midst" he goes out of. To take such a doubtful phrase and assert dogmatically that it means the Rapture of the Church is surely not wise commentary.

Others have suggested that in verse 7 Paul was referring to some particular angel. Certainly angels will be very active in events at the end of this age – Rev 7:1; 9:14,15; etc (the word "angel" – singular or plural – occurs about 80 times in the book of The Revelation). And it is possible that God has appointed one to restrain the appearance of antichrist until the right time. This explanation seems as good as any other to the author of these notes. But it must be repeated: Paul did not tell us what he meant and so we do not really know.

"Mystery of lawlessness" – on "mystery" see Matt 13:11; Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 15:51; etc. We could not know about the final development of lawlessness and sin in the world if God did not reveal it to us. Lawlessness was already at work in Paul's day. It is still working and will work until the man of sin appears. Then lawlessness will come to its full development, law will be abandoned, and the will of one wicked person will prevail throughout the earth.

**2:8** Powerful as the lawless one will be, he will not be able to stand against Christ. See Rev 19:19,20.

"The breath of His mouth" – Isa 11:4. The Greek word translated "breath" also means "spirit." Here it may signify His all-powerful word (compare Heb 1:3; 4:12). Christ has but to speak and His purpose is certain to be fulfilled (compare Gen 1:3; etc; Isa 55:11).

"Brightness of his coming" – Matt 24:30; 25:31; Titus 2:13; Rev 19:11,12.

**2:9** The coming of Christ was in accordance with the work of God. The coming of antichrist

the working of Satan, with all power and *miraculous* signs and deceiving wonders, 10 and with all the deception of unrighteousness among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, so that they will believe the lie, 12 that they all might be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

13 But always we are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren loved by the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth. 14 To this he called you by our gospel, to obtain *a share* in the glory of our Lord Jesus

will be in accordance with the work of Satan (Rev 13:2). We can judge the true condition of the world by the fact that to mankind in general the antichrist will be more popular than Christ has ever been – Rev 13:3,4,8. Compare John 1:10,11; 5:43.

"Power. . .wonders" – see Matt 24:24; Rev 13:13,15. These miracles will probably be very similar to those Christ did (see Acts 2:22 where the same words are used). But the wonders will be "deceiving." The Greek word can mean "unreal", "counterfeit", but here probably means "deceiving." In other words, they will be real miracles which will cause those who see them to believe lies.

**2:10** "All the deception of unrighteousness" – evil deceives people (compare Heb 3:13). It is one of the three deceitful powers in the world (for the other two see Jer 17:9 and Rev 12:9). At the end of this age all three will reach horrible development.

"Perishing" – 1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3; John 3:16. The perishing are those who love sin rather than the truth of God. They do not want the truth and willfully reject it because they want to do what pleases their sinful nature. Compare John 3:19,20; Rom 1:18. Observe carefully the connection Paul makes between love of the truth and salvation. We cannot have the one without the other.

**2:11** "The lie" – the lie of the antichrist that he himself is God (v 4). God will see to it that they will be deceived enough to believe this lie (compare Rom 1:28; 11:8; Isa 29:10; 6:10; 1 Kings 22:19-23). This will be a punishment for their rejecting the truth, and it will be a perfectly just punishment. It will be God giving to sinful men exactly what they deserve. See Ps 18:25,26 and note.

**2:12** Refusing the truth is the most dangerous thing anyone can possibly do. It will result not only in believing that which is false, but in eternal condemnation.

"Condemned" – compare Matt 23:33; Mark 16:16; John 3:18; 5:29; Gal 1:8.

"Unrighteousness" – notice carefully that delighting in wickedness and believing the truth are complete opposites. If we do one we cannot do the other.

**2:13** "Brethren dearly loved by the Lord" –

Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, stand firm, and hold the traditions you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or our letter.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us, and given *us* everlasting encouragement and good hope through grace, 17 encourage your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

**3** Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not everyone has faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and keep *you*

Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 1 John 3:1.

"God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation" – Eph 1:4.

"Sanctification of the Spirit" – 1 Pet 1:2. This means God's Spirit sets apart those whom God has chosen and begins to work in them to make them holy. This is true of every believer, not merely of a special few.

"Through. . .belief of the truth" – this is the method God uses to save people. See again the emphasis on truth. The truth Paul refers to here is the gospel of Christ, as he makes clear in the next verse.

**2:14** "Called" – See Rom 1:6; 8:28,30.

"Our gospel" – the gospel they preached, the gospel Christ entrusted to them (Gal 1:11,12; 1 Cor 15:1-8).

"Share in the glory" – 1 Thess 2:12; Rom 5:2; 8:17; John 17:22. This will be the difference between those who believe the truth and those who do not – one group inherits eternal glory, the other suffers eternal condemnation (v 12). Compare Rom 9:22-24.

**2:15** "Therefore" – in the light of the truth he has given he urges them (and us) to hold firmly to that truth. Compare Rom 12:1; Eph 4:1; Col 3:1.

"Stand firm" – 1 Cor 15:58; Eph 6:11,13,14.

**2:16** Observe the distinction Paul makes between the Lord Jesus and the Father. See also Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; John 17:1; 2 John 3.

"Loved us" – v 13; Jer 31:3.

"Hope" – 1 Pet 1:3; Rom 5:2; 8:24,25.

**2:17** "Comfort" or "encourage" – 2 Cor 1:3,4. Men may encourage each other but the best kind of encouragement comes from God Himself.

**3:1** "Pray for us" – Rom 15:30-32; Eph 6:19,20; Col 4:3,4.

"The word. . .glorified" – Paul never asked any of the churches to pray that he might get material things or money for God's work. His mind and heart were on other matters – as ours must be if we would truly serve God.

**3:2** At this time Paul was in Corinth and evil men were opposing him – Acts 18:12,13.

**3:3** "Faithful" – 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thess

from evil. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will *continue* to do the things we command you. 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from every brother who behaves disorderly and not according to the tradition he received from us. 7 For you know how you ought to follow us. For we did not behave disorderly among you, 8 and we did not eat anyone's bread *paying* nothing, but worked night and day, labouring and toiling, so that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have the right *to receive from you*, but *we wanted* to make ourselves an example to you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you that if anyone would not work

he should not eat.

11 For we hear that there are some who behave disorderly among you, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now such people we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly, and eat their own bread. 13 But you, brethren, do not be weary in doing well.

14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this letter, note that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be ashamed. 15 But do not regard *him* as an enemy, but warn *him* as a brother.

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.

17 The salutation of Paul with my own hand. This is the sign in every letter. *This is how* I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

5:24; 2 Tim 2:13; Heb 3:6; 1 Pet 4:19; 1 John 1:9; Rev 19:11.

"From evil" – Matt 6:13; John 17:11,15.

**3:4** "Confidence in the Lord" – 2 Cor 2:3; 7:4; Gal 5:10; Heb 6:9.

"We command you" – as an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor 5:20), as one to whom God had given a special revelation of the truth (Gal 1:11,12; Eph 3:2,3) Paul could speak with complete authority in the name of Christ (v 6). What he wrote to the churches was like commands coming from Christ.

**3:5** "Love" – Eph 3:17-19; Rom 5:5.

"Patient endurance of Christ" – when Christ was on earth He patiently persevered in doing God's will in the face of all the opposition of men and Satan. He wants all believers to have this same quality, and He Himself works it in our hearts. Compare Heb 12:1-3.

**3:6** "In the name of our Lord" – by the authority of the Lord (v 4). Believers should take the following command as the command of Christ.

"Keep away" – this may not mean a complete break, but it certainly means to withdraw from any close fellowship, and may mean even more than that. If any brother (or sister) does not live according to Paul's teachings we should not behave toward them as if it does not matter. Instead we should make it clear that neither God nor we are pleased with him. Compare vs 14,15.

**3:7,8** "You ought to follow us" – Acts 18:3;

20:34,35.

**3:9** "Right" – 1 Cor 9:12-15.

"An example" – Paul was a model for us all not only in the matter of working, but in how to live the Christian life (1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17).

**3:10** "Would not work" – he is not referring to people who want to work but can find none, but to those who refuse to work even when they have opportunity.

**3:11** "Busybodies" – 1 Tim 5:13. Idleness often leads to meddling in other people's affairs. And so sin is added to sin, and the result can be trouble to the whole church.

**3:13** Gal 6:9; 1 Cor 15:58.

**3:14,15** See notes at v 6. Paul is urging them to discipline those who are disobedient Christians. Discipline may make them ashamed of their conduct and cause them to start living as God wants them to live.

**3:16** "Lord of peace" – compare Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 13:20.

"Peace" – in Phil 4:6,7 he shows the way to this peace Christ gives.

**3:17** Paul dictated some (and perhaps all) of his letters and others wrote them down. Compare Rom 16:22. He was aware of the possibility of false teachers writing to the churches using his name – 2:2. So in all his genuine letters he wrote something at the end with his own hand – see 1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Col 4:18.

**3:18** Rom 1:7; 16:20.

# The First Letter of the Apostle Paul to TIMOTHY

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime about 64 AD.

**Themes:**

When Paul wrote this letter the number of Christian churches had much increased, and questions about the proper behavior of believers, order, discipline and leadership in the churches, and related matters had increased with them. Paul wrote two letters to Timothy and one to Titus about all this. He was Christ's apostle, and wrote with Christ's authority and with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so the instructions and teachings he gave them are the truth of God and apply to all churches in all times. We might call 3:15 a key verse of this letter – "that you may know how you ought to behave in the church of God." Again and again in his letters to Timothy Paul emphasizes the necessity of sound doctrine and correct instruction as an antidote to the false and deadly teaching that would attack the churches.

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**1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the command of God our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ, *who is* our hope,

2 To Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

3 As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so you can command some not to teach any other doctrine, 4 or pay attention to empty stories and endless genealogies, which cause debates instead of godly edification, which comes by faith. 5 Now the purpose of this command is love from a pure heart and *from* a good conscience and *from* sincere faith. 6 From these some have

veered off and turned aside to useless talk. 7 *They* desire to be teachers of the Law *but* do not understand either what they say, or what they affirm.

8 But we know that the Law *is* good, if a man uses it lawfully, 9 knowing that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for killers, 10 for sexually immoral men, for those who practice sodomy, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and for any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine 11 that is according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was entrusted to me.

**1:1** "Apostle" – Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1.

"Saviour" – here Paul says God is "our Saviour." In Titus 2:13 (and other places) he says Jesus Christ is "our Saviour." Is this not evidence once again that Jesus Christ is God? See Isaiah 43:11. See other references showing that Jesus is God at Phil 2:6.

"Hope" – Christ is the one and only basis of the believer's assurance of final salvation (Col 1:27; Rom 5:2).

**1:2** "Timothy" – Acts 16:1.

"Son" – spiritual son, not literal.

"Mercy" – Paul usually writes "grace and peace" (Rom 1:7; etc). Only in the two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus does he add the word "mercy." Timothy and Titus worked full time in the service of Christ. Do such people need mercy more than other Christians? See Jam 3:1.

"Our Lord" – notes at Luke 2:11; Phil 2:10,11.

**1:3** It would appear from this that Timothy was a leader in the church at Ephesus and probably the principal leader (about matters concerning the church there Paul writes only to him). He had authority to forbid false teaching in the Church. "Any other doctrine" means teachings contrary to the truth Christ revealed to His apostles. By the authority God gave them the apostles taught this truth, and it was very important for all Christians to believe it (compare 4:16; Gal 1:6-12; Rom 6:17; Jude 3).

God has appointed pastors and elders to be overseers of the church (Acts 20:28-31). They must not permit teachings contrary to God's revealed truth to be taught to Christians in their care. If they do permit them, they are being traitors to the faith and a cause of great harm to the churches. Today's Christians, like the Christians in the first century, are to be devoted to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). In the three letters written to Titus and Timothy there is much emphasis on sound doctrines and teaching – see v 10; 4:6,13,16; 5:17; 6:1,3; 2 Tim 3:10,16; 4:2,3; Titus 1:9; 2:1,7,10.

**1:4** "Empty stories. . . genealogies" – Paul is referring to empty legends and genealogies (probably Jewish) not found in

the Bible. Compare Titus 1:14. Such teachings do not contribute in any way to God's work on earth. God's work can be fulfilled only by those who believe His word the Bible and preach and teach His Word.

**1:5** "Love" – Paul used the Greek word which means the love that God shows to men and gives to His people ("agape" – 1 Cor 13:1). The goal of every believer should be to love others as Christ loved them (John 13:34, etc). This love is not mere human sentiment, has nothing to do with impurity or selfish desire.

"Pure heart" – Matt 5:8; 1 Pet 1:22.

"Good conscience" – v 19; 3:9; Acts 23:1; 24:16. Compare 4:2.

"Sincere faith" – Gal 5:6; 1 Cor 2:4,5.

This is in contrast to pretended faith which hypocrites have. Without the three things Paul lists here love will not be what it should be, will hardly be worthy of the name of love.

**1:6** Verse 5 gives the heart of the Christianity God wants people to experience. It is a sad truth that today also many professing Christians turn to "useless talk" and ignore these vital matters.

**1:7** "Desire to be teachers" – they want to be honored by men. Compare Matt 23:5-12; Jam 3:1. They are spiritually ignorant but want others to think they are wise. How confidently and boldly some speak about matters they know so little about!

**1:8** "The law is good" – Rom 7:12. It was given by a good God for a good purpose. "Law" here means God's law given through Moses (Exodus chapter 20). It is good but it is not a way of salvation, and it does not give power for a holy life. God uses it to shut people's mouths (Rom 3:19,20), and to make them realize their need of Christ as Saviour (Gal 3:24,25). That alone would make it good, even if there were no other reasons, which there are. Christ's servants should learn to use it as God does.

**1:9,10** "A righteous man" – Paul means Christians who live in a manner worthy of the Lord. They do not need the law to restrain or punish them. They want (as God wants) the righteousness of the law to be fulfilled in them (Rom 8:4). The case of evil men is quite different.

**1:11** Observe what Paul means by sound

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, for he counted me faithful and put me into the ministry, 13 *me* who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and harmful. But I obtained mercy because I did *so* in ignorance, in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant *toward me together* with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

doctrine. True teaching will conform to Christ's gospel; false teaching will be contrary to it.

"Glorious gospel" – compare 2 Cor 4:4. Notes on gospel at Mark 1:1; 1 Cor 15:1-8.

"Blessed God" – 6:15. He has in infinite measure all the blessings of peace, joy, holiness etc, that He wants men to experience in Christ.

"To me" – 1 Cor 9:17; Gal 2:7.

**1:12-17** Paul shows how the "glorious gospel" worked in his case and gives thanks and glory to the "blessed God" whose gospel it is. He knew in his own life that the gospel is the power of God for salvation – Rom 1:16. He did not try to preach to others truth he had not experienced himself (as some do).

**1:12** "I thank" – Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Lev 7:12,13. "Strengthened me" – Col 1:11,29; Phil 4:13; Eph 3:16; 6:10; 2 Cor 12:9,10.

"Faithful" – this means that Christ considered (in his foreknowledge) that Paul would be faithful, and appointed him as an apostle. The Bible puts much emphasis on the need for faithfulness and trustworthiness for those in Christ's service (Matt 24:45; 25:21; Luke 16:10-12; 1 Cor 4:2). All dishonesty and disloyalty are a disgrace to Christ.

**1:13** "Blasphemer" – he denied that Christ was the Son of God, the Saviour, and this is blasphemy against God (see note at Matt 9:3).

"Persecutor" – Acts 8:1-3; 9:1,2; 22:4,5; 1 Cor 15:9,10; Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6.

"Injurious" – the Greek word indicates an arrogant, insolent man who harms others by word or deed, or both.

"I obtained mercy" – mercy is what he needed and what all human beings need (Luke 18:13; Rom 3:9,19; Titus 3:3-5), and what God delights to give (Rom 11:32; Eph 2:4; Micah 7:8).

"In ignorance, in unbelief" – see Acts 26:9; 23:1. Paul thought he was doing the right thing in persecuting Christ's people (compare John 16:2). He was not knowingly rejecting the light God gave him or willfully refusing to believe what he thought was true. When men do willfully, knowingly reject Christ and His gospel (and many do) they may put themselves in danger of going beyond mercy (compare Matt 12:22-34; Heb 2:2,3; 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:25-29; Prov 1:22-33).

**1:14** "Grace" – John 1:14,16; Rom 1:7; 2 Cor 8:9; etc.

"Exceedingly abundant" – Rom 5:20,21.

15 This *is* a trustworthy saying, and worthy of all acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might display complete patience, as a pattern for those who would afterwards believe on him for everlasting life. 17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God *who* alone *is* wise,

Faith and love are in Christ. His grace brings them to men. Only as we are united to Him do we truly believe the gospel and love God. All this is a gift from Christ (Phil 1:29; Eph 2:8; Gal 5:22; Rom 5:5).

**1:15** "Trustworthy saying" – 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8.

"Jesus came. . .to save sinners" – not to destroy them – Matt 1:21; 9:13; Luke 19:10; John 6:51; Rom 5:8. Sinners are what we all are (Rom 3:9,19,23). If Christ had not come into the world there would not have been salvation for anyone, ever (Acts 4:12).

"I am chief" – Eph 3:8. Paul was one of the greatest and holiest man who ever lived. But in this verse he gives his estimate of himself. He does not say "Once I was the chief", but "I am the chief." Paul was not saying that he was rolling in the mire of sin and doing more bad things than anyone else. He is revealing his conviction about the depraved nature he received at birth and the fact that this nature was still in him (Gal 5:16,17; Rom 7:18,25). He knew what this nature had led him to do in the past, and he knew that only abundant grace could save him and keep him saved. What do we think of ourselves? The answer we give to this question is exceedingly important (compare Luke 18:9-14).

**1:16** By showing mercy and saving Paul, the chief of sinners, Christ has shown that He can save any sinner. No one should despair thinking he is too bad and beyond the reach of Christ's grace and power.

"Patience in full measure" – 2 Pet 3:9,15. If Christ was not patient with sinful, weak, foolish human beings no one would ever be saved.

"Pattern" – Paul was an example of how God saves men – it is all a matter of grace and mercy towards those who do not deserve them in the least. To be saved we do not need to see a great light as Paul did or have the exact experiences he had, but we all need the same grace and mercy he received.

"Everlasting life" – John 3:15,16. This is received only by believing on Christ (John 1:12,13; 3:36).

**1:17** "King" – Ps 10:16; 24:10; 45:1; 47:2; Rev 19:16.

"Immortal" – 6:16; Rom 1:23.

"Invisible" – John 1:18.

"Who alone is wise" – Rom 11:33; 16:27; 1 Cor 1:25; Col 2:2,3; Jude 25.

"Glory" – the true and only God will have all the honor and glory for saving men from

be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18 This charge I set before you, son Timothy, in accordance with previous prophecies concerning you, that by them you might fight a good fight, 19 holding *on to* faith and a good conscience. Some have cast these away and made shipwreck concerning the faith. 20 Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have given over to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

**2** I exhort, therefore, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men, 2 for kings, and *for* all those

their sins, and Paul wanted Him alone to have it. Compare Eph 1:6,12,14; 2:9.

**1:18** "Prophecies" – Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:28; 14:3. Evidently when God called Timothy into His service He enabled Paul (or some other prophet) to understand God's call and speak of it. Compare Acts 13:1,2.

"Fight a good fight" – 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; Eph 6:11.

**1:19** Verse 5. Observe the connection between faith and a good conscience. That is, between faith and avoidance of sin. The only way to a good conscience is to refuse to do what conscience forbids.

"Made shipwreck concerning the faith" – not "their" faith – the word "their" is not in the Greek here. "The faith" is the body of Christian truth which God revealed and the apostles taught. In any case, true believers do not make shipwreck of their faith – Heb 10:39; Luke 22:31,32; John 10:27. But people who profess to be Christian can make shipwreck concerning the teachings of the faith and fall into grave heresies.

**1:20** Paul did not hesitate to name individuals when he thought churches should be warned against them. See also 2 Tim 2:17; 4:14,15.

"I have given over to Satan" – compare 1 Cor 5:4,5. Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44; etc. Note on blasphemy at Matt 9:3.

**2:1** "Requests. . . intercessions" – Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6. References on prayer at 1 Thess 5:17.

"Thanksgiving" – Eph 5:20; Col 1:12; 2:7; 3:16; 4:2; 1 Thess 5:18; Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; etc.

"All men" – our prayers should not be restricted to our own little circle of relatives and friends, but should be as wide as the world.

**2:2** Paul says pray for rulers, not criticize them. He indicates here that the prayers of Christian believers can influence the course of events in a country. This is true even when those in authority are not believers and may even be opposed to them (as was true in Paul's day). Perhaps one reason why believers in some countries are not able to live peaceful and quiet lives is that they fail to pray for their rulers as they ought.

in authority, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all, testimony *about this given* in due time.

7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am speaking the truth in Christ, *and* am not lying), *and* a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

8 So I want men everywhere to pray, lifting up

**2:3** Praying for unsaved and saved people pleases God. And what pleases God believers should be eager to do.

**2:4** Here is a clear statement of God's attitude to everyone in the world. He wants every person to learn the truth about Christ and receive His salvation. Compare 4:10; John 1:29; 3:16; Rom 11:32; 2 Cor 5:19; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 John 2:1; Ezek 18:32. This is just what we would expect from a God whose nature is love (1 John 4:8). Then why do so many people fail to know the truth and to receive salvation? See Matt 23:37; John 3:19,20; 5:40; 2 Thess 2:10-12. Also see notes at Rom 8:29.

**2:5** "One God" – 1:17; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:6; Isa 44:6,8; 45:5,18. In other places Paul taught that Christ is a member of the Godhead – 1:1,2; Rom 8:9; 9:5; Phil 2:6,11; Col 1:15; 2:9; Titus 2:13. He certainly is not denying that truth here, but speaking of Christ as man, the Word made flesh (John 1:14; Phil 2:7,8; Heb 2:14,17).

"Mediator" – in the New Testament this word is used only here and in Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24, but the same truth in different words is found everywhere. Compare John 14:6,13,14; Rom 5:1,2; Eph 2:18; Heb 4:14-16; 7:25; 10:19-22; 13:15; 1 John 2:1. Because Jesus is both God and man He understands both and can lay His hand on both and be the mediator Job desired (Job 9:32-35). There is no other person, no saint, no so-called "god" or godman who is a mediator between God and men. And since Jesus is a perfect mediator no other is needed. If all men, even if all who are called Christians, believed this what a difference it would make on earth!

**2:6** "Ransom" – Matt 20:28; Rom 3:24,25; Gal 1:4.

"For all" – Christ died for all men and the price He paid is sufficient for the redemption of the whole world. When people perish without salvation the fault is theirs not His.

"In due time" – Gal 4:4.

**2:7** "Appointed" – once again Paul puts emphasis on the fact that God had called him for this work and that he taught the truth. Compare Gal 1:11,12.

"Gentiles" – Gal 2:7,8.

**2:8** "Lifting up holy hands" – the practice of

holy hands, without anger and doubting.

9 In the same way *I want* women to dress in decent clothing, modestly and soberly; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly garments, 10 but with good works (which is proper for women professing godliness).

11 Let a woman learn in silence with complete submission. 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over the man, but to be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

lifting hands in prayer was common among Jews and those of other religions. Paul is not, however, suggesting that posture in prayer is the important thing. See Matt 14:19; 26:39; Luke 18:13; John 17:1; Acts 1:14 with 2:1; 20:36.

"Holy hands" – compare Ps 26:6; Isa 1:15; Jam 4:8. If we want God to answer our prayers we should make sure we are not holding on to some sin or other. Lifting up unholy hands to God is to insult Him. "Anger" against others is an obstacle to praying as we ought. Compare Matt 6:12,14,15; Eph 4:23,31,32; Col 3:13,15.

"Doubting" – the Greek word indicates "reasoning" or "questioning hesitation" – Jam 1:6-8.

**2:9,10** Does God really see and care how women dress? Certainly. That is why He inspired Paul to write as he did here. Compare Isa 3:16-23. See also 1 Pet 3:3,4. Women who are believers should dress modestly and decently because they have no business trying to copy worldly women or to be the center of attention or to attract men. They should not wear gold or expensive jewels or costly clothing because they live in a world where the poor and needy suffer without proper food and clothing. Also their Lord and Saviour, who was poor Himself (Matt 9:20; 2 Cor 8:9), has called them to a life of self-denial, not self-indulgence – Matt 10:38,39; Luke 14:33.

It is far better to give money to the poor or to use it to spread the gospel than to spend it on gold, jewelry and expensive clothes. God wants both believing women and men to be humble, modest and contented (6:6-8), and to lay up their treasures in heaven, not on earth (Matt 6:19-21). All believers should make sure they wear the "ornaments" and "clothing" of good deeds. **2:11,12** "Silence" – 1 Cor 14:34,35.

"Submission" – 1 Cor 11:3,7-10.

"Teach" – he meant public teaching when men were present. This is not a woman's task. But they have a teaching ministry to younger women (Titus 2:3-5). In the New Testament we have one example of a woman helping to explain the Scriptures to a man privately (Acts 18:26), but the author of Acts makes no comment on it.

**2:13,14** Paul gives two reasons why women should not teach publicly or have authority over men. Neither reason has anything to do with the customs of the times, or what men in the Roman Empire thought was

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 However, she will be saved in childbirth, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

**3** This *is* a true saying: If a man desires the position of overseer *in the church*, he desires a good work. 2 An overseer must be blameless, the husband of only one wife, temperate, sound in

fitting, or any such thing.

The first reason is that God made Adam first – Gen 2:17,18,21,22. Paul says that God thus showed He intended man to be in the position of authority over the woman.

Second, Satan deceived Eve, not Adam – Gen 3:1-6. It seems Paul is suggesting that in theological matters women are more easily led astray than men. This would fit the context and be a good reason why they should not be permitted to have authority over men or teaching positions in the church.

"Transgressor" – Paul does not mean that Adam did not become a transgressor (see Rom 5:12-14), only that Eve sinned first.

**2:15** Pain in childbirth is one of the penalties for Eve's sin – Gen 3:16. Here is an encouraging word to women who believe in Christ and show the proof of their faith in the way they live.

**3:1-7** The Greek word translated "overseer" (episkopos, translated "bishop" in the KJV) is used only five times in the New Testament – Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 2:25. Actually it is a combination of two Greek words meaning "one who watches over." The word was used to indicate the elders of local churches (compare Acts 20:17 with 20:28; Phil 1:1). The work of an overseer is a "noble" one, one of the noblest works on earth and it will bring great reward to those who do it well – 1 Pet 5:1-4. Because the office of overseer or elder is so important the qualifications are high. If churches ignore these qualifications and choose their overseers on other grounds they will be failing in a very important area of church life and will bring trouble on themselves.

**3:2** "Blameless" – anyone the church considers for the position of overseer must live in such a holy and honest and moral way that no one can justly charge him with wrong doing.

"Husband of one wife" – polygamy was not uncommon at that time. It is very likely that some men who had more than one wife became Christians. Such a person should not become an overseer. An overseer should be an example to the whole church of what God wants His people to be (1 Pet 5:3). And from the beginning God's plan for human beings was that a man should have only one wife – Gen 3:22-24; Matt 19:3-9. Some think that "husband of one wife" means an overseer should not be a man who has remarried under any circumstances.

thinking, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for sordid gain, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, 4 one who rules his own home well, keeping his children obedient with full respect 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own home, how will he take care of the church of God?),

And some think that Paul was teaching that bachelors should not be overseers in churches. However, he himself was single (1 Cor 7:8) and yet had a higher office than that of overseer which involved him in overseeing many churches (1 Cor 12:28; 2 Cor 11:28). Can we think it is possible that the man who wrote 1 Cor 7:1,8,26,27,32-34 is teaching here that unmarried men should not be overseers? See note also on v 4.

"Temperate" – not self-indulgent.

"Sound in thinking" – 1 Cor 9:27; 2 Tim 1:7.

"Of good behaviour" – it is not enough to know the Word of God or to teach the Word of God, we must behave as the Word of God says we should.

"Hospitable" – he must welcome people into his home and show them kindness – see Heb 13:2. In Titus it is even more strongly put – "a lover of hospitality" – that is, one who loves to show hospitality, not to receive it. He must not selfishly withdraw from those who may need his help.

"Able to teach" – to teach God's Word. This means that overseers must know God's Word – how can they teach something they don't know themselves? And they must have some God-given ability in teaching.

**3:3** "Not given to wine" – not addicted to wine. Rom 14:21 and Eph 5:18 give us the best principles to follow. Every believer should give himself to the Lord, not to wine.

"Not violent" – God's servants must not abuse others in any way. And, of course, he must not hire others to be violent toward anyone. A person who does such a thing is not worthy of the name "Christian" and must absolutely have no place of leadership in the church.

"Not greedy for sordid gain" – money or property obtained in base and dishonest ways disqualifies anyone from being a church leader. Not only so, a desire for such things can ruin him forever – 6:5; John 12:6. May every Christian renounce such greed and avoid it like poison.

"Gentle, not quarrelsome" – 2 Tim 2:24,25; Matt 11:29.

"Not a lover of money" – 6:6-10; Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13,14. How many present leaders in churches the would be excluded if this principle were put in practice?

**3:4** "One who rules his own home well, keeping his children obedient" – see also Titus 1:6. If a man cannot take his rightful place in the home, he shows himself incapable of rightly leading the church. This is an important test in determining whether

6 not a new *convert*, or he may get puffed up with pride and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must have a good testimony among outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

8 Likewise, the deacons *must be* honorable, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not

a person is qualified to be an overseer. Does the mention of children here mean that no one should be an overseer who does not have them, even though he is married? This cannot be. Paul means, of course, if he has children he must be able to control them. Compare "husband of one wife" in v 2. If Paul is not saying an overseer must have children he is not saying he must be married. The two statements are in the same category.

**3:6** "Not a new convert" – Paul immediately tells us why. It is better not to have overseers than to appoint men to that position who have no experience. Before being laced in positions of authority believers need time to grow spiritually and become established in God's truth. Otherwise they will not be able to teach others, or to lead the church. Also those who are still spiritual infants may get puffed up with pride if they are put in positions of leadership.

"The condemnation of the devil" – or "the devil's judgment" – the meaning may be this: Satan is constantly accusing believers to God (Rev 12:10). If he sees pride and conceit in a church leader this gives him grounds for condemning him to God's face. Note on "devil" at Matt 4:1.

**3:7** "He must have a good testimony among outsiders" – Col 4:5; 1 Thess 4:12; 1 Cor 10:32; 1 Pet 2:12; Matt 5:16. This is very important indeed. It means that his life (and not merely his words) must be a testimony to those who are not believers; he must have a good reputation. If a church selects a man as an overseer whom outsiders know to be crooked or immoral, etc, they may accuse him and bring disgrace on him and the whole church. And this may be an obstacle to any of them believing in Christ and joining the church.

"The snare of the devil" – compare Luke 22:31,33; Ps 91:3; 124:7; 2 Tim 2:26.

In Titus 1:6-9 once again Paul gave a list of qualities necessary for an elder, mentioning some of the same things in the list here in 1 Timothy, using the same words, or using different words to express the same qualities. And He added some qualities – and elder's children should be "faithful children not accused of wildness or unruliness"; he should not be "soon angry"; he should be a "lover of good"; and he must be "upright" and "holy"; and hold firmly to the "faithful word."

**3:8** "Deacons" – this word comes from a Greek word meaning "to serve." The early churches had both elders ("overseers" or "bishops") and deacons – Phil 1:1. The



greedy for sordid gain, 9 but holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these *men* also first be tested, *and* when *found* blameless, let them serve as deacons.

11 *Also their wives must be* honorable, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

12 Let the deacons *each* be the husband of only one wife, ruling their children and their own homes well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

14 I write these things to you, hoping to come elders had the oversight and spiritual care of the church, and had to be able to teach God's Word (v 2). Deacons did other kinds of service. Compare Acts 6:1-6.

"Honourable" – if men are not worthy of respect they are not worthy to hold any position in the church.

"Not greedy for sordid gain" – in this regard the very least servant in the church must be as clear of this as the principal overseer – v 3. Crooked people in any position in the church (or in any organization) can play havoc and bring both material and spiritual loss to its members. And the sad fact is, this qualification for leadership is very often ignored in churches and organizations.

**3:9** "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" – 1:5,19. "Mystery of the faith" means God's revelation of what should be believed. Deacons and other church leaders (and every member, for that matter) must sincerely believe these truths, and not merely pay lip service to them.

**3:10** "Tested" – before any person is given responsibility in the church, those who consider appointing that person should be satisfied that he has the qualifications for that position. If they appoint someone who is not worthy or if they appoint someone for any reasons other than those God has revealed in this chapter the church will have trouble.

**3:11** The wives of deacons or any women in the church who serve in any way (Romans 16:1) must also have a good reputation among the people.

**3:12** Verses 2,4.

**3:13** A strong and assured faith will come to those who serve Christ faithfully, who received the power needed for that service from Him, and who are devoted to His work. Compare Heb 6:10,11.

**3:14,15** "The house of God" – here probably means "God's household" – Eph 2:19; Heb 3:6. The church which Christ has founded and which He nourishes is God's family. Compare Eph 3:14,15; Matt 12:46-50; Heb 2:11. As is true in all families those in God's family must learn how to behave.

"The pillar and ground of the truth" – Paul here is not speaking of some local church or other. Some of those, unfortunately, are not pillars and foundations of the truth but of false teaching. And Paul is not speaking

to you shortly. 15 But *in case* I am delayed, *I am writing* so that you may know how you should behave in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God appeared in the flesh, *was* declared righteous by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, *and* received up into glory.

**4** Now the Spirit clearly states that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving

of some Church denomination. Paul here means the Church which is Christ's body, the temple of God. Christ is the Head of this church and its foundation and its cornerstone (Eph 1:22,23; 2:20-22; 1 Cor 3:11; Col 1:18). It is the church which Christ is building for Himself (Matt 16:18). Only those who have been born again by the Spirit of God through faith in Christ are members of this church (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; 1 Cor 12:12,13). This is the only church which is build on the solid foundation of God's truth. In God's hands this church becomes the "pillar and ground" that bears the truth (God's Word) before the world. It becomes the foundation of the truth because Christ is the Head of it and the foundation of it.

**3:16** "Mystery of godliness" – Paul has been speaking of the behavior of those belonging to God and His church. This, as all other truth God has revealed, is a "mystery." See Rom 16:25,26; Eph 3:2-6; 5:32; Col 1:26,27. In the New Testament a mystery is a truth that men could not know unless God revealed it. The Greek word translated "godliness" means piety, devoutness. As used in the New Testament it means living in accordance with the teachings God has revealed, with true reverence for God. Compare 2:2; 4:7,8; 6:3,5,6,11; 2 Tim 3:5; Titus 1:1.

"God appeared" – Christ was the incarnation of God, God appearing in human form – John 1:14. See notes and references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

"In the flesh" – John 1:14; Rom 8:3; Heb 2:14; 10:5.

"The Spirit" – Matt 3:16; 12:28; John 1:32-34; Rom 1:4. In the life of Christ and in His resurrection from the dead God's Spirit revealed that Christ is the holy, spotless, righteous Son of God.

"Angels" – note at Gen 16:7. Angels were present at the birth of Christ, at His temptation in the wilderness, at His resurrection and at His ascension (Luke 2:9-15; Mark 1:13; Matt 28:5; Acts 1:10,11; Heb 1:6).

"To the Gentiles" – Matt 28:18,19; Eph 3:8,9; Col 1:23.

"Believed" – Acts 4:4; 5:14; 9:42; 11:21; 14:1; 17:12; 18:8; 19:18; 21:20. "Glory" – Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; Eph 1:20,21.

**4:1** "Spirit" – God's Spirit revealed the future. Compare Isaiah 46:10. God knew



attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared *as* with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God *is* good, and nothing *is* to be refused, if received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

6 If you remind the brethren of these things, in advance that false teachers and false prophets would come, so in many places in the Bible He warned His people about them – Matt 7:15; 24:4,5,24; Acts 20:29,30; Romans 16:16,17; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Tim 3:1; 4:3; 2 Pet 2:1; etc.

"The faith" – here the meaning is the body of truth God had revealed, the truths accepted by true believers.

"Seducing spirits" – Matt 4:24. We must understand that in the unseen world of spirits some spirits try to teach Christians false doctrines to lead them away from the truth of God. Compare Eph 6:11,12.

**4:2** Paul now speaks about those men whom demons use to introduce false teachings into the churches.

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy" – they themselves do not necessarily believe the things they teach. Also it is no problem for them to tell lies. In this way they reveal whose children they are – John 8:44. A "seared" conscience is one that is dead and silent. Compare Eph 4:19.

**4:3** We should not think that these are the only two things these false teachers forbid. There are others besides these. But these two are enough to show that their teachings are not based on the Word of God. Actually they raise their teachings above the Bible. This is one of the very dangerous things about all false teachings.

"Forbidding to marry" – see Gen 1:27,28; 2:22-24; Matt 19:4-6; Heb 13:4. "Forbidding" is a strong word. Compare the language Paul used in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 (7:2,25,26, etc). Even at a time of crisis for the church he did not forbid to marry, but only gave wise suggestions. See also Heb 13:4. No one on earth has divine authority to forbid anyone else to marry. There is no suggestion of such a thing in the Bible, and here Paul is saying that this teaching comes, not from God, but from demons and hypocritical liars.

"Foods" – Gen 1:29; 9:3; Mark 7:19; Acts 10:9-16; Rom 14:14,20. Observe the word "commanding." Trying to exercise authority over others in the matter of food – telling them what they must eat or when they must eat it – is not in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament. Compare the way Paul taught in Romans chapter 14. According to the New Testament there is no longer any kind of food that God forbids. Some people in almost every religion on earth believe that if someone abstains from certain kinds of food and does

you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, nourished by the words of faith and good doctrine that you have followed. 7 But reject godless *stories* and old wives' tales, and, *instead*, train yourself in godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, holding promise for the present life and for that which is to come.

9 This *is* a trustworthy saying and worthy of full acceptance. 10 For this *reason* we both labour not marry then he is more spiritual and holy than other people.

Perhaps this is one reason why demons want such teachings given out. They will seek ways to promote a false and destructive kind of righteousness and holiness among men. Also they much prefer to have people occupied with foods or austerities or penances or denying themselves this or that thing than with the Word of the living God. Compare Col 2:20-23. The teaching that such things help to make us acceptable to God has its source in evil spirits. We become acceptable to God only by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and having our life in Him. We need no commands except His. We need no righteousness except His.

"Thanksgiving" – Matt 14:19; 26:26; Rom 14:6; Col 2:6,7; 1 Thess 5:18.

**4:4** "Good" – Gen 1:1,31. Paul is reminding Timothy that God is the great Creator of all things, and there was nothing bad in anything He created. In nothing He has appointed for men (such as marriage) is there the slightest thing contrary to holiness and spirituality. And no kind of food is forbidden.

**4:5** God's Word has consecrated every kind of food for the use of mankind. See the references on verse 3. A prayer of thanksgiving makes the food "clean" and holy for the those who offer the prayer.

**4:6** "Good servant of Jesus Christ" – in the church every teacher, every leader, every preacher, every evangelist must labor to be like this with all his mind, heart, strength and spirit. If they want to be like this they must hold on to the truths God has revealed and with faith and courage declare them to others.

**4:7** "Godless stories" – 1:4.

"Old wives' tales" – Paul means religious stories which are not true, ancient legends which have no basis in reality and history.

"Godliness" – Paul uses the Greek word to indicate a true Christian life put into practice, the life of faith every Christian must learn to live. This means they must train themselves, discipline themselves in doing so. Compare Heb 5:14; 1 Cor 9:24-27. The servant of Christ must discipline himself in mental and spiritual matters as the able athlete trains himself in physical matters.

**4:8** "Holding promise" – godliness is what brings God's blessings now and in the future. The ungodly have no right to expect any good thing from God either now or then.

**4:10** "Labour" – 1 Cor 15:10; Col 1:29.

and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no man look down on your youthfulness, but be an example to the believers in speech, in behaviour, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come,

"The living God" – 3:15. The believer in Christ has a "living hope" in the "living God" (1 Pet 1:3).

"Saviour" – Paul is not saying that all men will be saved. He is saying that God is the one who protects all and provides for all until it is time for them to leave this earth (Acts 14:17; 17:25-27). Not only that – He stands ready to forgive and to give His eternal salvation to all who will turn to Him for it (Isa 45:22). Believers in Christ have turned to Him so He is Savior to them in every possible meaning of the word (1:1).

**4:11** "Command and teach" – true servants of Christ can speak with authority. They should do so. They represent Christ on earth. They have God's own revelation of the truth about spiritual matters. And they know they have them. They are not teaching doubtful matters or invented stories or old wives' tales. And they must not create the impression that they are teaching doubtful matters. See 1 Pet 4:11.

"These things" – things that God has revealed, not things like 4:3. No church leader has any right or authority to command or teach anything that God has not revealed in His Word.

**4:12** "Youthfulness" – Timothy, the leader of the church at Ephesus, would have been younger than many of the Christians there. But God had appointed him to that position, so he must speak the Word of God with authority and not permit anyone to look down on him because he was younger than they.

"Be an example" – something every Christian leader should be (1 Pet 5:3; 1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17; 2 Thess 3:7). If he is not a good example he should not be a leader.

"Love. . .purity" – Paul here lists things essential to a full Christian life. It is not possible to take any one of them away and still have that kind of life. The sad fact is that some preachers show great zeal in one or another of these matters and neglect others.

**4:13** "Reading" – the Greek word here as used in the New Testament meant the public reading of the Scriptures in the church or synagogue. This was a practice of the Jews when they came together for public worship. See Luke 4:16,17; Ezra 8:1-3; Acts 13:15. After the formation of the church Christians retained this practice (Col 4:16,17; 1 Thess 5:27). This practice was very important and beneficial in those days because not every Christian had a copy of the Bible, and even if everyone could have obtained his own copy, many of them were not able to read. Today also in many parts

apply yourself to reading, to exhortation, to instruction. 14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you that was given to you by prophecy, with the elders laying hands on *you*.

15 Meditate on these things, *and* give yourself wholly to them, that your progress might be evident to everyone. 16 Watch yourself and *your*

of the world the practice of public reading of Scripture can be very beneficial.

"Instruction" – observe that a pastor is to both preach and teach. Preaching is directed to the will and conscience, as well as to the mind of the hearer. Teaching is instructing people in the truths of the Christian faith. This is directed more to the minds of believers (but, of course, should not ignore the will). Both of these have an essential place in the ministry of the Christian pastor.

**4:14** "Neglect" – it is possible to neglect any of the gifts God gives to men. Compare Matt 25:24-27.

"Gift" – 2 Tim 1:6. Paul is speaking of a spiritual ability. See Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 1:7; 12:4-11,28; 14:1.

"By prophecy" – 1:18. The ability to give a prophetic message was one of the gifts given by the Holy Spirit – 1 Cor 14:29-31.

"Hands on you" – this occurred in the church at Ephesus when the elders met together and consecrated Timothy to the ministry. Compare Acts 13:3. God can and does give spiritual gifts and abilities to His servants without anyone laying hands on them. But the laying on of hands as practiced in the early church was an indication of the unity and harmony that existed between God and believers in the appointing of people for special service.

**4:15** "Wholly" – service not performed wholeheartedly can never please God. Every servant of Christ should have the same strong desire that Paul had – Acts 20:24; Col 1:29.

**4:16** Every servant of Christ must be very careful about how he lives and what he teaches. It is not enough to live a holy life if our teaching is not right and it is not enough to teach correct doctrine if our lives are unholy.

"Save. . .those who hear you" – compare Ezek 33:6,9. God alone is the Savior (1:1). And Paul was sure that Timothy had already been saved, had already been born again and received eternal life (1:2). God's servants by their method of preaching and living can never earn salvation (Eph 2:8,9). But by the grace of God they can go forward in faith and work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). This is very necessary (Col 1:23; Heb 3:6,14; 6:12). And by watching themselves and their teaching they can save themselves from God's severe chastisement. The Greek word translated "save" is used in the New Testament to indicate salvation from sin, but it also means to be saved from various dangers and ills.

doctrine. Continue in it, for in doing this you will save both yourself, and those who hear you.

**5** Do not rebuke an older man, but plead *with him as if he was your father, and treat the younger men as brothers, 2 the older women as mothers, and the younger as sisters, with complete purity.*

**3** Honour widows who are widows indeed. **4** But if any widow has children or nephews, let them first learn to practice piety at home, and to repay their parents, for that is good and acceptable before God. **5** Now she who is a widow indeed, and alone, trusts in God, and continues in requests and prayers night and day. **6** But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. **7** And command these things, so that they may be blameless. **8** But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he

"Save. . . your hearers" – Jam 5:19,20. This means that the faithful servant of God will be an instrument in God's hands, that God will use him either to bring others to salvation or to keep them moving forward in faith. Is there any greater or more blessed work possible to men?

**5:1,2** The pastor whom Christ has appointed as the leader of the church has authority, but he should not regard the church as his own little kingdom and try to rule it like a dictator. He should recognize that the church is like a home, like a family (3:15) and behave accordingly (1 Pet 5:1-3).

**5:3** The church and its pastor have a responsibility to look after the poor in the church. This is especially true when the poor are widows who have no resources and cannot work.

**5:4** Notice carefully the responsibility that children and grandchildren have toward needy parents and grandparents.

"Practice piety" – that is, show their devotion to God by living in the home in a way pleasing to God. How important this is for every believer! We must not only believe the truth, we must also practice it among those nearest to us. We must not only know that God has said something, we must do what He has said. This is the only possible way to please God. If children or grandchildren who can help a widowed mother or grandmother who is in need do not do so, they are sinning against God.

"Repay" – children may think they owe their parents nothing, but God has a different view of this matter.

**5:5** Paul is speaking about Christian widows. If they are in need and there is no one to help them, the church or an individual in the church must do so. This is the way God has appointed to meet their needs.

**5:6** "Dead while she lives" – this means such a person is separated from the life of God and spiritually dead (Eph 2:1; 4:18). This is true not only of those widows who live for

has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.

**9** Do not let a widow less than sixty years old be taken into the number. *She must* have been the wife of one man, **10** *and* be well spoken of in the matter of good works, if she has raised children, if she has shown hospitality, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has helped those in trouble, if she has carefully sought *to do every sort of* good work.

**11** But refuse the younger widows, for when they are overcome with desires against Christ, they will want to marry, **12** being condemned, because they disregard their first assurance. **13** And besides they learn *to be* idle, going about from house to house, and not only idle, but also gossips and busybodies, speaking things which they should not. **14** So I want the younger women to marry, bear children, manage the house, *and* give no

pleasure but of anyone who does so. Anyone without Christ is dead, no matter how much he or she seems to be alive. Sometimes those who live for pleasure instead of for God may think they are very much alive. Why? See Jer 17:9.

**5:8** "The faith" – Paul uses the word here to indicate the sum of Christian belief and practice. The heart of this is love. If anyone does not put love into practice he is denying the faith (1 John 3:16-18; 4:7,8). Even many unbelievers who totally reject Christ take care of needy relatives. Can believers in Christ even think of not doing so?

**5:9,10** "The number" – or "list" of widows. It is not likely that Paul is saying that the church should not help widows under 60 who are in need, or that even though a widow is in need in order to receive help she must meet all the conditions in these verses. Therefore the widows in the list most likely were those whom the church had appointed to serve in some way or other. Such widows must meet certain conditions, and have certain qualifications just as the elders and deacons in the church must have (3:1-12).

"Shown hospitality" – Rom 12:13.

"Washed the saints' feet" – John 13:5.

**5:11,12** All the widows on the list must be dedicated to Christ and consecrated by the church for service. Remarriage in itself is not wrong but if those widows dedicated to Christ's service remarry it was not likely that they would be able to devote themselves fully to their service and might even leave it altogether. Leaving the work of Christ which we have promised to do is no small sin. In this way God's judgment could come on such widows.

**5:13** This is one reason why younger widows (v 14) should not be appointed to serve in the church.

**5:14** Paul is saying it is far better for young widows to remarry than to be dedicated to service in the church, promise to do it, and then break their promise, leave that

occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully. 15 For some have already turned aside after Satan.

16 If any man or woman who believes has widows, let them assist them, and do not let the church be burdened, so it can assist those who are truly widows.

17 Let the elders who manage *the church* well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, You shall not muzzle the ox that treads out the grain.

And, The labourer *is* worthy of his wages.

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder, except in the presence of two or three witnesses. 20 Those who sin rebuke in the presence of everyone, so that others also may be afraid.

service and remarry.

"The enemy" – anyone who is opposed to Christ and His Church. This kind of people are always looking for opportunities to criticize and find fault with Christians. Christians must be careful not to give them opportunities.

**5:15** It seems clear that some widows had already promised to serve in some way in the church, then were overcome by sensual desires (v 11) and left Christ's service.

"After Satan" – by rejecting God's will in order to go after sensual pleasure they were following Satan. To follow the pleasures and sins of this world is to go after our worst enemy. See notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10.

**5:16** Women who are able to help the widows among their relatives are to take this responsibility just like everyone else. Compare verses 4 and 8.

**5:17** "Double honour" – the next verse shows that Paul means financial assistance as well as other kinds of honor.

**5:18** Deut 25:4; Luke 10:7; 1 Cor 9:9-12.

**5:19** Sometimes an innocent servant of Christ may be accused of some wrong doing or other. If others believe such accusations that person's service can be grievously affected. So Paul gives this wise instruction here.

"Two or three" – Deut 19:15; Matt 18:16; 2 Cor 13:1.

**5:20** To safeguard the holiness and purity of the church, discipline is necessary. If known sin in the church is not resisted and publicly rebuked then that sin may bring ruin to the church. See Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:1-5,13; Matt 18:15-17. One way to make God's children fear to sin is to expose their sins publicly. Of course great care must be taken in a matter like this and God's love even for the sinful must not be forgotten.

**5:21** See how strongly, how emphatically Paul writes here. He knew that showing favoritism is a very common matter even in churches. Many church leaders will defend sinning relatives or close friends and try to cover up their sin instead of exposing and

21 I charge *you* in the presence of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that you observe these things without showing favoritism, doing nothing from partiality.

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, and do not share in other men's sins. Keep yourself pure.

23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

24 Some men's sins are evident, preceding *them* to judgment, and they follow some *men*. 25 So also good works are evident beforehand, and those that are not cannot be hidden.

**6** As many slaves as are *still* under the yoke must count their masters worthy of complete

rebuking it. But if others sin they may behave very harshly toward them. This is very wrong and can work great harm to the church. Every servant of Christ should wholeheartedly obey Paul's instructions here. **5:22** "Hands" – 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6. Perhaps Paul is speaking of the appointment of elders and deacons. If people are appointed to these positions before they prove themselves worthy of them they may later bring great harm to the church. Compare 3:10. If the leaders of the church appoint those as elders and deacons who are living a sinful life, those leaders will be responsible for the results. Church leaders themselves must lead holy lives and must appoint as elders and deacons only those who lead holy lives.

**5:23** "Frequent infirmities" – Paul had the gift of healing (Acts 28:8,9) but neither he nor anyone else was able to restore Timothy to full health. This is very significant when we study the subject of the sickness and health of believers. Compare 2 Tim 4:20; Phil 2:27; 2 Cor 12:7-10. It is possible that Timothy's physical problems came from drinking impure water. In such a case adding a little wine to it would be beneficial. Adding some wine to drinking water was a common practice in those days. Notice here the word "little." See 3:3,8; Gen 9:21; Prov 20:1; 23:30,31.

**5:24,25** Sometimes neither the good deeds nor the bad deeds of a person are obvious to the general public. Men can for a time hide either their secret sins or their good works (Ps 90:8; Eccl 12:14; Matt 6:1-4). For this reason church leaders should not be hasty in appointing people as elders and deacons. Eventually everything that people do will be revealed – Matt 10:26; Luke 8:17; 12:2,3; Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5.

**6:1** Eph 6:5,6 (notes); Col 3:22; Titus 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18.

"Blasphemed" – if Christian servants or slaves did not show respect to their masters but rebelled against them this could very well be the result. For some unbelievers might think that Christianity was

respect, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed. 2 And those who have believing masters, should not regard *them* lightly because they are brethren, but rather serve *them*, because those who are benefitted are believers and loved. Teach and encourage these things.

3 If any man teaches otherwise, and does not consent to wholesome words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the teaching that is according to godliness, 4 he is proud, understanding nothing, but has a morbid interest

consistent with disrespect and rebellion and so speak ill of the God that Christian servants and slaves worshipped.

**6:2** Christian servants or slaves thinking that their believing masters were kind and merciful might try to take advantage of them and not do their work properly. This sort of thing is unworthy of any Christian in any job.

"Brethren" – when a master and a slave both believe in Christ they become spiritual brothers.

"Loved" – is it possible for slaves actually to love their masters? Yes, in Christ this is possible – Gal 3:28; Col 3:11. Christ's commandment to love one another (John 13:34) was given to all believers in all circumstances of life.

**6:3,4** "If . . . otherwise" – compare 1:3,10,11; 4:1. Here Paul is speaking of those who are Christians in name only, but it can be applied to others as well. He is here emphasizing once again the importance of the truths Christ has revealed to the apostles. Some people say that their intellect and knowledge keep them from believing these doctrines of the Bible. The fact is that what causes men to reject the truth of Christ is not that they know too much but that they know too little. They may be highly educated, but in spiritual matters they have no experience or understanding. They are in darkness and ignorance – John 3:1,9,20; 1 Cor 1:18-22; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 4:18. But even though they do not have even the beginning of wisdom (Prov 1:7) they may be proud and think they are very wise.

"Morbid interest" – Paul is speaking of the condition of those who are spiritually sick. Instead of accepting the truth of God which is able to make them well they show themselves ready to fight against it.

**6:5** "Corrupt minds" – 2 Tim 3:8. A mind that opposes the truth of God is not thinking rightly about spiritual matters. A new mind is one of the great blessing Christ gives to us (Rom 12:2; Col 3:10).

"Destitute of the truth" – the truth was before them. They had heard it and professed to believe it. But they had let Satan take away the truth from their minds. Compare Matt 13:18,19.

Observe how some who call themselves Christians reveal their corrupt minds – to them their profession of Christianity is only a means to get money or some other benefit. See Acts 8:18-23; John 12:6;

in debates and quarrels about words, from which come envy, strife, abusive language, evil conjectures, 5 *and* empty disputations from men of corrupt minds who are destitute of the truth and suppose that *financial* gain is godliness. Keep away from such people.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. 8 So having food and clothing let us be content with that. 9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and

2 Pet 2:15; Jude 11. Instead of leaving everything they have for Christ (Luke 14:25-27,33; Phil 3:8) they desire to take whatever they can from Christ's people. It is a horrible thing that people in churches and Christian organizations show this kind of mind. Some are willing to lie, cheat, and deceive in order to get money, or to steal it outright. They have forgotten (if they ever knew) that it is far better to be a poor man than a liar (Prov 19:22).

**6:6** Phil 4:11,12; Heb 13:5. Christ's believers should desire to be rich not in material things but in spiritual. Only in these is their eternal benefit (Matt 6:19-21). Contentment is the result of confidence and trust in God. The way to contentment is believing that God has put us in the place and position and circumstances He knows are best for us and has given us what He knows we should have, neither more nor less.

Contentment will keep us from complaining, and from going after greedy desires (which are the same as idolatry – Eph 5:5; Col 3:5). It will keep us from allowing material things to rule us. Contentment is a very important quality in a servant of Christ. Refusing to be contented is the same as criticizing God's ways and His behavior toward us. It leads to the sin of murmuring against God. Compare Ex 14:11,12; 15:22-24; 16:2,3,8; Num 14:3. **6:7** Job 1:21; Psalm 49:16-20; Eccl 5:15. During our time on this earth the only things we can store up are the things we send to heaven before us (Matt 6:19-21).

**6:8** Paul means the things that are really essential to life. Here he does not even speak of a house of one's own – possibly because one can live his whole life on earth without owning a house.

**6:9** People (including some Christians) may think that running after money is a very wise thing to do. But such people are terribly deceived, and are in the way that leads to destruction. Desire for riches is a trap laid by the devil, a temptation he puts to ruin us. This desire never brings contentment, but only increases as possessions increase and at last it leads to destruction (Matt 7:13; 2 Thess 1:8,9; Psalm 49:20; 73:18,19). Consider some Bible examples of this – Balaam (2 Pet 2:15), Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20-27), Judas (Matt 26:14-16; John 12:4-6). Do we want to end up as they did? If not, let us not permit desires like theirs to rule us.



a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful desires which drown men in destruction and ruin. 10 For the love of money is a root of all evils. Some while coveting it have gone astray from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But you, O man of God, flee *from* these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, *and* meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which also you were called, and have made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I charge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *in the presence of* Christ Jesus who,

*standing* before Pontius Pilate, gave witness *in* a good confession, 14 that you keep *this* command without spot, blamelessly, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which in his own time he will reveal. *He is* the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach, whom no man has seen or can see. To him be eternal honour and power. Amen.

17 Command those who are rich in this world not to be arrogant, and not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 *Command* them to do good,

**6:10** The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil because it turns us away from God and spiritual matters to material things, and lets them have power over us. See Matt 6:22-24. Love of money is actually hatred toward God. If we keep the command in Matt 22:37 there will be no room in our hearts for the love of money. On the other hand if we allow the love of money to possess us there will be no room in our hearts for the love of God. One of the sins (possibly the principal sin) that made Judas Iscariot like a demon was the love of money (John 6:70,71; 12:6; Matt 26:14-16). If we have any spiritual understanding, any sense at all, will we want to follow that path?

"Gone astray from the faith" - v 21; 1:19; 4:1,6; 5:8. Those whose God is money will not have any desire to follow the way of Christ, and will go off to wander in their own ways.

"Pierced. . . sorrows" - running after money is the same as chasing after grief and misery. The rewards wealth gives its lovers are sadness, delusion, dissatisfaction, and eternal loss and ruin. See James 5:1-3; Matt 19:22; Luke 6:24,25; 12:16-21; 16:19-31.

**6:11** Every servant of Christ, every believer must flee from the temptation to go after money and property. If they do not they are likely to fall into the trap of the devil (v 9). Let every one of us turn our back to all of that and go after the true riches Paul speaks of here - the fruit of God's Spirit (Gal 5:22,23). If we do so we will not need to worry about the necessities of life (Matt 6:33; Phil 4:19), and will have contentment along with them.

**6:12** "Fight" - Eph 6:10-18; 1 Cor 9:26; 2 Tim 4:7.

"Take hold" - God has placed the blessings of eternal life within our reach but we must take them for ourselves. The true Christian life is true life, not merely existing without purpose. God has given us many blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3), but we must realize they are ours, claim them, and make use of them.

"Eternal life" - v 19. Note at John 3:16.

"Good confession" - compare Matt 10:32,33; Rom 10:9,10; 1 John 4:15.

**6:13** 5:21. "Gives life" - Acts 17:25.

"Pilate" - Matt 27:2. In John 18:36,37 see the good confession Christ gave.

**6:14** "Commandment" - perhaps here Paul means the whole way of life that Christ appointed for His disciples. Certainly that is the theme in verses 11,12.

"Appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" - the second coming of Christ (2 Tim 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; Matt 24:30,31; Acts 1:11).

**6:15** "His own time" - Matt 24:36. Compare Gal 4:4; John 7:30. God has a perfect time for everything He does. Here Paul calls God the "only" Sovereign, the "King of kings and Lord of lords." Rev 1:5 says that Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth and Rev 19:16 calls Him the "King of kings and Lord of lords." Is there a contradiction here? Absolutely not. The clear meaning is that Jesus Christ is the incarnation of God. See John 1:1,14; Phil 2:6; etc.

**6:16** See 1:17. "Light" - 1 John 1:5; John 1:4,5.

**6:17** It is possible for wealthy people to fall into the error of thinking that they have no need of God. Compare Ps 49:6; 73:3-12.

"Uncertain riches" - Prov 23:4,5; 28:20. God can take away from men whatever He has enabled them to obtain. Such a result is fitting for those who are indifferent toward God.

"Gives us richly" - 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19. God is not a miser who holds tightly to whatever He has. Our hope and confidence should be in Him, not in people or in the material things which appear to our eyes.

"To enjoy" - Eccl 2:24-26; Acts 14:17. God wants people to enjoy what He has given them and He does not want them to think it is wrong for them to enjoy them. This does not mean living in luxury while others live in poverty - 2 Cor 8:13,14.

**6:18,19** Matt 19:21; 6:19,20; Luke 14:33. "Rich in good deeds" - in these verses we have true spiritual riches. Compare Luke 12:21. Those who use their riches only for themselves are actually throwing them away.

"Share" - what we do now, what we give now has a profound influence on our eternal future. Compare Matt 25:19; Luke 19:15. It is a very sad thing that many people who could do much good with their money selfishly use it only for themselves or spend it



and to be rich in good deeds, ready to give, willing to share, 19 *and so* storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.  
20 O Timothy, guard that which has been

for nothing of real value. See references on giving in the note on 2 Cor 9:15.  
**6:20** "Guard that. . . entrusted to you" – 2 Tim 2:14. Paul is speaking of the truths God has revealed, of the Gospel (1:11). We should all regard this as of the highest value and see to it that neither Satan nor anyone else takes it away from us.  
"Falsely called knowledge" – v 3,4;

entrusted to you, *and* avoid ungodly empty babbling, and *the* opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge, 21 which some have professed *to possess* and have gone astray from the faith. Grace *be* with you. Amen.  
Col 2:8; 1 Cor 1:17-25.  
**6:21** "Professed" – compare Rom 1:22. Some people claim to be very wise and think they have no need for the gospel of Christ. They are on the borders of destruction.  
"Gone astray from the faith" – v 10; 4:1.  
"Grace" – only by the grace of God can any servant of Christ put into practice the instructions given in this letter.

# The Second Letter of the Apostle Paul to TIMOTHY

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime about 67 AD.

**Themes:**

Paul is in prison, being persecuted for preaching the gospel of Christ. His friends and helpers have forsaken him (1:15; 4:16). He knows that the time of his death is near (4:6). But in the midst of what could have been depressing circumstances Paul is not discouraged or sad or afraid or defeated – in fact, just the opposite. He reveals his hope and confidence to Timothy and writes to encourage him in the Lord's service. By the inspiration of God's Spirit he points out how people will be in the future, and emphasizes again the importance of right doctrine, correct teaching, holy living, faithful work, and courageous preaching.

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**1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To *my* dearly loved son Timothy: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve, as *my* forefathers *did*, with a clear conscience, that night and day in my prayers I constantly remember you. 4 Recalling your tears, I have a great desire to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5 For I remember the sincere faith that is in you, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, in you also. 6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has

**1:1** Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1. "According to" – Paul's apostleship had to do with one great fact above all: the fact that God has promised eternal life to those who believe in Christ (compare Rom 1:2; Titus 1:2; 1 John 5:9-12).

**1:2** 1 Tim 1:2.

**1:3** "I thank God" – Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2.

"Forefathers" – God's servants in the Old Testament. Paul indicates his conviction that true religion and service for God had their roots there, that his faith and service was a continuation of theirs.

"Clear conscience" – Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Cor 4:4; 2 Cor 1:12.

"Night and day" – Paul was in prison (v 8) but his ministry was not bound. He had plenty of time for prayer and he constantly used the opportunity.

**1:4** "Tears" – Paul is probably referring to their last parting. Timothy's tears revealed his love for Paul and what Paul stood for. Compare Acts 20:37,38.

"A great desire to see you" – Rom 1:11; 1 Thess 3:6; Phil 1:8.

**1:5** Timothy's father and paternal grandfather were Greeks and may not have been believers, but his mother and maternal grandmother were Jews. Both his mother and grandmother had believed the gospel of Christ (Acts 16:1-3).

"Sincere faith" – 1 Tim 1:5.

**1:6** By the "gift" he does not mean a natural ability but a spiritual ability which God gave Timothy at a specific time. God's servants may neglect such an ability or let its bright flame die down. So Paul gives this exhortation. Timothy received a gift by the laying on of hands of the elders of the church (1 Tim 4:14). We do not know whether Paul is referring to that occasion here. Two separate laying on of hands for different purposes was not unknown. See Acts 9:17; 13:3.

**1:7** "Spirit of fear" – it would seem from this that Timothy was tempted to let the flame of his spiritual ability die down because of a lack of boldness to use it. Courage is needed in the exercise of God's gifts (Acts

not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

8 So do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me his prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel, by the power of God, 9 who has saved *us* and called *us* with a holy calling. *This was* not according to our deeds, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, 10 but is now revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 For *this gospel* I have been appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. 12 For this reason also I suffer these things. However, I am not ashamed, for I know

4:29; Eph 6:19). Paul speaks of three more things very much needed in the service of Christ. God's Spirit is the one who gives them. When God calls us to serve Him He makes us able to serve Him (2 Cor 3:5,6).

"Power" – Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 2:4; 4:20; 2 Cor 4:7; 12:9; Eph 1:19; 3:16; Col 1:11.

"Love" – love without power would be frustrating. Power without love would be harmful, not helpful. Above all, Christ's servants need love – 1 Cor 13:1-3.

"Sound mind" – or, possibly, "self-control". This is an ability to think in a healthy way, to control one's thoughts and so one's behavior. See 1 Tim 3:2.

**1:8** "Ashamed" – Mark 8:38; Rom 1:16. Many people consider the gospel of Christ foolishness (1 Cor 1:18,23), and the preaching of the cross of Christ offensive (Gal 5:11). A naturally timid Christian, giving in to the pride that rises so easily out of our fallen nature, might be tempted to be ashamed to speak of Christ to others. This temptation we should all overcome by the power of God's Spirit.

"His prisoner" – 2:9; Eph 3:1.

"Sufferings of the gospel" – sufferings that may come to those who proclaim the gospel or believe the gospel – 2:3; 4:5; Rom 5:3; 8:17; 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Pet 4:12-16.

**1:9** "Holy calling" – Rom 1:6; 8:30; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:4.

"Purpose" – Eph 1:5,9,12.

"Grace" – Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:5,7.

"In Christ" – John 15:4; Rom 6:5; 8:1; Eph 1:1,4.

"Before time began" – Eph 1:4; Titus 1:2.

**1:10** "Revealed" – John 1:17.

"Abolished death" – Matt 28:6; Heb 2:14; John 5:24; 11:25,26. Christ has laid the foundation for death's final overthrow – 1 Cor 15:26, and has opened the way to eternal life for believers – John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47. And He has revealed the truth about life and immortality – truth hidden and unknown before He came. On immortality see 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

**1:11** 1 Tim 2:7.

**1:12** Paul's sufferings (2:9; 2 Cor 1:8;

whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have entrusted to him until that day.

13 Hold firmly the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 By the Holy Spirit who lives in us, keep that good thing which was entrusted to you.

15 You know that everyone in Asia has deserted me, including Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 The Lord be merciful to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. 17 When he was in

Rome he sought me out very earnestly and found *me*. 18 The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day. You know very well how many ways he served me in Ephesus.

**2** You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard from me with many witnesses *present*; those same *things* entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 You, therefore, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that goes to war entangles himself in the affairs of *civilian* life, that he may

4:8-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-27) came because he was a servant of Christ (John 15:18-21; 16:1-4). He could have avoided them by withdrawing from the ministry. He did not do so because he was not ashamed to suffer for Christ – quite the opposite (Rom 5:3; 2 Cor 4:17,18; 12:10; Col 1:24).

"Whom I have believed" – he also knew what he had believed, but here he speaks of his personal knowledge of Christ. This is eternal life (John 17:3) and this knowledge all of God's children have (Heb 8:11).

"What I have entrusted" – he is probably referring to himself and all that pertained to him. Long before this he had committed himself completely into the strong hands of Jesus Christ and was confident Christ would not let anything or anyone remove him from His care. Compare Rom 8:35-39; John 10:28; 1 Pet 1:5.

"That day" – Christ's second coming.

**1:13** What Paul had taught Timothy was the very truth of God. Christ Himself had taught Paul this truth – Gal 1:11,12; Eph 3:2,3. Timothy was not to make his own "pattern" of doctrine. Neither are we. Everyone should follow the pattern God has given once and for all. If we preach and teach we must continually consult this pattern and build our ministry according to it. If we do not, we will make a wreck of it in God's eyes (however much we may seem to be a success in the eyes of men).

"Faith and love" – we must hold to Paul's teaching with a living faith. It must not become dead orthodoxy to us (compare John 5:38-40,45-47). And we must hold the truth with love. It is not enough to be sound in doctrine and to "contend for the faith" (Jude 3). If we do not have love along with all that we are nothing – 1 Cor 13:1-3.

"In Christ" – v 9.

**1:14** The "good thing" was God's revealed truth, the pattern of sound teaching. Why do Christ's servants need to guard it? Because there will be those who try to take it away from them and the Church.

"Holy Spirit" – note at John 14:16,17. God does not ask us to guard His truth with our own poor resources, our own arguments or wisdom or strength. He has given His servants a power and wisdom far greater

than anything they have by nature. Compare Matt 10:19,20; Luke 21:15; John 16:13-15; Acts 4:13.

"Lives in us" – Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19.

**1:15** Paul was in prison and in danger. It was a sad fact that those who should have stood with him and helped him then did not do so (4:16). Compare Matt 26:56.

"Asia" – see Acts 16:6.

**1:16-18** "Onesiphorus" – he was in great contrast with those Paul mentions in v 15. They searched for a way not to help Paul; he searched for Paul to help him. There are still these two types of Christians in the world.

"Merciful" (v 18) – Paul's desire was in accordance with the Scriptures – Matt 5:7. We have no right to expect God to be merciful or helpful to us if we are not merciful or helpful to others.

**2:1** Spiritual strength is a gift of God which is given in Christ to all believers. We should learn to appropriate this strength (Eph 1:3,19; 3:16,20; 6:10; 2 Cor 12:9,10; Isa 40:31).

**2:2** This is the way God has planned for His truth to spread throughout the earth. Paul taught Timothy (1:13); Timothy was to teach others and they, in turn, would teach still others. Compare Matt 28:19,20.

"Faithful men" – it is of no use to entrust important things to unreliable men. Compare Matt 24:45-51; 1 Tim 1:12; 1 Cor 4:1,2.

**2:3** "Hardship" – 1:8; 3:12; John 16:33; Acts 14:22.

"Good soldier" – Eph 6:11-18. All believers are soldiers in Christ's spiritual army. Being so we should try to be good ones and bravely endure what comes to us in the line of duty. This is especially true for those whom Christ has called into positions of leadership. We must not murmur or complain or try to avoid difficulties at any cost (as the manner of some is).

**2:4** "Entangles" – there is nothing wrong with either believers or preachers of the gospel having a secular job and working for a living (Acts 18:3; 20:34,35; 1 Thess 4:11,12; 2 Thess 3:7-10; Titus 3:14). But it is wrong if we get entangled in that or in any of the affairs of the world so that we fail to be good soldiers of Christ. We must have

please the one who has chosen him to be a soldier. 5 Also if a person competes in athletic contests, he does not gain the *victor's* crown unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer must be the first to get a share of the crop. 7 Consider what I say. May the Lord give you understanding in all things.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ, among the descendants of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer trouble, as *if I were* a criminal, *even to the point of* chains. But the word of God is not chained. 10 So I endure everything for the sake of *God's* chosen ones,

our priorities right. We must want to please our commanding officer (Christ) above all else – 2 Cor 5:9; Gal 1:10; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 4:1. Even if we are in a secular job or attending to some affair in the world we must always remember we are Christ's soldiers under His orders.

**2:5** "Athletic contests" – believers are also like athletes in the spiritual realm – 1 Cor 9:24-27; Gal 5:7; Phil 3:13,14; Heb 12:1. There are crowns for winners – 4:8; Jam 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10. But no one will be a winner who does not obey the "rules." There are spiritual laws, training and discipline which believers must follow. If they do not they will lose the rewards they might otherwise obtain – 1 Cor 9:27; Col 2:18; 2 John 8; Rev 3:11.

**2:6** 1 Cor 9:10; Gal 6:9; John 4:36; Ps 126:5,6. Paul's emphasis here is on "hardworking." Compare 1 Cor 15:58.

**2:7** Here are two things necessary to understand and apply any revelation from God. We must think, reflect, meditate, and the Lord must give insight, discernment, wisdom. Compare Ps 1:2; 1 Pet 1:13; Eph 1:18; Phil 1:9; Col 1:9; Jam 1:5.

**2:8** Rom 1:3,4; Matt 28:6.

"Remember" – an exhortation we need because of the possibility of forgetting Him among our cares and pleasures, labors and relaxations. Compare Deut 6:12; 8:11. We are to keep Him in mind always, fix our thoughts on Him – Col 3:1,2; Heb 3:1; 12:2,3. It is the only way to peace, power and victory.

"My gospel" – Rom 2:16; 16:25; 1 Cor 15:1-4.

**2:9** See 1:12. This is one error in thinking (among many) that opponents of the gospel fall into. They think they can bind God's Word by locking up God's servants, or destroy the gospel by destroying them. Actually by such methods they are often unwitting instruments for the spread of the gospel (Phil 1:12-14; Acts 8:3,4). Striking a seed-bearing plant scatters the seed.

**2:10** Paul (an example set forth by God for us) did not live for himself or face sufferings for his own sake, but for Christ. Compare 1 Cor 9:19-23; 10:33-11:1; Acts 20:24.

"Chosen" – Matt 24:22,24,31; Rom 11:7; Titus 1:1. Here Paul means those

that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 *This is* a faithful saying: For if we died with him, we will also live with *him*. 12 If we endure, we will also reign with *him*. If we deny *him*, he will deny us also. 13 If we are faithful, he remains faithful; he cannot deny himself.

14 Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly declare in the presence of the Lord that they must not quarrel about words, which is useless and ruins those who hear it. 15 Make every effort to show yourself approved to God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, using the word of truth

whom God has chosen for salvation and whom He has not yet brought into His kingdom. Compare John 6:37; Rom 8:29; Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:1,2.

"Eternal glory" – John 17:5,24; Rom 5:2; 8:17,18.

**2:11** "Died with him" – Rom 6:2-8; Gal 2:20.

**2:12** "Endure" – vs 10; Matt 10:22; 24:13; Rom 12:12; 1 Cor 13:7 – the Greek word contains the idea of patience or courage. Patiently, courageously enduring for Christ what He has given us to endure is a proof that faith is genuine.

"Reign" – Matt 19:28; Luke 1:33; Rev 5:10; 20:6; 22:5. This promise is not made to those who are not willing to endure hardship for Christ's sake.

"Deny" – Mat 10:33; Luke 12:9. Here Paul does not mean a temporary denial such as Peter's was (Matt 26:34,75), but a way of life.

**2:13** Rom 3:3,4; Ps 57:10; 89:1,8,14,33; 117:2; Titus 1:2. The believer's expectation of salvation is based on God's faithfulness, not on his own. God can never act contrary to His Word or His nature.

**2:14** Here are two duties of a pastor or teacher – reminding and warning. The people of God need both (Acts 20:31; Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 4:14; 15:1; Gal 5:21; 2 Thess 3:15; 2 Pet 1:12,13,15; 3:1).

"Quarrel about words" – some words are very important – God, Christ, truth, faith, love, salvation, etc. The realities these words represent are worth dying for. Paul here doubtless means quarreling about less important matters. Compare v 23; 4:4; 1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; 6:4. But quarreling about even the greatest matters is not the task of God's servants (vs 24,25), though they must proclaim them with much zeal, and stand for them with all the strength God gives.

**2:15** Here is excellent instruction for every preacher, pastor, evangelist, or teacher.

"Approved" – Rom 16:10; 1 Cor 11:19; 2 Cor 10:18; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4.

"Ashamed" – if any servant of Christ turns out poor quality work because he is lazy or careless he cannot gain God's approval. Our work is going to be very carefully examined – 1 Cor 3:12-15. We should do it in such a way that we will not need to be ashamed when we stand before God.

rightly. 16 But avoid profane, empty babblings, for they will result in more ungodliness. 17 And their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among these are Hymenaeus and Philetus. 18 They have veered away from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place. And they upset the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless the foundation of God stands firm, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his"; and, "Let everyone who utters the name of Christ keep away from wickedness."

20 But in a large house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and

"Word of truth" – in Eph 1:13 and Col 1:5 Paul defines this as the gospel of Christ. Here he may mean that, or, possibly, the whole of God's revelation in the Scriptures. To win God's approval we must learn to handle God's truth correctly and well. We need to understand it thoroughly and be able to teach it and explain it to others. It is the most important thing God has entrusted to us and we should study and labor accordingly.

"Using. . . rightly" – the Greek has a single word here. Originally its literal meaning was to cut straight, but it came to mean to accurately deal with a thing. In Paul's usage here it can hardly mean to cut or divide the Scriptures. Its more likely meaning is to use them accurately, rightly or in a straight way.

**2:16** Verse 14; 1 Tim 1:6; 6:20.

**2:17** "Gangrene" – this is the dying of body tissue. It happens when the blood supply is cut off. It spreads up a limb of the body until the limb has to be amputated. If neglected it kills the whole body. False teaching is like this. If it is allowed to spread in a church or denomination it can gradually bring it to a state of spiritual death. This is the reason why it must not be permitted to gain a foothold.

**2:18** "Veered away from the truth" – 1 Tim 1:6,19,20; 6:10,21. The future resurrection of the dead is a clear teaching of Christ and His apostles – John 5:28,29; 1 Cor 15:20-23. By saying it was already past these false teachers dared to deny this teaching. They were saying that the resurrection is only spiritual – man's spirit being made alive now, not his body rising sometime in the future.

"Upset" – the false teachers were causing much confusion and some of the Christians for a time hardly knew what to believe. But if their faith was genuine it would not be destroyed.

**2:19** Whatever false teachers may do they will not be able to destroy Christ's true Church or His people. God knows how to keep the foundation firm and His people believing (Matt 16:18; Luke 22:31,33; 1 Pet 1:4,5; 2 Pet 2:9).

"His" – John 6:37; 17:6; 1 Cor 6:19,20. "Keep away" if a person practices evil and yet claims to be a Christian, there is reason to doubt the reality of his faith. Compare

clay, some valuable and some of no value. 21 So if a person cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a valuable vessel, sanctified, and useful to the Master, *and* prepared for every good work.

22 Also flee from youthful cravings, but follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace, *together* with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 But avoid foolish and ignorant debates, knowing that they engender quarrels. 24 And the servant of the Lord must not quarrel, but be kind to everyone, able to teach, *and* patient. 25 *He should* humbly instruct those who oppose him, *hoping*

Rom 8:13,14; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 5:24; Eph 5:5,6; 1 John 2:4,6; 3:9,10.

**2:20,21** In the visible church in the world there are different kinds of people. Some belong to the Lord, and He knows who they are. Some do not belong to Him, and He knows who they are too (compare Matt 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50). Here Paul compares these two kinds of people to two kinds of vessels or articles in a house. Compare Rom 9:21. Paul in the preceding verses has been speaking of false teachers and the need to turn away from wickedness. False teachers and those who practice wickedness in the church are like dishonorable vessels. God's true people must have nothing to do with them (3:5). If we want to be the kind of honorable "vessels" God wants us to be, we must do what He tells us in this verse. If we do not, we are in danger of being corrupted – 1 Cor 15:33.

**2:22** See 1 Tim 6:11; 2 Pet 1:3-9. There are some things we should run from as from a great danger. Others we should run after. Some evil desires are very strong in young men. The best way to deal with them is to stay clear away from opportunities to satisfy them, and to flee if they appear.

"A pure heart" – Matt 5:8.

**2:23** Verses 14,16. God's servants should never allow themselves to be distracted from their main task and should not engage in quarreling at all.

**2:24** "Must not quarrel" – the Greek word is translated "fighting" in Acts 7:26. Verbal battles that have the sole aim of crushing an opponent do not promote the work of God. Of course, standing for the truth and reasoning with people in order to win them to Christ is good and necessary. But we should be careful that kind of situation does not develop into a useless quarrel. Our fight is not against men but against Satan – Eph 6:12.

"Able to teach" – 1 Tim 3:2.

"Patient" – opponents sometimes say cutting things, objectionable and unreasonable things, and make personal attacks. Christ's servants must learn to bear such things patiently and lovingly.

**2:25** "Humbly" – compare Matt 11:29. If opponents of the truth do not receive instruction from us given in a humble, gentle way, they will not likely receive it in some other way. See the hope Christ's servants



that perhaps God will grant them repentance *leading them* into a knowledge of the truth, 26 and *that* they may wake up *and escape* from the snare of the devil, who has taken them captive to *do* his will.

**3** Understand this also: In the last days perilous times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, lacking self-control, fierce, opposers of the good, 4 traitors, reckless, arrogant, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, 5 having a

should have when they instruct their opponents. Observe too that it is God who can enable men to repent, not our arguments or instruction (Acts 5:31). Notice also that it is only by repenting that men can come to a knowledge of God's truth.

**2:26** "Come to their senses" – compare Luke 15:17. Those who oppose the gospel of Christ are spiritually out of their minds (compare Eccl 9:3). They behave in a senseless way against their own welfare. This is because Satan has taken them captive and they have believed his lies (compare John 8:44; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2). Christ's servants must not be ignorant of the forces opposing them. They should understand also that it is only the power of God which can set men free, and that God may use our teaching of the truth to accomplish this.

**3:1** "The last days" – Jam 5:3; 1 Pet 1:5; Jude 18 – the time at the end of this age. There have always been terrible times and people in the world such as Paul described in vs 2-4. Compare Rom 1:28-32. But Paul evidently means that the times will get worse and that such people will be in the outward visible church (v 5).

**3:2-4** The word "lovers" is the key word in these verses. The terrible people of those terrible times will be "lovers" but altogether of the wrong kind. Their character will be opposed to the clear teaching of God's Word. They will be

"lovers of themselves";

"lovers of money" – compare Luke 16:14; 1 Tim 6:10;

"lovers of pleasure" (v 4) – 1 Tim 5:6; Titus 3:3; Jam 4:3; 2 Pet 2:13.

They will be "without love" for what is good and right, for their parents and neighbors, for God. They will not be willing to give up sinful pleasures for Christ's sake, or obey Him in the matter of money or renounce anything they really want. By their attitude and actions they will show that they do not have the one kind of love that really matters – the love of God (1 John 2:15,16; Matt 22:37-40; 1 Cor 13:1-3; 16:22).

Because of this all the other evils in these verses will find a nest in their hearts and minds. Of all people they will have the least

form of godliness but denying its power. Keep away from such people.

6 These are the sort who worm their way into households and take over silly women *who are* loaded down with sins and led away with various cravings, 7 always learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so these also resist the truth, *these* men of corrupt minds, rejected in regard to the faith. 9 But they will proceed no further, for their folly will be made clear to everyone, just as theirs was.

10 But you have fully known my teaching, manner of life, purpose, faith, patience, love,

to boast about, but they will boast. If they are rebuked they will get abusive. They will have no more gratitude than those of Rom 1:21. They will reveal they do not have God's forgiveness by refusing to forgive others. Believers will not be able to trust them or believe anything they say. Though they are spiritually blind and ignorant they will think they know everything and will not listen to godly teachers.

**3:5** "Form of godliness" – outwardly they are Christians, inwardly they are fierce wolves (Matt 7:15). In other words, they are hypocrites. They can use Christian language but do not really know its meaning. They know nothing of the power of the gospel to save sinners (Rom 1:16), the power of Christ's Spirit to make men new (John 3:5-8). Not knowing this power in their own lives they deny it altogether.

"Keep away from such people" – compare 2:21; Matt 18:17; 1 Cor 5:11,13; 2 Cor 6:17; 2 Thess 3:6; Titus 3:10. Paul's telling Timothy to avoid them shows that there were such people then also. There are such in every generation. But it is probable that there will be even more of them as the end of the age approaches (Matt 24:10-14; 2 Thess 2:1-12).

**3:6** Some of these hypocrites will seek for some people to deceive and control, and their eyes will fall on the women in the church. It seems they will consider them easier prey than the men.

**3:7** This is the sad condition of many. They hear the truth again and again, and may even think they want the truth. But actually they do not, so they do not understand what they hear. This is the reason why opponents of the truth are able to lead them astray (2 Thess 2:10).

**3:8** The names Jannes and Jambres appear nowhere in the Bible except here, but the opposition to Moses is recorded in Ex 7:10-12,22, etc.

"Corrupt minds" – 1 Tim 6:5.

**3:9** They will not be able to conceal forever their lack of truth and power. Jannes and Jambres were exposed (Ex 8:18) and so will these hypocrites be.

**3:10** Paul was not trying to get glory and honor for himself. He speaks in this way because he knew God had set him forth as

endurance, 11 persecutions and hardships which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra. What persecutions I endured! But the Lord delivered me out of *them* all. 12 Yes, and all who want to live godly *lives* in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and hypocrites will go on getting worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But you *must* continue in the things you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you learned *them*, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures that are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of

God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be perfectly prepared and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**4** Therefore I give *you this* charge in the presence of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: 2 Preach the Word. Be ready in season, out of season. Refute *errors*, rebuke, exhort with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but following their own

an example of how believers and Christian workers should live, and he wanted Timothy to follow him (v 14; 1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17; 2 Thess 3:7; Acts 20:18-35).

**3:11** Acts 13:49 - 14:20; 2 Cor 11:23-27.

**3:12** John 15:18-21; 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Pet 4:1,12; Rom 8:17.

"In Christ" - 1:9. Persecution will vary from place to place, from time to time, from individual to individual. Sometimes it will result in physical sufferings, sometimes it will mean facing dislike and discrimination. But all godly believers will face it in some measure at some times in their lives.

**3:13** They have an evil goal in life and will make steady progress toward it. Evil always results in further evil, deceiving others will result in becoming unable to recognize the truth oneself.

**3:14** Verse 10; 1:13,14; 1 Tim 1:3.

**3:15** "From childhood" - 1:5. The likely meaning is this: Even before they became Christians Timothy's mother and grandmother taught him the Old Testament ("Holy Scriptures"). They took seriously God's command in Deut 6:6,7; etc. Should Christian parents today do any less? - Eph 6:4. Now the "Holy Scriptures" are both the Old and the New Testaments in one holy book. Observe here that the O.T. when understood is able to make people "wise for salvation." Compare Luke 24:25-27,45-47; John 5:39,46.

"Faith. . . in Christ" - the Old Testament is not an end in itself, is not God's complete revelation. It points to Christ and proclaims to all men "have faith in Him."

**3:16** By "all Scripture" Paul did not mean all that the various religions of the world regarded as holy books or as God-given writings. Absolutely not. He was referring to the Holy Bible. See also 2 Pet 1:20,21; Matt 4:4; 5:17,18; 15:3,4; 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 24:44; John 10:35; Acts 4:35; 1 Cor 2:13; Heb 1:5-13; 1 Pet 1:11; Rev 1:1; 2:1; 22:18,19. Compare Jer 1:2,9; etc. See the Introduction to Judges.

"All" - not some words of Scripture more than some others, not one book of the Bible more than some other.

"Inspiration of God" - the word literally means "God-breathed." God breathed His truth, His thoughts, His words into the minds

of His servants the prophets, and He breathed His Spirit into their hearts and inspired them to write down exactly what He wanted them to write. And so the words of Scripture can be called "God-breathed." In another place it is said that man must live by every word that comes "from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4).

Observe why God acted in this way. It was not that men should worship the Bible or merely regard it as sacred and hold it in awe. He gave the Bible that men might use it. Paul speaks of four ways in which it is useful - teaching the truth (about God, Christ, man, salvation, etc), rebuking sin and false teaching, correcting those who err or go astray, and training God's people how to behave righteously in an unrighteous world.

**3:17** No servant of Christ can be thoroughly equipped for every good work without a thorough knowledge of the Bible. We may learn other things but let this be the chief study of our lives.

"Every good work" - 2:21; Eph 4:11-13; Heb 13:20,21.

**4:1** How very solemnly Paul now speaks. He has something of very great importance to say.

"Judge"-John 5:27; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 5:10.

"Appearing" - v 8; 1 Tim 6:14; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28.

"Kingdom" - Matt 4:17; 13:11; 19:28; 25:34; Luke 19:11,12; Acts 1:3,6.

**4:2** "Preach the Word" - here is the great work of pastors, teachers and evangelists (and there is no greater work on earth). They are not to preach their opinions or the opinions of other men. The Word of God is to be their message and nothing else. Compare Matt 28:20; Mark 16:15; 1 Cor 1:23; 2:1-5; 2 Cor 4:5; 1 Pet 4:11.

"In season, out of season" - this speaks of being ready always whether in church or out of it, whether it is convenient or not.

"Refute. . . encourage" - 3:16; 1 Thess 3:2; 4:18; 1 Tim 5:20; Titus 1:9,13; 2:15; Heb 3:13; 10:25.

"Patience and teaching" - 2:24,25.

**4:3,4** See 3:1; 1 Tim 4:1.

"Sound doctrine" - 1:13; 1 Tim 1:10,11; 6:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1.

desires they will heap up teachers for themselves *because they* will have itching ears. 4 And they will turn away *their* ears from the truth, and turn them to *empty* stories. 5 But you be watchful in everything. Endure hardships. Do the work of an evangelist. Make full proof of your ministry.

6 For I am now being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* race, I have kept the faith. 8 Now there is reserved for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me in that day, and not to me only, but also to all those who love his appearing.

9 Make every effort to come to me quickly,

"Following their own desires" – such people wish to do what they please and hear what pleases them. Their question is not "what is true?" but "what makes me feel good?" (though they would not put it in these words). They do not want the truth, because the truth condemns their way of life and interferes with what they want to do. So they draw back from the light of truth into the darkness. This is their great sin and condemnation – John 3:18-20. To receive God's salvation we must desire the truth above everything else. But these people do not desire it and do not want to desire it. See 2 Thess 2:10-12.

"Empty stories" – 1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; Titus 2:14. They will prefer empty stories to God's truth.

**4:5** "Hardships" – 2:3.

"Evangelist" – though Timothy was a pastor and teacher he was also to win people to Christ by preaching the gospel.

**4:6** "Drink offering" – Phil 2:17.

"My departure" – evidently the Lord had revealed this to Paul.

**4:7** "Fight" – 1 Cor 9:26; 2 Cor 10:4; 1 Tim 1:18; 6:12; Eph 6:10-18.

"Race" – 1 Cor 9:24; Gal 2:2; 5:7; Phil 3:13,14; Heb 12:1. His goal expressed in Acts 20:24 was reached.

"The faith" – the truth God gave as a foundation for faith. This had been entrusted to him (1 Cor 4:1; Eph 3:2-9). He kept it – kept it as the object of his own faith, and as the rule of his life, and kept it as a steward to give out to others. Because he had faithfully done this he could view his "departure" with great joy.

**4:8** "Crown" – the Greek word used here (and in 1 Cor 9:25; Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19; Jam 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10; 3:11) does not mean the sort of crown kings wear. It means a wreath made of leaves which was given to the winners in athletic contests in those days. Paul, his race over, looked forward to his "crown." Compare 1 Cor 9:25. Crown of righteousness means a crown which is the reward of the kind of righteous life he lived, a reward for fighting against unrighteousness, running a righteous race and keeping the righteous faith. Concerning

10 for Demas has deserted me, because he loved this present world, and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me in the ministry. 12 And I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13 When you come bring the cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. The Lord repay him for what he has done. 15 You too beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words. 16 At my first defense no man stood with me, but everyone deserted me. May it not be put to their account. 17 However, the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through

crowns see the references given above.

"That day" – 1:12,18; 2 Thess 1:10.

"Love his appearing" – what is the connection between a crown of righteousness and loving Christ's appearing? Only those who are living righteous lives will long for Christ to come again. And those who want Him to return will purify themselves. See 1 John 3:2,3. It is not enough to know about His coming and talk and preach about it. To earn the crown of righteousness we must earnestly desire it. **4:10** "Loved this present world" – a very sad thing to have to say of anyone. See 1 John 2:15-17.

**4:11** "Luke" – Col 4:14; Philemon 24.

"Mark" – Acts 12:25; 13:5,13; 15:37,39; 1 Pet 5:13. After his failure Mark proved himself to be a faithful servant of God. It is a very good thing that God does not cast us off when we fail, but bears with us and works in us to make us better.

**4:13** "Parchments" – scrolls were of papyrus (writing material made from a plant), parchments were made of the skins of animals. Paul does not tell us what was written on these particular ones.

**4:14,15** See 1:15; 2:17; 1 Tim 1:20. Paul did not hesitate to name harmful individuals and warn people about them.

**4:16** "Defense" – he was in prison and had to face a trial in court. Here he speaks of a preliminary investigation. Compare Acts chapter 24.

"Deserted me" – 1:15. Evidently Luke was not there at that time. It is highly unlikely that he would have deserted Paul. **4:17** Men may desert the servants of the Lord Jesus but the Lord will not – Heb 13:5,6. "Strengthened" – Isa 40:29-31. Compare Acts 18:9,10.

"Might hear" – Paul probably means those who conducted his trial and any others present who were Gentiles. The Lord gave Paul boldness even at such times to declare the gospel. Compare Matt 10:17-20; Mark 13:9; Luke 21:12-15; Acts 26:19-23.

"Mouth of the lion" – he means some kind of extreme danger, but whether physical or spiritual danger he doesn't say.

me the message might be fully known, and all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will keep *me* safe for his heavenly kingdom. To him *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household

**4:18** “Deliver me” – he does not mean that the Lord will rescue him from death. He has already said the time of his death was near – v 6. But he is sure the Lord will preserve him from evil and take him to heaven in His way and at His time. Compare Matt 6:13. **4:19** “Prisca” (Priscilla) and “Aquila” – Acts 18:2,18,19,26; Rom 16:3.

of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus stayed at Corinth, but I have left Trophimus at Miletum sick. 21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, and Pudens *does too*, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

**4:21** Verses 9,13. Winter in that area could be very cold.

**4:22** These are the last written words we have of the great apostle. He repeats two principal themes of his whole ministry – the presence of the Lord Jesus with His people and the grace of God which saves, keeps, and blesses them.

The Letter of the Apostle Paul to

# TITUS

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime about 65 AD.

**Themes:**

As in his first letter to Timothy, Paul teaches how believers should behave and serve in the church of God, and toward one another. In all his letters Paul emphasizes the grace of God and he does so in this one in two great passages – 2:11-14; 3:3-7.

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**1** Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness, **2** in expectation of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began, **3** and at the proper time has revealed his word through preaching, which has been committed to me according to the command of God our Saviour,

**4** To Titus, *my* own son in the common faith, grace, mercy *and* peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**5** For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order what was lacking, and ordain

elders in every city, as I had instructed you, **6** if there is anyone who is blameless, the husband of *only* one wife, having faithful children not accused of wildness or unruliness. **7** For an overseer *in the church*, as God's steward, must be blameless, not self-pleasing, not soon angry, not given to wine, not quarrelsome, not greedy for sordid gain, **8** but a lover of hospitality, a lover of *what is* good, able to think soundly, upright, holy, temperate, **9** holding firmly the faithful word as he has been taught, so that by sound doctrine he will be able both to exhort and to convince opponents.

**10** For there are many unrestrained *people*, empty talkers and deceivers, especially from the

**1:1** Rom 1:1; Gal 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1. Paul's great work was to bring people to faith in Christ, and to encourage and strengthen their faith by giving them the truth of God. Compare Rom 1:5,11,12. The truth Paul proclaimed as "in accordance with godliness" – to real devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, to holiness of life (2:12). Any religious teaching that does not do this is false.

"God's chosen" – Rom 8:33; Col 3:12; John 6:37; 15:16; 17:6.

**1:2** "In expectation of eternal life" – faith and knowledge of the truth do not rest on our expectation of eternal life, but Paul's work as a servant of God and the faith and knowledge of God's people are all related to the expectation of eternal life.

"Expectation" – clearer than "hope" for today's reader. Rom 5:2; 8:24,25; 1 Pet 1:3.

"Eternal life" – note at John 3:16. Sometimes eternal life is said to be a present possession of believers (John 3:36; 5:24). But the full manifestation and enjoyment of it is still in the future. Therefore the New Testament sometimes speaks of it as something believers enter into later on (3:7; Rom 2:7. Compare Rom 13:11; Heb 6:12; 1 Pet 1:5).

"Cannot lie" – Heb 6:18; Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Ps 31:5.

"Before the world began" – 2 Tim 1:9; Eph 1:4. How could God promise something to men even before He created mankind? He could make the promise to His Son and later reveal it to men.

**1:3** "At the proper time" – Gal 4:4; John 7:30; 1 Tim 6:15.

"Preaching. . . committed to me" – Eph 3:2-9; 1 Tim 1:11; Gal 1:11-12.

**1:4** 1 Tim 1:2.

**1:5** Crete is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Greece.

"Elders" – the same as overseers. See 1 Tim 3:1. Doubtless appointing elders in new churches was done in a way similar to the way we see in Acts 6:3-6.

**1:6-9** See the list of qualities for an overseer in 1 Tim 3:2-7. Some qualities in this list are not found there; some in that list are not here. For the complete picture of what

an elder or overseer (this is the same position – Acts 20:17,28) should be both these lists are necessary.

"Faithful children" – or "children who believe" – not only must the children of elders be obedient (1 Tim 3:4,5) they should be believers, faithful to the Lord.

"Not self-pleasing" – the Greek word means to be taken up with self and inconsiderate of others, to proudly assert one's own will.

"Not soon angry" – a church leader who gets angry easily and quickly can offend people and do much harm.

"Not greedy for sordid gain" – 1 Tim 3:8; 6:5-11.

"Lover of good" – compare Phil 4:8,9. If we do not love what is good, it means we love what is not good, and so are not fit for God's service (Matt 12:35). "Good" may also mean "good men."

"Able to think soundly" – 2:2,6; 2 Tim 1:7. A church leader must not be a victim of his desires and impulses.

"Upright" – 2:12. A crooked, unjust, unrighteous leader is a curse to a church, not a blessing.

"Holy" – if an elder is not holy, he is unholy and can never properly lead God's church in the way of holiness.

**1:9** An elder must not only hold firmly to the Word of God, he must know it well enough to teach others the truth and be able to refute error.

"Sound doctrine" – see note at 1 Tim 1:3.

**1:10** "Unrestrained people" – or "rebellious" or "disobedient" – literally "not subjected to rule." Such people rebel against God and the spiritual authority – 2 Tim 2:3,4; Heb 3:8,12; Deut 9:7,24; 31:27; Josh 22:18; 1 Sam 15:23; Ps 78:40,56; Isa 1:2,20.

"Empty talkers" – 1 Tim 1:6. Many like to talk about Christianity but have nothing meaningful to say and they do not put the truth into practice.

"Deceivers" – Matt 24:24; Rom 3:13; 16:18; 2 Cor 11:13; Eph 4:14; 1 Pet 3:10; Rev 21:27; Ps 50:19; 51:6; 101:7; Jer 14:14; etc.

"Circumcised group" – probably Paul means those Jews who professed to be



circumcised *ones*, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who destroy whole households, teaching things they ought not, for the sake of sordid gain. 12 One of them, a prophet of their own, has said, "The Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This witness is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 *and* not pay attention to Jewish fables, and the commandments of men who turn away from the truth. 15 To the pure all things *are* pure, but to those who are unclean and unbelieving nothing *is* pure. Even their mind and conscience are unclean. 16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny *him*, being abominable and disobedient and unfit for any good work.

**2** But *as for* you, speak the things that are appropriate to sound doctrine: 2 that the older men be sober, honourable, able to think

soundly, sound in faith, in love, in patient endurance. 3 *Teach* the older women also *to be* reverent in behaviour, not slanderers, not addicted to much wine, *but* teachers of good things, 4 so that they can teach the young women to think soundly, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 *to be* discreet, pure, homemakers, good, and obedient to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

6 Likewise exhort *the* young men to think soundly. 7 In all things make yourself an example in good works. In doctrine *show* integrity, seriousness, sincerity, 8 *and* sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that your opponents may be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about you.

9 *Instruct* slaves to obey their own masters *and* to please *them* well in everything, not to talk back, 10 not to steal, but to show complete

Christ's followers (Gal 2:12; Acts 15:1,5). **1:11** "Stopped" – church leaders should not let such people preach and teach. They must refute their teaching (v 9), and rebuke them sharply (v 13).

"Households" – false teachers often go from house to house trying to find a foothold for their teaching (2 Tim 3:6).

"Sordid gain" – v 7; 1 Tim 6:5,9,10.

**1:12,13** "Cretans" – v 5. These words are attributed to a poet of Crete. Paul from his own experience with Cretans had learned the truth of the poet's words. People of each nation have certain general characteristics which have been formed by their social and religious background. These traits of character are clear to those who know the people well.

"Sound in the faith" – those who rebuke others should have a good purpose in mind. Compare 2 Tim 2:24-26.

**1:14** "Fables" – 1 Tim 1:4.

"Commandments" – Col 2:21,22. Some people try to exercise authority over Christians even though they have no right whatever to do so.

**1:15** "Pure" – Luke 11:41; Mark 7:15,19; Rom 14:20; 1 Tim 4:3-5; Matt 5:8; 6:22,23.

"Unclean" – many religious people who are corrupt in heart are very careful about outward rules and ceremonies and "clean" and "unclean" foods, etc. See Matt 23:25-28. Paul says that in fact nothing is clean or pure to such people. They are sinners who refuse to believe God's Son and so they defile everything they touch.

"Conscience" – Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Cor 8:7; 1 Tim 1:5,19; 4:2; Heb 9:14. **1:16** Many people who do not know God claim that they do – John 8:41; Rom 2:17.

"Deny him" – what they do reveals that they do not know God and have no regard for Him (Rom 2:24; 1 John 2:4-6; 3:10; Matt 7:17-20). Their words are in sharp contrast with their deeds.

**2:1** Verse 15; 1:9; 1 Tim 1:3. Teaching the truth is the best defense against false teachings.

**2:2-10** Good teaching will be suited to the particular needs or weaknesses of different classes of people. Teachers in the church should minister to every kind of person.

**2:2** "Love" – the love that comes from God (1 Cor 13:1).

"Patient endurance" – Rom 5:3,4; 15:4,5; 2 Cor 1:6; Col 1:11; 1 Thess 1:3; Rev 1:9.

**2:3-5** "Teach" – compare 1 Cor 14:3,4; 1 Tim 2:11,12. Christian women can have a valuable teaching ministry. "Good things" – Paul is probably speaking of practical matters of the Christian life, not doctrine.

"Blasphemed" – if Christian women rebel against their husbands, are unkind, impure, etc, they will bring a bad name not only to themselves but to the Word of God they profess to believe and follow. This was always an important concern to Paul – 1 Tim 6:1.

**2:6** "Think soundly" – it is all to easy for the young to be frivolous or unrestrained in thought and behavior, and no doubt many of them need this exhortation – not to say that older ones do not sometimes need it too.

**2:7,8** Teaching others the truth is not enough. Teachers must be examples of what they teach – 1 Tim 4:12, etc.

"Opponents may be ashamed" – 1 Pet 3:16. There will always be some who oppose true teachers of God's word and search for some reason to speak ill of them. So much the more careful Christ's servants should be in both words and actions.

**2:9,10** Eph 6:5-8; 1 Tim 6:1,2.

"Complete trustworthiness" – Eph 4:28; Luke 16:10.

"Adorn the teaching" – every believer should make the gospel of Christ appear to others to be the beautiful thing it is. This is the way to make others want to believe it. Compare 1 Pet 2:9; Matt 5:16.

trustworthiness, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Saviour in every way.

11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared for all men, 12 *and* teaches us to reject ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, 13 *as we* look for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all wickedness and purify for himself a special people, eager *to do* good deeds.

**2:11** 3:4-6; Eph 2:8,9; Rom 6:23.

"Grace" – notes at John 1:14,16; Rom 1:7; 2 Cor 8:9; etc.

"The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared for all men" – or this may be translated "The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all men." This does not mean that all men will be saved but that salvation is for all kinds of men wherever they are – for slaves and masters, young and old, women and men, Jews and Gentiles.

"Salvation" – notes at Matt 1:21; Rom 1:16.

**2:12** God's grace is like a wise teacher, teaching believers both how to live and how not to live. It does not say to us "Because I have given you the gift of salvation you may live as you please." See Rom 6:1,15-18; Eph 4:22-24. It teaches us to say "no" to sin, self, and Satan, and "yes" to goodness, godliness and God. If we have not learned these things we might well ask, Is grace our teacher at all? Has grace saved us? Learning by grace how to live is the true evidence that we have spiritual life in Christ.

"Reject. . .worldly desires" – because of what the world is. See 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19; also notes at Rom 12:1,2.

"Soberly" – the Greek word means "with sound mind", "in control of one's thoughts."

**2:13** "The blessed hope" – notes on hope at Rom 5:2; 8:24,25. Christ Himself is our hope (Col 1:27; 1 Tim 1:1) and will be the fulfillment of all we as believers desire. His coming will be a blessed time, a happy time for those who are saved by grace.

"Glorious appearing" – this could also be translated "appearing of the glory." See Matt 16:27; 24:30; 25:31. Observe closely that Paul says that he and other believers looked for the appearance of Christ in glory. This does not suggest a secret rapture.

"Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" – this translation is in accordance with the Greek here and with the teaching of the whole New Testament concerning Christ. See references at Phil 2:6. In the Old Testament the LORD (Jehovah God) is the Saviour (Isa 49:26; 60:16). In the New Testament the Lord Jesus is the Saviour. In other words, Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah. See note at Luke 2:11.

**2:14** "Gave himself for us" – Rom 5:8; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 2:20; Heb 9:28; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:8.

15 Speak these things, and exhort and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

**3** Remind them to be subject to rulers and those in authority, to be obedient and ready for any good work, 2 not to speak evil of anyone, not to be quarrelsome, *but* gentle, showing complete humility toward everyone.

3 For in time past we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various desires and

"Redeem" – Ps 78:35; 130:8; Matt 20:28; Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:12,15; 1 Pet 1:18.

"All wickedness" – Matt 1:21; Gal 1:4; Heb 13:12.

"Purify" – Eph 5:25-27; John 15:3; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7,9; 2 Cor 7:1. Compare Ezek 37:23. Notes on holiness at John 17:17-19; Lev 20:7.

"For himself" – John 6:37; 17:6; 1 Cor 6:19,20; 1 Pet 2:9,10. Compare Ex 19:5.

"Eager to do good deeds" – Matt 5:16; Rom 12:11; Heb 13:6; 1 Tim 6:18. This is a good description of the kind of people the Lord Jesus wants us to be. It is the opposite of what the sinful nature in men is like. That is eager to do evil. Believers have a new spiritual nature and it should not be necessary to compel us to do good. We should have no reluctance. Enthusiasm and zeal to do good should flow up out of our hearts. This too is evidence that we have been saved by grace and are being taught by grace – Matt 7:17-20; 12:33-35; Heb 6:9-11.

**2:15** "Speak these things" – vs 11-14. Paul has set forth many of the basic truths of salvation – the grace of God, self-denial and devotion to God, the second coming of Christ, the deity of Christ, redemption through Christ, Christ's purification of His people, and the spiritual life believers are to live. These are things every Christian teacher and preacher should emphasize. If any teach contrary to these things it is because there is no truth in them (1 Tim 6:3-5).

"Authority" – 1 Tim 4:11-13; 1 Pet 4:11.

**3:1** Rom 13:1-7.

**3:2** Rom 12:16-18; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 4:31,32; Phil 2:3; Col 3:12; Jam 3:13.

**3:3** "We too" – Rom 3:9-19; Eph 2:1-3. Observe the words which describe those who do not know and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Foolish" – Ps 14:1; Jer 5:21,22; 10:8; Matt 7:26; Rom 1:21,22.

"Disobedient" – Rom 5:19; 10:21; 11:30-32; Eph 2:2; 5:12; Isa 1:2; Jer 5:23.

"Deceived" – Gen 3:13; Jer 17:9; 1 Cor 12:2; 2 Tim 3:13; Heb 3:13; Rev 12:9.

"Serving. . .desires and pleasures" – John 8:34; Rom 6:16,17; 7:14; Gal 4:3; Heb 2:15.

And what is the result of life lived under these four powers of foolishness, disobedience, deception and enslavement? Some of the worst passions possible to men

pleasures, living in malice and envy, being hated *and* hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 he saved us, not by righteous deeds that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the washing of new birth and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, 7 so that having been justified by his grace, we would become heirs in accordance with the expectation of eternal life.

8 *This is* a trustworthy saying, and I want you to declare these things constantly, that those who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable for men.

9 But avoid foolish debates and genealogies

or to demons – malice (Ps 28:3), envy (Matt 27:18), and hatred (Lev 19:17).

**3:4** “But” – compare Rom 3:21; Eph 2:4.

“Kindness and love” – John 3:16; Rom 2:4; 5:8; Gal 2:20; Eph 2:7; 1 John 3:16; 4:8-10.

“God our Saviour” – note at 1 Tim 1:1.

**3:5** “Mercy” – Eph 2:4; 1 Pet 1:3; 2:10. This means God saw us in our spiritual need and helplessness, had compassion on us, and saved us though we did not deserve any good thing from His hand. Compare Luke 18:13,14; Rom 6:23; 9:16,18; 11:32; Eph 2:8,9; 2 Tim 1:9.

“Washing of new birth” – compare Eph 5:26. This new birth has nothing to do with the teaching that men are born on earth physically again and again (Job 11:12; John 3:3; 9:3). “Washing” here has nothing to do with water baptism. The new birth itself is the washing and this is an inner spiritual work of God, not an outward ceremony. This work of God gives us a new, holy nature. See John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:5; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:3. Compare Ezek 36:26,27.

“Renewing” – Col 3:10; Eph 4:23,24; 2 Cor 4:16.

“Holy Spirit” – notes at John 14:16,17; Acts 1:5. The Holy Spirit both gives us new birth and continues to work in us making us new people.

**3:6** “Poured out” – Acts 1:5,8; 2:4,33; 10:44; Rom 8:9,15.

“Through Jesus” – God gives His Spirit only through Christ, and only to those who trust in Christ (Gal 3:1,2,14; etc).

“Saviour” – v 4; 1 Tim 1:1.

**3:7** “Justified by His grace” – note at Rom 3:21-26.

“Heirs” – Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 6:9; 15:50; Eph 1:14; Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:3-5.

“Hope of eternal life” – 1:2.

**3:8** “These things” – 2:15.

“Good” – 2:14; Jam 2:14.

**3:9** See 1:13,14; 1 Tim 1:4,7; 6:4; 2 Tim 2:14-16,23,24. Paul is saying that preachers

and controversies and quarrels about the Law, for they are unprofitable and useless. 10 Reject a person who chooses *to follow* heresy, after a first and second warning. 11 Know that such a person is twisted and sinning, and stands self-condemned.

12 After I have sent Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Make every effort to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos for their journey, so that they will lack nothing. 14 Our *people* must learn also to maintain good deeds, to *provide* for pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.

15 Everyone with me greets you. Greet them who love us in the faith.

Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

and teachers should not be diverted from their main task of declaring the important truths God has revealed. They should stick to the heart of the gospel and emphasize those things which are useful and build people up in the faith. Observe in vs 8,9 what is spiritually profitable and what is not. **3:10** “Heresy” – a belief or opinion or teaching contrary to the teaching of the Bible. The Greek word here may also be translated “a divisive person”, because that is what such belief does. Compare Rom 16:17. Paul means those who try to divide the church by teaching false doctrines. He found them in churches everywhere and warned believers about them – Acts 20:29,30; Gal 1:7; 1 Tim 1:3,4. Such people must be warned, but if they will not repent in the face of two warnings there is no use giving them further warnings. All that is left is to reject them and have nothing further to do with them – Rom 16:17, etc.

**3:11** By rejecting the solemn warnings of God’s servants he proves he is sinful and has a twisted mind which does not want the truth. And by doing so he condemns himself.

**3:12** “Tychicus” – Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2 Tim 4:12. There was a small band of preachers and teachers under Paul’s leadership and guidance whom he sent from place to place as the need arose.

“Nicopolis” – there were several towns of this name in the Roman Empire and we cannot be sure which one Paul means here.

**3:13** “Apollos” – Acts 18:24-28.

**3:14** See the great emphasis in this letter on doing good – vs 1,8; 1:16; 2:7,14. God wants us to devote ourselves to doing good to others – give ourselves completely to it. By “pressing needs” he probably means the needs of others as well as one’s own – Acts 20:35; Rom 12:13; Eph 4:28.

“Unfruitful” – compare John 15:8,16.

**3:15** “Who love us in the faith” – who love us because both they and we are believers in Christ.

The Letter of the Apostle Paul to

# PHILEMON

**Author:**

Paul an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime about 60 AD.

**Theme:**

Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison, being persecuted for preaching the gospel. Onesimus, a slave belonging to Philemon, had run away from his master and come to the place where Paul was. He heard the gospel through Paul and believed in Christ. Now Paul is sending him back to Philemon. The name Onesimus means “profitable.” Though he may have been useless to Philemon in time past, now being changed by God’s grace he was useful to Philemon, to Paul, and above all, to Christ Himself. This is one thing the gospel of Christ accomplishes in those who believe it: It makes useless people useful. An important theme in this little letter is the love that believers should show toward God’s children no matter how low their station in life may be.

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1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ and Timothy *our* brother,

To Philemon our dear *brother* and fellow worker, 2 and to *our* dear Apphia and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God, always mentioning you in my prayers, 5 for I hear of your love and faith which you have for the Lord Jesus and for all saints, 6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by knowing every good thing that is in you in Christ Jesus. 7 For we have great joy and encouragement in your love because the hearts of the saints are refreshed by you, brother.

8 Therefore, though I could be very bold in Christ to order you *to do* what is fitting, 9 yet instead, for love's sake, I appeal *to you* as Paul an old *man* and now also a prisoner of Jesus

Christ. 10 I appeal to you on behalf of my son Onesimus; in my chains I have become his father.

11 In time past he was not profitable to you, but now *is* profitable to you and to me.

12 I have sent him back *to you*. Therefore receive him, that is, my own heart. 13 I wanted to keep him with me, so that in your place he could be of service to me in the bonds of the gospel, 14 but without *knowing* your mind I would do nothing, so that your good deed would not be like something forced, but voluntary. 15 For perhaps he left you for a time that you might receive him for ever, 16 not now as a slave, but more than a slave, a dear brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the body and in the Lord?

17 So if you count me a partner, receive him as myself. 18 If he has wronged you, or owes *you* anything, put that to my account. 19 I Paul have

1 "Prisoner" - Eph 3:1; 4:1; 2 Tim 1:8.

"Timothy" - Phil 1:1; Acts 16:1-3.

"Philemon" - this is the only place in the Bible he appears.

2 "Apphia" - we are not told who she was.

"Archippus" - Col 4:17.

"Soldier" - 2 Tim 2:2; 4:7.

"House" - Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15.

3 Rom 1:7.

4,5 Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Eph 1:15,16; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3,4; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Tim 1:3.

6 "By knowing" - knowing what we have in Christ and sharing our faith effectively are intimately connected. The more we know what we have in Him, the better we can speak to others and treat them with kindness.

"In Christ" - Rom 6:3-8; Eph 1:1,4.

7 "Refreshed" - v 20; Rom 15:32; 1 Cor 16:18; 2 Cor 7:13; 2 Tim 1:16. This is what loving fellowship, generosity, and kindness do.

"Saints" - Rom 1:7.

8,9 As a servant of Christ Paul could have set before Philemon his duty as a believer, and the commands of Scripture. But Philemon had already shown that he had love in his heart (v 7), and so Paul appeals to him on that basis.

"Old man" - Paul was then probably about 60 years of age. Compare Acts 7:58.

10 "Son" - he means spiritual son, not literal. Compare 1 Tim 1:2. Through Paul's teaching Onesimus received new birth in Christ (John 1:12,13). Being in prison did not stop Paul from witnessing for Christ.

11 The name Onesimus means "useful." He was a slave of Philemon (v 16) who had run away and become useless to him. But having become a child of God he became useful in a far higher sense.

12 "My own heart" - such was the love the great apostle had for one from what men regarded as the lowest class of society. This is what Christ's love can do in anyone who

will receive it.

13,14 Paul was sure that Philemon would have gladly been a help to him if he had been where Paul was. But he would not try to use another man's servant without consent. If a favor is forced and not free, it is no favor at all. This is true also of any gift we make to God or to His people - 2 Cor 9:7.

15,16 "Slave" - notes at Eph 6:5; Ex 21:2.

"A dear brother" - Col 4:9. In Christ masters and slaves, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, those whom men regard as high caste or as low caste or as outcaste, are all brothers and one people and one body - Col 3:11; Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:12,13. Any Christian who does not accept this is rejecting a very important truth revealed by God Himself. Exalting ourselves over those considered lower is very offensive to God.

17-19 Paul had learned this from Christ. He knew that God accepts believers as He does His own Son - Acts 15:8; Rom 5:2; 14:3; Eph 2:18. He knew that we must accept one another as Christ accepts us - Rom 15:7. He knew that accepting someone a person sends is the same as accepting the person who sent him - John 13:20. He knew that all the wrongs, sins, and spiritual debts of believers have been put to Christ's account and that Christ paid them in full - Isa 53:5,6; Rom 8:33,34; 2 Cor 5:19-21. Paul had learned what love is and what these divine principles mean, and was happy to put them into practice. So must we be. We should be happy to pay the debts of other believers as Christ has paid our debts, and to accept other believers who have offended us as God has accepted us who have offended Him.

"Your very self" - Paul probably means that Philemon had come to Christ and gained salvation through Paul's ministry. Philemon had gained this great thing through Paul. So he should be willing to

written *this* with my own hand, I will pay it back; but I do not need to tell you that you owe me even your very self. 20 Yes, brother, let me rejoice in the Lord because of you. Refresh my heart in the Lord. 21 I have confidence in your obedience and so write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

22 Moreover, prepare a place for me to stay, overlook the offenses of another brother in Christ whom Paul loved.

20 This benefit was not for himself but for one who was dear to him.  
"Refresh" – v 7.

21 "Obedience" – not obedience to a command, for Paul gave none (vs 8,9), but obedience to the high principles of love. This is the best of all kinds of obedience. We should do things to please Christ

for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24 *as do* Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow workers.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit.

Amen.

simply because we love Him, and to help others on the same basis.

22 Because of the prayers of Philemon (and others) Paul expected to be released from prison. Compare Acts 12:5-11.

23 "Epaphras" – Col 1:7; 4:12.

24 "Marcus" – Mark – 2 Tim 4:11.

"Aristarchus" – Col 4:10.

"Demas, Luke" – Col 4:14.

25 Rom 1:7; 16:20.



# HEBREWS

**Author:**

Unknown. Some scholars believe that the apostle Paul wrote this letter. Some have suggested others as the possible author – Apollos, Silas, Barnabas, etc. The author does not make himself known in the letter, and the Bible does not inform us who he was in any other place, so we conclude that we cannot now know and do not need to know who wrote it. It is enough to know that it was written by divine inspiration and that God caused it to be included among the books of the Bible.

**Date:**

Sometime shortly before 70 AD when the Roman army came to Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the temple and exiled all the remaining Jews.

**Themes:**

The greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the greatness of the New Covenant which He made. The writer shows clearly that in every way the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant God made with Israel through Moses. Some Jewish Christians, being persecuted because of their faith in Christ, were tempted to abandon the teachings about Christ they had received and to go back to the old ways. Therefore the writer not only shows the greatness of the New Covenant but also gives 5 very severe warnings to those who were possibly thinking of turning away from it. Another leading theme of this letter is announced in the first two verses and in 12:25: God has spoken, not merely through His prophets, but through His own Son, and everyone should listen and obey. Two of the key words in this letter are “better” (1:4; 7:19,22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16,35,40; 12:24) and “faith.” The Bible’s great chapter on faith is in this letter (chapter 11).

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**1** God, who in time past, at various times and in diverse ways spoke to the fathers by the prophets, 2 in these last days has spoken to us by *his* Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, and by whom also he made the worlds.

3 *The Son* is the brightness of *God's* glory, and

**1:1** "God. . .spoke" – this is one of the great themes of this letter. What God spoke is recorded in the Old Testament. Compare Matt 4:4; 2 Pet 1:21; 2 Tim 3:16. See how the following verses in this letter are introduced: They reveal God speaking – 1:6,7,8,10; 2:11-13; 3:7; 4:3; 5:5,6; 6:13,14; 7:21; 8:8; 10:5,15-17; 12:25,26; 13:5.

"In diverse ways" – see Gen 15:1,12; 18:1,10; 28:12-15; Ex 3:1-4; 19:20; 25:22; 33:11; 34:5-7; Josh 5:13-15; 2 Sam 23:1-3; 1 Kings 19:11-13; Isa 6:1-8; Jer 1:4,9,10; Ezek 2:1,2; Dan 8:15-18; 9:20-22.

"The fathers" – ancestors of the Hebrews.

"Prophets" – those men whom God inspired and sent to speak His messages in the Old Testament. Notes at Gen 20:7; etc. Since it was the one true God who spoke through the prophets, obviously the study of the Old Testament is very important for an understanding of His will and ways.

**1:2** Verses 1 and 2 give the first of several comparisons in Hebrews.

"His Son" – see John 7:16,17; 8:28; 12:49,50; 17:8. Jesus was the final great prophet spoken of in Deut 18:18,19. In vs 2-4 the writer of this letter says nine very important things about Jesus the Son of God.

"Heir" – the writer begins to show who the Son of God is and how much greater He is than the prophets. Heir means one who is to come into possession of what is willed to him.

"Made the worlds" – v 10; Gen 1:1; John 1:1-3; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16. The Son was in existence before the universe was made – He did not become God's Son by being born on earth (John 17:5; Col 1:17). Note on "Son" at Matt 3:16,17; 11:27; John 3:16; 5:18-23.

**1:3** "God's glory" here means the divine nature itself. God can be described as "light" (1 John 1:5). Christ is the shining forth of that light (compare Luke 1:78,79; 2:29-32; John 1:4,5,9; 8:12; 2 Cor 4:6). The radiance of the sun reveals the sun and is of the very nature of the sun. In the same way Christ reveals God and has the very nature of God – John 1:14,18; 10:30; 14:9; other references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. Only one who shared God's nature could be the radiance of God's glory. He is "light of light."

"Exact image of His nature" – compare 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15. The Greek word translated "nature" means "substance", "essence", "actual being", "real nature." God in His eternal spiritual being dwells in "unapproachable light" and is invisible (1 Tim 6:16; John 1:18). He became

the exact image of his nature, and upholds all things by the word of his power. When he had by himself purged our sins he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 being made so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name than they.

visible in Christ. God's nature and attributes appear fully in Christ (Col 2:9). Christ reveals in His own person exactly what God is like. This too, could be said only of one who shared God's nature. See further references at Phil 2:6.

"By the word of his power" – compare Col 1:17. His Word speaks of His will – what He says is done. The universe with its galaxies, constellations, stars, sun, and planets holds together and is kept from collapsing by the power of Jesus Christ. By Him it moves forward to the purpose He has for it. In this too, we see that Christ shares the very nature of God. Who but God Himself could have a word and will so powerful as to uphold the whole universe?

"Purged our sins" – this means that Jesus, by the sacrifice of Himself on the cross, provided the way for men to be cleansed from their sins (7:27; 9:26; Matt 26:28; 10:10; 1 John 1:7; John 1:29; Rev 1:5). He did this "by himself." No man had any contribution to make to this divine work.

"He sat down" – v 13; 2:9; 10:12; Ps 110:1; Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33; Rev 3:21. By His sacrifice on the cross, the work of providing cleansing from sin was finished, and Jesus sat down at the highest place of power and glory in the universe.

**1:4** In showing Christ's superiority to the prophets (vs 1,2), the writer has shown His superiority to the angels as well. Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

"Being made" – the Greek word also means "having become." He was superior to the angels before He came to earth. But as a man on earth He was a "little lower than the angels" – 2:9. After His resurrection, He rose to a place higher than the angels.

"A more excellent name" – judging from the next verse this superior name is "Son." "Son" here means one who shares the nature of God and is to be worshiped, the Lord of the universe (vs 6,8,10). Compare Phil 2:9-11. Jesus, born into the world in a position lower than the angels, "inherited" this name which belonged to the Son of God before the universe came into existence.

It is possible that some of the "Hebrews" did not have a right understanding of who Christ is. Some may have thought that He is some sort of angel, or a person whom God created as He had the angels. This chapter shows the falsity of such views. But in showing the superiority of Christ over the angels the writer is certainly aiming at this great point: the superiority of the new covenant established by Christ over the old covenant of the Law. And the old covenant was given through angels – 2:2.

- 5 For to which of the angels did *God* ever say,  
 You are my Son,  
 this day have I begotten you.  
 And again,  
 I will be a Father to him,  
 and he will be a Son to me.  
 6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into  
 the world, he says,  
 And let all the angels of God worship him.  
 7 He says of the angels,  
 Who makes his angels spirits,  
 and his ministers a flame of fire.  
 8 But *he says* to the Son,  
 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.  
 A sceptre of righteousness is the  
 sceptre of your kingdom.  
 9 You have loved righteousness,  
 and hated wickedness,

therefore God, your God, has anointed  
 you with the oil of gladness above  
 your associates.

- 10 And *he also says*,  
 You, Lord, in the beginning  
 have laid the foundation of the earth,  
 and the heavens are the work of  
 your hands.  
 11 They will perish, but you remain.  
 All of them will wear out like a cloak,  
 12 And like a garment you will fold them up,  
 and they will be changed.  
 But you are *always* the same,  
 and your years will not end.  
 13 But to which of the angels did he ever say,  
 Sit at my right hand until I make your  
 enemies your footstool?  
 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth  
 to serve those who will be heirs of salvation?

**1:5** See Ps 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14. No angel can claim the title "God's Son" for himself (see note at John 3:16). In 2 Sam 7:14 God is speaking first of David's son Solomon. But He knew a greater than Solomon would come who would be the Son of David and the Son of God (Rom 1:3,4; Isa 9:6).

**1:6** "Firstborn" – in Greek this term signifies the pre-eminent One. It would not be incorrect to call even God the Father the "Firstborn" – meaning the pre-eminent one in the universe. See note at Col 1:15. The word need not refer to a literal birth of any kind (see Ps 89:27 – "appoint him my firstborn").

"Worship him" – these words appear in Deut 32:43 in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament (Septuagint). Here the Holy Spirit puts His stamp of approval on these words. See also Ps 97:7. Because angels are to worship Christ it is clear that He is far above them. It is also clear that Christ shares the nature of God – otherwise God would not command angels to worship Him. In the Bible worship is to be for God alone (see Matt 4:10).

**1:7,8** See Ps 104:4; Ps 45:6,7. These verses show that angels are beings God has created. The Son of God is not a created being but shares God's nature. In v 8 God the Father speaks to the Son and says through the prophet David – "Your throne, O God." Some who deny Christ's deity have tried to translate this "God is your throne." This is an absurd translation. It actually makes Christ greater than God – for greater is the One who sits on a throne than the throne itself. See other references to Christ's deity at Phil 2:6.

**1:9** "Your God" – God the Father – Eph 1:3.

**1:10-12** "And again" – see Ps 102:25-27. Here is another example of God speaking through a prophet. And He speaks of Christ

the Son of God (v 8) as "Lord" and says in v 10 that Christ created the heavens and earth. This is further proof that Christ shares God's nature, for God alone is the Creator (Gen 1:1). In vs 11,12 God says that the Son is unchangeable and eternal. These are attributes only God has. And who but God could ever fold up the heavens "like a garment" (v 12)? And Christ will do that. Also we should note that psalm 102 is a prayer to Jehovah God (102:1), but here the writer says it is a prayer to Christ. In other words, Christ is the incarnation of Jehovah. See other references at Luke 2:11.  
**1:13** See Ps 110:1. Only to Christ His Son has God given the highest place in the universe.

**1:14** Christ is the Lord of men (v 10; Rom 14:9; Phil 2:9-11). But the angels are sent to serve those who will inherit salvation, those who are believers in Christ. "Salvation" here means the final step in their salvation – Rom 8:23,29,30; 1 Pet 1:5. We are not told here what service angels perform for us. Notes on angels at Gen 16:7.

With these words the writer has finished his first main point – God has spoken through His own Son who shares His nature and who is far greater than all men and all angels. We may be sure that God's revelation through His Son is His final revelation. After sending His own Son and speaking through Him, why should He go back to His former method and choose a prophet from among men to speak through?

**2:1-4** This is the first of five very severe warnings in this letter. The others are 3:7-19; 6:1-8; 10:26-31; 12:25-29. The warnings are against treating the gospel lightly (2:3), unbelief (3:12,19), falling away (6:6), deliberately going on in sin (10:26), and refusing God and His revelation of truth

**2** Therefore we ought to pay more careful attention to the things we have heard, lest at any time we drift away *from them*. **2** For if the word spoken by angels was firm, and every violation *of the Law* and *every* disobedience was justly paid back in full, **3** how will we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first was spoken by the Lord, and which was confirmed to us by those who heard *him*? **4** God also gave witness *with them*, both with signs and wonders, and with many

(12:25). These five things can be summed up in one word – apostasy. Apostasy means to rebel against God and to turn away from the truth He has revealed.

**2:1** “Therefore” – since God has spoken by His own Son who is incomparably great we must regard what He has said with exceptional care.

“What we have heard” – the gospel of Christ.

“Drift away” – from the truth God has given to us. Drifting is one of the easiest of things. It requires no effort, only a lack of effort. There are currents in the world that bear people away from Christ. To drift downstream on any such current is to head for disaster.

**2:2** “Spoken by angels” – this “message” was the law that came through Moses at Mount Sinai (Exodus chapter 19, etc). Nothing was said of angels at that time, but the Jews believed that God used angels in the giving of the law. Gal 3:19 confirms this. See also Acts 7:53.

“Firm” – it was God’s law the angels spoke and He demanded obedience to it (Ex 19:5; Lev 18:1-5; Deut 6:1-3; 32:45-47), and punished disobedience (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68; 2 Kings 17:7-20).

**2:3** “Salvation” – the salvation God has provided through Christ (Rom 1:16). The writer’s point is this: God’s revelation through His Son (the gospel, the new covenant) is greater than His revelation through angels (the law). Those who neglected God’s law did not escape; neither will they escape who neglect the gospel of Christ. The gospel is a revelation of God’s love and grace, and provides salvation for men. But this does not mean that those who hear the gospel and treat it lightly can escape punishment. Rather their punishment will be more certain and more terrible because that which they ignore is greater than any previous revelation.

This salvation is called “so great.” Christ’s gospel is exceedingly great in:

Its Author – God Himself,  
Its certainty – many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3)

Its uniqueness – there is one, and only one true gospel – John 14:6; Acts 4:12

Its saving power – 7:25; Rom 1:16,

Its revelation of love and grace – Rom 5:8,

Its satisfaction of justice – Rom 3:25,26,

Its permanent results – 9:12; 10:10,14;

kinds of miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.

**5** For it is not to the angels that he has subjected the world to come, of which we speak. **6** But someone in a certain place testified and said,

What is man that you bring him to mind?  
Or the son of man, that you visit him?

**7** You made him a little lower than the angels.  
You crowned him with glory and honour,

Rom 5:9,10; etc.

Observe that to face the just punishment of God, men do not have to vigorously reject the gospel. Ignoring or neglecting it is enough.

“Spoken by the Lord” – Jesus Himself was the first to proclaim the gospel (Mark 1:14,15; Luke 4:18-21). The writer says this to emphasize its great importance.

“Confirmed” – the apostles of Christ confirmed all that He taught.

“To us” – this may rule out Paul as the writer of this letter (see Gal 1:11,12,15-17; 2:6). At least, it is not the sort of statement we might expect Paul to use.

**2:4** “God also” – the Father confirmed the gospel of His Son by mighty miracles – Matt 28:6 (Rom 1:4); Mark 16:20; Acts 2:43; 5:12-16; etc.

“And gifts” – the Holy Spirit giving spiritual abilities to believers was also a part of God’s witness to the gospel (1 Cor 12:7-11). The Trinity (see Matt 3:16,17) was at work to provide the gospel for people and to give absolutely sure evidence of its truthfulness.

**2:5-18** The writer returns to the subject of chapter 1 – Christ is superior to the angels (vs 5,7,9). He knew that some people, lacking a full knowledge of the truth, might object: “If Christ is superior to the angels how is it that He was a man lower than the angels? How could one greater than angels experience temptation, suffering and death?” Christ’s death on the cross was a stumblingblock to many Jews – 1 Cor 1:23. And many would not receive the truth that He was God incarnate – John 5:17,18; 10:31-33.

The writer answers any possible objection by making two chief points in these verses: Christ was made lower than the angels only for a brief time (v 9), and it was both fitting and necessary that Christ should be made a man, lower than the angels, so that He could be the Saviour of men (vs 10,14,17).

**2:5** “The world to come” – Matt 25:31,34; Acts 3:21; Rom 8:18-23; Isaiah chapter 11; Revelation chapters 20-22.

**2:6-8** The writer quotes from Ps 8:4-6 to show that God will make men, not angels, the rulers of the world to come. See also Matt 19:28; 24:46,47; 25:21; Luke 19:17; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 5:10; 20:6; 22:5.

“But now” – v 8 has not yet been completely fulfilled. Man does not now have the high place that God intended him to have.

and placed him over the works of your hands.

8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet.

For in putting all things in subjection under him, he omitted nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, the One who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man.

10 For it was fitting for him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both

**2:9** Man's authority over the world to come will be realized only through the Lord Jesus. He is mankind's representative, "the last Adam" (1 Cor 15:45-47), the leader of a redeemed people who shall rule the world to come. He wanted to raise men far above the angels. So, though He was the Creator of angels, He was made lower than angels – that is, He became a man (John 1:14; Phil 2:5-8). The purpose of His incarnation was to suffer death.

"Taste death" here means actually to die. God's purpose is for man to rule the world to come. But there was a great obstacle to the fulfillment of this purpose. All men were sinners and subject to death as a punishment for their sins (Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; 6:23). The Lord Jesus came to die "for every man" – 2 Cor 5:14,15; 1 Tim 2:6; 1 John 2:2. This was "by the grace of God." It was God's gift to mankind – John 3:16; Rom 5:8. Because Jesus willingly gave Himself up to death (John 10:17,18), God highly exalted Him – 1:3; Phil 2:9-11.

**2:10** "Many sons to glory" – this is God's purpose in all that He has done and is doing among men. Compare John 17:22,24; Rom 5:2; 8:18,28-30; 9:23; 2 Cor 4:17; Eph 1:18.

"Author of their salvation" – the Lord Jesus – 12:2. He established the way they must go to reach the glory God has prepared for them. To make Him "perfect" does not mean that the nature of Jesus was not perfect before His sufferings. He was sinless and perfect in character and action. To make Him perfect here means that through suffering God perfectly fitted Him to be the Saviour of men – 5:7-9; 7:28. His sufferings not only took away their sin and guilt (7:27; 9:28; 13:12; 1 Pet 3:18), they made Him fully able to sympathize and help His people in their sufferings and temptations (v 18; 4:15,16).

**2:11-18** The Lord Jesus completely identified Himself with those whom God is bringing to glory.

**2:11** "He who sanctifies" – means "the one who makes people holy." The one who does this is Christ – 10:10,14; 13:12. Notes on holiness at Lev 20:7; John 17:17-19. Those who are made holy are those who believe in

he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified *are* all of one. For this reason he is not ashamed to call them brothers, 12 saying,

I will declare your name to my brothers,  
in the midst of the church I will sing  
praise to you.

13 And again,

I will put my trust in him.

And again,  
See, I and the children whom God has  
given me.

14 Since therefore the children had flesh and

Heim and receive Him as Saviour from sin and Leader to glory. Christ has set them apart from the rest of mankind and consecrated them to God. He and they are "all of one." They belong to the same God. He is the Son of God born as a man. They become the children of God by a new spiritual birth – John 1:12,13; 3:3-8. God is the Father of Christ and the Father of all those who believe in Christ – John 20:17. And Christ, the Lord of glory, the heir of all things, is not ashamed to call believers "brothers" – though now they are poor, weak, and often foolish.

**2:12,13** He quotes Ps 22:22 and Isa 8:17,18 as evidence that the Lord Jesus and His believers share together in human nature and in their relationship to God.

**2:14,15** "Children" – the children of God, the "many sons" of v 10. They are all human beings, so Christ became a human being with real flesh and blood – Matt 1:20,21; Luke 2:5-7; 24:49; John 1:14; 6:53-58. His purpose in this was threefold: to die (Matt 16:21; 20:28; John 10:17,18), by dying to destroy Satan, and to free His people. Notes on the devil at Matt 4:1-10.

"The power of death" – he brought death into the world by leading Adam and Eve into sin – Genesis chapter 3. He rules in the realm of sin and death, taking men captive – 2 Tim 2:26, and keeping them in a state of spiritual death. He even has, it seems, the power to kill – Job 2:6; 1 Cor 5:5. By His death and resurrection Christ defeated Satan and made it possible for men to receive forgiveness of sins and spiritual life, and to be completely delivered from death – John 5:24; 11:25,26; 1 Cor 15:54-57; 2 Tim 1:10. This means the overthrow of Satan and the eventual destruction of him and his kingdom – John 12:31; Rev 20:10,14,15.

"Has the power" – the Greek verb is in the present tense. Even so, some versions have the translation "had the power" – as though Satan has it no longer. Satan still has the power of death over those who remain in their sins and reject Christ, but he has no such power over believers in Christ (except in a case like 1 Cor 5:5). Christ has rescued us from the power of Satan and the



blood, he also himself took of the same, so that through death he might destroy the one having the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver those who through fear of death were, throughout their lifetime, under the heel of slavery.

16 For he certainly does not take hold of angels *to help them*, but he takes hold of the children of Abraham.

17 Therefore in all things he had to be made like *his* brothers, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *relating* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since

kingdom of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of God (Acts 26:18; Col 1:13).

Observe that the "fear of death" is one way Satan holds men in slavery. Because of this fear men do all sorts of things at Satan's bidding that they might not otherwise do. The "fear of death" means more than merely being afraid to die – it is a fear of what happens after death. And this brings men into bondage to false religion. Men may do anything the devil tells them to do if they think that by doing it their lot will be better after death. Christ frees believers from the fear of death and all other bondage – John 8:32,36; Rom 6:18; 8:2,15,21; 2 Cor 5:6-8; Phil 1:21-23.

**2:16** This verse is not easy to translate. All that is in the Greek is "For certainly he does not take hold of angels, but he takes hold of the children of Abraham." The KJV put the verb in the past tense and added the words "him the nature of" and "him" in italics, indicating that the words were not in Greek. The meaning of the Greek probably is that Christ, having become a man, now lays hold of certain men, not angels, to help them (v 18).

"Children of Abraham" – Christ became a man, and not an angel, in order to help men. Abraham's "children" are his literal descendants (Jews) who believe in Christ and his spiritual descendants who believe God as he did – Rom 4:11,12,16,17; Gal 3:7-9.

**2:17** "In all things. . .like his brothers" – this does not mean that Jesus was a sinner or that He had a sinful nature like them. See 4:15; 7:26; Luke 1:35; John 8:46; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22. And it does not mean that as a man He was no longer God – 1:6,8. It means that He had real flesh and blood, true human nature (v 14), and had to face real sufferings and temptations (v 18). There were two reasons for this – to make propitiation, and to become the high priest of his people. On atonement see Ex 29:33; 25:17; Rom 3:25,26.

"High priest" – the writer here introduces one of the great themes of this letter (3:1; 4:14; 5:10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21). In the Bible a priest was one who offered sacrifices for the people, saw that the work of God's tabernacle or temple was carried on, and represented the people

he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

**3** Therefore, holy brethren, sharers in the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, as Moses also *was faithful* in all his house. 3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, since he who has built the house has more honour than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but he who *built* all things *is* God. 5 And Moses as a servant *was* indeed faithful in all his house, as a

before God. Note at Ex 28:1. The high priest was over all the priests and there was certain work that only he could do – 5:1-3; 9:7. See Leviticus chapter 16.

Now God has abolished the Old Testament priesthood (no other priesthood in any other religious system was ever ordained by God). Christ in heaven is the only high priest, and His believers on earth are the only priests on earth acceptable to God – 1 Pet 2:5,8; Rev 1:6. Christ is a merciful and faithful high priest – merciful to men, faithful to God in all His service.

"Propitiation" – many scholars think that this word brings out better the meaning of the Greek word than "reconciliation" or "atonement." See the meaning of it at Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:2.

**2:18** See 4:15; Matt 4:1-10. Jesus has felt the sharp arrows of temptation. He has suffered under the suggestions of Satan to think only of Himself, to avoid the cross, to do wrong. Since He has been through all that, He knows by experience Satan's ways and how they come against the human mind and heart, and He can sympathize with His people facing them. On temptation see also Matt 6:13; 1 Cor 10:13.

**3:1-6** Christ is greater than Moses. Moses was a servant in God's house, but Jesus was God's Son over the house.

**3:1** "Therefore" – this is God's way: He gives glorious truth then appeals to people to act according to it (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 15:58; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 5:1; Eph 4:1; Col 3:1).

"Holy" – 2:11.

"Heavenly calling" – the call to believers came from heaven and leads them to heaven (Rom 8:30).

"Apostle" – this is the only place in the Bible where Christ is called "apostle." It means God sent Him on His mission into the world and spoke through Him (1:2; John 6:38,39).

"High Priest" – 2:17.

**3:2** Both Moses and Jesus were faithful – Num 12:7; John 8:28,29; 17:4.

"House" means the household of God, God's people.

**3:3,4** Moses was a part of the household of God, but the Lord Jesus is the one who created it. So obviously Jesus is far superior to Moses.

**3:5,6** The Son over the house is in a far

testimony to those things which were to be spoken afterwards, 6 but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

Today if you will hear his voice,  
8 do not harden your hearts,  
as in the provocation,  
in the day of testing in the desert,  
9 when your fathers tested me,  
proved me,  
and saw my works forty years.

superior position to a servant in the house. Moses spoke of things to be "spoken afterwards." That is, he pointed to a further revelation of truth from God (compare 10:1). Christ is the one of whom Moses testified – Luke 24:27; John 5:46. Why does the writer show Christ's superiority to Moses? Moses is the representative of the old covenant of law; Jesus is the founder of the new covenant of grace. The writer will later show that the new is far superior to the old (8:6-13). Here he shows the new is superior because of its Founder.

"Whose house we are" – Moses served among the people of Israel; Christ's household is made up of all believers in Him, and He is the Head of the house.

"If" – see v 14; Col 1:23; 1 Cor 15:2. This does not teach that believers who are members of His household may lose their faith and cease to be members. The meaning is that continuing to believe is the real evidence of membership. See v 14. It is useless to say of anyone who gives up his courage and hope, rejects the gospel, and goes back to live in sin that he ever possessed God's salvation (10:39; John 10:27; 1 John 2:19; etc). It is a sad fact that many boast that they are of the household of God when they are not.

**3:7-19** These verses give the second warning against apostasy. Verses 7-11 are taken from Ps 95:7-11. See notes there. They show that a whole generation can profess to be the household of God and yet be guilty of unbelief and fail to receive the blessing God promised to give to those who believed (v 19). If it happened once it can happen more than once.

**3:7** "The Holy Spirit says" – observe these words. A man wrote psalm 95, but God's Spirit inspired the writing and spoke through him. Compare 9:8; 1 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21.

"Today" – this word signifies a new beginning, a new day of opportunity. It means this era of Christ's gospel. Compare 2 Cor 6:1,2.

**3:8** "Provocation" – Ex 17:1-7; Ps 95:8.

**3:9** "Forty years" – Num 14:26-35.

**3:10** "Grieved" – acting in a provoking way, hardening the heart and going astray – all that was (and is) a grief to God.

"Always go astray" – they were not like

10 Therefore I was grieved with that generation, and said,

They always go astray in *their* heart,  
and they have not known my ways.

11 So I swore in my wrath,  
They will not enter my rest.

12 Watch, brethren, so that there may not be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, 13 but encourage each other daily, while it is called "today", lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become sharers with Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm to the end;

Christ's sheep (who obey His voice and follow Him – John 10:27). Outwardly they had the name of being God's people, inwardly they were hard, unbelieving and rebellious. Compare Ps 58:3; Isa 1:2,3; 53:6.

**3:11** "My wrath" – see notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; etc.

"My rest" – rest from the desert journey and from their enemies in Canaan (Deut 1:34-36; 12:9; Josh 23:1).

**3:12-19** The writer applies the words of Ps 95:7-11 to the situation among the Jews in his day. We may well apply it to the situation in the churches in our time. The warning is against unbelief among those who are called God's people.

**3:12** "Watch" – 12:25; the dreadful possibility of unbelief is there; be very careful about it. An unbelieving heart is sinful. Sin produces unbelief which leads to further sin. An unbelieving heart cannot be seen but the outward evidence of it is turning away from the living God. Whenever men turn away from Him we know the cause is this – not their reason, their intellect, their learning, etc. It is the state of the heart that determines what men do. See Prov 4:23.

**3:13** Christians should constantly encourage other Christians to really believe God and go on believing, and to avoid sin. This can be an instrument in God's hands for much good. Observe two facts about sin. It hardens men's hearts against God, and it is deceitful (2 Thess 2:10). Sin likes to present itself as something pleasant rather than the ugly thing God says it is. It tries to appear as honey rather than the poison it really is. It speaks of pleasures but is quiet about the wages it pays (Rom 6:23), and God's anger against it (Rom 1:18).

Sin is one of the three deceitful powers that make men blind and keep them in the broad way which leads to destruction. For the other two see Jer 17:9 and Rev 12:9. When the great deceiver Satan uses deceiving sin in man's deceitful heart, is there any limit to the possibilities of deception?

**3:14** Verse 6. Observe carefully these verbs. We have become sharers in Christ (past tense – not "we will become sharers") if we hold our confidence in Him firm to the end (speaks of the future). If we have come to

15 while it is said,

Today if you will hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts,  
as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke *God*; however not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *Was it* not with those who had sinned, whose dead bodies fell in the desert? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who refused to believe? 19 So we see that they could not enter because of unbelief.

**4** Therefore let us fear that, perhaps, having received a promise of entering his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For the

share in Christ we have come to share in Christ – the future cannot abolish an actual event in the past. It can only confirm it. It can reveal whether we have really come to share in Christ or not. The writer is defining the true people of God – they share in Christ and prove it by continuing to believe. Faith will be tried, its profession will be tested. The genuine believer will appear by his perseverance in the faith. It is not enough to make some sort of beginning as a Christian. We must go on believing till the end. Real believers do this. Apostates do not, because the faith they professed to have is not genuine (compare 10:35-39; Rom 5:9,10; John 10:27; 17:11,12; Luke 22:31,32; 1 John 2:19).

**3:15** Hardening the heart and rebelling against God is evidence of an unbelieving heart.

**3:16** "Not all" – the whole nation of Israel, with only two exceptions (Num 14:1,2,30).

"Out of Egypt" – Ex 14:29-31.

**3:17** Verse 10; 1 Cor 10:1-12; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6. The writer is warning of the possibility that the Hebrews of his generation too might face the wrath of God. It was essential for them to believe and obey God's revelation in Christ.

**3:18,19** Verse 11; Num 14:11; Deut 9:24; Ps 78:10-12,21,22; Acts 7:51-53.

"Refused to believe" – see the note at John 3:36. It could also be translated "disobeyed." Disobedience and unbelief (v 19) work hand in hand. They are partners in every crime against God and man. And they are twin thieves which rob men of the opportunity to receive and enjoy what God offers to all. Then they kept Israel from entering Canaan, the promised land. Now, just as surely, they will keep men from entering heaven.

**4:1-13** The theme of this section is entering God's rest – v 1. Believers in Christ do enter it, but unbelieving Israel did not – vs 2,3. This rest existed in Israel's day and they could have entered it – vs 4-6. Since they did not, and it was God's purpose that some

gospel was preached to us, as well as to them. But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. 3 For we who have believed enter into rest, as he said,

As I swore in my wrath,  
if they will enter my rest.

And yet *his* works were finished from the beginning of the world. 4 For in a certain place he spoke of the seventh *day* like this:

And God ceased from all his works  
on the seventh day.

5 And in this *place* again,

If they will enter my rest.

6 Seeing, therefore, it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached

people should enter, He appointed another day and time – vs 6-8.

Conclusion: there is a rest that can be entered now – vs 9,10.

Exhortation: make every effort to enter it – v 11, because God's Word can discern and forever bar the unbeliever from entering – vs 12,13.

**4:1** "God's rest" means spiritual rest, the rest Jesus spoke of in Matt 11:28. It signifies salvation in Christ. The land of Canaan was only a type or picture of this rest (see note at Josh 1:18).

"Any of you" – he does not say "any of us." He is not suggesting that believers can't know whether they are saved or not, or that they should go around in fear they may be lost (see 2:15; Luke 12:32; Rom 8:15; 1 John 5:13). The writer was not fearful for himself but for some of them. All of us should be alarmed when those who profess to be Christians show signs of unbelief and disobedience. And we should be careful to warn and exhort them – 3:13; 1 Tim 5:20.

**4:2** The good news preached to Israel was this: the promised land is before you; go up and possess it – Deut 1:19-21. The good news preached to men now is: God offers you rest and salvation in Christ. Receive them by faith in Him. The people of Israel would not take possession of the land. In this way they showed their unbelief and disobedience. People now show their unbelief by not receiving Christ and taking possession of God's blessings in Him. Hearing the good news is not enough. Hearing must be mixed with faith, the kind of faith that results in obedience.

**4:3** Belief in Christ is the only way of entering God's rest – the rest God spoke about in Ps 95:11.

**4:4,5** The writer quotes Gen 2:2 and Ps 95:11 (again) to show there is a "rest" of God, and that it has been there since creation was finished. God's rest is a picture of the spiritual rest He gives to believers.

**4:6-8** It is God's purpose that some among

did not enter because of unbelief, 7 again, he appointed a certain day, saying through David, "Today", after so long a time, as it is said,

Today if you will hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts.

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then afterwards he would not have spoken of another day.

9 Therefore there remains a Sabbath-rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered his rest, has also ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his. 11 Therefore, let us strive earnestly to enter that rest, lest any man fall after the same

men should enter His rest. Israel did not, even after they entered Canaan (which was a type or picture of that rest). Through Joshua God gave rest from human enemies (Josh 21:44; 22:4), but not spiritual rest. So God appointed a new time and called it "today." "Today" means this era from Christ's first coming onward. See 3:7. Neither Joshua, nor Moses, nor the law, nor the whole old covenant could give people the rest God wanted them to have. So God appointed another time and another covenant.

**4:9** "Sabbath-rest" – in Greek "Sabbatismos" – Sabbath "observance" or "rest." Concerning the Sabbath see Ex 20:8-11. The Jews regarded the Sabbath as a type or picture of the next world – "The Israelites said, O Lord of the whole world, show us a type of the world to come. God answered them, That type is the Sabbath" (words found in a Jewish commentary). They said that psalm 92 was "a psalm for the Sabbath day because it refers to the world to come, which is all Sabbath and a rest unto eternal life." The writer of this letter here seems to be teaching the same thing.

**4:10** When do believers enter God's rest? Certainly at the end of their earthly life. Then they cease from their toil and rest in God's presence. Compare Rev 14:13; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:21-24. But, in a sense, to some extent they enter into rest now – Matt 11:28,29. The rest now is not the final Sabbath-rest, but it is a foretaste of that. And it means ceasing from any attempts to be saved by one's own works and trusting in Christ for salvation (see Rom 4:4,5). This rest begins now and will result in the final perfect rest in God's presence. If we do not begin this rest in Christ now, it is certain we shall not have the Sabbath-rest in the next world.

**4:11** Compare Matt 11:12; Luke 13:24; 2 Cor 13:5; 2 Pet 1:10. Let us all be on the lookout for disobedience and unbelief in ourselves and in other Christians, and go forward together in faith to the goal. Let us make sure we will enter that final rest by making sure we have Christ's promised rest now and are moving ahead yoked to Him.

"Strive earnestly" – he is not teaching

example of unbelief.

12 For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any double edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 Nor is there any creature that is hidden from his sight. All things *are* naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we will give an account.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but *one who*

salvation by works, but emphasizing again a persevering faith (3:14).

**4:12,13** The writer is saying that an "evil heart of unbelief", a heart "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (3:12,13), cannot be hidden from God. God's Word exposes the inner man, and God who gave His Word will know whom to receive into His rest and whom to keep out.

"Living and powerful" – 1 Pet 1:23. The Greek word translated "quick" in the KJV means "living", not swift in action.

"Sword" – compare Eph 6:17; Jer 23:29.

"His sight" – 2 Chron 16:9; Ps 14:2; 90:8; 139:1-12; Jer 23:24; Matt 6:4.

"Give an account" – Matt 12:36; Acts 17:31; Rom 14:12; Rev 22:12.

**4:14** The writer returns to the subject he introduced at 2:17 – Christ as high priest. He continues this subject, with breaks for exhortations and warnings, all the way to 10:18.

"Seeing then. . . let us" – 3:1; 4:1. God gives His truth that we might apply it.

"We have a great high priest" – it seems that men everywhere feel the need of a priest – someone who they think is nearer to God than they are and who can represent them to God. The idea is common to nearly every religion on earth. The Jews had priests and a high priest for 1400 years before Christ came. But the followers of Christ have no visible high priest, and Jews who did not believe in Christ might have thought and said that because they had no visible high priest on earth they had none at all.

The writer of this letter refutes this false notion. Christ's believers have the greatest possible high priest – the Son of God Himself. And the fact that He is not on earth and not visible at all is no disadvantage – just the opposite. For He has gone through the heavens into the very presence of God on high. There He can represent His people far better than any high priest on earth could ever do. Ignorance of this truth holds people in bondage to human priesthood everywhere. So the writer takes great pains to present Jesus as high priest and to show how wonderfully fitted for this work He is.

**4:15** "Touched" – this was one reason God established the priesthood for His people

was tempted in all points as *we are, yet* without sin.

16 Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, so that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

**5** For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *relating* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He should be able to have compassion on those lacking understanding and on those who have gone astray, since he himself is clothed with weakness. 3 Because of this he is obligated to make offerings for sin for himself, as well as for the people. 4 And

Israel. The ideal priest was one who knew the weaknesses, sorrows, troubles and needs of the people and could sympathetically present them to God – 5:1,2; compare Ex 28:29. The Lord Jesus can do this far better than any priest in Israel or anywhere else ever could.

“Our weaknesses” – every one of us has more than enough of these. Compare Matt 26:41; Rom 7:18; 8:26; 1 Cor 2:3; 2 Cor 12:5,9; Gal 5:17.

“Tempted” – 2:18; Matt 4:1-10. So He can sympathize with us. Jesus faced all the temptations that come to men on earth. He had real flesh and blood, real human nature – 2:14. He found out by experience how Satan rages against all who belong to God. He knows the terrific force of evil Satan brings against us and our faith. He has suffered from every fiery dart Satan can hurl. Yet He was “without sin.”

This could mean He never sinned, but always came through temptation victoriously. Or it could mean that He did not have a sinful nature. Both, of course, are true (note at 2:17). But is it possible for someone without a sinful nature to be tempted? Of course. See Gen 3:1-6. See also 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6. Indeed, it would seem that a sinless person who does not give in to temptation would feel the full power of the temptation in a way not possible to the sinful person who soon gives in to it.

**4:16** “Throne of grace” – God’s throne where He sits to rule the universe. Christ our great high priest sits on it by His side – 1:3; Rev 3:21. Because of His sacrifice for our sins grace now reigns. See Rom 5:21; 6:14. He Himself urges us to come to God for all we need – Matt 6:9-13; 7:7-10; John 16:23,24. Our greatest needs are mercy and grace. We need to be kept strong to resist sin, and to be forgiven if we do sin. We need the strength that grace can give us, and we need compassion and mercy when we fail in our weakness. Since we come to the throne of the universe we may be sure that no power that exists can keep God from giving us what we need. Since it is a throne of grace we know that He is willing to give us what we need (compare Phil 4:19). What more truth do we need to inspire us with

no man takes this honour for himself, but only he who is called of God, as Aaron *was*.

5 So Christ also did not glorify himself to become high priest, but he who said to him,

You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you,

6 also speaks like this in another *place*,

You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

7 *Jesus*, during the days of his earthly life in the body, when he had offered up prayers and requests with strong crying and tears to him

confidence, and cause us to come before Him with faith?

**5:1-10** He continues with the subject of Christ as high priest. Verses 1-4 give the qualifications of a good high priest among the people of Israel. Verses 5-10 show that Christ has these qualifications.

**5:1** “Every” – he is referring to the religious system of Israel in the days between Moses and Christ.

**5:2** “Those lacking understanding” – Lev 4:2; 5:17; Num 15:28. The priest could deal gently in such cases. But punishment was severe for those who sinned deliberately and arrogantly – 2:2; Num 15:30-36; etc.

**5:3** “Offerings for sin for himself” – Lev 16:3-6. Like other men the high priest in Israel was weak and prone to sin. See the weakness of Aaron himself, the first high priest, in Exodus chapter 32.

“For the people” – Lev 16:15,16,32-34.

**5:4** Ex 28:1.

**5:5** 1:5; Ps 2:7.

**5:6** Verse 10; 6:20; 7:17. See Ps 110:4. Psalm 110 is a prophesy about Christ, the “son” of v 5. God the Father appointed Him high priest just as He had Aaron.

“Melchizedek” – see notes on chapter 7.

**5:7-9** The writer shows that Christ had another of the qualifications of a high priest – the ability to “have compassion” on people. This ability was made perfect because of His sufferings on earth. In other places in the letter he shows how Christ fulfilled the other duties of a high priest – representing people before God (v 1; 7:25; 9:24), and offering a sacrifice for sins (7:27; 8:3; 9:11,12; 10:28; 10:10,14).

**5:7** “Prayers and requests” – the Lord Jesus in His days on earth was always a person of prayer (Matt 14:23; Luke 5:16). But the writer here seems to be referring to a specific time when He was facing death. More than likely he is referring to Christ’s time in Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46). There He was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. He was in anguish and His sweat was like drops of blood. And God sent an angel to strengthen Him. This all speaks of a dreadful time of testing, and an experience of physical weakness (compare 2 Cor 13:4).



who was able to save him from death, was heard because of his reverence. 8 Despite being *the* Son, he still learned *the meaning of* obedience by the things he suffered, 9 and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him. 10 *He* was called of God *to be* high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

11 We have many things to say concerning him, *things* difficult to explain, because you are slow to

And so loud cries and tears burst from Him.

"Save him from death" – some commentators say that Satan was trying to kill Jesus in Gethsemane and that Jesus was praying that God would save Him from this and enable Him to die on the cross as a sacrifice for sin. But there is no teaching like this in the Bible. Others say that He was praying to be delivered from dying on the cross at all. This cannot be true. He knew He had come for the very purpose of dying (Matt 20:28; John 10:17,18). And He committed Himself to God for this very thing (Matt 16:21; John 12:27,28). Also the writer says that Jesus "was heard" – that is, His prayer was answered. And we know that He was not kept from dying on the cross, so His prayer could not have been for that.

The likeliest explanation is this: Jesus was praying that God the Father would deliver Him from the realm of death after He died, that death would not keep its hold on Him (Acts 2:24); in other words, that God would raise Him from the dead. Compare Ps 22:15-21 (vs 19-21 seem to be a prayer for His resurrection). But did He not know that God would raise Him? Why pray about it? He knew God had promised to raise Him (Ps 16:10).

But this is one important element in prayer – pleading with God to fulfill His promises (compare John chapter 17; Dan 10:2-19; etc). And when faced with the "cup" (Matt 26:39) containing the awful experience of 2 Cor 5:21, and with the hour of darkness upon Him (Luke 22:53), Jesus was overwhelmed and cried out with tears. And God heard Him (Matt 28:6). This was because of His "reverence" or "fear" (as it could be translated, meaning the reverential fear of God – Isa 11:2; notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7). **5:8** "Learned *the meaning of* obedience" – this does not mean He was at one time disobedient but gradually learned to be obedient. Disobedience is sin and He was never once disobedient (John 4:34; 6:38; 8:29; Phil 2:6-8; 1 Pet 2:21,22). But He learned in actual experience what obedience meant, what self-denial and temptation and suffering were involved in it. And face to face with the "cup" (Matt 26:39) He found out in experience that obedience was no easy thing.

**5:9** "Made perfect" – this does not mean that there was some flaw in His character which needed to be corrected. See the note at 2:10. God took Him through suffering to

*understand what you* hear. 12 By now you ought to be teachers, but you still need someone to teach you again the basic things of God's revelation, and have become like those who need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who takes milk *is* inexperienced in the teaching of righteousness, for he is a little child. 14 But solid food is for those who have grown up, *to* those who by continual use have trained their minds to discern both good and evil.

make Him perfectly fitted to be our high priest. Without that process He would not have been the perfect one we needed.

"Obey Him" – in the light of this verse (and similar ones such as John 3:36; Acts 5:32; 2 Thess 1:8) can we think there is salvation for anyone who refuses to obey the Lord Jesus? This does not mean salvation comes by works but by what Paul called the obedience of faith (Rom 1:5). It is grace which gives us just such a faith and heart to obey (Eph 2:8,9). See note at Acts 22:10.

**5:11-14** The writer begins another exhortation and warning which concludes at 6:12. It is a warning against falling away (6:6). He gave it because he saw in some of these Hebrew Christians a lack of progress in the Christian life.

**5:12-14** This, no doubt, is the complaint of many a pastor, teacher and evangelist today also. Many Christians there are who, after years of Christian profession, still want only milk and seem able to take only milk, that is, the more simple truths of the gospel. They flock to evangelistic meetings and stay away from meetings for Bible study. And even the basic truths seem to slip away from them so that there is need to teach them over again.

"Solid food" – means solid teaching on such subjects as Christ as high priest and other doctrines concerning Him. Refusal to take in the deep truths of God's Word reveals immaturity. See also 1 Cor 3:1-4.

"Inexperienced in the teaching" – such infants in the spiritual life may hear teaching about righteousness, but they have no skill or experience in applying it to their lives.

"Teaching of righteousness" – this probably means the same as the "solid food" of v 12. It is similar in meaning to the "wisdom" Paul taught to mature believers (1 Cor 2:6-10).

"Those who have grown up" – those who have grown strong in spiritual understanding and practice of God's Word. Distinguishing good from evil and truth from error is sometimes no easy matter. It requires "training" oneself, taking effort to learn the meaning of the deep things of God's word and to apply it in the situation one faces. It means constant effort and study and discipline. Those who remain spiritual babies are those who perhaps have little time and opportunity to develop spiritually, or who are not willing to make the effort to grow in the things of God.



**6** Therefore leaving the basic matters of the teaching concerning Christ, let us go on to perfection, *and* not lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying

**6:1,2** "Perfection" – or "maturity" or "full growth" – 5:14; Eph 4:13-15.

"Foundation" – it is not altogether clear what foundation he means. He is writing to Jews who had become Christians. He perhaps meant the foundation in the Old Testament which they had received as Jews. Or perhaps He meant the new foundation laid by the apostles for this New Testament era. His meaning is doubtful because of the six things he mentions here not one of them is distinctly Christian; all could easily be a part of the foundation laid in the OT.

"Repentance. . . faith in God" – notice the writer does not say "faith in Christ." This way of stating it would seem strange if he were speaking about the foundation of the Christian life (note on repentance at Matt 3:7; etc).

"Baptisms" – notice the plural. If he had been referring to Christian baptism would he not have used the singular? See Eph 4:5. "Washings" is a possible translation here, and could be a better one. In the Old Testament there were various washings – Ex 29:4; 30:19-21; Lev 11:25; 13:6; 14:8; 16:26; 17:16; Num 8:17; 19:18; etc.

"Laying on of hands" is also seen in the Old Testament – Num 8:10; 27:18; Ex 29:10; Lev 1:4.

"Resurrection" (Dan 12:2; Isa 26:19; Ps 16:10), and "judgment" (Ps 9:8; 82:8; Dan 7:9,10; Joel 3:12) are also in the Old Testament.

However, some scholars view the matter differently. They say that in the writer's mind "faith in God" could include the idea of faith in Christ; that "baptisms" could mean John's baptism, Christian baptism, and the baptism with the Holy Spirit; and that laying on of hands could mean the practice of the early Christians (Acts 6:6; 8:16-18; 13:3; etc).

Still it seems a strange list of things to use if one wished to describe the very foundation of the Christian life – there is no mention in it of Christ, of His incarnation and sacrifice for sin, or the giving of the Holy Spirit, or teaching about Christ's Church, or eternal life through Christ. But the meaning of these verses is doubtful and we should not be too dogmatic in what we say about them.

**6:4-6** These verses, too, are not easy to interpret, and there have been great differences of opinion among scholars about the meaning of them. There are four principal interpretations of these verses.

First, they describe real believers in Christ and teach that they can fall away from Christ and lose their salvation.

Second, they describe believers, but if they fall away they do not lose their salvation but only the rewards they might have obtained by faithful service.

Third, they describe real believers who

on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do, if God permits.

4 For *this is something* impossible: those who were once enlightened, and tasted of the

are warned against falling away because there is real danger of it, but actually they will not fall away.

Fourth, they do not describe real believers at all – the things listed in these verses are true of believers, but may be true also of Christians who have never been real believers.

The author of these notes rejects the first two interpretations. He believes the Bible clearly teaches that real believers in Christ do not fall away or commit the other sins connected with final apostasy (note at 2:1-4). See 10:39; John 10:27; 1 John 3:9; 5:18. Compare also John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-29; 17:11-12; Rom 5:9,10; 8:28-39; Phil 1:6; 1 Pet 1:5. We should never use obscure and difficult Scriptures (like the ones here in Hebrews) to overthrow clear ones. These verses in Hebrews do not clearly state that true believers in Christ may fall away and be lost. In fact, faith in Christ is not mentioned in these verses at all.

The third interpretation given above seems more in harmony with the teachings of the New Testament as a whole. Satan tries to get believers to fall away, and they are in danger of it. But being in danger of it does not mean they will actually do it. They might do it if it were not for the Word of God, God's keeping power, and the prayers of Christ for them (compare Luke 22:31,32; John 17:11,12; 1 Pet 1:5). But because of these they are kept from falling away. And the warnings against falling away themselves are helps to keep them from falling away when the danger arises.

But the fourth interpretation given above may possibly be the true one. Verses 4-6 may be a description of those who know the truth, have been much influenced by it, have come very close to the kingdom of God, and yet have not actually entered it. Those who are not God's children, yet profess to be, can appear for a time as if they were (compare Matt 13:18-23,24-30; 25:1-12; 2 Cor 11:14,15). All the things said in vs 4-6 are true of believers, but possibly they may also be true of those who are not believers but only seem to be.

**6:4** "Enlightened" – describes people who know the truth. Compare 10:26. Christ's light has shined on them. But this need not mean that they put their trust in the light or become "sons of light" (John 12:35,36). People can know the truth without repenting and trusting Christ for salvation.

"Tasted of the heavenly gift" – this does not have to mean that they received the heavenly gift. The writer here may have used the word taste in contrast with eat (John 6:57). Compare Num 13:23,26. The

heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 if they fall away, *they cannot* be renewed again to repentance because they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes on it, and brings forth plants suitable for those who till it, receives blessing from God. 8 But that which bears thorns and briars *is*

Israelites who never entered Canaan because of unbelief (3:19), could still have tasted of the fruits of Canaan.

"Partakers of the Holy Spirit" – the writer does not say "received the Holy Spirit." Partaking or "sharing" may or may not mean that. There are different ways of sharing in the Holy Spirit. The false prophet Balaam did (Num 24:2). It seems that the apostate Judas Iscariot did (Matt 10:1; John 6:70,71). Simon in Acts 8:9-24 may be an example of this. Perhaps sharing here means to be present when the Holy Spirit is working in power, to be convicted by the Spirit (John 16:8-11), and brought by the Spirit to the place of repentance, to the very border of God's Kingdom.

**6:5** "Tasted. . . word" – compare Matt 13:20,21.

"Powers of the world to come" – compare Matt 7:22,23. It may or may not be significant that the writer does not say they had believed in Christ or received eternal life, or were saved, etc. But if he did not say this, is it wise for us to say it?

**6:6** "If" – actually this verse does not teach that the people described in vs 4,5 do fall away. It only states what would happen if they did. But the writer certainly seems to teach the danger of it.

"Fall away" – fall away is something far worse than falling into a sin. Peter fell badly but he was renewed to repentance (Matt 26:69-75). If we fall into sin we can be forgiven (1 John 1:9; 2:1; Matt 6:12; 12:31,32. See Prov 24:16). "Falling away" means final apostasy, leaving the faith. It means abandoning the truth altogether (note on 2:1-4). Why does the writer say it is impossible to renew them again to repentance? Why does he not say "renew them again to faith" if the people he described have faith? Repentance means a change of mind, and the meaning here may be this: these Hebrews at first thought Christ was not their Messiah. They changed their minds and thought He was. If after all that is said of them in vs 4,5, they turned away fully from Him, how can they be brought to change their minds once again?

"Crucifying. . . again" – this gives the reason why there can be no further repentance for them. They reject Christ and so take the side of His murderers as Judas did. The writer is speaking of something worse than backsliding. It is possible to bring backsliders to repentance and faith (2 Cor 2:5-11;

rejected, and *is* ready to be cursed. And its end *is* to be burned.

9 But, dear *brethren*, we are persuaded better things about you, and things that go along with salvation, though we speak like this. 10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have showed toward his name in the service you have performed to the saints, and are still performing. 11 And we want every one of you to show the same zeal to the full assurance of

Gal 6:1; Jam 4:8-10; Ps 32:3-5; 51:1-12; Jer 3:12; Ezek 18:30-32; Hos 14:1-4).

"Open shame" – if the Hebrews turned from Christ and went back to Judaism it would be known to everyone. And if anyone renounces Christ now and goes into another religion it becomes known to many people. And this means public disgrace for Christ and His gospel, and men will dishonor the true God because of it.

**6:7,8** The writer gives this illustration to make his meaning clear. The land that produces a crop signifies believers (see Matt 13:23). Land that does not produce a crop signifies unbelievers or apostates. They produce no fruit for God (compare Matt 13:19-22; Luke 13:6-9; etc). Both kinds of land may receive rain (rain here signifies God's truth and the influence of the Holy Spirit), but both do not produce fruit for God. What a person's life produces reveals whether or not Christ is in Him. The thorns and thistles of apostasy are evidence that Christ was never in such people (compare 1 John 2:19). See Matt 3:8; 7:16-20; etc.

**6:9,10** Evidently he wanted to remove any unnecessary alarm his words might have caused them (compare 4:1; Rom 8:15). The reason why he is confident that they will not "fall away", be "cursed" or "burned" is simply this: spiritual fruit had appeared in their lives. They loved God, worked for God, and helped the people of God (see 10:32-34). If things like this do not appear in a Christian's life where is the evidence that he is a believer? Even if all of vs 4,5 is true of him, if no fruit for God is seen in his life it is all in vain. He is only like land that brings forth thorns and thistles.

"Service. . . performed" – Matt 25:34-40; 1 Thess 1:3; etc.

**6:11,12** Here is the lesson he wanted them to learn from the warning he gave in vs 4-8. It would do them (or us) no good to speculate about the meaning of all that, if they are not earnest about moving forward in the Christian life. The important thing is to go on believing in Christ and serving Him to the end of our time on earth. If we do this we will not become apostates and will not need to fear we will.

"Full assurance" – 2 Cor 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10; 1 John 5:13.

"To the end" – 3:6,14; 10:36.

"Lazy" – Matt 25:26; Prov 18:9; 24:30. Laziness in spiritual matters is disastrous, just as it is in any kind of work.

hope to the end, 12 that you be not lazy, but followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself, 14 *and* said,

Surely *in* blessing I will bless you,  
and *in* multiplying I will multiply you.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men certainly swear by those greater *than themselves*, and an oath *given* for confirmation *is* to them an end of the whole dispute. 17 So God, willing more fully to show to the heirs of promise the unchangeability of his purpose, confirmed *it* with an oath, 18 so that by two unchangeable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us might

have strong encouragement.

19 This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and firm. It enters the inner *place behind* the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, Jesus *himself*, who has become high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

**7** For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 and Abraham gave him a tenth part of everything. By interpretation he is first "King of righteousness", and then "King of Salem" also, that is, King of peace. 3 *Being* without father, without mother, and without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, he is made like the Son of God *and* remains a priest continually.

4 Now consider how great this man *was*, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the plunder. 5 Certainly those who are of the

"Patience" – 10:36; Rom 8:25; Jam 1:4. **6:13-20** Here the writer concludes this section of exhortation (begun at 5:11) and brings us back to the subject of Christ as high priest (v 20). He has spoken of diligence, faith and patience in vs 11,12. Now he gives an example of one in the past who practiced these, and applies it all to believers now.

**6:13-15** Abraham was the ancestor of all the Hebrews. Also he is the spiritual father of all who believe (Rom 4:11,16). The faith of Abraham is described in 11:18-19. He is a great example of faith and patience.

"Promise" – Gen 22:16-18.

**6:16-18** If men swear to tell the truth what more can be demanded? Indeed, what more than that can men demand of God? Men after such an oath may lie, but God certainly will not (Titus 1:2). If He swears to do something we may be sure He will do it. The "two unchangeable things" (v 18) are God's promise and His oath. He gave them both that believers might have "strong encouragement", that they may be encouraged to believe and go on believing to the end. Believers have "fled for refuge" – fled from sin, and God's anger against it, from the fallen world, from all that would keep them from salvation (compare Num 35:9-29). They have laid hold of God's promise of eternal salvation.

"Refuge" – Ps 7:1; 18:2; 91:2; etc.

**6:19,20** The kind of hope the Bible speaks of is not some weak and wavering thing. It is like a strong and secure anchor. It will never fail (compare Rom 5:2-5). An anchor holds a ship steady in one place in the sea. Hope holds believers steady to one place – to the "inner things behind the veil" (heaven, where Jesus is). They will not be wrecked by any storm of apostasy.

"Veil" – 10:19,20; Matt 27:51. The veil or curtain in both tabernacle and temple separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy

Place (the inner sanctuary). The Most Holy Place signifies heaven. Those believers had not yet entered there, but Jesus had. And they are forever bound to Him by faith and hope. He is there "before" them and "for" them – 4:44; 9:24; Eph 2:6; Col 3:1-4. He is there and will see to it that all of them get there (John 17:24).

**7:1-3** Melchizedek was a type or picture of Christ who is both king and priest – 5:6,10; 6:20. Melchizedek appears only once in the history of the Old Testament – Gen 14:18-20, and is mentioned only once more in the Bible until this letter to the Hebrews – Ps 110:4. We know nothing more about him. The language here in v 3 is obscure. Because of it some scholars think he was actually Christ Himself. But if Melchizedek was literally the king of Salem in the land of Canaan then he could not have been Christ. And the writer here says he was "like" the Son of God, not that he was the Son of God.

What does it mean, then, that he was without "father or mother", etc? It probably means that there is no record of any of these in the Bible. We know nothing of his parents, his genealogy, his birth and death. He suddenly appears in the Bible and remains there always the same, always a king and priest, a picture pointing to Christ. He is a good picture. Christ is the King of righteousness, the King of peace, who is greater than Abraham, and who has no beginning and no end (1:2,3,8,10-12), and who is priest forever (5:6).

**7:4-10** The writer shows the greatness of Melchizedek – he was greater than Abraham (vs 4-8), and greater than Levi (vs 9,10). This means higher in position. His purpose in showing this is to show that Christ's priesthood is greater than the priesthood of the tribe of Levi.

**7:4** Gen 14:20.

**7:5** "Levi" – this was the tribe of Israel from which all the priests of the old covenant came

sons of Levi who receive the office of the priesthood are commanded according to the Law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brethren, even though they are descended from Abraham. 6 But he whose descent is not traced from them received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him who had the promises. 7 And without any contradiction the less is blessed by the greater. 8 And here men that die receive tithes. But there *they are received* by one about whom it is affirmed that he lives. 9 And, I may say, Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. 10 For he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

11 Therefore, if perfection came by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* that another priest should arise according to the order of Melchizedek and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 But the priesthood having been changed, it is necessary that there be a change of

(Num 1:48-53; 3:5-10).

"Tithes" - Lev 27:30; Num 18:24-28.

**7:6** "He whose descent is not traced from them" - Melchizedek.

"Blessed him" - Gen 14:19.

**7:7** "Greater" - that is, the person in a higher position.

**7:8** "Here" - in the case of the priests descended from Levi.

"There" - in the case of Melchizedek.

"That he lives" - v 3.

**7:9,10** Melchizedek was in a higher position than anyone descended from Abraham, including Levi and the priests of that tribe. Levi was born about 150 years after Abraham paid a tenth to Melchizedek.

**7:11-19** In the remainder of this chapter (and on to 10:18) the writer shows how Christ as priest is far superior to the priests of Levi's tribe. In these verses he begins by showing that the Old Testament priesthood was completely unsatisfactory. If it had been able to accomplish what God wanted done God would not have promised another kind of priest after the order of Melchizedek.

**7:11** "Perfection" - 10:14. The priesthood of Levi's tribe could not take away men's sins, or change their hearts, or fit them for heaven.

"The law" - before God gave the law through Moses there was no priesthood of the tribe of Levi. That priesthood was a part of the old covenant (Ex 19:5).

"Aaron" - the first high priest under the law. He was, of course, of the tribe of Levi - Ex 6:16-20; 28:1-3.

**7:12** The law and the Old Testament priesthood were tied together. Since the one failed the whole system failed, the whole old covenant failed (this the writer shows in chapter 8). And God laid it aside and brought in something new and better.

**7:13,14** "Judah" - in His human nature the

law also. 13 For the one about whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, and from it no man served at the altar. 14 For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang from Judah, and about this tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And *this matter* is far more evident, since according to the likeness of Melchizedek another priest arises, 16 who has become *one*, not according to the law having to do with a command concerning bodily *origins*, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For he declares,

You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

18 For without doubt the previous commandment has been annulled because of its weakness and uselessness. 19 For the Law made nothing perfect, but bringing in a better hope *did*, and by this *hope* we draw near to God.

20 And since *he was* not *made a priest* without

Lord Jesus was descended from Judah (Matt 1:1,3-6,16). When Jesus was on earth the temple authorities would not have let Him enter into the Holy Place, or serve at the altar, nor would He have tried to do so (see 8:4; Num 3:10).

**7:15-17** The writer has said that there has been a change in the priesthood and the law - v 12. This is clear not only because God has appointed one of the tribe of Judah as high priest, but because God did so on a new basis. The OT priests were chosen strictly according to their ancestry. They had to be descendants of Levi and Aaron. But God chose Christ because of His "endless life" - vs 16,24.

**7:17** The writer is showing that this prophecy in Ps 110:4 was also a prophecy about God's setting aside the whole old covenant with its priesthood and law.

**7:18,19** "Previous commandment" - the commandment that only men who were descended from Aaron and Levi could become priests. That regulation was "weak and useless" and so the whole Old Testament priesthood and the old covenant based on it were weak and useless to bring salvation to men. They made nothing and no one perfect - v 11. We should learn a very important lesson from this. Since the OT priesthood which God Himself established was weak and useless, we may be sure that any human priesthood in any religion is even more weak and useless. But why did God establish something that proved to be weak and useless? To teach us that it is weak and useless, and to show us we need Christ the great high priest.

"A better hope" - 6:18-20. It is related to the priesthood of Christ. Because of Him and His work as priest on our behalf we can "draw near to God" - 10:19-22.

**7:20-22** The writer gives another reason why Christ's priesthood is superior to the

an oath 21 (those priests were made *such* without an oath, but this *one* with an oath by him who said to him, The Lord swore and will not change his mind, You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek), 22 so much *more surely* has Jesus become a guarantee of a better covenant.

23 And in fact they were many priests, for they were prevented from continuing because of death. 24 But this *man*, because he goes on forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able also to save to the utmost those who come to God through him, because he always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For such a high priest is fitting for us. *He is* priesthood of Levi's descendants. When God appointed Christ as high priest He promised very solemnly that He would be priest. There was nothing like this in the case of the priests of Levi's tribe. God's oath reveals His unchangeable purpose - 6:17. He wanted the Jews (and us) to be absolutely sure about the priesthood of Christ. That priesthood is at the very foundation of salvation for men. If Christ is not a priest after the order of Melchizedek there is no salvation for anyone, ever.

"A better covenant" (v 22) - the writer takes this up in 8:6-13.

**7:23-25** Here is another reason why Christ as priest is greater than the priests of the Old Testament. Christ's priesthood is permanent, theirs was not. Each high priest in Israel died and left his work and position to another. Between Aaron and 70 AD (when the temple was destroyed) there were more than eighty high priests. Jesus lives and carries on His work forever. As a result He is able to save His people forever.

**7:25** The word translated "utmost" could also be translated "completely" or "forever." Perhaps all these ideas are here. Jesus saves people perfectly and for all time and eternity. But He saves only "those who come to God through Him" - people who accept Him as the one way to God (John 14:6), as the one Mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), as the one sacrifice for their sins (v 27; 9:28; 10:10; 1 Pet 3:18).

"Because" - Christ's saving people completely and forever is related to His intercession for them. See 9:24; 1 John 2:1; Rom 8:34. Believers in Christ are kept in a state of salvation by His life in heaven - Rom 5:9,10. When still on earth He gave examples of what His prayers for His people were like - John chapter 17; Luke 22:32. Because He is the interceding high priest in heaven He is able to bring all believers to glory (2:10), help them in temptations (2:18; 4:16), and enable them to hold fast their faith to the end (3:6,14; 10:39).

**7:26-28** The writer gives another reason why Christ's priesthood is superior to the Old Testament priesthood: Christ Himself is far superior to all those priests. He meets our

holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and exalted above the heavens, 27 who does not need to offer up sacrifice daily, as those high priests, first for his own sins, and then for *those* of the people, for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. 28 For the Law ordains as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which was after the Law, *ordains* the Son who is consecrated forever.

**8** Now the main point of what we have been saying *is this*: We have such a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle that was

real need; none of them ever could. He is perfectly holy; they were sinful and needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins. They had to make sacrifices again and again for the people; He took away their sins once and for all by His one sacrifice of Himself. They were weak men; He is the Son of God.

"Separate from sinners" - on earth He lived among sinners, ate with them, received them, was called their friend, showed love for them, was "made sin" for them, and died for them - Matt 11:19; Luke 15:2; Rom 5:8; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 3:18. But in character He was always in a different class from them. Their sinfulness did not defile Him. He was without a sinful nature and never sinned.

"Exalted above the heavens" - 1:3; 8:1 - something not true of any other priest.

**7:28** "Oath" - vs 20-22.

"After the law" - since the law and the OT priesthood proved weak and ineffective for salvation, God appointed another way.

"Consecrated forever" - this was not true of any other priest - v 19.

**8:1-13** The writer continues to show that Christ's priesthood is superior to the OT priesthood (and so, of course, to any human priesthood imaginable). It is better because He serves as priest in the true sanctuary of God in heaven itself, but all Old Testament priests performed their work in an earthly sanctuary which was only a little picture of the heavenly one - vs 1-5. Also Christ's priesthood is superior because it is associated with a better covenant than the old one - vs 6-13.

**8:1** See 1:3; 7:26.

**8:2** "True tabernacle" - 9:1,11; Rev 7:15; 11:19; 13:6; 14:15; 15:5,6; 16:1. The spiritual, heavenly tabernacle (or temple) of God is called "true" in contrast to the Old Testament one described in Exodus chapters 25-30. The Old Testament tabernacle was not "false", but it was only a copy or picture of the true (the heavenly) one - v 5; 9:23,24; 10:1. See Exodus 25:9. (It would seem that the heavenly tabernacle extends to earth. Only the Most Holy Place, the immediate presence of God, is in heaven. The brazen altar - Ex 27:1-8



erected by the Lord, and not by man.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices. Therefore *it is* necessary that this man also have something to offer. 4 If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, since there are already priests who offer gifts according to the Law, 5 who serve at the representation and shadow of heavenly things. So Moses was warned by God when he was about to make the tabernacle. He said,

See *that* you make everything according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain.

6 But now *Jesus* has received a more excellent ministry, and by so much more he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. 7 For if that first *covenant* had been without fault, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 But finding fault with them, he said,

See, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

– was a picture of Calvary where Christ died as a sacrifice. The basin or laver of the heavenly tabernacle is on earth and believers wash in it – compare Ex 30:17-21. The Holy Place is Christ’s Church on earth – compare Ex 25:31-40; Rev 1:12,13; 2:1. See the note at the end of Exodus chapter 30).

**8:3** See 5:1. “This man” – the Lord Jesus. What He had to offer was Himself and His own blood – 7:27; 9:14.

**8:5** Verse 2. “Moses was warned” – Ex 25:8,9,40; 26:30; 27:8. God does not lightly command something four times. He wanted the earthly tabernacle to teach heavenly truth. He did not want that truth to be distorted by a tabernacle not made in the pattern He gave.

**8:6** The writer now begins to compare the old covenant which He gave through Moses with the new covenant established by the Lord Jesus. He continues this comparison up to 10:18. See notes on the old covenant at Ex 19:5,6,21-25; on the new covenant at Jer 31:31-34; Matt 26:28. See another comparison between the old and the new at 2 Cor 3:6-18. The new is far superior to the old because it accomplishes what God wants done in the salvation of men, and the old did not. A covenant is an agreement made between two parties or a promise made from one to another. In the old covenant God promised His blessings to the people of Israel if they obeyed His laws. In the new covenant God promises the forgiveness of sins, a new heart, the knowledge of God which results in eternal life. The one requirement on man’s part is repentance and faith.

“Better promises” – vs 10-12. Christ is the “mediator” of the new covenant – 9:15; 12:24. Through Him God established it and

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Because they did not continue in my covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

11 And among them no one will teach his neighbour, and no one his brother, and say: “Know the Lord”, for everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

13 By his saying “A new *covenant*,” he has through Him God continually makes it effective.

**8:7** What was wrong with the old covenant? The people were all sinners and could not (and would not) obey God’s laws. Therefore it brought a curse rather than God’s blessings – Rom 8:3; Gal 3:10-13.

**8:8-12** See notes at Jer 31:31-34.

**8:9** “Did not continue in my covenant” – this was the whole problem. The old covenant of law could show the people what they should do and be, but it could not help them to do or be that. The whole history of the Old Testament from Exodus to Malachi is a story of Israel’s failure and unfaithfulness.

**8:10** God here promises to make His people new and different, to give them a mind and heart that can keep His commandments (compare John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; Rom 8:3,4; 2 Cor 5:17; 1 Pet 1:23).

“My people” – 2 Cor 6:16-18; 1 Pet 2:9,10.

**8:11** “Everyone. . . will know me” – Matt 11:27; John 14:7,17; 17:3,6; 2 Cor 4:6; etc. The new covenant promises the knowledge of God and gives what it promises. This is not merely a knowledge about God, but a direct, spiritual experiential knowledge. No other way, no philosophy, no religious system, can give this. See notes at 1 Cor 1:19-21; 2:7-16; Col 2:8.

**8:12** Isa 44:22; Mic 7:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 13:38,39; Rom 4:6-8; 8:33. Notice here in vs 8-12 God’s words “I will” repeated again and again. The new covenant is based on God’s “I will.” The old covenant was based on the people’s words “We will” – Ex 19:8; 24:7. This is why the old was weak and failed, and why the new is powerful and succeeds.

**8:13** “Obsolete” means no longer in use,



made the first old. Now that which is old and has become obsolete *is* ready to vanish away.

**9** Then indeed the first *covenant* also had regulations for divine service, and an earthly sanctuary. **2** For a tabernacle was constructed. In the first *part were* the lampstand, and the table, and the showbread. This is called the Holy Place. **3** And behind the second veil, *there was that part of* the tabernacle called the Most Holy Place. **4** This had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant completely covered with gold in which *were* the golden jar containing manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant, **5** and over *the ark* the cherubim of glory

no longer acceptable. In God's eyes the covenant given through Moses was at an end. And with it the old priesthood was at an end.

"Ready to vanish away" – the temple still stood in Jerusalem and priests were still active there. But all that came to a stop in 70 A.D. See Matt 24:1,2; Luke 19:41-44. From that time there has been no Jewish temple in Jerusalem and so, of course, no priesthood functioning in accordance with OT laws.

**9:1** In this chapter the writer continues the comparison between the priesthood of Christ and that of the OT. He speaks of the old tabernacle and the services of the priests there – vs 1-7. Then he shows what service and worship in the tabernacle signified – vs 8-10. Then he speaks about Christ's one sacrifice as high priest and His entry into the heavenly tabernacle – vs 11-28.

"Sanctuary" – note at Ex 25:8.

**9:2** Exodus chapters 25-40 describe the tabernacle and its construction. See notes there on the significance of the items connected with it. Much of Leviticus and parts of Numbers deal with its ministry. The amount of space given to it indicates its importance in God's program of instruction for His people. Some forty chapters are given to it in the Bible. Only two chapters are given to describe God's creation of heaven, earth and man (though creation is referred to many times in the Bible after Genesis chapters 1 and 2). See the note at the end of Exodus chapter 30 on how to use the tabernacle as a spiritual exercise today.

"Lampstand" – Ex 25:31-40.

"Lampstand" is a more accurate translation than "candlestick." People do not put lamps on candlesticks.

"Table" – Ex 25:23-30.

**9:3** "Second veil" – Ex 26:31-35. The first curtain separated the Holy Place from the courtyard.

**9:4** "Censer" – Ex 30:1-10.

"Ark" – Ex 25:10-15.

"Manna" – Ex 16:14-16,33.

"Aaron's rod" – Num 17:8-11.

"Tablets" – Ex 25:16.

**9:5** "Cherubim" – Ex 25:17-22.

overshadowing the mercy seat. About this we cannot now speak particularly.

**6** Now when these things had been prepared like this, the priests went at any time into the first *part of* the tabernacle, performing the service of *God*. **7** But into the second *part* only the high priest *went just* once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the people's sins of ignorance. **8** *In this way* the Holy Spirit was showing that the way into the Most Holy Place was not yet revealed, while the first tabernacle was still standing.

**9** *The tabernacle was* a symbol for the present time. Both the gifts and sacrifices offered in it could not make him who performed the service

"Glory" – Ex 40:34,35.

**9:6** The "first part" means the "Holy Place" – v 2.

"Service" – Ex 27:21; 30:7,8; Lev 24:5-9.

**9:7** The "second part" means the Most Holy Place – v 3. Leviticus chapter 16 describes this once-a-year work of the high priest. That chapter should be studied with this one for the full understanding of this one.

"Sins of ignorance" – the writer may not mean sins committed in ignorance of the law, or unknowingly, but in ignorance of God, that is, without a personal experiential knowledge of Him (compare Eph 4:17-19). Actually the day of atonement in Israel dealt with all the people's sins, including uncleanness, wickedness, and rebellion – Lev 16:21,22,30,34 (observe the repeated phrase there – "all their sins"). The work of the high priest in Leviticus chapter 16 was not limited to errors, to sins done unknowingly.

**9:8** "The Holy Spirit" – 3:7 (notes at John 14:16,17). From this we see the writer's conviction that God's Spirit inspired the account of the tabernacle and the work of the high priest (see 2 Tim 3:16,17). What lesson did He teach by the day of atonement in Israel? That the way into God's presence then was not yet revealed. As long as the tabernacle (and later the temple) was in use no individual except the high priest in Israel ever got into the Most Holy Place. And the Most Holy Place was the one place in the tabernacle where God's presence was. The tabernacle spoke of barriers to God's presence, not access. Note at Ex 27:9-19.

This does not mean that no individuals in Israel ever got into God's presence apart from the tabernacle. They certainly did – compare Gen 5:24; 6:9; 27:7; Ex 33:14; Ps 51:11; 89:15). But in that era God had not yet revealed the way this could be possible. Now He has revealed it. Sinful men can come into the presence of God, the absolutely Holy One, only because Christ sacrificed Himself to take away their sins – 10:19,20; 1 Pet 3:18.

**9:9** The Old Testament sacrifices were not able to take away the consciousness of sin and guilt. So they were not able to cleanse

perfect in regard to the conscience, 10 *but had to do* only with foods and drinks, and various washings, and regulations about the body, imposed on *them* until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ has come as a high priest of good things to come. *Going* through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, 12 *and* not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, he entered in once *for all* into the Most Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the *ceremonially* unclean, sanctifies to *the extent of* outward bodily

purification, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason he is the mediator of the new covenant, so that as a result of *his* death as a ransom for sins *committed* under the first covenant, those who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16 Now where there *is* a testament, of necessity there must also be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a testament *is* in force only after men are dead. It has no power at all while the one who made it is living.

the conscience – 10:2. And if the conscience is not clean, there can be no going into God's presence with "full assurance of faith" (10:22). Note on conscience at Acts 23:1.

**9:10** The Old Testament regulations concerning food, etc (Leviticus chapter 11; Num 6:15,17; 28:7,8; Ex 30:17-21; Lev 16:24) were also only types, shadows and pictures of spiritual things. They had no spiritual value in themselves but were only external "regulations." And God did not give them for His people forever – only until the "time of reformation." The Greek word translated "reformation" means "making straight." The Old Testament regulations were only meant to last until God introduced a new arrangement (the new covenant established by Christ).

**9:11-28** The writer takes up again the subject of Christ as high priest and shows how His ministry accomplishes what all the activities of the priests under the old covenant did not accomplish.

**9:11** See 8:2,5.

**9:12** "Goats and calves" – Lev 16:14,15,27.

"Own blood" – in vs 11-28 the word "blood" is used eleven times. Sacrifice and death also are used several times and these words imply blood. The writer shows that the blood (the sacrifice, the death) of Christ is so important because:

It cleanses the consciences of believers (v 14)

It was a ransom to set them free (v 16)

It is the only basis for forgiveness (v 22)

It purified "heavenly things" (v 23)

And it did away with sin (vs 26,28).

"Redemption" – v 15. Notes at Ps 78:35; Matt 20:28. Notice the redemption Christ obtained for believers is "eternal." Compare 5:9; 10:14. Its result is permanent. He has bought His own at the price of His blood and they are His forever – 1 Pet 1:18,19; 1 Cor 6:20; John 6:37; 17:6,11,12.

**9:13** "Heifer" – see Numbers chapter 19. This ceremony had nothing to do with taking away guilt or cleansing the heart from sin. Nor did any other animal sacrifice.

**9:14** "Conscience" – conscience is the faculty in a human being which judges his actions and declares them either right or

wrong, good or bad. On conscience see Acts 23:1; 24:16; Rom 2:15; 9:1; 1 Cor 8:7; 10:28,29; 2 Cor 1:12; 1 Tim 1:5; 3:9; 4:2; Titus 1:15. If a conscience is defiled with sin and conscious of guilt, it needs to be "cleansed." That is, it must be satisfied that sin and guilt have been taken away, that there is no longer any reason for God's judgment and punishment to come.

This is what the blood of Christ does. Our knowledge of the sacrifice of Christ, our faith that His blood was shed to take away our sins, satisfies our conscience. The blood of Christ does not cleanse us from the knowledge that we are sinners (1 John 1:8; 1 Tim 1:15; etc), but assures us that God's anger is removed from us. God uses the truth about Christ's sacrifice in our minds to instruct our consciences and so cleanse them. Compare Acts 15:9.

An awakened conscience that accuses and rages against us is a very painful thing. How can it find peace and rest? Only in Christ's sacrifice. When this happens we can freely and gladly "serve the living God." Observe the Trinity in this verse – the Son offered Himself to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc.

"Without spot" – 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:22; 3:18.

**9:15** "For this reason" – the fact that Christ's blood cleanses the conscience. This is what the OT sacrifices could not do – v 9; 10:2.

"Mediator of the new covenant" – 8:6-13. This covenant is based on the shed blood of the Lord Jesus – Matt 26:28.

"Ransom" – v 12; Matt 20:28.

"Under the first covenant" – Christ died for the sins of His people in all ages of the world. This includes all those who sinned before He came into the world. Compare Rom 3:25.

"Inheritance" – 1:2,14.

**9:16** "Testament" – in Greek the word for "covenant" is the same as the word for "will" and "testament." In English (and many other languages) we use two entirely different words. In v 15 the writer has spoken of an "inheritance" which comes to believers. Now he says that this inheritance could not come unless the one who made the testament

18 For this reason even the first *covenant* was not dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every commandment to all the people, according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, 20 and said, "This *is* the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you."

21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels *used in its service*. 22 And according to the Law almost everything is cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. 23 *It was* therefore necessary that the copies of things in the heavens should be purified by these *sacrifices*, but the heavenly things themselves by better sacrifices

(Christ) died.

**9:18-20** See Ex 24:1-8. The writer now speaks of the old covenant (Ex 19:5), as if it were a will or testament. God made this covenant and in it promised an inheritance to Israel (Deut 12:8-10; Josh 1:6; 23:4; Ps 105:11). But God did not die in order that this covenant or "will" should come into effect. Instead He ordained that animals should die. How can the death of animals bring God's testament into effect?

We must keep in mind that all that was a type or picture or shadow of things to come (vs 23,24; 8:5; 10:1). Israel's inheritance was a picture of the eternal heavenly inheritance promised to believers now. And the sacrifice of animals was a picture of Christ's sacrificial death. God knew then that later in time He would become a man and die, and gave that illustration of His coming death. Moses sprinkled literal blood on the people's bodies (Ex 24:8). Christ sprinkles His blood (spiritually, figuratively) in the inner parts – the heart and conscience of believers (v 14; 10:22).

**9:21** This is not recorded in the Old Testament. The writer obtained the information from some other good source.

**9:22** "Almost everything" – usually the blood of animals was required for atonement. But there were exceptions (Lev 5:11-13; Num 31:22-24).

"Without. . . blood. . . no forgiveness" – see Lev 17:11. Now God forgives men only on the basis of Christ's shed blood – Matt 26:28; Eph 1:7.

**9:23** "Copies of things" – 8:5; 10:1.

"Heavenly things" – heaven itself did not need to be purified. That is God's holy dwelling place and there is no taint of sin or evil there. "Heavenly things" probably means those things of the new covenant, this new relationship between God and believers, the sphere where redeemed men have access to God and serve Him here on earth. These "things" are spiritual realities having to do with believers' present sanctification, worship and service. The OT tabernacle, etc, had to be purified with the blood of animals (Lev

than these.

24 For Christ has not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are only* copies of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear now in the presence of God for us. 25 And it is not that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with the blood of other *sacrifices*. 26 For then he would have had to suffer often since the beginning of the world. But now once for all, at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed to men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. And to those who look for him he will appear the second time for

16:16,20). In the New Testament the "house" of God is His people, Christ's Church (3:6). This "house" had to be purified with Christ's blood. Christ Himself and His blood are the "better sacrifices" of this verse.

**9:24** "Copies" – or "representations." This is what the holy places in both the tabernacle and the temple were. They were made according to the pattern of "the true" – note at 8:2. Heaven is the "true" Most Holy Place. "For us" – 7:25; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 2:1.

**9:25** Lev 16:14,15,34.

**9:26** "Once for all" – vs 12,28; 10:10,14. Christ's one sacrifice nearly two thousand years ago was all that is needed for men to be forgiven. He offered Himself and took away the "sin of the world" (John 1:29). Any repetition of this one sacrifice is unnecessary and unthinkable.

**9:27** "Die once" – the Bible does not teach that individuals are born physically again and again on earth and die again and again. There is only one physical birth and one physical death. See notes on reincarnation at Job 11:12; John 9:3. The idea that through reincarnation individuals can obtain salvation is completely unnecessary (as well as false). Christ by the sacrifice of Himself took away all our sins. In a moment of time any of us by trusting in Him can receive complete forgiveness, spiritual birth and eternal salvation.

"Judgment" – Matt 10:15; Acts 17:31; etc. After that one death men die, there is something that awaits them, and it is not rebirth back into the world.

**9:28** "The sins of many" – Isa 53:11; Matt 26:28. Compare John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:14; John 3:16; 1 John 2:2. Though Jesus died for the whole world only those who receive Him by faith have the forgiveness of sins.

"Second time" – see references at John 14:3. In this verse "salvation" means the final salvation of believers, viewed here as something future. It is like an inheritance to be received hereafter – 1:14; Rom 8:23,24; 1 Pet 1:4,5. Believers are saved already from the penalty of sin, from condemnation and hell. They are being

salvation, without *bearing sin*.

**10** For the Law has a shadow of good things to come, not the very substance of the things. *So* with those sacrifices which they offer continually year after year *it* can never make perfect those who approach it. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because the worshippers once cleansed would no longer have a consciousness of sins. 3 But in those *sacrifices* sins *are* remembered again every year. 4 For *it is*

saved from the power of sin (Matt 1:21; John 5:24; Rom 8:1-4; 1 Cor 1:21; etc). They will be saved from the presence of sin and its effects, and obtain complete salvation of spirit, soul, and body.

Notice the words "Those who look for him" – Matt 24:42-51. This means to look forward with hope for His appearance. Compare Titus 2:13. On the day of atonement (Leviticus chapter 16) after the high priest entered the Most Holy Place the people of God waited outside for His appearance. Jesus has entered the true Most Holy Place, heaven itself. Outside, on the earth, His people wait for Him. This suggests that this entire age between the first and second comings of Christ is like a great day of atonement.

**10:1** "Shadow" – 8:2,5; 9:23,24. The law with its tabernacle and offerings and regulations and rules was only a type, a hint, a picture of "good things" – the things of Christ's ministry for men and the eternal salvation of His believers.

"Can never make perfect" – v 14; 2:10; 5:9; 11:40; 12:23. Animal sacrifices could never begin to make anyone perfectly fit for God's presence (7:11,19). For the significance of animal sacrifices see notes at Lev 1:2.

**10:2,3** See 9:9. "Consciousness of sin" – or, possibly, a "sinful conscience." The writer means that if the people had really thought that their sins were completely, finally taken away by their offerings, their consciences would have been cleansed; they would have realized that their heart need no longer accuse them. See 9:14.

**10:4** "Not possible" – why was this impossible? Animals could not be a substitute for men and die in their place. All they could be was a picture, a type of someone dying in the place of men. Animals have no moral nature. They were only ignorant, unwilling victims which could never bear the guilt and punishment due to the sins of man. This punishment is spiritual death, separation from God. See Matt 25:41; 2 Thess 1:9; Rev 20:14.

Even men could never be a sin offering for other men. Every man is a sinner and can die only for his own sins, not the sins of someone else. If there were a sinless man, and if he could be a sacrifice for sin, he could only die in the place of one other man, not for all men. Also God would have to agree to it, and He has not. To grasp fully

not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Therefore when he comes into the world, he says,

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me.

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, See, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do your will, O God.

the teaching of the Bible about atonement and substitutionary death we should understand the following facts.

All sin is against God – see Ps 51:4. Even those sins which seem to be only against other people, or oneself, or the world, are really against God, because all men and all creation are His property. If a person destroys your house he is sinning against you because it is your house. If a person harms another human being or property or the environment he is sinning against God because everything is God's. If a person sins against you (like destroying your house) and you forgive him without demanding payment you are bearing the results of his sin against you. You are showing that you are willing to pay the cost of it.

If God is willing to forgive all men, then he must be willing to bear the results of their sins and pay the cost Himself of what they have done. Sin cries out for punishment, for vengeance (see Num 31:1-3; Deut 32:41,43; Isa 34:8; 47:3; Rom 12:19). Who will, who can bear this punishment? Who can bear the just penalty that God demands for His broken laws? Then who? Only guilty people, or else God Himself. Only He, coming as a sinless man and offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of men, could bear their penalty and take away their guilt. This He did.

This is the meaning of Christ's incarnation. He, the sinless God-man, could be the substitute for all men. All sin was against Him. In our place He bore all sin in His own body on the cross and suffered its penalty (2:9; 13:12; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 2:24). Atonement and forgiveness are based on suffering – not the suffering of a sacrificial animal, not our own suffering, but God's. If Christ is not the incarnation of God there could have been no final and complete atonement for sin.

**10:5-7** See notes at Ps 40:6-8. This quotation is from the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint) dating from the 3rd century BC. The writer is showing from the OT that his teaching about animal sacrifices is correct.

"Sacrifice and offering" – God did not want animal sacrifices but a much better sacrifice than those. "I" in v 7 means Christ. "Your will, O God" here means God's will that Christ should be the one sacrifice for sins.

**10:7** Matt 26:39; etc.

8 Above when he said, "Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin you did not desire, and have had no pleasure *in*" (which are offered by the Law), 9 and then said, "See, I come to do your will, O God." He takes away the first *things* so that he may establish the second.

10 By this will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering over and over the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. 12 But this man, after

**10:8** "Offered by the law" – God appointed them so that they could be an illustration of the sacrifice of Christ. But He knew that they could not do all that He wanted done.

**10:9** "That he may establish the second" – he means the old and new covenants. He has set aside the first one – 8:7,13.

**10:10** "Sanctified" – by completely fulfilling God's will and dying for believers Christ has made them holy. This means He has set them apart and consecrated them to be God's people – 1 Pet 2:9. See notes on holy and sanctify at Lev 20:7; John 17:17-19. The word here in v 10 does not speak of the life of holiness believers are to live. That is seen in 12:10-16. Believers in Christ are now holy, they are being made holy (12:10), they will finally be made completely holy (Col 1:22). This is true of all His believers, not merely a special few.

**10:11** "Stands" – there was no chair in the tabernacle or temple. This may well signify that the work of the priests there was never finished.

"Never take away sins" – v 4.

**10:12** "Forever" – vs 10,14; 9:12,25-28. His one sacrifice is forever, because no other sacrifice for sin is needed.

"Sat down" – this indicates that His work of offering a sacrifice was finished forever. Nothing can be added to it. See John 19:30. Nothing that any so-called priest can do now is in any way necessary for the salvation of anyone.

"Right hand" – the writer brings us back to where he started his letter – 1:3.

**10:13** "Footstool" – 1:13; Ps 110:1. God the Father has not yet made Christ's enemies a "footstool." Christ still waits for that time. It will come – Rev 11:15-18.

**10:14** For many hundreds of years priests sacrificed many thousands of animals each year, but by all that not one sin was taken away, not one person made "perfect." But Christ's one offering made all believers in Him perfect forever. What does this mean? One meaning of the Greek word translated "perfected" is "made complete." In this verse this would mean this:

Christ's sacrifice for His people saves them completely with nothing lacking (compare 7:25).

His one sacrifice is the basis of a perfect standing before God. By it every barrier has been removed and perfect reconciliation made.

he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. 13 From now on he waits expectantly until his enemies are made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified.

15 *Concerning this* the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us. For after he first said, 16 "This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and write them in their minds," *he adds,*

Christ has perfectly taken away their sins – not one is counted against them (Rom 4:8; 8:33).

He has given them a perfect relationship with God (Rom 8:1,15; 2 Cor 5:18,19).

He has perfectly cleansed their conscience (9:14).

He has perfectly fitted them to enter the presence of God now and forever (v 22; Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18).

That this is the meaning of the word "perfected" as used here is clear from the verses which follow (up to v 23). No believer on earth is perfect in the sense that he has no flaw, or has no sin in him, or never errs – Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8. No believer yet is perfect in every sense – see Phil 3:12 where the same word is used. That kind of perfection awaits the future – 1 John 3:2.

"Forever" – 5:9; 9:12. The results of Christ's sacrifice for His people individually and collectively are permanent and irreversible.

"Those who are sanctified" – v 10. If this phrase is translated "those who are being sanctified" (as some scholars say it should be translated), then the phrase would point out what is happening to all believers in Christ; it would be a definition of what all real believers are. Compare 12:5-10; Matt 5:6,8; Rom 6:15-22; 8:12-14; 1 John 3:3,6,9,10. All believers in Christ, not merely some exceptionally holy and dedicated ones, are "made perfect" in Him, and have been sanctified, and are being sanctified.

**10:15** "Holy Spirit also is a witness. . . saying" – 3:7; 9:8; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21. Here He reveals what it means for believers to be "made perfect."

**10:16** See Jer 31:34. This is a very important element in the perfection that Christ brings believers into. God gives them a spiritual understanding of His laws and an inner desire and ability to obey them. This is what Christ had (v 7), and this is what God gives His people on the basis of Christ's sacrifice. It is a very important mark of the new covenant. Indeed, without it what real evidence is there that anyone is a believer? See John 14:15,23; Rom 8:3,4; 1 Cor 2:16; 2 Cor 3:3. What use is it for a person to say his sins are gone if he has no heart for God, no mind to serve Christ, no delight in doing God's will revealed in the Bible? Can the blessings of the new covenant be divided? Can we have one and refuse the others?



17 "And their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more."

18 Now where these *have* forgiveness, *there is* no more offering for sin.

19 Therefore, brothers, we have boldness to enter into the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way that he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 and *we have* a high priest over the house of

**10:17** This too helps to show the writer's meaning when he says Christ has made believers "perfect." He has given them perfect forgiveness of sins. The meaning here is the same as Paul's meaning when he says believers have been counted righteous. See Rom 3:24; 4:6-8; 8:33. Christ has made the believer's standing before God perfect.

**10:18** "No more" – the work is finished completely and perfectly and forever. God does not require any other sacrifice or any repetition of Christ's one sacrifice.

**10:19-23** Here, in some of the most significant and powerful words ever penned, is the essence of all the writer has been saying up to this point.

**10:19** "Therefore" – 2:1; 3:1; 4:1,14; 6:1. The writer has concluded the teaching about Christ as High Priest and Mediator of the new covenant. Now he exhorts all believers to behave in accordance with all this truth. In doing so he further shows how "perfect" is their standing with God.

"Boldness to enter" – under the old covenant only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place and that only once a year (9:7). No ordinary Israelite ever had the boldness to enter there. Now any moment of any day the believer in Christ can confidently enter the heavenly Most Holy Place – that is, can enter the presence of God. God has made all believers "priests" (13:15,16; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6), and all may follow their high priest into God's presence. But this is only because the blood of Jesus has made atonement for sin and removed that barrier that separated God and men.

**10:20** This way of Christ is new compared with the way of the old covenant which kept people at a distance – Ex 19:21-25; 27:9-19. It is a living way, a way that depends on Christ's life and gives new spiritual life to those who believe in Him – John 14:6; 3:1-4. This is in contrast to the dead ceremonies and rituals of the old covenant.

"The veil" – in both the tabernacle and the temple there was a curtain which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (9:3). This signified that the way into God's presence was not yet revealed – 9:8. That curtain was a symbol of Christ. When Christ came in a human body (10:5) and died for our sins the curtain in the temple was torn into two parts – Matt 27:50,51, leaving a gap in the middle. In other words, His death revealed the way into God's presence. We can enter the Most Holy Place because of Christ's crucified body, torn for us.

God. 22 *So* let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold firmly the confession of *our* faith without wavering (for he *is* faithful who promised).

24 And let us consider how to stir each other up to love and good works, 25 not forsaking our meetings together, as the way of some *is*, but

**10:21** "We have a high priest" – 2:17; 4:14; etc. "House of God" – 3:6.

**10:22** "Let us draw near" – see 4:16; Eph 2:18; 3:12; Rom 5:1,2; Jam 4:8. The writer says four things are involved in drawing near as we ought.

"Sincere heart" – Luke 12:1; Matt 5:8; John 4:23,24; 1 Cor 5:8.

"Full assurance of faith" – 11:1,6. Compare 3:12. This is what all believers should have and can have. We should be sure that Christ has taken away our sins, that He is our high priest, that His way brings us to God, that God will receive us into His presence. Doubts and fears about these matters should have no place in our hearts. And the better we understand what God has revealed in this letter to the Hebrews the greater our assurance can be. Compare 3:14; 6:19; 1 John 5:13; 2 Tim 1:12; John 14:1; Luke 12:32.

"Sprinkled from an evil conscience" – this "sprinkling" of the heart speaks of an inner experience. See 9:13,14. The blood of Christ is sprinkled on the believer's heart. This means that the understanding of Christ's sacrifice, and belief in it, gives cleansing to his heart.

"Bodies washed with pure water" – all through this letter the writer has regarded the physical things of Old Testament worship as symbols of spiritual realities. He is doing the same thing here (though some scholars think he was referring to Christian baptism). See Ex 30:17-21; Lev 8:6; 16:4. This physical washing of the bodies of the priests signifies the cleansing of the acts of the bodies of believers now. They are the priests under the new covenant – v 19. Their outward behavior is to be clean, just as their hearts are to be clean. The new and living way which God has opened for believers now was pictured to some extent in the Old Testament. See the note on the spiritual use of the tabernacle at the end of Exodus chapter 30.

**10:23** "He is faithful" – 6:16-18; Titus 1:2; 1 John 5:9,10. We should not dishonor Him by doubt and unbelief – these would suggest that He is not faithful to His promises.

**10:24** In vs 19-23 he has spoken of the relationship of believers to God, now he shows they have responsibilities to one another. See also 3:13; Rom 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor 9:24; Col 3:16.

"Consider" – we ought to give thought as to how to go about encouraging others to love Christ more and to serve Him better.

**10:25** No believer should give up going to



encouraging *each other*, and so much the more as you see the day approaching.

26 For if we wilfully go on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, 27 but *only* a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which will consume the adversaries. 28 He who despised Moses' law died without mercy on *the testimony of*

meetings where other believers will be. Each one needs fellowship and each one should encourage others in this life of faith. What is meant by seeing "the day approaching"? Possibly the writer meant the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Matt 24:1-3; Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24). This was very near to the time he wrote this letter. Or he may have meant the day of Christ's return (9:28; Matt 24:33). Or he may have included both in this phrase. Many among the first generation of Christians were looking for both of these events to happen at more or less the same time.

**10:26-31** This is the fourth warning against apostasy. See note at 2:1-4. This one concerns deliberately sinning against the light of the glorious truth God has revealed through Christ and about Christ.

**10:26** "Go on sinning" – this describes a settled state of the heart and life, not one or more acts of sin. The writer does not say that he thinks any of them will fall into this condition. He uses the word "if" (compare 6:6). In v 39 he says he is sure that the believers to whom he is writing will not be guilty of it (compare 1 John 3:9,10).

The writer seems to be referring to one kind of sin in particular. Believers may sin and obtain forgiveness (1 John 1:9; 2:1; 5:16). But there is a sin for which there is no forgiveness. Here that sin is described as rejecting Christ and His sacrifice, turning away from the new covenant in His blood, and refusing to obey the voice of God's Spirit (v 29). There are those who teach that if believers commit sin they may be lost forever. This is not the teaching of the New Testament – Matt 6:12; 1 John 1:9; 2:1.

"Knowledge of the truth" – he does not say "after repentance and faith." We may have the knowledge of the truth and yet refuse to repent and believe in Christ. The sin the writer speaks about in this verse may be this continual refusal. That is indicated in the next words.

"No more sacrifice" – if anyone rejects Christ's sacrifice he has cut himself off from the one way of forgiveness. And if such a person thinks that he can offer again the OT sacrifices (or any other such sacrifices), and that God will accept them, he is making a grave mistake.

**10:27** "Judgment" – 9:27; Acts 17:31; Rev 20:11-15.

"Fiery" – 12:29; 2 Thess 1:7; Matt 3:10; Mark 9:42-48; Luke 16:24; Rev 20:14.

"Adversaries" – he means God's enemies. Anyone who deliberately rejects the truth God

two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought deserving who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who has said,

Vengeance is mine, I will repay,

has revealed about Christ and His one sacrifice for sin will find that they are among God's enemies. Compare John 7:7; 15:18; Rom 5:10; Jam 4:4.

**10:28** See 2:2; Deut 17:6,7. For sins under the law that were punished by death see Ex 21:36. See an example in Num 15:30-35.

**10:29** This is the sin the writer speaks of in v 26. Compare 6:6; Matt 12:31; 1 John 5:16,17. Deliberate sin against the old covenant was punished by death. The new covenant is far greater than the old, so sin against it is far worse than sin against the old. The greater the light and truth God gives, the greater our responsibility to obey it, and the greater the punishment if we do not. Will a true believer in Christ commit the sin described in this verse – trample Christ under foot, count His blood unholy, etc? It seems impossible in the light of other teaching about believers in the New Testament. See John 5:24; Rom 8:1,28-33; Phil 1:6; 1 John 3:9,10; etc.

But what about the phrase "the blood. . . with which he was sanctified?" Can a person be "sanctified" by Christ's blood and not be a believer, not be saved? The word sanctification does not necessarily imply salvation and faith. The root meaning is to "set apart" (notes at Lev 20:7; John 17:17-19). For a case of unbelievers being sanctified see 1 Cor 7:14. Let us keep in mind that in this letter we have a comparison of the old and new covenants, and that it was written to Hebrews. They knew that as a nation Israel was sanctified by blood (9:18-20; Ex 24:7,8; 31:13; Lev 21:8). But this did not at all mean that every individual in Israel was a true believer or saved from God's wrath – see 3:10,11,19.

The foundation of the new covenant is Christ's blood – 9:15. See 13:12, which says that Christ suffered to sanctify "the people" with His own blood. The new covenant was made with the house of Israel – 8:8. The nation of Israel is still set apart (sanctified) from other nations for God's special purpose (Rom 9:1-5; 11:11,25-29). But most of them reject Christ and remain without faith and salvation. And is it not possible to say that the visible church on earth is sanctified by the blood of Christ? And is it not true to say also that a great many in the visible church are unbelieving and have never been saved? See also 1 Tim 2:6, which says that Christ gave Himself as "a ransom" for all men. The ransom He gave was Himself, His own blood – 1 Pet 1:18,19.

**10:30** Deut 32:35,36; Ps 135:14.

says the Lord.

And again,

The Lord will judge his people.

31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

32 But recall the former days, when, after you were enlightened, you patiently endured a great struggle with sufferings. 33 On the one hand, you were made a spectacle by both insults and oppression, and on the other hand, you associated yourselves with those who were so treated. 34 For you had compassion on me in my chains, and endured joyfully the plundering of your possessions, because you knew that you have in heaven a better possession and

**10:31** Falling into the hands of the living God is a fearful thing because God is holy, hates sins and will surely punish unbelief and rebellion. We need not worry about this if we receive God's truth and follow it, if we do as He says in vs 19-25.

**10:32-39** As he did in 6:9-12 after the warning against falling away from the truth, so he does now. He wants them to know he believes they are saved people who will not commit the sin of vs 26-29. He wants them to have confidence and go on proving their faith by their deeds.

**10:32-34** Their firmness in the face of suffering, their love for other people of Christ, their willingness to lose all things for Christ's sake – all this was strong evidence that their faith was real.

"Struggle" (v 32) – v 26; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:6; 2 Tim 3:12.

"One that lasts" (v 34) – see 6:12; Matt 6:19,20; Rom 8:17; 1 Pet 1:4. Eternal possessions are what every believer in Christ has, so he should not be much concerned with what happens to his possessions down here, or whether he even has any or not.

**10:35-36** "Reward" – Matt 19:28-30; Rev 22:12.

"Patient endurance" – see 3:6,14; 6:11; Rom 3:3-5; 8:24,25; Jam 1:2-4. Simply going on enduring all things and keeping faith in Christ in spite of anything that happens – this is what every believer must do. And the writer is confident that they will do so (v 39). We should have the same confidence.

**10:37,38** Hab 2:3,4. See also Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11. God counts men righteous when they believe Him – Rom 3:24,25,28; 4:24; 5:1. Having been counted righteous they begin a life of faith which goes on to the end of their time on earth (2 Cor 5:7). In Hebrews the emphasis is on this living by faith and persevering to the end by faith.

"If anyone draws back" – 6:6.

**10:39** "We" – he means true believers in Christ (he knew he was one, and they had given much evidence that they were – vs 32-34; 6:11). "If they 'draw back', God will not be pleased; it will mean

one that lasts. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence. It involves a great payment of reward. 36 For you have need of patient endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while and he who is coming will come, and will not delay.

38 "Now the righteous will live by faith, but if *anyone* draws back, my soul will have no pleasure in him."

39 But we are not of those who draw back to destruction, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

**11** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

destruction for them. But the inspired writer says they will not draw back. Some say even true believers may draw back, commit the sins described in v 26; 2:3; 3:12; 6:6; 12:25, and be lost forever. The writer indicates that they will not. Faith is much more powerful than some people think. It is stronger than the world (1 John 5:4).

It can move mountains and make seemingly impossible things possible (Matt 17:20; Rom 4:19-22).

It enables us to see the invisible (2 Cor 4:18).

It is the instrument God has chosen to save men and to keep them saved (Eph 2:8; 1 Pet 1:5) – so it must be the very best instrument for that.

Will an instrument God has selected fail to achieve His purpose? It is an object of Christ's special prayer for believers (Luke 22:32). Will it, then, fail? The writer to Hebrews expresses his confidence that it will not. See the note at Rom 5:9,10 also. True believers in Christ go on believing to the final salvation God has promised them. In the next chapter he shows something of the power of faith.

**11:1** This is the only place in the Bible where faith is defined in words (many places show what it is by revealing it in action). Faith has to do with two areas or spheres – the future (what we hope for), and the unseen. God has made promises and given revelations concerning these two spheres. Faith believes these promises and relies on these revelations. This brings assurance to the heart. Faith is not a leap into the dark; it is a leap into the light. It is not wishful thinking; it is based on the powerful evidence of God's Word. True faith does not believe every idea about God that men may have, or everything that men think is God's revelation. It believes the truth revealed in the Bible.

"Assurance" – the word also means "substance" or "essence" or "nature" or "confidence" but here "assurance" seems best. The Greek is a combination of two

2 For by it the forefathers obtained a good commendation.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were created by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain *did*. By it he obtained a testimony that he was righteous, God testifying of his offerings. And by it, though he is dead, he still

words, one meaning "under", the other meaning "standing." In other words, faith is something which stands under something else, something like a foundation. What is this something else that faith stands under? Here in Hebrews it is all that is hoped for in Christ. Faith is a true foundation for our hopes. Without faith we would have no right to hope and no good reason for hoping. And faith is a foundation, a quality, which enables us to stand under every kind of hardship, difficulty or suffering that could possibly destroy hope. Compare Rom 5:1-4.

"Conviction" – or "evidence" or "proving" or "exposing" – the Greek word may mean any of these. The verb is used in John 3:20; 16:8; 1 Cor 14:24; Eph 5:11,13; etc. Faith is a conviction that the unseen things the Bible speaks of actually exist. In a way, it brings them to light, enables the unseen to be "seen." Compare v 27; 2 Cor 4:18. **11:2** "Forefathers" – here means the people of God who lived in olden times. God commended them for their faith. The commendation was this: out of the whole human race they alone were on the right road, believed the one true God, were righteous before God. We have a part of that commendation in this chapter. From God's point of view the history of mankind is a history of those who believed Him. Faith and what it accomplished is what really matters, for that is what will last forever; all else passes away (1 John 2:17).

**11:3** Observe that faith is not contrary to understanding or reason – faith gives understanding. It is like the eye which lets in the light. Believers know how the universe came into being because God has revealed it. They need not speculate about its origin as unbelievers do. God spoke and creation began (Gen 1:1,3,6,9, etc; Ps 33:6; Isa 40:26; 42:5; John 1:3; Col 1:16).

**11:4** Now he begins to speak of the "forefathers" who had faith. Not all of them were great or exceptional people (Abel was a shepherd, Jacob and Samson were full of faults, Rahab had been a prostitute, etc). But they all had one thing in common – they believed God and in this they are examples to us all. Not all Old Testament believers are here by name. The writer chose various ones to illustrate various aspects of faith, the many sides of faith. The results of faith as seen here are three.

First, it caused those who had it to do something. True faith is not lifeless, not

speaks.

5 By faith Enoch was taken away so he would not experience death. He was not found, because God had taken him away. For before his being taken away he had the testimony that he pleased God.

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and *that* he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

inactive. It is a powerful force which always produces action (see notes at 10:39; Jam 2:14-26).

Second, faith obtained blessings from God. God blessed each believer in this list in some wonderful way or other.

Third, faith enabled those who had it to endure all things and go on enduring to the end. So true faith works, obtains, and perseveres. A faith that does not do these three things is not true Bible faith.

"Abel" – see Gen 4:1-10. In him we see the relationship between faith and sacrifice. This is where all of us as sinners must begin, and that is one of the chief teachings of this letter. Abel's faith was based on a revelation (true faith always is), and by faith he chose the sacrifice God had appointed. Cain refused to do this. So Abel's sacrifice was better than his.

"Faith. . . righteous" – compare Gen 15:6; Rom 1:17; 3:22; 5:1. By his example Abel still speaks today and says "Believe God's revelation and choose God's appointed sacrifice." Now this sacrifice is the Lord Jesus Christ – 7:27; 9:12,26,28; 10:10,14.

**11:5** Enoch illustrates the relationship between faith and fellowship with God. See Gen 5:21-24. There is no possibility of knowing God or walking with God apart from faith. Unbelief calls God a liar (1 John 5:10), and how can there be fellowship between two persons when there is distrust and slanderous thoughts in the heart of one? Enoch illustrates also the relationship between faith and immortality, the change that will come to believers when Christ returns (1 Cor 15:51-53; 1 Thess 4:15-17).

**11:6** "Without faith it is impossible to please him" – not merely difficult. Unbelief is not a small fault God can overlook, not some sort of misfortune. It is a deadly sin that strikes at the very heart of that relationship that should exist between God and man. It is the inner choice of a person for sin and darkness instead of God and light. It is a rejection of God's revelation and God's Son. And God punishes it as it deserves – 3:11,12,19; John 3:36; Rev 21:8.

Observe that faith accepts two things as true: that the God revealed in the Bible exists, and that He will reward the earnest seeker. Here are the two realms of v 1 – the unseen (God), and the future (rewards). Faith accepts these two truths because God has revealed them – 1:1-3; Isa 44:6; 45:5,18,21; John 1:18; Matt 7:7,8.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God about things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to save his household. By it he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham believed when he was called to go to a place that he would afterwards receive for an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going.

9 By faith he lived in the land of promise, as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

11 Through faith Sara also received strength to become pregnant, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she considered the one who had promised faithful. 12 Therefore from just one man, and him as good as dead, came offspring *as many* as the multitude of the stars of the sky, as innumerable as the sand at the sea shore.

"Earnestly seek him" – see Deut 4:29; Jer 29:13.

**11:7** Noah illustrates the connection between faith and refuge from God's anger against sin. See Gen 6:9-7:5. Now Christ is the refuge for people. They are safe under His protection.

"Fear" – notes at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:7-11; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"Household" – compare Acts 16:31.

"Condemned the world" – an example of faith condemns unbelief as light condemns darkness (compare John 3:18-21; 15:22-24).

"Righteousness which is by faith" – Rom 1:17; 3:24,25; etc.

**11:8-19** This chapter gives more space to Abraham than to anyone else. He is the supreme example of faith in the Old Testament and is called "the father of all who believe" – Rom 4:11,16. His life is an illustration of several different aspects of faith.

**11:8** See Gen 12:1-5; Acts 7:2-4. Here is the relationship between faith and obedience to God. Without faith there will be no real obedience and if there is no obedience it is proof that there is no faith. See 5:9; John 3:36; Acts 5:32; Rom 1:5; 2 Thess 2:8; and the note at Acts 22:10. God called Abraham to leave all behind and to set out for an unseen place. So he illustrates also the connection between faith and separation from one's former way of life, faith and forsaking all (compare Luke 14:33; 18:28-30; 2 Cor 6:17,18). But is it not foolish to set out and not know where one is going or what one will be doing? Foolish to man's reason, perhaps, but not to faith and its greater understanding.

**11:9,10** Gen 12:6-9. Abraham's living in tents and being frequently on the move illustrates the relationship between faith and pilgrimage. See vs 13-16. Abraham had his eyes on the eternal world, so he did not

13 These all died in faith, not having received the *things* promised. But they saw them far off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they who say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And certainly, if they had been thinking of that *country* they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But they were longing for a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. *Yes*, he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac will your descendants be called." 19 *Abraham* took into account that God was able to raise *him* even from the dead. And he received him back from there, figuratively speaking.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau settle down in this one. Compare 1 Pet 2:11. Believers now are to have the same outlook. Their lasting possessions and their citizenship are in heaven (10:34; Matt 6:19,20; Phil 3:20). By faith they understand this and rejoice in the fact that this world is not their home, that they are only passing through it on their way to the city of God in heaven (12:22; Gal 4:26; Rev 21:2). **11:11,12** Gen 15:4-6; 21:1-5; Rom 4:18-21. It is certain that Abraham believed God's promise that he and Sarah his wife would have descendants. But in Genesis when God promised He would give a son to Abraham and Sarah, nothing is said about Sarah's faith. See Gen 18:10-15. According to the writer to the Hebrews later on she too believed God's promise. Together they illustrate the connection between faith and fruitfulness, or faith and seeming impossibilities (Matt 17:20).

**11:13** They all illustrate the faith which perseveres to the end (10:39).

"Strangers and pilgrims" – not just Abraham (vs 9,10), but all believers the writer has named had the same understanding, the same outlook. Things hoped for, things unseen (v 1) were the great objects of their thoughts, desires, and belief.

**11:17-19** Gen 22:1-19. Several aspects of faith are seen in this event – faith and victory in trial, faith obedient in a time of perplexity, faith and resurrection, faith and the infallibility of God's promises. For the fulfillment of God's promise in Gen 21:12, Isaac had to live. Abraham believed that if he had to sacrifice Isaac, then God would raise him from death; that God would fulfill His promise regardless of appearances to the contrary. True faith perseveres in spite of circumstances and appearances. It lays hold of the fact that God cannot lie and reasons in His favor.

**11:20** Gen 27:27-40. This illustrates the

concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when he was about to die, mentioned the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* an exceptional child, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

24 By faith Moses, after he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to suffer ill-treatment with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time, 26 considering reproach for Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had fixed his eyes on the giving of the reward.

connection between faith and things hoped for (v 1).

**11:22** Gen 49:1-28; 50:24,25. Both Jacob and Joseph illustrate faith that goes on until death still sure about things God promised for the future (v 13). Jacob's faith actually shone brightest at the end of his life. True faith does not "draw back" even in the hour of dying (10:39). Were the Hebrews who received this letter tempted to forsake this faith because of difficulties? Let them look to their ancestors. Through what troubles and trials they came! But each one endured to the end. This is what God enables true faith to do.

**11:23** Ex 1:22; 2:2; Acts 7:20. They believed God and so were not afraid of the king's orders. Strong faith overcomes fear - 13:6; Matt 8:26; Mark 4:40; Acts 4:13. They illustrate faith working in behalf of children. Compare v 7; Acts 17:31.

**11:24-26** Ex 2:11-13; Acts 7:23-26. Moses at the age of forty made the choice between Egypt and God. Choosing Egypt would mean worldly power, wealth, and pleasure. Choosing God meant to give all that up, and to suffer with God's people who were then slaves in Egypt. Moses chose God and let everything else go. He could do this because he had faith, and faith helps men to put the proper value on things. Faith is sure that the future unseen things of God are of far more worth than all the world can offer. Compare Phil 3:7,8.

Moses illustrates the connection between faith and renunciation. See 10:34; Luke 14:33; 18:28-30; Matt 4:18-22; 10:37-39; 16:24-28. True faith will always be willing to give up everything for Christ. Those who are not willing, though they may say they have faith and though others may think they have faith, actually are without true Bible faith. Then what shall we say of those Christians who reject the way of Moses and Paul, refuse to suffer for Christ, and go after the pleasures, wealth and power of this world? They have a profound need to learn this

27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the anger of the king. And he patiently endured, as *though* he saw him who is invisible.

28 Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry *land*. The Egyptians, trying to do this, were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho collapsed, after they were encircled for seven days.

31 By faith the prostitute Rahab did not perish with those who refused to believe, since she had peacefully received the spies.

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah, and David, and Samuel, and the prophets, 33 who through faith subdued

great truth - disgrace for Christ's sake is of greater value than the treasures of the world (v 26; 13:13; Acts 5:41; 1 Pet 4:12-16).

**11:27** "Not fearing" - Ex 2:14 says Moses was afraid that his acts mentioned in vs 11,12 had become known. He must have realized this would cause further trouble to his people Israel. Evidently he feared for them, not for himself. He left Egypt "by faith", not by fear. True faith is always based on some word from God. Moses left Egypt because he knew God was telling him to do so. He persevered in faith (10:39), and he "saw" Him who is invisible (v 1; 2 Cor 4:18). Faith gives spiritual sight to men.

**11:28** See Ex 12:1-30. Here is faith and deliverance from God's judgment. Compare v 7; 9:27,28; 1 Cor 5:7.

**11:29** See Ex 14:15-31. Here is faith and deliverance from enemies.

**11:30** See Josh 6:12-20. Here is faith and taking what God has promised (compare Josh 1:3; 1 John 5:14,15; Mark 11:24).

**11:31** See Josh 2:1-21; 6:24,25. Here is faith triumphing over great sin and ignorance and delivering from God's curse (compare Gal 3:10-14; John 5:24).

"Refused to believe" - or "were disobedient" - the Greek word can indicate either or both. See John 3:36.

**11:32** The writer would have given many other illustrations from the Old Testament, but it was not necessary. He has shown what true faith is and what it does. Now he groups together a number of heroes of faith and shows how their faith worked, obtained, and persevered (note on v 4).

**11:33-38** These verses give ten things OT believers accomplished and eight things they endured. Their certainty about unseen things enabled them to accomplish what they did, and their confidence about things hoped for enabled them to endure what they endured. **11:33** "Kingdoms" - Num 21:23-35; Josh 12:7-24; 2 Sam 8:1-14.

"Obtained promises" - the many promises God gave in the Old Testament



kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became strong in weakness, became valiant in battle, and put to flight foreign armies.

35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. And others were tortured, refusing deliverance, that they might gain a better resurrection. 36 And others experienced trials of cruel mockings and beatings, yes, and bonds and imprisonment. 37 They underwent stoning, they were sawed in two, were tempted, were killed with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, ill-treated, and tormented 38 (of whom the world was not worthy). They

were given because there was someone there (often not many) to believe them.

"Lions" – Dan 6:16-22.

**11:34** "Fire" – Dan 3:19-27.

"Sword" – 1 Sam 17:45-50.

"Became strong" – Jud 6:15; 7:7,8; 16:21,28-30; 2 Chron 14:11; Isa 40:31. Compare 2 Cor 12:9,10.

**11:35** "Received back their dead" – 1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-37.

"Refusing deliverance" – they did not accept deliverance if it meant compromise with wickedness and unbelief.

"A better resurrection" – the future resurrection to eternal life, which is far better than being raised from the dead as the sons of the above two women were.

**11:36** "Imprisonment" – Gen 39:20; Jer 37:15,16; 38:6.

**11:37** "Stoning" – Matt 23:37.

"Sawed in two" – according to tradition this is how Isaiah died.

"Were tempted" – this is certainly true of those heroes of the faith, and of all believers since then. Many of us may not face other things listed in these verses, but all of us will be put to the test by various temptations.

"Destitute, ill-treated and tormented" – words that often describe the best people on earth in every era. Compare John 15:18-21; 16:2,3,33; Rom 8:35-37; 1 Cor 4:11-13.

**11:38** The world treated them as if they were not worthy of it. But the reverse was true. They could find no sure home on earth, but God prepared one for them in heaven.

**11:39,40** "A good commendation" – v 2.

"The things promised" – vs 10,16. The writer is referring to the promised blessings Christ would bring, the eternal inheritance – 1:14; 6:12; 9:15.

"Some better thing" – this includes all the better things we can see in this letter – 7:19; 8:6; 9:23. God's plan was (and is) that believers who lived before Christ, and those who have believed since He came, should be "made perfect" together. Christ's sacrifice was as much for them as for us, and is the only way anyone can ever be made perfect – 10:14; Rom 3:25,26. The final

wandered in deserts, and mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all of these, *though* they gained a good commendation through faith, did not receive the *things* promised. 40 God had provided some better thing for us, so that they, apart from us, would not be made perfect.

**12** Therefore since we also are surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily adheres *to us*, and let us run with patient endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross,

perfection will come at the return of Christ – Rom 8:23-30; 1 Cor 15:50-53; 1 Thess 4:15-17; 1 John 3:2.

**12:1,2** Here we have a crowd of witnesses (the believers of chapter 11), hindrances to be avoided (sins, etc), a necessary principle of the race we are running (patient endurance), and a great model to look at (Jesus). The writer implies that there will be a great prize at the end of the race.

"Witnesses" – the Greek word means those who testify to something they have seen or experienced. The English word "martyr" is derived from this word. Everywhere we turn in the Bible these witnesses appear. They look at us from the pages of Scripture and testify to us. They tell us the life of faith is a good one, that the rewards are great, that it is possible to overcome every obstacle.

"Every weight" – what runner ever goes into a race loaded down with weights? In the race of faith a weight is any thing that slows us down, or distracts us, or hinders us, or makes running more difficult, or takes away our determination to win. It may be laziness, or worldliness, or lack of discipline, or discouragement, or any of a great number of things. The worst hindrance of all is sin. And there seems to be a specific sin the writer warns about – "the sin that so easily ensnares us." It seems likely that he is referring to unbelief (though some think he is referring to all sin). Unbelief is surely the greatest hindrance of all in the race believers run. And it barks at the heels of all who are running in faith for the goal.

"Patient endurance" – an emphasis all through this letter – 3:6,12-14; 4:11; 6:11,12; 10:36.

"Race" – compare 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 3:13,14; 2 Tim 4:7.

**12:2** "Looking to Jesus" – Jesus is in heaven, but by faith we can fix our eyes on Him (11:1,27; 2 Cor 4:18).

"Author" – if we have faith He is the one who produced it in us (Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29).

"Finisher" – or "perfecter" or "completer." Jesus is the one who will see that our faith becomes more and more complete and that it goes on until the day we see Him face to



despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider him who endured such opposition from sinners against himself, or else you may grow weary and faint in your minds. 4 You have not yet resisted to *the shedding of your* blood, fighting against sin. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to children,

My son, do not scorn the discipline of the Lord,

face (10:39; Luke 22:32; Phil 1:6). He finishes what He begins.

"Joy" – how could Jesus endure 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24; Isa 53:5,10? Joy awaited Him on the other side (Ps 16:11). What was this joy? Perhaps the joy of pleasing God the Father and finishing His work (John 4:34). Perhaps the joy of seeing many sons brought to glory (2:10), of opening the way for sinners to obtain eternal salvation (Luke 15:7,10).

"Shame" – dying by crucifixion was the worst kind of public disgrace.

"Sat down" – 10:12; 1:3.

**12:3** In the life of faith Jesus is the believer's best example (1 Pet 2:21-23). Filling our minds with thoughts of Him gives great encouragement in the race believers must run. See also 3:1; Col 3:12.

"Opposition" – Matt 9:3,34; 12:14,24; 21:23,46; 22:15; 26:3,4,14-16,47-50, 65-68; 27:20-23, 27-31, 35-44.

**12:4** The life of faith is not only like a race; it is a warfare (Eph 6:10-18; 2 Tim 2:3; 4:7). Sin is the enemy. It fights believers from within as well as from without (1 John 1:8; Rom 7:17,18). To give up the fight against it invites disaster.

**12:5-13** Though they had not yet died for their faith (v 4), they had suffered in many ways (10:32-34). Unbelieving Jews would have told them that this was because God was displeased with them, that He was punishing them for abandoning the old ways. The writer wanted to encourage those believers. He wanted them to understand that troubles and hardships in the lives of believers were a sign of God's love, not His displeasure. God was disciplining or chastising them because they were His children and He was seeking their highest good. We can learn here five truths about chastisement (training by discipline or punishment).

First, it is inescapable for believers. God disciplines "every son" He receives (v 6).

Second, the method God uses is painful. It is like a whipping. This results in pain, not pleasure (v 11). "Uses a whip" – or "flogs" – this is the meaning of the Greek word. It is used in Matt 10:17; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33. Of course, God Himself does not use a literal whip on us, but his chastisement and discipline may feel to our hearts and minds and spirits as a literal whip does to the body. And human beings may

or become faint-hearted when you are rebuked by him.

6 For whom the Lord loves he disciplines, and whips every son whom he receives.

7 If you are patiently enduring discipline, God is dealing with you as with sons. For is there a son whom the father does not discipline? 8 But if you are not undergoing discipline, in which all *sons* have a share, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Moreover, we have had human fathers

beat us with literal whips which God may use as a means of discipline for us.

Third, this discipline is a sign. It shows that those who receive it are God's children. It is evidence that He is taking them into His special care. He loves them as an ideal father should, and therefore trains them (v 8). Some think "if God loved us He would not treat us like He does." But He treats us like He does just because He loves us.

Fourth, God's disciplining us has a wonderful purpose – our good, our holiness (v 10).

Fifth, it has a good result to those who patiently endure (v 7) and submit (v 9) and are exercised by it (v 11).

There are three possible ways to respond to God's discipline or "whipping." People may "scorn it" – disregard it or reject it; or become "faint-hearted" under it; or submit to God and be trained by it. The choice is either rejection, dejection, or subjection. The writer does not tell us what methods God uses to discipline us. But did he not have in mind such things as he had already listed in 10:32-34; 11:35-38? See also 1 Cor 11:29-32; 2 Cor 12:7-10; 1 Pet 1:6,7. Compare Ps 66:10-12, and see psalm 73 where a man of God described his experiences while under discipline.

**12:5,6** Prov 3:11,12. See also Job 5:17; Ps 94:12; 119:67,71,75.

**12:7,8** True believers often seem to meet with more trials and difficulties than others (see Ps 73:2-14). Here is the reason for it. God is dealing with them as sons. A person who considers himself a Christian should not worry if God is disciplining him, only if God is not. God does not discipline Satan's children. His anger rests on them, He punishes them, and will judge them one by one at the proper time.

**12:9** "Human fathers" – Prov 13:24; 18:18; 22:15; 23:13,14.

"Respect" – when parents discipline and punish their children in love, children understand and respect them for it. If they do not discipline them well, the children may wonder whether their parents really love them.

"Father of spirits" – the only time this phrase appears in the Bible (a similar phrase appears in Num 16:22; 27:16). It seems by it the writer is contrasting earthly fathers and the Heavenly Father. They chastise the bodies of their children; he deals chiefly with

who disciplined *us*, and we showed *them* respect. Much more then should we not be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they indeed disciplined *us* for a few days, as they thought best, but he *disciplines us for our good*, so that *we* might share in his holiness. 11 Now no discipline seems joyful at the time, but painful. However, afterwards it produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised by it.

12 Therefore lift up the hands which hang down, the spirits of His children.

**12:10** "Good" – Rom 8:28.

"Holiness" – God wants His children to be separated more and more from the world with its moral filthiness (2 Cor 6:17), to get complete victory in their "struggle against sin" (v 4), and to become more and more pure in heart (Matt 5:8). He disciplines, chastises, and punishes them with this end in view. Welcome troubles and trials when they bring such a result! What are a few pains if they help to purify us and make us share more completely in God's holiness?

Observe here how God goes about enabling His children to share His holiness – it is not by giving us a once-for-all extraordinary experience. He carries on His work of disciplining, and no doubt carries on with it until we leave this world.

For some other benefits of the troubles which come to believers see the note at Job 3:20.

**12:11** Here is a "harvest" all believers desire (Matt 5:6). Then they should welcome the means God uses to produce it – discipline, chastisement, punishment.

"Exercised by it" or "trained by it" – when troubles and sufferings come it is very possible to feel sorry for ourselves, or to fall into discouragement. Instead we should be "exercised." That is, we should learn to examine ourselves, seek the reason for God's chastisement, and correct ourselves. Compare Lam 3:40.

**12:12-16** "Therefore" – in view of what he has been saying about God's discipline, he now urges believers to actively respond to it all. We should do 4 things: "strengthen" (v 12), "make straight paths" (v 13), "follow" (v 14), "take care" (v 15). If God's discipline is to produce the desired effects, we must actively cooperate with Him, and not merely passively endure it.

**12:12** "Strengthen" – how can anyone properly run the race (v 1) if he lets his knees buckle and arms hang down? God has strength for us in Christ, and we must learn to use it. See Ps 29:11; 73:26; 105:4; Eph 1:18,19; 6:10; Col 1:11,12,29.

**12:13** "Make straight paths" – to run best we need straight and level ground. It is up to us to see that we have it. We are not going to win if we let crookedness into our lives.

"Feet. . .healed" – Prov 4:25-27. There is healing in God's way of discipline if we submit to it. Sadly, many Christians are trying to run the race with lame feet.

and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be turned aside, but healed instead.

14 Follow peace with everyone, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. 15 Watch carefully so that no one misses out on the grace of God, and that no root of bitterness springs up to trouble *you*, and defiles many, 16 and that there may not *be* any sexually immoral or ungodly person like Esau, who sold his birthright for one meal.

**12:14** "Follow" – once more we see that our personal effort is involved. We must not dream of passively drifting through life.

"Peace" – Matt 5:9; Rom 12:18.

"Holiness" – v 10. Holiness requires effort, much effort (Rom 8:13; 1 Cor 9:27; 2 Cor 7:1; Gal 5:16-18; Eph 4:22-32; Col 3:5; Heb 12:4,10-13; 1 Pet 1:13-16; 2 Pet 1:5-8). Holiness has to be pursued as if it were of great value (which it is).

"See the Lord" – holiness is an absolute essential (Matt 5:8; 1 Cor 6:9-11). Those who live according to the world, the flesh, and the devil, calling themselves Christians, and hoping to be received into God's holy heaven, are going to meet with a terrible surprise. Notes on holiness at Lev 20:8; John 17:17-19; etc.

**12:15** "Take care" – it is possible that some people in any church are missing out on the grace of God – compare 2 Cor 6:1; Gal 5:4,7. The writer is continuing with the subject of holiness. He knows that the only way anyone can become holy is by the grace of God, and that if a person does not take care he may miss out on this one way. If that happens roots of bitterness can spring up in the heart and in the church. If care is not taken the fruit of such a root in any church can be as bitter as the root – quarreling, factions, evil speaking, seeking revenge, etc. And so it will defile many. This was actually happening to some extent in the Corinthian and Galatian churches.

**12:16** There are many things we must watch out for in the churches. Everywhere in the Bible we see dreadful possibilities of going in the wrong way.

"Esau" – see Gen 25:24-34. He is an example of those who miss out on the grace of God. Observe here why Esau did not value the birthright and the promises of God which went along with it.

"Ungodly" – the Greek word also means "profane", "common", "base." Esau was the kind of person who has no interest in spiritual things. He is an example of those who are of "the flesh", who set their minds on what the flesh wants (Rom 8:5-8), who try to please themselves, not God. Are there not many in our churches today, and among the leaders of our churches, who are like Esau – immoral, profane, and for base gain willing to sell their spiritual birthright? Unless there is a radical change in their lives such people will end up as Esau did – rejected. Compare Mal 1:3.

17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to receive the blessing, he was rejected. Though he earnestly sought it with tears, he found no place for a change of mind.

18 For you have not come to the mountain that was touchable and that burned with fire, or to blackness and darkness and storm, 19 or to the sound of a trumpet and the sound of words (*the sound was such* that those who heard *it* begged that no further word be spoken to them; 20 for they could not bear what was commanded: "And if even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned, or pierced with a spear." 21 And the sight was so terrible *that* Moses said, "I am very afraid, and trembling").

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to

**12:17** "Afterwards" – Gen 27:30-40.

"Change of mind" – this probably means he tried to get his father to change his mind about the blessing he had given to Jacob, but was not successful. Some think that this means that Esau himself tried to repent but was unable to do so, but this seems unlikely. The Greek word translated "repentance" in the KJV literally means a change of mind.

**12:18** "For" – this word does not connect what follows with v 17, but with the theme of the first part of this chapter – patiently enduring God's discipline and being trained by it. This is the happy privilege of believers because they are not under the old covenant and law (vs 18-21), but under the new covenant of grace (vs 22-24). Compare vs 18-24 with Gal 4:24-26.

"You have not come" – as believers in Christ they were no longer under the law – Rom 6:14, and believers are not to look to the old covenant as a way of salvation or of fellowship with God.

"The mountain" – Mount Sinai. The description in this verse and the next two is based on Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-21 and Deut 4:11.

**12:19-20** All this indicates that the giving of the law was a fearful thing. See the notes on Exodus chapter 19.

**12:21** The words of Moses recorded here are not found anywhere else in the Bible. The Holy Spirit, who knew what Moses said, by some means revealed it to the writer of this letter.

**12:22** "You have come to Mount Zion" – the writer now shows some of the blessed results of faith in Christ and being under the new covenant Christ established. He speaks of the heavenly Mount Zion, the spiritual realities of which the earthly city was only a shadow.

"Heavenly Jerusalem" – Gal 4:26; Rev 21:10.

**12:23** "General assembly" – in Greek this is one word and indicates either a general assembly of the people (rather than a restricted meeting of leaders), or a meeting for worship or for a public festival.

an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose *names* are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks of better things than *that of* Abel.

25 See that you do not refuse him who speaks. For if those who refused him who spoke on earth did not escape, *it is* much more *certain that we will not escape*, if we turn away from him who *speaks* from heaven. 26 His voice then shook the earth, but now he has spoken this promise:

Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but heaven also.

27 And this *word*, "Yet once more," indicates

"The firstborn" – in Greek the word is in the plural indicating "firstborn ones." Who are these? The best answer seems to be: Those who through faith are united to Him who is the great Firstborn – see Rom 8:29; Col 1:15,18; Rev 1:5.

"Written in heaven" – Luke 10:20; Rev 21:27.

"Judge" – Ps 50:4-6; 96:13; Isa 33:22; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:16.

"Spirits of righteous men made perfect" – those who have already died in faith, perfected by the sacrifice of Christ (Heb 10:10,14), and made without blemish or fault in the presence of God.

**12:24** "Jesus the mediator" – 8:6; 9:15; 1 Tim 2:5. Through Him, and through Him alone, we can approach the holy God of the universe – 10:19-22.

"New covenant" – 8:8-13; Matt 26:26-28.

"Blood of sprinkling" – 9:14; 10:22; 1 Pet 1:2.

"Abel" – Gen 4:10. Abel's blood cried out for punishment and vengeance on the one who had shed it. Christ's blood speaks of redemption and forgiveness – Eph 1:7. In vs 18-24 the writer has shown in vivid language how much better the new covenant is than the old. The old spoke of fear and punishment, the new speaks of mercy and access to God and eternal blessing.

**12:25-29** Here is the last warning against apostasy in this letter (2:1-4; 3:7-19; 6:4-8; 10:26-31). It is against refusing God's revelation of the new covenant.

**12:25** The one who speaks is God (1:1,2).

"Earth" – God spoke through Moses at Mount Sinai.

"Heaven" – God speaking through His own Son is as if He spoke directly from heaven (John 1:18; 8:23; 12:49,50). Those who refused God's Word through Moses did not escape. Much less will anyone escape who refuses Christ's Word (2:3; 10:28,29; John 12:48).

"If" – see 6:6; 10:26.

**12:26** "Shook the earth" – Ex 19:18.

"Heaven" – Hag 2:6.

**12:27** See 1:10-12; Rev 6:12-14; 21:1.

the removal of those things that are shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Since, therefore, we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace so that we can serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, 29 for our God *is* a consuming fire.

**13** Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some have unknowingly entertained angels. 3 Remember those who are in bonds, as though bound with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 Marriage *is* honourable among all, and the *marriage* bed is undefiled, but God will judge the

Sometime in the future the material creation will pass away, but God's kingdom, the perfection that has come through the new covenant, the things listed in vs 22-24 – these cannot be shaken.

**12:28** "Kingdom" – notes at Matt 4:17; Rom 14:17.

"Godly fear" – Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 90:11; 111:10; Prov 1:7. Without reverence and awe and godly fear there is no wisdom and no worship acceptable to God.

**12:29** "Fire" – note at Ex 3:2. "Consuming fire" suggests fiery holiness that will destroy everything that is contrary to it. The judgment that will come on unbelievers, and those who forsake God and refuse His voice, will be very terrible indeed. Compare 2 Thess 1:7,8.

**13:1** John 13:34; Rom 12:10; 13:8; etc. **13:2** Rom 12:13; 1 Pet 4:9; 3 John 5-8.

"Angels" – Gen 18:2,22; 19:1-3. Angels sometimes appear in the form of men. Only if we show hospitality to strangers will there ever be any opportunity of having one in our home.

**13:3** Luke 6:31; Rom 12:15; Matt 25:34-40. Love can enable us to put ourselves in the place of others and experience and show compassion.

**13:4** "Honourable" – Christians should count marriage an honorable thing because God has ordained it (Matt 19:4-6).

"God will judge the sexually immoral" – Rev 21:8; Col 3:5,6; Eph 5:3-6; 1 Cor 6:9,10.

**13:5** "Be without the love of money" – this is the meaning of the Greek words here, and it is a very important exhortation indeed. The love of money is ruinous. See 1 Tim 6:9,10; Matt 6:19,20,24; Luke 12:15-21; 16:14; John 12:4-6.

"Be content" – Luke 3:14; Phil 4:12; 1 Tim 6:6-8.

"I will never leave you" – Deut 31:6; Matt 28:20; John 14:16. The presence of God with us is far better than all the wealth of the world. If He is with us He will supply what we need (Matt 6:25-34; Phil 4:19), and by His presence in us we can learn contentment in

sexually immoral, and adulterers.

5 *Your manner of life must be* without *the* love of money. *So be* content with what you have, for he has said,

I will never leave you or forsake you.

6 So that we may boldly say,

The Lord *is* my helper,  
and I will not fear what man will do to me.

7 Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you, and follow their faith, considering the final result of *their* manner of life.

8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.

9 Do not be carried away with various strange

all circumstances. But if believers sin will not God forsake them? Since He says He never will forsake them, then He never will. This does not mean they are free to sin. On the contrary, it makes them free to be holy (Rom 6:1,2; 15:18). But can't believers forsake Him? They do not want to, and they do not (10:39; John 10:27. Though some who claim to be believers, and are not, do want to and actually do so). Even if true believers tried to do so, which they will not, it would be most difficult (see Ps 139:7-12).

**13:6** See Ps 118:6,7; Rom 8:31; Matt 10:28-31; Ps 27:1-3. Men had already done much against them (10:32-34), but fear of men was to have no place in their lives. Whatever men could do was temporary. If God was with them they had a blessed eternity awaiting them. Compare 2 Cor 4:17,18.

**13:7** "Leaders" – he is probably referring to those who first preached the gospel to them.

"Imitate" – 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7,9.

**13:8** Human leaders live and die, come and go. Christ is always the same (1:12) and His ministry as the great High Priest of His people will remain the same (7:24,25). The principal point here is that there will be no change in His character or in His loving care for His people. He will be forever what He was in eternity past and in Old Testament days and during His life on earth in the body.

This does not mean that He will enable believers now to exercise all the gifts and signs that the apostles exercised (believers in Old Testament days did not do so and Jesus was the same then, and believers in the eternal ages will not do so – see 1 Cor 13:8-10 – and Jesus will be the same then). In the past at special times He manifested Himself in special ways, and in different ages emphasized different aspects of His divine being, but in His character and qualities Jesus will remain forever what He has always been. This is the subject here.

**13:9** "Strange doctrines" – Eph 4:14; Rom 16:17; Acts 20:20; Matt 7:15. Evidently the writer had in mind some strange Jewish teachings about the spiritual value of

doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods, which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. 10 We have an altar, and those who serve in the tabernacle have no right to eat there. 11 For the bodies of those animals, the blood of which is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp.

12 So Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 Therefore let us go to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek one to come.

15 Therefore let us offer through him the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share *what you*

*have*, for God is very pleased with such sacrifices.

17 Obey your leaders and be submissive, for they watch over your souls, as those who must give *an* account. *See* that they are able to do so with joy, and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

18 Pray for us, for we are confident that we have a good conscience, and are willing to live honorably in every way. 19 But especially I urge *you* to do this so that I may be restored to you more quickly.

20 Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom

ceremonial foods (compare Rom 14:2,14,21; 1 Cor 8:8; Col 2:8,16-23. See notes on Lev 11:2-23). It is only God's grace that can nourish the spiritual life, not physical things.

**13:10** "An altar" – believers in Christ have no visible, material altar. The writer is speaking of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Those who receive Christ by faith have spiritual food, not ceremonial food (see John 6:53-58,63). And those who serve in the old Jewish system and refuse Christ and the new covenant have no part in this "altar."

**13:11** He refers to the Day of Atonement – 9:7. See Lev 16:27. No one could eat the flesh of the animals sacrificed that day. And certainly no one can eat the literal flesh of Christ sacrificed for us. It is unthinkable.

**13:12** "Sanctify" – "make holy" or "set apart" or "consecrate" – 10:10. This is what the blood of Christ does for believers.

"Outside the gate" – the place of the cross (called Golgotha or Calvary) was outside the city of Jerusalem (Matt 27:32,33).

**13:13** "Outside the camp" – he means outside the camp of the Jewish religion, outside the system of the old covenant.

"Reproach" – or "defamation" or "disgrace" – 12:2. Convicted criminals were crucified on crosses. If we go to Christ accepting His death in our place we are acknowledging that we are sinners worthy of death. Believers are the crucified people of a crucified Saviour (Gal 6:14), and must not be ashamed to say so.

**13:14** "City" – 11:10,16; 12:22.

**13:15,16** The old covenant had priests who offered sacrifices. Here the writer indicates that now all believers in Christ are the priests of the new covenant. See 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6. Their offering is not animals, not any material things on any material altar, but something far better.

"Praise" – notes and references at Ps 33:1-3.

"Do good" – this is a very important part of the ministry of believers as New Testament priests. See Matt 5:16; 25:34-40;

Luke 6:27,35; Rom 12:21; 2 Cor 9:8; Gal 6:10; Col 1:10; 2 Thess 2:17; Jam 1:27; 1 Pet 2:12.

"Share what you have" – Matt 5:42; Rom 12:13; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 6:18; 1 John 3:17. God is pleased with offerings like these. Compare 10:6. See Rom 12:1 for another offering that pleases Him very much.

**13:17** "Leaders" – churches must have leaders, and leaders must have some authority. Their authority comes from God who appoints them. The writer was convinced that these leaders of these Hebrews Christians were good ones. Not all leaders are good, and none should be obeyed who do not live according to the truth God has revealed (compare Acts 4:19; 5:29), or who give commands not in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament. Good church leaders "keep watch" over the members – Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1-4.

"An account" – church leaders will have to give account not only of their lives, but of their leadership over God's people.

**13:18** "A good conscience" – 2 Cor 1:12; 4:2.

**13:19** Compare Rom 15:30-32; Philemon 22.

**13:20** "God of peace" – 7:2; Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Thess 3:16.

"From the dead" – Matt 28:6. This is the only place in this letter where the writer speaks of Christ's resurrection. But several times he implies it – 1:3; 2:9; 10:12,13.

"Blood of the everlasting covenant" – 9:12; 10:29; Matt 26:28. Here the new covenant is called "everlasting." There will be no need for another one to replace it. It accomplishes forever what God has purposed for His people.

"Again" – this means back to life again.

**13:21** This is what God can do for every believer, and what no believer can do for himself. If God does not equip us we will never be equipped, and if He does not work in us, our activities will never please Him. Compare 2 Cor 3:5; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29. The aim of every believer should be exactly the same as that of the Lord Jesus (Matt

*be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 And I urge you, brethren, bear with *this* word of exhortation, for I have written a letter to you in few words.

23 Know that *our* brother Timothy is set at

26:39; John 4:34; 6:38; 8:29) – the will of God – nothing less, nothing more, nothing else. God works this in believers “through” Jesus Christ. He is the one channel of God’s grace and power.

13:22 “Exhortation” – the doctrinal truths the writer presented were mixed with frequent exhortations. Often he says “therefore” and “let us” – v 13,15;

liberty. If he arrives shortly, I will *come* with him *and* see you.

24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

2:1; 4:1,11,14,16; 6:1; 10:19,22,23,24; 12:1,28. His reason for writing was practical, and he gave them deep truth that they might put it into practice and have deep spiritual lives.

13:23 “Timothy” – Acts 16:1. Evidently he had been in prison.

13:25 “Grace” – notes at John 1:14,16; Rom 1:7; 2 Cor 8:9; etc



# The Letter of JAMES

## Author:

In the New Testament there are several persons named James: the brother of John and one of the original apostles (Matt 10:2), the son of Alphaeus who was another of the original apostles (Matt 10:3), the father or brother of Judas who was one of the original apostles (see Luke 6:16 and note), and a younger half brother of the Lord Jesus (Matt 13:55). The author of this letter is generally thought to be the half brother of the Lord Jesus and a leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13). On the authorship of the books of the Bible, see the Introduction to Judges.

## Date:

Probably sometime between 45 and 50 AD.

## Theme:

The very important theme of proving one's faith by one's behavior. Genuine faith is shown to be so by enduring trials, by obedience to God's Word, by love and impartiality toward others, by good deeds and by the words the mouth speaks. A key verse is 2:17.

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**1** James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the trying of your faith produces patient endurance. 4 But let patient endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

**1:1** "James" – there are several persons with this name in the New Testament (Matt 10:2,3; Mark 15:40; Luke 6:16; Matt 13:55). More than likely it was James the half-brother of Jesus who wrote this letter. During Christ's lifetime neither James nor his brothers believed Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. But after Christ's death and resurrection they became believers (Acts 1:14). Later on James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13; Gal 1:9).

"Lord" – one who did not believe in Him before the resurrection now recognizes who He really is. See 2:1.

"Twelve tribes which are scattered" – there were twelve tribes in Israel, and "twelve tribes" became another name for the Jewish people. But James was writing to Christians (2:1). So we can say he wrote to Jews who had become Christians in the countries and regions outside Israel.

**1:2-4** "Count it all joy" – while undergoing trials our attitude is very important. If we are convinced they will bring a good result and are permitted by God for improving our spiritual life, then we can regard it as "all" joy. See John 16:33; Rom 5:3-5; 2 Cor 8:2. God wants His people to be spiritual and strong in faith. He wants us to be "perfect and complete" (compare Eph 4:13-15). He wants us to be able to patiently endure anything that may come to us in this life. Trials are one means God uses to produce this result. See Ps 66:10-12.

"Trials" – the Greek word here means either trials or temptations or both. Trials seems a better translation in the context here.

"Knowing" – this is the important thing. Knowing a good result will follow helps us to endure what brings the good result.

"Patient endurance" – Col 1:11; 2 Thess 1:4; 2 Tim 2:12; 3:10; Heb 12:10; 1 Pet 2:20. In Greek "patient endurance" is one word, which contains both meanings. By using this word James teaches us to endure whatever comes and to go patiently on trusting Christ and serving God. Without this quality our trials will not do us the good that they otherwise could do. Can we not rejoice about anything that brings us out of spiritual infancy and makes us better fit to live for God?

"Perfect" – the Greek word means "finished", "lacking nothing for completeness", "mature", "fully developed", etc.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask *it* from God, who gives to everyone liberally and without criticizing, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, without wavering at all. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man think that he will receive any thing from the Lord. 8 A double-minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

**1:5** The trials we face – the testing of our faith – will sometimes confuse and perplex us. We may not understand what God is doing or why He is dealing with us as He is. By our reasoning we will not understand why trials have come to us or how to make use of them spiritually. We need a wisdom that comes from God so we will know how to face trials and all the varied circumstances of life. Let us ask God for it, both for ourselves and for others. He delights to give it – Col 1:9; 2:3; Eph 1:17; 1 Cor 1:36; 2:6-10; Dan 2:20,21; Prov 1:20; 2:6; 8:1; Ps 51:6; 111:10. James describes this wisdom in 3:17.

"Liberally" – Matt 7:9-11; 2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19; 1 Tim 6:17.

"Without criticizing" – God does not criticize us when we come to Him; He does not refuse us because we are unworthy or do not pray in a perfect manner. We can come boldly to Him counting on His love and grace – Heb 4:15,16.

"It will be given" – this is a promise from the God who cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

**1:6-8** "But. . . ask in faith" – here is one thing absolutely necessary if we want our prayers answered. See Heb 11:6. Believing prayer makes all things possible (Mark 9:23; 11:23,24).

"Wavering", "double-minded" – expressions indicating doubt or unbelief. Unbelief is the same as calling God a liar (1 John 5:9,10). In other words, it is saying that God will not do what He says He will do. Doubting means to lean to the side of unbelief. It is to be without a firm trust in God's character and promises. Facing a promise of God faith says "God will do it", unbelief says "He will not", doubt says "He may or may not." In all his dealings with God and God's Word a doubter will be "unstable." He will always be pulled in two directions. He won't be settled in his thoughts, his motives, his aims, or his dedication to God's will. The very reason why he is a doubter is that he has a divided heart. See David's prayer in Ps 86:11.

All believers are tempted to doubt at some time or other. We must learn to resist this temptation, and rest in the truth that what God says He will surely do. In this Abraham is a great example to us – Rom 4:18-21. What is the cure for doubt? The Word of God (Rom 10:17), meditating on God's promises and God's character (Ps 1:2,3), and full consecration to Him and His will (Rom 12:1,2).

9 Let the brother in lowly circumstances rejoice because he is exalted, 10 but the rich because he is made low, for like the flower of the grass he will pass away. 11 For as soon as the sun has risen with burning heat, it withers the grass, and its flower falls, and the beauty of its appearance perishes. So also the rich man will fade away in his ways.

12 Blessed *is* the man who endures trials, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him.

13 When tempted let no one say, "I am tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. 14 But each person is

**1:9** "Lowly. . . exalted" – God, the great Creator of the universe, has raised poor, uneducated believers, whom the world counts as complete nobodies, to great heights in Christ. He has made them His own children and chosen them for a great future (John 1:12,13; Rom 8:29,30; Eph 2:6,7). In Christ no distinction is made between rich and poor, slave and master, educated and illiterate (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). The poor man should recognize this and have great joy and satisfaction because of his high position in Christ.

**1:10** "Rich. . . made low" – the rich man who is a believer has the same high position in Christ as the poor man. But through Christ he has learned (in a way he did not learn before) of his frailty and mortality. He can know that self-abasement is the way to exaltation (Matt 18:4; 23:12). He has learned his sinfulness and the great truth that apart from God's grace he can have no good thing either in the present or in the future. He must find joy and satisfaction in all this. We should all rejoice in any truth that brings us down low before God. See 4:6.

**1:11** Compare Ps 103:15; Isa 40:6-8; 1 Pet 1:23-25.

**1:12** "Blessed" – compare Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-12. Trials work for the good of believers both now and hereafter – vs 2-4; 2 Cor 4:17.

"Crown" – note at 2 Tim 4:8. See also 1 Cor 9:25; Phil 4:1; Rev 3:11; 4:10. The "crown of life" appears again in Rev 2:10. There, too, it is promised to those who faithfully endure trials; in other words, to those of genuine faith who prove their faith (and their love) by such endurance.

"Love Him" – this is the motive power which enables believers to persevere under trials (1 Cor 13:6). This perseverance is the evidence of their love.

**1:13** God tests us and proves us, but does not tempt us (Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12). Matt 6:13 is a prayer He delights to answer.

"Tempted by evil" – no evil, no sin has the slightest attraction for God. He utterly, eternally hates all wrong – Lev 20:7; Deut 12:31; Ps 11:5; Prov 6:16-19.

**1:14** We are not innately, naturally holy as

tempted, being drawn away by his own evil desire, and enticed. 15 Then when desire has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.

16 Make no mistake, my dear brethren, 17 every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variability, or shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will he begot us with the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creation.

19 So, my beloved brethren, let everyone be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to get angry. 20 For the anger of man does not produce the

God is. Our old nature is fallen and corrupted. That is why sin has an attraction for us (Gal 5:16,17; Rom 7:15-20; Eph 4:22-24). Satan knows this very well and brings enticing, tempting things before us (1 Thess 3:5). But if we give in to temptations the fault lies only in us, and we should not dream of blaming God for it. Compare 1 Cor 10:13. **1:15** Spiritual death is the final result of sin. Compare Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; 8:6. Acts of sin have their beginning in desire (Gen 3:6; 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 2:16). In the strength given by God believers must fight in the battlefield of their desires, and win before desire brings forth sin.

**1:16** "Make no mistake" – v 22; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 6:7; Eph 5:6; 1 John 1:8.

**1:17** God's gifts can be nothing less than good and perfect. They cannot be tainted with sin or promote sin. If men abuse God's gifts and make with them opportunities for sin, the fault is in men, not in God's gifts.

"Father of lights" – God is the creator and giver of every kind of light – literal and spiritual (Gen 1:3,14-16; Luke 1:78,79; John 1:4,5; 3:19; 2 Cor 4:6).

"No variability" – Num 23:19; 1 Sam 15:29; Mal 3:6; Heb 1:10-12; 13:8. God is eternally perfect. He does not need to develop and grow. Nothing can be added to His character, nothing taken away.

**1:18** Here is God's greatest and best gift to men.

"Begot us" – gave us the new birth, made us His own children – John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; 1 Pet 1:23. This was God's way of delivering us from sin and death (v 15). "The word of truth" He used to give us this new birth is the gospel of Christ.

"Firstfruits" – Rom 11:16; 1 Cor 15:20, 23; Rev 14:4. Believers now are "firstfruits" of a greater harvest still to come.

**1:19,20** From thoughts of the new birth he turns to thoughts of what that experience should produce in our lives.

"Swift to hear" – he may mean swift to hear God's Word, or, possibly, a willingness to listen to what others have to say.

"Speak" – 3:1-8; Prov 10:19; 13:3; 17:28; 29:20; Matt 12:36,37. People who talk too much will surely say much that is useless or wrong or harmful, and they will

righteousness of God. 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and the abounding wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man seeing his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he sees himself, and goes his way, and immediately forgets what he looked like. 25 But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues *to do so*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the deed, this man will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone among you seems to be religious, and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion *is* useless. 27 Pure and faultless religion before God the Father is this: To look after the fatherless and widows in their

not be able to hear what they should hear.

"Slow to get angry" – Matt 5:22; Eph 4:26; Prov 16:32. Man's anger, even so-called righteous anger, does not establish or promote God's righteousness. Compare 2 Tim 2:24,25. Gentleness and meekness are much more useful than any kind of anger we can display.

**1:21** "Lay aside" – Eph 4:22-32; 5:3,4; Col 3:5-10.

"The implanted Word" – the Word of God planted in our hearts. Compare Matt 13:3-9,18-22. If God's Word sown in us is to produce a harvest we must humbly, believingly accept it, yield to it and let it work. God's Word in the heart has power to transform and save.

**1:22-24** Hearing the teachings of the Bible without acting according to them is useless. Mere hearing only increases our condemnation. In the parable of the sower all four classes of people hear the Word (Matt 13:19,20,22,23), but only one class produces fruit. The Jews were great for reading the Word and hearing it and memorizing it, but (like most of us) not so great in acting according to what they heard (Matt 23:3; Acts 7:53; Rom 2:17-24). See in Matt 7:21-27 the emphasis the Lord Jesus put on obedience to His teaching. A great many who are called Christians will be lost forever because they have not done what the Word of God says they must do to be saved. And many more will lose the rewards they might have had because they did not do what God's Word told them to do.

**1:23** "Mirror" – the Bible is like a mirror. If we inspect ourselves in it, it will show us exactly what we are. But if we do not act according to this knowledge, it will do us no good and we will soon forget it.

**1:25** The law of Moses brought bondage – Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1. Believers are free from that law – Rom 6:14; 7:4. But they are under Christ's law – 1 Cor 9:21 – a law of grace and love. This law when obeyed gives freedom – not freedom to

trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

**2** My brethren, having faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, do not show favoritism. 2 For if a man with a gold ring and fine clothes comes to your meeting, and a poor man in dirty clothes also comes, 3 and you show respect to the one who wears the fine clothes, and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit here by my footstool," 4 are you not showing partiality among yourselves, and becoming judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him? 6 But you have treated the poor with

sin, but freedom from sinning.

**1:26** Verse 19; 3:2-12. On every hand there are many who do not control their tongues. Evidently, then, many are self-deceived and have a useless form of worship.

**1:27** We should understand that God does not accept every kind of worship and religion – Matt 15:8,9. Compare Ps 50:7-21; Isa 1:11-17. The kind of religion God wants to see is love and holiness in action, not merely in word. God has a special concern for the weak and helpless and poor – Ex 22:22; 23:11; Lev 23:22; Deut 10:18; 24:19; Ps 146:19; Isa 1:17; other references at Gal 2:10. We too must have concern for them, if we want to be pleasing to Him. God has a hatred for the pollutions of the world. So must we have if we want our worship to be fully acceptable to Him (Rom 1:18; 2 Cor 6:17; 7:1; 1 Pet 1:15,16; Jude 23).

**2:1** "The Lord of glory" – 1 Cor 2:8. Notes on Lord at Luke 2:11; Phil 2:10,11.

**2:1-4** God does not show favoritism or partiality. As believers in Christ we must follow Him in this (Rom 2:11; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 6:9; Col 3:11,25; 1 Tim 5:21; 1 Pet 1:17). It is a sad truth that this instruction is often ignored and disobeyed in churches. James (and God's Spirit speaking through James) plainly tells us that favoritism comes from "evil thoughts" (v 4). In Christ we are to accept all men alike, and honor and respect all alike – Rom 12:10,16. Looking down on fellow believers because they are poor, or uneducated, or poorly dressed, or from a different class or group or caste, or for any other reason, must have no place among Christ's people.

**2:5** Compare Luke 6:20. See also Matt 11:5; Luke 4:18; 1 Cor 1:26. It is far, far better to be rich in faith than to be rich in material things.

"Heirs" – Matt 5:5; 1 Cor 6:9; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Heb 1:14; 6:12; Rev 21:7. Note on God's kingdom at Matt 4:17.

"Love Him" – 1:12. Those who do not

contempt. Do not rich men oppress you, and drag you to court? 7 Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called?

8 If you fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you do well. 9 But if you show favoritism, you commit sin and are convicted by the Law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole Law, and yet goes wrong in one *point*, he is guilty of *breaking* the whole Law. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," said also, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law.

12 So speak and act as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For the one who has not

love God will have no inheritance with Him - 1 Cor 16:22; 1 John 4:8.

**2:7** "Name" - Christ.

**2:8** "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" - Lev 19:18; Matt 19:19; 22:39; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:9,10; Gal 5:14.

"Royal law" - it is the supreme law relating to human relationships, and given by the King of kings for all those in His kingdom.

**2:9** "Favoritism" - James takes us back to vs 1-4. Looking down on the poor and showing favoritism to the rich is a sin. It is disobedience to God's greatest law for men.

**2:10** A person is a lawbreaker if he keeps all the law and disobeys only one command. And if he disobeys the command to love he is breaking a very great command and so is a very great sinner. So we see that showing favoritism is not at all a small matter. We should see also that every one of us in some way or other is guilty of breaking God's law. And we are worthy of the whole condemnation of the law (Col 3:10). Everyone of us needs forgiveness through Christ (Rom 3:9,19,23).

"Goes wrong" - the literal meaning of the Greek word is "stumbles", but in the context it means to break a law of God. See 3:2 where the same word is used.

**2:11** Ex 20:13,14. Observe how he joins adultery, murder, and showing favoritism together in one brief passage. In this way he shows the seriousness of the sin of showing partiality or favoritism, of exalting some and looking down on others.

**2:12** "Judged" - 2 Cor 5:9,10.

"Liberty" - 1:25. If we are at all wise we will behave toward others in the light of the coming judgment.

**2:13** Matt 5:7; 7:1,2; 18:23-35; Luke 6:37,38; Prov 21:13; Ps 18:25,26.

**2:14** "Can such faith save him?" - clearly the answer is "No, such faith cannot save him." The reason is this: such faith is not genuine faith, not the kind of saving faith the Bible speaks about. The plain teaching of the Bible is this: we are saved by God's grace through faith apart from works (Eph 2:8,9; Rom 3:24,25,28; 4:5). But through this way of grace and faith God

shown mercy will have judgment without mercy. And mercy rejoices against judgment.

14 What use *is it*, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, and does not have works? Can *such* faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing, and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them those things which are needful to the body, what *is the* use? 17 Even so faith, if it is without works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yes, a man may say, "You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well *to believe it*, but the devils also believe *it*, and tremble.

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man,

transforms people. He gives them new spiritual birth. He makes them a new creation. See 1:18; 2 Cor 5:17. Such people are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good deeds (Eph 2:10). Good deeds are a part of the evidence that our faith is real, that God has done His work in our hearts (Heb 6:10; Gal 5:6).

A consistent lack of good works is proof that our faith is only in words, that we have not been changed by God's grace. True faith is a powerful force in a person's life. See notes at Heb 10:39; 11:4.

**2:15-17** All words and no action is a mark of spiritual death. Compare 1 John 3:17,18. A person who behaves in this way shows he does not have God's love in him. If he does not have love he does not know God (1 John 4:8). In other words, the faith he claims to have is not real (note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15). What is "dead" faith? A faith that does not produce what God wants to see - mercy, love, kindness, etc (Gal 5:22,23). A dead faith may be very orthodox. It may believe the right doctrines. It may persuade itself that it has a firm belief in God and His Word. But it has not laid hold of the Lord Jesus in a saving, life-giving way. Compare John 5:39,40.

**2:18** Someone may object to James' teaching and say, "some people have faith, others have deeds. They are both an important part of religion. But the one can exist without the other." James denies this. He insists that if there are no good deeds there is no faith. It is quite impossible to show faith without deeds.

**2:19** Demons know the truth about God and Christ. See also Mark 5:2-7. They "believe", but they are not saved. They believe, but they are without good works. They do not have a living faith that changes them. It is a sad and terrible truth that many very religious people, including many Christians, have no more of a living faith than demons. They believe there is one God, but they are merciless, unloving, selfish and hard-hearted. And what good will the faith of demons do them?

**2:20** "Foolish" - the Greek word literally



that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see how faith was working with his deeds, and that faith was made perfect by works? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness," and he was called "the friend of God." 24 You see then that a man is justified by deeds, and not by faith only.

25 In the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

means "empty" and here signifies a person who is lacking in the wisdom God gives, an empty-headed man, a "hollow" man.

"Dead" – a dead faith will never produce anything useful. And if it produces nothing useful, how can it be acceptable to God?

**2:21-26** James is not at all contradicting the teachings of the apostle Paul in Rom 1:16,17; 3:22-28; 4:5; 10:9,10; Eph 2:8,9. He is giving the opposite side of the same truth. He is showing that true faith and good works are inseparable – so united that what can be said of one may be said of both together. He is teaching what Paul himself taught in Rom 2:7-10; Gal 5:6; Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14. And what the Lord Jesus taught in Matt 7:21,24-27; 25:35-43.

Faith that does not express itself through love is useless, dead faith. James' language suggests that since good works come out of faith, they may be considered a part of faith. James is not contradicting Paul. He is opposing those who said that bare faith is sufficient even if it never results in good actions.

**2:21** Gen 22:1-18.

**2:22** If faith and actions do not work together they will not work apart. Actions are the evidence of faith, the fulfillment of faith, faith itself revealed to view.

**2:23** See Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3. Both James and his readers knew that this event took place many years before Abraham offered Isaac. God had already counted Abraham righteous through faith. But Abraham's faith was living and proved itself when he offered Isaac. We might even say that the offering of Isaac was inherent in Abraham's faith long before he actually offered him.

"The friend of God" – 2 Chron 20:7. Compare John 15:15.

**2:24** He is speaking this way for the sake of emphasis. He means that God justifies men through the kind of faith that will produce good deeds, the kind of faith that has good deeds inherent in it.

**2:25** Joshua 2:1-21; Heb 11:31. If Rahab had not had faith she would not have acted as she did. Her actions came out of her faith, were the proof of her faith.

**2:26** Faith that does not produce good works, that does not have good works inherent in

**3** My brethren, let not many of *you* be teachers, knowing that we *teachers* will receive more *severe* judgment. 2 For all of us go wrong in many ways. If anyone does not go wrong in what he says, that person is a complete man, able also to control the whole body.

3 See, we put bits in the horses' mouths, so that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. 4 See also the ships. Though *they are* so large, and *are* driven by fierce winds, yet they are turned about with a very small rudder, wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. See, what a great forest is set on fire by such a little flame! 6 And the tongue *is* a flame, a world of evil. Among

it, is like a corpse. It is lifeless, inactive, and will soon begin to stink. Is our faith active? Is it producing fruit for God? If not, let us shudder and tremble as demons do (v 19), and let us repent and turn to God with all our hearts.

**3:1-12** "Teacher" – he means a teacher of the Bible. Such a person has a very solemn responsibility. First of all, he should live according to the truth he is teaching. Since he has more knowledge, God will require more of him, and will judge him more severely. See Luke 12:47,48. So teaching the Bible is a very serious matter. The more so because they and all other believers "go wrong in many ways." And they have to use a very dangerous instrument in their work – the tongue. So no one should rush into the work of teaching. Each teacher should be sure God is calling him for that and has given him the gift of teaching (Rom 12:6,7). Of course, a teacher called and prepared by God to teach His Word has a very wonderful and satisfying task, and can do much good. All such teachers may well rejoice – with trembling – in this glorious calling.

**3:2** "Go wrong" – see 2:10, where the same Greek word is used, also Rom 11:11. The Greek word is "stumble" but when used figuratively means to go astray, to err, do wrong, or sin. Observe that James says we "all" do this, and in many ways. How good it is, then, to have Matt 6:12; 1 John 1:9.

"In what he says" – James is saying that the tongue is more difficult to control than anything else a person has. And the one who has mastered his (or her) tongue is a complete, mature person, well-fitted for the work God has for him.

**3:3-5** The point is that small things can have great effects. The tongue has more power for good or ill than any other part of the body. It has amazing power. It can build or tear down, create or destroy. It can be a tree of life (Prov 15:4; 18:21), or the fang of a snake (Ps 140:3). It can be a murdering sword (Ps 57:4), or a healing medicine (Prov 12:18). It can promote trouble and evil (Ps 10:7), or justice and righteousness (Ps 37:30; 51:14).

**3:6** James is speaking of the untamed



our members the tongue is such that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell.

7 All kinds of beasts and birds, and serpents, and creatures in the sea, are being tamed, and have been tamed, by man. 8 But the tongue no one can tame. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we praise God, the Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceeds praising and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send forth from the same place sweet and bitter *water*? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olives? Or a vine, figs? In the same way no spring can give

tongue, the tongue as it is by nature. And by "tongue", of course, he means the power to speak, to communicate what is in the mind and heart.

"Flame" – the tongue can be a great destroyer (Ps 52:2). One spark from it can ignite a fire which destroys many people. The tongue is a whole "world" in itself. And by nature this world is evil – Ps 58:3. It is on fire with desire and sin, and the fire has come from hell. Satan has taught human beings to lie and deceive and slander and blaspheme and curse. These things are fire which destroys lives.

**3:7,8** Has there been a single person in the whole of human history (apart from Christ) who always controlled his own tongue completely? Abraham did not – Gen 13:11-20; 20:2-9; 17:17,18. Moses did not – Num 20:10-12; Ps 106:33. Peter did not – Matt 26:69-74. Paul did not – Acts 23:2-5. James confesses he did not. This is not to say we should not try to control our tongues. We must. Far better to have some control over it than to have none at all (Ps 141:3; Prov 10:19; 11:12; 21:23). The best of all is to have our hearts and minds filled with God's Word and then our tongues will speak good things – Matt 12:34-37; Col 3:16. Though alone we cannot control our tongues, God and His Word can.

"Unruly" – Ps 39:1-3.

"Deadly poison" – Ps 58:4; Rom 3:13.

**3:9,10** This should not be so, need not be so, but often it is so. Some men are like saints in public, but like demons at home or in private.

"The likeness of God" – Gen 1:26,27; Eph 4:24.

**3:11,12** In all creation it seems only man's tongue has a double source and a double channel.

**3:13-18** There are two kinds of wisdom in the world. One comes from Satan (v 15), and the other comes from God (v 17). The results which flow from the one are very different indeed from the results which flow from the other. We can tell whether a person is really wise by what we see in his life. No one has the wisdom which comes from God who is evil or proud or envious or selfish or

both salt water and fresh.

13 Who *is* a wise man and has understanding among you? Let him show it by good behaviour, by his deeds with the meekness *produced by* wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter envy and strife in your hearts, do not boast, and do not deny the truth.

15 This wisdom does not come down from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envy and strife *are*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, readily obedient, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

worldly-minded or unspiritual. Such people may gain a reputation for wisdom with men. They may think they are wise. They may be very intellectual, very bright, very clever. But God sees where their so-called wisdom comes from. For another comparison between these two kinds of wisdom see 1 Cor 1:17 - 2:16.

**3:13** Only the good are wise. An evil man is a fool no matter how much intellect he has. Humility is one of the fruits of true wisdom. Those who have the wisdom that comes from God will not exalt themselves, will never think that they themselves are God or any similar wicked nonsense (Ps 14:1; 111:10; Prov 3:7; 8:1-8).

**3:14** "Envy" – Job 5:2; Prov 14:30; 23:17; Matt 27:18; Mark 7:22; Rom 1:29; 1 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:26.

"Do not boast" – can a person filled with bitterness, envy and strife still be a boaster? Oh yes, partly by denying that it is true.

**3:15** Do many religious people (including some professing Christians) have the devil's wisdom, and not God's? Their actions, aims and ambitions lead us to think so. A lack of meekness, a spirit of envy and strife, boasting, denying truth – these do not reveal the wisdom God gives.

**3:16** See the result of Satan's wisdom working in the minds of men.

**3:17** "From above" – heavenly wisdom, God's wisdom – Prov 8:22,23; 1 Cor 1:24,30; 2:7,13; Col 2:3.

"Pure" – the wisdom God gives is free from any kind of sin or defilement or corruption, and it does not lead to any such things. It is holy and separate from the wisdom of this world. This wisdom loves peace between God and men and between men and men. It is kind and concerned for the well-being of others and is obedient to God. It recognizes the truth of Matt 5:7,9 and puts it into practice. It produces good fruit for God's glory. It makes us impartial in our treatment of others (2:1), and sincere (Acts 2:46; 2 Cor 1:12; 6:6; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:5; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 1:22). There is no hypocrisy whatever in it. If we do not have such wisdom, let us ask God for it, and let us believe that He will give it to us – 1:5,6.

**3:18** Righteousness grows when there are

**4** Where do conflicts and fights among you *come* from? *Do they* not *come* from your desires that are at war in your members? **2** You desire and do not have; you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain *what you want*; you fight and struggle, yet you do not have, because you do not ask *God*. **3** You ask, and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, that you may use *it* up on your desires.

**4** You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity toward God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. **5** Do you

right relationships between God and men, and between men and men. Peace and righteousness go together and both flow from God's wisdom – Ps 85:10; Prov 3:17; Isa 32:17. Therefore, with all our getting, let us get wisdom (Prov 2:3-6).

**4:1,2** Here are some of the results from having the devil's "wisdom" (3:15) instead of the wisdom God gives. The picture is a raging war within the heart, and this war erupts into quarrels with other men. Compare 1 Cor 3:3; Gal 5:17.

"Kill, and desire" – James is writing to Jews who professed to be followers of Christ. Evidently the behavior of some revealed them to be followers of Satan (John 8:44). Wrong desire is at the root of all the corruption in the world (1:15).

"You do not ask God" – rather than pray, some people prefer to quarrel, fight and even kill to get what they want.

**4:3** Notice carefully why God sometimes does not answer prayer, and what is meant by wrong motives. God does not always give us what we ask for because, if He did, it would only make us more selfish, and worse in every way. A desire for selfish pleasure is often the reason why people ask for things. We should not blame God if He does not give them. God is not like some foolish parents who give whatever a child wants whether it is good for him or not. Let us open our hearts to God and sincerely pray as He wants us to pray (Ps 139:23,24; 66:18; Matt 6:9-13).

**4:4** "Adulterers and adulteresses" – there may have been individuals among them guilty of literal adultery, but James probably means adultery in spiritual matters, since he immediately speaks of friendship with the world. On adultery in spiritual matters see Jer 2:2; 3:6-9; Ezek 16:31-34; Hos 1:2. It means that those who are called God's people forsake God for something else.

Why is friendship with the world hatred toward God? The word "world" here means the fallen sinful world of men. It is clearly described in John 3:19; 7:7; 15:18-21; Gal 1:3; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19. It is in rebellion against God. It loves sin and hates Christ. So to have friendship with it is to join the enemies of the one true God, and to become His enemy. Let us take these solemn words to heart. Will we dare to be

think that the Scripture says in vain, The spirit that dwells in us desires jealously? **6** But he gives more grace. Therefore he says,

God resists the proud,  
but gives grace to the humble.

**7** Therefore submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners, and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. **9** Grieve and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your*

friends with the world that crucified the Lord Jesus? Will we follow its aims and ambitions, its desires and pleasures, its methods and ways? Let us beware. Compare Rom 12:2.

**4:5** The Greek here is very difficult. It could be translated in several different ways. For example, besides the above translation it could mean – "God jealously longs for the spirit He has made to live in us", or "The Spirit [the Holy Spirit] He caused to live in us longs jealously." In any case, James is saying that in spite of what men are by nature, God can enable us by His grace to renounce the world and draw near to Him (vs 6-8), and this is what God desires. God is a "jealous" lover of our spirits and wants us for Himself. See Ex 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Josh 24:19. "My child", He says to each of us, "give me your heart." **4:6** Prov 3:34; 1 Pet 5:5.

"Proud" – Prov 6:16,17; 16:5; 21:4; Isa 2:12-18; 13:11. If we allow pride to rule us God will be our enemy and will fight against us.

"Grace" – John 1:14,16,17; Rom 5:2,20, 21. God's grace is what we need in order to reject the world, overcome our selfish desires and devote ourselves to God.

"Humble" – 3:13; Ps 138:6; Prov 16:19; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Matt 5:3; 18:3,4. **4:7** "Submit" – this is what the humble do, what the proud will not do.

"He will flee" – here is a great promise. Satan is afraid of those who resist him in the strength God gives. But he will run only from those who submit themselves to God. Submitting comes first, then resisting the devil. Note on the devil at Matt 4:1. To resist the devil in one's own strength or in pride is to ask for a fall.

**4:8** This is another great promise we can always count on, if we come to God in the manner he tells us to come. Compare Zech 1:3.

"Cleanse" – compare Isa 1:16,17.

"Purify your hearts" – compare Ezek 18:31. James is speaking about full repentance (notes at Matt 3:2,8), and the earnest use of the means God has given for cleansing – 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 1:7,9.

"Double-minded" – 1:8. If we want God to draw near to us we must turn from all known sin and have a firm faith in Him.

**4:9** Matt 5:4; Luke 6:21; 2 Cor 7:8-10.

joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.

11 Do not speak evil about one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of *his* brother, and judges his brother, is speaking evil of the Law, and judging the Law. But if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you that judges another?

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into a certain city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and make a profit." 14 The fact is you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. 15 Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live, and do this, or that."

James is speaking of sorrow for sin. God does not draw near to bless those who take sin lightly. How long should our grief and mourning continue? Until we know that God has drawn near, forgiven us, and lifted us up. We must do a thorough work of repenting (Jer 29:13).

**4:10** Verse 6; Luke 1:52; 1 Sam 2:7,8; Ps 15:1,3; 50:20; Prov 10:18; Matt 15:19; 23:12; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8.

**4:11** "Do not speak evil" – slander is a work of the devil and the meaning of his name. What business do Christians have doing the devil's work? Anyone who speaks against another is judging him (or her). The law tells us to love others as ourselves (2:8). Speaking against them is not loving them. And if a person does so he is setting himself above the law, and treating it as if its words have no importance, and becomes a judge of it. **4:12** "Lawgiver" – Isa 33:22; Ex 20:1.

"To save and to destroy" – Matt 10:28; Isa 43:11.

"Who are you that judges another" – Matt 7:1,2; Rom 14:4,10-13.

**4:13** Here is another very common fault even among Christians. Some make their plans as if God were not important to them, as if they were perfectly able to carry on their affairs without His guidance and help.

**4:14** Compare 1:10,11; Job 7:7; Ps 39:5; 102:3; 144:4; Prov 27:1; 1 Pet 1:24; Luke 12:16-20. We do not know what natural calamity may come tomorrow, or what accident may befall us, or whether tomorrow is our last day on earth.

**4:15** "Say" – he is not suggesting that we should merely say the words that follow as a kind of ritual. We should mean them and submit ourselves to the will of God and do what He tells us (v 7; Matt 6:10; John 4:34; Acts 21:14; Rom 1:10; 12:1,2). **4:16** "Now you boast" – Ps 52:1; 75:4; Jer 9:23; Amos 4:5; 1 Cor 4:7; Gal 6:13. Men like to boast about what they have done or what they think they will do or can do. God tells us what such boasting is like.

**4:17** Luke 12:47; John 9:41; 2 Pet 2:21.

16 But now you boast in your arrogant presumption. All such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore to him who knows to do good, and does not *do it*, to him it is sin.

**5** Come now, *you* rich men, weep and howl because of your miseries that will come on *you*. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you, and will eat your flesh as if it were fire. You have heaped together wealth for the last days. 4 See, the wages of the labourers who have harvested your fields, which you have fraudulently kept, cry out, and the cries of those who have done the harvesting have entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived in pleasure and

They may have been acting as they did in ignorance, but now they would know the right way to behave and can have no excuse. Observe that good left undone is sin just as evil done is sin. Compare Num 32:23; 1 Sam 12:23; Matt 25:41-46.

**5:1-6** "You rich men" – James is speaking to the selfish rich who oppress the poor and care nothing for what God says about heaping up riches (Ps 37:16; 52:6,7; 62:10; Prov 11:28; Matt 6:19-21; Luke 12:16-21; 14:33; 1 Tim 6:6-10,17-19).

**5:1** "Miseries that will come on you" – Luke 6:24,25; 16:19-31.

**5:2,3** "Corroded" – James uses the past tense, not because this wealth had already been destroyed, but to show how certain it was that this would happen. And he is showing the eventual worthlessness of earthly riches. Whatever those riches are they will perish and leave those who had them naked before God. James knew that gold does not literally "corrode." He is stating in vivid language the fact that absolutely nothing will remain to the rich of what they had loved and hoarded.

"Heaped together wealth" – with so many people poor, destitute, starving and dying in the world, hoarding riches is a great crime. And the rich will pay for it with the misery God will send on them (v 1). They will find that piling up riches costs too much.

**5:4** "Labourers" – the Bible is for the poor, the working man, the down-trodden.

"The ears of the Lord of hosts" – there is a just Judge on high, and we may be sure He hears the cries of those oppressed by the rich.

**5:5** "Luxury" – Luke 16:19,25. Woe to those who deny themselves nothing they want. Compare Luke 9:23. Selfishness will always end in disaster.

"Slaughter" – the end of their luxury and self-indulgence is death. James compares them to dumb cattle being fattened only to be slaughtered (compare Amos 4:1). Let us learn to seek the truly important things during our brief earthly life – salvation,

luxury on the earth. You have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned *and* killed the righteous, *when* he was not resisting you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it, until he receives the early and later rains. 8 You also be patient *and* make your hearts firm, for the coming of the Lord draws near. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be judged. See, the judge is standing at the door!

10 My brethren, as an example of patient suffering take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord. 11 See *that* we count them

wisdom, righteousness, truth, holiness (Matt 6:33; etc).

**5:6** It is a strange and terrible fact that men, who are here today and gone tomorrow, will kill or trample any law of God under their feet to get money or property. Truly "madness is in their hearts while they live" (Eccl 9:3).

**5:7** "Brethren" – James leaves off his remarks to the rich and speaks again to believers. Though they are facing oppression and hardships they should be patient (Rom 12:12; Gal 5:22; Col 1:11; Heb 6:12).

"The coming of the Lord" – Matt 16:27; John 14:3; Acts 1:11. Farmers patiently wait for God's work in nature to produce a harvest. Believers are to wait patiently for the fulfillment of God's plan in the spiritual realm.

**5:8** "Firm" – Matt 24:13; 1 Cor 15:58; 16:13; 2 Cor 1:21,24; Eph 6:14; Col 1:23; 4:12; 1 Pet 5:9,10.

"Draws near" – he does not say how near or make any prediction. None of the writers of the New Testament knew the day of Christ's return. Sometimes it seems that they believed (or at least hoped) that it would take place during their life time. But see John 21:18-23; 2 Tim 4:6. See notes on Rev 1:1-3.

**5:9** Grumbling about others is the same as judging them, and this is not our business (4:11,12).

"Lest you be judged" – Matt 7:1,2.

"The judge" – the Lord Jesus (compare 4:12). He is always at the door.

**5:10** He has told them to have patience (v 7), now he points them to great examples of patience in the Old Testament. Heb 11:35-39 briefly sets forth some of the things they suffered.

"Prophets" – note at Gen 20:7.

"In the name of the Lord" – Ex 5:1; 1 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 7:1; Isa 1:10; Jer 1:9,10; 7:2; Ezek 3:4; 13:2; Hos 4:1; Amos 1:3.

**5:11** "Endure" – 1:2-4. Their sufferings did not destroy their patience and perseverance, but increased them (Rom 5:3).

"Job" – Job 1:13 - 2:10.

blessed who patiently endure. You have heard of the patient endurance of Job, and have seen the end the Lord *brought about*; and that the Lord is very compassionate, and very merciful.

12 But above all things, my brethren, do not swear, not by heaven, or by the earth, or with any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and *your* "no" be no. Otherwise you will fall into judgment.

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? He should pray. Is any happy? He should sing psalms. 14 Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they should pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed

"The end" – Job 42:10-17.

"Compassionate. . .merciful" – Ex 34:6,7; Ps 5:7; 25:6; 103:13; 116:5. God will never put more on us than we can bear, and will bring good out of all we have to suffer (Rom 8:28).

**5:12** Matt 5:33-37. We should speak every word as if God Himself were listening to what we say. And indeed He is. So there should be no attempts to deceive anyone.

**5:13,14** The three situations he mentions covers much of the life of believers.

"In trouble" – the Greek means to suffer or endure hardship (2 Tim 2:3; 4:5). This is the common lot of all believers (Acts 14:22).

"Pray" – in answer to prayer God either delivers us from trouble or gives us comfort and strength to endure it patiently. But we should not think James is teaching us to pray only when we are in trouble (compare Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:17).

"Happy" – there are times when believers experience relief from their troubles, feel no burdens and are filled with happiness – a good time to sing praises to God (Ps 9:13,14; 18:49; 35:28; 47:6; 51:14,15). All times are good for praising God (1 Thess 5:18), but no doubt there are times when we are better able to do it.

**5:14** Times of sickness are the common lot of mankind, and believers in Christ are not immune from them. James tells us what to do when we are sick. It is one provision God has made for the healing of His people. It is surprising how few believers avail themselves of it. What he states here should be the common practice in all Bible-believing churches.

"In the name of the Lord" – everyone must recognize it is not their power or the power of their words or the oil that heals anyone. The Lord is the healer. It is one of His names – Ex 15:26.

**5:15** It seems clear that God does not always choose to heal His servants immediately when they fall sick (Phil 2:26,27; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20). In such a case it will not be possible to pray in faith that they will be healed at once. When anyone has called for the church elders, and

sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Confess *your* faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. A righteous man's prayer at work is very powerful.

17 Elijah was a man with a nature like we have, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and

six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.

19 Brethren, if any of you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns the sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death, and will hide a multitude of sins.

God chooses to heal that person, He will give faith to one or more of the elders and then restore the sick person to health.

"If he has committed sins" – he seems to be suggesting that in some cases ("if") sickness comes as a result of the sick person's sin. Compare 1 Cor 11:30 – there weakness and sickness are said to be a result of God's chastisement for certain sins.

"Forgiven" – the Lord who raises him up will forgive him the sins which led to his sickness.

**5:16** "Confess" – he is not speaking of confession to a "priest", but "to one another." This should be a regular part of the fellowship ordinary believers have with each other, especially if any of them falls sick. There should be an openness, and a love and understanding and acceptance which would make this possible. (According to the New Testament all believers are priests – 1 Pet 2:5,9.) We should not think that prayer is a weak and ineffective thing. If we are righteous it has great power.

"Righteous man" – this means a man right with God, who walks in God's ways. If we are to be right with God He must count us righteous (note at Rom 1:17; 3:21-26; 5:1), and we must live righteous lives in obedience to His Word and will (Ps 66:18; Prov 15:29; Isa 1:15; John 9:31). If these two things are true of us, we then have the use of a powerful means for good – prayer. See references at 1 Thess 5:17.

"Very powerful" – or "strongly prevails", or "is able to accomplish much." The Greek noun related to the verb here means "strength", "power", "ability." The prayers of righteous people prevail with

God, are a powerful force in the world, and accomplish great things.

**5:17,18** Here is an example of the power of prayer. See 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-46. There are many other Bible examples of prayer's power – Gen 20:17; 25:21; Ex 8:30,31; 10:18,19; Num 11:2; Deut 9:20,25-29; 2 Sam 15:31; 17:14,23; 2 Kings 4:32-35; Job 42:10; Ps 18:6-24; Dan 9:4,20-23; Jonah 2:1,10; Luke 9:29; 22:31,32; John 11:41-44; Acts 4:31; 9:40; etc.

"A nature like we have" – Elijah was no superman. He was flesh and blood as we are. He had a sinful nature as we do. He was tempted and tried as we are. His power was not in him but in the God he served. If he could effectively use this wonderful means God has given (prayer), then so can we – if we are righteous as he was righteous.

**5:19,20** "Brethren" – he is addressing a large group of people who are called Christians. We cannot assume that they were all true believers in Christ, or that James thought they were. In most large groups of Christians there are a variety of people – some born again, some not; some following the truth, some not. In such a group there is always the possibility that some might forsake the truth altogether (1 Tim 1:6; 6:10,21; 2 Tim 2:18; 2 Pet 2:15). It is very difficult to bring such sinners back to the truth, but James suggests it is possible.

"Death" – spiritual death, separation from God (John 5:24; Eph 2:1). To save anyone from that is surely a very great thing. When it happens all the sins of the rescued sinner are put out of God's sight forever (Ps 103:12; Micah 7:19).

# The First Letter of the Apostle PETER

**Author:**

Peter one of the original apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime between 65 and 67 AD.

**Theme:**

Peter wrote to Jewish believers in Christ (1:1) because he was the apostle to the Jews (Gal 2:8,9). However, the blessed truth he writes down came by the inspiration of God's Spirit and is for all believers in all times. The command the Lord Jesus gave to Peter in Luke 22:31,32 he partly fulfilled by writing this letter. Countless believers in Christ have been strengthened in their faith through what Peter wrote here. Some key words are "hope", "suffering", "grace" and "glory." The principal theme is the suffering of believers and the glory that will follow.

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Closing remarks ..... 5:10-14

**1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those residing as foreigners *and* scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **2** who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling by the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you, and peace, be multiplied.

**1:1** "Apostle" – Matt 10:2.

"Foreigners" – 2:11; Heb 11:9,13. Believers in Christ are not at home in this world. Their citizenship is in heaven – Phil 3:20.

"Scattered" – Peter uses a technical word in Greek (*diaspora*) which means Jews living outside of Palestine (John 7:35). The ones Peter was writing to had become followers of Christ. Peter was the apostle to the Jews (Gal 2:7,8), and in his two letters he sends instructions to Jewish Christians. It seems very likely that some of them heard the gospel from him on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:9).

"Pontus. . . Bithynia" – these were all provinces in the area now known as Turkey.

**1:2** "Chosen" – Matt 24:22,24,31; John 17:6; Eph 1:4.

"Foreknowledge" – see notes at Rom 8:29 and at the end of the notes on Romans. Observe the three persons of the Trinity in this verse (notes at Matt 3:16,17; etc). Here several things are said about the salvation of believers.

We see the cause and the origin of it – God's choice.

We see the manner and process of it – the Spirit's work.

We see the purpose and goal of it – obedience to Christ.

And we see the means and basis of it – the blood of Christ.

Compare 2 Thess 2:13,14.

"Sanctification" – note on sanctify at John 17:17-19. See also Lev 20:7. God's Spirit sets believers apart from everyone else in the world, He convicts them of sin, brings them to repentance and gives them new spiritual life, and teaches them the truth (John 3:5-8; 16:7-15).

"Obedience" – the purpose of God's call and the Spirit's work is to make us obedient to Christ. See note at Acts 22:10. Observe here that it is put before being sprinkled with the blood of Christ. We receive Him as Lord and Saviour and so are cleansed and consecrated by His blood. After this, all our life through, God wants to see loving obedience in us (John 14:15,23; Rom 1:5).

"Sprinkling" – in the Old Testament the blood of animals was sprinkled to signify four things:

Cleansing (Lev 14:1-7)

Consecration of priests (Ex 29:20-22)

Confirmation of God's covenant (Ex 24:1-8).

Atonement (Lev 16:14).

Through the blood of Christ believers

**3** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in accordance with his abundant mercy has given us new birth into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** for an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in

have been forgiven and cleansed from their sins (Eph 1:7; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7), as priests they have been given full access to God's presence (Heb 10:19-22), and they have been made partakers of the new covenant (Matt 26:28; Heb 12:24).

**1:3** "God and Father" – Eph 1:3.

"Mercy" – Titus 3:5; Eph 2:4.

"New birth" – John 1:13; 3:3-8; Eph 2:5; Jam 1:18; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1.

"Living hope" – Rom 5:2; 8:24,25; Titus 1:2. "Hope" here means "expectation."

"Resurrection" – Matt 28:6; Acts 1:3; 2:24; Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:12-19. If Christ had not risen there would be no hope of salvation for anyone, ever.

**1:4** "Inheritance" – Matt 25:34; Acts 20:32; Eph 1:14; Col 1:12; Heb 1:14; 6:12; Jam 2:5. Only the children of God by the new spiritual birth have an inheritance. Those who renounce this world for Christ will inherit the world above (Matt 19:27-29). The inheritance is, first of all, God Himself (Gen 15:1; Ps 16:5; 73:25,26; Lam 3:24); then everything else He chooses to give us (Rev 21:7).

"Does not fade" – the inheritance is not of this creation, not something perishable (1 Cor 15:50,53), but indestructible and eternal.

"Reserved. . . for you" – there is no danger of anyone breaking in and stealing it. God has "reserved" this inheritance for believers and nothing and no one can get it from His care. Those who believe they have such an inheritance in heaven should not be (and will not be) eager to lay their hands on everything they can get now on earth.

**1:5** "Kept. . . through faith" – the Greek word translated "kept" is a military term meaning "to keep with a guard." God's power is the guard. He is the Lord of hosts who has all the armies of heaven at His command, and He sends forth His powerful angels to serve believers (Heb 1:14; Ps 91:11,12). He can and does arrange matters both in this world and in the unseen spiritual world so that His believers are guarded and safely kept to the end (John 6:39; 10:28,29). This is in answer to the prayer of His Son (John 17:11,12; Rom 5:9,10; Heb 7:25).

But what if believers stop believing – will they not lose their salvation? God shields them "through faith." Faith is the gift of God (Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29). It is the instrument in His hand to keep us in living contact with Himself. It is a powerful force that God has brought into our lives. It is a perfect gift and perfectly fitted for the work

the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice. Though now for a while, if need be, you are distressed by various trials. 7 These have come so that the proving of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found to result in praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. 8 Him you have not seen, but love. Though now you do not see him, yet believing in him, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 and receive

God planned to do in us. He who gives faith to believers is well able to keep faith alive in their hearts (Luke 22:31,32). God does not keep us whether we believe or not – He keeps us believing (Phil 1:6; Heb 12:2), though, no doubt, He also keeps us even when our faith temporarily stumbles, and then He renews our faith.

"For salvation. . . in the last time" – God does not keep believers only until they sin or until some doubt enters their minds. He keeps them until their salvation is completed. Here Peter is speaking of the future aspect of salvation. Believers are already saved (John 5:24; Rom 8:24; Eph 2:5; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5). They are being saved (1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15). They will be saved (Rom 13:11; Phil 1:28; Heb 1:14; 9:28).

**1:6** "Rejoice" – having spiritual joy in Christ is one of the marks of a true Christian. It too is a gift of God to His own. This joy is not mere happiness that arises from our own natures when things go well. It is a supernatural joy. If we have never experienced it at all, this is strong evidence that we have not trusted in Christ (John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Acts 5:41; 8:39; 16:34; Rom 5:2,3,11; 14:17; 2 Cor 6:10; 8:2; Gal 5:22; 1 Thess 1:6). Notice the words "in this." These words refer to all he has said from v 3. He is saying that joy comes from four things:

- The new birth
- A living hope
- A knowledge of a future inheritance in heaven

- And an assurance of God's keeping power.

"Though now" – there are certain experiences which can block the flow of God's joy in our hearts. Sin is one (Ps 32:3-5; 51:3,4,8,12). Doubt is another (Matt 14:29-31; Luke 24:37,38; Jam 1:6). Falling into false teaching is another (Gal 3:1-3; 4:15-17). Trials can be another (Job 3:1-26), though they need not be. A strong faith can rejoice even in the most severe trials (Acts 5:41; 2 Cor 12:7-10; Col 1:24; Jam 1:2). So distress and joy can exist in us at the same time (2 Cor 6:8-10). Observe that trials are only "for a little while" (2 Cor 4:17).

**1:7** Men use fire to refine gold and prove it. God puts believers in fiery trials for the same reasons. Compare Ps 66:10-12. Faith is far more precious than gold. Is it not a sad thing then that men neglect faith and go after gold and other riches of this world?

the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, made earnest search and enquiry, 11 trying to find out what the Spirit of Christ who was in them indicated, or what time it would take place, as he predicted the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but us, in these things which are now made known to you by those

Faith is so precious because it lays hold of eternal riches in heaven.

"Proving" – this word brings out the meaning of the Greek better than "trial." Trials (v 6 – altogether a different Greek word than the one here) reveal whether we truly believe, or only think or say we believe. When we go on believing through fiery trials, and do not turn back to the world, this is strong evidence that our faith is real. Compare Matt 13:21,23; Heb 10:32,39.

**1:8** "Love" – John 14:15; 21:16; 1 Cor 13:7; 16:22; Gal 5:6 – here is further evidence that faith is genuine. True faith and love for Christ go hand in hand. If we do not have one, we will not have the other.

"Do not see" – is it possible to love and believe i someone whom we have never seen? Certainly. We have Christ's Word, and His Spirit who makes Him real to believers.

"Joy" – v 6; Neh 8:10; Ps 4:7; 16:11; 21:6; 28:7; 43:4; 81:1; Isa 12:3; 35:6,10; Luke 2:10; John 16:20-24. "Inexpressible" – "unspeakable" (KJV) today usually has no good connotation.

**1:9** "Receive" – v 5. Even now in the midst of trials believers are experiencing the salvation they shall more fully experience hereafter.

**1:10** "Prophets" – he is speaking of Old Testament prophets (notes on prophets at Gen 20:7; etc). They wrote of the grace that comes to believers now. Their writings are full of prophecies, pictures, types and shadows of Christ and the salvation He has brought (Luke 4:17-21; 24:25-27,45-47; John 5:39,46; Heb 8:5; 10:1).

**1:11** The Spirit of Christ was in OT prophets and caused them to write words they themselves did not fully understand. They searched their own writings to try to understand them better. Observe that the Spirit of Christ was in the world before Christ came into the world. He "predicted" Christ's suffering and glory. For example compare psalm 22 – in vs 1-21 there is suffering, in vs 22-31 there is glory. The same is true of Isaiah chapter 53. In vs 1-9 there is suffering, in vs 10-12 glory. Both sufferings and glory appear in Isa 52:13-15, and glory in Isaiah chapter 54. Other examples could be given.

**1:12** God revealed to the prophets that their words would be fulfilled afterwards, and that they were serving future generations. The Old Testament is for the instruction of Christian believers (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor

who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. These things the angels desire to look into.

13 Therefore gird up your mind *for effort*, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not let yourselves be conformed to the cravings *you* formerly *had* in your ignorance, 15 but just as he who has called you is holy, so you be holy in your whole way of life. 16 Because it is written,

*You be holy, for I am holy.*

17 And if you call on the Father, who, without

10:11). They spoke of things which gospel preachers now proclaim to the world – the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ. All gospel preachers should preach “by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven” – John 14:16,17; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5,8; 2:1-4.

“Angels” – note at Gen 16:7. It seems that they do not understand all that God is doing through Christ and His Spirit in the salvation of believers. God is teaching them now (Eph 3:10). So great are these mysteries that they long to know more of them.

**1:13** Angels are eager to know more of this great gospel of salvation. Should we who have been given this salvation be less eager? We should have new minds (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23,24) and fill them with God’s Word. The Christian life demands effort in thinking, meditation, and careful study to try to understand all that God has revealed to us. Compare Ps 1:2; 119:26,27,34,73, etc; Eph 1:18; 3:18; Phil 1:9,10; Col 1:9.

“Gird up your mind for effort” – literally tucking a long garment up to the waist indicates preparation for action. Believers are to get ready for mental activity.

“Sober” – figuratively the Greek word may mean “self-controlled” or, possibly, “sober minded”.

“Grace” – God has already given believers grace, but there is more to come (v 4; Eph 2:7). Setting our hopes fully on that enables us to bear our trials and sufferings with joy.

“Revelation of Jesus Christ” – v 7; Matt 24:30; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28.

**1:14** “Obedient children” – v 2. This is what God wants – v 2; Rom 6:17,18; 2 Cor 2:9; 2 Thess 2:8.

“Conformed” – Rom 12:2; 8:29.

“Cravings” – or “evil desires” – Matt 15:19; Rom 1:24; 8:5; Eph 2:1-3; Gen 8:21.

“Ignorance” – John 15:21; Acts 3:17; 17:30; 1 Cor 15:34; Eph 4:18; 1 Tim 1:13.

**1:15,16** Lev 20:7; Isa 6:3; John 17:17-19; Rom 6:19,22; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:24; Heb 12:10,14. This must be, and is, the aim of every believer.

“Whole way of life” – we must not try to divide our lives into secular and sacred. For believers in Christ the whole of life is to be

partiality, judges according to everyone’s deeds, spend the time of your stay *on earth* in *reverential* fear. 18 For you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *such as* silver and gold, from your empty way of life *received* by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He was indeed foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for you. 21 Through him you believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying

sacred.

**1:17** “Father” – note at Matt 5:16.

“Without partiality” – Rom 12:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25.

“Your stay” – v 1. The Greek word means living as a foreigner, living away from home.

“Fear” – notes at 2:17; Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 86:11; 90:7-11; 111:10; Prov 1:7; Rev 14:7; 15:4; 19:5. Reverential fear and respect and awe of the one true God, fear of offending Him or dishonoring Him – this is at the heart of the spiritual life. Without it we do not have true religion. This fear will cause us to depart from evil and to do good, and to worship God as He ought to be worshiped. This is why it is commanded in the Bible (2:17; Rev 14:7).

**1:18** “Redeemed” – notes at Ps 78:35; Matt 20:28.

“Empty way of life” is all any of us had before we believed the gospel of Christ, and all anyone has now apart from Christ (though many, lacking understanding of the Bible, may think otherwise). Compare Eccl 1:2; 2:11. To be filled with the things of the world is to be empty. Do any of us feel this vanity and emptiness of life? Let us turn to Christ. He can fill our lives with meaning, purpose and hope.

**1:19** Here is the price God paid to redeem us and make us His own (Matt 20:28; 26:28; Acts 20:28; Rom 3:24,25). It is precious beyond words.

“Lamb” – John 1:29.

“Without blemish” – 2:22; Heb 4:15; 7:26; Ex 12:5; Lev 1:3. Without the shedding of Christ’s blood there would be no salvation for anyone, ever (Heb 9:22).

**1:20** Before He created the world, before mankind fell into sin God had a plan for the salvation of man, and Christ was at the heart of that plan. Compare Eph 1:4; Acts 2:23.

**1:21** “Through him” – Peter is saying that it is only through Christ that men come to trust the living God. Apart from Christ men may think they believe in Him but they really do not.

“Gave him glory” – Acts 2:32,33; 3:13; John 17:1. Only because God raised Jesus from the dead is it possible for us to have our faith and hope in the true God – v 3.

**1:22** Observe the only way we can be holy and purified – it is by obeying God’s truth

the truth through the Spirit into a sincere love for the brethren, fervently love one another with a pure heart, 23 being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever. 24 For,

All flesh *is* like grass,  
and all the glory of man as the flower  
of grass.

The grass withers,  
and its flower falls away,  
25 But the word of the Lord endures  
for ever.

And this is the word, which, by the gospel, was preached to you.

**2** Therefore laying aside all malice, and all deceit, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all

revealed in the Bible. Compare Rom 6:17-19; John 8:31,32. The result of this purification is sincere love. If there is no love in our hearts for God's people we may be sure that we have no real purification, no salvation (1 John 3:14; John 13:34). See here the kind of love believers should have for one another – sincere, fervent, pure.

**1:23** "Born again" – v 3; John 1:13. The Word of God is the imperishable seed. The new birth comes through God's Word planted in the heart (James 1:18).

**1:24,25** Isa 40:6-8. All that man apart from God does, or can do, has no permanence. The Word of God (and those who have been given new life through that Word) will stand forever – Matt 24:35; 1 John 2:17.

**2:1** Eph 4:25,29,31; Col 3:5-10. All such things are of the old nature and must have no place in the believer's life (Gal 5:19-21).

**2:2** "Newborn infants" – may suggest that he has new believers in mind particularly. Or he may be rebuking older Christians for making slow progress in the Christian life (compare 1 Cor 3:1,2; Heb 5:11-14). Or his meaning may be that we are all spiritual babies compared with what we shall be after Christ's return (compare Matt 18:3). Three qualities of infancy we should always retain:

Desire for spiritual nourishment  
Innocency and simplicity  
And dependence on God.

If there is no appetite for spiritual things, no desire for God's Word, is it not a sure mark that there is no spiritual life in a person?

"Pure milk" – the Greek word translated "pure" means either "without guile" or "unadulterated" (pure). The milk we need is the teaching of God's Word. We should all crave this, new believers and old alike (Ps 119:40,131).

"Grow" – Eph 4:13-15.

**2:3** Ps 34:8.

**2:4,5** "Living stone" – the Lord Jesus. Believers do not go to lifeless images but to a living person.

evil speaking, 2 as newborn infants desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow by it, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4 Coming to him, *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, *and* precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 And so it is contained in the Scripture,

See, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone,  
chosen, precious;  
and he who believes on him will not be  
put to shame.

7 Therefore to you who believe *he* is precious, but to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner, 8 and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of

"Rejected" – Matt 21:42; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 17:25; John 1:11; Acts 4:11.

"Precious" – Matt 3:17. See how different God's thoughts are from men's. Men did not think Christ was fit for the building they were constructing.

"Living stones" – coming to Christ the Living Stone believers become living stones themselves. For the Living Stone is also a "life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45).

"House" – Eph 2:19-22; Heb 3:6; 1 Cor 3:9. God is an Architect and Builder. We may be sure He has planned His house well. He knows each stone and where it should go. Surely He will not have to tear some stones out later and put others in their places. Surely God is not tearing out with one hand and building with the other. See note at Eph 2:21 also.

"Priesthood" – not only are believers built into the "house" of God, they are all priests to serve in the house – v 9; Rev 1:6; Heb 10:19-22. In the New Testament there is no separate priesthood taken from among believers. All believers are priests. It is a striking fact that in the New Testament no individual disciple or apostle of Christ is called a priest. And among those whom Christ gave to be the leaders of the Church the office of priest is not given (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28). Mark this well.

"Spiritual sacrifices" – Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15,16. Priests must have something to offer God. Believers as priests have themselves, their praise, and their deeds of love and kindness to offer.

**2:6** Verse 4; Isa 28:16; Zech 1:4; Eph 2:20.

**2:7** "Precious" – 1:8. Only to those who believe in Him is Christ precious. Only they see His value. Only they truly love Him.

"Head of the corner" – Ps 118:22; Matt 21:42; Acts 4:11.

**2:8** Isa 8:14; Rom 9:33. Those who do not want to obey God's truth will stumble over the truth. And this truth is Christ (Luke 2:34). Those who want Him will rise; those who do not will fall.

offense. *For* they stumble at the Word, being disobedient. Also they were appointed to this.

9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging *to God*, so that you may declare the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, 10 *you* who in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God, *you* who had not obtained mercy, but have now obtained mercy.

11 Dearly loved ones, I plead *with you* as foreigners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly desires, which war against the soul. 12 *And* have

your conduct among the Gentiles so beautiful that, although they speak against you as evildoers, seeing *your* good deeds they will glorify God because of them, in the day of visitation.

13 Submit yourselves, for the Lord's sake, to every institution for *governing* men, whether it is to the king, as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him to punish evildoers and to praise those who do well. 15 For such is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16 *Be* as free *men*, not using *your* liberty as a cloak for evil, but as the servants of God. 17 Honour all *men*. Love the

"Appointed to this" – Peter is probably referring to the rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation. Both the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul used references from Psalms and Isaiah to teach that. On this subject see Romans chapters 9-11 and notes, particularly 9:14-24,30-33; 11:7-12,22-32. **2:9** "Chosen" – Eph 1:4,11; John 15:16.

"Royal priesthood" – v 5. These words may mean a priesthood belonging to a king and in the king's service, or a priesthood which forms a kingdom (Rev 5:10), or a priesthood where all the priests are princes as well, or all three.

"Holy nation" – a nation set apart from all other people on the earth, and consecrated to God. Compare Ex 19:5,6; John 17:6. Peter is not calling the Church "The new Israel" or "the Spiritual Israel." He is writing to Jewish believers. They, and not the nation of Israel which rejected Christ are the true stock of Israel. Peter is not implying that God is finished with the old nation of Israel (compare Acts 1:6,7). No New Testament writer calls the Church the new Israel, and since they did not we should not. Gentile believers are grafted in to the stock of Israel. See Romans chapter 11; Eph 2:11-19.

"Belonging to God" – the Greek word here means several things – "keeping safe" or "obtaining" or "possessing" (but not what we mean now by "peculiar" – KJV).

"The praises" – the Greek word means virtue, goodness, excellence, that is, things worthy of praise. See Phil 4:8 and 2 Pet 1:3,5, where the Greek has the same word. It is the duty and privilege of all believers now, whether Jewish Christians or Gentile, to declare to the world the excellence and goodness of the one true God. We are not to seek our glory, but His. We are not to declare our goodness, but His (compare Ps 40:10; 71:16; Isa 42:12; 43:7; Eph 1:6,12,14).

"His...light" – Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 5:8; Col 1:13; 1 John 1:5-7.

**2:10** Before believing in Christ it was true of both individual Jews and Gentiles that they were not God's spiritual people – Hos 1:9,10; 2:23; Rom 9:24-26; Eph 2:11,12. In calling people from darkness into His light God acts in pure mercy (Titus 3:5).

**2:11** "Foreigners" – 1:17 – those now living away from their true home – heaven.

"Fleshly desires" – 1:14. These are of this world, of the sinful nature in man. Believers are of heaven.

"War" – desire for wrong things is one of the instruments Satan uses in his fight against believers (Eph 6:11,12). Evil desires are like swords that cut and wound our spiritual life, like flaming arrows in the mind that turn us from thoughts of God and holiness. They can be as destructive to the soul as bullets are to the body, wounding and causing much pain and suffering. We do not have to give in to them or give them a place in our hearts.

The command to "abstain" means we can do so by God's grace. Total abstinence from every wrong desire – this should be our goal. If evil desires are permitted to lodge in our minds they may well prove to be overpowering, and we will find it is easier to allow such thoughts in than to expel them once they get in. Abstinence from evil thoughts is the way of wisdom, the way God teaches us. And it involves the believer's choice and will – we must choose not to permit them in our minds.

**2:12** See Matt 5:16.

"Beautiful" – the Greek word means also "excellent", "admirable", "praiseworthy", "honorable", "attractive", "good."

"Speak against you" – rejecters of Christ like to slander believers, pick at every fault in them, and invent new ones. Slander on the part of others is to be a motive for us to do better. This evil can work for our good.

"Day of visitation" – this may refer to a special time of either blessing or judgment from God.

**2:13,14** Rom 13:1-5.

**2:15** "Doing good" – good deeds can do what arguments cannot do. One of the very best of arguments for the gospel of Christ is the changed and holy lives of those who believe it.

"Ignorance" – 1:14; 2 Pet 3:16. They talk ignorantly about Christ, His gospel and His people because they do not know the true God (John 15:21; Eph 4:17,18).

"Foolish men" – Rom 1:21,22.

**2:16** See Gal 5:13 and Rom 6:15-18.

**2:17** "All men" – rich or poor, high or low,



brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18 Slaves, *be* subject to *your* masters with all *respectful* fear, not just to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this *is* praiseworthy, if a man suffers wrongfully and endures grief because of *his* conscience toward God. 20 For what glory *is it*, if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do well and suffer *for it*, if you take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. 21 For you have been called to this, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps. 22 He committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was insulted he gave no insults in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed *himself* to him who judges righteously. 24 He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, so that we, being dead to sins, should live for righteousness. By his wounds you

were healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

**3** Likewise you wives *be* in subjection to your own husbands, so that, if any do not obey the Word, they also, without the Word, may be won by the behaviour of the wives, 2 seeing your chaste behaviour *joined* with *reverential* fear. 3 Do not let *your* adornment be that outward *adornment* of braiding the hair, and of wearing gold, or of *merely* putting on outer garments, 4 but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, in what is not perishable, *that is the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great value in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in times of old the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands, 6 even as Sarah obeyed Abraham,

educated and illiterate. All racial pride, bigotry, and feelings of superiority must be renounced. Believers must not despise or look down on anyone. Compare Rom 12:10; Jam 2:1-4,9; 1 Cor 12:14-26; Acts 6:1.

"Fear God" – references at 1:17. This is a command to believers just as certain as the command to love God. In fact, reverential fear, respect and awe of God go hand in hand with the love of God, and cannot be separated from it. Since it is commanded to Christians we should make sure that we have it. And if we are lacking in it, we should pray as David did in Ps 86:11.

"Honour the king" – compare Rom 13:1-7.

**2:18** "Slaves" – Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-24.

**2:19** "Praiseworthy" – God himself will commend and reward such people.

**2:20** Compare 4:15,16.

"Take it patiently" – without getting angry, without seeking revenge.

**2:21** "Called" – when God called us to be His own special people, suffering for doing good was part of the calling. Christ is the great example of suffering for doing good. He never did anything but good, but suffered far more than any of us.

"Follow" – Matt 4:19; 8:22; 16:24; 19:21; Luke 9:23; John 1:43; 10:4,27; 12:26; Rom 15:5; 1 Cor 11:1. They who think they believe in Christ but will not follow Him are deceiving themselves.

**2:22** Isa 53:9; Matt 27:23; John 8:46; 19:4; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26.

**2:23** Isa 53:7; Matt 26:63; 27:12-14; Luke 23:8,9. We should behave in the same way. The one "who judges righteously" is God.

**2:24** Here is one of the clearest statements in the Bible that Christ suffered in our place, as our substitute. See also 3:18; Isa 53:5; Matt 20:28; John 1:29; 10:11,14; Rom 3:25; 2 Cor 5:14,21; Heb 9:28. See here

the purpose of Christ's sufferings and death. Compare Rom 14:9; 2 Cor 5:15.

"Dead to sins" – Rom 6:10-14; Gal 2:20; 5:24; Col 3:5.

"Live for righteousness" – Rom 6:18,19; 14:19,21; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 4:24; Phil 1:11; 1 Tim 6:11.

"Healed" – Isa 53:5. The sins were ours, the punishment for them that brought us healing was His.

**2:25** "Going astray" – Isa 53:6.

"Shepherd" – 5:4; John 10:1-18.

"Overseer" – the same word used of elders in churches in Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:7. As Christ is the Chief Shepherd He is also the Chief Overseer and the only such one.

**3:1,2** "Be in subjection" – Eph 5:22-24.

"The Word" – God's Word, especially the gospel.

"Won" – won to Christ. Compare 1 Cor 7:16.

"Behavior. . .and reverence" – this can bring unbelieving husbands to Christ even though all talk, all arguments fail. Indeed wives preaching to their husbands may drive them away rather than win them to Christ.

**3:3,4** Compare Isa 3:16-23; 1 Tim 2:9,10. Women will not win their husbands to Christ by fixing their hair, but by fixing their hearts; not by gold, but by godliness; not by outer garments, but by inner grace. There is such a thing as inner spiritual beauty which is far superior to any outward beauty. And it is a beauty which will never fade away. Compare Proverbs 31:10-31. The churches and the world would be better places if more women went after the inner sort of beauty.

**3:5,6** Holiness, hope in God, and a submissive spirit are the marks of the beauty God wants to see in believing women.

"Sarah" – Gen 18:12.

"Daughters" – Abraham is the "father" of all believers (Rom 4:16). Sarah is the "mother" of all believing women who are

calling him lord. You are her daughters, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any terror.

7 Likewise, you husbands, live with *them* with understanding, giving honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

8 Finally, all of *you should be* of one mind, having compassion on one another. Love as brothers, *be* merciful, *be* courteous. 9 Do not pay back evil for evil, or insult for insult, but, on the contrary, blessing. *You* know that you have been called to this, so that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For,

He who would love life,  
and see good days,  
let him keep his tongue from evil,  
and his lips from speaking any deceit.

11 Let him avoid evil, and do good;  
let him seek peace, and follow after it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord  
are over the righteous,

submissive to their husbands.

**3:7** Eph 5:25,28; Col 3:19. He is speaking to Christian husbands.

"Understanding" – husbands should understand their wives' problems, desires and weakness, and honour them in spite of any of these.

"Weaker" – women are physically weaker, not mentally (though they are different in the way they think and in emotional makeup). Their position is also weaker – they are the ones to submit and obey.

"Prayers. . .not hindered" – if a married couple want their prayers answered they must be very careful in the way they treat each other. God may well refuse the prayers of a man who behaves badly toward his wife, or the prayers of a wife who refuses to submit to her husband.

**3:8,9** Rom 12:9-17; Eph 4:2,3,32; Phil 2:2,3; Col 3:12-14; Luke 6:28; John 13:34; 1 Thess 5:15.

"Might inherit a blessing" – 1:3-5; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:3. In view of God's blessings poured on us, and of the blessing that still awaits us in the future, we should be willing to bless others instead of seeking revenge.

**3:10-12** Ps 34:12-16. If we do not live as God tells us to live in vs 8,9, He may cause us to see bad days instead of good days, and may turn away His ears from our prayers instead of answering them.

**3:13** Rom 13:3. Unbelievers also can recognize and appreciate kind and compassionate behavior, blessing instead of cursing, doing good instead of evil.

**3:14** But suffering for doing what is right is always a possibility in a world like this – 2:19,20; 4:12,13. If it happens to us we should remember the truth the Lord Jesus spoke in Matt 5:10-12.

"Do not fear" – Isa 8:12. Compare Matt 10:26,28,31; John 14:27.

and his ears *are open* to their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

13 And who *is* he who will harm you, if you are followers of what is good? 14 But even if you suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed *are you*. And do not fear their dread, or be troubled, 15 but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* an answer, with meekness and fear, to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, 16 having a good conscience, so that, although they slander you, as *if you were* evildoers, those who falsely accuse your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous *one* for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit. 19 By whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison,

**3:15** "Sanctify the Lord" – see the use of he word "sanctify" here. It means to set the Lord apart from everyone else to be the one we worship, adore, and obey. We must consciously, willingly, continuously make Him Lord in our hearts.

"Always be ready" – Eph 5:15,16. We should know why we are believers in Christ and why we have our hope in heaven, and we should be able to tell others about it in a clear and convincing way.

**3:16** "Conscience" – Acts 23:1; 24:16; 2 Cor 1:12; 1 Tim 1:5,19; 3:9.

"Ashamed" – 2:15.

**3:17** See 2:20; 4:15,16.

**3:18** See 2:24.

"Suffered" – 2:21; 4:1.

"Once" – John 19:30; Heb 9:25-28; 10:10.

"The righteous one" – Luke 23:47; Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 1 John 2:1.

"Unrighteous" – this is what we all are by nature (Rom 1:29-32; 3:9-20,23). See the purpose of Christ's sufferings for sinful men – to bring us to God. Compare Eph 2:13,18; Heb 10:19-22; John 14:6.

"Put to death" – Matt 16:21; 27:50,58-60; Mark 15:43-45; John 19:32-34; 1 Cor 15:3.

"Made alive" – Matt 28:6; Rom 1:4.

"Spirit" – God's Spirit (John 14:16,17; Matt 3:16).

**3:19-22** This passage is obscure and difficult. It seems that sometime between His death and ascension into heaven Christ went somewhere and proclaimed something to some spirits in prison. Peter does not tell us what he means by "spirits" or "prison" or by Christ's going there. Some think Peter means that Christ's Spirit was in Noah preaching to the people of that day, but this seems to ignore the wording of v 19.

**3:19** Where did Christ go when He died? In

20 who in time past were disobedient, when once the patience of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls were saved through the water.

21 The exact representation of this *water* now saves us, baptism, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the pledge of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection

a statement of faith called "The Apostle's Creed" these words appear: "He descended into hell." Christ certainly did not descend into hell to endure punishment. All His sufferings were ended on the cross (John 19:30). But it seems He went to the unseen realm of the dead called, in Hebrew, "Sheol" (Eph 4:9; Ps 16:10).

"Preached" – Peter does not use the Greek word which means preaching the gospel (euangelizo), but a word which means to proclaim something as a herald (kerusso).

"Spirits" – Peter does not say the spirits of men, so it is not necessary to think they were people who died in the flood. In the Bible the word "spirits" sometimes refers to either demons or angels (Matt 8:16; Heb 1:14).

"Prison" – the Bible does not tell us the departed spirits of men are in prison, but indicates that some angels are (2 Pet 2:4). So "spirits" here may possibly refer to fallen angels.

**3:20** "Disobedient" – this was true of both angels and men before the flood (Jude 6,7; 2 Pet 2:4; Gen 6:2-7).

"Eight" – Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives (Gen 6:10; 7:1).

"Saved through the water" – compare with the first sentence of the next verse. Observe that in the same way that going through the water of the flood saved them, so going through the water of baptism saves believers now. In actual fact going through the water did not save them at all – being in the ark is what saved them. The ark going through the water of the flood delivered them from destruction and death by that water.

**3:21** "Baptism" – notes at Matt 3:6,13-16; 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. The waters of the flood are a picture of water baptism. The Greek word translated "exact representation" is used in the plural in Heb 9:24 (there translated "copies"). Just as the Holy Place in the tabernacle was an exact copy of the one in heaven, so the water of the flood is a copy or type or exact representation of baptism.

Now it is clear that Noah and his family were saved, not by being in the water, but by being in the ark. The ark symbolizes Christ (Gen 7:24). The water did not save them, but they were saved "through the water" (v 20). Heb 11:7 clearly states that they were saved by faith.

Since baptism is an exact representation of the flood waters, how can anyone think that the ceremony of baptism itself can save

of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him.

**4** Therefore, since Christ has suffered for us in the body, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. For he who has suffered in the body has ceased from sin, 2 so that he no longer should

us? Only if we think that the water of the flood saved Noah and his family should we think that baptism saves anyone.

For salvation and new life we first get into Christ, our "ark", and only after we have salvation and new life should we go through the water of baptism. Compare Mark 16:16. If we are not already in Christ, and so saved, we should not be baptized. Baptism is only a picture of the death and resurrection of Christ and our union with Him. The Bible is very clear about what saves us:

God Himself saves us by His mercy – Titus 3:4,5

Jesus saves us – Matt 1:21; Rom 5:9,10

The blood of Christ saves us – Eph 1:7

The sacrifice of Christ saves us – Heb 10:10,14

We are saved by grace through faith – Eph 2:8,9; Acts 16:31; Rom 3:22-25; John 5:24; Heb 10:39

We are saved by believing the gospel – 1 Cor 15:1-4; Acts 10:44-47

Peter says that the living hope we have is because of God's great mercy in giving us the new birth – 1:3, and that the goal of our faith is the salvation of our souls – 1:9.

"Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" – Peter says that this is what baptism is not. "Flesh" is the translation of a Greek word that means several things, including the physical body and the fallen nature in man. Baptism does not deal with either of these. It has to do with the inner person – "the pledge of a good conscience toward God" (compare Heb 9:14 where we see that what cleanses the conscience is the blood of Christ). Baptism is a public announcement that those receiving it mean to live as God wants them to live and not defile or silence their conscience any more. The outward ceremony of baptism can no more save a person than circumcision could save any Jew – see Rom 2:28,29. But the attitude of heart that baptism signifies is essential, that is, in faith submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice that we are saved through "the resurrection of Jesus Christ" – compare Rom 4:25.

**3:22** Acts 2:33; Eph 1:20,21; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 1:3.

**4:1,2** Christ suffered to free us from sin (2:24; 3:18). We must be willing to suffer in our fight against sin. If we have this attitude it will be like a weapon in our warfare. Christ died to sin; believers should recognize their union with Christ and the fact that in Christ they too have died to sin. See Rom 6:5-13; Col 3:3. In the light of the

live the rest of *his* time in the body for the desires of men, but for the will of God. 3 For the time of life *already* past is enough for us to have performed the will of the Gentiles, going about in lustfulness, evil desires, excessive drinking, carousing, drunken parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 Now they think it strange that you do not rush with *them* into the same excessive reveling, *and* speak evil of *you*. 5 *But* they will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 Because for this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, so that they might be judged

sufferings of Christ we should be finished with sin forever. We are to live not to fulfill our desires but to do God's will (Rom 8:5,12; 12:1,2; Col 1:9; 4:12; 1 Thess 4:3; Heb 13:21).

**4:3** Compare Titus 3:3; 1 Tim 1:13; Eph 2:1-3; 1 Cor 6:11. The gospel of Christ can reach people in the very depths of sin and change them forever. Observe that idolatrous religions and the life style described here can go hand in hand.

"Abominable idolatries" – Deut 7:25; 12:31; 13:12-14; 17:2-5; 27:15; 29:17; 32:16.

**4:4** The holy lives of believers who have left the old life are a rebuke and condemnation to those who remain in it. This partly accounts for the abuse and slander of the ungodly. See Matt 12:36; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom 2:16; 14:12; 2 Tim 4:1; Heb 4:13.

**4:5** "Give an account" – Rom 14:12; etc.

**4:6** This is another difficult and obscure verse. The meaning seems to be this: some who are now dead had the gospel preached to them while they were still alive on earth. The purpose for them, as for us who are still living, was the same – that they might have spiritual life and live "for the will of God" (v 2).

Some teach that this verse means that the gospel was preached to men after they died, if they had not had a chance to hear it on earth. They link this verse with 3:19 and believe "spirits" there means the spirits of men who have died. However, there is no such teaching in any other book of the Bible, and we should not believe so important a teaching of men based, as it is, on obscure and doubtful phrases in a verse or two. If such a teaching is ever true, God has not revealed it to us, and all we know is what he has revealed – Deut 29:29. Others teach that the "dead" means dead in "transgressions and sins" (Eph 2:1). This interpretation seems unlikely here.

**4:7** "At hand" – Rom 13:12; 5:9; Rev 1:3; Jam 5:8; 2 Pet 3:8,9; Matt 24:36,42. At the time of the end of this age there will be great troubles and temptations, great deception (Matt 24:4-14,21-25). To stand true and firm for Christ prayer will be absolutely vital. See here two qualities needed for real prayer. Compare Luke 21:36; 22:40,46.

"Sober minded" – the Greek indicates

according to men in the body, but live according to God in the spirit.

7 But the end of all things is at hand. Therefore be sober minded, and watch so you can pray. 8 And above all things have fervent love among yourselves, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without grudging. 10 As each one has received a *ministry* gift, *use* it to serve one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, *let him do so* like *one speaking* the utterances of God. If anyone ministers, *let it be done* with the ability

a mind that is healthy, kept from unreasonable or corrupting thoughts, a mind sound in every way.

**4:8** "Love" – 1:22; John 13:34; 15:12,17; 1 John 3:11,18; 4:8. Peter uses the Greek word for divine love. See 1 Cor 13:1.

"Covers" – we should try to understand what this means and does not mean. Peter is not speaking of church discipline, of a local church trying to cover sin which should be exposed and put away. Compare Matt 18:15-17; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:1-5,12,13. Peter is showing how love works in personal relationships. See Prov 10:12. Love does not like to expose the sins of others. It does not want to bring shame and condemnation on anyone. It will do its best to turn everyone to God who alone can really cover sin (compare Ps 32:1,2; Rom 4:6-8; Jam 5:20).

Peter may also be reminding believers that love will forgive and go on forgiving (1 Cor 13:5; Matt 18:21,22). He may mean too that if we have love, God covers a multitude of our sins (compare Luke 7:47-50). He is certainly giving the nature of love wherever it is found. Divine love always seeks for a way to cover sins consistent with justice and holiness. Compare Gen 3:21; 9:21-23; Rev 3:18,19. Of course, love will never cover the sins of others if that will be harmful to them, or will be a reason for them to go on sinning. Love will always try to get those sinning to forsake their sins (compare Prov 28:13). Real love can never promote sin in any way.

**4:9** Rom 12:13; 16:23; Heb 3:2; 3 John 8. This is one way love can be expressed.

**4:10** "Gift" – Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Eph 4:7-13.

"To serve one another" – those who love use the abilities God gives to help others, not for personal advancement, money, fame, etc.

"As good stewards" – Matt 24:45-47; 1 Cor 4:1,2.

**4:11** "Speaks" – refers to any kind of spoken ministry using the Bible. Those who do so should be conscious of standing in Christ's place as His representative and ambassador, and speak the Word of God with authority.

"Ability which God gives" – it is very possible to try to serve with our own natural ability or strength. This will come to

that God gives, so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

12 Dear ones, do not be surprised at *your* fiery trial which is for your testing, as though some strange thing happened to you, 13 but rejoice because you are sharers of Christ's sufferings, so that when his glory is revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. He is slandered by them, but glorified by you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a meddler in other men's matters.

nothing.

"God may be glorified" – the motive of all our service should be this. Those who speak or serve for their own glory are trying (perhaps unconsciously) to rob God of the praise that belongs to him. Compare Matt 6:2,5; 1 Cor 10:31.

**4:12** "Surprised" – Christ and His apostles warned repeatedly that troubles and persecution would come (2:20,21; 4:1; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 3:12).

"Fiery" – Peter is speaking of trial by "fire" – the process used in refining metals. See 1:7; Ps 66:10. God permits fiery troubles, or sends them to us to test and prove us.

**4:13** "Rejoice" – Matt 5:11,12; Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3; Col 1:24; Jam 1:2. This is always God's instruction to believers when they face trials. Our inner attitude toward them is extremely important. When suffering trials we must never grumble and complain, faint or be discouraged. We must trust God that He knows best how to deal with us for our good, and rejoice in the knowledge of Rom 8:28. Observe that enduring fiery trials is the same as having a part in the "sufferings of Christ" (2 Cor 1:5).

"When his glory is revealed" – Titus 2:13. Then we shall have the rewards of our trials and sufferings (Rom 8:17,18; 2 Cor 4:17,18).

**4:14** "Blessed" – see Luke 6:22. This is true only of those insults which come because we are believers in Christ, not those that come for other reasons.

"Spirit of glory" – God's Spirit comes from the glory of heaven and leads believers there. He now rests upon them (Acts 1:8; 1 John 2:20), and their patiently enduring sufferings and insults for Christ's sake is proof of this.

**4:15,16** See 2:19,20.

"Let him not be ashamed" – compare Acts 5:41; Heb 11:26. Why should Christians suffer because they bear His name? That is the kind of world we live in (John 15:18-25; 16:1-4). The world is willingly in darkness and hates any spiritual light (John 3:19,20).

**4:17** "Judgment" – 1 Cor 11:31,32; 2 Thess 1:5. God judges and disciplines believers so He will not have to condemn them with

16 Yet if *any man suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God that this is his lot. 17 For the time *has come* that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if *it first begins* at us, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as to a faithful Creator.

**5** I urge the elders who are among you, *I* who also am an elder and a witness of the

the world.

"House" – Gal 6:10; Eph 2:19.

"Those who do not obey" – John 3:36; 2 Thess 1:8,9. Note at Acts 22:10.

**4:18** Prov 11:31.

"Scarcely be saved" – Mark 10:24. Why is it difficult for the righteous to be saved? Consider the following:

Their enemies are many and strong – 5:8; Eph 6:11,12.

They are weak and have a sinful nature – Rom 6:19; 7:18; 8:26; Gal 5:16,17; 1 John 1:8.

God's law of sowing and reaping cannot be set aside for believers – Rom 2:6-8; Gal 6:7,8.

God must make them righteous in their behavior. God's standards are very high. He has laid down certain principles which must be fulfilled in His people.

They must not only enter the narrow gate but be kept on the narrow road (Matt 7:13,14).

They must learn to refuse their own will and do God's (Matt 7:21), and forsake all they have to follow Christ (Luke 14:33).

They must learn to follow holiness (John 10:27; Heb 12:6).

They must be brought safely through fiery trials and much discipline (Heb 12:5-13). And they must be kept believing to the end (Heb 10:38,39).

But though the salvation of the righteous is difficult it is certain (1:5; John 6:39; 10:28; Rom 5:9,10).

"Ungodly" – since the salvation of the righteous is so difficult, what hope is there for those who reject Christ and His narrow way and His will, and spurn holiness and faith?

**4:19** "Commit" – 5:7; Ps 31:5; 37:5; Acts 20:32.

"In well doing" – 2:12,15; 3:11; Rom 2:7; 2 Cor 1:10; 9:8; Gal 6:9,10; Eph 2:10; Col 5:10; 2 Tim 3:17; Titus 2:14. We must never let trials, insults, persecutions, or God's discipline keep us from doing good to others.

**5:1** "Elders" – Acts 14:23; 15:2; 20:17; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:17; Titus 1:5.

"Witness" – Peter was one of the original apostles of Christ.



sufferings of Christ, and also a sharer in the glory that will be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly; not for sordid gain, but with a ready mind; 3 not like lords over *God's* inheritance, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of glory that will not fade away.

5 Likewise you young *people*, be submissive to older ones. Yes, all *of you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

God resists the proud,  
and gives grace to the humble.

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty

"Glory that will be revealed" – Rom 8:17,18. **5:2-4** Here we see that elders (Greek "presbuteros") are to do the work of overseers (1 Tim 3:1, in Greek "episkopos") – evidently Peter is equating the two terms. See the qualifications needed for elders or overseers in 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Christ is the Chief Shepherd and He has delegated to elders the work of looking after local churches – Acts 20:28. Christ has entrusted His people into their care and they will have to give an answer to Him as to what they have done. They should all feel very keenly their responsibility to be the kind of shepherds He wants them to be. Compare 2:21; Isa 56:10-11; Jer 3:15; 10:21; 12:10; 23:1-4; Ezek 34:2-10. "Sordid gain" – Matt 6:24; 1 Tim 6:8-10; Titus 1:7.

"With a ready mind" – Titus 2:14.

"Not like lords" – Matt 20:25-28.

"Examples" – 1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17; 2 Thess 3:7; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7.

"Appears" – Matt 24:30; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; Rev 22:12.

**5:4** "Crown" – Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 2:5; 4:8; Jam 1:12. There will be glorious rewards for faithful elders.

"Not fade away" – 1 Cor 9:25.

**5:5** "Submissive" – 2:13,18; 3:1; 1 Cor 16:16; Eph 5:21; Jam 3:17; 4:7.

"Humility" – Prov 11:2; 15:33; Zeph 2:3; Phil 2:3; Col 3:12; Titus 3:2; Jam 3:13; Matt 5:13; 11:29. One mark of humility is to think lowly of ourselves and to be willing for others to think lowly of us. The first of these is easier than the second.

"Proud" – Jam 4:6. Do we want God to oppose us? Here is the way. Pride keeps us from getting God's grace which He gives to the humble. It is the root cause of much failure and defeat in the Christian life.

**5:6** James 4:10.

"In due time" – he is still speaking to young men (v 5). Due time is not what they think is due time, but what God thinks. The young should not be restless and self-assertive but prove themselves in small matters (Luke 16:10) and wait on God to put them in the place He chooses in His way and time (Ps 75:6,7; 31:15).

hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that these same sufferings are being imposed on your brethren that are in the world. 10 But the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, make you perfect, make you stable, strengthen, *and* establish *you*. 11 To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 With *the help of* Silvanus, whom I regard

**5:7** Ps 55:22; Matt 6:33,34; Phil 4:6,7.

"He cares for you" – Matt 6:30; Heb 2:6-8; Phil 4:19. God thinks about us, plans for us, is concerned for us as a Father for His children. To be anxious is to make ourselves miserable and to dishonor Him. Casting our cares on Him means to bring them to Him and trust Him to take them and work everything out for the best, resting in His goodness and wisdom and power.

**5:8** "Sober" – The Greek means literally "sober", but figuratively may mean "self-controlled" or "sober minded" or "alert" – not controlled by anything foreign to a true Christian walk. 1:13; 4:7; Prov 25:28; Gal 5:23; 1 Thess 5:6,8; 2 Pet 1:6.

"Vigilant" – Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:6. Satan can catch those who are spiritually asleep or self-indulgent. Note on "devil" at Matt 4:1. He has to "walk about" because he cannot (like God) be in every place at the same time. Though he comes like a lion, he is cowardly when facing faithful believers (James 4:7), and they can trample on him (Ps 91:13).

**5:9** "Resist him" – Eph 6:10-18. Believers need never give in to any temptation or trick of Satan, if they will meet him with a firm trust in Christ (1 John 4:4; 1 Cor 10:13).

"Same sufferings" – when we are tempted and tried we may think we alone are having to face such things. It is not so. All believers face similar trials.

**5:10** "Grace" – John 1:14,16,17; Acts 15:11; 20:24,32; Rom 1:7; 3:24; 5:21; 2 Cor 8:9; 9:8; Eph 2:8-10.

"Called" – 2:9; 3:9; Rom 1:6,7; 8:28-30; 11:29; Eph 4:1; Heb 3:1; 2 Pet 1:10.

"Glory" – John 17:24; Rom 5:2; 8:17.

"In Christ" – notes at Rom 6:3-8; Eph 1:1,3.

"After you have suffered" – 1:6; 4:1,12. Sufferings, then glory was the way with Christ (1:11) and it is the way God has appointed for believers. See what God says He will do for us who are undergoing trials and sufferings. Compare Ps 66:12. He promises to bring us safely through them all and make us stronger than we were before.

**5:12** "By the help of Silvanus" – compare



as a faithful brother to you, I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

13 The *church that is* at Babylon, chosen

Rom 16:22; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Col 1:1. Silvanus is the same person as Silas – Acts 15:22; 2 Cor 1:19.

“The true grace of God” – throughout this letter the grace of God has been one of his major themes – 1:2,10,13; 4:10; 5:5;10. Salvation comes by God’s grace alone, and that same grace will bring God’s saved people safely to glory at last.

**5:13** “The *church that is*” – notice that the words “church that is” have been added. It could be translated “*She who is*” and could mean either the local church in Babylon or possibly Peter’s wife.

“Babylon” – Gen 10:10; 2 Kings 17:24; Isa 13:1; Jeremiah chapters 50-52. There

together with you, greets *you*, and *so does* my son Mark.

14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace *be* with all of you that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

was also at that time a military station in Egypt called Babylon. Many commentators think Peter meant Rome (compare Rev 17:5,18). There is a tradition that he wrote his first letter from there, but no proof. If he wrote from Rome the question comes, why would he not plainly say so?

“Mark” – Acts 12:12,25; Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11. Peter considered Mark his spiritual son. Compare 1 Tim 1:2.

**5:14** “Love” – divine love – agape – note at 1 Cor 13:1.

“Kiss” – Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; etc.

“Peace” – Luke 1:79; 2:14; John 14:27; Rom 1:7. There can never be real peace to anyone who is not “in Christ”.

# The Second Letter of the Apostle PETER

**Author:**

Peter one of the original apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Sometime about 67 AD.

**Themes:**

Peter knows that very shortly he will die (1:13-15). His purpose in writing was to remind believers of what they had already learned and to encourage them (1:13; 3:1), to warn them again about false teachers, and to urge them to go on growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus (3:18). "Knowledge" is a key thought of this letter, used 7 times. The words "know", "knows", "known", and "knowing" are used another 7 times, and the word "ignorant" appears 3 times. All this indicates Peter's conviction of the great importance of true knowledge in the Christian life.

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**1** Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 just as his divine power has given to us all things that *we need* for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who has called us by *his* glory

**1:1** 1 Pet 1:1.

"Simon" – Matt 4:18; 10:2.

"Servant" – Rom 1:1. Observe that Peter calls the Lord Jesus "our God and Saviour." This is a more literal translation of the Greek and brings out the deity of Christ better than the KJV. The Greek phrase here is constructed exactly like the one in v 11 – "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." On Christ's deity see also Titus 2:13; Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3,8,10; John 20:28; etc.

"Precious" – faith is of very great value indeed (1 Pet 1:7). Those who have faith have "obtained" or "received" it. In other words, faith in Christ is a gift of God (Acts 3:16; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29).

"Righteousness" – Rom 3:20-26.

**1:2** Rom 1:7.

"Be multiplied" – 1 Pet 1:2. Observe in what way grace and peace overflow to believers. Compare John 17:3. The better we know the Father and the Son the greater will be our peace, the more we will appreciate God's grace. God wants us to know Him better that we might better receive and use His grace (3:18). Paul was always praying that believers might know God better – Eph 1:17; 3:19; 4:13; Phil 1:9,10; Col 1:9-12.

**1:3** "His divine power" refers to the power of the Lord Jesus. He has divine power because He is God. For living the Christian life as it should be lived He has given us everything we need. Compare Eph 1:3. All resources of wisdom and power and holiness and strength are in Him, and He is in all believers (Rom 8:9,10; 2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:27; 2:3).

"Godliness" – 1 Tim 2:2; 3:16; 4:8; 6:5,6,11; Titus 1:1.

"Called" – 1 Pet 1:15; 2:9,21; 3:9; 5:10 (notes at Rom 1:6; 8:30).

"Glory" – John 1:14; 17:5.

"Virtue" – the Greek word is translated "praises" in 1 Pet 2:9. It means excellent qualities, worthy of praise. God is good, His character is praiseworthy – Ex 33:19; Neh 9:25; Ps 17:13; 31:19; 145:7; 1 Pet 2:3.

**1:4** "Great and precious promises" – the New Testament, the whole Bible, is full of them.

"Through them" – we must find these promises, believe them, meditate on them, use them to claim the things God has given us. Otherwise there cannot be the blessed results in our lives that God wants us to experience. It is by faith in God's Word and His promises that we overcome sin, Satan and the world, and it is by faith that we walk with Christ and serve Him.

"Partakers of the divine nature" –

and virtue. 4 Through these, great and precious promises have been given to us, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through evil desire.

5 For this very reason, giving all *your* effort, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, 6 and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patient endurance, and to patient

believers in Christ do not become God. This is quite impossible for any man, any created being. But believers are united to Christ; they are in Him and He is in them, and God's Spirit is in them (John 14:17; 17:20-23). In this sense they participate in the divine nature.

"Having escaped" – if we do not escape the world's corruption we shall not escape the anger of God which comes on it (Matt 23:33; Rom 2:3; 1 Thess 5:3; 2 Tim 2:26; Heb 2:3; 12:25). And it is only by believing the promises of God that we can escape.

"Corruption" – Gen 6:11,12; Ps 14:3; Isa 1:4; Acts 2:40; Eph 4:22.

"Evil desire" – all the world's corruption can be traced to man's heart. See Jam 1:14,15; 4:1,2. We all need to obey Peter's exhortation in 1 Pet 1:14 and 2:11. God's very great and precious promises hold out a way of complete escape from corruption. Let us use them.

**1:5-7** Because Christ has given us everything we need, we should lay hold of what He has given and make earnest efforts to grow in all the good qualities of the Christian life.

"Add" – he does not mean to wait until we have one good quality before trying to add another one. These qualities should all be added together as we grow in the spiritual life. How can we add them? By laying hold of God's promises by faith, by self-examination, prayer and meditation on God's Word, by simply putting His Word into practice – doing those things we know we should do, by "putting on" Christ and the new nature (Ps 1:1-3; Luke 11:28; Rom 13:14; 2 Cor 5:7; Eph 4:22-24; etc).

**1:5** "Faith" – this is where we all must start. Without it, of course, we are not real Christians at all, and even if we could add the other qualities they would do us no permanent good – Heb 11:6; John 3:36.

"Virtue" – v 3. The Greek word suggests an excellent character, moral, upright, good.

"Knowledge" – v 2. This is something that cannot be added once and for all. Believers need a constant growth in knowledge – 3:18; Phil 3:10 – but we can begin to add it.

**1:6** "Self-control" – this is a fruit of God's Spirit (Gal 5:23). We "add" it by yielding to the Spirit and walking in the Spirit and using the strength the Spirit gives to bring our thoughts and desires and actions under control.

"Patient endurance" – means to persevere no matter what troubles and trials

endurance godliness, 7 and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are in you, and are increasing, they will cause *you to be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he who lacks these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, give even more effort to make your calling and election certain. For if you do these things, you will never fall. 11 For in this way an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will be richly provided to you.

12 Therefore I will not neglect to remind you always of these things, though you know *them*, and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I

may come to us, and go on in the faith. This is not something we have by nature. We must learn to "add" it (Jam 1:2-4,12).

"Godliness" – v 3; 3:11. The word means piety and devotion to God put into action.

**1:7** "Brotherly kindness" – Rom 12:10; 1 Thess 4:9; Heb 13:1; 1 Pet 1:22. This is love of fellow believers expressed in action, tender affection.

"Love" – divine love which God puts into the hearts of His believers ("agape" – note at 1 Cor 13:1).

**1:8** "Increasing" – 3:18; Gal 5:22,23; Eph 4:12-15; Phil 3:12-14.

"Neither barren or unfruitful" – we may not wish to be useless and unproductive in our Christian lives, but we will be just that – if we do not add the above qualities to our lives.

**1:9** "Blind. . . far off" – blind, that is, to certain spiritual truths, to many wonderful things he could see if his eyes were opened. See Paul's prayer in Eph 1:18,19. Those who can't see far off are not totally blind. They can see the things of this world, things that are all around them, but they lack the kind of sight Paul speaks of in 2 Cor 4:18.

"Forgotten" – if he kept in memory what cleansing from sin meant he would realize that God had called him to a high and holy life and would be adding the good qualities of vs 5-7.

**1:10** "God's calling and election" – Peter means God's choosing them for salvation and calling them to it. In the way the word "election" is used in the Bible God's people are chosen by only one vote – God's – and this vote was cast before the world was created (Eph 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2). See notes at John 6:37; Rom 1:6; 8:28-30; Eph 1:4-6. How do we make sure God has chosen and called us? One way is by adding the good qualities of vs 5-7. If we do not add them we might well doubt whether we know anything about the salvation God gives.

"Fall" – by adding those good qualities we become more sure that God has chosen us, our confidence in Him grows, and with it our strength to stand also grows.

think it fitting, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by giving this reminder, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has showed me. 15 Moreover, I will make an effort *to see* that you will always be able to keep these things in memory after my de- cease.

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when such a voice as this came to him from the majestic glory: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven, when we were with him in the holy mountain.

**1:11** "Kingdom" – Matt 4:17; 5:3,10; 6:10,33; 7:21; 25:34; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Tim 4:1,18; Heb 12:28. Christ will give a rich welcome to those believers who have eagerly added the qualities of vs 5-7. It may not be the same for those who have failed to add them. Compare Matt 5:19; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12.

**1:12** "Remind" – Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 15:1; 2 Tim 1:6; 2:14. There is a continual need for believers to remember the truths God has revealed. Forgetting is all too possible, and it will have very harmful results. See Deut 8:1-5; etc.

"Established" – Col 1:23; Luke 21:19; 1 Cor 16:13; 2 Cor 1:21,24.

**1:13** "Tabernacle" – or "tent" – 2 Cor 5:1,4.

**1:14** In other words, Peter was expecting to die soon. See John 21:18,19. Compare 2 Tim 4:6. Then Peter was not expecting the return of Christ in his lifetime.

**1:15** "Effort" – he was making part of that effort then, but he probably means he will write more fully on the above matters and send it to them.

**1:16** "We" – himself and the other apostles. They were with Jesus throughout His ministry and saw His supernatural power on many occasions.

"Cunningly devised fables" – compare 2:3; 1 Tim 1:4; 4:7.

"Eyewitnesses" – John 15:27; Acts 1:3. They knew exactly what He did and what He said. There was no room for doubt whatever.

"His majesty" – John 1:14. Here Peter may be speaking of a particular event – the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus. See Matt 17:1,2.

**1:17** See Matt 17:5. The voice came out of heaven, God's dwelling place.

**1:18** Matt 17:6. Peter is not reporting something he heard from someone else. He was there. He saw that Jesus was transfigured. He heard the voice from heaven. This is one factor that made the witness of the original apostles so powerful. Compare Acts 1:8; 2:32; etc.

"Holy" – the mountain became holy

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy. *And* you do well to take heed to it, as to a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns, and the day star arises in your hearts. 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For prophecy did not come in olden times by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

because God set it apart for that event. Note at Lev 20:7.

**1:19** "Prophecy" – he means the writings of the Old Testament prophets. Note at Gen 20:7. They too spoke of the "power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v 16; Ps 2:8,9; 96:13; 98:9; Isa 2:12-19; 13:9-11; 26:21; 62:11; 63:1-6; Dan 7:13,14; Zech 14:3-5; etc). The transfiguration of Jesus confirmed their prophecies, made believers even more certain that they would be fulfilled. The word of the prophets is a light which God has given believers (compare Ps 119:105; Prov 6:23). It shows us where we are and where we are going. It helps us to walk without stumbling and falling.

"Dark place" – Ps 82:5; Prov 4:19; John 1:5; 3:19; Rom 1:21; Eph 4:18; 6:12; 1 John 2:11.

"Day dawns" – the appearing of the Lord Jesus. Then the long night of earth's sin and darkness will be over – Rom 13:12; Isa 60:1-3.

"Day star" – or "morning star" – Rev 22:16. In this verse Peter is urging us to study the Old Testament prophets and observe carefully what they say.

**1:20** "Scripture" – he is referring to the Old Testament. The prophets did not write down their own interpretation of what they saw, and we will not be able to interpret what they wrote with our unaided reason. False prophets are just the opposite. They both prophesy and interpret prophecy out of their own hearts and imaginations – Jer 14:14; 23:16; Ezek 13:3. The prophecies of Scripture came from God and God's help is necessary to understand them.

**1:21** "By the will of man" – he means prophecy uttered by God's prophets and recorded in the Old Testament. The prophets did not of themselves decide to speak or to write something or other. Their prophecies came from heaven. Compare Jer 1:9. They could truthfully say, "Hear the word of the Lord", or "Thus says the Lord" (Isa 1:2,10,11; Jer 2:4; Ezek 3:16,17; etc) because it was absolutely true. God gave them the very words they should say. They were instruments in the hands of God's Spirit to declare God's truth. See Matt 4:4; 5:17,18; Mark 12:46; John 10:35; Acts 4:25; 1 Cor 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:5-13; 1 Pet 1:11.

If we neglect the Bible we are neglecting the Word of the living God. If we are ignorant of prophecy, we are ignorant of what God will yet do on this earth, and many other

**2** But there were false prophets also among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways. Because of them the way of truth will be slandered. 3 And because of greed they will make merchandise of you with fabricated teachings. Their

truths we need to know.

**2:1** "False prophets" – Deut 13:1-5; 18:20-22; 1 Kings 18:19-40; 22:6,7; Isa 9:15; Jer 2:8; 5:31; 14:14; 28:1-9; Ezek 13:2-7.

"Among you" – Matt 7:15; 24:11; Acts 20:29,30; Rom 16:17,18; Gal 1:7; Phil 3:18; 1 Tim 4:1,2; 2 Tim 4:3; Jam 4:1. Satan will not give up a method which has proved so successful through the centuries. He himself was the first false prophet on earth. See Gen 3:4; John 8:44.

"Secretly" – 2 Cor 11:13-15; Gal 2:4; Jude 4. Very cleverly they try to gain the confidence of Christians before introducing their false teachings. They mix truth with error so the false is more appealing and attractive. Many of them are pastors and teachers and professors and bishops accepted by churches and denominations.

"Destructive" – false teachings destroy the souls of individuals and whole churches. Religious lies are very deadly. Satan's first one (Gen 3:4) plunged mankind into ruin. His followers keep many people there.

"Denying the Lord who bought them" – Matt 20:28; 1 Cor 7:23; Gal 3:13; Rev 5:9. Christ gave Himself "a ransom for all men" and this includes false teachers. See 1 Tim 2:6. He paid a sufficient price to save everyone if everyone will repent and believe the gospel. False teachers deny Christ. This may mean they deny His deity or that they deny the necessity of His sacrifice. But they will call themselves Christians, and their denials may be subtle and sly (compare Rom 16:18).

"Bring upon themselves" – Phil 3:19. False teachers are inviting disaster. They are provoking God to destroy them. Their behavior cries out for judgment. They will be fully responsible for what happens to them.

**2:2** "Many will follow" – Matt 24:11; Phil 3:18.

"The way of truth will be slandered" – those who profess to walk in Christ's way when actually they do not, cause people to think that the way of Christ is not good. They dishonor the gospel they say they believe.

**2:3** "Greed" – v 15; Rom 16:18; Phil 3:19; 1 Tim 6:5,10. Their religious activity is not for God or for others, but for their own gain.

"Make merchandise of you" – they care nothing for God's people, or for the church. Like Judas they would sell anyone for money.

"Fabricated teachings" – 1 Tim 4:1,2,7; 6:20,21; 2 Tim 4:3,4. The clear teachings of the Word of God is not to the liking of such

condemnation *uttered* long ago now does not delay, and their damnation does not slumber.

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be kept for judgment; 5 and did not spare the old world, but saved Noah *one of eight*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 and *if he* turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes *and* condemned *them* with an overthrow, making them an example to those who afterwards would live ungodly lives, 7 and delivered righteous Lot, troubled with the filthy behavior of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man living among them, in seeing and hearing *them*, had his righteous soul pained day after day with *their* unlawful deeds), 9 *then* the Lord knows how to

people, so they make up their own teachings. "Condemnation" – God has already condemned them and will deal with them at the proper time.

**2:4** This is the first of three examples Peter gives to show that God is well able to punish those who will not walk in His truth.

"Angels who sinned" – Jude 6. Notes at Gen 6:1-5; 16:7; etc. Compare Rev 12:4,7,8. Sometime in the past some of the angels in heaven revolted against God and were cast out. Since God did not spare them, we may be sure He will not spare false teachers.

"Hell" – the original has "Tartarus", a Greek word indicating a place of punishment.

"Chains of darkness" – compare v 17; Matt 25:30.

"Judgment" – 1 Cor 6:2,3.

**2:5** Gen 6:5-8,11-13,18; 7:11,12,23.

"Noah. . . a preacher" – this is the only place in the Bible where Noah is called a preacher. He was a righteous man (Gen 6:9) and preached righteousness to the people of his day, but they refused to listen. His ministry went on for many years without a single convert. Since God did not spare the whole of mankind except for eight persons, we may be sure He will not spare false teachers.

**2:6-8** See Gen 19:1-29. How then will false teachers escape?

"An example" – Jude 7; Mal 4:1; Matt 3:10,12; 25:41.

"Righteous Lot" – Gen 18:23. From this verse we understand that Lot had believed God, and that God had counted him righteous (compare Gen 15:6), though we have no record of this in the Bible. Peter gives us further information about Lot's inner experiences as he lived in Sodom. His words show us what goes on in a righteous man's heart when he sees the sins of the world.

**2:9** As in all former eras, so now mankind is divided into two groups – the "godly" and the "unrighteous". In the Bible the "godly" are those who have faith in the one true and living God and are devoted to Him. The Lord Jesus Christ is His one incarnation, and so

deliver the godly out of temptations, and to keep the unrighteous for the day of judgment to be punished, 10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise authority. *They are arrogant and self-willed, and are not afraid to speak evil of honored ones.* 11 Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring abusive accusations against them before the Lord.

12 But these *people*, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand. And they will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the consequences of unrighteousness, *as* those who count it pleasure to carouse in the day-time. *They are* blots and blemishes, delighting themselves with their own deceitfulness while they

the godly believe in Him and follow Him. The unrighteous reject Him (though, some of them may say they believe in Him), and their lives reveal that they do not truly believe in Him.

"Deliver. . . out of temptations" – 1 Cor 10:13; Rom 8:35-39.

"Day of judgment" – Acts 17:31.

"To be punished" – though the day of final judgment has not come, the unrighteous who have died are now being punished (Luke 16:22-25). This will continue until the day of judgment, and afterwards.

**2:10** "Walk according to the flesh" – see Rom 7:5; 8:4-8.

"Lust of uncleanness" – Matt 15:19; Rom 1:24; Eph 4:19,22.

"Despise authority" – that is, despise any authority anyone tries to exercise over them. This often goes along with greed and immorality. Under the power of these things men reject all authority, God's or man's, that would interfere with them in their wickedness. They reject the Lordship of Christ. The more they follow their corrupt desires the more bold and arrogant they become.

"Honored ones" – or "heavenly beings" – such people are contemptuous of the unseen world. To them this world is everything.

**2:11** Compare Jude 9.

**2:12** Eph 4:18; Jude 10. They are not humble enough to admit they are ignorant of anything. In their arrogance they speak evil of glorious truth beyond their understanding.

"Brute beasts" – Ps 49:12,20; 57:4; 74:19. Such people have no more spiritual understanding than animals. The satisfaction of bodily desire is all they want. They may pride themselves on their ability to reason, but behave as if they had none.

**2:13** "Consequences of unrighteousness" – Gal 6:7,8; 2 Thess 1:6.

"Daytime" – the nights are not enough for them to satisfy their corrupt desires. They have no shame and do not try to hide their sins.

"Feast with you" – Acts 2:42; Jude 12; note at 1 Cor 11:20-22.



feast with you. 14 *Having* eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin, they entice unstable souls. They have a heart exercised with greedy practices. *They are* cursed children 15 who have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son of* Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness 16 (and was rebuked for his wickedness. The dumb donkey speaking with man's voice prohibited the madness of the prophet).

17 These *people* are wells without water, clouds that are carried about by a storm. The blackness of darkness is reserved for them forever. 18 For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* shamelessness, those who had completely escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the slaves of corruption. For

**2:14** They look at every attractive woman with lust and think how they might seduce her. They sin continually in thought, desire and deed. Compare Matt 5:28-30.

"Greedy" – v 3. They are utterly selfish, totally inconsiderate of others.

"Cursed" – 1 Cor 16:22; Gal 1:8,9; Heb 6:8; Gen 4:11; Deut 16:22; Gal 1:8,9; Heb 6:8; Gen 4:11; Deut 11:26-28; Prov 3:33; Isa 24:6.

**2:15** "Forsaken the right way" – 1 John 2:19.

"Balaam" – Jude 11. His story is found in Numbers chapters 22-25. See notes on Num 22:1-7,19. False teachers and false prophets are for hire. They go after money or other worldly advantages, and are willing to teach what people want to hear.

**2:16** Num 22:28-31.

"Madness" – it is madness for anyone to think he can hide his motives and intentions from God, and to be determined to take one's own way instead of His.

**2:17** "Wells without water" – compare 2 Tim 3:5. They appear promising on the outside but are empty of spiritual life. They profess to belong to God but are without God's Spirit. On "water" see John 4:13,14; 7:38,39.

"Clouds. . . carried about" – Jude 12. See Eph 4:14.

"Darkness" – they choose darkness here on earth (John 3:19,20); they will have darkness forever (Matt 8:12; 22:13; Jude 13).

**2:18** "Swelling words of vanity" – the ungodly are often great boasters – Ps 52:1; 75:4; 94:4; Rom 1:30; Gal 6:13; 2 Tim 3:2; Jam 3:5. They who have least to boast about are often the most boastful.

"Escaped from them" – these evil teachers want to regain control over those who show an interest in the gospel, or who are new Christians, and try to corrupt them.

**2:19** "Promise them liberty" – the only so-called liberty they know is the freedom to do what their sinful natures desire. They pervert the grace of God and seemingly believe that Christians may go on in their

whatever overcomes a man that same *thing* brings him into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, their latter end is worse than their beginning. 21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy command delivered to them. 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog has turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

**3** This second epistle, dearly loved ones, I am now writing to you. In *both* of them I would stir up your pure minds by way of reminder, 2 so that you may remember the words

sins and still be saved (Jude 4; Gal 5:13), ignoring the teachings of God's Word on this (1 Cor 6:9,10; Gal 5:21,24).

"Slaves" – John 8:34,35; Rom 6:16. Slaves to money and to lust sometimes stand and preach freedom to others – the freedom to be enslaved as they are.

**2:20** "Escaped. . . through the knowledge of the Lord" – such people may have much knowledge of Christ, may even know Him as Judas did. Notice the word "if" and compare Heb 6:4-6; 10:26,27. People may know a great deal about Christ, may decide to turn over a new leaf and turn away from the corruption in the world. This does not necessarily mean they have received a new spiritual life and a new nature by God's Spirit.

"Worse than their beginning" – compare Matt 12:43-45.

**2:21** Christ's way is the way of righteousness, a straight and narrow way (2:2,15; Matt 5:20; 7:13,14; Isa 35:8; Ps 15:1-5). It is very possible to know this way and turn back from it.

"Holy command" – Matt 4:17,19; Mark 1:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30. The gospel message is like God's holy command to man.

**2:22** The first proverb is found in Prov 26:11, the origin of the second is unknown. True believers are "sheep" (John 10:27), not dogs or pigs. Sheep neither return to their vomit nor wallow in the mud. It is possible for Christ's people to fall into sin (Jam 3:2; 1 John 2:1; Gal 2:11-13; 5:17), but they do not stay wallowing in it (Prov 24:16; 1 John 3:9). Peter gives a clear picture of those who for some reason or other become religious and leave behind for a while their former corrupt and immoral practices. But soon their real nature reasserts itself and they return to them. A washed pig will always be a pig and not anything else.

**3:1** "Reminder" – 1:12-15.

**3:2** "Prophets" – 1:19-21.

"Command" – 2:21. Again he

which were spoken beforehand by the holy prophets, and the command of the Lord and Saviour through us, the apostles.

3 First understand this: in the last days there will come scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation." 5 For they are willingly ignorant of the *fact* that long ago by the word of God the heavens existed, and the earth stood out of the water and in the water, 6 and that the world that then existed was covered with water and perished. 7 But by that same word the heavens and the earth which now exist are reserved for fire, kept until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, dearly loved ones, do not be ignorant of this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* like a

thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some men count slowness, but is patient toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. In that *day* the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fiery heat. The earth also and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 *Since* then all these things will be dissolved, what kind of *people* you ought to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 *as you* look for and speed the coming of the day of God, in which the heavens will be on fire and dissolve, and the elements will melt with fiery heat! 13 Nevertheless, in accordance with his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness *will* dwell.

emphasizes the importance of both the Old and New Testaments to the understanding and growth of believers.

**3:3** "Scoffers" – 2:12; 2 Chron 36:16; Ps 1:1; Ps 73:8; 74:22; Prov 14:9; 15:12; 19:29; 21:24; Isa 28:14; Acts 13:41; Jude 18. Some men ignorantly sneer at the well-founded beliefs of Christians. It is easier to scoff than to examine the evidence and renounce evil desires.

**3:4** "His coming" – Matt 24:3,30; John 14:3. These scoffers will assume that because Jesus has not returned for a long time He will not return at all.

**3:5** "Are willingly ignorant" – they wish to follow their evil desires and do not want to keep in mind anything that might interfere with that. Their beliefs are not based on the facts, but on what they want to be true. Compare Rom 1:28. Their ignorance of God's truth and unbelief are intentional, deliberate.

"By the Word of God" – Gen 1:1-3,6,9, etc.; Ps 33:6.

**3:6** See 2:5.

**3:7** "Word" – Heb 1:3.

"Fire" – v 12; Isa 66:15,16; Nahum 1:56; Mal 4:1; Rev 20:9. When will the heavens and earth be destroyed by fire? At the time of the judgment of the unsaved, not before (see Rev 20:11-15). Compare Matt 19:28; Acts 3:21; Rom 8:19-21.

**3:8,9** To men it seems a long time since Christ promised to return. But God does not experience time as we do, and to Him it is like two days, or less. See Ps 90:4 and note. If He waits 2000 years (or more) in our reckoning before sending Christ again, He has a very good purpose in mind. He is at work bringing men to repentance and waiting until He knows He should wait no more. Compare Gen 6:3.

"Not willing that any should perish" – Ezek 18:32; 1 Tim 2:4; John 3:16. God wants every human being to come to repentance – Acts 17:30. "Repentance" – Matt 3:2; etc.

**3:10** "The Day of the Lord" – notes at

Isa 2:12; 13:6-13; Joel 2:1,2,30,31; Zeph 1:14-18; Acts 2:20; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2. In the Bible the word "day" does not necessarily mean one single literal day. See Gen 2:4; John 9:4; Isa 34:8; 1 Thess 5:5,8. The "day" of salvation (2 Cor 6:2) has continued from Paul's day to ours, nearly two thousand years. The period of time for the "day" of the Lord may be a thousand years or more, beginning with the return of Christ and ending with the final judgment of Rev 20:11-15.

"Like a thief" – 1 Thess 5:1-3; Rev 3:3; 16:15.

"Fire" – v 7. Peter does not give us a schedule of future events. His language does not rule out the possibility that Christ will return and reign for a thousand years before the final judgment of men and the complete destruction of the heavens and earth (Rev 20:1-6). There will be fiery punishment both before and after that thousand years – 2 Thess 1:7; Isa 24:6-13; 29:6; 30:30; Rev 16:8,9; 20:9,14,15. **3:11** "What kind" – is it reasonable to live for the things of a world which is heading for destruction? Compare 1 John 2:15-17.

"Holy conduct and godliness" – Titus 2:11-14; 1 Pet 1:15; 1 John 1:6.

**3:12** "Day of God" – v 10; 1 Cor 1:8; 3:13; 5:5; 2 Cor 1:14; Phil 1:6. How can believers speed its coming, that is, cause that day to come more quickly? By doing what the Lord Jesus told us to do. He has instructed us to pray for His Kingdom to come (Matt 6:10), and to take His gospel to all the various peoples on earth (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15). When His Church has completed this task the end of this age will come (Matt 24:14).

**3:13** "New heavens and a new earth" – Isa 65:17; Rev 21:1.

"Where righteousness dwells" – Rev 21:27; 22:14,15; Ps 15:1-5; 89:14; 118:19; Isa 11:4,5; 1 Cor 6:9,10. It will be the exact opposite of this world where true righteousness, God's righteousness, is

14 Therefore, dearly loved ones, since you look for such things, make *every* effort to be found by him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 And consider *that* the patience of our Lord *is* salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also according to the wisdom given to him has written to you, 16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things. In them some things are hard to understand. Those who are ignorant

and unstable twist these things, as *they do* also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

17 Therefore, dearly loved ones, seeing *that* you know *these things* beforehand, be careful that you also are not led away by the error of the wicked, and fall from your own firm position. 18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

despised and persecuted.

**3:14** Dan 12:10; 1 Cor 1:8; Eph 1:4; 4:3; 5:27; Phil 1:10; 2:15; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 12:14. If we live as He has told us, we can look forward to His coming with joy and confidence.

**3:15** "Patience" – v 9.

"Paul" – he wrote of God's patience in Rom 2:4; 3:25,26; 9:22,23; 10:21. Peter may be referring to that letter.

**3:16** "Hard to understand" – there are difficult matters and difficult language in some of Paul's letters (for example, parts of Romans). Without much study and, above all, the enlightenment and wisdom God's Spirit gives, we shall not understand them.

"Ignorant" – this seems a better translation than "unlearned." It is not a lack of education that causes people to "twist" the Scriptures, but ignorance of God and ignorance of how God's Word should be studied and understood.

"Unstable" – 2:14; Jam 1:8 – not firm in the truth (Col 1:23; 4:12; 1 Thess 3:8; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 Pet 5:9,10).

"Twist" – or "distort" – Acts 20:30; 2 Cor 4:2; Gal 1:7; Jer 23:36. How the writings of Paul (and indeed, the whole Bible) have suffered at the hands of such people – many of them highly educated people.

"Other Scriptures" – observe that Peter places what Paul wrote to them on a par with the Scriptures (which Peter accepted as inspired by the Holy Spirit – 1:21,22).

"To their own destruction" – 2:1,3; 2 Thess 2:10. We must be extremely careful how we treat God's revelation. If we twist and pervert His teachings and do what we wish we cannot escape His condemnation.

**3:17** "Be careful" – or "be on your guard" – Matt 10:17; 16:6; Mark 13:9,23,33; Acts 20:31; 1 Cor 16:13.

"Wicked" – or "lawless" – 2:7,8; 2 Thess 2:3,7-9; 1 John 3:4; Jude 4; 1 Cor 9:21; Jam 2:8.

"Fall" – 1:10; 1 Cor 10:12.

**3:18** "Grow" – Eph 4:12-15; 1 Pet 2:2.

"Grace" – see in Titus 2:11-14 what grace teaches us and what we are to grow in. This is the grace of Christ, and growing in it will be growing more like Him.

"Knowledge" – Eph 1:17; 3:18,19; Phil 3:10; Col 1:9; 2:2. To know Christ better and to be more like Him – this must be the great aim of every believer.

"To him be glory" – Peter knows glory belongs to Christ. Only God is worthy of this glory. Isa 42:8; Rom 11:36; 16:27. Christ is worthy of it because He is the incarnation of God.

# The First Letter of the Apostle JOHN

## Author:

John one of the original apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Date:

Probably sometime between 85 and 95 AD.

## Themes:

This letter is written to all those who, by God's grace, have received new spiritual birth in Christ. They are God's dearly loved children (2:1,12,13,18,28; 3:7; 4:4; 5:21). They are members of the family and household of God, and John writes that they should behave in a way worthy of this great truth. That is, they should live in fellowship with God and with each other (1:3-7), confess any sin they might be guilty of and obtain forgiveness (1:8 - 2:2), obey the commands of God the Father (2:3-7), and love one another (3:11-20). Three key words of this letter are "life" (1:1,2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11,12,13,20), "light" (1:5,7; 2:8,9,10), and "love" (3:11-18; 4:7-12). Another key word is "know" (2:3,5; 4:6,7; 5:13,18), and an important theme is assurance – how we can know we have really been born into God's family.

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**1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked on, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life **2** (for the life was revealed, and we have seen, and bear witness and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was revealed to us), **3** that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And truly our

**1:1** "Beginning" – Gen 1:1; John 1:1.

"We" – John speaks of all the original disciples of Christ. When Jesus was on earth they knew Him personally, heard what He taught and saw what He did. Compare 2 Pet 1:16; John 15:27; Acts 4:20.

"Handled" – see Luke 24:39; John 20:27. This was after Christ's resurrection.

"Word of life" – Christ Himself is the Word, God's fullest revelation to mankind. And He is eternal life (5:20; John 1:4; 5:26; 14:6), and He came to bring eternal life to people (John 10:10; 6:51). The words He spoke were also "life" (John 6:63). And His gospel produces spiritual life (Rom 5:21; 6:23).

**1:2** "Was revealed" – eternal life appeared when Christ appeared (John 1:14; 2 Tim 1:10).

"Eternal life" – 5:11,12; John 3:16.

"With the Father" – John 1:2; 17:5. Christ was not the Father, but is with the Father in the one Godhead. See notes at John 17:1,5; 1 Cor 8:5,6; 2 John 3.

**1:3** "We have seen" – this is the third time in three verses he says this. He is saying very emphatically that he and the other apostles did not pass along information gathered from others, or stories they had invented. They knew exactly what they were talking about because they personally had seen and heard Jesus.

"Fellowship" – Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 13:14; Phil 3:10. The Greek word means sharing together. John had good reasons for proclaiming the truth of Christ. This is one. Others appears in v 4; 2:1; 12-14,21; 5:13.

"With the Father. . . with his Son" – John distinguishes between these two persons of the Godhead (notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc), but they are so united that to have fellowship with the one is to have fellowship with the other also. Other references on Christ's deity at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. Fellowship with God means to know Him (John 17:3), to share in His joy, His peace, His thoughts, His work on earth. Only believers in Christ know God, and have fellowship with God. No one else has true enlightenment or spiritual life (5:11,12).

**1:4** "Joy" – Luke 2:10; John 15:11; 16:22,24; 17:13; Rom 14:17; Gal 5:22. Joy is the result of truth received into the heart and practiced in the life. So John writes the truth to them which he had learned from Christ. Complete knowledge of the truth of Christ and complete obedience to it will

fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** And we write these things to you, so that your joy may be full.

**5** This then is the message we have heard from him, and declare to you: God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus

mean complete joy.

**1:5** "God is light" – not physical light, of course, but spiritual light. In the New Testament darkness signifies sin and ignorance of spiritual things; light signifies holiness and truth – Matt 4:16; Luke 2:32; John 1:4,5; 3:19,20; 8:12; 11:10; 12:36,46; Acts 26:18; Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 4:4,6; Eph 5:8,9,13,14; 1 Tim 6:16.

"No darkness at all" – there is much evil in the world, but there is none whatever in God. He did not create it and He does not approve of it in any form. He is absolutely holy and gloriously pure (Lev 20:7; Isa 6:3).

**1:6** "If we say" – it is impossible to have fellowship with holiness and truth while living in sin and error. Choosing sin is the same as rejecting God, and if we reject Him how can we share with Him in anything? See 2 Cor 6:14. The sad fact is that there are many who claim to know God who do not know Him, and they prove they do not know Him by their manner of life (Titus 1:16).

"Lying" – such people are either deceived or trying to deceive others. In either case their claim is utterly false.

"Not practicing the truth" – simply hearing the truth or studying the truth is not enough. We must put the truth into practice in our lives.

**1:7** What does it mean to walk in the light? John shows what it means in the rest of this letter. It is the opposite of walking in the darkness of sin, ignorance and error. It means to renounce sin and all that is contrary to God's Word, and to put into practice what His Word tells us. It is to be open toward God, trying to hide nothing of what we are and do. If we would walk in the light we must first have the light. It is the work of God to bring us into it – 2 Cor 4:6; 1 Pet 2:9; Col 1:12,13. Being in the kingdom of light we are responsible to behave accordingly (2:6).

"Fellowship" – true Christian fellowship can exist only when believers are walking in the light. Sin and error will kill fellowship.

"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin" – believers sometimes sin in thought, word, or deed (2:1; Jam 3:2; Gal 2:11-13; 5:17; Rom 7:18; 1 Kings 8:46; etc). If they walk in the light God will forgive their sins, cleanse them away, and blot them out as if they had never existed. He does this on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (2:2). This process goes on continually (the



Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not

sinned, we make him a liar, and his Word is not in us.

**2** My little children, I write these things to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

Greek verb is in the present continuous tense – “goes on cleansing”).

**1:8** If Christ’s blood cleanses us from every sin, does this mean we are sinless? Not at all. Lest anyone should mistakenly think so John immediately makes the point clear. No human being on earth, no believer is sinless, not even the holiest. Paul, the great and holy apostle, spoke of sin living in him (Rom 7:17). See also Matt 7:11; Rom 7:14-25; Gal 5:16,17; 1 Tim 1:15; Jam 3:2. None of us in this life ever gets beyond the need of confessing sin and of the blood of Christ cleansing from sin (Matt 6:12).

If any of us think our nature is sinless “we deceive ourselves” – that is, we are leading ourselves astray. We are persuading ourselves that something is true which is not true, and we are responsible for doing this, and so guilty of doing wrong. Thinking we are sinless comes out of our own efforts to think so, not from God’s Word.

“The truth is not in us” – whatever other truth may be in us, the truth about sin and cleansing from sin is not in us, if we think our nature is sinless. In such case we are not facing the truth, but evading it, calling sin by a different name and excusing it. In this way falsity takes the place of truth in our hearts.

All believers should aim to be perfect, but none achieves it – Phil 3:12. As believers we should aim to live without ever sinning (2:1), but we do not achieve this either. If we do not sin knowingly, we do unknowingly, and sins done ignorantly are still sins and not something else (compare Lev 4:1,2). If we do not sin by what we deliberately do, we sin by not doing what we should do (see notes at Num 32:23 and Matt 25:42,43). Who of us can say we never fail to do what we should do?

**1:9** “We” – John is writing to believers (2:1,12-14) and he includes himself in what he says. He knew the need of all believers to confess their sins – Matt 6:12; Luke 11:4.

“Confess” – the Greek word means to say the same thing as another person, to agree, to admit that an accusation is true, etc. Confessing sins means to say the same thing that God says about them. We must not call them by some other name such as mistakes or errors of judgment, etc. Anything in thought, word, or deed in any way contrary to God’s standard of perfect righteousness and holiness is sin. Also anything left undone that should be done is sin (Jam 4:17; Matt 25:41-46; 1 Sam 12:23; etc).

Committing sin makes us guilty and we need forgiveness. So we must agree with God, call our sins by their names, and ask God for forgiveness. Confessing our sins

and walking in the light go hand in hand. God’s light exposes our sins (Eph 5:13,14), and as they are exposed we are to confess and forsake them. Of course our confession should be to God for He is the one who can forgive us.

“Faithful” – Ps 33:4; 111:7,8; 145:13; 146:6; 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Tim 2:13; Heb 10:23; 11:11; 1 Pet 4:19. God is always faithful to His Word, to His plan to save people, and to His own nature. He is a forgiving God – Ex 34:7; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:5; 99:8; 103:3; Dan 9:9; Micah 7:18; Matt 6:12; 9:2; Rom 4:7,8; Heb 8:12; Jam 5:15. His Word (the Bible) shows that in order to forgive the sins of people He sent His own Son to die as a sacrifice for them – John 1:29; 3:14-16. So we may be sure that He will forgive us our sins if we repent and truly desire forgiveness and cleansing.

“Just” – Deut 32:4; Ps 9:16; 36:6; 89:14; 111:7. He will forgive our sins on the basis of justice. Christ has paid for our sins, endured the penalty for them. Therefore God can justly forgive them when we repent and confess them. See 2:2; Rom 3:25,26.

“Cleanse” – v 7. God forgives our sins, blots them out forever and cleanses our consciences from all unrighteousness (Heb 9:14).

**1:10** Verse 8 speaks of the present; this verse speaks of the past. God says “all have sinned” (Rom 3:9-23). If we say we have not, we are saying that God’s Word is not true, that the God of the Bible is a liar. In such case, no part of the Bible has any real place in us.

**2:1** “My little children” – he considered them his spiritual children. Compare 1 Tim 1:2.

“So that you will not sin” – this is the ideal, the goal to which we should press. And this word opens up a grand possibility for all believers. Though a sinful nature is in us (1:8), we can overcome it by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. We do not need to be overcome by temptation and knowingly sin. Compare 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 7:1. Having a sinful nature does not mean believers in Christ have to sin, and it gives them no excuse if they do sin, for they also have a new nature created by God in righteousness and holiness (Eph 4:24), and God’s Spirit lives in them (1 Cor 6:19).

“We have an advocate” – see Rom 8:34; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 7:25; Rom 5:9,10. Jesus is the heavenly advocate, the defense attorney, speaking to the Father on behalf of believers when they sin. Satan accuses us (Rev 12:10), Christ defends us. If a believer sins, is he destroyed? Does he lose

Christ the righteous, 2 and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.

3 And by this we know that we know him: If we keep his commandments. 4 He who says, "I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps his word, in him indeed the love of God is perfected. By this we know that we are in him.

6 He who says he remains in him ought to walk just as he walked.

7 Brethren, I am not writing any new command

his salvation? Is there no hope? That is not the teaching of the Bible – 1:9.

How can they be destroyed and lose their salvation when they have such an Advocate and Defender? This is an Advocate who can defend us with perfect justice, who loves us with infinite love, who is determined to have us released from the penalty of every sin, to rescue us from God's anger against all sin. Can we doubt that He will be successful?

"Righteous" – Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14. He will not do anything in His dealings with us, or in His work as Advocate, Mediator and Defender, that is in any way contrary to perfect justice and righteousness. He can righteously defend believers when they sin because He has taken away their sins by the sacrifice of Himself.

**2:2** "Propitiation" – Christ is the one who turns aside God's anger, by taking away sins. This is the meaning of the word as used in the Bible. See Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17. Compare Matt 26:28; John 3:14,15; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:19,21; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12,28; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18.

"Sins of the whole world" – 4:14; John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:14; 1 Tim 2:6; Heb 2:9. Men are not lost because Christ has not died as a sacrifice for them. They are lost because they do not accept this sacrifice and do not believe in Him. They choose darkness rather than light, sin rather than holiness. This is their condemnation.

**2:3-6** "We know" – v 5; 3:14,19,24; 4:13; 5:13. Here John is not speaking of knowing about God, but of knowing Him personally. The Word "know" is a key word in this letter. It appears 33 times (more than in any other letter of the New Testament). In this verse John speaks of knowledge based on evidence. People can think they know God when they do not. They can be deceived by some emotional or mystical experience. There are powerfully deceptive forces in the world which lead people astray – Jer 17:9; Heb 3:13; Rev 12:9.

John insists that we should not think we know God unless there is proof of this knowledge in the way we live. The true knowledge of God has a profound effect on people (John 17:3). It changes their hearts, their thinking, their behavior. If there is no change, we may be sure there is no true knowledge of God. There are those who claim to have enlightenment, to know the

to you, but an old command, which you have had from the beginning. The old command is the word which you have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, I am writing a new command to you, a thing that is true in him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light is now shining. 9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He who loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause of stumbling in him. 11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because

ultimate truth about God and to be perfectly one with Him. But do they keep the commandments of Jesus Christ? If not, their wisdom and experience is deceptive and useless.

What is the proof that we know God?

Obedience (v 3)

God's love in the heart (v 5)

A life that follows the pattern Jesus gave us (v 6).

"Keep his commandments" – 3:24; 5:3; Matt 28:20; John 14:15,23; Acts 4:19; 5:29; Rom 6:16; 16:26; Heb 5:9. True believers receive Jesus as Lord as well as Saviour (note at Acts 22:10).

"Liar" – v 8; 4:20; John 8:44.

"Love" – 4:7,8 – another key word in this letter. It appears 35 times (more than in any other book of the New Testament). The real proof of love toward God is obedience to Him. All else is mere sentiment and deception (John 14:15). Truth planted in the heart results in love and in obedience.

"In Him" – see John 17:21-23; Rom 6:3-8; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:1,3.

"Walk just as he walked" – see 1 Pet 2:21; compare Eph 5:1; 1 Thess 1:6.

**2:7** "Have heard" – 1:1-3. The message is who Christ is, what He is, and what He wants us to be and do. See 3:23. John was not writing some strange new thing which he had invented (compare 2 Pet 1:16).

**2:8** "New" – like the old command but emphasized anew and put in a new way.

"Now shining" – before Christ came into the world there was great spiritual darkness everywhere (Isa 60:2). He came as a light (John 8:12), sent forth His disciples as lights (Matt 5:14), and gives light to people through His gospel. This light began to shine in Israel but in John's day soon began to spread throughout the Roman empire. Now it shines in every country of the world.

**2:9-11** Love is the test of whether we are in light or in darkness. People may think or say all sorts of things about being in the light and being enlightened, and they can deceive themselves and others. But we can know what they are by their behavior. Love and light go together; hate and darkness go together.

"Brother" – probably means here another Christian, but John is not suggesting that it is all right for Christians to hate those who are not Christians. See Matt 5:44; etc. If

that darkness has blinded his eyes.

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known him *who is* from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one.

I am writing to you, little children, because you have known the Father.

14 I have written to you, fathers, because you have known him *who is* from the beginning.

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God remains in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

there is God's love in our hearts we will love everyone, though we will have a special love for fellow believers.

"No cause of stumbling" (v 10) – this probably means that there is nothing in him to make others stumble. God's love in our hearts will make us the sort of people who will not give others reason to stumble spiritually. Lack of love among Christians is a significant stumblingblock to many people. On stumbling see Rom 14:13; 1 Cor 8:9; 10:32; 2 Cor 6:3.

"Where he is going" – John 12:35; Prov 4:19.

"Blinded" – compare 2 Cor 4:4.

**2:12** "Are forgiven" – 1:7,9.

"His name's sake" – we are forgiven because of who Christ is and because of what He has done for us, and because we have believed and accepted God's revelation about Him, and because He wants us to be forgiven.

**2:13** "Known" – v 3; John 17:3; 2 Cor 4:6; Matt 11:27.

"Who is from the beginning" – 1:1 – he is referring to Christ.

"Overcome" – see 4:4; 5:4; Rev 2:7; 12:11; 21:7. The wicked one is Satan. People "overcome" him when they repent, trust in Christ and begin to live a true Christian life.

"The Father" – v 1; Matt 5:16 (note).

**2:14** "Strong" – they had the physical strength of youth and, far more importantly, the spiritual strength God gave them to overcome Satan.

"Word of God remains in you" – vs 24,27; John 15:7; Ps 119:11; Col 3:16.

**2:15** John now appeals to all and gives a command to all.

"World" – 3:1,13; 4:5; 5:19. This is another key word in this letter, appearing 20 times. It means the system that has been developed by sinful men apart from God; the society, the aims, the thoughts, the religions, the ways of living that come out of man's fallen nature. According to God's Word the world does not know God (John 14:17; 15:21). It does not know what believers are (1 John 3:1). It hates Christ and believers (3:13; John 15:18,24). And it is controlled by Satan (5:19; Eph 2:1,2). God has chosen believers out of the world to be His own special people (John 15:19;

15 Do not love the world, or the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that *is* in the world – the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the pride of life – is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passes away, and its desires *also*; but whoever does the will of God continues on forever.

18 Little children, it is the last hour, and *just* as you have heard that antichrist will come, even now there are many antichrists. By this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but none of them were of us. For if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us.

17:6,14,16). All of this is reason enough for them not to love the world.

"If. . . the love of the Father is not in him" – this "world" is utterly opposed to all that the one true God is and desires, therefore to love it is to show a complete lack of love for Him. What shall we say, then, of those Christians who run after the world and imitate the world and long for the things of the world? They do not know God or love God. **2:16** "All" – there is no exception. There is nothing in this fallen world worthy of a believer's love. Desires that come from man's fallen nature, desires that come because of what man sees, pride and exalting self – these are the only things in the world – compare Gen 8:21; Matt 15:19; Rom 1:28-32. And so we must not be conformed to it – Rom 12:2.

"Flesh" – see the note at Rom 7:5.

**2:17** "Passes away" – God will judge the world, punish it, and put it away forever (Acts 17:31; Isa 24:1-13; 2 Pet 3:10-13).

"Does the will of God" – Matt 7:21. Notice again John's emphasis on doing, not merely believing, though he well knew that we are saved by grace through faith. Compare James 2:14-26. True faith produces a great change in one's life which results in a mind to obey God. See note at Acts 22:10. God's will is for us to believe in Christ, receive Him as Lord and Savior, obey the gospel and follow Him. They are the ones who will live forever with God. All others will have to experience "the second death" (Rev 20:14,15).

**2:18** "Last hour" – compare Acts 2:17; Rom 13:11,12; Jam 5:3; 1 Pet 1:20; Rev 1:3. This last hour is still going on. Perhaps we are in the last minutes of this last hour. Compare 2 Pet 3:8.

"Antichrist" – v 22; 4:3; 2 John 7; 2 Thess 2:3,4. The antichrist will come opposing Christ, but possibly claiming to be Christ. He will certainly claim to be God.

"Many" – compare Matt 24:4,5; 2 Cor 11:13-15.

**2:19** "Out from us" – Acts 20:30. These antichrists claimed to be followers of Christ.

"None. . . of us" – that is, they were not real believers, not born again, not of God's spiritual family. Their going out proves they did not belong. God's chosen ones remain in the faith (Heb 10:39; John 6:67,68; etc).

But *they went out*, so that it might be made evident that all of them were not of us.

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He who denies the Father and the Son is antichrist. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father, but he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 Therefore let that remain in you which you have heard from the beginning. If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, you also will continue in the Son and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he has promised us, eternal life.

**2:20** "Anointing" – compare 2 Cor 1:21,22. This anointing is the gift of God's Spirit (3:24). It sets believers apart to be God's servants. Christ means "The Anointed One" (Matt 1:1). Believers have an anointing from Him and so are able to recognize antichrists when they appear. They will be able to discern from their teaching and behavior that they are not Christ's servants. "The Holy One" – Mark 1:24; Acts 2:27; 3:14.

"You know all things" – John certainly did not mean that those believers knew everything that can be known about all subjects. He understood very well that only God knows like that. But those to whom he was writing had God's Spirit and had been well taught in the truth of God. They knew all the things he was writing to them were true. Now we who have the Bible and God's Spirit are also at the source of all true spiritual knowledge. **2:21** Verse 13 – anything that deviates from the truth God has revealed in the Bible is false and dangerous.

**2:22** The man who says Jesus is not the anointed Messiah, the Son of God, is a liar, and the worst of all possible liars. Some people do this. They deny that Jesus combines in Himself both God's nature and man's nature, that Jesus is the eternal Son of God become man. Such people by denying the Son are denying God the Father who sent Him. Compare John 5:23. See references to Christ's deity at Phil 2:6 and Luke 2:11.

**2:23** Whatever people may think, no one has God who does not believe and receive the Son of God Jesus Christ. It is absurd to think that we can have God and reject His Son. But those who believe in Jesus have God the Father as their Father.

**2:24** "Heard" – 1:1; 2:7.

"If" – Heb 3:6,14; Col 1:23; 1 Cor 15:2. "Remains" – John 15:4,5,7,9,10.

**2:25** "Promised us, eternal life" – 5:11; Titus 1:2; John 3:16; 6:47.

**2:26** "Astray" – 3:7; Matt 24:4,14; 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9. This is the kind of world we live in – if we believe in the Lord Jesus, Satan and his angels do their best to deceive

26 I have written these *things* to you concerning those who would lead you astray. 27 But the anointing which you have received from him remains in you, and you do not need any man to teach you; but as that same anointing teaches you *concerning* all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, you will remain in him.

28 And now, little children, remain in him so that when he appears, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him.

**3** See what kind of love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the sons of

us and turn us away from the true faith.

**2:27** "Remains" – the Holy Spirit does not forsake believers (John 14:16; Eph 1:13,14). "To teach you" – they had already been taught the truth concerning antichrist and false teachers – that is the context here. And God's Spirit was in them to enable them to understand what they had learned. They did not need even the apostles to teach them any new truths, and they certainly did not need false teachers who claimed to have new truth and did not.

John is not denying the need of teachers in the churches. God Himself appoints them (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28), and John himself was one of them. The believers John was writing to had been taught and knew the truth, but many today have not been taught and do not know the truth. And none of us, no matter how much we think we know, should arrogantly think we cannot learn from godly teachers of God's truth.

"Anointing teaches you" – through God's Spirit we learn spiritual truths which cannot be learned by any other means (1 Cor 2:10-14). Compare Isa 54:13; Ps 25:4,5. The divine Teacher actually lives in believers – Rom 8:9,15,16.

**2:28** "Remain in him" – v 24.

"Appears" – 3:2; Matt 24:30; Col 3:4; 1 Tim 6:14; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28.

"Not be ashamed" – the only way to be without shame before Him is to live in a way pleasing to Him. And this can be done only by continuing in Him – John 15:4,5.

**2:29** "Righteous" – what a person is will be revealed by what he does (Matt 7:15-20). Notes on doing right at Matt 7:21; Rom 6:16-18; 8:4; etc. In fact, we might say what a person does is what he is.

"Born of Him" – John 3:3-8; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23.

**3:1** "What kind of love" – 4:8-10; John 3:16; Rom 5:8; Eph 1:4; 2:4. We are worthy of nothing but hell. It was because of His great love that God took such sinners as we are and transformed them into His children.

"The Father" – note at Matt 5:16.

God. Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know him. 2 Dearly loved ones, we are now the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we will be, but we know that when he appears, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

4 Whoever commits sin also breaks the Law, for sin is the breaking of the Law. 5 And you know that he was revealed to take away our sins, and in

him is no sin. 6 Whoever remains in him does not go on sinning. Whoever goes on sinning has not seen him, and has not known him.

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He who commits sin is of the devil. For the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever is born of God does not go on sinning, for his seed

"Sons of God" – John 1:12,13; Rom 8:16,17; Phil 2:15; Heb 2:13; 1 Pet 1:14. Not everyone is a child of God – only those who have received the Lord Jesus and been born again by God's Spirit.

"Does not know us. . . know Him" – John 15:21; 16:3. Because believers are new people, born again, and "in Christ" the world does not know them any better than it knows Christ. They are not of the world just as Christ is not of the world (John 17:14,16). The world cannot understand their nature, their motives, their faith or anything that God has put in their hearts.

**3:2** "What we will be" – God has not given a full revelation of what it will mean in eternity to be God's children.

"When he appears" – 2:28.

"We will be like Him" – see Rom 8:29. This is the highest conceivable goal for any human being. When believers see Him they will be changed into His likeness forever (1 Cor 15:48-54).

"We will see him as he is" – Matt 5:8; 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:4.

**3:3** Those who hope to become like Christ when He comes will want to be like Him now. The process of becoming like Him has already begun (2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:9,10), and real believers will cooperate with God in this work of purification. Compare Heb 12:14.

"Purifies" – 1:7,9; 2 Cor 7:1. We can only purify ourselves by walking in the light.

**3:4** Sin is setting up one's own will against God and against God's revelation of right and wrong. It is to act as if there were no law of God, no principle of righteousness in the universe. It is to be taken up fully with one's own selfish desires.

**3:5** "To take away our sins" – John 1:29; Rom 11:27; Heb 9:28; 10:11-14,17.

"In him is no sin" – Heb 4:15; 7:26. This can be said only of the Lord Jesus Christ. John has already pointed out that believers must not say it of themselves – 1:8.

**3:6** Everyone is either in sin or in Christ. Those in sin practice sin as a way of life. Those in Christ cannot do this. They have been born again (2:29). They are the children of the righteous God and therefore have a righteous nature (3:1). God's Spirit lives in them (4:13). It is impossible for them to continue as they were before (Eph 2:1-3). Believers sometimes fall into sin (1:7; 2:1; 5:16; etc), but they do not, cannot knowingly continue to sin as a way of life (Prov 24:16). If they sin, their new

nature revolts against sin and causes them to reject it and strive to get out of it. And Christ is praying that they will get out of it. And the Holy Spirit in them (Luke 22:31,32; John 17:17; Heb 7:25) convicts them and urges them to get out of it.

If people who profess to be Christians remain in sin and practice it as a way of life, this shows they were not Christ's sheep, not born of God. Compare 2 Pet 2:22. The children of God are totally different from the children of the devil and this will be seen in their behavior.

"Does not go on sinning" – the Greek word is in the present tense and may be translated like this, and this certainly states the truth accurately. Or it could be translated "continue to sin" or perhaps "practice sinning." The translation "does not sin" may suggest that a believer never, ever sins. But John (just as other apostles) has already shown that this is not true – 1:9; 2:1.

**3:7,8** "Let no one deceive you" – 2:26; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 6:7; Eph 5:6. There are only two ways of life open to people – the way of sin and the way of righteousness. Every one is either in the one way or in the other (compare Matt 7:13,14; Rom 2:6-10). This does not mean that a righteous person never sins (1:7,9; 2:1; Jam 3:2; etc), or that a sinner never does a righteous act. John is speaking of the whole course of a person's life. In the life of a righteous person doing right will predominate. In the life of a sinner doing wrong will predominate.

"Righteous" – 2:29.

"Devil" – Matt 4:1; Eph 2:2. Every person is either of God or of Satan (v 10). See John 8:44. If God does not rule our lives, the devil will.

"Beginning" – Satan was the original sinner.

"Destroy the works of the devil" – the devil's work is sin and death. Christ came to destroy these in His people. By dying for their sins and rising again He laid the foundation for this destruction, and for the destruction of the devil too.

**3:9** "Born of God" – John 3:3-7.

"Does not go on practicing sin" – v 6.

"His seed" – God's seed, spiritual seed that gives spiritual life (1 Cor 9:11). This seed is the Word of God (Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23; Matt 13:3,23; Luke 8:15). It is sown in the hearts of people; it germinates and produces a new nature.

"Remains in him" – believers need not



remains in him and he cannot go on sinning, because he is born of God. 10 In this the children of God are revealed, and the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, neither *is* he who does not love his brother.

11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 12 *and* not *be* like Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil, and his brother's *were* righteous.

13 Do not be surprised, my brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.

fear that God's seed in them will die or be taken away by Satan. It will remain, and God will continue the work He has begun (Phil 1:6; 2:13).

"Cannot go on sinning" – continuance in sin is altogether contrary to the believer's new nature received from God. This new nature cannot sin at all (Eph 4:24), and will join with God's Spirit in the fight against sin and the sinful nature in believers (Gal 5:17,18,24).

**3:10** John is saying every person is either a child of God or a child of Satan (John 8:44; Matt 13:38), and we can tell what an individual is by what he does or does not do (Matt 7:15-20).

"Practice righteousness" – doing what is right is doing what the Bible teaches, not what people may think is right (compare John 16:2). Those who do not do right are doing wrong, through they may not always realize this. And if they do not practice doing right they are Satan's children, not God's.

"Love his brother" – this is one of the right things Jesus commanded. "Brother" has a broad meaning – including a fellow believer and brother by blood (as in v 12).

**3:11** John 13:34; 15:12,17.

**3:12** "Cain" – Gen 4:1-8; Heb 11:4; Jude 11. Cain belonged to the "the wicked one", Satan (v 10). Abel was a child of God who did what God told him (Heb 11:4).

**3:13** John 15:18-21. Cain is one example of the people of the world hating the people of God.

**3:14** "Passed from death to life" – see John 5:24. What is the great evidence seen in those who have experienced this? Love of fellow believers. Compare v 19; 2:3.

"Death" – spiritual death (Eph 2:1). Having a heart that does not love is the great evidence of this. God who is love lives in the hearts of all believers, and He causes them to love.

**3:15** Hate is like murder because if it could it would destroy the person it hates. God looks at the state of the heart as well as the acts of a person. Compare Matt 5:27-30.

"Murderer" – a murderer could receive eternal life if he repented and trusted Christ. Then he would stop being a hater, and the murder he had committed would be forgiven.

He who does not love *his* brother remains in death. 15 Whoever goes on hating *his* brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling in him.

16 By this we know the love *of God*: because he laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world's good things, and sees his brother in need and shuts up his heart toward him, how can the love of God be in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater

**3:16** "By this we know" – John shows what love is by pointing us to one who is love incarnate, and speaking of what love caused Him to do. See Rom 5:8; Gal 2:20; John 3:16; 10:11,15. Believers should be willing even to die for fellow believers. This is the standard of love God shows and teaches us. How sad it is that many who think of themselves as good Christian people will hardly lift a finger to help another Christian. How sad, and also how dangerous, as the next verses show.

**3:17,18** Compare Jam 2:14-17. Without deeds faith is dead. We can say the same about love. Love that does not practice good deeds is not love at all. So-called love that does not help others is a false, deceptive and useless thing. When Christ comes to judge the nations the basis of His judgment will be what people have and have not done, not the fine words they may have uttered, or the fine emotions they may think they have felt. See Matt 25:31-46 (vs 41-46 are especially meaningful in the light of John's words here). Of course those who have real love do not help others with a view of getting some benefit for themselves (such help is only disguised selfishness). They help those in need simply because they need help. Note and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15.

**3:19** Verse 14. If we know we love fellow believers because we have proved our love in helping them, this gives us knowledge that we are rightly related to God's truth. And we have rest in God's presence. Perhaps one reason some Christians lack assurance of salvation lies in this: They have not proved their love in action, in kind and helpful deeds.

**3:20** "Condemns us" – sometimes the hearts of believers condemn them. This may be because they have sinned (1:9; 2:1); or perhaps because they are reminded how little their love is, how scarce the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, or how they have failed to do what they should have done. But if we love and have shown our love in action we can have rest in God's presence.

"God. . . knows" – He is the great one and knows all about our weakness, failures, and sinfulness, and still receives us as His



than our heart, and knows all things.

21 Dearly loved ones, if our heart does not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God. 22 And whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commands, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his command, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he commanded us. 24 And he who keeps his commands remains in him, and he in him. And by this we know that he remains in us, by the Spirit which he has given *to* us.

**4** Dearly loved ones, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into

dear children, and leads us on to higher things. Compare Ps 103:8-14.

**3:21** "If our heart does not condemn us" – when we are full of love and good works, and victorious over sin, our hearts and consciences will not accuse us.

"Confidence" – this is not the confidence of self-righteousness but the confidence that God is in us and working in us.

**3:22** John 14:13-15; 15:7.

"Those things. . .pleasing in his sight" – we have no right to expect God to answer our prayers if we will not obey Him or try to please Him. He will not reward our disobedience and self-centeredness by giving us the blessings of answered prayer. The things which please God are things produced by faith and love, the acts of faith through love (Gal 5:6; Heb 11:6).

**3:23** "Name" – John 1:12.

**3:24** John 14:20-23; 17:21-23.

"Know" – vs 14,19; 2:5; 4:13.

"By the Spirit" – the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,17). The Spirit gives believers the knowledge that they are the children of God – Rom 8:15,16.

"Has given us" – 1 Cor 6:19; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13,14.

**4:1-6** In these verses John gives two tests which enable us to know whether people are following God's truth or not. Verses 2,3 gives the first one, v 6 the second.

**4:1** "Do not believe every spirit" – God's Spirit is in the world, but so are evil spirits. These evil spirits influence men to teach false doctrines, and may also speak through them. See 2 Cor 11:14,15; 1 Tim 4:1-3. So we must not believe every person who claims to teach the truth, or every spirit which speaks through men.

"False prophets" – 2:18; 2 Pet 2:1. Observe the word "many."

**4:2,3** See 2:22.

"Flesh" – John 1:14; Heb 2:14. To deny this is to deny the incarnation, the virgin birth, the union of God's nature and human nature in Christ – all clear Bible truths.

"Does not confess" – they do not openly say that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. They do not preach the truth expressed in

the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. This is that *spirit* of antichrist, about which you have heard that it would come. And even now it is already in the world.

4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world. 5 They are of the world, so they speak of the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are of God. He who knows God listens to us, *but* he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 Dearly loved ones, let us love one another;

John 1:14. They may not openly deny it either. But by their failure to acknowledge it they show they do not believe it. Deceivers and false teachers can be recognized by what they do not say as well as by what they do say.

"Already in the world" – compare 2 Thess 2:7.

**4:4** "Have overcome them" – 2:13; 5:4. Believers are God's chosen ones; their new spiritual life has come from God. They are able to discern false teachers and reject their teachings.

"He who is in you" – the Spirit of Christ (3:24; Rom 8:9,10).

"He who is in the world" – Satan. God's Spirit is far greater than this evil spirit. Therefore believers can overcome Satan (Jam 4:7; Eph 6:10-13).

**4:5** "They" – false teachers.

"World" – 2:15,16. False prophets teach what unsaved, unspiritual people want to hear, so they are accepted (2 Tim 4:3).

**4:6** Here is a very important test.

"We" – John means true teachers of God's Word, those whom God has sent. Real believers (those who know God) listen to them, recognize them as men of God and obey their teaching (compare Acts 2:42). Believers recognize teachers of God's truth, and the teachers recognize God's children. The test and proof have to do with God's revelation of the truth. Those who will not receive the teaching of Christ's gospel as recorded in the Bible are not of God, no matter what they may think.

**4:7-21** These verses reveal what love is. The words love, loves, and loved, noun and verb, appear 24 times in these verses. John's point is this: God is love and has proved His love toward us in action, therefore we must love and prove our love toward others in action (3:18).

**4:7,8** "Let us love" – John 13:34. Real love has its source in God, and because believers are born of God they should be like God in loving. The love he speaks of here is divine love (agape; see note at 1 Cor:13:1). It is the love God has and which He imparts to those who believe in Christ (John 17:26).

for love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was revealed toward us: God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Love is *seen* in this: Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

11 Dearly loved ones, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is made perfect in us.

13 By this we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father sent the

No one else in the world has it. This love is not at all the same as the natural affection the people of the world may feel for friends, and families. It has nothing to do with sexual love. It is unselfish love, love that wants to serve and bring blessings to others, love that seeks the spiritual good of others. It is best seen in God's sending His Son to die for us (v 9; Rom 5:8). The surest evidence that people have been born again and know God is that they have God's love in their hearts. If people have it, it will appear in what they do.

"He who does not love does not know God" – people may pride themselves on their enlightenment and knowledge of God, but if they do not have God's love, they are deceiving themselves. They may have all sorts of mystical experiences and self-satisfying emotions, but if these do not cause them to love believers in Christ those things are false and useless and deceptive.

"God is love" – also v 16. This is God's essence, His nature. He cannot but love.

**4:9,10** John 3:16; Rom 5:8; Eph 2:4,5. God is the source of divine love, not man. We would never know what divine love is if God did not show us. We would never love Him if He had not loved us and given His love in our hearts (v 19).

"Propitiation" – see the note on 2:2.

**4:11** Believers ought to love one another because of what God is and what they are.

**4:12** "No man has seen God" – John 1:18; 1Tim 6:16.

"God dwells in us" – John 14:23; Rom 8:9. This is true only of believers in Christ (Eph 2:12; 4:18). And the proof that it is true of them is the fact that they have love for each other. If God is in us, love is in us, and if God's love (agape) is in us, God is in us.

"Love. . . made perfect" – it is through the love of God's people for one another that God's love is fulfilled on earth.

**4:13** See 3:24; John 17:21-23.

**4:14** See 1:1,2.

"Saviour of the world" – 2:2; John 4:42; 1Tim 4:10.

**4:15** "Confesses" – see 1:9 where the same word appears. Confessing Jesus is God's Son means that we believe Him and what

Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. 17 Our love is made perfect in this: That we can have boldness in the day of judgment, because in this world we are just as he is. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear is *linked with* torment. He who fears is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his

He said, and we say so. We know He is the Son of God only because He revealed it to us. And this faith brings us to God and joins our life with His.

"The Son of God" – not a son of God. Notes at Matt 3:17; John 3:16; 5:18-23. **4:16** We know God's love not merely because He says He loves us, but because He proved His love in the most wonderful way possible (v 9; 3:16). Since God has given us absolutely convincing proof of His love we must never doubt that He loves us. No matter what difficulties, troubles or suffering come to us, or to those we love, we can count on God's love. It will never fail, never leave us (Ps 23:6; Rom 8:35-39; 1Cor 13:8).

**4:17** "Perfect" – v 12.

"Boldness" – 3:19,21; 2:28.

"Day of judgment" – Matt 10:15; 11:22,24; 2Cor 5:10; 2Pet 2:9; 3:7.

"We are just as he is" – as Christ is – John 17:14. God will judge believers as His children, as those who have His life and His love in them.

**4:18** Do thoughts of the day of judgment bring fear to our hearts? Then we are not loving as we should.

"Perfect love" – this means love that is complete and fully developed. We see it in the life of Christ and we should know this love and have it in our lives (compare Eph 3:16-19). When we have it we will not fear even the judgment of God. See 2Cor 5:6-9; Phil 1:21,23; 2Tim 4:7,8.

"Drives out fear" – John is not speaking of the fear of God, that reverential respect and awe which is very important to the spiritual life of believers (notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 86:11; 111:10; Prov 1:7). John here means fear of punishment, fear of meeting God face to face in judgment.

**4:19** Verse 10. God has shown us what real love is, and through His love has made us His children and put His love in us. Compare Rom 5:5.

**4:20** See 2:9; 3:14,15. People may imagine they can love God without loving other people, but this is quite impossible. If we love God it is only because God has put this love in us, and this divine love in us

brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And we have this command from him: He who loves God must love his brother also.

**5** Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves him who did the begetting loves him also who is begotten by him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commands. 3 For this is love for God, that we keep his commands. And his commands are not grievous.

4 For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the

will cause us to love people just as surely as we love God. Real love for God and for people cannot be separated.

**4:21** What is a spiritual necessity, God commands us to put in practice. He is speaking of love shown in action (3:16-18).

**5:1** "Jesus is the Christ" - 2:22; 3:23; 4:2. To believe Jesus is the Christ is to accept God's revelation about Jesus and to trust that truth. A real belief that Jesus is the Christ is a gift of God (Phil 1:29; Eph 2:8,9). It has a profound effect on anyone who has it (compare Acts 2:36-42). Of course, merely to say we believe that Jesus is the Christ without really believing it will have no good effect whatever.

"Born of God" - 2:29; John 1:12,13.

"Loves him also who" - if we love God we will love all those who are born of God (4:20).

**5:2** "Know" - can we not know we love God's people because we have good feelings toward them and want to help them? This is not proof of love if we do not show our love to God by obedience to His Word. Love and obedience go together. If we know we love God because we heartily obey His commands, we can be sure we love God's children.

**5:3** John 17:15,21,23.

"Grievous" - or "burdensome" - a principal meaning of the Greek word. Compare Matt 11:29,30.

**5:4** God's commands are not burdensome to believers because they have a new nature which loves God, and God Himself lives in them (4:12).

"Whoever" - everyone without exception.

"Overcomes the world" - compare 2:13,14; 4:4. Believers began to overcome the world by leaving the ways and sins of the world and coming by faith to Christ. The moment they did this they had overcome the world, and they continue to overcome it by continuing to believe in Christ. God has called them out of the world and separated them to be His special people (John 17:6,14,16). Faith is victory over the world because it binds us to Christ who is the great Victor over the world (John 16:33). **5:5** See 4:15.

"But the one who believes" - people may try to overcome the world by ascetic

world: our faith. 5 Who is *the one* who overcomes the world, but *the one* who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is *the one* who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is truth.

7 For there are three who testify in heaven: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.

8 And there are three that testify on earth: The Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree as one.

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the

practices or by withdrawing from the world. This is not overcoming the world but running from it. This will not work. Those who try this method take the world along with them in their hearts, and what they are doing is actually a part of the world they hope to overcome. Note on overcoming at Rev 2:7.

**5:6** Matt 3:13-17; 26:28; John 19:34. In the Bible water is sometimes a symbol of spiritual life and God's Spirit (John 4:10,14; 7:38,39). Blood speaks of sacrifice for sin, the basis of forgiveness and cleansing (1:7; Eph 1:7). Christ was born of God's Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, was full of spiritual life, and became the source of spiritual life to others. And He finished His earthly life by laying it down as a sacrifice for our sins.

"Spirit who testifies" - John 15:26; 16:13-15. God's Spirit continues to do this everywhere throughout this age.

"The Spirit is truth" - John 14:6,17; Ps 31:5; Titus 1:2.

**5:7,8** A part of these verses - "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that testify on earth" are missing from all the earliest Greek manuscripts now available, but are found in a famous Latin translation of the Greek. Erasmus, a Greek scholar of the 16th century, included them in the Greek text he published and so they came into the King James Version of the Bible. It is not impossible that they were in the original Greek manuscript, unlikely as nearly all authorities on the subject think this is. However that might be, the truth these words teach is seen everywhere in the New Testament. See notes at Matt 3:16,17; etc. **5:8** The facts of the life and death of Christ are written down and are like witnesses. God's Spirit speaks to us of them also. All three are in perfect agreement. The inner witness says the same thing as the outer. The believer's experience and the Bible agree.

**5:9** "The testimony of men" - compare John 8:17. We believe many things because men say them. Should we not then believe a far greater testimony, that of God Himself? The water, the blood and the Spirit (vs 6,8) are God's witness to Christ. Two of them are

testimony of God which he has given concerning his Son. 10 He who believes on the Son of God has *this* testimony in himself. He who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he does not believe the record that God gave about his Son. 11 And this is the record: God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

13 I have written these things to you who believe on the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of

recorded in the Gospels; God's Spirit testifies both in the words of the Bible (which He inspired) and to our minds and hearts.

"The testimony of God" – compare John 5:36,37; 8:18. We have this testimony in the New Testament. Indeed, we can say that the whole Bible is God's testimony to Christ.

**5:10** When we trust in Christ we obtain an inner conviction that the written record about Him is true. This is produced by God's Spirit.

"Liar" – 1:10. Not to believe what God says is a grave insult and dishonor to Him.

**5:11** "Eternal life" – John 3:16,36; 6:47; 17:2.

"In His Son" – v 20; 1:2; John 11:25,26; 14:6; Col 3:4.

**5:12** Eternal life, spiritual life is obtainable only in one person – Jesus the Son of God. If we do not have Him in us we are spiritually dead (Eph 4:18). And we will not be able to obtain spiritual life from God in some other way (John 3:36). How can we expect to receive it if we reject the one and only source of it?

"Has" – believers have eternal life as a present possession (John 3:36; 5:24).

**5:13** God does not want believers in Christ to be doubtful about their salvation. They have eternal life, and they should know that they have it. This is one reason why God inspired John to write this letter. How can believers be sure they are saved? What is the evidence, what are the signs John points to? Assurance of salvation comes from the following:

By believing the testimony of God in His Word (v 9,11)

By the inner testimony of God's Spirit (v 10; 3:24)

By relying on the promise of the forgiveness of sins (1:7-9)

By the evidence of obedience to God (2:5; 5:2)

By the evidence of right living (2:29; 3:6,10)

By the evidence of the fruit of love in our lives (3:14,18,19; 4:12).

John also gives us statements of truth which assure believers (4:15; 5:1). Full assurance of salvation is based on three things –

The written Word of God

God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him: If we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have made to him.

16 If any man sees his brother commit a sin *which is* not to death, he should pray, and he will give him life for those whose sin is not to death. There is a sin *leading* to death. I do not say that he should pray concerning it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin that is not to death.

18 We know that whoever is born of God does

The inner experience of believers

The outer evidence of the way they live and love.

**5:14,15** Because believers have eternal life they can have confidence in coming into God's presence (compare Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18; 3:12; Heb 4:16; 10:19-22). Our confidence is this: God will answer all prayers if they are according to His will, and He will give us what we ask for. Asking God according to our own will is a different matter. We should not expect Him to answer such prayers. Matt 6:10 gives what should always be the chief concern of every believer. But how do we know what God's will is? The whole Bible reveals it. If we are ignorant of the Bible we will not know God's will. But if we study it we can see what He wants to give us in answer to our believing prayer (compare Jam 1:6,7).

**5:16** Praying for others who sin is a duty of believers. Compare Jam 5:16.

"Sin which is not to death" – why does some sin not lead to death? Because God can forgive it, and will forgive it when confessed (1:9). What is the sin that is "to death"? Since John did not explain it we should not speak too dogmatically about it. The probable meaning seems to be this: a sin which God will not forgive. See Matt 12:31,32; Heb 2:3; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:25. Those who knowingly, willfully, deliberately reject Christ and His gospel and go on doing so make it impossible for God to forgive them. John does not say that believers can commit this sin. Indeed, 3:6,9 teaches that they cannot.

**5:17** See 3:4. The fact that there is sin which does not lead to death should not encourage us to sin, but should give us hope of forgiveness if we sin.

**5:18** "Does not go on sinning" – 3:6. Many translators of this verse believe that "whoever is born of God" refers to any believer, and "he who was born of God" refers to the Lord Jesus. His physical birth of a virgin was by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:35; Gal 4:4). His resurrection from the dead was like a birth (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5). And the life He had from eternity was from God (John 5:26).

"Keeps him" – that is, Christ keeps the believer (John 10:28; Rom 5:9,10).

"That wicked one" – Satan.

not go on sinning, but he who was born of God keeps him, and that wicked one does not hold him.

19 *And* we know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies prostrate in wickedness.

20 And we know that the Son of God has come,

and has given us an understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

"Does not hold him" – or "does not touch him" (KJV); the same verb is translated "do not cling to me" in John 20:17. Satan cannot keep his hands on believers, cannot hold them in his power. Christ is in them and He is greater than Satan (4:4). What John says here is true of all who have been born again, not of just a few exceptional saints.

**5:19** "Know" – see in this letter the things John says believers "know" – 2:5,20; 3:2,5,14,16,19,24; 4:16; 5:13,15, 18,20.

"In wickedness" – 2:16. Or the Greek could be translated "in the wicked one." See John 14:30; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 2 Tim 2:26. This is why the world is the ungodly place it is.

**5:20** "Given us an understanding" – compare Luke 24:45; 1 Cor 2:12,16.

"That we may know Him" – Matt 11:27. This is the only way to a true knowledge of God.

"In Him" – John 17:21-23; 1 Cor 12:12,13; Eph 1:3,4. The world is "in" the wicked one; believers are "in" Christ. The words "true God" refer to Christ. See references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11. He is also eternal life (v 11; John 11:25; 14:6). Only of God could it be said that He is eternal life.

**5:21** "Idols" – he has spoken of the true God, and this has brought to his mind the thought of false gods. All that men worship or serve which is not the true God is an idol. An idol may be a physical object or it may be a false idea of what God is like. Let us guard ourselves against any kind of idolatry.

The Second Letter of the Apostle

# JOHN

**Author:**

John one of the original apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Probably sometimes between 85 and 95 AD.

**Theme:**

Some scholars think that John is writing to a church which he speaks of figuratively as “the elect lady.” Others think he is writing to a Christian woman and her children (this seems a more likely view). In either case what he writes has the same value for us. Two key words are “truth” and “love.” There is a very severe warning about false teachers in verses 7-11, and we would all do well to pay close attention to it.

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1 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all those who have known the truth; 2 for the truth's sake, which dwells in us, and will be with us forever. 3 Grace be with you, *and* mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I greatly rejoiced because I found some of your children walking in truth, *just* as we have received a command from the Father. 5 And now I urge you, lady (not as though I wrote a new command to you, but that which we have had from the beginning), that we love one another. 6 And this is love: that we walk according to his commands. This is the command: just as you have heard from

**1** "Elder" – John does not call himself an apostle (though of course he was one). The apostles were called elders by others and sometimes referred to themselves as elders (1 Pet 5:1). The word indicates both mature years and leadership in the Church.

"Elect" – the Greek word may also be translated "chosen" (Matt 24:22,24,31; Rom 8:33; Eph 1:4; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:9; etc).

"Lady" – the Greek here is *Kyria* and was a common personal name. John was writing to a well-known believer and her children.

"I love in the truth" – his love was not human emotion or mere natural affection but divine love (*agape* – note at 1 Cor 13:1). And this love is always based on the truth. "Truth" here is the same as the message of Christ (John 1:17). Believers love each other because of their mutual devotion to the truth God has revealed.

**2** "Dwells in us" – believers in Christ do more than acknowledge the truth with their minds. They welcome the truth into their hearts, and the truth remains there to influence all their behavior. Compare Ps 51:6. And Christ, who is the truth (John 14:6) is in them.

"Forever" – John was confident that truth once fully implanted in the believer's heart would remain to eternity.

**3** 1 Tim 1:2.

"The Son of the Father" – observe how John distinguishes between the Father and Christ. Christ is not the Father. The Father is not Christ. They exist in eternity as two distinct persons in the one Godhead. See v 9 also. See notes on Father, Son, and Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; 5:16; 28:19; John 3:16; 17:1; etc.

"Grace", "mercy", and "peace" are what make Christian life and service possible. Grace is the fountain in God's heart; mercy is grace poured out; peace is the result.

**4** "Very glad" – we can learn much about the character of a person by what gives him joy.

"Walking in truth" – believing God's truth and putting it into practice. Compare John 8:31,32.

"Command from the Father" – compare

the beginning you should walk in *love*.

**7** For many deceivers have gone out into the world, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

**8** Watch yourselves so that we do not lose those things which we have worked for, but that we receive a full reward.

**9** Whoever transgresses, and does not remain in the teachings of Christ, does not have God. He who remains in the teachings of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

**10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not greet him. **11** For he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Deut 5:33; 10:12; 1 Kings 2:3; Isa 30:21; Jer 6:16. God's command to repent (Acts 17:30) is a command to forsake all evil and all lies and deception and to walk in the truth.

**5** John 13:34.

**6** John 14:15,21,23. It is useless and deceptive to think or say we love God if we do not do what He tells us to do.

**7** "Deceivers" – compare Matt 24:4,24; Rom 16:18; 2 Cor 11:13-15. They come from the chief of all deceivers (Rev 12:9).

"In the flesh" – John 1:14. Christ became a man with real human nature (Heb 2:14,17). In fact, He still has it, now risen from the dead and glorified, and He will come again with it.

"Antichrist" – 1 John 2:18,22; 4:3 – an opponent of Christ who tries to take Christ's place.

**8** By listening to false teachers and falling under their influence true believers will not lose their salvation, but they may lose everything else. Compare Rev 3:11; 2 Tim 2:5; 1 Cor 9:27.

"Full reward" – Rev 22:12.

**9** Some people believe they are advanced thinkers and can leave the truth of Christ behind. Such people only reveal that they are without God. Compare 1 John 2:19.

"Remains" – John 8:32; 2 Tim 3:14. Those who continue in the truth reveal that God is in them.

"Both" – v 3 – evidently refers to more than one person.

**10** "If anyone comes" – he is speaking of those who teach something other than what Christ taught. We must not welcome false teachers into our homes or have any fellowship with them anywhere. We should not even greet them (compare 2 Cor 6:15; Rom 16:17). If we do, we place ourselves in danger, and give the impression to others that their teaching may not be so bad after all.

**11** "Evil deeds" – this is what teaching contrary to Christ's teaching really is. In fact, it is some of the most evil work possible to men. Believers must have no share in it, or seem to have a share in it, or help it in any way.

12 Having many things to write to you, I would not *write* with paper and ink, but I trust to come to you, and speak face to face,

that our joy may be full.

13 The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

**12** "Joy" – this is the joy of true Christian fellowship in the truth. Compare 1 John 1:4.

**13** Evidently her sister was a believer and this sister's children were living in the same city where John was at the time.

# The Third Letter of the Apostle JOHN

**Author:**

John one of the original apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Probably sometime between 85 and 95 AD.

**Theme:**

Three individuals – John's good friend Gaius who behaved in accordance with the truth, Diotrephes who exalted himself and opposed John, and Demetrius witnessed to by the truth itself. Believers are to follow the example of Gaius and Demetrius and to reject the example of Diotrephes. Verse 11 seems to be the key verse.

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1 The elder to the dearly loved Gaius whom I love in the truth.

2 Dear *friend*, above everything I want you to prosper and be in health, just as your soul prospers. 3 For I greatly rejoiced when the brethren came and testified about the truth that is in you, just as you are walking in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth.

5 Dear *friend*, you are doing faithfully whatever you do for the brethren, and for strangers. 6 They have testified before the church about your love. If you bring them forward on their journey in a godly way, you will do well; 7 because they went forth for his name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. 8 Therefore we ought to receive such, so that we might be helpers together for the truth.

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who

loves to have the preeminence among them, will not receive us. 10 So, if I come, I will remember the deeds which he does, chattering against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he does not receive the brethren himself, and forbids those who want to *do so*, and puts *them* out of the church.

11 Dear *friend*, do not follow what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

12 All *men* speak well of Demetrius, and the truth itself *does also*. Yes, and we *also* testify *for him*; and you know that our testimony is true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not write to you with ink and pen. 14 But I hope to see you soon, and we will speak face to face. Peace *be* to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

1 "Elder" – 2 John 1.

"Gaius" – there are three men named Gaius in Acts and the letters of Paul (Acts 19:29; etc). It was a common name in those days, and we do not know whether this Gaius was one of those three or another person.

"In the truth" – 2 John 1.

2 Gaius was doing well in his inner spiritual life. But it seems he was facing difficulties in other matters, and these may have affected his health. No doubt John prayed for what he saw was Gaius' real need.

3,4 "Very glad" – 2 John 4.

"The brethren" – spiritual brothers, believers in Christ.

"Walking in the truth" – Gaius was sincere and loyal to God's revelation. He accepted the truth and lived according to it.

"In the truth" – 2 John 4.

"My children" – he means spiritual children, those who had come to Christ through his ministry, or those whom he had nurtured with the Word of God. Compare 1 Tim 1:2.

5 "Faithfully" – his faithfulness to the truth of God made him faithful in helping Christ's servants in any way he could. He put the truth he had learned into practice – an example to us all.

6 "Love" – love shown in action – 1 John 3:16-18.

"Bring them. . . on their journey" – John is referring to traveling evangelists who went from place to place preaching Christ's gospel. When it was time to go to another place to preach, Gaius would give them provisions or money for the journey.

"You will do well" – Christians in local churches should treat God's servants in a way pleasing to God who calls them and puts them in the ministry.

7,8 "For his name's sake" – he meant the Lord Jesus Christ. These traveling preachers did not go out for their own sakes, or for any profit or gain.

"Gentiles" – evidently they were working chiefly among people other than Jews. These servants of Christ trusted God to

meet their needs and went to preach the truth. And they did not accept help from the people among whom they went. If believers in the churches did not help them they would have to endure great difficulties.

"Helpers together for the truth" – not all believers can be evangelists or traveling preachers or missionaries, but all can help those who are. The whole church with one heart and mind should do all in their power to see that the gospel goes out to everyone on the face of the earth.

9 "Diotrephes" – here was a man so vain, so arrogant, so ambitious that he would have nothing to do with the great apostle John himself. He wanted to be the one authority in the church, the one everybody else noticed and looked up to and obeyed. Such men are still with us in the churches. We must watch out for those who are ambitious for self rather than for Christ.

10 "Chattering against us" – some people think that the way to be first is by putting everyone else down. By destroying the reputation of others they vainly imagine that theirs will shine brighter.

"Puts them out of the church" – he not only had no interest in helping God's servants spread the gospel, he tried to prevent others from helping, perhaps thinking these "brothers" were a threat to his supremacy in the church there?

11 "Follow. . . what is good" – 1 Cor 4:16; Eph 5:1; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; Heb 6:12; 13:7. "He who does good is of God" – that is, he who practices good, as revealed by God – 1 John 3:7-10. Not everything that men think is good is good in God's eyes (Luke 16:15).

"Does" – he is not speaking of one act, but the manner of life of a person.

12 "The truth itself" – in other words, he put the truth of God into practice, and so according to the truth in the Bible he was a good man. The word of God tells each of us what we are by judging what we do.

14 "Peace be to you" – John 20:19,21,26; Rom 15:33.

The Letter of  
**JUDE**

**Author:**

A younger half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ and the brother of James.

**Date:**

Somewhere between 68 and 80 AD.

**Themes:**

Jude writes of those in the Church who reject the truth of Christ and teach their own false doctrines. By the inspiration of God’s Spirit he severely condemns their teaching and their life style. A key thought is in v 3 – “earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.”

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1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called: 2 May mercy, peace, and love be ever increasing toward you.

3 Dearly loved ones, while I was fully prepared to write to you about *our* common salvation, necessity drew me to write to you and urge *you* to

contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For there are certain men *who have* crept in secretly, who were long before *this* marked out for this condemnation. *They are* ungodly men *who have* turned the grace of our God into uncontrolled lust, and denied the only Master, our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

5 So I want to remind you, for you once *came*

**1** Jude means "praised." It is the same name as Judah in the Old Testament and Judas in the New Testament. There are several men named Judas or Jude in the NT. This one, it seems sure, was a half brother of the Lord Jesus (Matt 13:55; John 7:3). Before the death and resurrection of Jesus Jude did not believe in Him, but afterwards we see him among the believers in Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 9:5.

"Servant" – Rom 1:1.

"James" – Jam 1:1.

"Sanctified" – Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom 15:16; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; Heb 10:10,14.

"Preserved" – John 6:37-40; 10:27,28; 17:11,12; Rom 5:9,10; 8:28-30,35-39; 1 Cor 1:8,9; 1 Pet 1:5.

"Called" – Rom 1:6,7; 8:28,30; 9:24; 1 Cor 1:9; Gal 1:6,15; Eph 1:18; Phil 3:14; 2 Thess 2:14; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 Pet 2:9; 3:9; 5:10; 2 Pet 1:10.

**2** "Mercy" – Rom 9:15,16; 11:32; 12:1; 15:9; Eph 2:4; Titus 3:5. When believers were helpless in their sin and ignorance and weakness God saved them by His mercy. It was all an act of kindness and grace to the undeserving. Now God's mercy continues to be available to us, and this mercy of God is the foundation of peace.

"Peace" – Rom 1:7. The meaning is peace of mind and heart that comes from a right relationship to God, and harmony among believers.

"Love" – divine love (agape – see John 13:34; Rom 5:5; 1 Cor 13:1; Eph 3:17). This comes because we have received God's mercy and peace. It is the greatest of all qualities (1 Cor 13:13). Its source is God, who is love (1 John 4:7,8).

**3** "Salvation" – note at Rom 1:16. Jude wanted to write about something very great and glorious. But he saw the need of writing on another subject not so pleasant as that.

"Necessity drew me" – the need of the church demanded it and there was a great danger threatening the Christian community. God's Spirit was at work in him and compelling him.

"Contend" – the Greek word suggests combat on a battle field, which is where believers are. Compare Eph 6:11-18; 1 Tim 6:12. On the earth in general and in the Christian world there is a war going on concerning the truth God has revealed.

"The faith" – Jude does not mean here the inner experience of faith, but the body of truth God has given through Christ. He and His apostles taught us what we should believe and how we should live. This is "the

faith." It is not enough to hold right doctrine (important as that is). We must also live according to these doctrines (Eph 4:1; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12). Jude's emphasis in this letter is not on doctrine alone, but on right behavior and right doctrine together. The error he warns about is unholiness which comes out of false doctrine.

"Once delivered" – the "faith" God has revealed through Christ and His apostles is complete. Nothing should be added to it, nothing taken away. Compare Deut 4:2; Prov 30:6; Rev 22:18,19. God will not make any further revelation of any truth to be added to "the faith", not through anyone, anywhere. Any new doctrine is sure to be false. God has given the truth to believers to keep, practice and defend when it is attacked. Compare 1 Cor 4:1; 1 Thess 2:4; 1 Tim 1:11; 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14.

"Saints" – Rom 1:7.

**4** Here was the danger Jude saw. A terrible heresy had been introduced among Christians. That false teaching was this: since salvation comes entirely by God's grace and does not in any way depend on good works, Christians may live as they please; however they live, whatever they do, grace will forgive them. Compare Rom 6:1. This false teaching still exists today.

"Secretly" – 2 Pet 2:1. Often false teachers do not come openly and honestly. They slip in like thieves. They mix their errors with truth to make it more deceptive.

"Ungodly" – they professed to be Christians and followers of Christ but their behavior proved otherwise.

"Turned. . . grace. . . into uncontrolled lust" – it seems that some professing Christians in Corinth had this same idea (1 Cor 5:1,2; 6:9,12). In Titus 2:11-14 see what God's grace really teaches. See also Eph 4:19-24.

"Denied" – 2 Pet 2:1. Denial can be by actions as well as by word. These men rejected Christ's Lordship over them, but they may have said they believed He is the Lord.

"Only Master" – the Greek word here is "despotes" and means owner and possessor of absolute authority. In Luke 2:28,29 and Acts 4:24 it is a title given to God. Since Christ is our "only" Sovereign this means that Christ is God, as the whole last phrase of this verse makes clear. The above translation brings this out accurately.

"Our God and Lord" – compare 2 Pet 1:1.

**5** "Remind" – 2 Pet 1:12-15.

"The Lord" – this is a title (Greek – kurios)



to know this, that the Lord, after rescuing people out of the land of Egypt, destroyed those who did not believe.

6 And the angels who did not keep their first position but left their own dwelling place, he has kept in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

7 Just as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, *which* in the same way gave themselves up to sexual immorality and went after unnatural flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 In a similar way also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of honored ones. 9 Yet Michael the archangel, when

given to Jesus everywhere in the New Testament. And Jude calls Him Lord in the preceding verse. In this one he says He delivered His people from Egypt. In the historical record it was Jehovah who delivered the people. See Ex 3:7-12; 18:10; 19:2. This means that Jude is equating Jesus with Jehovah. See note and references on "Lord" at Luke 2:11.

"Destroyed" - Heb 3:16-19; 1 Cor 10:1-6; Num 14:11,22,23; Ps 78:22,32,33; 106:15,18,24-26,29.

6 "First position" - 2 Pet 2:4.

"Dwelling place" - heaven.

"Day" - the day of final judgment (Rev 20:11-15).

7 "Just as. . . in the same way" - this seems to mean that the sin of the people of Sodom mentioned here and the sin of the angels in v 6 was the same sin. Compare Gen 6:1-4.

"Unnatural" - Genesis chapter 19.

"Fire" - 2 Pet 2:6; Mal 4:1; Matt 3:10,12; 25:41.

8 "Dreamers" - they were out of touch with reality, behaving as if they were stupefied with lust. The word dreamers may suggest also that these men claimed to get revelations from God in visions (Deut 13:1-3; Jer 23:25,26).

"Defile the flesh" - Rom 1:24; 1 Cor 6:18.

"Reject authority. . . honored ones or 'heavenly beings'" - 2 Pet 2:10.

9 "Michael" - Dan 10:13,21; 12:1; Rev 12:7. An archangel is an angel of the highest rank.

"Devil" - note at Matt 4:1.

"About the body of Moses" - this event is not recorded in the Bible. We do not know what this dispute was about. It is not important for us to know - Deut 29:29.

"The Lord rebuke you" - see how careful Michael was in his language even when speaking to Satan. He left judgment and condemnation of others in God's hands, as we should do.

10 "Speak evil of" - 2 Pet 2:12. This shows their arrogance and wickedness.

"What they know naturally" - they know nothing of spiritual things, only the things

he contended with the devil, disputing about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him an abusive accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." 10 But these speak evil of those things which they do not know; but what they know naturally, like brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe to them! for they have gone in the way of Cain and for reward have run greedily after the error of Balaam, and have perished in the rebellion of Korah.

12 These are blots in your love feasts, when they feast with you, looking after themselves without fear. *They are* clouds without water, carried about by winds; trees whose fruit withers, without

of the body.

11 "Woe" - Isa 3:11; Matt 18:7.

"Cain" - see Gen 4:1-12. The way of Cain is to ignore God's instructions about sacrifice, and to hate those whom God accepts. See also Heb 11:4; 1 John 3:12.

"Balaam's error" - see 2 Pet 2:15.

"The rebellion of Korah" - Numbers chapter 16. These godless men bring destruction on themselves, as Korah did, by rebelling against God. In this verse we see that at the heart of these godless men are three things - hatred of the truth and those who practice it, greed for anything they can get, and rebellion against God.

12 "Love feasts" - note at 1 Cor 11:20-22.

"Looking after themselves" - greed, selfishness, and lack of consideration for others was at the heart of all they did. Compare Ezek 34:1-10; Jer 10:21; 12:10; 23:1.

"Without fear" - their conscience does not bother them, God's warnings are as nothing to them. Compare 1 Tim 4:2.

"Without water" - like clouds which promise refreshing showers and give nothing (Prov 25:14).

"Carried about" - 2 Pet 2:17.

"Without fruit" - without good fruit (they produce plenty of bad). Compare Matt 21:18,19; Luke 13:6,7.

"Twice dead" - dead in trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1), with their death confirmed by the kind of life they live (1 Tim 5:6). They were spiritually dead and dead to the truth they had rejected. And they were heading for the second death (Rev 20:14). Jude indicates that they brought it on themselves as surely as they exist. By their arrogance, unbelief and rebellion they cut themselves off from the possibility of eternal life in Christ. They were like trees not planted by God, so they were lacking spiritual life; and they were uprooted so there would never be any hope of spiritual life.

"Plucked up by the roots" - see Matt 15:13. God had not planted these people. They had no contact with anything that could produce good fruit in their lives. They were the exact opposite of what true believers should be, and, to some extent, are -

fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; 13 raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these *people*, saying, "Look, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his saints, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all the ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed *in an* ungodly way, and of all their hard words which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

16 These are grumblers, complainers, walking after their own lusts. And their mouth speaks great swelling words, flattering people for the sake of *getting some* advantage.

17 But, dearly loved ones, remember the words which were spoken previously by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, 18 how they told you there

would be mockers in the last time who would walk after their own ungodly desires. 19 These are those who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit.

20 But you, dearly loved ones, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

22 And have compassion on some *people*, making a distinction; 23 and others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 to God our Saviour, *who* alone *is* wise, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Eph 3:17; Col 2:7.

**13** "Raging waves" – restless, tossed by their raging desires. Compare Isa 57:20,21.

"Foaming out their own shame" – the sin in their hearts coming out in filthy actions.

"Wandering stars" – they have no fixed orbits around Christ, and are not heading for the goal set before Christians (Phil 3:14).

"Darkness" – 2 Pet 2:17; compare Phil 2:15; Dan 12:3.

**14,15** Gen 5:18,21-14. This quotation is not from the Bible. The Holy Spirit inspired Jude and gave him words spoken by Enoch thousands of years before. (There is a book called the "Book of Enoch", but it is not inspired by God and it contains some ridiculous legends. It cannot be proved that Jude used it for this quotation). Apart from Jude we would not know that Enoch was a prophet. Ungodliness was exceedingly common in Enoch's day, as it is in ours. So he condemns it very strongly.

"These people" – Enoch's prophecy was about people in this age.

"Execute judgment" – Acts 17:31.

**16** There are five marks of these godless men given in this verse.

"Flattering people for . . . advantage" – they are not straight and truthful in anything. They tell others what they think they would like to hear. Their aim is to get some benefit or profit. Do we not see this on every hand today? On flattery see Job 32:21,22; Ps 12:2,3; Prov 26:28; 28:33; 29:5; Rom 16:18; 1 Thess 2:5.

**17** "Remember" – v 5; 2 Pet 1:12-15.

**18** Compare 2 Pet 3:3.

**19** "Not having the Spirit" – again he tells us that these professing Christians are not real Christians at all. See Rom 8:9. Observe that not all people even in churches have God's Spirit. See John 14:17; Rom 8:9,16; Eph 4:18.

**20** Jude now shows how believers can be

safe from apostasy and apostates.

"Building up yourselves" – compare Acts 20:32; Rom 15:2; Eph 4:12,13; 1 Thess 5:11 – it is by studying God's Word and putting the truth into practice that we can build ourselves up. It is the responsibility of every believer to do this.

"Praying in the Holy Spirit" – Eph 6:18.

**21** Christ keeps believers in a state of salvation (v 1). Believers must keep themselves in God's love. This can be done only by obedience to His Word – John 14:21,23; 15:9,10.

"Mercy" – no matter how much we obey and keep ourselves in a condition where God can express His love toward us, the fact is our salvation from beginning to end is all of His mercy.

"Eternal life" – here means the final entering into that which believers already have (John 5:24; Titus 1:2; 1 Pet 1:5).

**22** Do not be hard and unsympathetic toward them. Try to understand them and help them to believe.

**23** "Others" – we have to be able to discern the condition of people and act accordingly. Some are struggling with doubts and want to believe. Others are in grave danger and need swift action to save them. They are in danger of the fire of God's judgment. With some others we should fear lest we be dragged down into their sins (compare Gal 6:1). We should show love to the sinner but hate his sin.

**24,25** One of the greatest doxologies in the Bible.

"Keep you from falling" – or "stumbling" – God can keep us from either one – Ps 37:23,24; Rom 8:37.

"Present you faultless" – Eph 1:4; 5:26,27.

"Exceeding joy" – instead of sorrow over many failures.

"Who alone is wise" – Rom 11:36; 16:27.

# THE REVELATION of Jesus Christ

**Author:**

John, one of the original apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:**

Probably sometime about 96 AD, though some scholars think it was much earlier than this.

**Themes:**

John wrote down what Christ had revealed to him (1:1). It is “prophecy” (1:3). In it Christ appears in glory. He is the Ruler of the kings of the earth (1:5), the One who judges the churches (chapters 2,3), the “lion” of the tribe of Judah (5:5), the glorified Lamb of God (5:6), the King who will reign over God’s kingdom (19:15), the Lord of lords (19:16), the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End (22:13). This book contains things to take place after John wrote them (1:1). The theme in it is the second coming of Christ and the things that will occur before and after that event, things in heaven and on earth. This book is full of figurative language, of symbols, of signs given in language not always easy to understand. However, the leading themes are clear – the condition of churches in general and the promises and warnings Jesus gives to them, the end of this age when evil will develop to the full, the rule of antichrist over the whole earth and his cruel persecution of the people of God, the punishment God will mete out to those who follow the antichrist and the fearful disasters He will send on the earth, the harvest of the earth, the second coming of the Lord Jesus with great power and glory to rule the world, and the glorious future that awaits His followers. Along with the revelation of these events God has given many great promises and words of encouragement to believers, and visions of heaven which are sources of joy and comfort to them.

It is only fair to say that some Bible teachers do not agree that the principal theme of this book is the second coming of Christ and events related to it. Their explanation of the things revealed in this book are quite different from the explanation given in the following notes. Some of them teach that the visions and signs John saw are related to John’s own time and to a large extent have already been fulfilled. Others teach that they began to be fulfilled in John’s day and have been slowly and progressively fulfilled all through this age, that this book is a sort of pre-written church history. Still others teach that for the most part the visions and symbolic language in this book were not meant to indicate literal events, but reveal spiritual principles and lessons which apply throughout this whole age. The writer of the notes given with the text of this book does not accept any of these systems of interpretation. Of course there are spiritual principles and lessons in this book, just as there are spiritual principles and lessons in every part of the Bible, whether literal history, prophecy of future events, poetry, or those portions which give direct instruction. But this does not at all mean that the things revealed in this book do not signify real events which will take place sometime in the future. Symbols are used in other parts of the Bible to indicate literal events, and there is no good reason to think the same is not true in this book.

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**1** The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show to his servants things which must quickly take place. And he sent and signified *it* by his angel to his servant John, 2 who testified concerning the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and everything that he saw. 3 Blessed *is* he who reads the words of this prophecy, and those who hear *it* and keep those

things which are written in it, for the time *is* at hand.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness *and* the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings

**1:1** "Revelation" – this book is not an invention of men. It is a gift from heaven. It's source is God Himself, not the brain of any human being. John did not borrow the symbols, the pictures, the words of this book from any other literature. The Lord Jesus revealed it all to him.

"To show" – God gave this book to reveal the future, not to conceal it. It is for our understanding, not for our confusion.

"Servants" – in Rom 6:17-22 Paul says all true believers in Christ are God's servants or "slaves" (the Greek word means both).

"Quickly" – this does not have to mean that this book had its fulfillment in John's day or shortly after, or that it even began to have its fulfillment then. Compare 22:7,12, 20 – three times Jesus says He is coming "quickly," but He did not come in John's day or shortly afterwards, or even up until our day. What, then, does "quickly" mean? Commentators offer various explanations:

The word means soon from God's point of view (2 Pet 3:8 – less than two days from John's day to ours. See note at Ps 90:4).

Or the Greek word translated "quickly" may mean "suddenly" (things that must suddenly come to pass once they begin to happen – 1 Thess 5:2).

Or John was caught forward in vision to see the end of this age – from that point of view things took place very quickly.

Or God used the word "quickly" to indicate that the things in this book are always imminent ("at hand" – v 3) – they may begin at any moment and each generation of believers should be alert and prepared for the Lord's coming (Matt 24:36,42-44).

"Signified" – the English word means to make known by speech, action or signs. The Greek word has the same general meaning. The Revelation uses many signs and symbols, along with explanations in ordinary words, to reveal what God wanted us to know.

"Angel" – the words "angel" and "angels" are used about 80 times in this book, and about 300 times in the whole Bible. They are spirit beings usually unseen by men, but they may appear in human form from time to time. There are innumerable angels – 5:11.

**1:2** Here the "word of God" and "testimony of Jesus Christ" refer to this book of Revelation. The Lord Jesus was the final great prophet of God – notes at Deut 18:18,19; Matt 1:1; John 7:16; Heb 1:2. In this book He continued this ministry He

began on earth. It comes with His full authority.

**1:3** "Blessed" – this blessing will come on those who read and obey the truth in this book. Reading merely with the view of trying to understand the mysteries God has revealed will not result in blessing. See notes on "blessing" at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1-3; Matt 5:3-10; etc. Since God has promised a special blessing on this book we should all be encouraged to read it and apply its truth to our lives.

"Prophecy" – 19:10; 22:7,10,18,19. This is the only book of the New Testament called a prophecy, though every book in it (and in the whole Bible) came by God's inspiration.

"The time is at hand" – these words (like the word "quickly" in v 1) indicate that the things revealed in this book had not even begun to happen when John wrote these words down toward the end of his life.

"At hand" – compare 22:10; Rom 13:12; Matt 24:33; 1 Pet 4:7; Joel 1:15.

**1:4** "John" – see the Introduction.

"The seven churches" – v 11. There were more than seven churches in the province of Asia (for example, the church at Colosse was also there). But God chose these seven to represent all the churches in Asia (and no doubt, throughout the world – note at v 20).

"Asia" – note at Acts 16:6.

"Grace and peace" – Rom 1:7; etc. John now points to the Trinity as the source of grace and peace (notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc). From "Him who is and who was and who is to come" means God the Father.

"Seven spirits" – 3:1; 4:5; 5:6. These seven spirits are linked with the Father and the Son in this divine benediction and are set forth as a source of grace and peace to the churches (compare 2 Cor 13:14; Matt 28:19). So we may be sure they symbolize the one Holy Spirit of God (John 14:16,17). He is the sevenfold Spirit. "Seven" in this book is often used as a symbolic number meaning perfection, fullness, completion (compare vs 11,12,16,20; 4:5; 5:1,6; 8:2; 10:3; 12:3; 13:1; 15:1,7).

**1:5** "And from Jesus Christ" – the eternal Son of God. Here He is given three titles.

"The faithful witness" – a witness is one who knows the truth and reveals it. A faithful one does not bend the truth in any way, hides nothing that needs to be known. The Lord Jesus tells us exactly what we need to hear and holds back nothing that would be



of the earth. To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Look, he is coming with clouds, and every eye will see him, and those *also* who pierced him, and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

9 I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patient endurance of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a loud

voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. Write what you see in a book, and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke to me. And being turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the middle of the seven lampstands *someone* like the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and with a golden sash tied around the chest. 14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes *were* like a flame of fire. 15 And his feet were like fine bronze, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice *was* like the sound of many waters. 16 And he had seven stars in his right hand, and

for our good.

"Firstborn from the dead" – "firstborn" is a title of dignity, indicating pre-eminence and supremacy (Col 1:18; Ps 89:27). Christ has risen from the dead (Matt 28:6; 1 Cor 15:1-8), and has the highest position of all who will ever be raised (Phil 2:9-11).

"Ruler of the kings of the earth" – 19:16; Prov 21:1; Dan 4:34,35; 5:21. The events in this book which the kings of the earth will think they are controlling will actually be under the control of their unseen Ruler, the Lord Jesus Christ. See John 17:2; Matt 28:18.

"Loved us" – Rom 5:8; 8:37; Gal 2:20; Eph 3:18,19; 5:2. Some Greek manuscripts have the present tense of the verb.

"Washed us" – 1 Cor 6:11; 1 John 1:7.

"Blood" – Matt 26:28; Rom 3:25; Heb 9:12; 10:19.

**1:6** "Kings" – 2:26,27; 3:21; 20:4; 2 Tim 2:12; Matt 19:28-30.

"Priests" – 5:10; 7:15; 1 Pet 2:5,9.

"To Him be glory" – see John 12:28; Rom 11:36; 16:27; Jude 25.

"Amen" – this word comes from the Hebrew word for truth and means "so be it."

**1:7** John announces the great theme of this book – 2:25; 3:3,11; 11:15; 14:14-16; 16:15; 17:14; 19:11; 22:7,12,20.

"He is coming" – Matt 16:27; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; etc.

"Clouds" – Dan 7:13; Matt 24:30; 26:64; 1 Thess 4:16,17.

"Pierced Him" – John 19:34,37; Ps 22:16; Zech 12:10.

"Mourn" – Matt 24:30; Zech 12:10-14.

**1:8** "Alpha. . .Omega" – here the Lord God speaks. In 22:13 the Lord Jesus uses the same words about Himself. In other words, He knew that He was the Lord God. Alpha was the first letter of the Greek alphabet, Omega the last. God is the beginning (the One who brought things into being) and end of all things. Compare Rom 11:36; Isa 44:6. **1:9** Observe what accompanies the kingdom of the Lord Jesus in this world.

"Tribulation" – 2:9,10; 7:14; Matt 5:10;

John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom 8:17; 1 Pet 4:1,12.

"Patient endurance" – 2:2,3,19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12; Rom 5:3,4; Cor 1:6; 2 Tim 2:12; Heb 6:12; 10:36; Jam 1:3.

"Patmos" – a small island near the coast of present-day Turkey, about 80 kilometers southwest of Ephesus. Evidently the Roman authorities had banished John there because of his preaching the Word of God and the gospel of Christ.

**1:10** "In the Spirit" – 4:2; 17:3; 21:10. God's Spirit gave John an exceptional spiritual experience, a vision of the unseen. Compare Ezek 1:1; Dan 8:1; Acts 10:10,11.

"The Lord's day" – Sunday, the first day of the week, the day on which Jesus rose from the dead – Matt 28:1-6.

**1:11** Note at v 4. "Seven" – note at v 4.

**1:12** "Golden lampstands" – a fitting symbol of the seven churches (v 20; Matt 5:14). Compare Ex 25:31-40. "Lampstands" is a more accurate translation of the Greek word than "candlesticks."

**1:13** "Son of man" – Dan 7:13; Matt 8:20 (note).

"Garment. . .golden sash" – probably speaks of Christ as the High Priest of His people. Compare Ex 28:4. See Heb 2:17; 4:14; 8:1; 10:21,22.

**1:14** "Wool" – compare Dan 7:9.

"A flame of fire" – 2:18; 19:12; Dan 10:6 – a person's eyes tell us much about him. Here Christ's eyes speak of the fiery holiness of His character, and His ability to discern all the secrets of men.

**1:15** "Bronze" – Dan 10:6. The feet that walk about in the midst of the churches are of a burning purity.

"The sound of many waters" – Ezek 43:2. Christ's voice is like the voice of the God of Israel, powerful and irresistible (compare Ps 29:3-10).

**1:16** "Seven stars" – note at v 20.

"Sword" – 2:12,16; 19:15,21 – a symbol of the Word of God (Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17). It speaks of offensive warfare – the fight against evil. Christ has only to

out of his mouth went a sharp double-edged sword, and his face *was* like the sun shining in its strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as *though* dead. And he laid his right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I *am* he who lives. I was dead, and, look, I am alive for ever and ever. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and death.

19 "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are *now*, and the things which will take place after these things. 20 The mystery of

speech and judgment is executed.

"Sun" – Matt 17:2. This speaks of Christ's glory and splendor. He is the radiance of God's glory (Heb 1:3; 2 Cor 4:6). This is the light that blinded Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3,8,9; 22:11).

**1:17** "At His feet" – where we should all be, and would be if we saw Him as John did. Compare Ezek 1:28.

"Do not be afraid" – Matt 17:7; 14:27.

"First and Last" – words only God can truly speak. Compare v 8; Isa 44:6; 48:12,13.

**1:18** "I am he who lives" – a reference to the Living God (Ps 42:2; Jer 10:10; Matt 16:16; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Thess 1:9. Compare John 8:24,58). Jesus here says He Himself is that one.

"Dead" – Matt 27:50; Mark 15:44,45; 1 Cor 15:3.

"Alive. . .for ever and ever" – 4:19; Matt 28:6; Acts 1:3; Rom 6:9,10.

"Keys of Hades and death" – Christ has absolute authority over the unseen realm of the dead, and no one else has any at all. See the note on the Greek word "Hades" at Luke 16:23.

**1:19** John's writing is in three parts:

"The things you have seen" – the vision of Christ in this chapter

"The things which are now" – the conditions prevailing in the seven churches (chapters 2 and 3)

"The things which will take place after these things" – the things that will happen after conditions in the churches have run their full course (4:1 to 22:5).

**1:20** "Mystery" – truth revealed by God which men could not know if He did not reveal it.

"Angels" – the Greek word can be translated "messengers" (as it is in Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24; 9:52; etc). Here (and in 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14) the meaning is probably this: the messengers through whom the Lord can speak to the churches, those He counts responsible as representatives of the churches.

"Seven churches" – vs 4,11. These seven churches were literal historical churches of John's day which needed the messages of chapters 2 and 3. But they may be viewed in a different way – as churches that represent all churches both in that day and throughout this whole age. The number seven is significant. It suggests fullness

the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and of the seven golden lampstands *is this*: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

**2** "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write: He who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands says these things:

2 "I know your works, and your labour, and your patience, and how you cannot endure those

and completion. Just as the seven spirits symbolize the one Spirit of God (v 4), so may the seven churches symbolize the one Church in the world. The picture of Christ in the midst of the lampstands holding the seven stars also suggests this. Had Christ only seven literal churches in His care? Has He none now? Is it not clear that these seven lampstands represent all churches? So we may expect to see these seven kinds of churches in our day.

Some commentators have taught that these churches have a further meaning. They think the seven churches gave a prophetic outlook of the Church from its beginning to its end. In this view the seven churches were chosen in perfect order beginning at Ephesus and ending at Laodicea to indicate seven successive eras through which the church would pass. This is a possible interpretation, and an interesting one. And there is actually some agreement between the contents of the letters which follow and church history. But there is no real proof for this interpretation. In any case, we should be more interested in what these letters say to us personally and to the churches we attend.

**2:1** "Angel" – 1:20.

"Ephesus" – Acts 18:19,14; 19:1-20; Eph 1:1.

"Write" – the Lord Jesus told John exactly what he must write to each of the churches – vs 8,12,18; 3:1,7,14. John did not fabricate any of it. He wrote to the "angel" of the church but the message was for the whole church.

"Stars. . .lampstands" – 1:12,16,20.

**2:2** "I know" – the Lord says the same to each church. Compare Ps 33:13-15; 139:1-4; Prov 5:21; Jer 16:17; 23:24; Heb 4:13. He knows all about us as individuals and as churches, and stands ready either to give blessing or chastisement.

"Cannot endure those who are evil" – compare Ps 101:3-5; 1 Cor 5:13. They followed the apostle Paul's instructions in Eph 5:5-7 and refused to compromise with evil and evil people.

"Tested" – compare 1 John 4:1; 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Cor 14:29. This is very important today also.

"Liars" – Matt 7:15-20; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Pet 2:1. In Acts 20:28-31 Paul had warned the elders of the Ephesian church against

who are evil, and *that* you have tested those who say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars, 3 and *that* you have persevered, and have had patience, and for my name's sake have laboured, and have not fainted.

4 "Nevertheless I have against you *that* you have left your first love. 5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works. Or else I will come to you quickly,

such people.

**2:3** "Laboured" – v 2 – this second reference to their hard work indicates that they were very active in the Lord's service, toiling for His "name's sake." Paul had set an example of this when he was among them – Acts 20:19,20,31,34; and he had written to them to "redeem the time" (Eph 5:16). Evidently all this they had put into practice and had strength to continue without fainting or growing weary of it.

**2:4** "Against you" – in some ways they were an ideal church, hardworking, persevering, careful about evil men and evil doctrine. But they were failing in the most important matter of all – love. See 1 Cor 13:1-3,13; Matt 22:37-40. The Lord does not say they had no love at all. The meaning is that they didn't have as much as they had at their beginning as a church. Evidently they had gotten away from Paul's words to them in Eph 3:16-19.

**2:5** "Fallen" – losing one's first love is sin, and no small sin at that. It is a fall in the most important of all things. If there is no sin there is no need of repentance.

"Repent" – vs 16,22; 3:3,19. Jesus began His ministry on earth with this word (Matt 4:17). He continues with it in His present ministry to His people. Here it encourages us to believe that first love once lost may be regained. Notes on repentance at Matt 3:2; etc.

"Unless" – a church or an individual who will not obey Christ's command to repent is heading for judgment. Let us understand that when love begins to go everything God values in a church begins to go with it.

"I will. . . remove" – this means either that they would cease to be a church or that He would have nothing more to do with them as a church.

**2:6** "Nicolaitans" – v 15. The Bible says nothing about what these people believed and taught, but there seems to be two possible interpretations. Some have taught that they were followers of a man named Nikolaus who, after professing to adopt Christianity, became a heretic and the leader of an immoral sect. Others have taught that we should look at the meaning of the word Nicolaitans itself to understand who they were. The name could have been derived from two Greek words – nikan, which means to conquer, and laos, which means the people. Thus the Nicolaitans would be a class of people arising in the church who tried to gain power and lord it over God's

and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent. 6 But this you have *in your favor*: You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the tree of life, which is in the middle of the paradise of God.

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna

flock. Perhaps they indicate the beginning of a priestly class that eventually came to dominate many of the churches, and still retains its hold over much of Christianity. Whoever the Nicolaitans were, we may be sure that both their practices and teachings were contrary to the Word of God and hateful to the Lord Jesus.

**2:7** "Let him hear" – Matt 11:15; 13:9,43. This word is given to each of the seven churches, and so to all churches and individuals today also.

"The Spirit" – Jesus spoke to John through God's Spirit and John, filled with the Spirit, wrote these words down.

"Overcomes" – there is a promise to overcomers in each of these letters to the churches. On overcoming see Matt 16:18; Luke 10:19; John 16:33; Rom 8:37; 1 John 2:13,14; 4:4; 5:4,5; Rev 21:7. The word means getting the victory over opposing forces (such as we see in Eph 6:10-18). This does not mean that overcomers never fail, never sin (see notes at Ps 37:24; Prov 24:16; Matt 6:12; etc). Overcoming is consistent with such experiences as Rom 7:18-25; 2 Cor 4:7-12; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8,9; etc.

Overcoming means to go on believing in Christ to the end of life, regardless of difficulties, trials, hardships, temptations and persecutions, regardless of what the world, the flesh and the devil can throw against us. Overcomers go on in faith and give evidence in their lives that they do so (compare Luke 22:32; Heb 10:39; Jam 2:14-17; 1 Pet 1:5; etc). They overcome because greater is the one who is in them than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4). The Spirit of the great Overcomer, Christ Himself, is in them, and God has put within them a powerful conquering force – faith (Heb 10:39 - 11:1).

"Tree of life" – compare Gen 2:9; 3:22-24. God then barred sinful people from the tree of life. At last sinners forgiven and overcoming will enter into eternal life. What man lost by sinning he can have through Christ. Christ was nailed to a tree of death (Acts 5:30; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 2:24) that we might eat of the tree of life. This tree is for those who believe in Christ and persevere in believing – on perseverance in faith see Col 1:23; Heb 3:6,14; 6:12; 10:38,39.

"Paradise" – see Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4.

**2:8** "Angel" – 1:20.

"Smyrna" – a city about 60 kilometers

write: The First and the Last, who was dead and has come to life again, says these things:

9 "I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich). And *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear none of those things which you are going to suffer. See, the devil will cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

north of Ephesus and famous then for its beauty. In present-day Turkey it is called Izmir.

"First and the Last" – 1:17.

"Has come to life again" – 1:18; Matt 28:1-10.

**2:9** "I know" – v 2.

"Tribulation" – the people of Smyrna, and the large community of Jews there persecuted the Christians. Though the city was beautiful its citizens were ugly in their behavior toward God's people.

"Poverty" – it would seem from this that the Christians for the most part were from the poorest classes of society (some may have willingly become poor to follow Christ). Compare Jam 2:5; Luke 6:20-22; 14:33.

"But you are rich" – 1 Cor 3:21-23; 2 Cor 8:9; Eph 1:3 – poor in material things, rich in spiritual things.

"Who say they are Jews and are not" – compare Rom 2:28,29; Phil 3:2,3.

"Synagogue of Satan" – 3:9. They no doubt thought they were a synagogue of God. For one reason why people can be so grossly deceived see Jer 17:9. Notes on Satan at 12:9; 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44; etc.

**2:10** "Fear none of those things" – compare Matt 10:26-28,31; Luke 12:32; John 14:27; 16:33; Heb 13:5,6; Rom 8:28.

"Tested" – the devil intended to persecute and crush them; God meant it as a test. Compare Ps 66:10-12; 1 Thess 2:4; 1 Pet 1:6,7; 2 Pet 2:9; Jam 1:2,3.

"Ten days" – God knows exactly how long to permit any test to continue and He will not ask us to endure more than we are able.

"Be faithful" – continue to trust Christ in the midst of persecution and trial and do not deny Him.

"Crown of life" – Jam 1:12. Note on "crown" at 2 Tim 4:8.

**2:11** "Hear" – v 7.

"He who overcomes" – v 7.

"Second death" – 20:6,14; 21:8. This means final separation from God. Compare 2 Thess 1:8,9.

**2:12** "Angel" – 1:20.

"Pergamos" – or Pergamum – a famous city in those days, about 160 kilometers north of Ephesus.

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write: He who has the sharp sword with two edges says these things:

13 "I know your works and where you live: where Satan's throne *is*. And you hold fast to my name, and have not denied my faith, even in those days when Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan lives.

14 "However I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak how to cause the children of Israel to stumble, to *have them* eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. 15 Also you have those who hold the

"Sword" – 1:16. Introducing Himself to this church in this way indicates that there was much there that He opposed.

**2:13** "I know" – v 2.

"Where Satan's throne is" – Satan's throne is not in hell but on earth. Compare John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 6:12; 1 Pet 5:8; 1 John 5:19. At that time he made Pergamum his headquarters, the center of his operations. Doubtless it is somewhere else now. Pergamum has completely lost the importance it had in those days. Then it was the center in Asia for the worship of the Roman emperor. It was also very near the center of the wonderful work God accomplished in the first century, being nearly equidistant from Rome and Jerusalem and close to the churches founded by Paul and others in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece.

"Have not denied my faith" – they continued to confess Christ as Lord and Saviour in the place that was the center of opposition to Him. This required much spiritual strength – Eph 6:10.

"Antipas" – one of the first martyrs for Christ in the province of Asia. Satan tried to destroy the church in Pergamum by persecution.

"Faithful martyr" or "witness" – compare 1:5. It was Christ the faithful witness working in him that made him one too.

"Where Satan lives" – what a world this must be when the devil himself feels at home in it. The people of Pergamum must have given him an especially wholehearted reception.

**2:14** "Against you" – v 4. Christ first commends His people for the good He sees and only then speaks of their failures.

"Balaam" – Num 25:1-3; 31:16; 2 Pet 2:15; Jude 11.

"Balak" – Num 22:1-6. The two things the Lord points out here troubled the church in Corinth also. See 1 Cor 5:1,2; 6:9; 8:1-13. See also Acts 15:20,29. Satan, not being able to destroy the church by persecution from without, tried the way of corrupting it from within. And this was a greater danger.

**2:15** "Nicolaitans" – compare v 6. Practices have a way of becoming teachings.

doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. 16 Repent! Or else I will come to you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give *some* of the hidden manna to eat, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, known to no man except he who receives *it*.

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and whose feet *are* like fine bronze, says these things:

19 "I know your works, and love, and service, and faith, and your patience, and your works, and *that* the last *are* more than the first.

**2:16** "Repent" – v 5.

"Fight" – compare Jer 21:5. We must be careful in matters of teaching and doctrine or we may find the Lord Himself at war with us.

**2:17** "Hear. . .overcomes" – v 7.

"The hidden manna" – Christ Himself. Compare Ex 16:14-16,31; John 6:35, 48-51. It is hidden from the world.

"White stone" – in those days sometimes white stones were used like tickets to festivals. This may be the meaning here – admission to the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9).

"New name" – a name Christ gives to an individual will indicate exactly what he or she is. Compare Gen 17:5; 32:28.

**2:18** "Angel" – 1:20.

"Thyatira" – a town about 70 kilometers ESE of Pergamum.

"Son of God" – notes at Matt 1:18; 3:16; John 1:14; 3:16; 5:18,19; etc.

"Fire. . .bronze" – 1:14,15.

**2:19** "I know" – v 2.

"Love. . .faith" – note at Gal 5:6.

"The last are more than the first" – they were not like many churches where zeal and service for Christ decrease with passing time.

**2:20** "Against you" – vs 4,14.

"You permit" – compare v 2. Toleration of evil and evil people in the church is a very serious matter indeed. It brings the church into opposition to Christ.

"Jezebel" – the literal Jezebel was one of the most wicked women in Bible history. See 1 Kings 16:30-33; 18:4; 19:1,2; 21:1-23; 2 Kings 9:7,10,22,30-37. In the church at Thyatira an equally wicked woman called herself a follower of Christ and God's prophetess, pretending that she got messages from God. What she taught was similar to "the teachings of Balaam" in the Pergamum Church – v 14.

**2:21** "Time to repent" – Rom 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9. "She did not" – 9:20; 16:9,11; Matt 23:37.

**2:22** Refusal to repent will always bring God's

20 "However, I have a few things against you, because you permit that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, and she did not repent. 22 Look, I will cast her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches will know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to every one of you according to your works. 24 But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, *to* as many as do not hold this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say: I will put on you no other burden. 25 But

punishment, now or later.

"Adultery" – this may mean either literal or figurative adultery (unfaithfulness to God – compare Jer 2:2; 3:6-9; Ezek 23:37; Hos 1:2; 4:15), or it may mean both.

**2:23** "Her children" – those who followed her teaching.

"Death" – in the law of Moses this was the penalty of both kinds of adultery (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22-24; Ezek 16:38-40; 23:46-49). By sending punishment on evil-doers in a church God means for other churches to learn some important truths.

"Searches the hearts and minds" – 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; Ps 139:1,2; Prov 24:12; Jer 17:10; Heb 4:13.

"According to your works" – 18:6; 20:12,13; 22:12; Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6.

**2:24** "Depths of Satan" – since this Jezebel called herself a prophetess she no doubt tried to pass her teaching off as God's deep secrets. But she was a servant of Satan (compare 2 Cor 11:14,15). There was a teaching in the first century that one could learn Satan's secrets by doing evil and so gain the experiences needed to defeat him. This was turning the truth completely upside down – we can never defeat Satan by giving in to Satan or conquer sin by sinning, or overcome the world by indulging in worldly things. If we try that method we become slaves not overcomers. But is it possible that people can accept teachings from Satan and think they are teachings from God? Yes, indeed. We see it everywhere.

**2:25** Christ did not demand too much of this church or lay heavy burdens on them. (Compare Matt 11:29,30.) It was enough for them to hold to the truth they had heard from God's true servants and refuse the teachings of false prophets. Compare John 8:31,32; 1 Cor 15:2; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 Tim 3:9; Titus 1:9; Heb 4:14.

"Until I come" – the literal church at Thyatira would not be in existence at Christ's second coming, but see the note at 1:20. That which Thyatira represented will be on earth when Christ comes.



hold on to what you *already* have until I come.

26 "And he who overcomes and keeps my works to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; 27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron. Like the vessels of a potter they will be broken to pieces. This I have received from my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

**3** "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says these things:

"I know your works, and that you have a name that you are alive, but *you* are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, which are about to die, for I have not found your works complete before God. 3 Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard, and hold *it* firmly,

**2:26,27** "Overcomes" – note at v 7.

"To the end" – compare Matt 24:13; Heb 3:6,14; 6:11; 2 Tim 2:12. Perseverance in faith and service is of the utmost importance.

"He will rule them" – this is the same promise God the Father gave to Christ in Ps 2:8,9. Overcomers are united to Christ. They share His sufferings now, but will reign with Him after He comes – 3:21; 20:4,6; 2 Tim 2:12.

"I have received from my Father" – Matt 28:18; John 3:35; 17:2.

**2:28** "Morning star" – Christ Himself. See 22:16.

**2:29** Verse 7.

**3:1** "Angel" – 1:20.

"Sardis" – a famous and wealthy city about 50 kilometers south of Thyatira.

"Seven spirits" – 1:4.

"Seven stars" – 1:16,20.

"I know" – 2:2.

"You are dead" – spiritually dead. The reputation they had for being a living church was probably based on the previous generation of believers. Or, perhaps, on much religious activity. People sometimes mistake church activity for spiritual life.

**3:2** "Be watchful" – compare Eph 5:14. They were spiritually sleepy and unaware of their true condition.

"Strengthen. . . remains" – the church was not yet in a completely hopeless condition, but even what they had of truth and light was about to die among them.

**3:3** "Remember" – 2:5.

"Received and heard" – the Word of God.

"Hold it fast" – it seems it was about to slip away from them – or they from it. Compare Heb 2:1. The truth must be valued, held on to, and obeyed. Otherwise the church would sink further into death. Once truth is gone, everything is gone.

"Repent" – 2:5,16,21.

"A thief" – compare Matt 24:43,44; 1 Thess 5:2-4.

and repent. But if you will not watch, I will come on you like a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come on you.

4 "You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their clothes, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes will be clothed in white clothing, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name in the presence of my Father and in the presence of his angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no man can shut and shuts and no man can open, says these things:

8 "I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it, for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and

**3:4** "Few" – often even in dead churches some are spiritually alive and follow holiness (Heb 12:14; 1 John 3:3).

"White" – v 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13; 19:14.

"Worthy" – 2 Thess 1:5.

**3:5** "He who overcomes" – note at 2:7.

"Book of life" – 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; Phil 4:3. Compare Ex 32:32,33; Ps 69:28; Dan 12:1. The Lord Jesus here is not threatening to blot anyone out of this book, but promising He will never blot out the names of true believers.

"I will confess" – Matt 10:32.

**3:6** 2:7.

**3:7** "Angel" – 1:20.

"Philadelphia" – a city about 50 kilometers southeast of Sardis. The name means "brotherly love."

"Holy. . . true" – 6:10; 15:4; Isa 1:4; Ps 31:5; John 14:6.

"The key of David" – Isa 22:22. Christ is the manager of God's house, God's kingdom, the treasurer who has the key to the storehouse of wisdom and grace and spiritual gifts and power.

"Shut. . . open" – Christ has absolute authority in the affairs of churches and nations. Compare Matt 28:18; John 17:2. He can open or shut doors anywhere in the world, and does so in perfect wisdom.

**3:8** "I know" – 2:2.

"An open door" – Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 16:9.

"A little strength" – compare Eph 1:18,19; 6:10; Col 1:11. Evidently they could have had much more than they did have.

"Kept my word" – this is what the Christians at Sardis were urged to do – v 3.

"Not denied my name" – 2:13. From this we judge that holding fast the word of the Lord Jesus and not denying His name requires only a "little" spiritual strength. If there is any real spiritual life at all there will be this much strength. Think then what believers may do if they are "strengthened with all power" (Col 1:11; Eph 3:16).



have not denied my name. 9 Look, I will make those *who are* of the synagogue of Satan – who say they are Jews and are not, but lie – look, I will cause them to come and show reverence at your feet and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will also keep you from the hour of trial which will come upon the whole world, to test those who live on the earth.

11 "Look, I am coming quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no man takes your crown. 12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never go out. And I will write on him the name of my God, and the name

of the city of my God, *which is* the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God. And *I will write on him* my new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God says these things:

15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were *either* cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, and have many

**3:9** "Synagogue of Satan" – 2:9.

"Lie" – they were Jews by physical descent, but their lives were a denial of all that God wanted Jews to be, so they were living a lie (compare Rom 2:28,29).

"At your feet" – compare Isa 45:14; 49:23; 60:14.

"I have loved you" – a special love for a church that was special in His eyes. Compare John 14:21,23.

**3:10** "Patient endurance" – Rom 12:12; 2 Thess 3:5; 1 Pet 2:20,21.

"Keep you from" – in Greek this may mean to keep them altogether away from the presence of the coming trial, or it may mean to keep them safe even though the trial is going on around them.

"The hour of trial" – this may have a double reference – to a trial coming in the time of the early churches, and to a trial at the end of this age (possibly to the time of great tribulation spoken of in 7:14 and Matt 24:21. See also Dan 12:1). In this case, the promise of keeping believers from that hour would also refer to both times. During the time of persecution and tribulation which came on the early churches, certainly the church at Philadelphia was not removed from the earth in fulfillment of this promise. Instead, it was preserved during that time. Should we think that the promise of Jesus would be fulfilled in one manner then, and in an altogether different manner at the end of this age?

**3:11** "Quickly" – 1:1,3; 22:7,12,20.

"Hold on to what you have" – 2:25.

"Your crown" – probably refers here to rewards for faithful service. Compare 2:10; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 4:1; 2 Tim 2:5; 4:8; Jam 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; 2 John 8.

**3:12** "Him who overcomes" – 2:7.

"Pillar" – every believer is a part of the spiritual temple God is now building (Eph 2:19-22; 1 Cor 3:17; 6:19). Being a "pillar" signifies an important and permanent place in this temple.

"Name" – 2:17. Overcomers will have three names written on them.

"God" – God's holy character will be stamped on them, the mark of God's ownership. They will have a nature fully in tune with God's nature.

"City" – 21:2-27. Overcomers will be perfectly fitted to live in that bright, shining, golden, glorious place.

"My new name" – compare 19:12. We do not know what this new name may be, what unknown wonders about Him we shall afterwards see.

**3:13** See 2:7.

**3:14** "Angel" – 1:20.

Laodicea was a city about 80 kilometers southeast of Philadelphia, and about 150 kms due east of Ephesus.

"The Amen" – 1:7. The word here means truth, faithfulness, trustworthiness. In Isa 65:16 it is used of God (in Hebrew there it is "the God of amen." It means the God who will do exactly as He says he will do).

"Witness" – 1:5.

"Beginning" – this does not mean that He was the first one whom God created. He was one of the Trinity and so was never created at all. The Greek word here means the one through whom creation came into existence, the source, the origin of creation. Compare John 1:3; Col 1:16,17.

**3:15,16** "I know" – 2:2.

"Cold" – spiritually cold. Here it probably means utter rejection of the gospel of Christ or even open opposition to it. "Hot" means love for the gospel and fervent zeal for Christ.

"Lukewarm" – means not being either much for the gospel or against it, but a form of godliness lacking its power (2 Tim 3:5), no heart for Christ but not wanting to abandon the Christian religion altogether. It is the opposite of Rom 12:11; 1 Cor 15:58. This is a spiritual condition that disgusts Christ, the one consumed with zeal for God (John 2:17).

"I will spit you out" – if they will not repent (v 19), He will have nothing more to do with them; they will cease to be a church in the true sense of the word (though they may continue to have their meetings, ceremonies, etc). It is surely possible for churches who have been spit out of the mouth of Christ to carry on more or less as before as if nothing has happened!

**3:17** What a contrast between Christ's view of those Christians and their thoughts about themselves! Their condition disgusted Him;

possessions, and need nothing,' and do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold tried in the fire, so that you can be rich; and white clothing, so that you can be covered and *that* the shame of your nakedness does not appear. And anoint your eyes with ointment, so that you can see.

19 "All those I love I rebuke and discipline. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. 20 See, I stand at the door, and knock. If anyone hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will eat with him, and he with me.

it was a source of satisfaction and pride to them. Compare Luke 16:15.

"And need nothing"—compare Hosea 12:8; Luke 18:11,12; 1 Cor 4:8.

"Do not know"—how dangerous is self-deception and self-ignorance, and how common they are, both in the world and in the church. The reasons for them? Compare Jer 17:9; 2 Cor 4:4; 2 Thess 2:10; Heb 3:13.

**3:18** "Buy"—not with money or good deeds. Compare Isa 55:1; Matt 13:44-46.

"From me"—Jesus is the only source of the things we need for a true spiritual life and a happy eternity. There is no use trying to buy them somewhere else.

"Gold"—here signifies something of great spiritual value, true, divine riches.

"White clothes"—means righteousness (compare Isa 61:10).

"Ointment"—Christ's remedy for spiritual blindness, His power to give spiritual understanding.

**3:19** "I love"—their lukewarmness disgusted Him but His loving heart was not changed because of it.

"Discipline"—Heb 12:5-11; 1 Cor 11:32; Prov 3:11,12.

"Repent"—Jesus appeals to five of these seven churches to repent (2:5,16,21,22; 3:3). Does this not suggest to us that a great many churches in our times also need to repent?

**3:20** The church there as a whole had shut Christ out, and He had to knock to get into the hearts of any of its members. This indicates that the whole membership was in unbelief (compare 2 Cor 13:5).

"I stand"—who is this "I"? See in v 14 how He presents himself to this church: As the source of the whole creation, the one whose word is absolutely sure, the one of supreme authority. The picture we sometimes get of a meek Saviour standing there is not at all true to the context, though He is the Saviour as well as the universal Sovereign. (See the note at Acts 22:10).

"I will come in"—this is a promise from the Lord of glory who cannot lie. Let us all believe it, receive Him, and become the children of God in truth (John 1:12,13). Christ in the heart is all we need to have eternal life and begin a truly spiritual walk

21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne, just as I also overcame, and have sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

**4** After these things I looked, and saw a door opened in heaven, and the voice which I first heard speaking to me *was* like a trumpet which said, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after these things." 2 And immediately I was in the Spirit, and saw that a throne was set in heaven, and one sitting on the

with God. To keep Him shut out of our hearts is all we need to do to perish forever.

**3:21** "Him who overcomes"—2:7.

"Sit with me"—means to share His authority and rule—2:26,27.

"My throne"—5:10; 20:4,6; 2 Tim 2:12.

"I also overcame"—5:5; Heb 2:17; 4:15; 12:2,3; Matt 4:1-10.

"His throne"—God's eternal throne. Jesus' throne is different (Luke 1:32,33). He has not yet ascended it—2:7; Matt 19:28; 25:31.

**4:1** "Door open"—suggests God is about to reveal more of heaven's secret truth to John.

"Saw"—the Greek word literally means "behold", "see", "look." See notes at Gen 1:31; Matt 1:23.

"Trumpet"—1:10—loud, piercing, clear.

"Come up here"—some commentators teach that John here going up to heaven symbolizes the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess 4:16,17). Unlikely as this seems to many students of God's Word, this may possibly be true. But there is no real proof for it. And we should all be careful not to teach dogmatically something lacking in real proof. In chapters 10 and 11 John is once more on earth (10:1,4,7,9,10; 11:1-3), yet who suggests he represents the Church returned from heaven? Some commentators say also that in the visions which follow, the Church is not mentioned by name as being on earth and so it must be in heaven. But it is also true that in the visions which follow, the Church is not mentioned by name as being in heaven. Should we therefore reason that it must be on earth? One argument is as good as the other.

"Things. . .after these things"—1:19—probably means what will occur after conditions in the churches of chapters 2 and 3 run their full course, or reach their full development at the end of this age.

**4:2** "In the Spirit"—1:10.

"Throne. . .in heaven"—1 Kings 22:19; Ps 9:4; 47:2; 123:1. God reigns over the universe, and all the events in this book are under His control and He is working out His purposes through them. See 19:6. God's throne is referred to 40 times in this book. We may call it the central fact of the Revelation.

throne. 3 And he who sat *there* in appearance was like a jasper and a sardius stone. And *there* was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. 4 And around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, dressed in white clothing, and they had crowns of gold on their heads. 5 And from the throne came lightning flashes and thunderings and voices. And seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 Also before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the central area of the throne and around the throne, were four living beings full of eyes in front and in back. 7 And the first living being was like a lion, and the second living being was like a calf, and the third living being had a face like a man, and the fourth living being was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living beings each had six wings. All around and on the inside of the wings they were full of eyes. And they do not

**4:3** "In appearance" – no one has seen God in His spiritual essence (John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16). John saw only an appearance of His splendor reflected as in precious gems. The Greek word here translated jasper indicates a gem clear as a diamond (2:11). The sardius (or carnelian) is red.

"Rainbow" – suggests God's glory and faithfulness (Gen 9:13-16; Ezek 1:28).

**4:4** "Elders" – vs 9-11; 5:5; 8-10; 7:11-14; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4. It seems they are different both from ordinary angels (7:11), and from God's people in heaven (5:8-10; 7:9-11,13,14; 19:4-7). But they could possibly be special angels in an exalted position in heaven (compare Eph 1:21; 3:10; Col 1:16; 2:10). It seems unlikely to the author of these notes that they represent the church already rewarded and reigning in heaven before John gets there, and before the seventh trumpet sounds (11:15-18; 1 Cor 15:52). The saved people of 7:9 are not on thrones but are "standing before the throne." And can we think the bride of Christ, the Church, sits enthroned in heaven before the wedding of the Lamb occurs (19:7,8), or before Christ takes His own throne at His return?

**4:5** "Lightning. . .thunderings" – 8:5; 11:19; 16:18. Compare Ex 19:16-19; 1 Sam 2:20; Job 36:29,30; Ps 18:12,13; 29:3; 77:18.

"Seven Spirits" – 1:4.

**4:6** "Sea of glass" – 15:2. Compare 2 Chron 4:2,6,10. In Solomon's temple the "sea" was for the priests to wash in. In heaven there is a temple – 7:15; 11:19; 14:15,17; etc. But there is no need for anyone to wash in that "sea" for all people there have already been washed from all sin and defilement (1:5; 1 John 1:9; Heb 10:19-20). So the "sea" in heaven is solid.

"Four living beings" – compare Ezek 1:5-14; 10:20; Isa 6:2,3. See also Gen 3:24. Evidently these "beings" are similar to

rest day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come."

9 And when those living beings give glory and honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders prostrate themselves before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they exist and were created."

**5** And I saw in the right hand of the one sitting on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth, was able to open the scroll, or even to look

cherubim and seraphim. There is speculation, but no proof, that they represent the Church in heaven. The above references are not in harmony with such a view.

"Full of eyes" – see Ezek 1:18; 10:12. Probably speaks of great intelligence and great watchfulness.

**4:7** "Lion. . .eagle" – see Ezek 1:10.

**4:8** "Six wings. . .holy, holy, holy" – Isa 6:2,3.

"Is to come" – 1:4.

**4:9** "Give glory and honour and thanks" – 5:12,13. This is what believers now on earth may also do, should do, and will do, if they are in tune with heaven (1:6; John 5:23; Rom 11:36; 16:27; 1 Cor 6:20; 10:31; Eph 1:12; 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; 1 Tim 1:7; 6:16; Heb 13:15).

"Who lives forever and ever" – 1:18.

**4:10** "Cast their crowns" – they thus humbly acknowledge that all their authority and the power associated with their thrones come from God the supreme authority.

**4:11** They praise God as the Creator of the universe (10:6; Gen 1:1; Job 38:4-7; Ps 19:1; Isa 40:25,26; Acts 14:15; 17:24-28; Rom 11:36).

"For your pleasure" – or "because of your will" – the Greek word translated "pleasure" is usually translated "will" or "desire."

**5:1** "The one. . .on the throne" – God the Father.

"A scroll" – writing material rolled up like a roll of paper. The Jews used scrolls in their synagogues – Luke 4:17; Heb 10:7.

"Seven seals" – means perfectly secure, completely sealed up.

**5:2** "Angel" – one of about 80 references in this book to heavenly angels.

"Who is worthy" – breaking the seals of this scroll and opening it to view was not a matter of strength or power, but of worthiness.

**5:3** "No one" – not Abraham, friend of God; not Moses, the mighty lawgiver; not David, king of Israel; not any of the prophets; not

at it. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or even to look at it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to break its seven seals."

6 And I looked, and there in the centre of the throne and of the four living beings, and in the middle of the elders, stood a Lamb *appearing as though* it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God

any of the elders or living creatures or angels in heaven. All in heaven and on earth and anywhere in the universe had to confess their unworthiness to break the seals. No one dared approach the throne to take the scroll.

**5:4** Evidently John realized something of the importance of this scroll and longed to see what was in it.

**5:5** "Lion of the tribe of Judah" – a title of Christ. Compare Gen 49:8-10. It speaks of His royalty, His right to the throne of David (Luke 1:32,33).

"Root of David" – see Isa 11:10; 53:2; Rom 15:12 (Jesse was David's father).

"Has prevailed" – the same verb in Greek as in 3:21.

"Prevailed to break its seven seals" – because He has demonstrated His worthiness (v 9).

**5:6** "In the center of the throne" – the Lord Jesus is at the very center of sovereign rule in the universe. He has authority over the whole earth (1:5; Matt 28:18; John 17:2).

"Lamb" – the kingly Lion of v 5 is also a Lamb (John 1:29,35). One symbol cannot signify all that Christ is.

"Slain" – Isa 53:7,8; Matt 27:35,50; John 20:25-27; Acts 2:23; 3:15. The words "appearing like" suggests that the scars of His wounds were visible. Compare John 20:25-27.

"Seven horns" – in the Old Testament horns are sometimes a symbol of power, strength, or authority (Deut 33:17; Ps 89:17; Zech 1:18,19). Seven horns signify that Christ has these to perfection. Literal lambs are very weak and completely lacking in power and authority. But not this Lamb who is also a Lion.

"Seven eyes" – Zech 4:7.

"Seven Spirits" – notes at 1:4. The seven spirits are both before God's throne (4:5) and in all the earth. The Holy Spirit, being God, can be in more than one place at the same time. Christ has the "seven spirits" – that is, He has the Spirit of God in the fullest possible measure (compare John 3:34). In fact God's Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. See Rom 8:9.

**5:7** This is one of the greatest moments in the Bible. John is weeping. Silence reigns in heaven for no worthy person is found to open the scroll. The whole world waits to see what will happen. Then the Lamb, meek and lowly, comes with full confidence to

sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each of them having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they sang a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals, for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe, and language, and

that brilliantly shining omnipotent One on the throne, reaches out and takes the scroll from His right hand. And immediately heaven is filled with praise.

**5:8** "Fell down before the Lamb" – this is an attitude of worship. In heaven, in the presence of God the Father, worship is offered to Jesus (compare Heb 1:6). This would be impossible if Jesus is not the incarnation of God, if He did not share the divine nature. Throughout the Bible God forbids the worship of anything or anyone but Himself. See Ex 20:3-5; Deut 6:13; Matt 4:10. They know in heaven what many on earth have not yet learned – the truth of John 5:23 (see other references to Christ's deity at Phil 2:6.

"Harp" – 14:2; 15:2.

"Incense" – Ex 30:1,7,34-38; Ps 141:2.

"Prayers" – the prayers of His people are sweet-smelling to God and they are kept in heaven and offered to Him (8:3). The mention of them here indicates something of their importance in regard to the opening of the seven-sealed book.

**5:9** "A new song" – 14:3; Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isa 42:10.

"You are worthy. . . for you were slain" – see why the Lord Jesus alone is worthy to open the scroll. It is because He gave Himself as a blood sacrifice to take away our sins. See 1:5; Matt 26:28. No one else ever did this, and no one else ever could have done it (see note at Heb 10:4).

"Redeemed" – it is perfectly true that Christ has redeemed His people – Gal 3:13; 4:5; Eph 1:17. But here the literal meaning of the Greek word is "bought" or "purchased." Compare Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 6:20.

"Us" – some Greek manuscripts (and what a many of even evangelical scholars consider the best manuscripts) do not have the word for "us" here. The NASB adds the word "men" in italics, indicating that the word is not in the original. Other translators prefer to add the word "some" in italics. If John actually wrote the word for "us" in this phrase, this would mean that the elders (and the living beings), unlikely as other evidence makes this, are redeemed men (see note at 4:4). But even if this were so, it would not necessarily mean that the resurrection of believers had already taken place at the time this vision points to; they could be representatives of the spirits of believers who have died and gone to heaven (2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; Heb 12:22-24).

people, and nation, 10 and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we will reign on the earth."

11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living beings and the elders. Their number was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. 12 *They were* saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and praise."

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and those who are in the sea, and everything that is in them, I heard saying, "Praise, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* to him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

14 And the four living beings said, "Amen." And the twenty-four elders prostrated *themselves* and worshipped him who lives for ever and ever.

**6** And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard one of the four living

"Tribe. . . nation" – 7:9; Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47. The gospel of Christ is for all peoples and will bear fruit among all. **5:10** "Made us kings and priests to our God; and we will reign" – according to some Greek manuscripts "made them kings and priests to our God and they will reign."

"On the earth" – 3:21; 20:4,6; 2 Tim 2:12; Matt 19:28; Luke 22:29,30.

**5:12** "Slain" – v 9. The death of Christ for sinners is a matter for great praise in heaven.

"Power. . . praise" – compare 4:11; 5:12; John 5:23. Jesus is just as worthy as God the Father of having these ascribed to Him. **5:13,14** It is clear again that God the Father and the Lord Jesus are equally worthy of the praise and worship of every created being in the universe.

**6:1** "Seven seals" – the scroll (5:1) was sealed in such a way that as a seal was broken a part of the scroll could be unrolled. The scroll contained what we have in the following chapters of this book. The scroll that John longed to see opened, that caused great praise and rejoicing in heaven, is now open before us. Among the Jews title deeds to property were sealed documents (see Jer 32:9-14), and the sealed scroll in this book may represent Christ's title deed to the earth, His right to possess it and reign over it (see notes at Lev 25:24-31; Ruth 2:20; Jer 32:11). At the end of this age, He will come to claim His property, His inheritance (Matt 21:38; Heb 1:2,13; 10:13), and share it with His people (Rom 8:17). This Christ does in chapters 19 and 20. Chapters 6-18 give events shortly before the end which lead up to that. Though the seals, trumpets and bowls all reveal disasters to come we

beings say in a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked and saw a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow. And a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living being say, "Come and see." 4 And there went out another horse, a red *one*, and he who sat on it was given *power* to take peace from the earth, and to *cause men to* kill one another. And a great sword was given to him.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living being say, "Come and see." And I looked and a black horse appeared. And he who sat on it had a pair of balances in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice among the four living beings say, "A measure of wheat for a day's wage, and three measures of barley for a day's wage; and *see that* you do not damage the oil and the wine."

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living being say, "Come and see." 8 And I looked and a pale horse appeared. And he who sat on it was named Death, and Hades followed along after him. And power

should remember it is Christ the Redeemer who is in charge of events.

"Come and see" – vs 3,5,7. John is now permitted to see the things contained in the scroll (and so are we).

**6:2** "White horse" – Christ also will come on a "white horse" (19:11), but His coming will be after this event, after all the seals have been opened. When this white horse rides forth Christ is still in heaven opening the seals. The white color probably speaks of someone trying to take Christ's place and claim the earth for himself. Can this be anyone but the great impostor, the antichrist (chapter 13)?

"He who sat on it" – since the other horses and their riders (and all the rest of the seals and the trumpets and bowls) represent coming troubles or disasters, it is very likely that this one does too.

"Bow. . . to conquer" – it appears from this that toward the end of this age there will be a determined effort by someone to conquer the world. "Crown" suggests that he will be successful. Compare 13:7.

**6:3,4** Toward the end of this age there will be much warfare (compare Matt 24:6-8). "Take peace from the earth" suggests that the whole world will be caught up in the coming struggle for power.

**6:5,6** "Measure" – the Greek word indicates an amount the equivalent of about a liter dry measure.

"Day's wage" – in Greek "denarius" – the pay for a day's work (Matt 20:2; etc). This suggests famine conditions for the common man (Matt 24:7). If his daily wage all goes for a measure of wheat how will he meet other expenses? "Oil and wine" indicate things that are not basic necessities. The rich, as usual, will have plenty of everything.

**6:7,8** "Hades" – see notes at Matt 16:18;



was given to them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will you refrain from judging those who live on the earth and avenging our blood?" 11 And white robes were given to each one of them, and they were told that they should rest a little longer, until *the number* of their fellow servants and their brothers who would be killed, as they *had been*, was completed.

12 And I looked when he had opened the sixth

Luke 16:23.

"Fourth part of the earth" – may refer either to a geographical part of the earth or, more likely, to the number of people killed (compare 8:7; 9:18). At the end of this age the powers of darkness will be let loose on earth as perhaps never before.

"Sword. . . beasts" – in Ezek 14:21 these are called God's "four dreadful judgments." They are judgments which have often come to some of the peoples of the earth, but it seems we should look for an even greater working of them at the end of this age.

**6:9-11** The scene indicates persecution and martyrdom for Christ's servants, and probably points to the "great tribulation" or "great distress" at the end of this age – 7:17; Matt 24:21.

"The altar" – Ex 27:1-8. Christ's martyrs are like a sacrifice whose lives are poured out (compare Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6; Lev 1:5,11,15).

"Avenging our blood" – while they live on earth Christ's servants are not to pray for vengeance on their enemies. See Matt 5:44; Acts 7:60; Rom 12:14. But the end of this age will be a time when God will rise to take vengeance on the world – 2 Thess 2:6-9; Ps 94:1-3; Deut 32:35; note on God's vengeance at Num 31:1-3. Then the prayers of those who have died will be in harmony with God's just purposes. Observe that the dead are conscious and able to pray.

"White robes" – 3:5,18; 4:4; 7:9,13; 19:14.

"Rest a little longer" – tribulation had come, but not the day of God's vengeance. We see that day coming later in this book – 14:17-20; chapters 15 and 16; 19:11-15.

**6:12-17** Compare the changes in sun, moon and stars with Matt 24:29. These are events which will take place after the "great tribulation" Christ spoke of in Matt 24:21. This means that the great tribulation takes place sometime under the opening of the first five seals, before the sixth seal is opened. But these changes in sun, moon and stars take place before the "Day of the Lord." See Acts 2:19,20. Therefore the Day of the Lord is

not the same as the great tribulation. The Day of the Lord will bring God's anger and vengeance against the people of the world – vs 10,16,17; 1 Thess 5:2,3; 1 Pet 3:10; Isa 13:6-13; etc. The great tribulation is the anger and persecution Satan and evil men pour on God's people at the end of this age – 12:12; 13:7.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!" 17 For the great day of his

not the same as the great tribulation. The Day of the Lord will bring God's anger and vengeance against the people of the world – vs 10,16,17; 1 Thess 5:2,3; 1 Pet 3:10; Isa 13:6-13; etc. The great tribulation is the anger and persecution Satan and evil men pour on God's people at the end of this age – 12:12; 13:7.

The great tribulation and the Day of the Lord are separated by these unmistakable signs in sun, moon and stars. The one comes before these signs, the other comes after them. It is very important to see this. We should not think that both the great tribulation and the Day of the Lord happen in the exact same period of time, and are the same thing. This is to confuse two things that God has separated. Those who do not distinguish between these two separate periods of time are failing to take into consideration some very important information He has given us about the time of the end. So they will inevitably make mistakes in their interpretation of the Revelation.

**6:12** "Earthquake" – Isa 24:19,20; Heb 12:26-28. "Immediately" – literally "Look".

**6:15-17** See Isa 2:9-21 which also speaks of the Day of the Lord.

"Wrath of the Lamb" – a lamb is a meek and harmless creature. But this Lamb is the Lion of Judah's tribe (5:5). He is meek (Matt 11:29), but will at last rise up in terrible anger to punish the world for its wickedness. Observe that the wrath of God comes after the signs at the beginning of the Day of the Lord, after the great tribulation is over. If we want our interpretation of the Revelation to be correct it is very important to see this.

"Wrath" – this is God's just anger against sin and unrepentant sinners. See notes at Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5. This is the wrath that Jesus rescues believers from – 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9.

**7:1-17** Before the Lamb opens the seventh seal there is a break in the narrative. Here Christ gives John visions which help to explain what has been going on under the



wrath has come, and who will be able to stand?"

**7** And after these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that wind would not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. **2** And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, who had been given *power* to harm the earth and the sea, **3** saying, "Do not harm the earth, or the sea, or the trees, until we have put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." **4** And I heard the number of those who were sealed, *and* a hundred *and* forty-four thousand from all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.

**5** Of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand

*were* sealed. Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed.

**6** Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed.

**7** Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed.

**8** Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

**9** After this I looked and saw a great crowd, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and people, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in

opening of the six seals. Such explanatory visions appear in other parts of this book – 7:1–17; 10:1–11:14; 12:1–14:20; 17:1–19:11. It seems clear that the seals, trumpets and bowls carry the main narrative straight to the end in perfect order and sequence. These explanatory visions give added information. They are like explanations given in parentheses or brackets.

This is the view of the author of these notes. Not every scholar agrees with it. In the present portion we see two distinct groups of people, one on earth, the other in heaven. The first group has a limited number, the second has a number so large that a person cannot count it. The first group has to do with events after the six seals have been opened, the second has to do with events which took place under the first five seals. The first are to be protected against judgments to come under the seventh seal. The second group has already come through the "great tribulation" which occurs before the sixth seal is opened.

**7:1** "Four winds" – these signify forces of destruction, released by God to punish sinful men. Compare Jer 49:36–38.

**7:2,3** God's seal here signifies God's ownership. Compare 2 Cor 1:21,22; Eph 1:13. Seal on the "foreheads" here means to mark them out for protection in the midst of the coming judgments and disasters. Compare Ezek 9:3–6.

**7:4–8** The "servants of our God" (v 3) to be sealed at the end of this age with God's seal are of the nation Israel. There are about thirty lists of the tribes of Israel in the Bible, all of them meaning literal Israel up to this list. It would be very strange if only in this one place the names of the tribes would not signify literal Israelites.

It is not clear, however, whether they are called servants here because they will do special service or simply to mark them out in general as believers (compare 1:1; 2:20; 6:11; 10:7; 19:2; 22:3,6. See Rom 6:16–18). It seems quite clear from the

Word of God that Israel as a nation will turn back to God at the end of this age. Now, as a nation, they are in unbelief rejecting Christ as their Messiah. But that will change. See Rom 11:11,25–32; Jer 23:5–8; 31:31–37; 32:37–40; Ezek 20:40–44; 37:21–28; Dan 12:1; Hos 3:4,5; Zech 10:10–12; 12:9–14; 13:1,9.

The number 144,000 (v 4) may be a symbolic number indicating completeness. 144 is 12 X 12 X 1000. In the Bible twelve is a number that may signify completeness – twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles, twelve gates and twelve foundations and twelve crops of fruit (21:12,14; 22:2). One thousand may be 10 X 10 X 10 – a perfect cube also indicating fullness or completion. Or 144,000 may be used here to indicate a fairly large but limited number of people. Or possibly, as some think, it may be a literal number. In a book containing many symbols we must be very careful not to be dogmatic about doubtful things. If symbols are explained, as they sometimes are, then we can know what they mean. Otherwise, we should be cautious about our statements. Then "may", "perhaps", "possibly" or "might be" seems the language that best suits the case.

**7:8** "Joseph" – Manasseh (v 16) was a son of Joseph. Ephraim was his other son. Since Ephraim is not in this list of tribes Joseph must represent Ephraim. The tribe of Dan is not in this list.

**7:9** This great multitude is put in contrast with the 144,000 of v 4. Those are from the tribes of Israel; these are from every tribe and nation. Those are comparatively few in number; these are innumerable.

"All nations. . . languages" – 5:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15. This is proof that the gospel will go into every corner of the earth before the end of this age. Compare Matt 24:14.

"Before the throne" – 4:2.

"White robes" – 6:11.

"Palm branches" – Lev 23:40; John 12:13

white robes with palm *branches* in their hands. 10 And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

11 And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living beings, and they prostrated *themselves* before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 saying, "Amen. Praise, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power and might *be* to our God for ever and ever. Amen."

13 And one of the elders responded *and* said to me, "Who are these who are dressed in white robes? And where did they come from?"

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

– a symbol of rejoicing and praise.

**7:10** "Salvation" – 19:1; Ps 3:8; 37:39; 62:1; Isa 43:11; Hos 13:4; Jonah 3:9; Rom 1:16; Eph 2:8,9.

"And to the Lamb" – 5:13; 14:4; 22:1,3.

**7:11** "Elders. . . living beings" – 4:4,6-8.

"Prostrated" – 5:8.

**7:12** Compare 5:12.

"Thanksgiving" – see Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

**7:14** "The great tribulation" – see Matt 24:21. The word for "the" is in the Greek here, but for some strange reason the KJV omits it. The tribulation called "the great" is an exceptional time of trouble coming at the end of this age. It will be similar to the troubles believers usually face in the world (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3,4. The same Greek word translated "tribulation" here in Rev 7:14 is in those verses. Compare also 1 Pet 4:12,13). But the trouble at the end of this age will be more severe, more widespread than ever before (13:7,8). There is no reason here to think that to "come out of" means to be rescued from. Judging from 13:7,15 the way they come out of it is by being put to death for their faith.

"Washed their robes. . . in the blood of the Lamb" – this indicates that their faith is in the gospel of Christ. Compare 1 John 1:7.

**7:15** "Serve Him" – see 22:3. Service does not end when believers leave earth for heaven.

"Day and night" – their service will increase in heaven, since sleep is not needed there.

"Temple" – the Greek word here means the inner part of a temple, the Most Holy Place. See Ex 26:31-35; Heb 9:3. This service of believers in the temple shows that they are God's priesthood (1:6; 1 Pet 2:9). Their "sacrifice" of praise (Heb 13:15) will not stop when they get to heaven.

"Will dwell among them" – suggests living together in the closest sort of fellowship, and perfect protection from anything that could ever bring harm (v 16).

And he said to me, "These are those who have come out of the great tribulation, and who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. And he who sits on the throne will dwell among them. 16 They will hunger no more and thirst no more; nor will the sun beat down on them, or any *excessive* heat. 17 For the Lamb who is in the centre of the throne will shepherd them, and will lead them to springs of living waters, and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes."

**8** And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Compare 21:3; Ex 25:8.

**7:16** "Hunger no more and thirst no more" – compare Isa 49:10; John 4:13,14; 6:35,58. Many believers during the great tribulation will suffer literal hunger (13:16,17), as some have throughout this age (1 Cor 4:11; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27; Luke 6:21). In heaven such things will not exist. "Excessive heat" – compare 16:8.

**7:17** "In the centre of the throne" – note at 5:6.

"Shepherd" – this is a more accurate translation of the Greek word than "feed." Christ's work as shepherd will not end when believers get to heaven. He will continue to be their great leader through eternity.

"Lead them" – believers follow Him on earth (John 10:3,4,27) and will follow Him in heaven. Without the one there will not be the other.

"Living waters" – John 4:10; 7:38,39. Believers have been drinking of these now and will not stop drinking them in heaven. Christ, who is the source of their spiritual life here, will be that to them there.

"All tears" – there are many reasons for tears on earth (2 Kings 20:5; Job 16:20; Ps 6:6; 42:3; 56:8; 119:136; 126:5; Jer 9:1; Matt 26:75; Luke 7:38; Acts 20:19,31; Phil 3:18; 2 Tim 1:4). There will be none in heaven – 21:4; Isa 25:8; 35:10.

**8:1** "The seventh seal" – in chapter 6 most of the seven-sealed scroll was opened. The last seal is now opened and out of this last part of the scroll come all the seven trumpets and all the seven bowls of wrath. The time of the great tribulation ends before the 6th seal is broken (see the note on 6:12-17). Now in this chapter the trumpets announce the beginning of God's judgments on wicked men at the very end of this age. And under the bowls (chapters 15,16) God's wrath is fully poured out on them.

"Silence" – compare 4:8-11; 5:9-14; 7:10-12. This silence after such continual praise surely indicates that something very significant is about to happen. It is like the silence that comes before a great storm. See Zeph 1:7. The "Day of the Lord", His time to pour out His fierce anger on the

2 And I saw the seven angels who stood before God; and seven trumpets were given to them.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and much incense was given to him that he might offer *it*, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, *together* with the prayers of the saints, went up out of the angel's hand to the presence of God. 5 And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw *it* onto the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightning flashes, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to blow *them*.

7 The first angel blew *his trumpet*, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and a third part of trees was burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

8 And the second angel blew *his trumpet*; and *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and a third part of the sea became blood, 9 and a third part of the creatures

which were living in the sea, died; and a third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 And the third angel blew *his trumpet*, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a lamp, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the springs of waters. 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood. And a third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from these waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel blew *his trumpet*, and a third part of the sun was struck, and a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars, so that a third part of them was darkened, and a third part of the day had no light, and likewise the night.

13 And I looked and heard an angel flying through the middle of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth because of the other trumpet blasts of the three angels who are yet to sound!"

**9** And the fifth angel blew *his trumpet*, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth; and to him was given the key to the pit of the

world, is very near, and He announces His judgment with a series of trumpets. The troubles which come under the trumpets are not nearly as severe as those under the bowls of wrath. It seems that the trumpet troubles are more like warnings and announcements of further troubles to come. **8:2** "Seven" – this is the number of completeness or perfection.

"Trumpets" – in other places the Bible shows the significance of the sounding of trumpets. See Ex 19:16; Lev 23:13-25; Num 10:1-8,9; Jer 4:19; 1 Kings 1:34,39; 2 Kings 9:13; Josh 6:13-16. So when the seven trumpets are sounded here in this book we may expect to see the following: The manifestation of God's majesty, war, the gathering of the people of God, the appearance of the King, and the overthrow of God's enemies. And all these do appear at the sounding of these trumpets and just afterwards.

**8:3-5** "Censer" – a censer was a metal bowl containing hot coals for burning incense (Lev 16:12).

"Incense" – Ex 30:1-9,34-38.

"Prayers of all the saints" – the prayers of God's people have their importance at the opening of the seals (5:8). We see the same thing here at the blowing of the trumpets. It seems that what follows here is an answer to their prayers (especially, perhaps, prayers like 22:20; Matt 6:10; etc). True prayer is very powerful indeed – Jam 5:16 (compare Ps 18:6-9).

"Golden altar" – Ex 30:1-6; Heb 8:5; 9:4.

"Thunderings. . . earthquake" – note at 4:5. The author of these notes believes that the things which appear at the sounding of the trumpets are disasters that will occur very near the end of this age. Symbols and

figurative language are here, but they speak of literal calamities of some sort. Interpretation of all the details is difficult and cannot be attempted in brief notes like these.

**8:7** Compare Ex 9:22-26. What once happened in one country (Egypt) will happen on the earth at large. And it will be a worse disaster – fire and blood will be mixed with the hail and lightening. See also Ezek 38:22; Joel 2:30; Acts 2:19.

**8:8,9** Compare Ex 7:19,21.

**8:10,11** Could this blazing star be some sort of comet or asteroid or huge meteor? Possibly, but we cannot say with any certainty. In 9:1,2 "star" symbolizes a living being. In 12:4 stars symbolize angels. Could this star be an angel who is given power to poison a third of the sources of fresh water on earth? We do not know. "Wormwood" means bitterness.

**8:12** Compare 6:12,13; 10:12-23; Isa 13:10; Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18.

**8:13** God gives warning of terrible disasters still to come before He actually sends them.

"Woe" – the Greek word indicates some cause of great grief or pain. Two of these three "woes" are described in chapter 9. The third one comes after the seventh trumpet sounds (11:5), and actually seems to be the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath in chapter 16 which takes place under this last trumpet.

**9:1,2** The "star" here is no literal star but a living being, as can be seen from the language concerning him. He is probably an angel.

"The key" – compare 20:1,3. Luke 8:31 indicates that the Abyss is a place of punishment in the unseen world of spirits and is much feared by demons (compare 2 Pet 2:4). In Rom 10:7 the same Greek

Abyss. 2 And he opened the Abyss, and smoke came up out of the pit like the smoke of a huge furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the Abyss. 3 And from the smoke locusts came out upon the earth, and power was given to them like the power the scorpions of the earth have. 4 And they were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green plant, or any tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given *power* to kill them, but to torment them for five months. And their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion, when it strikes a man. 6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it, and will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts *were* like horses prepared for battle. And on their heads *were something* like crowns of gold, and their faces *were* like men's faces. 8 And their hair was like women's

word is used, and means the realm of the dead.

"Smoke" – contrast 8:4. The smoke in heaven is quite different from this hellish smoke.

**9:3** "Locusts" – it is not plainly said that the "locusts" come out of the abyss, but out of the smoke which comes out of the Abyss, but they probably come directly from the Abyss. It is clear from their description that they are not literal locusts (locusts are similar to the grasshoppers of India, but not identical. None is anything like a scorpion). **9:4** Grass, plants and trees are what literal locusts feed on.

"The seal of God" – used about Israelites in 7:3. But all believers have God's seal – 22:4; Eph 1:13. Compare Ezek 9:4-6. There may be few of them left on earth when this 5th trumpet blows. This takes place after the great tribulation when a great many of them will die – see 7:9-14; 13:15.

"On their foreheads" – probably figurative language indicating God's ownership. The Lord knows those who are his and will protect them.

**9:5** "Five months" – it does not seem necessary to take this also as a symbol. Because there are many symbols used in this book that does not mean that each thing in it is a symbol of something else. When a symbol appears it usually seems clear that it is a symbol. There is either a hint in the language itself, or in the context, or an explanation of the symbol is given. Compare 2:28 with 22:16; 12:5 with 19:15; 12:14 with 12:6; 12:9; 13:11 with 16:13,14; 17:15,18; etc).

**9:6** Compare 6:16; Jer 8:3 – wanting to die but afraid to commit suicide.

**9:7-10** These "locusts" are the strangest creatures ever to appear on earth, almost indescribable. "Horses and wings" speak of speed. "Crowns" suggest authority to do what they do. "Men's faces" indicate

hair, and their teeth like lion's *teeth*. 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails, and they had power to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, the angel of the Abyss, whose name in the Hebrew language *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek language *he* has the name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past. *And* look! Two more woes are coming after this.

13 And the sixth angel blew *his trumpet*, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound in the great river Euphrates."

15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third part of mankind. 16 And the

intelligence and personality. What do these "locusts" symbolize? If they come out of the abyss (vs 2,3), and this is very likely, they are evil spirits, demons. If they are only produced by the smoke which comes from the abyss, they may be another sort of plague caused by Satan and his helpers working among the nations.

**9:11** Both Abaddon and Apollyon mean "Destroyer." Some think he is Satan, and he may be. We know that Satan is the great destroyer of men – John 8:44; Heb 2:14; 1 Pet 5:8. However, if he is shut up in the Abyss with the "locusts" he cannot be Satan. Satan is not thrown into the Abyss until the return of Christ – 20:1-3. Also we should observe that this horde of "locusts" will not kill people (v 5).

**9:12** "Two other woes" – vs 13-19; 16:1.

**9:13** "Altar" – 8:3,4. The horns are the corners which project upwards.

**9:14** "Release the four angels" – evidently not the same angels seen in 7:1.

"Bound" – probably signifies only that they cannot act until God gives permission.

"Euphrates" – see also 16:12. This long river flows from Turkey through Syria and Iraq into the Persian Gulf.

**9:15** "The hour . . . year" – all things are in God's control and He has an appointed time for everything. See Acts 1:7.

"To kill" – it seems from vs 16-19 that these angels use some kind of army to produce this result. This is not to suggest that four angels by themselves could not kill so many people. Compare 2 Chron 32:21.

"A third of mankind" – the death of such an enormous number of people speaks of terrific agents of destruction of one kind or another. The population of the world now at the beginning of the 21st Century is about six thousand million (6 billion, 600 crores). But under the 4th seal a fourth of the earth's population will perish.

**9:16-19** Compare Joel 2:2-11. Two hundred

number of the army of horsemen *was* two hundred million. And I heard their number.

17 And I saw the horses in the vision were like this: Those who sat on them had breastplates of a fiery *colour*, and a dark blue, and sulfur *yellow*; and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire and smoke and sulfur. 18 By these three, by the fire, and by the smoke and by the sulfur which came out of their mouths, a third part of mankind was killed. 19 For their power is in their mouths, and in their tails; for their tails *were* like serpents and had heads, and with them they do harm.

20 And the rest of mankind which was not killed

million (twenty crores) make a vast army indeed. At present the armies of all the nations on earth would not add up to anything near this number.

"I heard their number" – v 16 – he knew the number was amazingly high and insisted he was not exaggerating it. But what do these strange and terrible horses with their riders symbolize? Enormous human armies equipped with frightful weapons? A horde of demons let loose on the earth? Who can say with any certainty? As with some other prophecies of future events we may not know the exact method of fulfillment until the events take place. And can we think it is necessary for us to know before then?

**9:20,21** "Nor did they repent" – 16:9,11; Matt 3:2,8; Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30. In spite of pains, plagues and disasters of every sort men will refuse to turn to God from the sins which bring His judgment on them. They love their idols and their sinful habits, and will not give them up, even when all around great numbers of people are injured and dying. Observe what sins in particular they are wedded to, sins evidently that will be very common in the last days of this age.

"Worship demons" – see Deut 32:17; 1 Cor 10:20 (men will call them gods and think they are gods).

"Idols" – Deut 4:28; Ps 115:3-8; Isa 40:18-22; 44:12-20.

"Murders" – after the fall of mankind into sin, beginning with the first family of the human race, murders have continually stained the earth with blood. At the time of the end there may be an increase in this savagery.

"Sorceries" – Acts 8:9-11; 19:17-20; Ex 7:11,12,22; 8:7,18,19; Deut 18:10-12; Rev 21:8; 22:15.

"Sexual immorality" – a sin that grips the hearts of men very powerfully (Prov 2:16-19). The Bible very clearly reveals the evil of that way of life – 1 Cor 6:9,10; Eph 5:3-7; Heb 13:4; Rev 21:8; 22:15.

"Thefts" – Ex 20:15; Jer 7:9,10; Matt 15:19; Rom 2:21; Eph 4:28. This is a sin that is so common among some people that it is almost regarded as natural shrewd behavior. God takes a different view of the

by these plagues still did not repent of the works of their hands, so that they would no longer worship demons, and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. 21 Nor did they repent of their murders, or of their sorceries, or of their sexual immorality, or of their thefts.

**10** And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow *was* over his head, and his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2 And he had in his hand a little scroll *which was* open. And he set his right foot on the sea, and *his* left *foot* on

matter – 1 Cor 6:10.

**10:1** As between the 6th and 7th seals so here between the 6th and 7th trumpets we have a break in the narrative. This is a pause to reveal matters not directly caused by the sounding of the 6th trumpet, a parenthesis to look at other events to take place at the end of this age. This break for these explanatory visions goes on to 11:15. It seems some of these events (11:1-6) will actually take place before any of the trumpets sound, or even before the 6th and 7th seals are opened.

**10:1-3** The description of this mighty angel suggests the Lord Jesus. In this book both a cloud and a rainbow are associated with the divine presence – 1:7; 4:3; 14:14.

"Face. . .like the sun", "feet like pillars of fire" reminds us of the vision of Christ in 1:15,16. The word "lion" (v 3) suggests the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5).

"Set his. . .foot on" – this phrase suggests victoriously claiming possession. Compare Deut 11:24; Josh 1:3. If that is the meaning here (some scholars deny it), again it may cause us to think this angel is Christ. Who but He has a right to claim the world as a possession? But is Christ called an angel any other place in this book? No, but He is called an angel (which means "messenger") in other parts of the Bible – see Gen 16:7. However, is it really possible to refer to Christ as merely "another mighty angel" (v 1)? It does not seem very likely, so we cannot say with any certainty that the angel is Christ. He may (or may not) be the mighty angel of 5:2.

**10:2** "A little scroll" – this can hardly be the same as the seven-sealed scroll of 5:1. This is not called "the" scroll, as it might well have been if it were the same as the one previously referred to. Also it is not called the "scroll" but a "little scroll." Moreover, the scroll of 5:1 was in heaven and was not yet completely unrolled. But the angel tells John to eat this scroll. It seems that this little scroll contains additional visions and prophecies (such as those in chapters 12 to 14 and 17,18), that do not come under the orderly opening of seals or blowing of the trumpets or pouring out of the bowls. See what the angel tells John after he eats this



the land, 3 and cried out with a loud voice like the roar of a lion, and when he had cried out, seven thunders spoke *with* their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had spoken *with* their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them down."

5 And the angel which I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 and swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, and the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there would be delay no longer, 7 but in the days when the seventh angel sounds *his trumpet*, when he begins to sound *it*, the mystery of God will be completed, as he declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, and said, "Go *and* take the little scroll that is open in the hand of the angel standing

on the sea and on the land."

9 And I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little scroll." And he said to me, "Take *it*, and eat it. It will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth be as sweet as honey." 10 And I took the little scroll out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but as soon as I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and languages, and kings."

**11** And I was given a reed like a rod. And the angel stood by, saying, "Get up and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the worshipers there. 2 But exclude the court that is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it is given to the Gentiles, and they will trample the holy city underfoot forty-two months. 3 And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will

scroll - v 11.

**10:4** What did these seven thunders say? No man now knows, and it is useless to speculate about it. Compare Deut 29:29.

"Seal up" - compare Dan 12:4,9.

**10:5,6** Here is a very solemn moment in this very solemn book. It indicates that what the angel says is of great importance in understanding this book and the events recorded in it.

"Delay no longer" - a little delay was announced at 6:10,11. Here the delay is over - the time now comes for God to judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge the blood of His people.

**10:7** This age will come to its end in the days of the 7th trumpet. The word "days" suggests a brief time - not years or an indefinite long period. These "days" will give time for the outpouring of the bowls of wrath (chapters 15,16).

"Mystery of God"-in the New Testament a mystery means truth which God has revealed and which no one could know if He did not reveal it. Several such mysteries are revealed in the New Testament. See Matt 13:11; Rom 11:25; 1 Cor 15:51,52; Eph 3:3-10; 5:22; Col 1:24-27; 2 Thess 2:7; 1 Tim 3:16. Which of these mysteries will be finished at the 7th trumpet? Or are several of them included in this phrase "the mystery of God?" Are they perhaps gathered together in a greater and more inclusive mystery - the one Paul speaks of in Eph 1:9,10? It seems quite possible; see the things that happen when the 7th trumpet sounds - 11:15-18.

**10:9** "Eat it" - compare Ezek 3:1,2.

"Bitter. . .sweet" - it was sweet to his taste because it contained words from God. Compare Ps 19:9,10; 119:103; Jer 15:16; Ezek 3:3. It was bitter in his stomach - when understood and digested prophecies of coming judgment seem painful and bitter to those with a heart of love and

compassion. Compare Ezek 21:6,12; Jer 9:1; 10:19; 13:17; Isa 22:4; Ps 119:5,136. This is the character of God's true prophets.

**10:11** "Prophesy" - 1:2,3.

"Again" - this may mean that John must cover the same ground here briefly covered before and give further prophecies about the same people and events (note at v 2).

**11:1,2** "Temple" - not the one in heaven (7:15), but one on earth. Its location is Jerusalem "the holy city" (v 8; Matt 4:5; 27:53). It is a Jewish temple dedicated to God and so is God's temple. The fact that Gentiles (a word used in the Bible for peoples other than Jews) occupy the outer court indicates that the worshipers in the inner part are Jews. Today there is no Jewish temple in Jerusalem, and there was none in John's later years. The temple that was standing during Christ's time on earth was destroyed in 70 AD (Matt 24:2; Luke 19:41-44). It seems this message to John indicates that before the end of the age a new temple will be built in Jerusalem. See also Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4.

"Measure" - a symbol indicating a marking out a place for either destruction or protection. Compare 2 Kings 21:13; Isa 34:11; Lam 2:8; Zech 2:1-5.

"Given to the Gentiles. . .trample" - at this time (2005) the Jews control Jerusalem and have done so for several years. But judging from this there will be a brief time at the end of this age when other people will take the city. Compare Zech 14:2.

"Forty-two months" - 13:5. This same period is said to be 1260 days (v 3; 12:6), a time, times and half a time (12:14). This seems to mean 3 1/2 years), and "one hour" (17:12). So it seems clear that this period is a very limited time. The author of these notes can find no reason in the Bible not to take these 42 months as literal. See also Dan 7:25; 9:27; 12:7.

**11:3,4** "Two witnesses" - some teach these



prophesy for a thousand two hundred *and* sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouth and devours their enemies. If anyone wants to harm them, this is how he must be killed. 6 These *witnesses* have power to shut heaven, so that it does not rain during the days when they prophesy, and they have power over waters to turn them to blood and to strike the earth with all *kinds of* plagues, as often as they will. 7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the Abyss will fight against them, and will defeat them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city, which is

two symbolize a group of Jewish believers who witness during the time of the great tribulation at the end of this age. Others think that because they are called "two lampstands" they may symbolize witnessing churches (compare 1:20). Still others teach they are two individuals. The language of vs 5-12 makes this last view more likely. Some Bible teachers seem sure they will be Moses and Elijah (who appeared together at Christ's transfiguration—Matt 17:3). There is no word in the Bible about Moses returning to earth to die again. Concerning Elijah (who did not die – 2 Kings 2:11) see Mal 4:5; Matt 17:11. The only other person in history who went to heaven without dying is Enoch (Heb 11:5) who prophesied about the end times (Jude 14,15). Will he return to earth and die here? Who can say with any certainty?

"Two olive trees"— see Zech 4:3-14.

"Two lampstands" – the seven lampstands are the seven churches (1:20); however, it does not seem impossible that the two lampstands refer to witnessing groups or individuals other than churches. Lampstands suggest those who are a light for God and who point to Christ who is the light.

**11:5** "Fire comes out of their mouths" – this is obviously a symbol, but a symbol of what? Compare 2 Kings 1:9-12. They have but to speak and God acts in their defense.

"Devours their enemies" – this seems to rule out the interpretation that these two witnesses are any of the churches of this age. It is not the work of the Church to destroy its enemies.

**11:6** "Shut heaven", or "shut up the sky" – compare 1 Kings 17:1; Jam 5:17.

"Blood. . . plagues" – Ex 7:20; 8:5,6,16; etc. Since these things literally happened in history is there any Scriptural reason for thinking they will not literally happen again?

**11:7** "Finished their testimony" – God will appoint a specific time period for their work and will protect them until that work is finished. Once a servant of God in India said, "If He has work for me to do I cannot

figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 And *some* from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will see their dead bodies *for* three and a half days, and will not allow their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10 And those who live on the earth will be glad about them, and celebrate, and will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who lived on the earth."

11 And after three and a half days the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them *go*.

die." This is a true word.

"The beast" – see 13:1-8; 17:3,7-11. Compare 2 Thess 2:3,4; 1 John 2:18.

"Abyss" – note at 9:1. "Up from the Abyss" suggests that the "beast" comes from the realm of the dead. See also 13:3; 17:8.

"And kill them" – compare 13:7. Antichrist (another name for the "beast") will have great power and will be permitted to put a great many of God's people to death. But God will still be in control of His universe and will have a wise purpose in all that happens. The fact that the two witnesses are in Jerusalem and that the "beast" kills them is not evidence that up until then he has his headquarters there (see notes on 17:9,10, 18). He could be at a distance and have them killed. Or he could come personally to Jerusalem at this time.

**11:8** The words here seem to clearly identify this great city with Jerusalem. That, of course, is the city where the Lord Jesus was crucified. And Jerusalem is figuratively called Sodom in Isa 1:8-10. In the Bible "Egypt", figuratively speaking, means spiritual slavery. And that is what Jerusalem represents (compare Gal 4:25).

**11:9** How will so many in such a brief time be able to see this? In these days of television can we think this will be difficult? The words "dead bodies" and "put in graves" seem plainly to indicate literal individuals who die.

**11:10** See here what mankind by nature is like. The death of God's prophets is good news. Men in general do not want the truth of God. It tends to torment them and they feel only relief when they don't have to hear it. Compare John 3:19,20; Rom 8:5-8.

**11:11** The devilish glee of wicked men will be short-lived (compare Job 20:5). The language seems clearly to mean a physical resurrection, a coming to life of dead bodies.

**11:12** This, too, seems to speak clearly of a literal event, an ascension of those who die and live again.

"Cloud" – compare Acts 1:9.

13 At that very hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth part of the city fell, and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were frightened and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past, *and* now the third woe is coming quickly.

15 And the seventh angel blew *his trumpet*, and loud voices in heaven said, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he will reign for ever and ever."

16 And the twenty-four elders who had been

sitting on their thrones in the presence of God, prostrated *themselves* and worshipped God, 17 saying,

"We give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who are and was and are to come, because you have taken your great power and reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and your wrath has come, and the time when the dead should be judged and for you to give rewards to your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear your name, small and great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and in his temple the ark of his covenant appeared.

**11:13** The fact that this severe earthquake put ~~ilslslslslslslslslslslslslslslsl~~ kills only 7,000 people in "the city" is evidence that the city (vs 2,8) is the literal city of Jerusalem. This earthquake is not a worldwide disaster but a local one. It will have a good result among those who remain alive (compare 16:9,11).

**11:14** "The second woe" – the events that happen under the 6th trumpet. See 8:13; 9:12. "Now" – literally, "Look".

"The third" – the long break in the narrative that began at 10:1 is over. The 7th trumpet is about to blow, and out of the 7th trumpet come the 7 bowls of wrath. They are the third (and last) "woe."

**11:15** The 7th trumpet is the last trumpet in this series, the last in this book, the last before the return of Christ. Compare Matt 24:30,31; 1 Cor 15:51,52; 1 Thess 4:16. Judging from what has been revealed in earlier chapters and what is said in the following verses this trumpet sounds after the rise of the antichrist and after the great tribulation.

"Kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of . . . Christ" – 19:15,16; Matt 6:10; 13:40-43; 19:28; 25:31; Luke 1:32,33; Acts 1:6,7; Ps 2:1-12; Isa 11:1-9; Dan 2:44,45. One of the principal themes of the Revelation is this: God will openly establish His kingdom on earth. This book reveals the way all other rule and authority is destroyed and the coming of Christ to rule the world takes place. Note on kingdom of God at Matt 4:17.

"Has become" – the elders seem to be standing at the last event that takes place under the 7th trumpet (19:11-16) and looking back at all the things that take place under it. Or else they are here uttering a prophecy of future events using the past tense of the verb (as in Isaiah chapter 53; note at Isa 55:10,11).

"Forever and ever" – Isa 9:7; Dan 7:14,27. It appears that His rule will be in two phases. See 20:4,6; 1 Cor 15:24,25. The thousand years reign will be the beginning of His eternal reign.

**11:16** "Elders" – 4:4.

**11:17** "Thanks" – it will be a reason for great thanksgiving – the reign of sin in the earth

will be over and Christ will reign. On thanksgiving see Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

"Who are . . . are to come" – compare 1:4,8; 4:8. Under the 7th trumpet He will come. The days of the 7th trumpet (10:7) extend to the great event described in 19:11-16.

"Reigned" – God has always been a great King over the earth (Ps 47:2; etc). Though his reign before the 7th trumpet is hidden from the eyes of earth's people, all along He has been ruling over events. After the 7th trumpet He begins to reign openly.

**11:18** "The nations were angry" – indicates the anger which Satan will stir up among nations against one another, and against God and God's people. See 12:12. This anger will be fully displayed in the reign of antichrist – 6:4,10; 13:7; 16:9,11; 19:19.

"Your wrath has come" – 6:17; 14:19; 15:1,7; 16:19; 19:15; Ps 2:4,5. All the bowls of wrath in chapter 16 come under this 7th trumpet.

"Time when the dead should be judged" – there are three possible interpretations of the meaning of "the dead" here: those who have died unsaved, or those who are still alive physically but dead in sin (Eph 2:1), or believers in Christ who have died. The first interpretation is unlikely – judging from chapter 20 the unsaved dead will not face the final judgment until the thousand year reign of Christ is over (20:7-15). The second interpretation, though not impossible, seems unlikely in this context. The third interpretation seems the most likely.

"Time . . . for rewarding" – the Lord Jesus will reward His servants on His return to earth – 22:12; Matt 16:27; 25:19-21; Luke 19:15-17.

"Fear your name" – Heb 12:28; 2 Cor 7:1; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"Who destroy the earth" – a new name for sinners. They are destroyers of what God made good, and the time will come when God will destroy them.

**11:19** "Temple" – 7:15; 16:1.

"Ark" – Ex 25:10-22; Heb 9:4. The ark on earth was only a copy of the true one in

And there were lightning flashes, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

**12** And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. **2** And she was pregnant and labored *to give* birth and cried out in pain. **3** And another sign appeared in heaven: a great red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns appeared, with seven crowns on his heads. **4** And his tail dragged

heaven (Heb 8:1,2,5). The ark of the "covenant" spoke of the covenant God made with the nation Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex 25:15; Deut 10:1-5). The mention here of the heavenly ark of the covenant may cause us to think of Israel and God's faithfulness to that people. It seems that in the next chapter He reveals His faithfulness toward them at the end of this age.

"Lightning. . . hail" – compare 4:5; 8:5; 16:18.

**12:1-5** This begins another break in the narrative before the seven bowls of wrath in chapters 15,16. The end of this age comes with the 7th trumpet, but it seems clear that chapters 12-14 look back at events before the 7th trumpet sounds, and give us additional information about those days.

"Woman" – as with many of the other symbols in this book there has been a variety of interpretation about the meaning of this one too. Let us note the facts given about her.

She is seen here immediately after the mention of the ark of the covenant in 11:19.

She is a "sign" – this may suggest that we are not to regard her as a literal individual woman but as a representation of something else. This interpretation of her seems to be confirmed by the use of other symbols in the description of her.

She appears in "heaven" – "in the sky" is also a possible translation. This suggests her heavenly calling – she is in a higher position than the nations of the earth (compare Deut 7:6).

The symbols of sun, moon and stars are associated with her (compare Gen 37:9,10).

She wears a crown, which indicates authority to reign (compare Matt 19:28; Acts 1:6,7; Isa 2:1-5; etc).

She gave birth to a son who will rule the world (v 5. Compare 19:15,16).

She will face a time of great persecution at the end of this age (vs 6,13-15. Compare Jer 30:7-9; Dan 12:1).

She has other offspring besides her son who will rule (v 17).

For these reasons the author of these notes believes the woman represents the people of Israel. In the Old Testament the nation of Israel is called the "wife" of Jehovah God. See Isa 54:5; Jer 3:14; 31:32. This accounts for her splendid appearance in the sky.

**12:2** Evidently this verse looks back to the

away a third part of the stars of heaven, and threw them down to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. **5** And she bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up to God and his throne. **6** And the woman fled into a desolate area, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there for a thousand two hundred *and* sixty days.

**7** And there was war in heaven: Michael and his

birth of Christ two thousand years ago.

**12:3** "Dragon" – Satan (v 9). One of several symbols explained in this book (note at 9:5).

"Seven heads and ten horns" – compare 13:1. The seven heads may speak of completeness of evil intelligence and leadership; the ten horns the fullness of worldly power (17:12; etc).

"Seven crowns" – complete authority to rule in the realm of darkness and evil (Eph 6:12). Note on "seven" at 1:4.

**12:4** This seems to look back to the original fall of Satan and the fall of many of God's angels with him.

"Stars" – compare 9:1. Satan too now has angels – v 7. Or perhaps this picture may only indicate that Satan is so huge and powerful that he can brush a third of the stars in the sky from their natural positions. But the first interpretation seems the better one.

"Devour her child" – Satan wanted to destroy Christ if possible as soon as He was born. Surely he was behind the attempt of king Herod (Matt 2:13-16).

**12:5** Jesus was born as a son of Israel of the tribe of Judah (5:5; Rom 1:3; Gal 4:4).

"Rod of iron" – 19:15; Ps 2:9.

"Caught up. . . to His throne" – 3:21; 5:6; 7:17; Acts 1:9; 2:32-36; Heb 1:3,4. Could this be said of any other person or any group of persons?

**12:6** "A thousand two hundred and sixty days" – v 14; 11:3; 13:5 (note at 11:2).

There seems no good reason for thinking this time period is not literal. And it seems to point to a time at the end of this age after Satan is cast out of heaven (vs 9-13).

This period of 1,260 days did not take place immediately after Christ ascended into heaven. The things said of the woman in vs 1-5 were given that we might identify her.

After these facts were given, it was not necessary to say any more about her history, so the next great event in the woman's future is given to us. All the time in this age from the first century to the last is passed over in silence because it has no direct bearing on the purpose of this book. The Revelation is not a history of the past but a prophecy of the future.

**12:7** "War in heaven" – Satan and evil spirit beings who are with him are now in "the heavenly realms" – Eph 6:12 (note at Eph 1:3). This expression may be the equivalent

angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but did not win. *And* no longer was a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them in the presence of our God day and night, has been thrown down. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they did not love their lives even to death. 12 Therefore rejoice, *you* heavens, and you who live in them. Woe to the inhabitants of

the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that he has only a short time left."

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown to the earth, he persecuted the woman who bore the male *child*. 14 And the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the desolate area, into her place, from the presence of the serpent, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. 15 And the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, for the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed up the flood that the dragon spewed out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was angry with the woman and went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep

of "heaven" here. Satan now has access to heaven itself, into God's presence - v 10; Job 1:6,7 (notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1). It seems that this war to expel him comes at the very end of this age. When Satan is cast out it is said that the kingdom of God comes (v 10) and that he knows "he has only a short time left" (v 12). Also, we should note he is able to persecute the woman for only 1260 days.

"Michael" - see Dan 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9. This great angel is the protector of the nation of Israel.

**12:8** "Could not win" - then surely Satan could have been cast out of heaven (or the heavenly realms) long ago. Yes - if it had been God's wise purpose to do so.

"No longer was a place found for them in heaven" - the plan of God for the future age will move to its complete fulfillment, and Satan will have no part in it.

**12:9** "Serpent" - Gen 3:1-5; Isa 17:1; 2 Cor 11:3.

"Devil" - Matt 4:1-5; John 8:44.

"Who deceives the whole world" - Satan is the great deceiver (20:3,8,10). For the two other great deceiving powers in the world see Jer 17:9; Heb 3:13. We can see from all this that the possibilities of deception are almost without limit (but compare Matt 24:24).

**12:10** "Now" - does not mean at that exact moment, because Satan will still be permitted to work on earth for a little while (vs 13-17). Here "now" means that the coming of God's kingdom is very near, even at the door (11:15).

"Accuser of our brethren" - examples of this at Job 1:9-11; 2:3-5; Zech 3:1. This has been one of Satan's works throughout this age. The word "Satan" means opponent, "devil" means accuser.

"In the presence of our God" - in heaven.

"Day and night" - Satan is very zealous in pointing out the faults and sins of believers. Fortunately believers have an advocate with the Father to speak for them (1 John 2:1).

**12:11** "Overcame" - 2:7. Heaven tells us

how to get the victory over Satan.

"Blood" - 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; Matt 26:28; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7-9.

"Testimony" - Matt 10:32; Rom 10:9,10. A Christian who does not confess Christ is defeated.

"Did not love their lives" - Matt 10:37-39; Luke 14:26,27; Acts 20:24. True disciples are the ones who conquer the devil.

**12:12** "Rejoice" - because of Satan's banishment.

"Woe" - indicates grief, pain and trouble.

"With great wrath" - this will result in the great tribulation (7:4; Matt 24:21). That coming time will not be the outpouring of the wrath of God on men, but the wrath of Satan and evil men against God's people.

"Only a short time left" - vs 6,14.

**12:13** Satan will try to destroy Israel.

**12:14** We do not know what exact things "wings of an eagle" and "desolate area" may mean here. We do know that somehow, somewhere God will enable Israel to escape and will protect her (v 6; Jer 30:7).

"Time, times and half a time" - v 6; 11:2,3. See also Dan 7:25; 12:7.

**12:15,16** For an understanding of the details of this we await the fulfillment. Satan will do all in his power to destroy the people of God, but will be unable to do so.

**12:17** "The rest of her offspring" - these are distinct from the woman herself and so signify another group of people. If the "woman" is Israel what can this group be? Can we not say that Christians united to Christ have also sprung from Israel? That believers now have their roots in the Old Testament? That the godly in Israel gave birth to the New Testament church? If the "rest of her offspring" are not Christians living at the end of this age, it is very difficult indeed to say who they might be.

"Testimony of Jesus" - this also seems strong evidence that the "rest of her offspring" are believing, practicing Christians. Satan at the end of this age will make a special attempt to destroy them too.

the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

**13** And I stood on the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea. *He* had seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns on his horns, and a blasphemous name on his heads. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like a bear's *feet*, and his mouth like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had received a fatal wound, and his fatal wound had been healed. And the whole world was amazed *and went* after the beast.

**13:1** "Beast" – 11:7 – called by this name nearly 40 times in this book. In Daniel "beasts" are symbols which signify literal kingdoms and their rulers (Daniel chapters 7 and 8). Doubtless "beast" here has the same meaning. See 17:9-13. Observe how in some respects this beast resembles the red dragon of 12:3. But the dragon has seven crowns on its heads, this beast has ten on its horns. The dragon has complete authority in his realm. The beast's authority is derived from ten kings (17:12,13) and from the dragon.

"Ten horns" – see also Dan 7:7.

"A blasphemous name" – v 5. Compare 2 Thess 2:4; 1 John 2:18,22. Note on blasphemy at Matt 9:3.

**13:2** "Leopard. . . lion's mouth" – this beast combines some of the features of all four beasts of Dan 7:2-8, but must be identified with the fourth beast. It seems clear that this beast is some sort of revived Roman Empire. See notes on Dan 2:32-45; 7:7. It will be the final form of Gentile power in the world. And it will be a dreadfully evil power because the dragon will be behind it. What Satan is in the unseen world of darkness and opposition to God, the beast will be openly and visibly on earth. See 2 Thess 2:9,10.

**13:3** See 17:8-11. In Daniel's visions of beasts "heads" signify parts of a kingdom and/or their rulers. Here "a fatal wound" seems to mean that either a part of the coming world empire, or one of its rulers is destroyed or dies. See 11:7 – the "beast" will come up "from the Abyss." The Abyss is the realm of dead individuals. It seems clear that the "beast" sometimes indicates a man who will be the ruler of the empire which is also called the "beast" (see v 18; 17:8-13; 19:19,20; 20:10). He represents the empire and sums up all of its "beastly" characteristics in his own person. 2 Thess 2:3,4 and 1 John 2:18,22 speak of a person called "the man of sin" and the "antichrist". Can we doubt that the "beast" is that person?

"Healed" – evidently this will be a miracle so great that the "whole world" will be amazed. This miracle could be the resurrection of a dead individual one of the former rulers of the Roman Empire is a

4 And they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

5 And he was given a mouth speaking big things and blasphemies, and he was given power to continue for forty-two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and those who live in heaven. 7 And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and he was given power over all tribes, and languages, and nations. 8 And all who live on the earth will worship him, *those* whose names are not written in the

possibility. See 17:10,11.

**13:4** "Worshipped the dragon" – men will be worshipers of Satan at the close of this age. One reason they will do so is that it will seem to them that Satan and the beast have achieved the final victory over God and God's people. Satan has always wanted worship (see Matt 4:8-10), and has received it from some people (9:20; Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20). Such worship will, it seems, be more prevalent and more open at the end of this age.

"The dragon who gave authority" – Satan tried to destroy Christ by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world. Christ refused that offer. But at the end of this age Satan will find someone who will accept it.

"Worshipped the beast" – the ages-long tendency to worship men will reach its full development toward the end of this age.

"Who can make war" – the beast will have world-wide power (v 7), and no country will be able to fight him.

**13:5** "Big things and blasphemies" – v 1; Dan 7:8; 11:36.

"Forty-two months" – 11:2,3; 12:6,14; 17:12. Many dictators in history lasted longer than the antichrist will, in spite of his great boasts.

**13:6** "Blaspheme" – since this is mentioned three times in these verses we may judge that it will be a striking feature of the beast's character.

**13:7** "The saints" – Dan 7:21,25. This is the word used throughout the New Testament to indicate believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare Rom 1:7. It is also used in the Old Testament to designate believers.

"Overcome them" – 6:10; 7:14; 11:7; 12:17. The "great tribulation" will be a result of his activities. The beast will overcome the saints, but at the same time they will overcome him. See 15:2. He will overcome them physically, they will overcome him in the way that matters most – spiritually. They will still be more than conquerors even while he is torturing them or putting them to death.

"All tribes. . . nations" – the empire of antichrist will be the first to encircle the whole globe.

**13:8** Verse 4.

"Book of life" – 3:5.



book of life of the Lamb *who was* slain, from the beginning of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

10 He who leads into captivity will go into captivity. He who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I saw another beast, coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who live in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. 13 And he performs great signs. He even makes fire come down from heaven onto the earth in the sight of men. 14 And *he* deceives the inhabitants

of the earth by those signs that he had been granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling earth's inhabitants to make an image of the beast who had the wound caused by a sword, and *yet* lived. 15 And he was given *power* to give life to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would both speak and cause all who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 And he caused *everyone*, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 so that no one could buy or sell except he who had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is

"From the beginning of the world" – this phrase may be taken with the words "Lamb who was slain", or, possibly, "whose names are not written." Compare 17:8. The Lamb was slain from the creation of the world in the plan of God (1 Pet 1:19,20), though not, of course, in actual fact. And we also have reason to think that the names of certain people were written in the book then (for example, see Eph 1:4). Here those written in His book are God's chosen ones mentioned in Matt 24:24. They will love God and recognize the wicked nature of the beast and so refuse to do what all the world will do.

**13:9** "Hear" – 2:7.

**13:10** Compare Ps 7:15; 18:25-27; Prov 22:8; Gal 6:7.

**13:11** "Out of the earth" – evidently in contrast with "out of the sea", the origin of the first beast. Here "sea" may symbolize the "sea" of humanity (compare 17:15). If this is so then earth probably means a particular country, perhaps Israel.

"Like a lamb. . . like a dragon" – his appearance is deceiving. He looks (and doubtless wants to look) like one thing, but is actually the opposite of it. But his words will reveal what he is (compare Matt 12:34,35). In 16:13; 19:20; 20:10 he is called "the false prophet." He may try to convince Israel that he is their Messiah (compare John 5:43; Zech 11:15-17; 11:36-45). He will be the chief of all those false prophets and false Christs that Jesus warned about in Matt 24:23-26. So at the end of this age the whole world will be deceived by an evil threesome – the dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet.

**13:12** Wherever he may live he will act as the representative of the first beast, the ruler of the world empire.

"Worship" – being a false prophet his particular field will be religion and he will lead a world-wide religious movement which will oppose the one true God and make the antichrist the one object of worship.

**13:13** See the warnings at Matt 24:24; Deut 13:1-3.

"Fire. . . from heaven" – or, "from the sky." He will do what a true prophet twice did (1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10).

**13:14** "Deceives" – see 2 Thess 2:9-12. Men will not want Christ, who is the truth (John 14:6), so in punishing them God will see to it that they receive "the lie" who is antichrist.

"Image" – when this age draws to a close people everywhere will be engaged in the worship of an evil man and his image instead of in the worship of the Creator of the universe.

**13:15** "Life. . . speak" – to the world this will seem a great display of supernatural power, and it may well be so. Jesus said that false prophets will perform "great signs and miracles", and gave no hint that those miracles might be mere tricks of some sort.

"To be killed" – no doubt the believers we read of in 7:9,14 will leave the world in this way. They will prefer death to unfaithfulness to God, and in this they will be wise. Compare Daniel chapter 3.

**13:16,17** See how the people of the world will become worshippers of the beast – first political authority and military might (v 4); then deceiving miracles (vs 13-15); then the economic squeeze. The choice in many cases may be either to worship the beast or to suffer great hunger. Those will be times which will fully try men's souls.

**13:18** What is the meaning of 666? It is "man's number", a symbolic number signifying a man taking God's place, saying he is God and trying to force God out of His world. If 7 is the number of perfection and completeness (1:4), 666 may speak of man at his most powerful, trying to take God's place but coming short as he must always do. No doubt the meaning of this number and how it will be related to antichrist, will become clear when the events of this chapter are being fulfilled. Believers will then know all they need to know to resist him. Today in the world there are many forces preparing the ground economically, psychologically, politically, and religiously for the advent of the "beast." Let us be on our guard.



the number of a man. And his number *is* 666.

**14** And I looked, and there, on Mount Zion, stood a Lamb, and with him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand who had his Father's name written on their foreheads. **2** And I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of great thunder, and I heard the sound of harpists playing on their harps. **3** And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living beings and the elders. And no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. **4** These are the ones

**14:1** This chapter is a continuation of the long break in the orderly progression of seals, trumpets and bowls which began at 12:1. It gives further information about the end time before the bowls of wrath are poured out. This portion looks back to a time before the sounding of the last trumpet.

"There" – literally, "look".

"Mount Zion" – here this may refer either to the Jerusalem in the land of Israel (2 Sam 5:6-9; Ps 2:6; Matt 23:37-39), or to the Jerusalem which is in heaven (2:12; Gal 4:25,26; Heb 12:22-24). If the earthly Jerusalem is meant the picture here is of a time after Christ's return to earth. But it is possible the heavenly Jerusalem is meant – v 3 gives this impression.

"A Lamb" – 5:6. The word for "the" is lacking in the Greek of the text used with this translation, but there is only one "Lamb", and no possibility of thinking another is meant here.

"One hundred and forty-four thousand" – the word "the" is lacking here too. One group of 144,000 is seen in 7:4. Is this the same group as that one? There is reason here to think they are not – those in chapter 7 are from the tribes of Israel and are on the earth; the ones here are "from the earth", "from among men", and the further description of them is not given in chapter 7, and there is no reason to think this description applies to those chosen from Israel.

"Written on their foreheads" – this means they are God's special property, and that His character can be seen in them.

**14:2** "Harp" – 5:8; 15:2.

**14:3** "New song" – 5:9.

"Learn" – we are not told who first sings this song or who teaches it to the 144,000.

"Redeemed" – 1:5; 5:9; 1 Pet 1:18; Heb 9:12; Eph 1:7; Rom 3:24; Matt 20:28.

**14:4** "Not defiled with women" – marriage is not defiling. See Heb 13:4; Matt 19:4-6. But sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage is defiling.

"Virgins" – if this is taken literally the meaning is obvious. Some commentators prefer to take it figuratively. See a figurative use of the word at 2 Cor 11:2. If taken in this way it means that the 144,000 were not

who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. **5** And in their mouth no deceit was found, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

**6** And I saw another angel flying in the upper sky, *and he* had the eternal gospel to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, and to every nation and tribe and language and people, **7** *and he* said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made heaven and earth and the sea and the springs of water."

guilty of spiritual unfaithfulness to God (compare Hos 1:2; 2:2; Jer 2:2,5; etc).

"Follow" – 7:7; John 10:27. Those who follow the Good Shepherd here and now will follow Him there and then. They who will not follow Him now will not be there.

"Redeemed" – see note at 5:9, where the same word appears.

"From among men" – this phrase is evidence that they may not be the same as the group in 7:4-8 who are all from the nation of Israel.

"Firstfruits" – before Christ came the whole nation of Israel was called "firstfruits" (Jer 2:3). After Christ came the whole body of people now born again are "firstfruits" (Jam 1:18). Firstfruits always indicates that there is a greater harvest still to come. Here it may point to the great number of people to be gathered into Christ's kingdom during His thousand year reign (15:4; Isa 2:2-4; 60:3-9; Jer 3:17; Zech 14:16).

**14:5** "No deceit" – compare Ps 15:1-5. Liars will have their portion in another place (21:8,27; 22:15). Lying is exceedingly hateful to God who is the God of truth – Ps 31:5; Prov 6:16-19; etc.

"Without fault" – Ps 15:2; 24:3-5; Gen 17:1; Deut 18:13; Eph 1:4; 5:27; Phil 1:10; 2:15; 2 Pet 3:14.

**14:6** This angel may be symbolic just as the woman of chapter 12 and the beast of chapter 13 are symbolic. In Greek angel means "messenger" (1:20; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24; 9:52), and here may represent the world-wide preaching of the gospel of Christ before this age ends. See Matt 24:14.

"Nation. . . people" – 5:9; 7:9.

**14:7** "Fear God" – for the importance of this see 15:4; 19:5; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:17; 2 Cor 5:11; Rom 3:18; Heb 12:28; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7. Observe here that the fear of God is connected with the "eternal gospel", and, like repentance (Acts 17:30), is commanded to all people everywhere. Repenting and turning to the one true God and believing His gospel will produce the fear of God that He commands. The gospel is called eternal because it began with God's plan for men in eternity past and produces results that will last for eternity in the future. It will always be God's good news

8 Another angel followed and said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! That great city! Because she made all nations drink of the inflaming wine of her adultery."

9 And a third angel followed them and said in a loud voice, "If any man worships the beast and his image and receives *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 he himself will drink of the wine of God's wrath which is poured out unmixed into the cup of his indignation, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. And day and night *there is* no rest for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name. 12 Here is the

to mankind, the best news ever heard.

"Give him glory" – 16:9; 19:7; 1 Cor 10:31.

"Judgment" – 11:18.

"Worship him who made the universe" – Matt 4:10; Acts 14:15; 1 Cor 8:5,6; Isa 40:18-26; 42:5; 43:10,11; 45:18. People must worship the Creator and nothing else and no one else.

**14:8** "Babylon" – 17:1-5; 18:2. Here she is said to be already fallen but her fall is not described until chapter 18.

"Wine of her adultery" – 18:3,9.

**14:9-11** This warning against worshipping the "beast" (13:4,8,15) implies a warning against ever worshipping anything or anyone except the one true God, the Creator (v 7). All idolaters, not merely worshipers of the beast, will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire (21:8).

**14:10** "Wrath. . . indignation" – v 19; Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6.

"Fire and sulphur" – compare Gen 19:24; Ps 11:6; Jude 7.

"In the presence of the Lamb" – the Lord Jesus, who gave His life to save men, will look on the torment of these wicked people and will do nothing to prevent their suffering. This is proof that their suffering comes to them in perfect justice and that it would not be right, not according to heaven's laws, to relieve it.

**14:11** "Forever and ever" – Isa 33:14; Matt 25:46; Mark 3:29; 9:48; Luke 16:22-26. This verse does not actually say that the torment of those wicked people goes on forever, only that the smoke from their torment rises up forever (compare 19:3), but the presumption is that the torment also will go on forever. Compare 20:10. As long as day and night exist the beast worshipers will be without rest. It is interesting that the verbs in this verse are not in the future tense, as we might expect, but in the present tense.

**14:12** See 13:10; Heb 6:12; 2 Thess 1:4.

**14:13** "From now on" – this truth should be an encouragement to all believers who will face death under the reign of the beast

patience of the saints, here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours. And their works follow them."

14 And I looked and a white cloud appeared, and sitting on the cloud was *one* like the Son of man. He had a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15 And another angel came out of the temple and called out in a loud voice to the one who was sitting on the cloud, "Thrust in your sickle and reap, for the time has come for you to reap, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 And the one who was sitting on

(13:15). Of course it is always true that it is a blessed thing for believers to die in the Lord (2 Cor 5:1-6; Phil 1:21-23; Ps 116:15; etc). But it will be especially true for those who refuse to submit to the beast and the false prophet.

"Rest" – compare v 11.

"Their works follow them" – there will be special rewards for special faithfulness in the face of great pressure and great danger.

**14:14** "Cloud" – 1:7; Matt 24:30; 26:64; Acts 1:9,11; 1 Thess 4:16,17.

"Like the Son of man" – this same expression is used of the Lord Jesus in 1:13. Is there any good reason to think this one on the cloud is not He?

"Crown" – the word is never used in regard to angels. The Greek for this (stephanos) speaks of the reward given to a victor, not a royal crown worn by a king. Compare 2:10; 1 Cor 9:25; Heb 2:9. Later Christ appears wearing many crowns – 19:12. There the Greek word means the kind of crowns kings wear. Here Christ is not yet coming to reign but to "reap."

**14:15** If the one on the cloud is the Lord Jesus why should an angel come and tell Him what to do? Because Jesus is always in submission to God the Father and gets His instructions from Him (compare John 5:19; 6:38; 14:31). This angel comes out of the temple – from the presence of God – and brings a message from the Father to the Son. Or the angel may be merely symbolic of a message that passes between Father and Son.

"Time to reap. . . ripe" – compare Matt 3:12; Mark 4:29. When Christ reaps He will use angels as His agents – Matt 13:39; 24:31.

**14:16** We are not told what this harvest is. However, it is put in contrast with the harvest from "the earth's vine" in vs 17-20. That is a harvest of wicked people, so this harvest, it would seem, will be of God's people. In other words vs 14-16 may be a symbolic picture of the Rapture of the Church (see 1 Thess 4:16,17). Other scholars think the Rapture takes place at 4:1; still others think 11:12 may refer to that event; and some

the cloud thrust his sickle onto the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven. He also had a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel, who had authority over fire, came from the altar, and called out in a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle and said, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of *grapes* from the earth's vine, for its grapes are fully ripe." 19 And the angel thrust his sickle onto the earth and gathered the earth's vine and threw *it* into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine press was trampled outside the city and blood came out of the wine press up to the horse bridles for the distance of a thousand six hundred furlongs.

think it will take place only when Christ appears from heaven in chapter 19.

The author of these notes thinks the verses here (14:14-16) probably speak of the Rapture, but thinks also that dogmatism about doubtful things is not wise. Let us always be ready for the events of the end of this age, and for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

**14:17-20** "Another" – obviously these verses depict a different harvest from the previous one. This one is for the purpose of judgment and wrath on evil men.

**14:18** "Authority over the fire" – probably the angel of 8:3-5.

"The altar" – 6:9; 8:5; 16:7.

"The earth's vine" – not God's vine. See Deut 32:32,33 (compare John 15:1-5).

"Ripe" – evil will have come to full ripe fruit under the reign of the beast.

**14:19** "Wine press of the wrath of God" – Isa 63:3,4; Lam 1:15; Joel 3:13.

"Wrath" – references at v 10.

**14:20** "Trampled" – the Lord Jesus himself does this – 19:15. That is, God the Father has appointed Him to execute God's anger against earth's wicked people.

"The city" – these words standing alone almost surely refer to Jerusalem (11:2,8, 13). Certainly Jerusalem will be the scene of some terrible judgment from God in the last days. See Joel 3:12-16; Zech 14:1-3.

"1,600 furlongs" – nearly 300 kilometers, which is the approximate length of the most highly populated area in the land of Israel from the northern border into the desert in the south. So much blood signifies an enormous slaughter of human beings. Compare 19:17,18.

**15:1** The long explanatory section that began with 12:1 is over, and the main thread of the narrative of seals, trumpets and bowls begins again here. These seven bowls come under the 7th trumpet and the trumpets all come out of the 7th seal.

"With them the wrath of God is completed" – 6:16,17; 11:18; 14:10,19.

**15:2** Before the angels pour out the bowls

**15** And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, because with them the wrath of God is completed. 2 And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb and say, "Great and marvelous *are* your works, Lord God Almighty. Just and true *are* your ways, King of saints. 4 Who will not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name? For *you* alone *are* holy. For all nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed."

5 And after this I looked, and saw that the

of wrath, a scene of beauty and blessedness appears.

"Sea of glass" – 4:6.

"Fire" – note at Ex 3:2. All heaven will then be prepared to execute God's judgment on the earth.

"Those who had gotten the victory over the beast" – will actually be those the beast conquers and kills (13:7,15). They would rather die than compromise with evil. And this is a great spiritual victory anytime, anywhere. The beast seems to be victorious and has a physical victory, but these believers will have the spiritual victory, the eternal victory. Their victory will be this: they will refuse to worship the beast or receive his mark. So it will be time for music and singing.

**15:3** "Song of Moses" – there are two songs of Moses in the Old Testament – Ex 15:1-18 and Deut 31:30-32,43. Either one seems appropriate to this occasion. The one speaks of rescue from Pharaoh and his armies (in some ways Pharaoh is a good picture of the "beast"), the other describes the final overthrow of the wicked (Deut 32:16-19,22,32,35,41-43).

"The Lamb" – 5:9. The song of the Lamb is the one that follows.

"Great. . . your works" – Ex 15:11; Ps 92:5; 111:2.

"Just. . . your ways" – 16:5,7; 19:2; Deut 32:4; Ps 33:5; 89:14; 145:17.

**15:4** "Who will not" – the meaning is that eventually all of earth's peoples will fear Him and glorify Him. See references on fear at 14:7.

"You alone are holy" – compare what is said of the Lord Jesus in Luke 1:35; Acts 2:27; 3:14 (note there). Note on God's holiness at Lev 20:7.

"All nations" – Ps 66:4; 86:9; Isa 66:23; Zeph 2:11; Zech 14:16,17; Mal 1:11.

"Your judgments" – displayed in His wrath poured out on evil men.

**15:5** "Sanctuary" – 7:15; 11:19.

"Tabernacle of the Testimony" – Ex 38:21; Num 1:50; Heb 8:2,5 – called this in the Old

sanctuary of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, *and they* were dressed in clean and bright linen, and with golden sashes tied around their chests. 7 And one of the four living beings gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives for ever and ever. 8 And the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one was able to enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

**16** And I heard a loud voice out of the sanctuary saying to the seven angels, "Go, and pour out the bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

2 And the first went and poured out his bowl on the ground, and harmful and painful sores came on those who had the mark of the beast, and *on* those who worshiped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead *man*, and every creature living in the sea died.

4 And the third angel poured out his bowl on the

rivers and springs of waters, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, "You are righteous, O Lord, who are and was and will be, because you have judged like this. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink, for they deserve it."

7 And I heard another from the altar say, "Yes, Lord God Almighty, your judgments *are* true and righteous."

8 And the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to it to scorch people with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues, but they did not repent and give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast. And his kingdom became full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain, 11 and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried

Testament because the "testimony" (the ten commandments) was kept in it in the ark. This is the only place in the New Testament this name appears – here perhaps because God is about to pour out His full anger on the world that has trampled His laws under its feet.

**15:6** "Out of the sanctuary" – from God's presence.

**15:7,8** "Four living beings" – 4:6-8.

"Wrath" references at 14:10.

"Smoke" – Ex 19:18; Ps 18:8; Isa 6:4; 30:27.

"No one was able to enter" – Ex 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10,11.

**16:1** "Loud voice out of the sanctuary" – probably the voice of God. No one else could enter there at this time (15:8).

"Bowls" – the seven seals completely seal the scroll in God's hand (5:1). The seven trumpets give complete warnings of coming disasters. These seven bowls contain the complete measure of God's wrath against the world as a whole. The disasters that come under them are similar to the ones under the trumpets, but much more severe and intense.

**16:2** "Sores" – compare Ex 9:9-11.

**16:3** "The sea" – 8:8,9. Under the 2nd trumpet only a third part of the sea and its living creatures were affected.

**16:4** Compare 8:10,11 – under the 3rd trumpet only a third part of the sources of fresh water was affected.

**16:5-7** See references at 15:3. God's justice in pouring out His wrath on evil men is three times declared. See also 2 Thess 1:5-7 and the note at Ps 47:2. This is emphasized, perhaps, because people find it hard to believe. When disasters come on

the earth now, some complain against God as though He were guilty of unjust dealings with innocent mankind. This is because they have an entirely perverted view of things. When the most terrible plagues possible come on the world at the end of this age, everyone in heaven will agree that God is perfectly just in sending them.

**16:6** Here is the law of perfect retribution at work. Compare Lev 26:23,24; Num 31:1-3; Deut 32:35,41,42.

"They deserve it" – no one receives any punishment from God that they do not fully deserve.

**16:7** "Altar" – 6:9,10.

**16:8** "Sun" – compare 8:12 where only a third part of the sun, etc was affected.

**16:9** "Blasphemed the name of God" – this is thrice repeated (vs 11,21). This emphasizes the depravity, hardness, and folly of human beings. Instead of confessing and forsaking their sins which bring these plagues on them, they will rage against God who in justice must send them. See Rom 8:7; John 7:7.

"Did not repent" – 9:20,21.

**16:10** "Throne of the beast" – the only mention of this throne in this book (God's throne is referred to 40 times). The beast will think he is in control of things and too late will realize that heaven rules (Dan 4:26).

"Darkness" – compare Ex 10:21-23.

"Pain" – from the burns received from the previous plague.

**16:12-16** Compare 9:14-19.

"Euphrates" – note at 9:14. To the east of this river lie Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, etc. This drying up of its

up so that the way for the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three foul spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 They are the spirits of demons, performing signs, *that* go out to the kings of the earth, of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 "Look, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches and keeps his clothes so that he does not walk naked and they see his shame."

16 And they gathered them together to a place called Armageddon in the Hebrew language.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the sanctuary in heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done." 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightning flashes, and a great earthquake. An earthquake so mighty *and* so great had not

occurred since men were on the earth. 19 And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon was remembered before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And a great hail out of heaven fell on men, *each* stone weighing about fifty kilograms. And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was exceedingly great.

**17** And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me. *He* said to me, "Come here. I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed adultery. And the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her adultery."

waters may be a symbol indicating the removal of all obstacles for the rulers of those nations to march to Western Asia.

**16:13,14** Reason and sound military strategy will not be the basic causes of this movement of vast armies at the end of this age. Compare Ezek 38:4; 39:2. Rulers will be deceived and stirred up by demons. Observe the source of these demons – Satan, the coming antichrist and the false prophet (the second "beast" of chapter 13). Note on demons at Matt 4:24.

"Battle of that great day of God Almighty" – compare 6:17; 19:19; Isa 42:13; Joel 3:9-13; Zeph 1:14-18; Zech 14:3.

**16:15** "As a thief" – 3:3; Matt 24:42-44; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10.

"Watches" – 1 Thess 5:4-8.

"Naked" – 3:17,18.

**16:16** "They" – the demons (vs 13,14).

"Armageddon" – means the mountain or hill of Megiddo. The Hebrew word for mountain or hill is "har." Megiddo is the large plain in Israel south of Nazareth and the hills of Galilee and east of Mount Carmel (2 Chron 35:22; Zech 12:11). It is called the Plain of Esdraelon and the valley of Jezreel. Mount Tabor lies northeast and Mount Gilboa lies southeast of this plain. The ancient and important fortress city of Megiddo lay on its southern edge (Judges 1:27; 1 Kings 9:15).

**16:17** "Sanctuary" – v 1.

"From the throne" – 19:5; 21:3.

**16:18** Compare 4:5; 8:5; 11:19.

"Earthquake" – the word is used seven times in this book. This one will be worse than any in history.

**16:19** "City" – the mention of Babylon immediately after the reference to the earthquake gives us reason to think that the city which Babylon symbolizes is meant here (17:9,18). Also the description of her fall in chapter 18 is suggestive of what happens in a great earthquake (18:8-10,21. Fires often result from earthquakes).

"Cities of the nations fell" – this earthquake is no local one (as in 11:13). Compare Isa 24:18-20; Heb 12:26,27.

"Wine. . . of his wrath" – 14:10.

**16:20** See 6:14.

**16:21** "Hail" – compare Ex 9:22-26.

"Blasphemed God" – vs 9,11.

**17:1** "Prostitute" – in the Bible this word is sometimes used of those called the people of God who are unfaithful to Him and go after other gods. See Isa 1:21; Jer 2:20; 3:1; Ezek 16:15-34; Hos 9:1. When used in a figurative sense, as here, this is the usual meaning of the word. In one place it is used of the merchant city of Tyre (Isa 23:15-17), and once of Nineveh (Nahum 3:4), both cities of idolatry. In those cases it means ignoring the true God and going after the treasures of this world. The "prostitute" in this chapter is a city – v 18. But we make no mistake in thinking it is a city that represents a vast religious and commercial system.

"Many waters" – v 15.

**17:2** "Adultery" – this word too is frequently used in the Old Testament to signify the unfaithfulness in spiritual matters of those called God's people. See Jer 3:6,8,9; Ezek 23:37,43; Hos 1:2; 2:4,5; etc. Indeed, it is not used figuratively of anything else. In the Old Testament it always spoke of fallen, apostate Israel. It seems almost certain that here it means fallen, apostate Christianity at the end of this age (compare Matt 24:10-12; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1-3). If it does not mean this, then apostate Christianity is not mentioned anywhere in these chapters which describe God's judgment coming on the world. And this would be a very strange thing indeed.

The "kings" committing adultery with the "woman" means having close dealings with her for their benefit or pleasure.

"Drunk" – people drink and are out of their right minds with this false religious and commercial system. Her "wine" is what she



3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was dressed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold, precious stones and pearls, and had a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and the filthiness of her adultery. 5 And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,

uses to seduce them to share her ungodliness.

**17:3** "Wilderness" – perhaps indicating that what the woman represents is like a spiritual desert.

"Woman" – in the Bible woman is used sometimes to signify a religious body (Isa 54:5,6; Jer 3:1; Eph 5:23-32. In the Revelation 12:1; 19:7,8).

"Beast" – 13:1. The beast signifies both a kingdom and its ruler. Therefore the woman is not either of those. But sitting on the beast indicates that in the beginning of the beast's reign the woman is supported by the beast and may even try to control it. Later the beast destroys her – v 16.

**17:4** "Purple and scarlet" – some commentators say these colors indicate only luxury and splendor or royalty. Others point to the fact that the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as high officials in some other churches, wear these colors.

"Gold. . . pearls" – signify great wealth.

"Golden cup" – rich and attractive on the outside (compare Matt 23:25,26).

"Abominations" – in the Old Testament abominations frequently mean idols and idolatry (note at Jer 7:30).

**17:5** "Name. . . on forehead" – in other words this name describes exactly what she is.

"Mystery" – this means she is a mystery that no one could discover the meaning of if God did not reveal it (compare Matt 13:11; Rom 16:25; etc).

"Babylon the Great" – she is not the literal Babylon that was destroyed long ago (see v 18; Jer 50:39,40). She is "mystery" Babylon. But in certain respects she is like that Babylon. Babylon was a city of false religion. It was built originally in defiance of God (Gen 9:1,7, with 11:1-4). It became a city full of idols (Jer 50:38), and the center of a vast religious system. The chief priest of that system was called "Pontifex Maximum" (eventually the emperors of Rome took this title, and later still the bishops of Rome and the popes of the Roman Catholic Church. It means "Chief Bridge Maker." The word "pontiff", used of popes today, means "bridge maker").

"Mother of prostitutes" – this means she is the chief producer of groups, like herself (v 1), unfaithful to God in spiritual and religious matters. This woman is a false system of religion which has some of its

#### THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I was amazed, greatly amazed.

7 And the angel said to me, "Why were you amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carries her, that has the seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast that you

roots in ancient Babylon and reaches its end in the final apostate religion with its headquarters in Rome.

"Abominations of the earth" – the abominations religious people are capable of when they forsake the teachings of the one true God.

**17:6** "Blood of the saints" – in the first centuries Rome under its emperors sometimes persecuted Christians. After that for many centuries the greatest religious persecutor of true believers in Christ was the Roman Catholic Church, and she put multiplied thousands of believers to death (one scholar has estimated the total at five crores – 50 millions). At the end of this age the beast (probably the head of the revived Roman Empire – note at 13:2) will be the persecutor – 13:7,15, but we see the woman here riding the beast.

**17:7-18** In these verses the angel gives John (and us) a straightforward explanation of the woman and the beast in literal language. We should accept this explanation and not try to explain it away – which we may do if we try to take this literal language and make it symbolic. Yet we need wisdom to understand some of his words (v 9).

**17:8** One question that has perplexed commentators is this: Does the word "beast" here mean an individual or an empire? The answer seems to be it represents an individual who is the head of the empire (as a king of France once said, "I am the state").

"Once was, and is not" – both the "beast" and the "woman" are connected with the city of Rome (vs 9,18). When the angel gave this explanation to John the city of Rome was the flourishing capital of a mighty empire. The angel could not have said either of the city or of the empire in John's day that it "is not." But he could have said it of an individual.

"Will come up out of the Abyss" – see 11:7. The Abyss is the unseen realm of the dead (note at 9:1). The future head of antichrist's kingdom comes from there. And his manifestation was future to John's day (and still is future).

"Destruction" – 19:20.

"Book of Life" – 13:8; 3:5; 20:12.

"Amazed" – see 13:3. There the cause of astonishment is the death and coming to life of one of the heads.



saw was, and is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to destruction. And those who live on the earth whose names were not written in the book of life from the beginning of the world will be amazed when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 "Here a mind that has wisdom *is needed*. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. 10 There are also seven kings: five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain for a short time. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, he is the eighth *king*, and is *one* of the seven, and goes to destruction.

12 "And the ten horns that you saw are ten

**17:9** Wisdom is required because the seven heads are a double symbol.

"Seven hills on which the woman sits" – Rome was famous in that day as the city on seven hills. To John it could not have meant any other place on earth (and we must keep in mind that the angel is giving him an explanation so he can understand, not trying to confuse him). The same is true of the word of the angel in v 18. The Greek word here translated "hill" also means mountain.

**17:10** This is the other explanation of the seven heads of the beast. Rome and its empire rested solidly upon its first powerful emperors, beginning with Julius Caesar. In John's day five of them had "fallen." This may mean death by violence. From Caesar to John's day (a period of about 140 years, if John wrote about 96 AD.) there had been eleven emperors. Eight of them died by murder or suicide but only five of those eight were powerful rulers on whom Rome could be said to sit. Counting Julius Caesar they were Caesar, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. The other three (Galba, Otho and Vitellius) were insignificant and between them ruled for only about 2 years.

"One is" – the emperor in John's day was Domitian. Or, if John actually wrote sometime between 54-68 AD (as some think) the emperor in his day would have been Nero (in this case the emperors who had passed off the scene – not necessarily by violence – would be Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. Nero would be the sixth).

"The other has not yet come" – he is the seventh king whose place is taken by "the eighth" (v 11), the individual who will come up out of the Abyss (v 8). There were many emperors after Domitian (or Nero) until the Roman Empire collapsed nearly 400 years later. But all that time is passed over in silence because it has no bearing on the purpose of this book. Revelation does not give a history of the Roman Empire, but a picture of things at the end of this age. In vs 10,11 after explaining the origin of the coming individual ruler of the revived Roman empire the angel passes on to the end.

kings who have as yet received no kingdom, but will receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 They *will* have one intention, and will give their power and authority to the beast. 14 They will make war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and those who are with him *are* called and chosen and faithful."

15 And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. 16 And the ten horns that you saw on the beast, these will hate the prostitute and will make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to execute his will,

"A short time" – 13:5.

**17:11** Observe in this literal explanation of the angel the words "the beast. . . is an eighth king." He lived before the angel spoke to John but was not living then. He would come to power afterwards.

"He is one of the seven" – since he comes up out of the Abyss (v 8; 11:7), it seems he is resurrected from the dead. Compare 13:3.

**17:12,13** "Ten horns" – v 3; 13:1; Dan 7:7. Again we have the explanation in literal language. These ten kings are future to John's day and have still not given their help to the beast. Since they do so all at the same time they must be rulers of places other than Rome. Rome will not have eleven kings at once.

"One hour" – most emphatically a short period of time. Compare 13:5.

"One intention" – probably world-wide power under the leadership of the beast – 13:7.

**17:14** "Will make war against the Lamb" – 13:7. Waging war against the people of the Lamb is the same as waging war against the Lamb. Compare Acts 9:4,5.

"Lamb will overcome them" – 19:19-21.

"King of kings" – 19:16.

"Those who are with him" – 19:14.

**17:15** "Waters" – v 1. If the prostitute sits in Rome how can she sit at the same time over many other peoples? Rome is her home, the headquarters of her operations. But she will dominate or influence people in many countries around the world.

**17:16** "Hate the prostitute" – she will "sit" on them, but they will not be happy about it, and when opportunity comes they will turn on her and destroy her.

"Eat her flesh" – suggests taking her wealth for themselves.

"Burn her" – possibly a literal burning of her possessions and properties which gets out of hand and consumes the whole city (18:8,9). It is difficult to conceive how the beast and the ten kings will hate her as a wealthy commercial center. It is clear though how they could hate her as a religious system – she will be in competition with them.

**17:17** "For God" – God is on the throne in 4:2, and His throne is mentioned forty times

to agree together and give their kingdom to the beast until God's words are fulfilled.

18 "And the woman that you saw is that great city which is reigning over the kings of the earth."

**18** And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven. *He* had great authority and the earth was lit up with his brightness. 2 And he cried out loudly in a strong voice and said, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen and has become the home of demons, a guardhouse for every foul spirit and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the inflaming wine of her

in this book. In the world's darkest period He will still be in control of events, working out His purposes toward the world. A former king of literal Babylon learned this – Dan 4:35.

"Put it into their hearts" – compare Prov 16:9; 21:1; Gen 45:5. No matter how evil men oppose Him, God accomplishes His purposes on earth.

"Until God's words are fulfilled" – 10:7; Matt 5:18. What God says will happen, and no one can prevent it.

**17:18** When the angel gave this literal explanation Rome was the city that ruled over the parts of the earth John knew. To him it could mean only that city. See also v 9 and 18:20. We might suppose that he did not then know all that Rome would become as a center of apostate Christianity, etc, but he could know that it was to be the center of important events at the end of this age. The woman, then, is the city of Rome but a city that represents the religious (and other) characteristics of a people.

**18:1** "Another angel" – an angel was already speaking to John. One purpose he had was to show John "the judgment of the great prostitute" (17:1). This he did in v 16. Why then does another angel come now to announce it? It may be because this chapter reveals a different aspect of her fall, or that her fall is in two stages.

**18:2** "Fallen", "fallen" – 14:8; Isa 21:9. Why is the word "fallen" repeated? Possibly for emphasis. Or possibly because she falls first from her high religious position, and then from her commercial position. By destroying the one (17:16) the beast finds he has also destroyed the other. Or it may mean that this woman Babylon first fell spiritually, morally, and ethically, and then will fall into literal destruction.

"Home of demons" – this sounds like a fall in the spiritual sense, completely away from God (note on demons at Matt 4:24). After the destruction of the old literal Babylon it became the haunt of jackals and hyenas (Isa 13:19-22; Jer 50:39; 51:37). Mystery Babylon is filled with worse than these.

**18:3** "Wine of her adultery" – 17:2. Here the wine is said to be "inflaming." Compare Jer 51:7.

adultery, and the kings of the earth have committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich through the power of her luxuries."

4 And I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not share in her sins and that you receive none of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her wrongdoing. 6 Give her back just as she has given you and pay her back double for her deeds. Pour out for her a double *amount* in the cup that she poured. 7 In the measure she has honoured herself and lived luxuriously, give her torment and sorrow. For she

"Merchants" – vs 11,15,23. This is the first mention of them in this book. Until now there has been no reason to think that the "prostitute" of chapter 17 is anything but a city which represents a large and powerful religious system. But of course a great city is more than its religion.

"Luxuries" – vs 7,9.

**18:4** "Another voice from heaven" – compare Heb 12:25.

"Come out" – compare Isa 52:11; Jer 51:45; 2 Cor 6:17. Some of God's people will be in this "mystery Babylon" in the last days. Coming out of her does not mean to leave physically the city of Rome. It means to separate from the system that city represents, and from its greed for gain as revealed in this chapter. Compare 1 Tim 6:10,11.

"Share in her sins" – sharing her sins will mean sharing her punishment also. Compromise with evil is very dangerous.

**18:5** "To heaven" – Jer 51:9. When they built the original Babylon men wanted a tower that reached to the heavens (Gen 11:4). But in the end it is their sins which reach the heavens.

"Remembered" – 16:19.

**18:6** "Give her back just as she has given" – here is the perfect principle of justice that God reveals throughout His word (Ex 21:23-25; Lev 24:20; 26:23,24; Esther 7:10; Ps 18:25-27; Isa 59:18; Jer 51:56; Rom 2:5-11; Gal 6:7-9).

"The cup" – 17:4. She used her "cup" to destroy others; justice will see that it destroys her.

**18:7** Three sins (v 5) are listed here in this verse: self-glory, luxurious living, and proud boasting.

"Honoured herself" – what she did was all for self rather than for God whom all should glorify.

"Luxuriously" – this is another of her sins for which God will punish her. When many in the world live in deep poverty, rags and hunger, living in luxury is a crime. It is also a sign that those who indulge in it have no heart for God (compare Luke 16:19-21). And God will punish those guilty of it – Jam 5:1-5.

"Queen" – mystery Babylon thinks she is

says in her heart, 'I sit as queen and am not a widow, and will not see grief.' 8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day: death, mourning, and famine. And she will be consumed by fire, for the Lord God who judges her *is* mighty.

9 "And the kings of the earth who have committed adultery *with her* and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning. 10 From fear of her torment they will stand far off, and will say, 'Alas, alas, the great city Babylon! The mighty city! In one hour your judgment has come.'

11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their merchandise any more, 12 the merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet *cloth*, and every kind of citron wood, and every kind of article *made* of ivory, and every kind of article *made* of costly wood, of bronze, of iron, and of marble, 13 and cinnamon, perfumes, fragrant ointment, frankincense, and wine and oil, and fine flour and wheat, and cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.

reigning now and that no disaster can overtake her. But Prov 11:2; 16:18 will be true of her (as those verses always are).

**18:8** "In one day" – very suddenly and quickly. It seems there will be two stages in her destruction, and possibly three. First death, mourning and famine, then fire, then (possibly) a violent, overwhelming disaster (v 21). It takes time for famine to develop and affect a city.

"God who judges her" – 16:5,7.

**18:9** "Kings of the earth" – v 3; 17:2. Apparently these are different kings than the ones in 17:12,16 (if they are the same this means that they did not want to destroy Rome as a commercial system, but only as a religious system). And they are different from the beast and the woman.

"Weep" – because an important source of their power and influence is destroyed.

**18:10** "Fear" – their own future will seem grim and fearful.

"The mighty city" – 17:18.

**18:11-17** "Merchants" – v 3. Evidently Rome will represent a very large commercial system (v 23). More and more the economies of various nations of the world will be tied together. When one large market is affected the whole world is affected.

"Fear" (v 15) – fearful that a similar thing might happen to them.

"Weeping" – those who have their treasures in this world (rather than in heaven – Matt 6:19-21) will be alarmed and sad when there is a threat of losing them.

**18:13** "Bodies and souls of men" – "Babylon" cares nothing for people but only what can be gotten out of them. Her dealings result in every kind of bondage and enslavement.

14 "The fruit that your soul craved has gone from you, and *your* luxuries and splendors have gone from you, and you will never find them again.

15 "The merchants of these things who were made rich by her, will stand far off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and say, 'Alas! alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17 For in one hour such great wealth has come to nothing.'

"And every ship captain, and all who travel by ship, and sailors, and all who trade by sea, stood far off, 18 when they saw the smoke of her burning, and cried out and said, 'What *city was ever* like this great city!' 19 And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and said, 'Alas! alas! that great city, where all who had ships on the sea were made wealthy through her riches! For in one hour she has been destroyed.'

20 "Rejoice over her, *O* heaven, and *you* holy apostles and prophets, because for you God has executed judgment on her."

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, and said,

Her leaders will sell souls like cattle.

**18:17-19** Sailors and their captains will join the lament. The fall of Rome will be a serious blow to commerce by sea.

"What city was ever like this great city?" Will Rome in the future be greatly developed as a commercial center as well as a political one? It seems quite possible from this question and this chapter. Or is it here viewed more as what it represents than what it will be in itself?

"Wealthy" (v 19) – the kings will think of her power (v 10), merchants and sailors will think of her wealth.

**18:20** These words are spoken by the voice from heaven which has been speaking from v 4. See how different are God's thoughts from the thoughts of unbelievers about the same event. The destruction of mystery Babylon is a source of grief to men of the world, but of joy to God and His people. Compare Luke 16:15; Isa 55:8,9. It will mean the end of a system based on greed, covetousness, and love of money; a system that craves power and cares nothing for people; a system that ignores God and tries to build a world of leisure, luxury and satisfaction without Him. Such a system deserves to be destroyed, and it will be.

"Apostles and prophets, because for you God has executed judgment on her" – v 24; 17:6; 19:2. This is more evidence that the woman means Rome. It was Rome which killed Paul and Peter and countless other believers, and had persecuted John and banished him to Patmos.

**18:21,22** It would seem that mystery Babylon's final destruction will result from a sudden terrific act of violence.

"In this way that great city Babylon will be violently thrown down and will never be found again. 22 And the sound of harpists, and musicians, and flutists, and trumpeters will never again be heard in you. And no workman of any kind of work will ever again be found in you. And the sound of a millstone will never again be heard in you. 23 And lamplight will never again shine in you. And the voice of bridegroom and of bride will never again be heard in you. For your merchants were the world's great men and all nations were deceived through your sorceries. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who had been killed on the earth."

**19** After these things I heard a loud voice of many people in heaven saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and honour and power *belong* to the Lord our God, 2 for his judgments *are* true and righteous, because he has judged

the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adultery and has taken vengeance on her for the blood of his servants she shed."

3 And again they said, "Hallelujah! And smoke from her rises up for ever and ever."

4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living beings prostrated themselves and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne, and said, "Amen, Hallelujah!"

5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, and you who fear him, both small and great."

6 And I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, and like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give him honour, for the wedding of the Lamb has come and his wife has made herself ready. 8 And to wear she has given fine linen, clean and bright; for the fine

"Never again" - one name men have given Rome is "The Eternal City." It will prove a false title.

**18:23** "World's great men" - v 11,14,15. Again we see that the city represents a great commercial system with its immensely rich and powerful bankers and industrialists.

"Deceived" - 12:9. Here this means led astray from God into ungodliness. Satan uses her for this purpose.

"Sorceries" - compare what is said about Nineveh in Nahum 3:4.

**18:24** "All who have been killed" - how can this be said of any single city? For a similar thing see Matt 23:35,35 and notes. Mystery Babylon by her attitude and behavior reveals herself as one with all the violent persecutors of history and shares and inherits the guilt of all. She is their successor who has willingly imbibed their spirit.

**19:1** "Hallelujah" - this word occurs in the New Testament only in the first six verses of this chapter. The word joins two Hebrew words - "Hallel" meaning praise, and "Jah" (Yah) meaning Jehovah God. It can be translated as "Praise the Lord", or "Praise Jehovah", or "Praise Yahweh."

"Belong to the Lord our God" - 4:11; 5:12; 7:10,12.

**19:2** "True and righteous" - 15:3; 16:5,7. "Adultery" - 17:2,5.

"Taken vengeance" - 6:10; 17:6; 18:20. It is not our place to take vengeance, but when God does it there is great rejoicing in heaven. They all recognize that it is God acting in perfect justice for the good of the universe.

**19:3** They praise God because mystery Babylon will be destroyed forever. Never will she rise again to corrupt the earth or persecute true believers.

"For ever and ever" - 14:11.

**19:4** "Elders. . . living beings" - 4:4,6-8.

"Amen" - 1:6.

**19:5** "From the throne" - 16:17; 21:3.

"Praise our God" - note at Ps 33:1-3.

"Fear Him" - 14:7; 15:4; notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 86:11; 111:10; Prov 1:7; Rom 3:18; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:17. Observe in this verse that God's servants and those who fear Him are the same persons. Without the proper fear of the Lord it is not possible to be a true servant of God. How can a person truly serve God if He does not have a reverential awe and respect for Him, a fear of offending or dishonoring Him?

**19:6** "Reigns" - 11:15. Here is reason for great praise and rejoicing. God is the great King over all the earth, and He will demonstrate it by destroying all corrupt and ungodly power on earth, religious or secular.

**19:7** "The great prostitute" has been judged and destroyed. Now, in great contrast to all that she was and did, the bride of the Lamb appears.

"Wedding" - the public manifestation and celebration of what has been true of all His believers throughout this age. All believers are even now united to Him. The "bride" is the same as what is called the "body" of Christ in Rom 12:4,5; 1 Cor 12:12; Eph 1:23; 5:23; Col 1:18. On this subject see Matt 22:2-14; John 3:29; 17:20-23; Rom 6:3; 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:22-32. In the Old Testament the nation Israel was the "wife" of Jehovah - see Isa 54:5-7; Jer 3:14,20; 31:32; Hos 2:16,19,20. See also notes on Song of Songs and Ps 45:8-17.

"His wife has made herself ready" - compare Eph 5:26,27. There we see it is Christ who makes the bride ready. How then does she make herself ready? By cooperating with Him and doing what He commands.

**19:8** "Righteous deeds" - believers have the righteousness of Christ (Rom 3:21-26; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9), but they prove this by their own righteous acts.

linen is the righteous deeds of the saints."

9 And he said to me, "Write: Blessed *are* those who are called to the wedding supper of the Lamb." He also said to me, "These are the true words of God."

10 And I prostrated myself at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, "Look, *do* not do *that*! I am a servant together with you and with your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

11 And I saw heaven opened, and there appeared a white horse and he who sat on him. *He is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness

he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns. And he had a name written that no man knew except he himself. 13 And he *was* dressed in a garment dipped in blood. And his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven followed him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which he should strike the nations. And he will rule them with an iron rod. And he tramples the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And on *his* robe and on his thigh he has a name written:

On this subject see Matt 5:6; 25:34-40; Rom 2:6-10; Jam 2:14-26. No righteous acts means no real faith and no readiness to meet the Lord.

**19:9** "Those who are called" – this does not refer to the open invitation given to many who do not accept the invitation (compare Matt 22:2-7; Luke 14:16-24). This means a special invitation in heaven to those who have already accepted the one on earth. The "called" are all those who actually attend (see Rom 8:30). Who are they? Is there any doubt that they constitute the bride? The symbol of the bride views them collectively; the words "those who are called" view them individually. In the parable in Matt 22:2-14 those who accept the King's invitation, and wear the wedding garment he gives, all together make up the "bride" for the King's Son. They show they are part of the bride by accepting his invitation.

"Blessed" – notes at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; Matt 5:3.

"True words of God" – not the angel's own invention. Everywhere in the Bible God has spoken (Heb 1:1,2). On His revealed Word believers can rest and rejoice.

**19:10** If this angel was the one in 18:1 perhaps John was overcome by his splendor and his words of authority and blessing, and mistook him for Christ.

"Do not do that" – no good angel and no good man has the desire that Satan has (to receive worship – see Matt 4:9). All of them will refuse worship and point people away from themselves to God. Any who accept worship reveal their wickedness.

"Spirit of prophecy" – anyone who gives true witness concerning Christ is giving a witness that is truly prophetic. It is speaking forth truth revealed by God Himself and it has to do with both the present and the future.

**19:11** The great prostitute has been judged. Now the evil triumvirate – the dragon, the beast and the false prophet – must be dealt with to redeem the earth from its enslavement to wickedness. This Christ will do at His return (v 20; 20:1-3). The picture in this verse is of Christ's sudden coming to earth again. Believers from the first century onwards have looked forward to this

great event. See references at 1:7.

"There appeared" – literally, "look".

"White horse" – the rider of this one will be in great contrast to the one in 6:2.

"Faithful and True" – 1:5; 3:14 – He is the Lord Jesus and no other. He is not unfaithful and false as the prostitute, the beast and his prophet will prove to be.

"Makes war" – 17:14; Ex 15:3; Josh 10:42; 23:3; Ps 45:3-7; Isa 11:4. Christ will fight for His world and for His people, and He will win. Compare His coming here with His first coming (Luke 2:7), and His riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (Matt 21:1-5).

**19:12** "Fire" – 1:14.

"Many crowns" – this is the only place in the New Testament where Christ is said to wear any royal crown (diadem) and it is when He comes to earth to reign.

"No one knew, except he" – compare 2:17; Matt 11:27. Only God can fully understand all that Christ is.

**19:13** "Blood" – probably signifies Christ as Redeemer who shed His blood for sinners (Matt 26:28; Rom 3:24,25; Eph 1:7). Some think it speaks of Christ as warrior and the defeat of His enemies. But this comes in v 15.

"Word of God" – John 1:1,14.

**19:14** "Armies in heaven" – certainly His angels (Matt 16:27; 25:31; 2 Thess 1:7), and perhaps His believers also (17:14; see note at 1 Thess 3:13). In this book fine white linen is the dress for both angels and believers (v 8; 15:6).

**19:15** Note at 1:16.

"Strike" – 2 Thess 2:8; Isa 11:4.

"Iron rod" – 2:27; Ps 2:9. Very clearly, his rule over the nations of earth is after His second coming.

"Wine press of the . . . wrath" – 14:19; Isa 63:1-4.

**19:16** "King of kings and Lord of lords" – means the greatest and highest of all who are called kings or lords. Could this be said of anyone who does not share the nature of God and is not God Himself? Compare Deut 10:17; Ps 136:2,3; Dan 2:47. See 1 Tim 6:15 where God Himself bears this name. In the Old Testament the LORD (Jehovah God) is the great King (Ps 47:2). Here the



## KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun. And he shouted in a loud voice and said to all the birds that fly through the sky, "Come and gather together at the supper of the great God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of their riders and the flesh of all *kinds of people*, both free and slave, both small and great."

19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured and with him the false prophet who performed signs in his presence, with which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who

Lord Jesus is the great King. Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah (see note and other references at Luke 2:11). This name "written" on Christ at His coming means that He Himself is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords – 17:14. He does not bear a title that belongs to someone else. This is the "glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ", the blessed hope of believers (Titus 2:13). Other references to Christ's deity at Phil 2:6.

**19:17,18** The reference to birds, flesh, horses and men suggest a literal battle with many killed. This "supper" is in great contrast with "the wedding supper of the Lamb" (v 9). That one is for Christ's righteous people; this one for Christ's opponents. God provides this supper for the vultures who feed on the dead. Compare Ezek 39:17-20.

"All kinds of people" – people of all nations who have received the mark of the beast and joined the armies mentioned in v 19.

**19:19** "Beast" – see 13:4. Now One is seen who can make war against him.

"Kings of the earth" – 6:15; 16:12, 14,16; 17:2,18; 18:3; 21:24.

"Gathered together" – 16:14,16. This is the final great battle of this age. They will come to this battle whether they think it is militarily reasonable or not (compare Ezek 38:4; 39:2). Christ is sovereign over all the kings of earth – 1:5. And He who brought Pharaoh's army to the Red Sea and their destruction (Ex 14:4,23-38) can bring earth's armies to this final battle. And He will do so. We are not told what the beast and these kings will think – whether they realize they are trying to fight the Lord from heaven. For all we know they may think it is an invasion from space which must be resisted to save the earth. But we should not rule out even a conscious attempt on their part to fight the Son of God. There is no limit to the willful and stubborn depravity of men energized by Satan. Remember that Satan and his angels fight in heaven

worshiped his image. Both of them were thrown alive into a lake of fire burning with sulfur. 21 And the rest of *them* were killed by the sword of the one who sat on the horse, *the sword* that came out of his mouth. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

**20** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the Abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he seized the dragon, that old serpent, who is the Devil, that is, Satan, and bound him *for* a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the Abyss and locked him up and put a seal on him, so that he could no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years were finished. And after that he must be let loose *for* a little while.

itself (12:7). And men can know God's coming judgment and still continue in their rebellion against Him (Rom 1:32; etc).

**19:20** "False prophet" – 16:13; 20:10.

"Signs" – 13:13-15.

"Lake of fire" – 20:10,14,15; 21:8. The throwing of them alive into the lake of fire is further evidence that the beast and false prophet are individuals. The Bible says nothing about kingdoms and empires being thrown there.

**19:21** "Sword. . . out of his mouth" – Christ will but speak and destruction results.

**20:1-3** Before this event Christ has dealt with the prostitute, the beast and the false prophet. But before the earth is prepared for His glorious reign one more person must be removed. That is what we have here.

**20:1** "Abyss" – note at 9:1.

**20:2** "Dragon" – 12:3,9.

"Satan" – notes at 1 Chron 21:2; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44.

"Bound him" – in a sense Christ at His first coming bound Satan (Matt 12:29). Some teach that Satan is bound throughout this whole age and that these verses here in this book refer to that. However, if that is true Satan must be on a very long chain – see 12:10,12,13,17; 1 Pet 5:8; Eph 2:2; 6:11,12! We should notice that here it is an angel, not Christ, who binds Satan. And that having bound him he throws him into the Abyss. And there is not a word about this anywhere else in the New Testament, not a suggestion that Satan has been in the Abyss all these centuries and not able to deceive the nations.

"Thousand years" – vs 4,6. There have been many attempts to make this mean anything but a literal thousand years, but in the view of the author of these notes these attempts have all been unsuccessful.

**20:3** "Locked him up and put a seal" – compare Isa 24:21-24. This surely indicates imprisoned so that he cannot for a moment step out of the Abyss and put his foot on earth.

"So that he could no longer deceive the



4 And I saw thrones and those who were sitting on them. *Authority to mete out* judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or in their hands. And they lived *again* and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the

nations until" – we can be sure that this speaks of an event still in the future, because deceiving the nations is something Satan constantly does now (12:9). See also 2 Cor 4:4; 11:3,14,15; 2 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 4:1. "A little time" – v 7.

**20:4** "Thrones" – it does not say where they are, but the whole scene from v 1 to v 9 seems clearly to be on earth. Verse 1 says the angel came "down out of heaven" and vs 8,9 are events which will take place on earth.

"Authority to mete out judgment" – compare Matt 19:28.

"Souls of those. . . beheaded" – 6:9.

"Beast" – the antichrist does not appear until the end of this age and Christ Himself will deal with him at His coming (19:20; 2 Thess 2:3-8). It is perfectly clear that the events revealed here in this verse happen after that.

"Lived again" – in the next verse this is called resurrection; that is, souls entering the bodies they once occupied and the bodies coming to life again.

"Reigned with Christ" – as Christ promised (2:26,27; 3:21). It speaks here of those reigning who had been beheaded by the beast, but this does not mean that other believers will not reign with Christ. Their reign had been revealed before in other Scriptures, and so it was not necessary to state that truth again. See 5:10; 2 Tim 2:12; Rom 8:17; compare Luke 19:15-17,19.

"A thousand years" – all the time Satan is in the Abyss. This is the only place in the Bible that speaks of the length of this time when Christ will reign with His saints on the present earth. But this book is a special revelation from God, and it should not surprise us that there is truth in it not revealed before. There are Christian scholars who say there will be no literal reign of Christ on this present earth after His return. Some of them teach that the promises of glory and blessing made to Israel in the Old Testament are being fulfilled in the Church in this present age, that Satan is bound now, and that now the saints reign with Christ. And some scholars teach that this "thousand year" reign does not refer to the earth at all, but to the reign of the saints in heaven. The reasons they give for these views do not satisfy the author of these notes. On Christ's reign as prophesied in the Old Testament see Isa 2:1-4; 9:6,7;

first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy *is* he who will have a part in the first resurrection. On such *people* the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years have ended, Satan will be let loose from his prison, 8 and will go out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for battle. The number

11:4-16; 24:23; 32:1-5; 35:1-10; Dan 2:34,35,44,45; Zech 14:8-21.

**20:5** According to this there are two resurrections.

"The rest of the dead" – unbelievers who have died in their sins. Compare John 5:28,29. See note at Phil 3:11; Luke 20:35. Other references on the resurrection of believers: 1 Cor 15:20-25, 42-44, 51-53; 1 Thess 4:14-17.

**20:6** Blessed and holy surely applies to all true believers in Christ throughout this age – Matt 5:3; Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; John 17:17; Rom 1:7; Eph 1:4; 2:21; Col 1:2; 3:12; Heb 10:10,14; 1 Pet 2:9.

"Second death" – v 14.

"Priests" – 1:6; 5:10; 1 Pet 2:5,9.

"Will reign with Him" – no description is given here of Christ's reign on earth. It was not necessary to give it here because God had revealed it before this in other parts of the Bible. For example see Isa 2:1-4 and other such Scriptures.

**20:7** "Let loose" – this will be for the "little time" referred to in v 1. It is different from the little time in 12:12. There Satan was cast out of heaven; here he is let loose from the Abyss – a huge difference.

**20:8** "Deceive" – immediately he will be up to his old tricks again and he will succeed remarkably well. Even after one thousand years of universal justice and righteousness, peace and prosperity and perfect government, the hearts of men will prove to be as rebellious and depraved as ever. These will be people born and grown to maturity during the thousand year reign. Their rebellion at the end will reveal other lessons (or deeper truths) God will be pleased to teach about the depravity of the human heart.

"Gog and Magog" – compare Ezek 38:2. In Ezekiel Gog is the chief prince of Magog, and Magog and the other nations that come against Israel are from the far north of Israel (Ezek 38:6,15; 39:2). And it seems they will invade Israel sometime before the end of this age, before the thousand year reign (notes at Ezek 38:1,8). Here in this book Gog and Magog are nations from the "four corners of the earth." Also this invasion takes place after the thousand year reign. Why are these nations called Gog and Magog? Possibly merely to reveal their character – they will be just as rebellious and determined, etc. as the ones in Ezekiel chapters 38,39.

of them is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they proceeded across earth's wide expanse and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. Then fire came down from God out of heaven and consumed them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne and him who was sitting on it. From his face earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the book of life*. And the dead were judged by the things

written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and each one of them was judged according to his deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whoever was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

**21** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And no longer was there a sea. 2 And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven which said, "Look, God's

**20:9** "The earth's wide expanse" – this is not said of the invaders of Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 (38:6,15; 39:2).

"The beloved city" – Ps 87:2.

"Fire. . . from heaven" – compare Ezek 38:22; 39:6; Ps 11:6,7.

**20:10** "They" – the verb is in the plural here, indicating that all three of those mentioned here will be tormented. Two of them will have been there for 1000 years (19:20). Evidently being cast into the lake of fire does not mean annihilation, extinction of being.

"Day and night for ever and ever" – 14:11.

**20:11-15** The final judgment of people and the end of the heavens and earth as they are now. God's throne is now a throne of grace – Heb 4:16. Those who reject God's grace will face His just judgment on all their sins. Does this judgment take place when the 1000 years are over, or before? The wording here does not make this clear. It may be that what is revealed here are the principles of the judgment and not the time of it. All we can say is that from the context it seems likely that it happens after the 1000 years reign of Christ. But this does not necessarily rule out a similar judgment before the 1000 years.

**20:11** "Him who was sitting on it" – Christ; see John 5:22; Acts 17:31.

"No place was found for them" – 21:1.

**20:12** "The dead" – presumably those raised from the dead in the second resurrection (v 5). They will be raised, but still called "the dead", because they will be without spiritual life. Compare Eph 2:1; 1 Tim 5:6.

"Books" – distinct from the book of life, and containing a record of the deeds done by those dead while they were on earth.

"The book of life" – note at 3:5.

"Were judged" – Ps 9:7,8; 82:8; 94:2; 96:10-13; Dan 7:9,10.

**20:13** "The sea" is mentioned probably because some might think that bodies sunk in the depths of the sea or devoured by sharks or fish will be beyond recovery. But they too will rise and stand before the judgment throne.

"Death" – the power that separated

peoples' souls from their bodies. But death will not be able to keep souls and bodies separated.

"Hades" – see Luke 16:23; etc. There unbelievers are kept until God's final judgment on them.

**20:14** Death will no longer separate souls from bodies but will be merged into the final separation of the wicked from God. Hades will no longer be a place where the wicked are kept until judgment. All the wicked will be judged and Hades merged into hell.

"Second death" – this means eternal separation from God who is the source of all peace, joy, and blessing (Matt 25:41; 2 Thess 1:8,9).

**20:15** Those not written in the book of life will not have spiritual life (John 1:12,13; Eph 2:5), and they will practice the sins listed in 21:8. And they will receive exactly what they will deserve. Let us remember again the one way to escape this just judgment and punishment – John 5:24; Rom 8:1.

**21:1** "New" – Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13.

"Passed away" – 20:11; Matt 24:29; 2 Pet 3:10.

"A sea no longer existed" – there will be vast changes from the state of things now.

**21:2** "New Jerusalem" – compare Gal 4:26; Heb 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Phil 3:20; John 14:2.

"Coming down out of heaven" – the final dwelling place of redeemed mankind will be on a new earth, not in heaven. Or should we say heaven becomes earth and earth heaven.

"As a bride" – vs 9,10.

**21:3** "From heaven" – 4:2; 16:17; 19:5 – the central place of authority in the universe.

"God's dwelling place is with men" – that is, on the new earth. The new earth will become heaven, for God will live there with men. This is the climax of the whole Bible, the fulfillment of the plan God has had for mankind from the beginning. Note and references at Ex 25:8.

"His people. . . their God" – 2 Cor 6:16; Lev 26:11,12; Ezek 37:27; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Pet 2:9.

dwelling place *is* with men, and he will live with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them, *and be* their God. 4 And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And no longer will there be death, or sorrow, or crying. And no longer will there be pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 And he who sat on the throne said, "See, I make all things new." And he said to me, "Write *this*, for these words are true and faithful."

6 And he said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him

who is thirsty I will freely give from the fountain of the water of life. 7 He who overcomes will inherit all things. I will be his God, and he will be my son. 8 But the cowardly, and the unbelieving, and the vile, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars will have their part in the lake which burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came to me and talked with me and said, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he

**21:4** "Eyes" – 7:17.

"No. . . death" – 20:14 – no more physical death, the separation of soul and body, and no more spiritual death which is separation from God.

"Passed away" – the root cause of death, mourning, crying, and pain is the fall of mankind into sin (Rom 5:12). When sin is abolished from the world these other things will vanish with it.

**21:5** "New" – He has already begun this work. See 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10. Once the present earth and its system have fulfilled the purpose for which God made them, He will lay them aside and make new ones.

"True and faithful" – 19:9; 22:6. These things are not visionary or imaginary, but eternal realities.

**21:6** "He" – God.

"It is done" – when God says something is done it means that it is absolutely certain it will be fulfilled, though it does not always become so at the moment of speaking. See Isa 46:10; Rom 4:17.

"Alpha and Omega" – 1:8; 22:13.

"Water of life" – here it is God who gives the water of life; in John 4:10,14 it is the Lord Jesus who gives it. Observe that it is given without cost. See 22:17; Isa 55:1; Rom 6:23.

**21:7** "Overcomes" – see note at 2:7.

"Inherit" – 1 John 3:1-3; Rom 8:15,16, 19,23,29. This is a promise that should make everyone who reads it determine to be among the overcomers and not to be much concerned about any inheritance in this present world. But we should not think from this verse that becoming a child of God is a reward for overcoming. Becoming a child of God is altogether a gift of God's grace (John 1:1,13,14; Gal 4:4-7; Eph 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:3-5). Overcoming is a result of becoming a child of God, is evidence of the new birth (1 John 5:4,5). However, overcoming is not something that takes place automatically without the child of God having any part in it. Winning, continuing in the faith, requires spiritual effort through the power God has put in believers.

**21:8** There will be only two classes of people – the saved and the lost; God's people with whom He will dwell (v 3), and these who have refused to be God's people.

"Cowardly" – in the context this means those who refuse to believe in Christ and confess Him because of the fear of other

people.

"Unbelieving" – those who preferred darkness to light, themselves to Christ, this world to heaven and so do not believe in Christ because they do not want to (John 3:19,20,36; 5:40; 2 Thess 2:10,11). Unbelief is not some light thing, some misfortune, something to be easily excused. It is the sin above all which will condemn men to the lake of fire. It is here put together with murder and sins which make people vile.

"Whoremongers" – the original meaning of the Greek word (used also in Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 1:10; Heb 13:4; Rev 22:15) seems to be men engaged in buying or selling sex, but in various versions in various places has been translated "fornicators" or "sexually immoral person". Certainly all such immorality is condemned in many places in the Bible. See 1 Cor 6:9,10; Eph 5:5,6; Col 3:5,6.

"Sorcerers" – 9:21; 18:23; 22:15; Acts 8:11; Deut 18:9-14. This means those who practice black magic with the intention of deceiving people, and the result of which is to lead them away from God's truth.

"Idolaters" – a sin everywhere condemned in the Bible and one forbidden in the list of the ten commandments God gave (Ex 20:4-6). No idolater will ever be among God's people – unless he or she repents and forsakes all idols and gods.

"Liars" – see also v 27; 22:15. Because this is put last we should not think it is least. Liars are classed with "dogs" and murderers. Telling lies is no light thing. It is a deadly sin which will bring people at last to the lake of fire. God condemns it everywhere in His Word – Ex 20:16; Ps 5:6; 15:2; 31:5; Prov 6:16-19; 12:22; 19:5,9,22; Matt 19:18; Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9. Liars are children of Satan (John 8:44), and will go where Satan goes (20:10). Observe that God says "all" liars will go into the lake of fire – all who practice any form of lying and deception whether they profess to be saints or Christians or Christian workers or anyone else. Let us all escape for our lives from this soul-destroying sin.

"Lake. . . second death" – 19:20; 20:6,10,14,15.

**21:9** "Last plagues" – 15:1.

"The bride" – 19:7.

**21:10** In v 9 the angel said he would show John "the bride, the wife of the Lamb." But

carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. And her light *was* like a very precious gemstone, like a crystal-clear jasper. 12 *The city* had a great, high wall with twelve gates. And twelve angels were at the gates, and names were written on *the gates, the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. 13 Three gates *were* on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them *were* the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 He who talked with me had a gold rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16 The city is laid out *like* a square, and its length is the same as its breadth. And he measured the city with the rod, twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth and height are equal. 17 And he measured its wall, a hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according to* man's measurement, that is, of the angel.

instead of showing John the people of God the angel shows him the city of God. This city will be the residence of the people of God (v 27) and represents them. Compare the great prostitute of chapter 17 who is also said to be a city (17:18). A city means more than buildings and streets. It means also the people who live there, and it can represent a whole system of religion. Compare Matt 23:37-39. It was not literal buildings and streets which killed the prophets but the people of Israel represented by the literal city of Jerusalem. As the old Jerusalem represented the Jews so the new Jerusalem represents the redeemed people of God and they will fully share its holiness, glory and splendor.

**21:11** "Glory of God" – v 23. Compare John 17:22,24; Rom 2:10; 5:2; 8:17,18,30. "Jasper" – 4:3.

**21:12** "Twelve tribes" – 7:5-8. Evidently this city represents both Israel and the Church of the New Testament (v 14) united forever. Compare Eph 2:14-22; Rom 11:17-24. Since this city represents the bride of Christ (v 9) it seems that redeemed Israel is a part of the bride.

**21:14** "Twelve apostles" – Matt 10:2-4. Judas Iscariot lost his place as an apostle – Acts 2:15-20. Can we doubt whose name will appear here with the remaining eleven? See Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 15:7-10; Gal 2:8,9.

**21:16** "Twelve thousand furlongs" – about 2,200 kilometers. This city will be of tremendous size and reach far into the sky. Evidently a city of this size is required to represent the great multitude of redeemed people who will live there. Compare 7:9.

**21:17** "A hundred and forty-four cubits" – about 66 meters. Why is a wall necessary? It is perhaps a symbol signifying the exclusion of all who do not belong there –

18 The wall was built *of* jasper, and the city *was* pure gold like clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* embellished with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation *was with* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcidony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolyte, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprasus, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls, each gate was a single pearl. And the street of the city *was* pure gold like transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 And the city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it and the Lamb *is* its light. 24 And the nations of the saved will walk in its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And its gates will never be shut by day (for there will be no night there), 26 and they will bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And no defiling

v 27; 22:15.

**21:18** Gold transparent as glass is not a substance now known to men (nor pearls as large as city gates – v 21). God the Creator is not limited to the rude and solid materials we now have on earth.

**21:19,20** We cannot be sure what the Greek names for some of these gems represent today.

**21:21** No oysters produced these pearls, but He who will make all things new – v 5.

**21:22** There will be no need of a temple built of materials. The temple (and tabernacle) in the Old Testament was a place for God to dwell (Ex 25:8), and no one but the high priest of Israel could even enter His presence (Heb 9:7; Lev 16:1,2). All others were excluded. In the new Jerusalem God and Christ are the temple and all His people will live in His presence and in Him (v 3; 3:12; John 17:20-23).

**21:23** "Sun or moon" – we do not know whether there will be anything like our present sun or moon – 20:11.

"The Lamb is its light" – compare John 8:12; 2 Cor 4:6; 1 John 1:5,6. Only those who walk in His light in this world will live in it in the next.

**21:24-26** This picture suggests that the redeemed in the new earth may have distinct lands with their individual rulers and come and go to and from the city. But we cannot be sure of this.

**21:27** This makes it clear that the nations and kings of vs 24-26 will be the people of God, born of His Spirit.

"No defiling thing" – sin is what has ruined the earth we now live in. It will not ruin that one. Ah, eternal purity and holiness without a blot or stain!

"Anyone who practices lying" – singled out for special mention (see v 8). Not one

thing will ever enter it, or anyone who commits an abomination *or tells* a lie, but *only* those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**22** And he showed me a pure river of *the* water of life, clear as crystal, issuing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of the *city's* street. And on each side of the river *there was* the tree of life, producing twelve *kinds* of fruits *and* yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. 3 And no longer will there be any curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in *the city*. And his servants will serve him, 4 and they will see his face, and his name *will be* on their foreheads. 5 There will be no night there, and they will need no lamp or light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

lie will ever be told in the new Jerusalem – we might almost think now that this alone will be heaven enough!

"Book of life" – 20:12,15.

**22:1** "River of the water of life" – 21:6. Compare Ps 46:4; Ezek 46:4. It is the flow of eternal life which believers will experience forever.

"From the throne" – the throne is shared by God and the Lamb, and that throne will be in the city on the new earth. The new earth will be the place from which God will reign over the universe.

**22:2** "Tree of Life" – 2:7. The history of mankind begins with mention of the tree of life (Gen 2:9) and man barred from it because of sin (3:22-24). The last scene is of men redeemed from sin and having free access to this tree.

"Twelve kinds of fruit" – one taste of that fruit will mean the end of all that has afflicted God's people throughout the ages on this sinful earth.

**22:3** "Curse" – Gen 3:17; Isa 24:6. The Old Testament concludes with a warning about a curse – Mal 4:6. The Bible concludes with a promise of the curse removed forever.

"Serve him" – see 7:15. The service of believers will not end when they enter the eternal ages. They will have the privilege and joy of serving God forever. This will be service without sin or fault, without opposition, without weariness.

**22:4** "See his face" – Matt 5:8; 1 Cor 13:12; Heb 12:14; Isa 33:17.

"His name. . . in their foreheads" – 14:1. They will belong to Him and be like Him – Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:1,2.

**22:5** "No night" – 21:25.

"Light" – 21:2.

"Reign forever and ever" – this will be part of their service. Their reign will not end at the completion of the 1000 years reign of Christ – 20:4. Like Christ's reign their reign will be in two stages. Nothing here is said about them being priests (as in 20:6).

6 And he said to me, "These words *are* trustworthy and true, and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show to his servants the things which must quickly take place."

7 "Look, I am coming quickly. Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

8 And I, John, saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen *them*, I prostrated myself to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 But he said to me, "Look, *do not do that*, for I am a fellow servant with you, and with your brethren the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. 11 He who is unjust, let him still be unjust, and he who is vile, let him still be vile, and he who is

**22:6** "True" – 19:9; 21:5.

"God of the holy prophets" – it was the God who inspired the prophets of the Bible (2 Pet 1:21) who inspired this book also.

"Must quickly take place" – see 1:1.

**22:7** These are the words of the Lord Jesus – vs 12,20; 3:11. Perhaps the angel was quoting Jesus' words here, or else the Lord Himself spoke. "Quickly" – see not at 1:1.

"Blessed. . . prophecy" – 1:3. See who this blessing is for – it is not for those who interpret this book or speculate about its symbols, etc, but for those who obey the truth revealed here.

**22:8** "I, John" – 1:9.

"I prostrated myself to worship. . . the angel" – see 19:10.

**22:9** "Do not do that" – so we can learn the nature of angels and the nature of demons. God's angels reject worship; Satan and his angels crave it.

"Worship God" – then flee for your life from any person teaching the veneration or worship of any angel, or spirit, or human being, or object of any kind. Such teaching is devilish.

**22:10** "Do not seal" – compare 10:4. The command not to seal the book means it is to be written for all to see, with nothing concealed. Compare Dan 12:4. Daniel's prophecies were given in such a way that they could not be understood until a later time. But this prophecy given through John was given for the understanding of God's servants now (1:1-3).

"The time is at hand" – 1:3.

**22:11** The meaning here seems to be this: in the light of this unsealed book with its descriptions and promises of great glory and its warnings of terrible punishment, if anyone chooses to do wrong and to be vile, then let it be. No compulsion will be brought to bear upon such a person to move him from his determined course. Part of his punishment will be the terrible one of being left to his vileness and wrongdoing. The



righteous, let him still be righteous, and he who is holy, let him still be holy."

12 "Look, I am coming quickly, and my reward *will be* with me to give to every man according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and Omega, *the* Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. 14 Blessed *are* those who do according to his commands, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 For outside *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves or practices a lie. 16 I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things to you in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star.

17 "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'

reverse of this is also true. In the light of this book the holy and righteous should continue on this course.

**22:12** "Quickly" – a better translation than "soon" – see 1:1, etc.

"My reward" – Matt 16:27; 1 Cor 3:12-15; Col 3:24.

**22:13** "Alpha and Omega" – compare 1:8; 21:6. The Lord Jesus could not more plainly say that He is God. He would not take for Himself a name of God unless the name belonged to Him. See also references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

"Beginning and the End" – 21:6.

"First and Last" – 1:17.

**22:14** "Blessed" – these words appear eight times in this book – here, v 7; 1:3 (twice); 14:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6.

"Do . . . his commandments" – compare 1 John 2:3-6; James 2:14-26; see the note at Acts 22:10.

**22:15** "Outside" – this does not mean lurking just outside the gates hoping to slip in if an opportunity offers. We have already been told where such people will be – 21:8.

"Whoremongers" – see note at 21:8.

**22:16** "My angel" – 1:1.

"Root and Offspring" – 5:5; Matt 1:1; Rom 1:3; Isa 11:10; Ps 110:1.

"Morning Star" – compare 2:28; Num 24:17.

**22:17** This last invitation in the Bible is a great one, and stands as a reminder of all the many promises God has given throughout the Bible. God's Spirit invites people to come to Him. The Church, the bride of Christ echoes this invitation. Every individual who hears it should repeat it to others.

"Thirsty" – Isa 55:1; Matt 5:6.

"Whoever" – John 3:16,36; 7:37; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9; Isa 55:7; Ezek 18:32.

"Water of life" – v 1; 21:26; John 4:14. This water of life is God Himself (Jer 2:13; 17:13). He invites all to come and drink of Him and gain eternal life.

And let him who hears say, 'Come.' And let him who is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. 19 And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the book of life, and from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."

20 He who testifies these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

"Freely" – Rom 5:16,17; 6:23; Eph 2:8,9.

**22:18,19** This last warning in the Bible is a very severe one. See how important this book is. The emphasis here is on the words. Deliberately adding or taking away any of them would be trying to pervert the truth God has revealed. Compare Deut 12:32; Prov 30:6. Of course, this refers to the sin of willfully doing so, not to copying mistakes or printing errors, etc. God has chosen to convey His truth to men through words, and these words are of the utmost importance. Compare Deut 4:2; 12:32; Ps 12:6; 119:160; Prov 30:6; Jer 1:9; 15:16. New translations of God's Word may be made, and should be made, as languages and writing styles change, but no one should try to add or take away from the words of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts which have come down to us. This inspired warning is surely enough to prevent any true believer from meddling with these.

**22:20** This is the last doctrine in the Bible. This teaching is referred to in one out of every 25 verses in the New Testament. Jesus will come personally, visibly, triumphantly, and suddenly. The suddenness, the swiftness of His coming is taught three times in the last chapter.

"Come, Lord Jesus" – this last prayer of the Bible is an expression of the desire of His Church from the beginning until now. All our hopes are in Him. His is the glory we want to see.

**22:21** This last blessing of the Bible is a fitting conclusion to all the Bible teaches. The grace of the Lord Jesus is what overcomes sin and death and alone makes it possible for people to be God's people and to inherit all God has promised.

"Amen" – 1:6. And so the Bible ends. So be it. We should all say "Amen" to all of it, every book and every word and every jot and tittle of it. Blessed indeed is the person who can say from the heart "amen" to all that God has said.



# SUBJECT CONCORDANCE

The exact words of the following subjects may not always be in the references which follow them, but the subject itself will be there.

## **Abiding, remaining in Christ:**

John 15:4,7,9; 1 John 2:27,28; 3:6

## **Abominable, abomination:**

Deut 7:25; 18:12; 25:16; 27:15; Prov 3:32; 6:16; 11:20; 12:22; 15:8; 16:5; 17:15; 21:27; 28:9; Luke 16:15; Titus 1:16; 1 Pet 4:3; Rev 21:8,27

## **Abyss:**

Luke 8:31; Rom 10:7; Rev 9:1,2; 11:7; 13:3; 20:1

## **Access into God's presence:**

Ps 15; John 10:9; Rom 5:2; Eph 2:13,18; 3:13; Heb 10:19-22

## **Adoption:**

Rom 8:23; 9:4

## **Adultery, fornication Literal:**

Ex 20:14; Lev 20:10; 21:9; Deut 22:22-29; 2 Sam 11:1-4; Job 31:1,9-12 (notes); Prov 2:16-19; 5:3-23; Jer 7:9; Ezek 23:45; Mal 3:5; Matt 5:27-30; 15:19; Acts 15:20; 1 Cor 5:1; 6:9; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5; 2 Tim 3:6; Heb 13:4; 2 Pet 2:14; Rev 9:20,21; 21:8. See also under Sexual immorality.

## **Metaphorical:**

Jer 3:8,9; Ezek 16:32; 23:37; Matt 12:39; 16:4; Jam 4:4; Rev 2:22; 17:2. See also under Prostitute.

## **Advaita:**

John 10:30; 14:16,17; 15:21; Rom 8:16

## **After God's heart:**

Note at 1 Sam 13:14

## **Almighty God:**

Gen 17:1; Ex 6:3; Job 11:7; Ps 89:8; 91:1; Isa 6:3; 45:13; 47:4; Rev 4:8; 19:6

## **Alpha, Omega:**

Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13

## **Altar for sacrifice:**

Gen 8:20; 12:7; 35:1; Ex 27:1; 2 Sam 24:25; Heb 13:10; Rev 6:9

## **Amen :**

Deut 27:15; 2 Cor 1:20; Rev 1:6; 3:14; 22:21

## **Angels :**

Gen 16:7; Ps 91:11,12; Heb 1:4-14; 13:2; 1 Pet 1:12; Rev 5:2

## **Angel of the LORD:**

Note and references at Gen 16:7.

## **Anger, man's:**

Prov 15:1; 29:11; Matt 5:22; 1 Cor 13:5; Eph 4:26; Jam 1:19,20; Rev 11:18. For God's anger, see under God.

## **Animals, beasts, etc Literal:**

Gen 1:24,25; 7:16; 9:2,3; Lev 11:1-47; 26:21,22; Job 40:15; 41:1; Ps 50:10; Ezek 5:16,17; Rom 1:23; 1 Tim 4:4; Jam 3:7,8

## **As symbols:**

Ps 22:12,21; Dan 7:3-28; 8:3-27; Matt 3:7; 7:6; 15:26; Luke 13:32; John 10:3; Acts 10:11-16,28; Phil 3:2; 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 5:5,6; 12:3; 13:1-18; 17:3,7-11; 19:19,20; 22:15

## **Anointing:**

Ex 30:26,32; 1 Sam 9:16; Ps 23:5; 45:7; 105:15; Isa 61:1; Dan 9:24,26; Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 1 John 2:20,27

## **Antichrist:**

Dan 7:8,20-25; 8:9; 9:27; 11:36-45; Zech 11:15-17; 2 Thess 2:3-9; 1 John 2:18,19,22,26; 4:1-3; 2 John 7; Rev 6:2; 13:7

## **Apostasy:**

2 Thess 2:3; Heb 2:1-4 (note)

## **Apostles, apostleship:**

Matt 10:2-4; Acts 5:15,32; 8:15-17 (note); Rom 1:1,5; 1 Cor 4:9-13; 9:1-23; 2 Cor 10:1; 2:11,12; Rev 21:14

## **Ark of Noah:**

Gen 7:24; Heb 11:7

## **Ark of the covenant:**

Ex 25:21; Deut 10:5; Josh 3:3-17; 1 Sam 4:11; 1 Chron 13:9-14; 15:1-3,25-29; 16:1-4; Heb 9:4; Rev 11:19

## **Armageddon:**

Rev 16:15

## **Armour:**

Rom 13:12; Eph 6:11-17

## **Assurance of salvation:**

Ps 23:6; Rom 5:5-11, 12-21; 8:15,16; 2 Cor 5:6,7; Col 4:12; 2 Tim 1:12; 4:18; Heb 6:11-18; 10:22,39; 1 Pet 1:5; 1 John 3:19,21; 5:13-15. See also under Keeping, preserving.

## **Astrology, astrologers:**

Gen 25:24 (note); Isa 47:13; Dan 2:2 13,27,28

**Atheism:**

Job 9:21-24; Ps 14:1. See also the note on Gen 1:24-25.

**Atonement, covering sin:**

Ex 25:17; 29:33; 30:10,15; Ps 65:3

**Babylon :**

Gen 11:9; 2 Kings 25:13; Ps 137:8; Isa 13:19; 14:4,22; 47:1; 48:14; Jer 25:12; 50:1; 51:1,8; Dan 4:29; 1 Pet 5:13; Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2; 19:2

**Bad language :**

Eph 4:29; 5:4

**Baptism:**

Matt 3:6,13; 28:19; Mark 16:16; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3,4; 1 Cor 1:14-17; 10:2. See Spirit baptism under Holy Spirit.

**Beloved, loved ones:**

Rom 1:7; 11:28; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 John 3:1; Jude 1

**Bible, its divine inspiration:**

Ex 24:4; Jer 1:9; Ezek 1:9,10; Matt 4:4; 5:18; 15:3-6; 22:43; Luke 24:44; John 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16,17; Heb 1:1; 3:7; 2 Pet 1:21. See also under God's Word.

**Blasphemy:**

Lev 24:14-16; Matt 9:3; 12:31; 26:65; John 10:33; 1 Tim 1:13; 2 Pet 2:12; Rev 13:6

**Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit:**

Matt 12:31

**Blessing, blessed, etc:**

Gen 12:2,3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 23:5; 28:1-14; Ps 1:1,2; 2:12; 32:2; 76:1; 112:1; 119:1; Isa 30:18; Matt 5:3-11; 11:16; 16:17; Luke 11:27,28 John 20:29; Acts 3:26; 20:35; Rom 10:12; Gal 3:9,14; Eph 1:3; Jam 1:12; 1 Pet 4:14; Rev 1:3; 19:9; 22:7,14

**Blindness:**

Lev 19:14; 22:22; Job 29:15; Ps 146:8; Isa 35:5; Mal 1:8; Matt 9:27-31; 11:5; Luke 4:18; 7:21; John 9:1,2. See also under Spiritual blindness.

**Blood :**

Gen 9:4; Ex 12:1-3; Lev 17:11; Deut 19:10; Matt 27:4; Acts 5:28; 15:20; 18:6; Heb 9:22; 10:4; Rev 17:6; 18:24

**Christ's blood :**

Matt 26:28; Acts 20:28; Rom 3:25; 5:9; 1 Cor 10:16; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12,14; 10:19; 13:20; 1 Pet 1:2,19; 1 John 1:7; 5:6,8; Rev 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11; 22:14.

**Boasting :**

Prov 27:1; Jer 9:23,24; Rom 3:9,27;

1 Cor 1:29-31; 3:21; 4:7; 5:2,7; 2 Cor 11:16 - 12:10; Gal 6:14; Eph 2:9; Jam 4:13-16; 1 John 2:16; Jude 16; Rev 13:5

**Body :**

Matt 10:28; 26:26; John 13:10; Rom 5:13; 12:1,2; 1 Cor 6:19,20; 15:44; 2 Cor 5:10; Phil 1:20; 3:21 See also under Christ.

**Bondage, slavery :**

Literalz Ex 21:2,6; Eph 6:5-9; 1 Tim 6:1,2; Philemon 15,16; 1 Pet 2:18-20

**Spiritual:**

John 8:34-36; Rom 6:16-22; 7:14; Gal 4:8,9; 5:1; 2 Tim 2:26; Titus 3:3; Heb 2:15; 2 Pet 2:19. See also under Freedom.

**Book, Book of life :**

Ex 32:32,33; Ps 69:28; Dan 12:1; Luke 10:20; Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27

**Bread of life :**

John 6:35,48

**Burnt offering :**

Gen 8:20; 22:2; Lev 1:1-7; 6:9; 8:18; 1 Sam 15:22,23; Ps 40:6-8; 50:8-15; Isa 40:15-17; Heb 10:5-14

**Canaan, the promised land :**

Gen 12:5,7; 17:8; 50:24; Ex 6:8; Num 14:8; Deut 6:10; Josh 1:18 (note); Heb 11:13-16

**Capital punishment :**

Gen 9:5,6; Ex 21:14,29,36 (note); 22:30; 31:36 (note); Num 15:30-36

**Carefulness or indifference, neglect, etc :**

Ex 23:13; Deut 4:9; 8:1,11; Josh 1:7,8; Amos 6:1-7; Luke 21:34; 1 Cor 3:10; 1 Tim 4:14,15; Heb 2:1,3

**Examples:**

Gen 3:6; 4:7,8; 19:14; 25:34; Ex 5:2; 32:1-4; Lev 10:1,2; Num 14:39-45; 15:30-36; Jud 2:10-19; 21:25; 1 Sam 13:7-14; 15:3,7-23; 1 Kings 11:1-8; 2 Kings 17:6-23; Jer 11:6-8; 36:1-3,20-26; 42:1-43:7; Matt 7:26,27; 23:37,38; 24:37-39; Acts 2:13; 13:40,41; 17:11,18; 18:12-17; 24:24-26; 26:28; 28:24-28

**Censer :**

Ex 30:1-10; Lev 16:12; Num 16:17,18,37,38; Heb 9:4; Rev 8:3-5

**Cherubim, seraphim :**

Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-22; Isa 6:2; Ezek 1:5-14; 10:15; Rev 4:6

**Children, offspring :**

Gen 3:16; Ps 8:2; 113:9; Matt 18:3;

19:14; Acts 2:39; Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:20,21

### **Chosen, elect :**

Deut 7:7; Ps 33:12; 105:6; Isa 42:1; 44:1; Matt 12:18; 24:22,24,31; Mark 13:20; John 15:16,19; Rom 8:33 9:10-13; Eph 1:4-6; Col 3:12; 2 Thess 2:13; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:4,9

### **Christ** (See Jesus Christ also) :

Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah  
Matt 1:1; 11:3; 16:16; 26:63; Luke 2:11; John 1:41; 4:26; 6:69; 7:41; 11:27; 20:31; Acts 2:36; 1 John 5:1

### **Becoming like Christ :**

Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; Phil 3:21; Heb 2:10,11; 1 John 3:1-3

### **In Christ :**

John 17:21; Rom 6:3,4; 8:1; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 1:1,3; 2:6; Phil 3:9; Col 2:10; 1 John 5:20

### **Body of Christ :**

Rom 12:4,5; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:23; 4:25; 5:30; Col 1:18,24

### **His Church**

Matt 16:18; 18:17,20; Acts 2:42; Rom 12:4; Gal 6:16; Eph 5:25-32; Col 1:18; 1 Tim 3:14,15; Rev 1:20; 21:12. See also under Rapture of the Church.

### **Christians :**

Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16

### **Church :**

See under Christ.

### **Circumcision :**

Gen 17:9-14; Acts 15:1; Rom 2:25-29; 4:10-12; Gal 2:3; 5:2-4; 6:12-15; Col 2:11

### **Cleanness, uncleanness, purity, impurity :**

Lev 4:12; 11:1-23; 12:2; 16:16-20; Ps 24:4; 51:7; Isa 6:5; Matt 5:8; 15:2,11, 18-20; 23:35; Mark 7:19; John 13:10; 15:3; Rom 14:14,20; Heb 9:14; 10:22. See also under Unclean.

### **Cleansing from sin :**

Ps 51:2,10; 119:9; Isa 1:18; Jer 33:8; Ezek 37:23; Joel 3:21; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 5:26; Jam 4:8; 1 John 1:7,9

### **Comfort, encouragement :**

Ps 23:4; 119:50,76; Isa 40:1; 51:3; 61:2; Acts 9:31; Rom 15:4; 2 Cor 1:3-11; 7:6; 1 Thess 4:18

### **Comforter, the Holy Spirit :**

John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7

### **Commandments :**

The ten: Ex 20:1-17; Rom 7:8-13

### **Other commands:**

Deut 6:4-9; Matt 22:36-40; John 13:34; 14:15; 15:10; 1 Cor 14:37; 1 Tim 6:14; 2 Pet 2:21; 1 John 2:3-8; 4:21; 5:3

**All:** Ps 19:8; 103:18; 111:7,10; 119:98, 151; Prov 6:23; Matt 5:19; Rom 13:9; 1 Cor 7:19; 1 John 2:3,4; 5:3; Rev 12:17

### **Complaining, murmuring :**

Ex 14:11; 15:22-24; 16:8; 17:7; Num 11:1; 14:2; 16:11; 17:5; 21:5; 1 Cor 10:10; Phil 2:14; Jam 5:9; 1 Pet 4:9; Jude 16

### **Compromise or fellowship with evil :**

Judges 5:8; 1 Kings 22:2; 2 Chron 20:35-37; Neh 13:4,5; Ps 101:3-8; 141:4; Isa 52:11; Jer 51:45; 1 Cor 5:9-11; 2 Cor 6:14-18; Eph 5:11; 2 Thess 3:6,14,15; 2 Tim 3:5; Titus 3:10,11; 2 John 10,11; Rev 2:20; 18:4

### **Condemnation :**

John 3:17-19; 8:11; Rom 5:16; 8:1,3,33,34; 1 Cor 11:32; 2 Thess 2:12

### **Confession :**

Ps 32:5; Prov 28:13; Matt 10:32; Rom 10:9,10; 2 Tim 2:12; 1 John 1:9

### **Conquest of Canaan, spiritual significance :**

Note at Joshua 1:18

### **Conscience :**

Acts 23:1; 24:16; Rom 2:15; 13:5; 14:22,23; 1 Cor 8:7; 2 Cor 1:12; 1 Tim 1:5,19; Heb 9:14; 10:22; 1 Pet 3:16

### **Contentment :**

Num 12:1,2 (note); 16:9-11 (note); Luke 3:14; Phil 4:11-13; 1 Tim 6:6-8; Heb 13:5.

### **Courage, boldness :**

Num 13:20; Deut 31:6; Josh 1:6,7,9,18; 1 Chron 22:13; 1 Chron 15:8; 2:7; Ps 27:14; 31:24; Prov 28:1; Matt 9:2; 14:27; Mark 15:43; John 16:33; Acts 4:13,29,31; 9:27; 14:3,20; 18:26; 19:8; Eph 3:12; 6:19,20; Phil 1:15,20, 27,28; 1 Thess 2:2; 1 Tim 3:13; 2 Tim 1:7; Heb 4:16; 10:19; 13:6; 1 John 3:21; 4:17

### **Covenants made by God :**

With Noah : Gen 6:18; 9:9-11  
With Abraham: Gen 15:18-21; 17:9-14  
Gal 3:15-18  
With Israel : Ex 19:5,6  
With David : 2 Sam 7:8-16  
The New : Jer31:31-34; Matt 26:28; Gal 4:24-31; Heb 8:10

**Contrast between Old Covenant and New :**

2 Cor 3:6-18; Gal 4:24-31; Heb 12:18-24

**Covetousness :**

See under greed

**Creator, creation :**

Gen 1:1-31 (note at v 31); 2:7,17; Job 38:4-7; Ps 19:1,2; 102:26; Isa 40:25,26; John 1:1-3; Acts 14:15; 17:24; Rom 1:20; 8:19-22; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2,10-12; 11:3; Rev 4:11. See also under God, and Jesus Christ.

**Cross :**

Ps 22:1-21; Matt 10:28; 27:22; Luke 9:23; 14:27; John 3:14,15; 8:28; 1 Cor 1:17,18; Gal 2:20; 5:11,24; 6:14; Col 2:14

**Crowns :**

1 Cor 9:25; Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; Jam 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10; 3:11. See rewards also.

**Cup, vessel :**

Ps 23:5; 75:8; 116:13; Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15; 51:7; Matt 20:22,23; 23:25,26; 26:27,39; John 18:11; 1 Cor 10:21; 11:26; Rev 14:10; 16:19; 17:4

**Curse, accursed :**

Gen 3:14,17; 12:3; Ex 21:17; Deut 11:26-29; 23:5; 27:15-26; 28:15-20; 30:19; Prov 3:33; Isa 24:7; Jer 11:3; 17:5; 48:10; Matt 25:41; 1 Cor 16:22; Gal 1:8; 3:10-13; Rev 22:3

**Darkness :**

Matt 6:23; Luke 22:53; John 3:19,20; Acts 26:18; Rom 13:11-14; Eph 4:18; 5:8-11; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 5:4-8; 1 Pet 2:9; 2 Pet 2:7; 1 John 1:5; 2:9,11; Jude 13

**David, a man after God's heart :**

1 Sam 13:14

**Day of Atonement :**

Lev chapter 16; Rom 3:25; Heb 9:7-10

**Day of the Lord :**

Isa 2:12; 13:6,9; Joel 1:15; 2:1,11,31; Zeph 1:7,14; Zech 14:1; Mal 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 6:12-17

**Deacons :**

Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-13

**Death, die, dead, etc :**

Gen 2:17; 3:7; Lev 21:1-4; Num 19:12,13; 21:18-21; Deut 21:18-21; Ps 55:4,5; 116:15; John 5:24,25,28,29; Rom 5:12-14,17; 6:5-10,23; 7:4,24; 8:6; 1 Cor 3:22; 15:21,26,54,55; 2 Cor

3:7; Eph 2:1; Phil 1:20; 2:8; 1 Tim 5:6; 2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14; 9:14; Jam 1:15; 5:20; 1 John 3:14; 5:16; Rev 1:18; 3:1; 6:8; 20:12-14; 21:4,8

**Debt :**

Ex 22:14,25; Lev 25:35; Deut 15:8; 2 Kings 6:5; Ps 37:21,26; 112:5; Prov 19:17; 22:7,26; Matt 5:42; 6:12; 18:23-32; Luke 6:34,35; Rom 1:14,15; 8:12; 13:8; Philemon 17,18

**Deceit, deceivers, deceived, etc :**

Gen 3:13; 12:13; 27:18-26; Lev 19:11; Josh 2:5; 1 Sam 27:10; 2 Sam 15:34; Ps 5:9; Isa 53:9; Jer 8:5; 14:14; 17:9; Matt 13:22; 24:4,5,11,24; Rom 1:29; 3:13; 16:18; 2 Cor 11:3,13; Gal 6:7; Eph 4:22; 5:6; Col 2:4,8; 2 Thess 2:9,10; 1 Tim 2:14; 2 Tim 3:13; Titus 3:3; Heb 3:13; Jam 1:26; 1 Pet 3:10; 2 John 7-11; Rev 12:9,10; 13:14; 20:3,8. See also under Lies, speaking falsely.

**Decision :**

Ex 32:26; Deut 30:19; Josh 24:14,15; 1 Kings 18:21; Matt 4:18-20; 19:21,22; Mark 7:22; Luke 9:59; John 6:67; Acts 24:25; Heb 11:24-26; Rev 22:17

**Dedication, consecration :**

Ex 13:2; Lev 20:7; Num 6:12; Matt 6:24; Rom 6:13; 12:1,2; 2 Cor 8:5; Prov 23:26

**Demons, evil spirits :**

Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; 1 Sam 16:14; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Ps 106:37; Matt 4:24; 8:16,31; 12:24; Mark 5:12; Acts 16:18; 1 Cor 10:20,21; 1 Tim 4:1; Jam 2:19; Rev 9:20,21; 16:14; 18:2

**Desire, lust :**

Ex 20:17; Ps 37:4; Rom 7:7-11; 1 Cor 10:6; 12:31; 14:1; 2 Tim 2:22; 1 Pet 1:4; 2:11; 2 Pet 1:4; 2:10,18; 1 John 2:16,17; Jude 16

**Destruction of the wicked :**

Gen 6:7; 15:16; Lev 18:24; Deut 13:12-18; Introduction to Joshua; Josh 10:28-40; Ps 35:8; 37:38; 73:3,18,19; 75:2-10; 92:7; Prov 1:27; 16:19; 29:1; Isa 13:6; 24:1-6; 34:2; Jer 25:8,9; Mal 4:1; Matt 3:10,12; 7:13; Rom 2:8,9; 9:22-24; Phil 3:19; 2 Thess 1:8,9; 1 Tim 6:9; 2 Pet 3:7; Rev 11:18; 16:5-7; 21:8. See also under Sin.

**Devil :**

Matt 4:1; 13:39; 25:41; Luke 8:12; John 8:44; 13:2; Acts 10:38; 13:10; Eph 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim 3:6,7; 2 Tim 2:26; Heb 2:14; James 3:15; 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8,9;

1 John 3:8; Jude 9; Rev 2:10; 12:9,12; 20:2,10. Also see Satan, and Demons.

### **Disciples, discipleship :**

Matt 4:19-22; 8:19-22; 10:1-4,16, 24,25, 37-39,42; 28:19; Luke 6:21-23; 9:57-62; 14:25-35; John 1:38; 8:31; 13:35; 15:8; Acts 6:1; 11:2.

### **Discipline, correction, training :**

Deut 4:36; Job 5:17,18; 33:14-30; Ps 6:1; 39:11; 73:14; 94:12; 99:12; Prov 1:2,7; 3:11; 13:24; 15:32; 19:18; 23:13; 1 Cor 5:4,5; 9:25-27; 11:32; 1 Tim 4:7; Heb 12:5-13; Rev 3:19.

### **Discouragement :**

Num 11:11-15; Josh 7:7; 1 Sam 17:1; 1 Kings 19:4; Job 3:1-26; 17:11-16; Ps 38:8; 42:3-11; 73:13-17; 77:1-20; 143:3,4; 143:3,4; Jer 8:20-22; 15:10; 20:14-18; 45:3; Lam 3:17-24; Micah 7:1,7

### **Disobedience :**

Lev 26:14; Num 14:22; Deut 11:28; 28:20-68; 1 Sam 13:13; 15:20-23; 28:7; 1 Kings 13:22,26; Isa 24:5; Luke 1:17; John 3:36; Rom 5:19; 10:20,21; Eph 2:2; 5:6; Titus 3:3; Heb 2:2; 3:18,19; 4:6,11

### **Divisions, quarreling, etc :**

Acts 6:1; Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 1:10-12; 3:1-4; 12:25; Titus 3:10; Jam 4:1,2

### **Divorce :**

Malachi 2:16; Matt 5:31,32; 19:9; 1 Cor 7:12-16

### **Door :**

Matt 7:7; Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Rev 3:20.

### **Doubt :**

Gen 18:12-14; Ex 5:22; Jud 6:13-15; 1 Sam 27:1; Job 9:16-23; 19:6-12; Ps 73:1,13,14; Isa 49:14,15; Matt 8:24-26; 11:2; 14:31; 21:21; Mark 11:23; 16:10; Luke 12:29; 24:38; John 20:25,27; Acts 2:12; Rom 4:18,20,23; 14:1; Jam 1:6-8

### **Dragon :**

Rev 12:3,4,7-11; 13:2,4; 20:23

### **Dreams. See visions also:**

Gen 20:3; 28:12; 37:5-10; Num 12:6; Deut 13:1-3; Job 33:14-30; Dan 2:1,28; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17.

### **Drunkenness :**

Gen 9:20,21; Prov 20:1; 23:29-35; Isa 5:11,22; Acts 2:15; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 6:10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:18; 1 Pet 4:3

### **Earthquakes :**

Isa 24:19,20; Ezek 38:19; Matt 24:7;

28:2; Acts 16:26; Heb 12:26-28; Rev 6:12; 16:18.

### **Edification, building up :**

Rom 14:13-21; 1 Cor 8:1,9-13; 10:32, 33; 14:3,26; 2 Cor 10:8; 12:19; Eph 4:12-16,29; Col 2:7; Jude 20

### **Elders :**

See under leaders

### **Elect :**

See under chosen

### **Encouragement :**

See under comfort

### **Enemies :**

Ex 23:4; Deut 32:41; Ps 3:7; 18:48; 35:8 (note, references); 68:1,2; Isa 1:24; Matt 5:44; Rom 5:10; 12:20; Eph 6:12; Col 1:21; Jam 4:4; 1 Pet 5:8

### **Enlightenment :**

1 Sam 3:7; Job 42:5; Ps 18:28; 19:8; 36:19; 119:105; Isa 6:5; 29:18; Jer 3:25; 16:10; Matt 11:25-27; Luke 18:9; Acts 26:19; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17-19; 5:8; Phil 3:7; Heb 6:4.

### **Ephod :**

Ex 28:6-30

### **Eternal, everlasting :**

Gen 21:33; Ex 3:14; Deut 33:27; Ps 16:11; 21:6; 90:2; 119:89; Eccl 3:11; Isa 26:4; Matt 18:8; 25:41,46; Mark 3:29; Rom 1:20; 2 Cor 4:17,18; Eph 3:11; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 5:10; Rev 11:15; 22:5

### **Eternal life :**

Ps 133:3; Matt 19:16; John 3:15, 16,36; 4:14; 5:24,6,40; 10:28; 17:2,3; Acts 13:46; Rom 5:21; 6:22,23; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Titus 1:2; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 5:11-13; Jude 1

### **Eternal security :**

Luke 23:32 (note); John 5:24; 6:39; 10:28-30; 17:6,11,12; Rom 5:9,10; 8:29,30,34-39; Phil 1:6; Heb 7:25; 10:39; 1 Pet 1:5

### **Eternal glory :**

2 Cor 4:17,18; 2 Tim 2:10

### **Eternal inheritance :**

Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4

### **Eternal salvation, eternal redemption :**

Heb 5:9; 7:25; 10:10,14

### **Eternal redemption :**

Heb 9:12

### **Eternal fire :**

Jude 7

**Evil, wicked, ungodly, etc :**

Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ex 23:1; Deut 9:4; 1 Sam 2:12; 2 Kings 17:11; 2 Chron 7:14; 19:2; Ps 1:1,4,6; 14:4; 32:10; 34:16; 36:1; 37:1,2,9; 50:16; 58:3; 59:6,7; Prov 1:7 (note); 2:12; 5:6; 6:18; 10:7,16,20,24,28; 11:7; 12:10; 15:26; Isa 1:16,17; 9:18; 13:11; 31:2; 48:22; 57:20; Ezek 3:17-19; 18:21-23; 33:11; Matt 6:13; 7:11; 12:34,35,45; 15:19; John 3:19,20; Acts 2:23; Rom 1:18,30; 2:8,9; 4:5; 6:12; 7:19,21; 12:9,21; 1 Cor 5:13; 6:9-11; Eph 4:31; 1 Thess 5:22; 2 Thess 2:12; 1 Tim 6:10; 2 Tim 2:19,22; Heb 1:9; 8:12; Jam 1:13; 3:8; 1 Pet 3:12,18; 2 Pet 2:15; 1 John 3:12; 3 John 11; Jude 4,8-19; Rev 2:2

**Evil spirits :**

See under Demons.

**Excommunication:**

Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:11-13; 2 Thess 3:6,14,15

**Example, model, ideal:**

1 Cor 4:16; 10:1-11; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thess 3:7; 1 Tim 1:16; 4:12; 2 Tim 1:13; 2:10; Titus 2:7,8; Heb 12:3; 13:7; 1 Pet 2:21-23; 5:3; 3 John 11

**Faith, belief, trust :**

Gen 4:3-5; 15:6; 17:17,18; 25:34; 27:18-26; Josh 6:22-25; 1 Sam 17:38,39; 2 Kings 4:6; 2 Chron 20:20; Job 1:20; 16:19; Ps 13:5; 20:8; 21:7; 37:3; 62:8,10; 71:1-3; 118:8; Prov 3:5,6; Isa 26:4; 30:15; 50:10; Hab 2:4; Matt 8:10; 9:22,29; 15:28; 17:20,21; Mark 11:24; 16:16; Luke 17:5-10; 23:42; John 1:12; 3:14-16, 36; 5:24; 20:29; Acts 16:31; 24:14; 27:25; Rom 1:17; 3:22,28; 4:5,18-24; 10:9,10; 12:3; 14:23; 1 Cor 12:9; Gal 2:16; 3:2,6,22; 5:5; Eph 2:8; 3:16; 6:16; Phil 1:30; Col 2:5-7; 1 Thess 3:10; Titus 1:1; Heb 3:13-15; 4:14; 10:22,37-39; 11:1-40; 11:6; 12:2; Jam 1:6-8; 2:14-26; 1 Pet 1:5-7,21; 2 Pet 1:1,5; 1 John 5:4,5,10; Jude 20. See also Perseverance in the faith.

**Faithfulness :**

Gen 39:6; Num 12:7; 1 Sam 12:24; Ps 12:1; 101:6; Matt 23:23; 24:45; 25:21; Luke 16:10; 19:17; 1 Cor 4:2; Gal 5:22; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 2:2; Heb 3:2; 3 John 5; Rev 2:10; 17:14. See also Unfaithfulness, and God's faithfulness.

**False apostles :**

2 Cor 11:4,5,13-15; Rev 2:2

**False Christs :**

Matt 24:4,24,25

**False gods :**

Ex 12:12; 15:11; 20:3; Deut 4:28; 13:1-15; 1 Chron 16:26; Ps 16:4; 81:9; 115:2-8; Isa 40:18-26; 44:9-20; Jer 16:20; Acts 14:11-18; 19:24-28; Rom 1:23,25; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 12:2; Gal 4:8; 1 John 5:21; Rev 9:20; 21:8

**False gospels :**

2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6,7

**False prophets :**

Gen 20:7 (note); Deut 13:1-4; 18:10-14,21,22; 1 Kings 18:18-29; 22:6-12,34-38; Isa 44:25; Jer 14:14; 23:14,15; 28:9-17; Lam 2:14; Ezek 13:10; Matt 7:15-23; 24:11; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Rev 13:11; 19:20

**False religion :**

1 Kings 12:32; Matt 6:5; 23:2-15; Acts 17:16; Rom 1:22-25; Gal 4:10; 2 Tim 3:5; Titus 1:16; Rev 13:4,14-17. Compare false religion with the true - Deut 10:12; Hos 6:6; Micah 6:8; Matt 22:37-40; Jam 1:26,27

**False teaching and false teachers:**

Matt 15:2-20; Luke 13:52; John 10:1,5,8,10; Acts 15:1; 20:29; Rom 16:17,18; 2 Cor 10:1; Gal 1:7-9; 3:1; Col 2:8,16-23; 1 Tim 1:3,4; 4:1-3; 6:3-5; 2 Tim 4:3,4; Heb 13:9; 2 Pet 2:1-22; Jude 4,8-19

**False ways :**

Ps 1:1,6; 49:13,14; Prov 2:15; 12:15; 13:15; 14:12; Isa 59:8; Jer 18:14,15; Matt 7:13,26,27; Gal 5:4; Col 2:3; 2 Pet 2:2,15; Jude 11

**False witness :**

Ex 20:16; 23:1; Prov 19:9; Matt 28:15; Acts 6:11

**False worship :**

Ex 20:4; 22:20; 32:1-10; Lev 26:1; Deut 11:16; 13:1-18; 17:1-7; Ps 50:8-23; Isa 1:15-17; 29:13,14; Ezek 8:10,14-16; 33:31,32; Mal 1:6-14; Matt 7:21,22; 15:7-9; 23:23; Acts 14:11-15; 17:29; Rom 1:25; Col 1:18,23; Rev 9:20,21; 13:4,12; 14:11; 22:9

**Famine :**

Gen 12:10; 41:30; Lev 26:18-20; Deut 28:53-57; 2 Sam 21:1; 25:3; Ps 105:16; Isa 5:13; 9:19,20; Jer 14:1-7; Amos 8:11; Matt 24:7; Rom 8:35; Rev 6:5,6

**Fasting :**

Ex 34:28; Esther 4:3; Ps 35:13; 69:10; Isa 58:3; Jer 14:12; Dan 10:3; Joel 1:14; 2:12; Matt 6:16; 9:14,15; Luke 4:1,2; Acts 9:9; 13:2; 14:23; 2 Cor 11:27.



**Father :**

Gen 18:19; Ex 20:12; Deut 1:31; 6:6,7; 21:18; Ps 27:10; 103:13; Matt 10:37; 23:9; Luke 9:59; 14:26; Rom 4:11,16; 1 Cor 4:15; Eph 6:4; Col 3:21; Heb 12:7,9. See also under God.

**Favoritism, partiality :**

Gen 25:28; 27:6-17; 37:3,4; Levi 19:15; Deut 10:17; 21:15-17; Acts 6:1; Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; 1 Tim 5:21; Philemon 15,16; Jam 2:1-4,9

**Fear :**

Gen 3:10; 15:1; 21:7; 26:24; Ex 14:13; 1 Sam 17:26; 1 Kings 19:3; Ps 46:2,3; 56:3,4; Prov 29:25; Isa 35:4; 41:10; 43:5; 51:12; Ezek 2:6; Matt 14:27; John 9:20-23; 11:48; 19:16; Heb 2:15; 13:6; 1 Pet 3:14; 1 John 4:18; Rev 2:10.

**Fear of the Lord :**

Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 22:22; 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7; Eccl 12:3,4; Jer 5:22; Rom 3:18; 2 Cor 5:11; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 14:7; 15:4; 19:5

**Feasts, festivals :**

Lev 23:1-43

**Fellowship :**

Gen 2:15-20; 3:8; 5:22-24; Ex 24:2; 25:8; Lev 3:11; Num 12:8; Matt 18:20; John 14:23; 1 Cor 1:9; 5:2; 10:16; 2 Cor 6:14-18; Phil 2:1; 3:10; Heb 11:5; 13:14; 1 John 1:3-7; Rev 3:10. See also God's presence. The desire for fellowship with God is seen also in many of the psalms.

**Figurative language, use of symbols :**

Ex 25:9; Lev 11:1,2-23; Matt 16:6-12; John 6:52-58; Rev 1:4; 8:3-5,10,11; 9:5.

**Fire, flame :**

Ex 3:2; Isa 33:14; 66:24; Matt 3:12; 13:42; 18:8; 25:41; Heb 12:29; 2 Pet 3:7,10; Rev 1:14; 14:10; 15:2; 19:20; 20:15; 21:8

**First and the Last :**

Rev 1:17; Isa 44:6; 48:12,13

**Firstfruits :**

Ex 23:16; Lev 2:12; 23:9-14,17; Prov 3:9; Jer 2:3; Rom 8:23; 11:16; 1 Cor 15:20,23; Jam 1:18; Rev 14:4

**Flesh, carnal nature :**

Gen 6:3; John 3:6; Rom 7:4,14,18,25; 8:3-8; 1 Cor 3:1-4; Gal 5:16,17; 6:8; 1 John 2:16. See also under Sinful nature in man, and Man's condition.

**Food :**

Gen 2:9; 9:3; Lev 2:9-11; 11:1-23; Job 23:12; Mark 7:18-23; Acts 10:13-15; 14:17,15-29; Rom 14:2-4,14-17,20-23; 1 Cor 6:13; 1 Tim 4:3,4; 6:8.

**Fool, foolishness, etc :**

Ps 14:1; 94:8-11; 107:17-22; Prov 1:7; 9:1; Eccl 9:3; Isa 32:6; Luke 12:20; Acts 26:25; Rom 1:21-23; 1 Cor 1:17-25; 3:18-20; Gal 3:1; Titus 3:3; Jam 2:20

**Forgiveness :**

Ps 32:1; 103:3; 130:3,4; Isa 1:18; 55:7; Matt 6:12,14,15; 9:5-7; 12:31,32; 18:21-35; Luke 1:77,78; 7:47; 23:34; 24:46; Acts 2:38; Rom 4:5-8; 2 Cor 2:5-11; Eph 1:7; 4:32; Heb 8:12; Jam 5:15; 1 John 1:9

**Foreknowledge :**

Ps 139:13-16; Isa 42:9; 46:10; 48:5; Jer 1:5; Dan 2:28; Matt 24:36; John 6:64; 13:1; 18:4; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 15:18; Rom 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet 1:2

**Freedom, liberty, liberation :**

Ex 8:1; 10:24-26; Isa 61:1; Matt 20:28; Luke 4:18; John 8:32-36; Rom 6:17,18; 7:6; 8:2,21; 1 Cor 6:12-20; 8:9-13; 10:23-33; 2 Co 3:17; Gal 5:1,13; Jam 1:25; 1 Pet 2:16

**Fruit, fruitfulness, etc. :**

Ps 1:3; 92:14; Jer 17:7,8; Hos 14:8; Matt 3:8; 13:8,23; John 12:24; 15:1-8,16; Rom 1:13; 7:4; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9; Phil 1:11; Col 1:6,10; Heb 6:7,8; 12:11; Jam 3:17

**Fulfilment of OT prophecies in NT :**

Matt 1:22,23; 5:17,18; Mark 14:49; Luke 4:21; 24:44; John 19:28,29; Acts 1:16. See under Jesus Christ, fulfilled prophecies.

**Future :**

Ps 37:37; Eccl 7:14; 8:7; Isa 41:22; 42:9; 46:10; Matt 24:36; Rom 8:38; 1 Cor 2:9,10; 3:22; Eph 2:7; Titus 1:2; Heb 2:5; 11:1; Rev 1:1,19.

**Future of men :**

The saved: Matt 25:34,46; Luke 20:35,36; John 3:16; 14:2,3; 17:24; Rom 8:17-21,29,30; 1 Cor 15:24-54; 2 Cor 5:1; Phil 3:21; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 21:1-4,7

The lost: Matt 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:22-24; John 5:29; Rom 2:8; 2 Thess 1:9; Rev 14:11; 20:15; 21:8

**Giving :**

Ex 35:5-9; Lev 27:30-33; Num 18:8-32; 1 Chron 29:3,9,14; Mal 1:8; 3:8-

10; Matt 6:1-4; Mark 12:41-44; Luke 6:38; 21:1-4; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor 16:1-3; 2 Cor 8:1-15; 9:5-15 (references at 9:15); 1 Tim 6:18; Heb 13:16; 1 John 3:17,18.

### **Glory of God :**

Ps 29:1,2; Luke 2:14; John 11:4; 12:28; 13:31; 15:8; Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 3:7-18; 4:4-6; Eph 3:16,21; Heb 1:3; 1 Pet 5:10; 2 Pet 1:17; Rev 4:11; 19:1. See also under God, and Jesus Christ.

### **Goal, aim :**

Matt 5:48 (note); Acts 20:24; 2 Cor 5:9; 7:1; 13:11; Phil 3:12-16

### **God :**

#### **God's Sovereignty:**

Gen 50:20; Ex 4:21; 6:8; Deut 32:8,39; Josh 14:2; 1 Sam 2:6; 1 Chron 29:11,12; Esther 4:14; Job 38:3; Ps 2:1-12; 22:28; 31:11-19; 47:2; 105; Prov 21:1; Isa 10:5,6; 40:22,23; Jer 39:15-18; Dan 4:34,35; Matt 6:10; 11:25; John 10:29; 19:11; Acts 17:24-26; Rom chapters 9-11; 9:14-24; 11:33-36; Heb 1:3; Jam 4:12; Rev 4:2,10; 19:6.

#### **God's oneness, uniqueness:**

Ex 12:12; 20:3-6; Deut 6:4,5; 1 Kings 18:21-39; 2 Kings 19:15-9,35-37; Isa 43:9-13; 44:6,8; 45:5,6,18,21,22; 46:8,9; Jer 51:15-19; Rom 16:27; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 Tim 1:17; 2:5; 6:15,16

#### **God's mercy:**

Ex 33:19; 34:6; 2 Sam 24:14; Dan 9:18; Ezek 18:32; Micah 7:18; Matt 5:7; Luke 1:50; Rom 9:16; 11:32; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 2:4; 1 Tim 1:16; Titus 3:5; Heb 4:16; Jam 2:13; 1 Pet 1:3; Judah 2. See also under mercy

#### **God's grace:**

Gen 6:8; Ex 33:12; Ps 45:2; 84:11; Prov 3:34; Luke 2:40; John 1:14-17; Acts 4:33; 15:11; 18:27; 20:24,32; Rom 1:5,7; 3:24; 4:4,16; 5:2,21; 6:1,14; 11:5,6; 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 1:12; 6:1; 8:9; 9:8; 12:9; Gal 2:21; 5:4; Eph 1:6,7; 2:8,9; 3:2,8; 4:7; Col 3:16; 4:6; 1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 2:1; Titus 2:11; Heb 2:9; 4:16; 13:9; Jam 4:6; 1 Pet 4:10; 5:5; 2 Pet 3:18; Rev 22:21

#### **God's anger, wrath, etc :**

Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:16; Rom 1:18; 2:5,8; 5:9; 9:22-24; Eph 5:6; 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Heb 3:8-10; Rev 6:16,17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:1

### **God's greatness:**

Gen 1:1; Ex 15:11; Deut 10:17; 32:3; 1 Sam 7:22; Job 36:22-37:24; 38:3,12-35; Ps 47:2; 95:3; 99:1-5; 104:1; 15:5; 145:3; Isa 2:10,11; 40:12-31; 57:15; Dan 4:34,35; 9:4; Mal 1:14; Rom 11:33-36; Titus 2:13; Rev 4:11

### **God's compassion:**

Deut 30:3; Ps 78:38; 86:15; 111:4; 112:4; 45:8; Lam 3:22,32; Micah 7:19; Matt 9:36; 15:32; Mark 1:41; Luke 15:20; Rom 9:15; Heb 5:2; 1 Pet 3:8; Jude 22

### **God's righteousness, justice:**

Gen 18:25; Ex 22:22-24; Deut 32:4; Esther 7:10; Job 8:3; 34:10-12; Ps 7:9; 11:7; 18:25,26; 19:9; 33:5; 64:7-10; 89:14; 145:17; Isa 51:6; Ezek 18:25-30; Dan 4:37; 9:14; Zeph 3:5; John 5:30; Acts 3:14; Rom 3:26; 9:14-24; 1 John 1:9; 2:1; 3:7; Rev 15:3,4; 16:5-7; 19:2

### **God's holiness:**

Ex 15:11; 20:7; 28:31-35; Lev 10:3; 16:2; 20:7 (note); 26:30; Josh 24:19,20; 1 Sam 2:2; Ps 5:5,6; 99:9; Isa 6:2,3; 57:15; Luke 1:49; 1 Pet 1:16; Rev 3:7; 4:8; 15:4

### **God's love:**

Ex 20:6; Deut 7:7,8; Song 1:2 (see Introduction to Song of songs); Isa 38:17; Jer 31:3; Hos 14:4; Zeph 3:17; John 3:16; 13:1; 14:21; 17:24; Rom 5:5,8; 8:35,39; 1 Cor 13:1 (note); 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 1:4,5; 2:4; 3:17-19; Titus 3:4; 1 John 3:116; 4:8-10

### **God's power and might:**

Gen 1:1; 17:1; 18:14; Deut 3:24; 32:39; Josh 4:24; 1 Chron 29:11; 2 Chron 16:9; 20:6; 25:8; Ezra 8:22; Job 9:4-9; 42:2; Ps 29:1,2; 77:14-20; Isa 40:26; Jer 10:6-12; 2:17,27; Dan 4:35; Matt 19:26; 22:29; Rom 1:20; 4:21; 1 Cor 2:5; 6:14; 2 Cor 4:7; Eph 1:19-21; 3:20; 6:10; Col 1:29; Heb 1:3; 1 Pet 1:5; 2 Pet 1:3; Rev 11:17; 19:1

### **God's foreknowledge:**

Ps 139:13-16; Isa 42:9; 46:10; 48:5; Jer 1:5; Dan 2:28; Matt 24:36; John 6:64; 13:1; 18:4; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 15:18; Rom 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet 1:2

### **God's goodness, kindness:**

Ex 33:19; 34:6; 2 Chron 7:3; Ps 23:6; 31:19,21; 34:8; 52:9; 73:1; 100:5; 116:5; 119:68; 145:9; Isa 30:18; 54:8; Joel 2:13; Matt 19:17; Rom 2:4; 11:24; 1 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:22; Eph 2:7; 5:9; Titus 3:4; 1 Pet 2:3

**God's glory:**

Ex 15:11; 16:10; 24:17; 33:18; 40:34;  
 Num 14:21; 1 Kings 8:10,11; Ps 19:1;  
 Isa 6:3; 40:5; 42:8; 43:7; Ezek 1:28;  
 9:3; 10:4,15-19; 11:22-24; Luke 2:9;  
 John 1:14; Acts 7:55; Rom 1:23; 3:23;  
 1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:6; Heb 1:3;  
 Rev 4:11; 5:12,13; 21:11,23

**God's faithfulness:**

Deut 7:8,9; Josh 23:14; Ps 33:4; 36:5;  
 89:1,2; 145:13; Isa 11:5; 25:1; Lam  
 3:23; Rom 3:3,4; 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 1  
 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; 2 Tim 2:13;  
 Titus 1:2; Heb 2:17; 6:18; 10:23; 1 Pet  
 4:19; 1 John 1:9; Rev 1:5; 19:11

**God's will:**

Ps 40:8; Isa 46:10; 53:10; Matt 6:10;  
 7:21; 10:29; 12:50; 26:39,42; John  
 6:38; 7:17; Acts 20:27; Rom 9:19-21;  
 12:2; 1 Cor 1:1,2; 4:19; Eph 1:5,11;  
 5:17; Col 1:9; 1 Thess 4:3; 5:18; Heb  
 10:9,10; 13:21; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 2:15;  
 4:2; 1 John 2:17; 5:14; Rev 4:11; 17:17

**God's truth, truthfulness:**

Num 23:19; Deut 32:4; Ps 31:5; 43:3;  
 119:160; 138:2; 146:6; Isa 45:19;  
 65:16; John 1:14; 8:26; 14:6; 15:26;  
 17:17; Rom 3:4; Titus 1:2; Rev 3:7,14;  
 6:10; 15:3

**God's presence:**

Gen 3:8; 16:13; 28:16; Ex 25:8 (note);  
 1 Sam 2:20,21; 4:3,4; Ps 139; Isa 6:3;  
 7:14; Ezek 1:4; 48:35; Matt 1:23; Acts  
 17:28; Rom 5:2; Eph 2:18; 3:13; 2  
 Thess 1:9; 2 Tim 4:1; Heb 9:24; 10:19;  
 Jam 4:8; 1 Pet 3:18; Rev 21:3

**God's omniscience:**

Gen 18:20,21; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron  
 28:9; Ps 147:4,5; Dan 2:20,22; John  
 21:27; Acts 15:18; Rom 11:33-36; 1  
 Tim 1:17; Heb 4:13; 1 John 3:20

**God's omnipresence:**

Ps 139:7-10; Prov 15:3; Isa 66:1; Jer  
 23:24; Matt 18:20; 28:20; Acts 17:27,28

**God's patience, forbearance:**

Ex 34:6; Rom 2:4; 9:22; 10:21; 1 Cor  
 13:4; 1 Tim 1:16; 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet  
 3:9,15

**God as Teacher:**

Ps 25:4; 71:17,18; 94:10; 119:102,171;  
 Isa 2:3; 48:17; 54:13; Matt 5:2; 7:29;  
 Luke 12:12; John 7:17; 13:13,14;  
 14:26

**God as Father:**

Deut 1:31; 32:6; Ps 2:7; 68:5,6;  
 103:13; Isa 63:16; Jer 3:19; Mal 1:6;  
 Matt 5:16; 6:9,26; 11:27; 18:10; 23:9;

John 3:35; 4:21-24; 5:17,18; 8:41-44;  
 10:30; 14:6; 2 Cor 6:18; Eph 3:14,15;  
 Phil 2:11

**God as Judge:**

Gen 18:25; 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 7:8; 9:8;  
 72:2; 75:7; 95:10,13; Isa 2:4; 11:3,4;  
 Micah 5:1; Matt 19:28; 25:31-46; Acts  
 10:42; 17:31; Rom 2:2,5,6,12,16;  
 14:10; 1 Cor 4:4,5; 2 Tim 4:1; Heb  
 10:30; 12:9,23; Jam 5:9; 1 Pet 1:17;  
 Rev 19:2; 20:11

**God as Saviour:**

2 Sam 22:3; Ps 106:21; Isa 43:3,11;  
 45:15; 49:26; 60:16; 63:8; Jer 14:8;  
 Hos 13:4; Luke 1:47; 2:11; John 4:42;  
 Acts 5:31; 13:23; Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20;  
 1 Tim 1:1; 4:10; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet  
 1:1,11; Jude 25.

**God as King:**

Ex 15:18; 1 Sam 8:7; 12:12; Ps 24:7-  
 10; 47:2 (note); 68:5,6; Isa 44:6; Lam  
 5:19; Dan 4:34,35; Mal 1:14; Matt  
 6:10,13; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 15:3;  
 19:6,16. See also God's sovereignty.

**God as Light:**

Ps 18:28; 27:1; 76:4; 89:15; Isa 9:2;  
 42:6; 49:6; 60:19; Micah 7:8; Matt  
 4:16; John 1:4-9; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; 2  
 Cor 4:5; 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Tim 6:16;  
 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 1:5; Rev 21:23

**God as Creator:**

Gen 1:1; Job 39:1 (note); 41:1 (note);  
 Ps 19:1,2; 24:1; 65:9-13; 96:5; 104;  
 Isa 40:26; 66:1,2; Rev 4:11

**God and knowing spiritual truth:**

See under Knowing God

**God, praising:**

See under Praising God

**God, seeking:**

See under Seeking God

**God's call:**

Rom 1:7; 8:28-30; 1 Cor 1:26,27; Eph  
 4:1; Heb 3:1; 3:12; 2 Pet 1:3,10; Jude 1

**God's children:**

Matt 5:9,45; John 1:12,13; 17:6-10;  
 Rom 8:16-21; 2 Cor 6:17,18; Gal 3:26;  
 4:4-6; Eph 5:1; Phil 2:15; Heb  
 2:10,14,15; 12:7,8; 1 Pet 1:4; 1 John  
 3:1; 5:2,19

**God's city:**

Ps 46:4; 48:1,2,8; 87:3; Isa 60:14; Matt  
 5:35; Heb 11:10,16; 12:22; 13:14; Rev  
 3:12; 21:10 - 22:5

**God's gifts of grace:**

Isa 55:1-3; Matt 7:11; 11:28; Luke  
 11:13; John 1:12; 4:14; 6:32; 10:28;

14:27; Acts 2:38,39; 14:17; 17:25; Rom 6:23; 2 Cor 9:15; Eph 2:8-10; Phil 1:29; Jam 1:17; Rev 22:17

#### **God's kingdom:**

Isa 2:1-4; 9:7; 11:1-10; 24:23; 32:1-5; 35:1-10; 42:4; Dan 2:35,44; 7:14; Matt 4:17; 5:3; 6:10; 13:11; 24:14; Luke 17:20,21; John 3:3,5; 18:36,37; Acts 1:6,7; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 6:9-11; Heb 12:28; 2 Pet 1:11; Rev 11:15

#### **God's Lamb**

Ex 12:1-11; John 1:29; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6; 6:1; 14:1,10; 17:14; 19:7; 21:23

#### **God's names**

Gen 14:18; 17:1; Ex 3:14,15; 1 Sam 1:3; Matt 5:16

#### **God's service, servants :**

Ex 3:1; 8:1; Josh 1:6-8; 24:15; 1 Sam 1:27,28; 2:18; 3:11-14; Ezra 7:10; Neh 3:5; 4:16-18; 5:14-18; 7:2; 13:31; Ps 84:10; Isa 6:8; 41:8; 49:3,5,7; 50:4-10; Jer 1:12; 45:2,3; Ezek 2:1; 3:18-21,26,27; Haggai 1:3,4,13; 2:8; Mal 3:14; Matt 20:25-27; 24:45-51; 25:14-30,35,36; Luke 5:4; 9:62; 12:37; John 4:36-38; 12:26; 13:14; 14:12; 15:5; Acts 1:4; 6:4,8; 20:18-36; 26:18; Rom 1:1; 6:16-18; 12:1; 14:7-12; 15:16-29; 1 Cor 3:5-10; 4:3,4; 9:19-23; 15:58; 2 Cor 3:9; 4:1,2,5,7-12; 5:18-21; 6:5-10; Eph 2:10; 3:7,8; 4:12; 6:6-8; Phil 2:7; 1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 2:24; Heb 3:2,5,6; 9:14; 1 Pet 4:10,11; Rev 1:1; 7:15; 22:3

#### **God's Son:**

See under Jesus Christ

#### **God's Word:**

Deut 4:2,10; 6:6; 8:3; 11:18; 2 Kings 22:11-13; Ps 1:2; 12:6; 18:30; 19:7-10; 111:7; 119:1,9,11,89,103, 105, 130,160; Isa 2:3; 34:16; 40:8; 55:11; Jer 1:9; 15:16; 23:29; 36:2; Ezek 3:1-3; Matt 4:4; 5:17,18; 22:29; 24:35; Luke 8:11; John 1:1,14; 5:39; 10:35; 15:3; 17:17; Acts 1:16; 12:24; 24:14; 28:25; Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11; Eph 5:26; 6:17; Phil 2:15; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:15-17; 4:2; Heb 1:1; 2:2; 4:12,13; Jam 1:18,21-24; 1 Pet 1:23-25; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 John 2:5,14; Rev 1:2; 22:18,19

#### **God of this age:**

2 Cor 4:4

#### **Golden rule :**

Matt 7:12

#### **Good, goodness, etc :**

Gen 1:4,31; 2:9; 50:20; Job 2:10; Ps

14:1; 34:14; 37:3; 84:11; 103:5; 147:1; Prov 3:27; 14:22; 18:22; 22:1; Eccl 12:14; Isa 5:20; 55:1,2; Jer 6:16; 13:23; Micah 6:8; Matt 7:11,17; 12:35; 13:8; Rm 8:28; 12:2,9; 1 Cor 10:24; Gal 6:9,10; Jam 4:17

#### **Good deeds :**

Matt 5:16; 6:1-4; 25:35-46; 26:10; Gal 6:9,20; Eph 2:10; 1 Tim 6:18,19; Titus 2:14; 3:14; Heb 10:24; 13:16; Jam 2:14-26; 4:17; 1 Pet 2:12; 3:11; 4:19; 1 John 3:17,18

#### **Gospel, good news :**

Matt 24:14; Mark 1:1; 16:15; Luke 2:10; Rom 1:1,16; 16:25,26; 1 Cor 15:1-8; 2 Cor 4:3-6; Gal 1:11,12; Eph 1:13; 6:15; 2 Thess 1:18; 1 Tim 1:11; 2 Tim 1:10; 1 Pet 4:17; Rev 14:6

#### **Government :**

Matt 22:17-21; Rom 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13,14

#### **Grace :**

See under God

#### **Grapes, wine, etc :**

Ps 92:12-14; Prov 20:1; 23:20,31; Isa 5:2-4; Matt 9:17; John 2:3-11; 15:1; Acts 2:13; Rom 14:21; Eph 5:18; 1 Tim 3:3; 5:23; Rev 19:15

#### **Great tribulation :**

Jer 30:7 (note); Dan 12:1; Matt 24:21,29; Rev 6:12-17 (note); 7:14

#### **Greed, covetousness :**

Ex 20:17; Ezek 33:31; Luke 12:15; 1 Cor 6:10; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5

#### **Grieving God's Spirit :**

Eph 4:30

#### **Guidance :**

Gen 12:1; 24:48; Ex 13:21; Deut 32:12; Ps 23:2; 31:3; 48:14; 73:24; Isa 30:21; 42:16; 48:17; John 10:3,4; Acts 8:26; 16:6-10; Rom 12:1,2

#### **Guilt, guilt offering :**

Ex 34:7; Lev 5:15,16; Ps 32:5; 38:4; Isa 6:7; Jer 2:22; Mark 3:29; John 8:46; 1 Cor 11:27; Jam 2:10

#### **Hallelujah :**

Rev 19:1

#### **Hardening of the heart :**

Ex 4:21; Ps 95:8; Prov 28:14; Ezek 11:19; Zech 7:12; Rom 9:18; Eph 4:18,19; Heb 3:13,14

#### **Harlot :**

See under Prostitute

#### **Harvest :**

Ex 23:16; 34:22; Ps 126:6; Jer 8:20; Joel 3:13; Matt 9:37,38; John 4:35-38;

Acts 2:1; Gal 6:8,9; Rev 14:15-20

**Hatred, hate, abhor, etc :**

Lev 26:30; Deut 32:19; Ps 5:5,6; 45:7; 97:10; 139:20-22; Hos 9:15; Mal 1:3; Matt 5:43,44; 6:24; 10:22; Luke 6:22,27; 14:26; John 3:20; 12:25; 15:18; Rom 1:30; 12:9; Heb 1:9; Jam 4:4; 1 John 2:9,11; 3:14,15; Jude 23. See also Abomination.

**Head :** (Christ as Head of the Church)

Eph 1:22,23; Col 1:18; 2:19

**Health :**

See under Sickness

**Heart :**

Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 24:4; 37:4,31; 44:21; 51:10,17; 66:18; 73:26; 119:11; Prov 4:23; Eccl 9:3; Isa 57:15; Jer 7:24; 17:9; Ezek 11:19; 14:3; 36:26; Joel 2:13; Matt 58; 15:18; 23:27,28; Luke 6:45; 8:15; Acts 15:9; Eph 3:16; 1 Tim 1:5; Heb 4:12; 1 Pet 1:22; 3:15; Rev 3:20.

**Heart purity :**

Ps 24:3,4; 51:10; Matt 5:8; Eph 5:26, 27; 1 Tim 1:5; 1 Pet 1:22.

**Heaven :**

Deut 26:15; Ps 73:23; 123:1; Matt 3:2; 5:12; 6:9,10,20; 28:18; Mark 16:19; Luke 10:20; John 3:13; 6:38; 14:2; Acts 1:11; 7:55,56; 1 Cor 15:47; 2 Cor 5:1-4; 12:2,4; Eph 1:10; Phil 2:10; 3:20; 1 Thess 1:9; 4:16; Heb 1:3; 8:5; 9:24; 12:23; 1 Pet 1:4; Rev 4:1; 5:13; 12:7; 21:1 - 22:5

**Heavenly places :**

Eph 1:3; 2:6; 3:10; Rev 12:7

**Hebrew language :**

Note at Psalm 14:7

**Hell, Hades, Sheol, realm of the dead:**

Gen 37:35; Deut 32:22; Ps 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 55:15; 139:8; Prov 5:5; 9:18; 15:24; 23:14; Isa 14:9,15; 28:15; Ezek 31:16; Matt 5:22,29; 10:28; 11:23; 16:18; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43, 45,47; Luke 12:5; 16:23; Acts 2:27,31; Jam 3:6; Rev 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-15.

**High priest :**

Ex 28:1; Lev 11:44; 16:2-17; 21:10; Zech 3:1; Heb 5:5; 9:7. See also under Jesus Christ.

**Holy, holiness, sanctify, sanctification:**

Ex 15:11; 19:21-25; 28:36-38; Levi 19:2; 20:7 (note); Isa 1:4; 6:3; John 17:17-19 (note); 1 Cor 3:17; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 5:3,4; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 2:21;

Titus 2:14; Heb 2:11; 7:26; 10:10; 12:10,14; Jam 3:18; 1 Pet 1:2; 15,16; 2 Pet 3:11; 1 John 3:3; Rev 15:3. See also under God.

**Holy Place, Most Holy Place :**

Ex 26:33; 28:29; Lev 6:16; 16:2,12-14; 1 Kings 6:19; Matt 24:15; Heb 9:3,8,12,25; 10:19

**Holy living :**

Isa 1:16-20; Matt chapters 5-7; John 15:3,4; 1 Cor 5:7,8; 6:9; 2 Cor 6:14 - 7:1; Eph 4:1 - 6:17; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 2:11; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 1:15,16; 2 Pet 3:11-14; etc.

**Holy Spirit, God's Spirit :**

His divine nature: Matt 3:16,17 (note); John 14:17; 2 Cor 13:14

**His personality:**

John 14:17; 2 Cor 13:14; Heb 3:7

**Promise of:**

Luke 24:29; John 14:16,17; Acts 1:4,5; 2:39; Gal 3:14

**Coming of:**

John 14:18; 16:7; Acts 2:1-4

**Receiving:**

Luke 11:13; John 20:22,23; Acts 1:5; 10:47; 19:2; Rom 8:15,16; Gal 3:2,14; 4:6; Eph 1:13; Titus 3:6

**His presence in believers:**

Ezek 36:27; John 14:17; 16:7; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16

**Baptism of:**

Matt 3:11; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor 12:12,13

**Fullness of:**

Acts 1:5; 2:4,13; 6:3; Eph 5:18

**Power of:**

Micah 3:8; Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8; 4:33; Eph 3:16; Col 1:11

**Gifts of:**

1 Cor 12:4-7

**Work of:**

John 3:5,6; 6:63; 14:26; 15:26; 16:8-11,13-15; Acts 16:6; Rom 8:2-27; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2; etc

**Fruit of:**

Gal 5:22,23; Eph 5:19-21

**Holy people, saints :**

Ex 19:6; Ps 16:3; 4:9; Dan 7:18; Rom 1:7; 8:27; 1 Cor 6:1,2; Eph 1:18; 6:12; 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 5:8; 19:8; 20:6

**Homosexuality :**

Gen 19:4,5; Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:26,27; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Tim 1:10; Jude 7

**Honesty, integrity :**

1 Sam 12:3-5; 2 Kings 12:15; Job 1:18; 27:6; Ps 11:7; 15:1-5; 41:12; 101:1-8; Prov 11:3; 15:8; 16:17; 19:1; 20:7; Matt 1:19; 5:6,10; Luke 16:10-14; John 12:6. See also under Truthfulness.

**Honour, glory :**

1 Sam 2:30; 15:12,30; Ps 8:5; 84:11; Prov 25:27; Matt 13:57; 23:6,12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; John 5:41,44; 7:18; 12:26; Rom 2:7,10; 12:10; Gal 1:10; 1 Tim 5:17; Rev 21:26. See also under God's glory.

**Hope :**

Job 13:15; Ps 39:7; 42:11; 130:5; 145:5; Jer 29:11; Lam 3:21,22; Rom 4:18; 5:2; 8:24,25; 15:4,13; 1 Cor 13:13; Gal 5:5; Eph 2:12; Col 1:27; 1 Thess 1:3; Titus 2:12,13; Heb 6:19,20; 1 Pet 1:3; 3:15; 1 John 3:3

**Hospitality :**

Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 4:9

**Humility, meekness, etc :**

Num 12:3; Ps 22:6,26; 25:9; 37:11; 45:4; 119:176; 131:1; Prov 3:34; 11:2; 29:23; Isa 57:15; 61:1; 66:1,2; Micah 6:8; Zeph 2:3; Matt 3:11,12; 5:3; 11:29; 18:1-4; 20:25-27; 21:5; Luke 17:7-10; 18:13; John 3:27-30; 13:4-8,14; Rom 12:16; 1 Cor 1:28-31; 13:4; 2 Cor 10:1; 12:7; Gal 5:23; 6:1; Eph 3:8; 4:1; Phil 2:3-11; Col 3:12; Jam 3:13,17; 4:6,10; 1 Pet 3:4,15; 5:5,6. See also under Pride.

**Husbands :**

Gen 3:6; Isa 54:5; Jer 3:20; Rom 7:2; 1 Cor 7:3; Eph 5:23,25; 1 Tim 3:2; 1 Pet 3:7. See also under Marriage.

**Hypocrisy, false piety :**

Ps 50:16-21; Isa 29:13; Jer 3:10; 17:9; Matt 6:1-5,16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:2-6,39 (note); Mark 7:6; 12:15; John 18:28; Acts 5:1,2; Gal 2:13; 1 Tim 4:2; 1 Pet 2:1.

**Idols and idolatry****Sin and folly of:**

Ex 20:4-6; 32:5,6; Deut 4:15-19; Ps 115:1-8; Isa 40:18-26; 44:9-20; Jer 7:5,6; 10:9-16; 44:15-18; 51:17-19; Ezek 8:10-16; 14:3; Acts 14:11-15; 17:16,22-30; Rom 1:21-23; 1 Cor 8:4-6; 10:7,12; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:5; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 John 5:21; Rev 9:20,21

**Punishment of:**

Ex 31:36; Lev 26:1,14-45; Deut

4:25,26; 13:1-18; 28:15-68; 2 Kings 17:7-14; Ps 78:58,59; 115:8; Isa 2:8,9; Jer 18:15-17; Ezek 6:2-7; Rom 1:23-27; 1 Cor 6:9,10; Rev 21:8

**Ignorance :**

See under Spiritual ignorance

**Immanuel:**

Isa 7:14; 8:8; Matt 1:23

**Immortality, incorruption :**

Prov 12:28; John 3:16; 5:24; 11:25,26; Rom 1:23; 2:7; 1 Cor 15:53,54; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim 1:10; Rev 21:3,4

**Incense:**

Ex 30:34-38; Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8; 8:3-5

**Indifference :**

See under Carefulness

**Ingratitude :**

Rom 1:21

**Intercession, praying for others :**

Gen 18:22-32; Ex 32:32; Isa 53:12; Ezek 22:30; Luke 22:32; 23:34; John 17:9; Rom 8:34; 1 Tim 2:1,2; Heb 7:25

**Invitations, God's :**

Isa 1:18; 55:1; Matt 11:28; 22:4; Luke 14:17; John 1:39; 2 Cor 5:20; Rev 22:17

**Israel, the people of :**

Gen 28:10; 32:18; Ex 2:23-25; 3:7-10; 19:4-6; Deut 6:10-12; 7:6-8; Isa 2:1-5; 11:11,12; 27:6-11; Jer 31:31-40; 33:23-26; Ezek 37:1,25; Hos 3:4,5; Amos 9:15; Acts 1:6,7; Rom 11:1-27; Gal 6:16; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 7:4-8; 21:12

**Jealous, jealousy :**

Ex 20:5,6; Deut 6:15; Song 8:6; Nahum 1:2

**Jehovah :**

Ex 3:14,15; 6:3; 20:2

**Jerusalem :**

Gen 14:18; 2 Sam 5:6; 2 Kings 18:17; 24:10; Ps 46:4,5; 48:1,2; 87:1-7; Isa 1:4,27; 2:1-4; 29:1-9; 40:1,2; 62:1-12; Jer 9:11-16; Ezek 48:35; Dan 9:25,26; Zech 12:1-14; 14:10-21; Matt 5:35; 23:37-39; Luke 19:41-44; 21:24; Gal 4:25,26. See also New Jerusalem.

**Jesus Christ :****Birth:**

Matt 2:1-11; Luke 2:1-18; Gal 4:4,5

**Boyhood:**

Luke 2:40-52

**Baptism:**

Matt 3:13; Mark 1:9,10; Luke 3:21,22

**Anointing:**

Ps 45:7; Isa 61:1; Matt 3:16; Luke 4:18;



Acts 4:27; 10:38

**Temptation, testing:**

Matt 4:1-10; Luke 4:1-13; Heb 2:18

**Service:**

Matt 12:17-21; 20:28; John 13:4,5; Acts 10:38; Rom 15:8

**Miracles:**

See under Miracles.

**Parables:**

See under Parables.

**Transfiguration:**

Matt 17:2; Mark 9:2,3; Luke 9:29; 2 Pet 1:16-18

**Sufferings and death:**

Ps 22:1-21; Isa 53:1-12; Matt 26:39; 27:27-50; Luke 22:41-44; John 19:34; Acts 1:3; 3:18; 26:23; Rom 5:6,8; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14,15; 1 Thess 5:10; Heb 13:12; 1 Pet 2:21; 3:18; 1 John 3:16; Rev 5:6

**Resurrection:**

Ps 16:8-11; Matt 28:6,7; Acts 2:24-36; Rom 1:4; 4:25; 1 Cor 15:4,12-57; Eph 1:20,21; Rev 1:5

**Ascension:**

Ps 68:1,18; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; 2:33-35; Eph 1:20,21; 2:6; 4:10; Heb 4:14; 9:24; 1 Pet 3:22

**As incarnation of God:**

Isa 7:14; 9:6; John 1:1,14; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:7; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 John 4:2,3.

**Reasons for His incarnation:**

Matt 5:17; 9:13; 20:28; Luke 19:10; John 6:38; 9:39; 10:10,11; 12:46; 1 John 3:8; 4:9,10,14

**His deity:**

Isa 9:6; Matt 3:17; 8:1 (note); 11:27; Luke 2:11 (note, references); John 1:1,2,14; 2:24,25; 3:13; 5:18-23; 8:9,24,58; 10:30; 14:10; 20:28,29; Phil 2:6 (note, references); Col 1:15; 2:9; 1 Tim 3:16; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:3,6-12; 1 John 5:20; Rev 5:8

**Authority:**

Matt 7:28,29; 8:27; 28:18; John 3:11,35; 5:27; 10:17,18; 17:2; Acts 2:24,33; Heb 1:3; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 2:26,27; 3:7; 22:1. See also under Lord.

**Righteousness and justice:**

Ps 45:4,7; Acts 3:14; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 John 2:1; 3:7

**Power:**

Matt 4:23,24; Matt chapter 8; 11:4; 2 Pet 1:16. Because he shares God's nature, all the power of God is His.

**Holiness:**

Mark 1:24; Luke 1:35; 5:8; John 8:46; 14:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5; Rev 3:7. See also under God.

**His prayers:**

Mark 1:35 (note and references); See also as Intercessor.

**His love:**

John 13:1; 15:9,13; Rom 8:35; 2 Cor 5:14; Gal 2:20; Eph 3:17-19; 5:25-33; 1 John 3:16; Rev 3:9,19.

**His anger:**

Mark 3:5; Rev 6:16,17; Ps 2:12

**His greatness:**

Matt 3:11; Luke 1:31,32; John 3:31; Col 1:18; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:2-13; 3:1-6; 4:14; Rev 5:5-14

**His glory:**

Matt 16:27; Luke 9:32; John 1:14; 17:5,22,24; Jam 2:1; 1 Pet 1:21; Rev 1:13; 5:13

**His human nature:**

Ps 69:1-3; Isa 7:14; 9:6; Luke 2:40; 4:2; 8:23; John 1:14; 3:13; 4:6,7; Heb 2:5-13; 5:7

**His presence in His people:**

John 17:23; Rom 8:9,10; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 1:16; 2:20; 4:19; Eph 3:16; Col 1:27; 3:11; 1 John 4:4

**His second coming:**

Matt 16:27; 19:28; 24:27,30; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; Rev 1:7; 14:14-16; 19:11-21; 22:20

**As teacher:**

Matt 4:17; 5:1,2; 7:28,29; John 3:1; 13:13. See also under God.

**As shepherd:**

Ps 23:1; Isa 40:11; John 10:1-18; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4

**As Lamb of God:**

See under God's Lamb.

**As Son of God:**

Ps 2:12; Matt 3:17; Luke 2:49; John 1:14; 3:16; 14:28; 17:1; 20:17; Heb 1:2,5; 2 John 3

**As Word of God:**

John 1:1,14; 1 John 1:1; Rev 19:13

**As Lord:**

Luke 2:11 (note and references); Acts 2:36; Rom 10:9,10,12,13; Phil 2:10,11; 1 Pet 3:15; Rev 5:6; 19:16

**As High Priest:**

Ps 110; Heb 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:1-

10; 7:11 - 8:6; 10:21

**As Prophet:**

Deut 18:17; John 6:14; 12:49,50; 13:19; Heb 1:2

**As Stone:**

See under Rock, stone.

**As sacrifice:**

Matt 20:28; 26:26; John 1:29; 3:14-16; Rom 3:25,26; 4:25; Eph 5:2; Heb 1:3; 2:17; 9:26,28; 10:10-14; 1 Pet 2:24,25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10.

**As mediator:**

1 Tim 2:5; Heb 9:15; 1 John 2:1

**As Saviour:**

Matt 1:21; Luke 2:11; 19:10; John 3:17; 10:9; Acts 4:12; 5:31; 15:11; Rom 5:9; 1 Tim 1:15; Titus 2:13; Heb 5:9; 7:25. See also under God.

**As King:**

Ps 2:5-12; 45:1-17; Ps 72; 89:28,29; 110:2; Isa 2:1-4; 9:7; Micah 5:2; Zech 9:9; Matt 25:34; John 18:36,37; 1 Pet 3:22; Rev 1:5; 19:16

**As Intercessor:**

Luke 22:31,32; John chapter 17; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1; Isa 53:12

**As Light:**

John 1:4; 8:12; 12:35; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 5:14; Rev 21:23

**As the truth:**

John 1:14,17; 14:6

**As Lion**

Rev 5:5

**As Creator:**

John 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:1,2,10

**As servant:**

Matt 12:17-21; Rom 15:8

***Jesus Christ,***

***O.T. prophecies concerning***

*Prophecy*

*Fulfilment*

Gen 3:15

Gal 4:4; 1 John 3:8  
Rev 20:10

Gen 12:3,7

Acts 3:25,26;  
13:16, etc Gal 3:16,22  
Heb 7:14; Rev 5:5;  
19:16

Gen 49:10

Rev 19:11-16

Num 24:17

John 6:14; 12:49,50  
13:19; Acts 3:20-23  
Heb 1:2

Deut 18:15

2 Sam 7:11-16;

Isa 9:6,7

Luke 1:32,33

Ps 2:6-9

Acts 13:32,33;

Ps 16:10

Ps 22:1

Ps 22:6-8

Ps 22:8

Ps 22:16

Ps 22:18

Ps 34:20

Ps 41:9

Ps 45:6,7

Ps 68:18

Ps 69:4

Ps 69:21

Ps 72:5-8

Ps 78:2

Ps 89:27-29

Ps 110:4

Ps 118:22,23

Isa 7:14

Isa 9:1,2

Isa 9:6,7

Isa 11:2

Isa 40:3

Isa 42:1-4

Isa 53:3

Isa 53:4

Isa 53:5

Isa 53:6

Isa 53:7

Isa 53:9

Isa 53:10

Isa 53:10,11

Isa 53:11

Isa 61:1,2

Jer 31:15

Jer 31:31

Dan 9:25

Hosea 11:1

Zech 9:9

Zech 11:12

Zech 12:10

Phil 2:9; Heb 1:3; Rev 3:21

Matt 28:6; Acts 2:24-33

Matt 27:46

Matt 27:38,40

Matt 27:43

Matt 27:35; John 20:27

Matt 27:35; Mark

15:24

John 19:33-36

Matt 26:23; John

13:18

Heb 1:8,9

Luke 24:50,51; Eph 4:8

John 15:24,25

John 19:29

Luke 1:32,33; etc.

Matt 13:34,35

Eph 1:20,21; Heb 1:8; Rev 19:16

Heb 5:6-10

Matt 21:42; Acts

4:10,11

Matt 1:22,23

Matt 4:13-16

Matt 3:17; Luke 1:32, 33; John 1:1,14; etc.

Matt 3:16; John 3:34

Matt 3:3,11

Matt 12:17-21

John 1:11;

Acts 3:13,14

Matt 8:17

John 19:34;

1 Cor 15:3; 2 Pet 3:18

John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21

Matt 26:33; John 1:29;

1 Pet 2:23

Matt 27:57-60; 1 Pet 2:21,22

Rom 3:25; Heb 9:26

Matt 28:6

Rom 4:25; 5:19

Luke 4:17-21

Matt 2:16

Matt 26:27,28; Heb 8:6-13

See note there

Matt 2:14

John 12:13,14

Matt 26:15

John 19:34-37; Rev 1:7

**Joy, rejoice :**

Deut 12:7; 1 Chron 16:10; Neh 8:10,12,17; Job 20:15; 38:7; 39:1; Ps 2:10,11; 16:11; 19:8; 30:5; 81:1-5; 85:6,7; 90:14,15; 98:4,7; 104:31;

119:143; 126:5; Prov 8:27-31; Isa 12:3; 35:10; 61:10; 62:5; Jer 15:16; Hab 3:17-19; Zeph 3:17; Zech 9:9; Matt 5:12; Luke 2:10; 6:23; 24:52; John 3:29; 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Acts 5:41; 8:8; 16:25; Rom 5:2; 14:17; 15:13; 1 Cor 13:6; 2 Cor 6:10; 12:10; Gal 5:22; Phil 1:5,18,26; 2:2; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 1:6; 5:16; Heb 10:34; 12:2; Jam 1:2; 1 Pet 1:6,8; 4:13; 1 John 1:4; 2 John 4; 3 John 3,4; Jude 24; Rev 12:12; 19:7; 21:4

### **Judgment, God's :**

Ex 6:6; 12:12; Ps 1:5; 9:8,9; 96:10-13; Isa 6:9,10; Ezek 7:3; 18:30; Joel 3:12-14; Mal 3:5; Matt 7:1,2,22; 11:22; 25:31-46; John 3:17-20; Acts 17:30,31; Rom 2:2,5,16; 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:13; 11:19-32; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27; 13:4; 1 Pet 1:17; 2 Pet 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17; Jude 14,15; Rev 11:18; 20:11-15. See also under God as Judge.

### **Justification :**

Gen 15:6; Luke 18:14; Acts 13:39; Rom 3:21-26; 4:5-11; 10:9,10; Gal 2:16; 3:6; Titus 3:7; Jam 2:20-26

### **Keeping, preserving:**

Gen 28:15; Num 6:24; Deut 4:9; Ps 34:7; 37:28; 119:11; 121:4,5,7; Prov 4:23; John 6:39; 10:28,29; 17:11,15; Rom 5:9,10; 1 Tim 5:22; 2 Tim 1:12; 4:18; 1 Thess 5:23,24; Jam 1:27; 1 Pet 1:4,5; 1 John 5:21; Jude 1,24

### **Keys :**

Matt 16:19; Acts 8:15-17 (note); Rev 1:18; 3:7

### **Kindness, showing to others :**

Ruth 1:8; Ps 18:25; 1 Cor 13:4; Eph 4:32; Col 3:12; 2 Tim 2:24; 2 Pet 1:5-7. See also God's kindness.

### **Knowing God and spiritual truth :**

Ex 6:7; 7:3-5,17; 1 Sam 3:7; Ps 25:4; 79:6; 119:33,34; Prov 2:4,5; Jer 4:22; 9:23,24; 22:13-19; 24:7; Hos 6:3; Matt 11:25-27; 13:23; John 3:3; 7:17; 9:30,39; 10:15; 14:7,21; 17:3; Rom 1:19,20,28; 1 Cor 2:10-16; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17; Phil 1:11; 3:8-10; Col 1:10; 2:2,3; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 1:12; 3:7; Heb 8:11; 2 Pet 1:8; 3:18; 1 John 2:3-6 (note); 2:20,21,27; 3:24; 5:20. See also under Spiritual ignorance, and Enlightenment

### **Lake of fire :**

Rev 19:20; 20:10,14,15; 21:8

### **Lamb :**

Ex 12:1-11; John 1:29; 1 Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6; 6:1; 14:1,10; 17:14; 19:7; 21:23

### **Last days :**

Isa 2:2; Dan 12:9; Micah 4:1; Acts 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; 2 Pet 3:3

### **Law of Moses :**

Ex 19:8,21-25; Lev 18:5; Matt 5:17,18; John 1:17; Acts 13:39; 15:1,10,11; Rom 2:12,13; 3:19,20; 4:15; 5:20; 7:1-12; 8:3,4; 2 Cor 3:6-11; Gal 2:16; 3:2,17-25; 4:21-31; 1 Tim 1:7-11; Heb 7:18,19; 12:18-21; Jam 2:10,11

### **Lawsuits, court cases :**

1 Cor 6:1-8

### **Laying on of hands :**

Matt 19:13-15; Luke 4:40; Acts 8:15-17; 9:17; 1 Tim 4:14; 5:22; Heb 6:1,2

### **Leaders, overseers, elders, etc :**

Ex 3:1 (note); Num 12:1-3 (note); 16:1-3,9-11 (notes); Josh 1:6-9,18 (note); Judges 2:16; 1 Sam 12:1,3,6; 13:13; 18:5; 2 Sam 5:12; Neh 5:14-18; 7:2; Ps 101:1-8; Isa 56:11; Jer 3:15; 23:2,4; 50:6; Ezek 34:2,3,33; Matt 3:4,7,11,12; 18:4; 20:25-28; Acts 14:23; 20:17-36,24,28; 1 Tim 3:1-13; 4:12,14; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Jam 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1-4; Rev 4:4,10

### **Leper, leprosy :**

Lev 13:1-44 (note); Num 12:10; 2 Kings 5:1,27; 7:3; 2 Chron 26:21; Matt 8:1-4; Luke 17:12-19

### **Liberation :**

See under freedom

### **Lies, speaking falsely :**

Gen 27:18-26; Ex 20:16; Josh 9:18,19; 1 Sam 21:2; Ps 5:6; 58:3; 120:2; Prov 6:17; 19:22; John 8:44; Acts 5:3,4; Eph 4:25; 2 Thess 2:11; 1 John 1:6; 2:4,21,22; Rev 14:5; 21:8,27, 22:15. See also under Deceit.

### **Life :**

Gen 2:7,9; 9:5; Ex 21:23; Lev 17:14; Deut 30:15,19,20; 32:39,47; Ps 16:11; 27:1; 36:9; 69:28; Prov 4:23; 6:23; 8:35; 10:11; 11:30; 19:23; Dan 12:2; Matt 6:25; 7:14; 10:39; 18:8; 19:9; 20:28; Luke 12:15; 14:26; John 1:4; 3:15,16; 5:24,26,40; 6:35,63; 10:10; 11:25; Acts 3:15; Rom 8:38; 2 Cor 3:6; 4:10; 5:4; Gal 2:20; Phil 2:15; 1 Tim 4:8; 2 Tim 1:9,10; Jam 1:12; Rev 2:7,10; 3:5; 22:1,17 See also Eternal life.

### **Light :**

Gen 1:3; Ex 13:21; Job 38:19; Ps 19:8; 36:9; 43:3; 119:105,130; Matt 5:14-16; 6:22,23; Luke 1:79; John 1:4,5,9; 3:19,20; 8:12; 9:39; Acts 9:8; 10:4-6 (note); 26:18; Rom 13:11-14; 2 Cor

4:4-6; 6:14; Eph 5:8-14; Phil 2:15; Col 1:12; 1 Thess 5:4-8; 1 Tim 6:15; Heb 6:4; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 1:5,7; 2:10; Rev 21:23

**Lord :**

Gen 15:2; Ex 3:14,15; Josh 3:11; Deut 10:17; Ps 110:1; Luke 2:11 (references); John 13:13; Acts 2:36; 22:10 (note); Rom 10:9,10; 14:9; 1 Cor 8:5,6; Phil 2:9-11; Rev 19:16

**Lord's table, communion :**

1 Cor 10:16-22; 11:17-34

**LORD of hosts :**

Note at 1 Sam 1:3

**Love :**

Lev 19:18; Deut 6:4,5; 11:1,13,22; 13:3; Ps 18:1; 26:8; 31:23; 119:47,48, 97,119,132,165,167; Prov 8:17; Introduction to Song of songs; 8:6,7; Matt 5:43-47; 10:37; Luke 10:27-37; John 3:16,35; 13:1,34,35; 15:9; Rom 5:8; 8:28,37-39; 1 Cor 8:1,2; 13:1-13; 16:22,24; 2 Cor 5:4; Gal 5:13,14,22; Eph 3:17-19; 5:2,25-33; Phil 1:9; Col 3:14; 1 Thess 1:3; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:7; Philemon 17,18; Heb 6:9,10; Jam 2:8; 1 Pet 1:8,22; 4:8; 2 Pet 1:7; 1 John 2:5,10,15; 3:11-18; 4:7-21; Jude 2; Rev 2:4. See also under God, and Jesus Christ.

**Love, divine (agape) :**

See note at 1 Cor 13:1 See under Love, God, Jesus Christ

**Love of money, greed :**

Josh 7:20,21; 2 Kings 5:16,20,22; Micah 3:11; Matt 6:24; 13:22; 26:14,15; Luke 16:13,14; John 12:6; Acts 8:18,19; 16:19-21; 19:24; 20:35; Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 6:5,9-11,17-19; Titus 1:11; Heb 13:5; 1 Pet 5:2; 2 Pet 2:15; Rev 18:20

**Magicians, sorcerers, etc :**

Gen 41:8; Ex 7:11,12; 8:7,18,19; 9:11; 22:18; Lev 19:26; Deut 18:12-14; 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6; Isa 47:9; Dan 1:20; 2:2,27; 4:7; Mal 3:5; Acts 8:9-11; 13:8-10; 19:19; Gal 5:20; Rev 9:20,21; 18:23; 21:8

**Man :****Creation of:**

Gen 1:26,27,31; 2:7,21,22; Deut 4:32; Ps 8:5; 100:3; Isa 43:7; 51:13; Mal 2:10; Acts 17:28; 11 Cor 11:7-9; 1 Tim 2:13; Jam 3:9

**Fall of:**

Gen 3:6-23; 5:3; Rom 5:12; 1 Tim 2:13,14. See also under Flesh, Man's condition.

**Authority of:**

Gen 1:26; 9:2; Ps 8:6

**Glory of:**

Ps 49:17; 1 Pet 1:24

**Weakness of:**

Job 4:19; Ps 78:39; 103:14,16; Isa 2:22; 40:7; 51:12; Matt 26:41; Rom 8:3,26; 2 Cor 4:7; Jam 1:10; 1 Pet 1:24

**Ignorance of:**

See under Spiritual ignorance.

**New man:**

2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 2:15; 4:24

**Spirit and soul in man:**

Job 32:8; Ps 31:5; Prov 20:27; Eccl 12:7; Matt 10:28; Acts 7:59; Rom 8:16; 2 Cor 7:1; 1 Thess 5:23

**Man after God's heart :**

See under David.

**Mankind's condition :**

Gen 6:5-7; 8:21; Ps 14:1-3; Isa 1:4; 24:1-6; John 1:10,11; 3:17-20; 15:18-21; Rom 1:28-32; 3:9-19; Eph 2:1-3; 2 Tim 3:1-9,13; Titus 3:3; 1 John 2:15-17; Rev 9:20,21; 16:9-11

**Manna :**

Ex 16:31; Deut 8:16; John 6:49; Rev 2:17

**Marriage :****Literal:**

Gen 2:23,24; 30:1; 1 Kings 22:2; Ezra 9:2; Matt 5:31,32; John 2:2; 1 Cor 7:1-40; 2 Cor 6:14; 1 Tim 4:3; Heb 13:4; Rev 14:4

**Spiritual:**

Introduction to The Song of songs; Jer 2:2 (references); Rom 7:4; 1 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-32; Rev 14:4

**Masters, slave owners :**

Eph 6:5-8

**Mediator :**

Job 16:21; 1 Tim 2:5; 1 John 2:1

**Meekness :**

See under Humility

**Mercy :**

Ex 20:6; 34:7; Lev 16:2; Ps 51:1; 85:10; 103:8,11,17; 106:1; 119:64; Ezek 39:25; Hos 14:3; Micah 6:8; 7:18; Hab 3:2; Matt 5:7; 9:27; Luke 16:24; Rom 9:15-23; 11:30-32; 2 Cor 4:1; Eph 2:4; 1 Tim 1:2; Titus 3:5; Heb 4:16; James 5:11; 1 Pet 1:3

**Mind, thoughts, etc :**

Gen 6:5; 8:21; Ps 94:11; Prov 15:26; Matt 15:19; Rom 1:28; 2:15; 8:6,7; 12:1,2; 14:14; 1 Cor 2:16; Eph 4:17;

Phil 2:5; 4:8; Col 3:1-3; Titus 1:15; 1 Pet 1:13

### **Miracles, signs and wonders :**

Ex 3:20; 7:11,12; 11:10; Num 14:11; Ps 78:17; Matt 8:1; Mark 16:17,18; John 2:11; 11:47; 20:20,31; Acts 2:43; 8:13,15-17; 1 Cor 12:10; 2 Thess 2:9; Heb 2:4; Rev 13:13-15; 15:14

### **Old Testament miracles**

Rod becomes snake	Ex 4:3,4; 7:10
Hand becomes leprous	Ex 4:6,7
Water becomes blood	Ex 4:9,30
River becomes blood	Ex 7:20
Frogs	Ex 8:6,13
Gnats	Ex 8:17
Flies	Ex 8:21,31
Plague	Ex 9:3
Boils	Ex 9:10
Hail	Ex 9:23
Locusts	Ex 10:13,19
Darkness	Ex 10:22
Death of firstborn	Ex 12:29
Dividing the sea	Ex 14:21
Destruction of army	Ex 14:26-28
Water becomes safe	Ex 15:25
Quails	Ex 16:13
Manna from heaven	Ex 16:14
Water from rock	Ex 17:6
Death of Nadab, Abihu	Lev 10:2
Quails again	Num 11:31-34
Miriam becomes leprous	Num 12:10
Death of Korah, etc	Num 16:32
Aaron's rod budding	Num 17:8
Bronze snake	Num 21:9
Balaam's donkey	Num 22:28-30
Jordan river divided	Josh 3:16
Jericho's walls fall	Josh 6:20
Sun, moon stand still	Josh 10:12
Thunder and rain	1 Sam 12:18
Jeroboam' altar	1 Kings 13:4-6
Drought and rain	1 Kings 17:1; 18:45
Ravens bring food	1 Kings 17:6

### **Miracles Jesus performed**

Healing many	Matt 4:23,24; 8:16
Healing a leper	Matt 8:3

### **Healing the centurion's**

servant	Matt 8:13
Healing Peter's mother-in-law	Matt 8:14,15
Stilling the storm	Matt 8:26
Driving out demons	Matt 8:31,32
Healing paralyzed man	Matt 9:6,7
Healing woman with issue of blood	Matt 9:22
Raising dead girl	Matt 9:25
Healing deaf and dumb	Matt 9:29-33
Feeding five thousand	Matt 14:17-21

Walking on the sea	Matt 14:25-31
Healing Canaanite woman's daughter	Matt 15:28
Feeding four thousand	Matt 15:34-38
Healing demon- possessed boy	Matt 17:18
Coin in fish's mouth	Matt 17:27
Sight to two blind men	Matt 20:34
Withering of fig tree	Matt 21:29
Healing demon- possessed man in synagogue	Mark 1:25
Healing blind man in Bethsaida	Mark 8:22-26
Wonderful catch of fish	Luke 5:4-7
Raising dead boy in Nain	Luke 7:14,15
Healing of woman bowed over	Luke 13:10-13
Healing of man with dropsy	Luke 14:1-4
Healing ten lepers	Luke 17:11-14
Healing the ear of the high priest's servant	Luke 22:50,51
Changing water to wine	John 2:7-11
Healing nobleman's son	John 4:50-54
Healing man at Bethesda	John 5:8,9
Healing man blind from birth	John 9:1-7
Raising dead Lazarus	John 11:43,44
Appearing to disciples after resurrection	John 29:19, etc
Catch of fish	John 21:5,6
Rising from the dead	Matt 28:1-6 Mark 16:1-6 Luke 24:1-6 John 20:1-17

### **Miracles Jesus' disciples did**

Healing of crippled man	Acts 3:6-8
Death of Ananias, Sapphira	Acts 5:5,10
Healing many	Acts 5:12-16
Healing many more	Acts 8:6,7
Healing of Aeneas	Acts 9:33,34
Raising of Tabitha	Acts 9:40
Blinding of sorcerer Elymas	Acts 13:11
Healing of cripple	Acts 14:9,10
Driving demon out of fortune teller	Acts 16:18
Raising Eutychus from the dead	Acts 20:9,10
Case of poisonous snake	Acts 28:3-5
Healing many on Melita	Acts 28:8,9

### **Most Holy Place, Holy of holies :**

Ex 26:31-35; 1 Kings 6:19; 8:6; Heb 9:2,8,12,25; 10:19

### **Murder :**

Gen 9:6; Ex 20:13; 21:12; Matt 5:21-

24; Rom 13:9; 1 John 3:15; Rev 21:8

### **Mysteries of God :**

Matt 13:11; Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7; 15:51; Eph 1:9,10; 3:3,4; 5:22; 6:19; Col 1:27; 1 Tim 3:12; Rev 1:20; 10:7; 17:5,7

### **Nazirite :**

Num 6:2

### **Needs, God's care for His people :**

Ex 15:22-24; 16:3,4; Num 11:4; 20:3; 21:5,16; 1 Kings 17:4,7,10-13; Ps 23:5; 37:25,26; 78:15-29; Matt 6:31-34; 7:7,8; Luke 6:38; Acts 17:25; 2 Cor 9:8-11; Phil 4:19

### **New birth :**

John 1:13; 3:3-8; 13:10; Eph 2:1; Titus 3:5; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:3,23; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,18

### **New Covenant :**

See under Covenants.

### **New creation :**

2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10; Rev 21:5

### **New heavens and earth :**

Isa 65:17; 66:22; Rev 22:1-4

### **New Jerusalem :**

Heb 12:22; Rev 21:2,10; 22:19

### **New life :**

Rom 6:1,4; 7:6; Eph 2:1; Col 3:3

### **New nature :**

Eph 4:24; Col 3:9,10; Titus 3:5

### **New song :**

See references at Rev 5:9.

### **New way :**

Heb 10:19

### **New way of living :**

Rom 12:1,2,9-21; 13:14; Gal 2:20; Eph 4:1-3; 4:17-5:20; Phil 1:27,28; Col 3:1-4:6; 1 Pet 2:12; 4:2; 1 John 2:6

### **Obedience :**

Gen 12:1,4; 17:23; 18:19; 22:18; Ex 19:5; Lev 18:5; 25:18,19; 26:3; Deut 6:3; 28:1,15; 32:46; Josh 1:7,8; 1 Sam 15:22,23; Ps 40:8; 103:18; 119:17, 57,67,100,129,167; Matt 6:10; 7:21; 21:28-32; 26:39; Luke 1:38; John 2:5; 7:17; 14:15,21,23,31; 15:10,14; Acts 5:29,32; Rom 5:19; 6:13,17; 1 Cor 14:33-35; 16:16; Eph 5:21,22; Phil 2:8,12; 1 Tim 2:11-14; Heb 5:8; 11:8; 13:17; Jam 4:7; 1 Pet 1:2,14,22; 3:1-6; 5:5; 1 John 2:5; 3:22; 2 John 6; Rev 12:17. See also under Disobedience.

### **Old Covenant :**

Jer 31:22; 2 Cor 3:7-15; Gal 4:24-31;

Heb 8:13. See under Covenants.

### **Old way of life :**

Eph 2:1-3; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet 1:18; 4:3,4; etc.

### **Old nature :**

Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22; Col 3:9,10. See also under Flesh.

### **Parables of Jesus :**

Matt 13:3,11,12

Two houses	Matt 7:24-27
New cloth, new wine	Matt 9:16,17
The sower	Matt 13:3-9, 18:23
Tares and wheat	Matt 13:24-30, 36-43
Mustard seed	Matt 13:31,32
Leaven in the dough	Matt 13:33
The treasure in a field	Matt 13:44
The pearl of great price	Matt 13:45
The net and the fish	Matt 13:47-50
The house owner	Matt 13:52
The sheep gone astray	Matt 18:12-14
The unmerciful servant	Matt 18:21-35
Workers in the vineyard	Matt 20:1-16
The two sons	Matt 21:28-32
Tenants of the vineyard	Matt 21:33-44
The marriage feast	Matt 22:1-14
The fig tree	Matt 24:32-34
Wise, faithful servant	Matt 24:45-51
The ten virgins	Matt 25:1-13
The talents	Matt 25:14-30
The growth of the seed	Mark 4:26-29
Servants in the house	Mark 13:33-36
The two debtors	Luke 7:41-47
The good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
The friend at midnight	Luke 11:5-10
The rich fool	Luke 12:16-21
Watchful servants	Luke 12:35-40
Steward over the house	Luke 12:42-48
Fig tree in the vineyard	Luke 13:6-9
The great feast	Luke 14:16-24
The lost coin	Luke 15:8-10
The lost son	Luke 15:11-32
The shrewd steward	Luke 16:1-13
The rich man and Lazarus	Luke 16:19-31
Unprofitable servants	Luke 17:7-10
The persistent widow	Luke 18:1-8
The Pharisee, tax man	Luke 18:9-14
The pounds (minas)	Luke 19:11-27
The Vine and branches	John 15:1-8

### **Paradise :**

Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4; Rev 2:7

### **Passover :**

Ex 12:11-14; Lev 23:7,8; Num 26:2,17; Matt 26:2,17-19; Luke 22:1; John 11:55; 13:1; 18:28,39; 19:14; 1 Cor



5:7; Heb 11:28

### **Patience, endurance :**

Ps 37:7; 40:1; Prov 19:11; Rom 8:25; 12:12; 1 Cor 13:4-7; Gal 5:22; Col 1:11; 3:12; 1 Tim 4:2; Heb 10:36; James 1:4; 5:7,11; Rev 13:10; 14:12

### **Peace :**

Num 6:26; Ps 29:11; 34:14; 37:37; 85:10; 119:165; Prov 12:20; Isa 9:6; 26:3; 32:17; 48:22; 52:7; 53:5; 59:8; Ezek 13:10; Matt 5:9; 10:34-36; Luke 1:79; 2:14; John 14:27; 16:33; Rom 1:2; 5:1; 8:6; 14:17; 15:13; Gal 5:22; Eph 2:14-17; 6:15; Phil 4:7; Col 3:15; 2 Thess 3:16; Heb 12:14; 13:20; Jam 3:17; 1 Pet 3:11; 2 Pet 11:2; 3:14

### **Peace offerings :**

Lev 3:1

### **Pentecost :**

Acts 2:1

### **Perfection, blamelessness, faultlessness :**

Ps 18:30,32; Matt 5:48; 2 Cor 7:1; Phil 3:12; Col 1:28; Heb 6:1,2; 10:10

### **Persecution :**

Matt 5:10-12; 13:21; John 15:20; Acts 8:4; 9:4,5; Rom 8:35; 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Cor 4:9; 2 Tim 3:12; Heb 11:37

### **Perseverance in faith :**

Matt 24:13; Luke 22:32,32; 1 Cor 15:2; Col 1:23; 2 Tim 2:12; Heb 3:5,6; 10:39; 1 Pet 1:5; Rev 2:7. See also under Eternal security, Keeping

### **Pharisees :**

Matt 3:7; 5:20; 3:2-36

### **Philosophy :**

Acts 17:18 (note); 1 Cor 1:20,21 (note); Col 2:8 (note)

### **Pilgrims, pilgrimage :**

Gen 47:9; Ps 39:12; 119:19; Introduction to psalm 120; Heb 11:9,10,13; 13:14; 1 Pet 1:1; 2:11

### **Plague, plagues :**

Ex 26:21; Num 8:19; 11:33; 14:37; 16:46; 25:28,29; 31:16; Lev 26:21,25; Deut 28:59; 2 Sam 24:13,15,21,25; 1 Kings 8:37; Ps 91:3,6,10; Jer 14:12; Hos 13:14; Zech 14:12; Matt 24:7; Luke 21:11 Plagues in Egypt: Ex 7:20-12:30 The end of this age: Rev 15:1-16:20

### **Pleasing others :**

Rom 14:13-21; 15:1-4; 1 Cor 10:33

### **Pleasing others from wrong motives:**

John 12:43; Acts 12:3; Gal 1:10; 6:12; Col 3:22

### **Poor, poverty, etc :**

Ex 22:25; 23:11; Deut 15:7,11; Job 31:16-23; Ps 35:10; 41:1; 82:3; Prov 14:31; 19:1,17,22; 21:13; 22:2; 28:6; Isa 25:4; Amos 2:6-8; 5:11; Matt 5:3; 11:5; 19:21; Luke 4:18; 6:20; 16:22; 21:2; Acts 3:6; 9:36; 10:4; 24:17; Rom 15:25-28; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 6:10; 8:9; Gal 2:10; Jam 2:5; Rev 2:9

### **Potter :**

Isa 64:8; Jer 18:2-6; Rom 9:19-21

### **Power :**

Zech 4:6; Luke 1:35; 9:1; 24:49; Acts 1:8; 4:33; Rom 1:16; 15:13; 1 Cor 1:17,18; 2 Cor 12:9; Phil 3:10; 2 Tim 3:5

### **Praising God :**

Ps 33:1; 71:15,16; 103:1; 135; 145; 150; Isa 12:1; Luke 2:13,20; Acts 2:46; 16:25; Eph 1:3; Heb 13:15; Rev 4:9-11; 5:9-14; 7:12; 19:5

### **Prayer :**

Gen 18:32; 32:23-32; Ex 32:31,32; 1 Sam 1:10-20; 12:22; Ps 18:7; 65:2,3; 66:18; 67:1; 81:10; 86; 132:1; 141:1; 143:1; Jer 33:3; 37:3; Matt 6:5-13; 7:7,8; 9:38; Luke 11:1-13; 18:13; John 11:41,42; 14:13,14; 15:7; 16:24,27; John chapter 17; Acts 1:14; 2:21; 12:5; Rom 1:8,9; 8:26,27; 10:13; 15:30; Eph 1:16-19; 3:14-19; 6:18; Phil 1:9-11; 4:6,7; Col 1:9-12; 4:12,13; 1 Thess 5:17; 2 Thess 1:11,12; 1 Tim 2:1-3; 2:8; 2 Tim 1:3; Jude 20; Jam 4:3; 5:13-18; 1 Pet 3:12; 1 John 3:22; 5:14-16; Rev 5:8; 6:10; 8:3

### **Predestination :**

Acts 4:28; Rom 8:29; Eph 1:11. See note at end of Romans.

### **Pride, arrogance, egoism :**

2 Sam 2:3; Job 41:34; Ps 40:4; 138:6; Prov 16:17; 8:13; 11:2; 16:18; 21:4; Isa 2:11-17; 5:21; Jer 48:29-31; Dan 4:37; Hos 5:5; Mal 3:15; 4:1; Mark 7:20-23; Rom 12:16; Col 2:18; 1 Tim 6:4; Jam 4:6; 2 Pet 2:10; 1 John 2:16

### **Illustrations :**

Ex 5:2; Num 12:2,3; 16:1,2; 2 Kings 5:11; 2 Chron 26:16; 32:25; Esther 3:5; Dan 4:30; 5:23; Luke 18:11; John 8:33; 13:6-8; Rev 3:17

### **Priests :**

Ex 28:1; 29:35; Lev 1:5; 21:1; Heb 13:15,16; 1 Pet 2:5,9; Rev 1:6; 20:6. See also under High priest.

### **Promises of God :**

Josh 23:14; Ps 77:8; Acts 2:39; Rom

4:16,20,21; 2 Cor 1:20; Titus 1:2; Jam 1:12; 2:5; 1 Pet 1:4; 3:9; 1 John 2:25. See also under God's faithfulness.

### **Prophet, prophesying :**

Gen 20:7; Num 11:25; Deut 18:15-19, 20,22; 1 Sam 9:9; Jer 14:14; Ezek 13:17-23; Matt 5:17; Rom 16:26; 1 Cor 12:10; 14:1-5,22-25; Heb 1:1,2; 1 Pet 1:10-12; 2 Pet 1:19-21; Rev 19:10; 22:6. See also False prophets.

### **Prostitution :**

Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:2

### **Prostitute, harlot, etc :**

Ex 34:15; Lev 20:5; Num 14:33; Josh 2:1; 6:17; Ps 73:27; Prov 7:10; Isa 1:21; 23:17; Jer 2:20; chapter 3; Ezek 6:9; 16:15-34; Hosea chapter 2; Matt 21:31,32; Luke 15:30; Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 1:10; Heb 11:31; 13:4; Rev 17:1-18; 21:8; 22:15

### **Punishment :**

See under Sin's punishment

### **Race, run :**

1 Cor 9:24; Phil 3:14; 2 Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1

### **Raising the dead :**

1 Kings 17:22; 2 Kings 4:35; 13:21; Matt 9:25; 27:52; Luke 7:15; John 11:44; Acts 9:40. See also under Resurrection.

### **Rapture of the Church :**

1 Cor 1:7; 15:51,52; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 2 Thess 2:1. See also note at Matt 24:31.

### **Realm of the dead :**

Note at Gen 37:35

### **Rebellion, rebel, etc :**

Gen 3:6 (note); Num 14:9; 20:24; Deut 9:7,23,24; 1 Sam 15:23; Ps 5:10; 68:6; 107:11; Prov 17:11; Isa 1:2,20; Jer 5:5; Ezek 2:3; 12:2; Dan 9:5,9.

### **Reconciliation :**

Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Eph 2:16,17; Col 1:20

### **Redemption :**

Lev 25:24-31; Ruth 2:20; Job 19:23-27; Ps 76:35; Matt 20:28; Rom 3:24; 1 Cor 6:20; Gal 1:4; 3:13; 4:5; 5:1; Eph 1:7; 4:30; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14; Heb 2:15; 9:15; 1 Pet 1:18,19; Rev 1:5; 14:4

### **Refuge, fortress, stronghold, etc :**

Num 35:6-32; Deut 33:27; Ps 9:9; 18:2; 46:1; 57:1; 91:2; Isa 25:4; Jer 6:19; Heb 6:18

### **Reincarnation :**

Job 11:12; 14:7-12; Luke 16:26; John

9:2,3; Heb 9:27

### **Religion, religious :**

Acts 13:43; 17:22-25; 26:5; Gal 1:13,14; Jam 1:26,27

### **Remembrance, remembering :**

Deut 8:1-5 (see references there); 1 Chron 16:13; Ps 63:6; 77:11; Eccl 12:1; Isa 62:6; Jonah 2:7; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 4:17; 11:25; 2 Tim 2:8; 2 Pet 22:19

### **Renunciation, self-denial :**

Matt 16:24,25; Luke 9:23; 14:25,26.

#### *Illustrations:*

Matt 4:18-22; 19:27; Phil 3:7-9; Heb 11:8,24-26

### **Repentance :**

Ex 9:27; 1 Sam 15:24; 2 Sam 12:1; 2 Chron 33:12-17; Job 42:6; Jer 18:7,8; Ezek 18:30-32; Hos 14:2; Jonah 3:5-10; Zech 12:10-13; Matt 3:2,8; Luke 3:10-14; 13:2,3; Acts 2:38; 16:33,34; 17:30; 2 Tim 2:25; Heb 6:6; Rev 2:5,16,22; 3:3,19; 9:20,21

### **Rest :**

Ex 33:14; Ps 91:1; 95:11; 116:7; Isa 28:12; 57:20; Jer 6:16; Matt 11:28-30; 2 Thess 1:7; Heb 3:11-19; 4:1-13; Rev 14:13

### **Restitution:**

Returning what is taken dishonestly Ex 22:3-9; Lev 6:4; Num 5:7; Neh 5:10-13; Prov 6:31; Luke 19:8

### **Resurrection of the dead :**

Job 14:13-15; 19:25-27; Ps 16:10,11; Dan 12:2; Matt 22:30; 28:6; John 5:25; 6:40; 11:25; Acts 1:3; 24:15; 26:8; Rom 1:6; 4:25; 6:4; 7:4; 8:11; 1 Cor 15:12-57; 2 Cor 4:14; Phil 3:11; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Rev 20:4,5

### **Revival, renewal :**

2 Chron 7:14; 34:33; Ps 71:20; 80:3,18; 85:6; 119:25,50

#### *Illustrations of revival:*

1 Kings 15:9-14; 2 Kings 11:17 - 12:16; 23:4-25; 2 Chron 19:3-11; 29:1 - 31:21; 33:9-20

### **Rewards :**

Gen 15:1; Ps 19:11; 62:12; Prov 11:18; 19:17; Isa 40:10; 49:4; Jer 17:10; Matt 5:12; 10:40-42; 16:27; 19:27-30; 25:21,23; 1 Cor 3:12-15; Eph 6:8; Phil 3:14; Heb 10:35; 11:24-26; 2 John 8; Rev 11:18; 22:12. See also under Crowns.

### **Rich people :**

Job 34:19; Ps 49:16; Prov 22:2; 28:6,20; Eccl 5:12; Jer 9:23; Matt 19:23; Luke 1:53; 6:24; 12:21; 16:1,19; 21:1; 1 Tim 6:17; Jam 1:10,11; 2:6; 5:1-6; Rev 2:9; 3:18

**Righteousness, justice, honesty :**

Ex 23:2; Deut 9:4; 16:19,20; 27:19; 1 Sam 8:3; 1 Kings 3:11,28; Job 19:7; 40:8; Ps 9:8; 23:3; 33:5; 85:10; 89:14; Prov 8:20; 14:34; 16:8; 17:23; 21:3; 28:5; 29:7; Isa 1:17; 9:7; 26:9; 32:17; 42:1-4; 56:1; 59:14,15; 61:10; Jer 9:24; 23:6; Hos 10:12; 12:6; Amos 5:7,12, 15,24; 6:12; Hab 1:4; Zech 7:9; Matt 5:6,10,20; 6:33; Luke 11:42; 18:7,8; John 16:8; Rom 1:17; 6:19; 8:4; 14:17; Gal 5:5; Eph 6:14; Phil 1:9; 3:9; Col 4:1; Heb 12:11; Jam 3:18; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:13; Rev 19:11. See also under Honesty, and Justification.

**Righteous people :**

Gen 6:9; Num 23:10; Job 36:7; Ps 1:6; 5:12; 11:5-7; 15:1-5; 34:15-17; 37:16,25; 64:10; Prov 1:7 (note); 3:32-35; 10:7,11,20,28; 11:23-30; 14:32; 15:29; 18:10; 29:7,27; Isa 3:10; 26:7; 53:11; Hab 2:4; Mal 3:18; Matt 9:13; 10:41; 13:43,49; 25:37,46; Acts 24:15; Rom 1:17; 3:10; 5:19; Jam 5:6; 1 Pet 3:12,18; 1 John 2:1; 3:7

**Rock, stone :**

Ex 17:6; 33:21-23; Num 20:11; Deut 32:4; Ps 18:2; 61:2; 71:3; 73:26; 118:22,23; Isa 28:16; Matt 16:18; 21:42,44; 1 Cor 10:4; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:4-8

**Ruler or prince of this world :**

John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12

**Sabbath :**

Ex 20:8; Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:27; Acts 20:7; Rom 14:5-8; 1 Cor 16:2; Gal 4:10,11; Col 2:16

**Sacrifices, offerings :**

Gen 4:3-5; Lev 1:2; 7:12,13; 9:22,23; 16:1-34; 1 Sam 15:22,23; Ps 40:6; 50:8-13; 51:16,17; Prov 15:8; Isa 1:11; Jer 6:20; 14:12; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Matt 5:23,24; 9:13; Luke 2:24; Phil 4:18; Heb 9:9; 10:1-14,18; 11:4; 13:15,16. See also under Sin offering, and Jesus Christ.

**Safety, security :**

Deut 33:27,28; Ps 23:1-6; 27:5; 37:24; 63:8; 91:1-16; 121:1-8; Prov 1:33; 3:23; 18:10; 21:31; 29:25; John 17:11; Rom 5:9,10; 8:31; 1 John 5:18. See also under Refuge, Eternal security.

**Salvation :**

Ex 15:2; Ps 27:1; 37:39; 50:23; 51:12; Isa 12:2; 61:10; Jonah 2:9; Matt 1:21; Luke 19:9; Acts 4:12; 10:2; Rom 1:16;

10:13; 1 Cor 1:18; Eph 6:17; Phil 2:12,13; 1 Tim 1:15; Heb 2:3; 5:9; 7:25; 1 Pet 1:5,9; 2:2; 2 Pet 3:15; Rev 7:10; 12:10; 19:1

**Satan :**

Gen 3:1,4,5; 1 Chron 21:1; Job 1:6-19; Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:11-19; Zech 3:1,2; Matt 4:1-10; Luke 22:3; John 8:44; 13:17; Acts 5:3,4; 26:18; Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; Eph 2:2; 1 John 4:4; Rev 2:9,13,24; 3:9; 12:4,9; 20:2. See also under Devil.

**Satan's children :**

Matt 13:38; John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:10

**Saviour :**

Luke 1:46 (note) See under God as Saviour and Jesus Christ as Saviour.

**Scriptures :**

See also under God's Word

**Second death :**

Rev 2:11; 20:6,14; 21:8

**Seeking God :**

Deut 4:29; 1 Sam 7:3; Ps 27:8; 63:1; 105:4; 119:2; Isa 55:6; 58:8-12; Jer 29:13; Hos 5:6; 10:12; Amos 5:4,6; Matt 6:33; 7:7; Acts 17:27; Jam 4:8

**Self-confidence :**

Prov 28:26; Jer 17:5; Hos 10:13; 1 Cor 10:12

**Self-control :**

Gen 39:7-10; Job 31:1-8; Ps 39:1-11; Prov 4:23; 16:32; Rom 6:12; 1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Tim 1:7; Titus 2:6; Jam 3:2; 2 Pet 1:6

**Self-deception :**

Isa 44:20; Jer 4:22; 17:9; 37:9; 1 Cor 3:18; Gal 6:3; Jam 1:22,26; 1 John 1:8; Rev 3:17

**Self-denial, renunciation :**

Matt 10:37-39; 16:24; Luke 9:23 14:26,27; John 12:25; Rom 8:13; 15:1; Gal 5:24; Phil 3:7-9

**Self-dependence :**

Ex 2:11-15; Num 14:44,45; Ps 127:1,2; Matt 12:44,45; John 13:37; Rom 4:1,5; 7:14-25; 9:30-32; Gal 3:9,10; 5:1-4; Eph 2:8,9; Phil 3:6; Titus 3:5

**Self-examination :**

Ps 119:59; Lam 3:40; Matt 7:5; 1 Cor 11:28; 2 Cor 13:5,6

**Self-exaltation :**

Num 12:1,2; 16:1-11; 2 Sam 15:1-12; 1 Kings 1:5; Isa 14:13,14; Jer 45:5; Matt 20:20-28; 23:12; Acts 8:18,19; 20:30; 2 Thess 2:4; 3 John 9

**Self-righteousness, self-justification :**

Job 13:6-12; (note); 31:38-40; Matt 5:20; 9:11; 22:12; Luke 10:29; 18:9; Phil 3:4-9

**Seraphim :**

See under Cherubim.

**Sermon on the Mount :**

Matt chapters 5 -7.

**Sermon on the plain :**

Luke 6:20-49

**Serpent, etc :**

Gen 3:1; Ex 4:3; 7:9; Num 21:4-9; 2 Kings 18:4; Ps 58:4; 91:13; Prov 23:32; Isa 37:1; Matt 7:10; John 3:14; 2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9; 20:2

**Service, servants, slaves :**

See also under God's service, servants.

**Sexual immorality :**

Gen 39:9; Lev 18:6-18; Job 31:1; Prov 2:16,17; 5:3-23; Matt 5:27,28; 15:19; Acts 15:20; 1 Cor 5:1-13; 6:9-20; 10:8; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; Heb 12:16; 13:4; 2 Pet 2:14; Jude 4,7; Rev 21:8. See also under Adultery.

**Shepherd, shepherds :**

Gen 48:15; 2 Sam 5:2; Ps 23:1; 78:70-72; Isa 40:11; 56:10,11; Jer 23:1-4; 25:34-38; 31:10; 50:6,7; Ezek 34:2-12; Zech 11:15-17; 13:7; Matt 9:36; John 10:1-16; 21:16; Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:2-4; Jude 12; Rev 7:17

**Shield :**

Gen 15:1; Ps 28:7 (references there). See also under Refuge.

**Sickness, health, healing :**

Gen 12:17; Ex 15:26; Lev 13:1-44 (note); Deut 28:61; 2 Kings 13:14; 15:5; 20:7; Job 2:7; Ps 30:1-3; 41:3,4; Isa 53:4,5; Ezek 34:4; Matt 10:8; 25:36; John 11:4; Acts 3:8; 1 Cor 11:30; 12:9; Gal 4:13,14; Phil 2:26,27; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20; James 5:14-16; 3 John 2; Rev 22:2

**Sin, iniquity, etc. :**

Gen 3:6,23; 4:7; 6:5; Lev 15:31; Num 21:6-9; 32:23; 1 Sam 12:23; Ps 51:1-5; 79:8; 90:8; 106; Isa 53:6; 59:1,2; Jer 2:32-35; Rom 1:18-32; 2:18-23; 3:9-19,23; 6:11-14; 1 Cor 5:6; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:22; 6:1; Heb 10:26; 12:1; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8,9; 2:1; 3:4-10; 5:17

**Power of**

Gen 4:7; 5:3; Prov 5:22; Jer 13:23; 17:9; John 8:34; Rom 6:16; 7:5,14-23; 8:8; 1 Cor 5:6; Eph 2:1-3; 4:18,19;

Heb 3:13; 2 Pet 2:19

**Punishment of, wages of**

Gen 3:14-24; 4:7; 5:3; 6:3,7; Num 15:32-36; Josh 7:1,11,24,25; 2 Sam 12:14; 1 Kings 11:14-25; 2 Kings 17:5; 23:26; Ps 32:10; Jer 5:1; Ezek 18:4; 44:10-14; Matt 3:7-10; 7:23; 25:44-46; Luke 16:23-26; Acts 5:1-5; Rom 1:24; 6:23; 1 Cor 6:9,10; Gal 6:7,8; 2 Pet 2:3-10; Jude 5-7; Rev 19:20; 20:15; 21:8

**Confession of**

Gen 3:9; Ex 9:27; Lev 26:40-42; 1 Sam 15:24; 26:21; 2 Sam 12:13; Ezra 10:11; Job 40:8; Ps 32:1-4; 51:1-4; Prov 28:13; Isa 6:5; 64:6; Jer 3:13,25; Luke 5:8; Jam 5:16; 1 John 1:9

**Forgiveness of**

See under Forgiveness

**Cleansing from**

Ps 51:2,7; Isa 1:16,18; 6:7; Ezek 36:25; Zech 13:1; John 13:10; 15:3; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 5:25,26; Heb 9:14; 10:22; Jam 4:8; 1 John 1:7,9; 3:3; Rev 7:14

**Sincerity :**

Ps 51:6; 2 Cor 2:17; Phil 1:10; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:5; Heb 10:22

**Sinful nature in man :**

Gen 4:7; 5:3; 6:5; 8:21; Ex 19:8,21-25 (notes); 21:8; 32:2-4; Jud 2:11,16-19; 21:25; 2 Kings 17:19; 25:21; Ps 2:3; 5:9; 14:2,3; 51:5; 58:3; 78:32-42; Isa 54:6; Jer 13:23; 17:9; 18:12; Matt 7:11; 10:21,22; 15:18; John 2:24,25; 13:37; Rom 1:29-32; 6:12; 7:5,15-25; 8:5-8; 13:14; Gal 5:13-21; 6:8; Eph 2:1-3; 1 Tim 1:15; Titus 3:3; 2 Pet 2:10,18 See also under Flesh, and Man's condition.

**Sin offering :**

Gen 3:21; 4:3-5; Ex 29:14; Lev 4:1-3; 12:6,8; 16:7-10; Num 6:11; 8:8; 15:27; Ps 40:6; Isa 53:10; John 1:29; 19:30; Rom 3:25; 8:3; Heb 9:26; 10:1-14; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2

**Son of man :**

Dan 7:13; Matt 8:20; Rev 1:13; 14:14

**Sorcerers :**

See under Magicians

**Soul winning :**

Ps 126:5,6; Prov 11:30; Dan 12:3; Matt 4:19; 28:19; 1 Cor 9:19,20; James 5:19,20; 1 Pet 3:1,2; Jude 23

**Spiritism :**

Lev 19:31; 20:6; Deut 18:10-14; 1 Sam 28:3,12

**Spiritual blindness :**

Isa 6:10; 43:6; 59:10; Matt 15:14; 23:26; John 9:1,39-41; Rom 2:19; 2 Cor 3:14; 4:4; Eph 4:18; 2 Pet 1:9; 1 John 2:11; Rev 3:17

**Spiritual bondage :**

John 8:34-36; Rom 6:16-22; 7:14; Gal 4:8,9; 5:1; 2 Tim 2:26; Titus 3:3; Heb 2:15; 2 Pet 2:19

**Spiritual ignorance :**

Judges 2:10; 1 Sam 2:12; 3:7; Ps 14:1,4; Prov 1:7; 9:1,10,13-18; Isa 1:3; 27:11; 59:8; Jer 4:22; 16:10; Hos 4:6; Matt 6:23; 22:29; John 1:10; 3:10; 13:36,37; 15:21; 16:2,3; Acts 17:23,30; Rom 1:21; 10:3; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:8,14; 6:9; 2 Cor 3:15; 4:4; Eph 4:18; 2 Thess 1:8; 1 Tim 1:13; 2 Pet 3:16

**Spiritual food :**

Ex 12:8; 16:16; Lev 2:1; 3:3,4,11; John 4:22,23; 6:27; 1 Cor 10:3,4; Heb 5:12-14; 1 Pet 2:2,3; Rev 2:7,17

**Spiritual gifts and abilities :**

Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 1:5,6; 12:1 - 14:40; Eph 4:7-11; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; Heb 2:4; 1 Pet 4:10,11

**Spiritual growth :**

1 Sam 2:26; Ps 84:7; 92:12-14; Luke 1:80; 2:52; Acts 9:22; 1 Cor 13:11; 14:20; Eph 3:17-19; 4:12-16; 1 Thess 3:12; 2 Thess 1:3; 1 Tim 4:15; Heb 5:12-14; 6:1; 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 1:5-7; 3:18

**Spiritual life :**

Ps 36:9; 87:4-7; John 3:3-8,16,36; 5:24; 6:63; 10:10; 12:49; 14:6; 2 Cor 4:11; Gal 2:20; 5:16-26; 6:8; Eph 5:18; Phil 1:21; Col 3:3; 1 Pet 2:1-3; 2 Pet 1:5-9

**Spiritual warfare :**

Num 1:2,3 (note); Josh 1:18 (note); Neh 13:31 (note); Ps 45:3-5; Matt 4:1 (note); John 16:33; Rom 7:23; 8:37; 1 Cor 9:26,27; 2 Cor 10:3-6; Eph 6:10-18; 1 Tim 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim 2:3,4; 4:7; Heb 12:4; Jude 3; Rev 2:7; 21:7

**Spiritual wealth :**

Matt 6:20; 19:21; 2 Cor 8:9; Eph 1:18; 3:8; Col 1:27; 1 Tim 6:19; Heb 11:26; Jam 2:5; Rev 2:9; 3:18 Spiritual wisdom See under Wisdom, Enlightenment.

**Spiritual worship :**

John 4:23,24

**Strength, strong, etc :**

Ex 15:2; Deut 6:5; 1 Chron 16:11; 2 Chron 16:9; Neh 8:10; Ps 18:1; 29:11;

33:16; 73:26; 84:5; Isa 40:31; Jer 9:23; Ezek 3:8,9; Eph 3:16; 6:10; Phil 4:13; 2 Tim 1:7; 2:1; 4:17; Heb 11:34

**Sufferings, troubles, tribulation, etc:**

Gen 3:7,23,24 (notes); Job 2:10; 3:20 (notes); 5:7; Ps 9:9; 34:19; 46:1; 50:15; 66:10-12; 138:7; Matt 5:10; 13:21; John 9:2; 11:4; 16:33; Acts 14:11; 6:25; Rom 5:3,4; 8:17-2335 - 39; 2 Cor 1:3-11; 4:8-18; Phil 1:30; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:3,4; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 1:8; 3:12; Heb 10:32-34; 12:5-13; Jam 5:15; 1 Pet 2:19-25; 3:14,17; 4:1,13-19; Rev 2:9

**Superstition :**

Jud 17:1-13; 1 Sam 4:3-8; 1 Kings 18:25-29; 20:23; 2 Kings 18:4; Isa 2:6; Jer 10:2; 44:17,18; Acts 14:11-18; 17:22-31

**Swearing :**

Matt 5:33-37; James 5:12

**Tabernacle :**

Ex 25:8,9; Ex chapters 25-31; 39:32; 40:34; Heb 9:1-10

**Temple :**

1 Kings chapters 6-8; Ezek 8:6-18; 9:3-7; 10:4,18,19; 11:23; 40:1; 43:1-5; Matt 21:12-15; 24:2; John 2:19-22; 1 Cor 3:16,17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:19-22; 2 Thess 2:4; 1 Pet 1:5; Rev 11:1,2,19; 15:6; 21:22

**Temptation :**

Gen 3:1-6; 1 Chron 21:1; Prov 1:10-16; Matt 4:1,3; 6:13; 26:41; 1 Cor 10:13; Eph 6:11-13; 1 Thess 3:5; Heb 2:18; Jam 1:13-15

**Thanksgiving, gratitude :**

Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; 100; 107; 113:1; Matt 14:19; Rom 1:8,9; Eph 1:16; 5:20; Phil 4:6; Col 1:11; 1 Thess 5:18; 1 Tim 4:3; Rev 4:9; 11:17

**The Lord's day :**

Rev 1:10; also see Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2

**Tithing :**

Gen 14:20; 28:22; Lev 27:30; Num 18:21; 2 Chron 31:5; Mal 3:10; Matt 23:23; Luke 18:12; Heb 7:4-10

**Tongue :**

Ps 34:13; 39:1-7; 52:4,5; Prov 6:16,17; 18:21; Isa 45:23; Phil 2:11; Jam 1:26; 3:2-12; 1 Pet 3:10

**Tongues, speaking with :**

Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4,11 (note); 10:46; 19:6; 1 Cor 12:10,30; 14:2-23

**Tower of Babel :**

Gen 11:4-9

**Transfiguration :**

Matt 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:29; 2 Pet 1:18

**Transgression, trespass**

Ps 32:1; 51:1-4; Isa 53:5; Rom 4:7,15; 1 John 3:4

**Tree of life :**

Gen 2:9; 3:22; Prov 3:18; 11:30; Ezek 47:7; Rev 2:7; 22:2

**Truth :**

Ps 15:1,2; 25:5; 31:5; 45:4; 51:6; 52:3; 119:160; Prov 23:23; Isa 59:14; Jer 5:1; Zech 8:16; John 1:14,17; 8:32,45; 14:6,17; 18:37,38; Acts 10:4-6,9-16,34,35; Rom 1:18,25; 2:8; 1 Cor 5:8; 13:6; 2 Cor 10:3-6 (note); Gal 4:16; Eph 1:13; 4:15,21; 6:14; 2 Thess 2:10-13; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 2:15, 25; 1 Pet 1:22; 1 John 1:6,8; 4:6; 5:6; 2 John 1,4

**Thief, stealing :**

Ex 20:15; 22:3; Prov 6:30,31; Matt 15:19; John 10:8; 12:6; 1 Cor 6:10; Eph 4:28; Titus 2:10; 1 Pet 4:15; Rev 9:20,21. See also under Restitution.

**Throne :**

2 Sam 7:13; Ps 11:4; 45:6; 84:14; Isa 6:1; 66:1; Dan 7:9; Matt 19:28; Heb 1:8; 4:16; 12:2; Rev 3:21; 4:2,4; 16:17; 19:5; 22:3

**Trials, tests :**

Gen 22:1,2; Ex 15:25; 32:10; Deut 8:2,16; 13:3; Job 1:12; 3:20; 7:18; 23:10; Ps 66:10-12; Isa 48:10; Matt 6:13; Mark 10:21; Heb 2:18; 4:15; Jam 1:2-4,12; 1 Pet 1:6,7; 4:12,13; Rev 2:10; 3:10

**Trinity :**

Gen 1:26; Zech 12:10; Matt 3:16,17; 28:19; John 5:30; 2 Cor 13:14; Rev 1:4

**Trumpets :**

Lev 23:24; 25:9; Num 10:2-10; Isa 27:13; Matt 24:31; 1 Cor 14:8; 15:52; 1 Thess 4:6; Rev 8:2; 11:15

**Unbelief, unbelievers :**

Gen 15:8; 17:17; 19:14; Ex 16:3; Num 11:21; 14:1,3,4,10,11,45; Ps 14:1; Isa 53:1; Matt 13:57,58; 17:17,20; Mark 4:40; 6:5; 9:24; 16:14; Luke 12:46; 22:67; 24:11; John 8:24; 12:10,11, 37-40; 16:9; Acts 12:15; Rom 4:20; 11:20,23; 1 Cor 6:6; 7:14; 14:22; 2 Cor 4:4; 6:14; 1 Tim 5:8; Heb 3:12,18, 19; Jude 5; Rev 21:8

**Unclean, uncleanness :**

Lev 11:1-23; 12:2; 13:3; Job 14:4; Isa

6:5; 64:4; Matt 15:18-20; 23:25,27; Rom 1:24; 6:19; 14:14,20; 2 Cor 6:17; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19; 5:5; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 2:3; 4:7; Heb 9:13,14; 2 Pet 2:10

**Unfaithfulness :**

Ps 78:57; Prov 25:19; Isa 56:10; Jer 6:13; 23:11; Ezek 33:6; Micah 3:11; Matt 21:43; 25:24; Luke 16:12

**Unholy :**

Matt 15:18-20; Rom 1:24; 2 Tim 3:2; Rev 21:27

**Ungodliness, the ungodly :**

Rom 1:18; 5:6; 2 Tim 2:16; Titus 2:12; 1 Pet 4:18; 2 Pet 3:7; Jude 4,8-16,18

**Unity, union in Christ, with Christ, etc :**

Psalm 133; Mark 9:38; John 14:20; 17:21-23; Acts 2:44-47; 6:1; Rom 6:5; 8:2; 12:5,16; 14:19; 15:5,6; 1 Cor 1:10-12; 3:1-4; 6:15-17; 10:17; 12:12-27; 2 Cor 13:11; Eph 2:5,6 4:3-6,13-16; Phil 1:27; 2:2,3; 4:2; Col 2:2; 3:14; 1 Pet 3:8

**Unpardonable sin :**

Matt 12:31,32; Heb 10:26-31; 1 John 5:16

**Usury, interest on money :**

Ex 22:25; Lev 25:36; Neh 5:10; Ps 15:5; Prov 28:8

**Vengeance, revenge :**

Ex 21:23-25; Num 31:1-3; 1 Sam 25:38; Ps 69:22-28; 93:1,94:1; 149:6-9; Jer 50:15; 51:6; Matt 5:38-44; Rom 12:19-21; Col 4:6; 1 Thess 5:15; 2 Thess 1:6; Heb 10:30; Rev 6:10,11; 18:6; 19:2

**Victory :**

Josh 1:18; Neh 13:31; Job 1:20,21; 2:10; Ps 9:1-12; 18:1; 91:13; 124:1-5; Luke 10:19; John 16:33; Acts 5:14; Rom 8:1-37,39; 13:14; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14; Jam 4:7; 1 John 2:13; 4:4; 5:4,5; Rev 2:7; 12:11; 15:2; 21:7

**Virgin birth of Christ :**

Isa 7:14; Matt 1:18,23; Luke 1:26-38

**Visions :**

Gen 15:1; Num 12:6; Acts 2:17; 10:3,11; 26:19; 2 Cor 12:1-4

**Vows :**

Num 6:2; 30:2; Deut 23:21; Jud 11:30,31; Ps 116:4; Prov 20:5; Eccl 5:4; Acts 18:18

**War :**

Ex 17:15; Num 1:2,3; Ps 18:34-40; 144:1; Isa 2:4; Matt 24:6; Rev 6:2; 12:7; 19:11,19. See also under Spiritual warfare.



**Warnings :**

Deut 6:12; 29:19-21; 1 Sam 12:15; Ezek 3:18; 33:9; Matt 18:10; 24:4; Luke 12:1,15; Acts 13:40; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 6:7; Phil 3:2; Col 2:8; 1 Thess 5:14; Heb 2:1-3; 3:7-19; 4:11; 5:11-6:8; 10:26-31; 12:15,25; 2 Pet 3:17; 1 John 3:7; Rev 22:18,19

**Watchman :**

Isa 62:6; Jer 6:17; Ezek 3:17; Heb 13:17

**Water :**

Ex 17:6; John 4:10-14; 7:37,38; 1 Cor 10:4; Rev 7:17;21:6; 22:1,17

**Weakness :**

2 Chron 20:12; Isa 40:29-31; Matt 26:40,41; John 15:5; Rom 5:6; 7:18,19; 8:3,26; 14:1; 15:1; 1 Cor 1:27; 8:9; 9:22; 11:30; 2 Cor 12:10; Heb 11:34; 12:12

**Wealth, riches, property :**

Gen 24:35; Deut 8:10-14; Job 42:10; Ps 49:10-13; 112:3; Prov 11:4; 16:8; 21:6; Eccl 2:18; Matt 6:19-21; 13:22; 16:26; 19:21,23; Phil 3:8; 1 Tim 6:7-10,17-19; Heb 10:34; 11:26; Jam 5:3-5; Rev 18:7,20. See also under Spiritual wealth.

**Weeping, lamentation, grief, tears, etc:**

Gen 6:6; 27:34; 2 Sam 1:17; Job 3:1-26; 29:1 - 30:31; Ps 6:6; 13:12; 42:3; 80:5; 102:10; Isa 61:3; Jer 9:1; 48:31-39; Lamentations; Joel 2:12,13; Zech 12:10; Matt 5:4; 8:12; Luke 6:21; 19:41-44; John 11:33-35; Acts 20:19; Rom 9:1-3; 2 Cor 2:1-4; 6:10; 7:8-11; Phil 3:18; Heb 5:7; James 4:9; 1 Pet 1:6; Rev 7:7; 18:11-19; 21:4

**Wicked :**

See under Evil.

**Wicked one (Satan) :**

Eph 6:16; 1 John 2:13; 3:12; 5:18,19

**Widows :**

Ex 22:22; Deut 10:18; Ps 68:5; 146:9; Isa 1:17; Luke 21:2; 1 Cor 7:8; 1 Tim 5:3-16; Jam 1:27

**Wisdom :**

1 Kings 3:8-13; Job 28:1-28; Ps 19:7; 51:6; 90:12; 111:10; Prov 1:7,22; 2:1-6; 3:13-18; 8:4-11,12-21; 9:1; Eccl 1:17,18; Isa 44:25; Jer 10:12; Matt

7:24,25; 11:19,25; Acts 6:3; Rom 11:33; 1 Cor 1:17-25; 26-16; 3:18-20; Eph 1:9,10,17; 5:15; Col 2:3,23; 2 Tim 3:15; Jam 1:5; 3:13-18; 2 Pet 1:5; Rev 13:18

**Witness, testimony :**

Ps 107:2; Isa 43:10; John 3:11,33; 4:39; 8:14; 15:26,27; 18:37; Acts 1:8; Rev 1:5; 12:11

**Wives :**

Gen 2:24; 3:16; Ps 128:3; Prov 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 31:10-31; Matt 5:32,32; 1 Cor 7:12-16; Eph 5:22-24; 1 Tim 2:11; 1 Pet 3:1-6. See also under Marriage.

**Women :**

Gen 1:27; 2:18,22,24; 3:1,6,13; Ps 128:3; Prov 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 31:10-31; 1 Cor 11:2-16; 4:34-38; 1 Tim 2:9-15; Titus 2:3-5; Rev 12:1; 17:3

**World :**

Isa 24:1-6; John 7:7; 14:17; 15:18,19; 16:8-11; Rom 12:2; Gal 1:4; 3:22; Jam 4:4; 2 Pet 1:4; 2:20; 1 John 2:2,15-17; 4:4,5;5:19;Rev 16:1; 21:1

**Worry, anxiety, cares, etc :**

Ps 127:2; Matt 6:25-34;13:22; Luke 21:34; John 14:1; 1 Cor 7:32; Phil 4:6,7; 1 Peter 5:7

**Worship, worshipped :**

Gen 22:5; Ex 8:1; 30:34-38; 34:14; Deut 6:5,13; 2 Kings 17:32,33; Ps 95:3-7; Ezek 2:1; Matt 4:10; 15:9; 18:26; 28:9,17; John 4:21-24; Acts 14:12; 17:23; 2 Cor 11:2-16; 14:26:40; Col 2:23; 2 Thess 2:4; Heb 1:6; James 1:26,27; Rev 4:10; 9:20; 13:8; 14:7. See under False worship also.

**Yeast, leaven :**

Ex 12:8; Lev 2:11; 6:17; Matt 13:33; 16:6-12; 1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9

**Youth :**

1 Sam 3:11-14; 2 Kings 2:23-25; Ps 119:9; Prov 1:8; Eccl 11:9; 12:1-7; Lam 3:27; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17; 1 Tim 4:12; 5:1; 2 Tim 2:22; Titus 2:6; 1 Pet 5:5; 1 John 2:13

**Zeal, zealous :**

Num 25:11-13; 2 Kings 10:16; Ps 69:9; Isa 9:7; 37:32; 59:17; John 2:17; Rom 10:2,3; 1 Cor 14:12; Gal 4:17; Phil 3:6; Col 4:13; Titus 2:14; Rev 3:19

**జార్జ్ రాబర్ట్ క్రో**, తను హిట్లర్ ని ఓడించానని చెప్పేవారు. రెండవ ప్రపంచ యుద్ధంలో ఫ్రాన్స్ లోని యునైటెడ్ స్టేట్స్ సైనిక శిబిరంలో సైనికోద్యోగిగా ఆయన పని చేశారు. యుద్ధానంతరం యు.ఎన్ ప్రభుత్వం ఆయన్ని చికాగో యూనివర్సిటీకి పంపింది. అప్పట్లో జి. ఆర్. క్రో నాస్తికునిగా ఉండేవారు. క్రైస్తవ్యం పనీ పాటాలేని వారికోసమని రుజువు చేసే ఒక రచనకు పూనుకున్నారు. అందులో భాగంగా 'రోమా పత్రిక' చదువుతుండగా, ప్రభువు ఆయన్ని పట్టుకున్నారు. బాబ్ (క్రో గారిని గౌరవంగా పిలిచే పేరు) క్రీస్తుని తన స్వంత రక్షకునిగా అంగీకరించారు. తను మారుమనస్సు పొందిన తర్వాత, చికాగో యూనివర్సిటీలో బి.ఎ పూర్తిచేసి, వెస్ట్ వర్జీనియాలోని ఒక సంఘానికి పాస్టర్ గా బాధ్యతలు స్వీకరించారు. హార్వర్ టేల్, జార్జ్ ముల్లర్, ఎమీ కార్మికేలేచే ఎంతో ప్రభావితం చేయబడ్డారు. "విశ్వాసంతో జీవిస్తూ, క్రీస్తును సేవించడమనే వారి ఆధ్యాత్మిక సూత్రం" ఆయనపై ఎంతో ప్రభావం చూపింది.

1952లో బాబ్ ఇండియాకు వచ్చారు. ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ లోని ఒక మారుమూల, అనాగరిక గ్రామాన్ని ఎంచుకున్నారు. విపరీతమైన వేడి, దుమ్ముతో నిండిన ప్రాంతమది. ఆ గ్రామంలో మనుషులకన్నా పాములే ఎక్కువ అని అప్పట్లో వ్యాఖ్యానించేవారు. వచ్చిన మొదటి ఆర్నెల్లలోనే ఆయన తెలుగులో బోధించటం ప్రారంభించారు. ఎంతో కాలాన్ని హైందవ మతం, హైందవ సంప్రదాయాల గురించి అధ్యయనం చేయడానికి వెచ్చించారు. కొన్ని సంవత్సరాల తర్వాత ఆయన సికింద్రాబాద్ కు మారారు. గుడ్ న్యూస్ సెంటర్ అనే స్థానిక సంఘాభివృద్ధికి తోడ్పడ్డారు. స్థానిక యు.ఇ.యస్.ఐ, యూత్ ఫర్ క్రైస్ట్ వంటి సంస్థలతో కలిసి పని చేసారు. భారత దేశమంతటా ప్రయాణించారు.

తెలుగువారి మధ్య సేవచేస్తున్న సమయంలో తెలుగు బైబిల్ లోని భాషకూ, తెలుగువారు తమ దైనందిన జీవితంలో మాట్లాడుతున్న భాషకు చాలా వ్యత్యాసముందని ఆయన గమనించారు. దీని విషయం ఏదైనా చేయాలనే ఆశ ఆయనలో వుట్టింది. సువార్త ప్రకటన, బైబిల్ డీవింగ్, రచనా వ్యాసంగాల్లో ఉత్పృష్ట స్థానంలో కొనసాగుతున్న సమయంలో ప్రభువు ఆయన్ని తెలుగు వాడుక భాషలోకి బైబిలును అనువాదం చేసేందుకు పిలిచినప్పుడు ఆయన ఆనందానికి అపధులేవు. తన బోధనా పరిచర్యను అవివేసి కొంతమంది భాషా పండితులతో కలిసి అనేక సంవత్సరాలు తెలుగు వాడుక భాషలోకి బైబిలును అనువాదించే పనిలో నిమగ్నమయ్యారు. అప్పటికి తెలుగులో కానీ, ఆ మాట కాస్తే భారతదేశపు ఇతర భాషల్లో కానీ వ్యాఖ్యాన సహిత బైబిలు గ్రంథాలు లేవు. అందుచేత వాడుక భాషలోకి తెలుగు బైబిలును ప్రచురించాక, తెలుగులో స్వదీ బైబిలు లేదా వ్యాఖ్యాన సహిత బైబిలు రాయడానికి పూనుకున్నారు. పాశ్చాత్యదేశాల్లో లభించే బైబిలు నోట్సును కాపీ చేసి ఇందులోకి అనువాదించకుండా, ప్రత్యేకంగా భారతీయుల్ని హైందవ సంప్రదాయ నేపథ్యాన్ని దృష్టిలో ఉంచుకొని ఈ నోట్సును తయారు చేసారు. ఎన్నో సంవత్సరాల ప్రయాస, కృషి తర్వాత 1983లో ఇండియా బైబిలు లెటరేచర్ వారి సహకారంతో గ్రేన్ మినిస్ట్రీస్ (క్రోగారు స్థాపించిన సంస్థ) చరిత్రలోనే మొట్టమొదటి తెలుగు స్వదీ బైబిలును ప్రచురించింది. ఇప్పటివరకు 1,00,000 పైగా కాపీలు పంచిపెట్టడం జరిగింది. తెలుగువారికి తమ దైనందిన భాషలో ఒక వ్యాఖ్యాన సహిత బైబిలు లభించటం అక్షరాలా ఒక చారిత్రాత్మిక ఘటం. ఇందుకోసమే దేవుడు బాబ్ ను ఇండియాకి పంపాడు.

బాబ్ వ్యాఖ్యాన సహిత బైబిల్ కాక మరో ఐదు పుస్తకాలు కూడా వ్రాసారు. వీటిలో యుగాంతానికి సంబంధించిన 'ది లాస్ట్ టుమారో' అనే పుస్తకాన్ని చదివిన ప్రముఖ క్రైస్తవ సాహిత్య రచయిత జె.ఐ.పాకర్ 'బాబ్ క్రో లూయీస్ వలె వ్రాసారు' అని వ్యాఖ్యానించారు.

బాబ్ 2007, మే 23 రాత్రి 7.45 నిమిషాలకు తన సొంత రక్తకుని దగ్గరకు వెళ్ళిపోయారు

## నేను ఎందుకు మిషనరీగా సమర్పించుకున్నాను?

(క్రో గారు చనిపోవడానికి కొన్ని నెలల ముందు ఆయన స్వయానా వ్రాసిన మాటలు)

"చికాగో విశ్వవిద్యాలయంలో గ్రాడ్యుయేషన్ చివరి దశలో నేను యేసుప్రభువు వైపు తిరిగాను. మునుపెన్నడూ ఎరుగని శాంతిని, జీవనోద్దేశ్యాన్నీ ఆయనలో కనుగొన్నాను. దేవుడు నన్ను సేవచేయమంటున్నాడని గుర్తించాను. కానీ ఎక్కడ, ఎలా చేయాలో తెలీదు.

చికాగోలోని మూడీ బైబిలు ఇన్ స్టిట్యూట్ లో ఉన్నప్పుడు 'మిషన్స్' ప్రాముఖ్యత తెలుసుకున్నాను. ఆ తర్వాత ఒక పెద్ద మిషనరీ కాన్ఫరెన్సుకు హాజరైనప్పుడు మిషన్స్ పట్ల నా ఆసక్తి మరింత గాఢమైంది. వెస్ట్ వర్జీనియాలోని మేసన్ కంట్రీలోని ఒక బాప్టిస్ట్ చర్చికి పాస్టరుగా ఉన్న రోజుల్లో 'మిషన్స్' పట్ల సంఘస్థులలో ఆసక్తి కలిగిస్తూ ఉండేవాణ్ని. ఆయా మిషనరీలను సంఘానికి ఆహ్వానించి వారి సేవా వివరాలను తెలుసుకునేవాళ్ళం. క్రమంగా కోస్టర్ కాలో మిషనరీగా చేస్తున్న విలియం టేలర్ కు సహాయం చేయటం ప్రారంభించాం. అతని రాక, నన్ను ఇతర దేశంలో మిషనరీగా పనిచేయటం గురించి ఆలోచించేలా చేసింది. భారతదేశంలో పనిచేసిన ఇద్దరి మిషనరీల జీవిత చరిత్రల్ని చదవమని టేలర్ నాకిచ్చారు. విలియం టేలర్, హెన్రీ మార్టిన్ నన్నెంతో ప్రభావితం చేసారు. మరో రెండు సంఘాలకు నేను పాస్టరునయ్యాను. ఇతర దేశాలకు క్రీస్తు సువార్త అందాల్సిన అవసరాన్ని సంఘస్థుల దృష్టికి తెచ్చాను. క్రమంగా నాలో భారం పెరుగుతూ వచ్చింది. దీని విషయం ఇతరుల్ని ప్రోత్సహించడమే కాకుండా, స్వయంగా నేనే ఆ అవసరాన్ని తీర్చాలని దృఢంగా ఒప్పించబడ్డాను.

బైబిలు ఉపదేశాలూ, పరిశుద్ధాత్ము ద్వారా నాలో ఈ తీర్మానం గాఢమవుతూ వచ్చింది. 'ఇండియా మిషన్' సంస్థ నా దరఖాస్తును అంగీకరించడంతో 1952 డిసెంబర్ లో ఇండియాకు ప్రయాణమయ్యాను.

ఇండియానే ఎందుకు? ఎందుకంటే ప్రపంచంలోనే అత్యంత అవసరత ఉన్న, అతి పెద్ద మిషనరీ పొలమది. దేవుడు నాకు నిర్దేశించిన ప్రదేశం ఇండియానే. నేను ఇండియాకు బయలుదేరిన నాట నుండి నేటికి 50 సంవత్సరాలు దాటుతున్నా. నాకు ఈ విషయంలో ఎటువంటి సందేహం లేదు. అపొస్తలుల కార్యముల గ్రంథాల్లో శిష్యులకు ప్రభువిచ్చిన ఆదేశాలు, సుస్పష్టంగా వారేమి చేయాలో తెలియజేస్తున్నాయి.

"కాబట్టి మీరు వెళ్ళి సమస్త జనాలలో శిష్యులను చేయండి. తండ్రి కుమార పవిత్రాత్ముల పేరట వారికి బాప్టిస్మం ఇవ్వండి" (మత్తయి 28:19)

"మీరు సర్వలోకానికి వెళ్ళి సృష్టంలోని ప్రతి వ్యక్తికీ శుభవార్త ప్రకటించండి." (మార్కు 16:15)

"జెరుసలం మొదలుకొని జనాలన్నిటికీ ఆయన పేర పశ్చాత్తాపం, పాపక్షమాపణ ప్రకటించడం జరగాలి." (లూకా 24:47)

"తండ్రి నన్ను పంపిన ప్రకారం నేను మిమ్ములను పంపుతున్నాను." (యోహాను 20:21)

"అయితే పవిత్రాత్ము మిమ్ములను ఆవరించినప్పుడు మీరు బలప్రభావాలు పొందుతారు. జెరుసలంలో, యూదయ, సమరయ ప్రదేశాలలో నలుదిక్కులకు, భూమి కొనలవరకూ కూడా మీరు నాకు సాక్షులే ఉంటారు." (అపొ. కా 1:8)

ఒక ప్రాంతంలో సువార్తాకరణ జరిగాక, సువార్త అక్కర ఉన్న మరో ప్రదేశానికి శిష్యులు సాగిపోయేవారు. ఈ లేఖనాలన్నీ శక్తివంతంగా నన్ను సంధించాయి. నేనిలా ఆలోచించాను:



**ఒక ప్రక్క కొన్ని దేశాల్లో సంఘాలు, క్రైస్తవులు బైబిలు స్కూళ్ళు, కాలేజీలు, క్రైస్తవ రేడియో కార్యక్రమాలు, ప్రచురణ సంస్థలు విస్తారంగా, సమృద్ధిగా ఉంటే, మరో ప్రక్క చాలా ప్రాంతాల్లో ఇవేమీ లేక, సువార్త వినే అవకాశం లేక ఘోరమైన చీకటిలో ముగ్గుతున్నాయి. ఇలా ఎందుకు జరుగుతుంది?**

**ఇండియాలోనూ, ఇంకా ఇతర దేశాల్లోనూ కనీసం ఒక్క క్రైస్తవుడు కూడా లేని గ్రామాలు, పట్టణాలు వేలాదిగా ఉన్నాయి. నేను యువకుడ్ని, ఆరోగ్యంగా ఉన్నాను. సువార్త తెలుసు. నేనిలా హాయిగా అమెరికాలోనే ఉండిపోనా?**

**అవకాశం ఎక్కువగా ఎక్కడ ఉందో అక్కడికి వెళ్లాలి. పనివారు తక్కువగా ఉన్నచోటికి వెళ్లాలి. ఇది సమంజసం కాదా? లేఖనానుసారం కాదా?**

ఒక క్రైస్తవ సేవకుడు ఎలా ఉండాలనేదానికి పౌలు గొప్ప ఉదాహరణ. పౌలు ఏమన్నాడంటే "ఈ విధంగా, నేను మరొకరి వునాది మీద కట్టుకుండా క్రీస్తు పేరు కూడా వినిపించని ప్రాంతాలలో శుభవార్త ప్రకటించాలని ఎప్పుడూ నా ఆశయం. రాసి ఉన్నదాని ప్రకారం ఆయనను గురించిన సమాచారం తెలియనివారు చూస్తారు. చేరనివారు విని గ్రహిస్తారు." రోమా 15:20,21.

ఇందుచేతనే నేను మిషనరీనయ్యాను. మీరూ దీని విషయం లేఖనానుసారంగా ఆలోచించాలని కోరుతున్నాను. మా గ్రేన్ మినిస్ట్రీస్ ప్రస్తుతం ఇండియాలో హైందవులు, ముస్లింలు, గిరిజనుల మధ్య సువార్త ప్రకటిస్తూ, సంఘాలు, స్కూళ్ళు స్థాపిస్తూ పనిచేస్తుంది. మాకున్న కొద్ది వనరులు అక్కరలో ఉన్న వారికి సాయంమందిస్తున్నాం. మరింత అధిక ప్రార్థనా భాగస్వామ్యంతో, మరిన్ని ఆర్థిక వనరులతో మనం ఇంకా ఎక్కువ పనిచేయగలం. గొప్ప దేవుడు మనకున్నాడు భారతదేశంలో పనిచేసేందుకు గొప్ప అవకాశాలు మనకున్నాయి.

రండి. పగటి వెలుగుండగానే పని చేద్దాం. ఎవరూ పనిచేయలేరు. ఎందుకంటే చీకటయ్యాక!!

వ్యక్తిగతంగా బాబ్ క్రోగారి గూర్చి తెలిసిన వారికి 'అతని సేవ రోజులయిపోయినప్పుడు తన ఇంటికి వెళ్ళిపోయాడు.' లూకా 1:23; "అతడు చనిపోయాడు ... ఇంకా మాట్లాడుతూ ఉన్నాడు." పీట్రా 11:4 అనే వాక్యాలే గుర్తుకు వస్తూనే ఉంటాయి.



**George Robert Crow** claims he defeated Hitler – he (Bob not Hitler) was a corporal in the United States Army stationed in France during the II world war. He was born in 1924 in Ohio. After the war, he was sent by the US government to the University of Chicago. Bob Crow was an atheist then. He wanted to prove Christianity was for the birds and so started to write a paper. While reading the book of Romans to write the paper, the Lord zapped him and Bob accepted Christ as his personal Saviour.

Soon after his conversion and completing his BA program in the UC, he began to pastor a church in the hills of WV. He was much influenced by Hudson Tyler, George Muller and Amy Carmichael and their spiritual principle of “living and serving Christ by faith.”

Bob came to India in 1952; chose a very remote, primitive, hot, dusty village in Andhra Pradesh as his base to start his missionary work. Someone once commented that there were more poisonous snakes in that village than people. Within the first six months of arriving there, he began to preach in Telugu, the language of that state. Also he spent considerable time learning Hinduism and the Hindu culture.

After a few years, he moved to Secunderabad, a major city in central India. Here he helped build up a local Church called the Good News Centre (and later another one called the Secunderabad Bible Fellowship); got involved with the UESI and the Youth for Christ ministries that work among students; travelled all over India teaching and preaching in large Christian conventions and student camps leading many to Christ. When someone once pointed out to Bob, “Hey, Bob, this gentleman claims you led him to Christ”, his response was, “I have been accused of worse things than that in my life”.

In 1953 and began his work among the Telugu people. Before long he saw that the language of the existing Telugu Bible was not at all like the language that people were actually speaking in their daily lives. A desire was created in his heart to do something about it, and he was overjoyed when, at the height of his preaching, teaching and writing career, the Lord called him to translate the Bible into spoken Telugu.

Bob Crow stopped, for the most part, his preaching ministry and, with the advice and help of a few Indians proficient in the language, spent the next several years in translating the Bible into spoken Telugu. He saw also that there were almost no study helps in the Telugu language (or in other languages of India), no commentaries or concordances. So after the Telugu Bible in spoken language was published, he felt moved by the Lord to prepare a Study Bible in Telugu, not something copied from a study Bible produced for the West, but writing notes especially for India, where the background of the people and their ways of thinking are quite different from those of people in western nations.

For the next several years he was engaged in writing notes on the entire Bible, choosing references and making a topical concordance. Altogether this came to nearly 2000 pages. After all this it was translated into Telugu, with the help of India Bible Literature, Grace Ministries (founded by Crow in 1983) published the first Telugu Study Bible in history. Up to now more than 1,00,000 copies of this Study Bible have been distributed. He wrote 5 Books. Dr. J. I. Packer once commented after reading some of Bob Crow's books, “Bob writes like C. S. Lewis.”

Bob Crow went to be with his and our Saviour on May 23rd around 7.45 pm.

## WHY I AM A MISSIONARY?

*(This was written by Bob Crow about a year ago)*

Just before I graduated from the University of Chicago, I turned to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him I found peace and purpose in life, which I had never known before. I realised that God wanted me to serve Him, but I did not know where or how.

During my brief seven months at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago I learned the importance of foreign missions. My interest deepened when I attended a large missionary conference and heard more about God's great program for the earth in this age of grace.

About two years after becoming a Christian, I became the pastor of a Baptist church in Mason County, West Virginia. I began to rouse the interest of church members in foreign missions, inviting missionaries to the church to tell the people about their work. We soon began to support William Taylor who was then serving as a missionary in Costa Rica.

His visit encouraged me to think that service in a foreign land might well be the thing God wanted for me. Taylor loaned me two biographies of missionaries who had served in India. William Carey and Henry Martyn, both of which moved and inspired me. I became the pastor of two more churches, where I brought before the people the great need of many foreign lands for the Gospel of Christ. The conviction grew on me that I should not be simply telling others of the need, but trying to meet that need myself. This conviction came through the teachings of the Bible and by the Holy Spirit. So I decided to apply to The India Mission. I was accepted and sailed for India in December, 1952.

Why choose India? Because it was the largest and neediest open mission field in the world. I might well have gone to China, had China been open to foreign missionaries. But India was God's place for me, and I have not doubted it from the time I sailed for that land more than 50 years ago. After rising from the dead and before ascending to heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ spent 40 days with His disciples. During this time, He taught them concerning the kingdom of God and instructing them about what they were to do. In each of the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles we have His final instructions, revealing His heart concerns and what He wants His people to be doing. Here they are:

\* Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.. (Matthew 28:19)

\* Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15)

\* Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47)

\* As the Father has sent me, I also send you. (John 20:21)

\* You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

After evangelizing in one place, the disciples were to move on to others places and lands that needed the Gospel. These commands of the Lord Jesus came with great power to me, as indeed they should to all believers everywhere. I reasoned like this:

\* Why should some countries have a great abundance of churches and Christians and Bible schools and colleges and Christian radio programs and publishing houses, and where anyone who wants to hear of Christ and believe in Him can certainly do so, while many areas of the earth remain in gross darkness, without churches, Christians, Christian schools, or the opportunity to hear the Gospel?



\* In India and many other parts of the world there are thousands of villages and towns without a single Christian, let alone a church, and where the opportunity of hearing the Gospel of Christ is remote.

\* I was young and healthy and knew the Gospel. Should I then remain in the United States, the most heavily evangelized nation on earth, when I could go to places with desperate need of the Gospel and to those who had little or no chance of hearing it?

Is this not both Scriptural and reasonable? The Communists had a slogan. Go where the revolution needs you most.. Should Christians be less sensible and dedicated?

Paul is the great example of what a Christian and Christian worker should be. Here is the example he set for us: I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written, To whom He was not announced, they shall see; and those who have not heard shall understand... (Romans 15:20,21)

Some may say, But what about the needy person in my own town, down the road from my house, my neighbor? Certainly we are to help them and share the Gospel at every opportunity. But this does not relieve us of the responsibility of taking the Gospel to those in other lands, who have far greater needs and much less opportunity. It does not free us from the final commands of Jesus to His believers.

This is God's great program in this age of grace. This is why I have been a missionary, and why I will encourage others to think in a Scriptural way about all this. To me it is a matter of simple obedience to the Lord's marching orders to His church. If this is not already true of you, I pray that it will become so. May you carry out your duty to do what is in your power so that the whole world, and not merely your little corner of it, has the opportunity to hear the wonderful Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This alone can save from eternal ruin.

Grace Ministries is serving in India, in areas of great need. We work among Hindus, Muslims and tribal people, preaching the Gospel, establishing churches and schools and helping those in need with the few resources we have. With more prayer partnerships and financial resources we could do more. We have a great God, a great commission and great opportunities to serve in India. Let us work together while it is yet day, for the night comes when no man can work.

*Those who have known Bob Crow may say,*  
“..as the days of his service were completed that he went to his own house.” Luke 1:23

“he...died, but through his faith he is still speaking”  
Heb 11:4.

